

Proclamation

The Occasional Gentle Giant Newsletter

2

Dec. 1992



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Trondheim, Norway, December 1992.

Proclamation

Welcome once again to more news about Gentle Giant. Bigger and better, hopefully, with something for you all. We got some nice coverage in *The Record Collector* and *A New Day*, so I can't wait until they get this one. Pretentious, they might say.

Readers in the UK may now send money directly to Pete Gray in Huntingdon while American readers may send to David Armas of Los Angeles. See inside back cover for details. All correspondence not regarding subscriptions should, however, always be sent to me. The two guys have willingly accepted the task of making the money transactions and posting the newsletter in their countries - better for the fans and cheaper for me, thus enabling a larger newsletter.

The first issue of the newsletter (print run = 100 copies) has sold out. If some die-hard fans wish to have it, then write me and I'll see if there is enough interest to reprint it. I have had lots of requests, from as diverse places as Kazakhstan, Mexico, Japan, Man, Australia and Israel, and mostly from the USA. There are obviously Giant fans everywhere. I can't answer all of you personally, but I will still try to answer all questions in this newsletter. Some people have been waiting for some time for this newsletter or at least for a reply from me. You will all be treated fairly although you may have to wait some time before the newsletter reaches you.

This issue brings the first installments of what I hope to be continually running features, namely a presentation of each Gentle Giant album, a letter from or interview with a band member, an article about the band from that time, a concert reminiscence, and a presentation of another band much in the same vein as Gentle Giant. Opinions and questions will be included as usual, while advertisements are a new section. For future issues I will publish sheet music, as Kerry has found his written material while searching for his wife's miniskirt from the 60's, for their eldest daughter. I myself began writing down *On Reflection*, but found that Derek sings incorrectly (a huge reward to the first who finds out where he misses) while Ray drowns totally in the 60th bar, so it was fantastic to receive the manuscript yesterday.

I can forward letters to the band members for you, but I can't let you have their addresses or telephone numbers. We have to respect their privacy. They have, however, responded well to the newsletter, and promise to help with details.

Remember to buy *The Record Collector* in March and enter your vote in the Reader's Poll! Let 1993 be the year when Gentle Giant emerge amongst the Top 100 collectable artists! They were not far from it in 1991, having climbed steadily each year, but this year they fell back, possibly due to many new people participating in the poll.

The goal of the newsletter is to let Gentle Giant fans have a place to communicate about Giant and other like-minded groups. All suggestions welcomed.

It's Not Imagination

The great news first. Earlier this year, Terrapin Trucking Co. obtained the rights from Phonogram to put *In a Glass House* and *The Power and the Glory* out on CD. The latter includes the single track *The Power and the Glory* which wasn't on the LP. Release date was 19th of October, and of the first batch of 14,000 copies there is only about one thousand left as I write these words, so rush with your order, because Terrapin tell they have had more business than expected from ads in *Record Collector* and *Q Magazine*. In fact, so much more that there will not be a limited edition of picture discs as first planned – all will be picture discs. *In a Glass House* has sold better than *The Power and the Glory*, therefore Terrapin are definitely going to manufacture more of it. The CDs are nice, very nice. Each includes an 8 page booklet with the lyrics and some additional information by Michael Heatley. Sadly, the ghastly *Giant for a Day* giant is used as a background for the lyrics of *The Power and the Glory*. And why couldn't they include the title track lyric? The cover of *In a Glass House* was hard to reproduce, but the solution was to print the silk screen picture on the plastic box (so don't break the CD's glass house when you tap your fingers to the opening track).

Terrapin obtained the master tapes from Phonogram and these were transferred to DAT and then digitally enhanced for the sake of the CD, whatever this process involves, but obviously the sound will be better. However, no remastering has been done. It seems that the interest in Gentle Giant world wide is not great enough to make such a venture possible. I have had comments on the sound ranging from superb to 'didn't really like it'. Myself, I will not comment on the sound, because you all listen differently, and have your own views about how the sound ought to be. However, I did discover some new details while listening, and I was very pleased with the production, although the sound could be sharp at times. The title track was louder than the 8 album tracks of *The Power and the Glory*, but that doesn't really matter. The musical content is superb, and shall not be discussed here. The event was a milestone in the renewal of interest in Gentle Giant, and as nearly half of all your letters have mentioned the wish for *In a Glass House* to come out on CD, I think it is rewarding. See ad elsewhere in the newsletter.

There are also two new bootleg CDs on the market. Firstly, the 1975 vinyl bootie *Amongst the Darkers. Behind the Few. The 1975 American tour*. Tracks are *Cogs* in *Cogs* with a superb intro (more than two minutes long) based on the main theme from *Giant* (1st LP), and not found on any album. This, I think, is the introduction to the show while they showed slides. *Funny Ways* is included as usual, with a long vibes solo, then comes the well known combination of *The Runaway* and *Experience*. So *Sincere*, the longest cut, moves into a section where the whole band play drums and tuned percussion. The album rounds off with new arrangements of *Free Hand* and *Just the Same*. This album alone would have made me name Gentle Giant the best live group ever, but I think the official live LP *Playing the Fool* is better. The tracks, as usual, differ from the studio versions and the official live version, so the album is well worth having. The sound is good overall for a bootie and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Total running time 48.04. There is little information on the cover, but it was recorded in Baltimore, October 1975 (not in the *Playing the Fool* star chart?). Catalogue listing *Raid Masters RAID 910705*, issued 1991 in Italy.

The other new bootleg available is Live 1980. "The Last Giant Step". Taped in New York, May 24, 1980, obviously on Long Island, it shows the heavy rocking side of Giant - nothing Gentle here. 13 tracks, 6 of them from *Civilian*, makes a total running time of 72.56. The tracks included: *Convenience*, *All Through the Night*, *Free Hand*,

On Reflection

I remember an album was released after "Civilian" which I cannot find. Have any of the Shulman brothers or Kerry Minnear released anything since 1982, either as Gentle Giant or under their own names or another group name?

The last studio album was *Civilian*, released only a few months before the band broke up. The year after saw a release of a *Best of* album, and that was the last to come from any of these band members, apart from a few participations on other people's albums. See the The Missing Piece section which will bring to light unknown works (began in #1). Information about the various band members activities after the split will be featured in the new The Boys in the Band section.

Is there an address to which we can write to plead with the powers-that-be to release other Gentle Giant recordings on CD?

In England, Vertigo will eventually put out *Three Friends*, and then there is only the Chrysalis records left. In the US, Capitol has apparently withdrawn *The Power and the Glory*, to make a joint CD of that one and *Free Hand* together, but this is just what I have been told and I cannot confirm it. The latter CD, which is already available, is a private initiative, of poor quality. Capitol have most of the rights, but CBS, I think, brought out the vinyl *Octopus* and *Civilian*, and as the former has been put out on CD, I would think the latter will come also. *Three Friends* was also put on CD by CBS although another company (Warner?) made the vinyl. I don't have the US addresses, but you can write to Chrysalis, UK, as far as I know, at Bramley Road, London W10 8SP, they moved there in 1990. Mention the growing awareness of Gentle Giant, shown in recent articles in *The Record Collector* and *A New Day*, this newsletter, and the reissuing of other CDs that have been sold with success. And please, protest against making a *Best of* compilation, which is likely to destroy plans of issuing complete CDs.

Perhaps in the future a convention for readers could be arranged?

Why not? That depends on how eager you are out there. Here in Trondheim, we have occasional Gentle Giant evenings where we also listen to other kinds of interesting music. People always have something to share with each other. However, I don't think the interest is great enough yet. Decide, yourselves!

Perhaps we could attempt to build up a world wide discography of the group, including bootlegs?

Yeah, that is one of the goals of the newsletter. I will gather the details sent to me, and in a future issue make a list of what has been gleaned so far. There's a lot of promo material and edits, along with all the taped shows, for instance on BBC, and there are some interesting picture covers of singles. These will be covered in the Design section.

Where did Gary Green get his famous on stage high leg stomping movement? Martin Barre? Looks similar but more emphasized?

Well, Gary, mind an answer?

Is it possible to acquire a photo or album with all the band members' autographs on?

Sure, it's possible, but I don't know how. Let's see how the band themselves react to the proposal. Maybe you would have to travel around the UK & USA to obtain it - would it be worth it? Honestly, I don't think that the band members will indulge in idolation, their humility wasn't destroyed by large followings and super sales...

Thanks for bringing back my memories about Gentle Giant through your article in *A New Day*. It has spurred me on to start purchasing their CDs. One of GG's songs is still haunting me. All I can remember is the opening lyrics: "I remember the good things, how can you forget all the years that we shared in our ways."

These lyrics are from the middle section of *On Reflection* on the *Free Hand* album.

Experience

Pat Leonard, principal songwriter, keyboardist and MD for Madonna, was interviewed in *Q Magazine* of February. His contributions to her repertoire, like *Live to Tell*, *La Isla Bonita*, *Like a Prayer* and *Cherish*, "was never even part of the plan." *"The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* [Genesis], *Dark Side of the Moon*, *The Wall*. That's what I grew up with and that's what I dreamed of doing one day. I was a big Gentle Giant fan. I was a huge Jethro Tull fan. But I had to feed my children and heat my house..."

I can only add that I began enjoying Madonna when I heard *La Isla Bonita*, which brought some chord progressions that I hadn't heard in pop music before, and was even beautifully handcrafted by someone who knew how to make music. It was a huge step forward from the previous hits. Yeah, I said this before I heard about the connection with Gentle Giant. And as Madonna has left Pat Leonard and moved in other musical directions, her popularity is fading. Any connection? - GH.

The Missing Piece

In 1983 a group called *Minor Detail* issued a record under the same name. Yes, it's terrible, and a very minor detail for Giant fans. I don't even know if it should be called a missing piece, because no one would miss it - it is awful listening by all standards. However, the credits on the back state: "Guitars: Des Moore and Ray Shulman", and "Our thanks to Jerry Jaffe and Derek Shulman for their personal contribution". It has nothing in common with the Giant records, being a sort of "The Most Boring Side of Elton John" compilation with extremely straightforward songs wrapped in early eighties machine gun pop sound. Catalogue number Polydor POLD 5113 for those of you who can't bear missing it.

Thanks to Pete Gray for the tape and details about this one.

A Cry for Everyone

The poll will be listed in each issue. So far few people have sent their votes. Remember to send a list with in your opinion, the five best Gentle Giant albums, the 10 best cuts, and the 10 best other artists you listen to. At this stage *Free Hand* is best album, followed by *In a Glass House* and *Octopus*. Experience and *The Advent of Panurge* share a first in the best track listing, while Jethro Tull is best other group so far.

Thank You

First of all, I have to thank you all for sending me the warmest letters about this venture. It is really good to know that this late night work means something to someone. So many of you have sent me photocopies of articles, they are gratefully received, and will be presented in forthcoming issues of the newsletter. I will make a bibliography of articles and interviews later on, and try to include at least one good article in each issue.

Thank you also for personal reminiscences; it is fun to read about your experiences, and the intention is to present these also to the readers. Photographs from shows are also welcomed. A special thank you to those who sent me the liner notes to *Pretentious*, and a very special heartfelt thank you to David Armas of Los Angeles who actually sent me the record itself! When I get a little more time, you will have a special surprise in the post.

As for bootlegs, it seems that there are only two on vinyl. However, a lot of concerts were taped, and there are in circulation at least 40 taped shows, radio shows, etc. An audio guide will possibly find its place in the next issue. Thank you so far for sending me tapes, I am quite impressed with the amount. See the advertisements section.

Further, I thank Pete Gray for sending me the *Interview* tour program book, and David Armas for sending me the promo material for *Giant for a Day*, which has been reproduced for inclusion in the newsletter. If any of you have got material which you cannot reproduce, send it to me and I'll do it. Also thanks for different album covers and other record rarities, posters etc.. All these will be dealt with as I discuss the various albums in future issues.

Thanks also for photographs of yourself or other more or less non-Giant items, even a Peace postcard (thanks Warren, I have it at my bedside table), and a Christian pamphlet (I of course read that. Read about Kerry's work in the Christian community in a future issue!).

A feature on Simon Dupree and the Big Sound, with a complete discography, will be found in a future issue. David Armas is working on it now. Thanks for sending Simon Dupree material and also items covering the other band members' activities.

Can anyone make an overview of Gentle Giant's position in the top 500 collectable artists poll in *Record Collector* over the recent years? It could be fun to see how they climbed.

Dear Enrico Ponzoni, can you send me details about your Gentle Giant videos?

As you will see from the newsletter itself and from what I have mentioned in this section, you could send me anything Gentle Giant related and I'll try to include it. Send also your views of what you'd like to see more of in future issues and comment on what I have included so far. Thank you once again, Friends!

Design

Each issue of the newsletter will carry a brief description of each Gentle Giant album, in chronological order. This is because not all readers have acquired all albums, though Giant fans are notorious for their completomania. The inner sleeves with lyrics on may be missing, particularly from CDs, and so on. In addition, the collective responsibility for the various tracks says nothing about where the idea originated and who did what with the development of the composition. This time, the first album.

Gentle Giant.

Vertigo 6360 020.



Issued Nov. 1970, as the first of four albums on the Vertigo label. The first edition was on the so-called swirling label, where the label on one side only depicted a swirling design, while the label on the other side gave the information for both sides. The Transatlantic label was the same, and the idea has been used by other companies, but none so extensively as Vertigo. A later edition had the label designed by Roger Dean. This label gives the information in the traditional way. Rather than producing an inner sleeve with lyrics, Vertigo produced gatefold sleeves on all four albums, with lyrics and other information on the inner side. The cover painting by George Underwood was also used on the US edition of *Three Friends*, as the first album was not released in the USA. The rights to the six first albums belong to Phonogram, the



record company to which Derek Shulman is now assigned as a director. Line Records in Germany bought the rights to issue the first four CDs from Phonogram in 1989, and the Gentle Giant album (LICD 900722) was then issued with all the LP information printed in the folder of the CD edition (as far as I remember; I must confess that I don't have the Line CD here at the moment). People writing tell me that Line used vinyl, not master tapes in the production. Vertigo released the CD themselves in 1991, I believe (842 642-2, undated). This edition lacked the lyrics, but, apparently is taken from the master tapes. There is still no US edition of the album.

The first album was basically identical with the live set of, from left to right below: Phil, Martin, Ray, Derek, Gary and Kerry. Later, solos in these tunes would be longer, and sometimes the tunes would be more or less rearranged. Track listing:

A Tall Tale

Giant took notice of the long shadows and decided to quit for the day in the apple orchard. He stretched, took forty steps and covered the quarter mile to the mouth of his cave. He sat down and pulled a sweet smelling cork out of a two hundred gallon jug. Champagne is what he poured into a mug having the same capsize as a bath tub.

As he quaffed he perceived that something strange was in the air, stirring the serenity of the Somerset countryside. He slowly rose to his full height and whispered "Is there be a good sound floatin' in the east wind? I think I'll investigate."

One must understand that the giant doesn't go out much, except when he sees his girlfriend in France now and then (she's the daughter of Gargantua) and twice a century at that! Now he had another good excuse to break the routine of his work at the orchard.

He travelled swiftly through the night, care fully avoiding populated areas. When he came to the Salisbury Plain he decided to see if his stone ring was still standing. He made it as a boy, just for fun. As he approached, two long haired youths sitting against a slab looked up. One said, "Alan, this stuff is pretty good gear. I've just hallucinated a great big fat-out lookin' giant over there."

The other said, "Javont man. I see him too."

They sat motionless for a few moments, then the giant turned and continued his quest towards the sound. When he was out of their sight the first one whispered wide eyed, "Too much man, us having the same hallucination." The other youth had fainted.

Sure enough, the sound was coming from Portsmouth war. To the giant's delight it came from a cottage out in the countryside, far from the centre of town. Inside, six dedicated musicians

were treating off a rendition of "One Not" at a thousand watts, that's enough to rip the top of anybody's head. All except the giant's. He just laid on his stomach, rested his head on his folded arms and listened with an ear to each open window for good stereo.

The band stopped after three hours and Ray said to Kerry, "Let's go out and dig the stars." They opened the front door and slowly walked up the giant's nostrils. They tumbled back inside shakin' all over and both said at once "There's a big fat-out there!" about shag. "Oh!"

The others noticed immediately that some thing was wrong so they all went out to have a look. They saw the head of a great big giant, sleeping peacefully. Phil was at the head of the group. He turned and said, "Gary, did you spike our tea again?"

Just then the giant opened his eyes. "He re the boys as were makin' that good sound?"

Martin, it once put it case be the troublest record recorded. When it was in a 3rd wave it had made the north coast. You see, our record was not so in the north neither anybody and

"What's happened? But that's the greatest music I've ever heard from thunderstorms."

Needless to say they all got on very well after the giant had said that. Frank the teacher moved the instruments outside and they played the rest of the night to him. Somewhere in Dorsetmouth a seismograph recorded a mild earthquake when the giant was sleeping.

By the morning I have down from London with the group's managers Gerry and our friend George the artist. We drove around to the back of the cottage and gazed at the group lying in the grass listening to stories of the giant's distant past. Derek ran to us as the car lurched into reverse and made us to halt. He explained everything and soon we were listening to the amazing things the giant had to say.

Before the giant left, it was suggested that he pose for a picture with the group. No matter how I angled my polaroid I just couldn't get everyone in the picture. I have some photos of six guys and a big boat, six guys, a big eye and part of a big nose, but I couldn't get a decent picture of the giant and the band together.

George was more successful. The giant placed him at the top of a tall tree and in fifteen minutes George had done the rough sketch.

Well, there you have it. The story of the Gentle Giant. You may think it's fantastic but then, so is the music.

Tom Viscanti, Record Producer.

These are the giant's favourites:

1. Giant Side One
2. Summer Wars
3. Aloud
4. Isn't It Quiet And Cold?
1. Nothing At All Side Two
2. When Not?
3. The Queen



Giant. Running time 6.22. A group composition, with lyrics by Phil, and the music mostly by Ray, with Kerry contributing the organ and multivoiced vocal parts. This track presented the group's basic philosophy.

Funny Ways. Running time 4.21. Kerry wrote both the music and the words, which were cleaned up by Phil. It was made on a guitar (discovering some new chords) while Kerry lived with Phil, because they didn't have a piano in the house.

Alucard. Running time 6.00. Ray wrote the music with Kerry helping with the arrangements, and Phil wrote the lyrics. The backward driven tapes were an idea made possible by having a whole studio to play in. "We were quite green at that time." Isn't it Quiet and Cold? Running time 3.51. Music by Ray, who basically wrote all his

Giant

The birth of a realisation,
The rise of a high expectation,
Emerging successful, defiant,
Together the parts make a Giant
See the world in the palm of his hand,
Sundering steps that will cover the land

He is coming,
Hear him coming,
Are you ready?
For his being?
See the Giant
Feel the Giant
Touch the Giant
Hear the Giant

The birth of a realisation,
The rise of a high expectation,
Emerging successful, defiant,
Together the parts make a Giant

Funny Ways

I'm sorry to have been so much of a bore
But in my own funny way I find I learn much more
I realise what you think from your eyes,
But in your own funny way I find I learn much more
My ways are strange
Then I never change

Then you, strange ways
I'm sorry to have been so close from the start,
But for all that I cared we could be miles apart
I understood that you never would
Understand a way of life that I never could
My ways are strange
Then I never change
Then you, strange ways
Go your own way or wait for me
Go your own way or wait for me
Go your own way or wait for me
And so you see what happened to me
Since the time when I judged my life in funny ways
I realised that my life was less
So you see what I mean with all my funny ways
I'm sorry to have been so much of a bore
But in my own funny way I find I learn much more
I'm sorry to have been so much of a bore
But in my own funny way I find I learn much more

Alucard

Living still,
Am I dreaming
I feel the chill
Breath of fear
I feel things
Hover, linger
Someone help me
Terror my soul

Living dead,
Am I breathing
Sapless, blind
Hears stopped beating
Hear the crying
Oh the dying
Someone help me
Opes of the night

Isn't It Quiet And Cold?

Isn't it quiet and cold walking down the street alone?
Happened I missed the bus and found I had to walk, alone
What was that?
Ooh me,
Hear the echo of my feet
Footsteps
Are they mine?
Hear the echoes of the street
Wished I lived near at hand although I live alone, alone
At least I'd had company, so why should I moan, alone?

Movement
Paper wind across the street
Curtains closed
Sleepy heads
Wrapped together in your beds
I used to walk with someone else
Didn't seem to notice sights and sounds of the lonely street
I used to talk with someone else
Now the only answers are the calls of the night
Look at that silks can winding home to rest, alone
Half-past four and daylight shows itself once more
Walking all alone
Walking all alone

Nothing at all

Now she sits by the riverside
Watching the waters glide by,
With a sigh
And the things she put faith in
Are rippled just away from her
With a sigh
She sees lovers pass by, but much more than a kiss
At this little girl who had everything hands
She's nothing at all
Now the wind seems so cold
Seems all old as in laughs at her fears
And her fears
And as ducks swim away from her
Voices of past love appear
In her tears
She sees love in her face as she tells him to go,
And so - here's a girl who had everything now
She's 'nothing' at all

What could she do if she saw him now,
Now that he's gone she's leaving
If she could see what she's seeing now
For sure she's more than just choosing
Now she sits by the riverside
Watching the waters glide by,
With a sigh
And the things she put faith in
Are rippled just away from her
With a sigh
She sees lovers pass by, but much more than a kiss
At this little girl who had everything hands
She's nothing at all

Whip not?

Don't sing a tune to yourself
You might believe this one
Try not to see it yourself
The thrashing won't stretch more
Don't give me more of that line
Who not?
Go to sing something
Love's song there's nothing to find
Who not?
Dead before playing
Don't sing a tune to yourself
You might believe this one
Try not to see it yourself
The thrashing won't stretch more
Who says the things that go on
The song is only saying
Dead thoughts can kill a good thing
The band is only playing
Don't give me more of that line
Who not?
Go to sing something
Love's song there's nothing to find
Who not?
Dead before playing
Dead before playing

In his namesake, Gentle Giant are individuals:

Derek Shulman - Lead vocals, backing vocals and some bass
Ray Shulman - Most bass, violin, some guitar, percussion and backing vocals
Phil Shulman - Sax, trumpet, recorder, lead vocals and backing vocals
Barry Shulman - Keyboard, some bass, cello, lead vocals, backing vocals and tuned percussion
Gary Owen - Lead guitar, 12 string guitar
Gillian Smith - Drums and percussion

Our helpful friends include:

Claire Denis - Critic on "Isn't It Quiet and Cold"
Blair Cook - Editor of "Giant"
Ray Baker - Recording Engineer on all titles
Georgie Blackwood - Cover Artists & Illustrations

WARNING - Copyright exists in all recordings. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance copying or re-recording in any manner whatsoever will constitute infringement of such copyright. Licences for the use of records for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, Euston House, 82 Oxford Street, London W1.

This stereophonic record can only be played on a magnetophone reproducer provided it is fitted with a stereophonic or compatible magnetophone cartridge. For further details please ask your retailer.

songs on a Fender Stratocaster, arrangement by Kerry, and words by Phil.

Nothing at All. Running time 9.08. Kerry had written this song before joining the group. Phil helped in cleaning up the words. The drum solo in the middle was thrown in because drum solos were usual at the time. The phasing was another new effect, which was fun at the time. They then got the idea that there could be some wild piano on top of it, in a jazz style that today is little played.

Why Not? Running time 5.31. Another song Kerry had written before joining GG, with Phil cleaning up words again. The 6/8 shuffle at the end was put there to let Gary Green have a chance to play a solo.

The Queen. Running time 1.40. The traditional **God Save the Queen**, arranged for rock group, to end the show. Later re-arranged, with new chords. This cut, and all the other cuts was arranged by the Shulman brothers and Kerry, with each of them throwing in ideas in the process, both about the lyrics and the music

Total running time 37.05. The production by Tony Visconti was so bad that the group decided to produce their albums themselves thereafter. The musical content is very high, and it is a pity that some of it gets muddled by the production. Some of the lyrics differ from those printed on the cover, and I'm sorry to say I find them unintelligible in places. The drum/piano solo of **Nothing at All** is the most dated part, together with the end of **Why Not?** and **The Queen**, while most of the rest of it have stood the test of time extremely well. All the acoustic and vocal parts are remarkably independent of the rock standards of that time, and all the songs show the craftsmanship of the group. The songs are well arranged, but not so well structured as their later albums. This is, however, a minor comment; another being that the albums seems a little short by today's standards. It is, however, one of the best albums to be made in 1970 along with Jethro Tull's *Benefit* and Emerson, Lake & Palmer's debut album, beating both in musical variation. Only The Beatles had been so musically varied in the sixties. Classical composition principles were coupled with the most trendy of progressive rock patterns, or riffs as they are better known. Utilizing the mediæval flavour was, according to Kerry, a fad; they had no real interest in renaissance music at the time. The heritage from Simon Dupree and the Big Sound seems to me nonexistent. The group cite Tull and King Crimson as influences, but the influence of both classical music, jazz and folk, in addition to the music of the Beatles and other progressive rockers, seem obvious. Being paid, and having a whole studio to themselves for one and a half year, the group had their most rewarding period financially.



Interview

GENTLE GIANT by Paul Weir.

[This article appeared in the *Zigzag* (London: Spicebox Books Ltd.) magazine no. 51 (Vol. 6, no. 1), April 1975.]

Until recently, Gentle Giant were one of the only, perhaps the only band deserving of the title 'Britain's biggest unknown band'. It's quite a treat when you go to see what to you is a new band, for the first time, and find a thoroughly professional outfit with four years on the road and five albums behind them, playing to a crowd that's consistently in the two thousand bracket.

When I was at college, a friend on the same course used to say "I've got a friend who knows a group called Gentle Giant and she says they're terribly good, have you heard of them?" and I could cheerfully say "No". Two years later (January '74) I'm sitting in the bar of the Marquee with folk's fuzziest double bass player, Brillo, comparing superlatives on Capability Brown (they'll make it yet I tell you), and he starts raving about this here Gentle Giant. His conviction is compelling and a mental note is made to go and see them. Meanwhile back at the chateau, by sheer cosmic design, my own dear brother has bought Gentle Giant's *In A Glasshouse* album on the recommendation of friends. Yours truly is impressed and is soon heading up to Birmingham to see them.

A more upfront arranged music band you'd be hard put to find and I was bowled over, and amazed that the media have been resolutely ignoring the band since its inception. That was March '74 and subsequently the media have started picking up on Gentle Giant. I've seen them a few more times and acquired all six albums. By the end of '74 the writer finds himself being invited to write a History on Gentle Giant for this august journal and despite an antipathy for vast sums of money he agrees. I suppose he must like the band....

This is the story of how two ordinary, typical average young kids called Ray and Derek (who lived at the seaside) learnt to play their scales, went through all the traumas of turning semi-pro, experienced the even greater traumas of being manipulated, and survived to form the band of their dreams. It is also the story of how drummer John Weathers got ripped off in Wales and invariably ripped every night, whilst in Germany, young and tender Kerry Minnear was starving in a hovel and writing letters to his mum for the fare home. It's also a little bit of a story about Gary Green but he didn't get conned like the others... He just played the blues and lived a life of serenity and contentment with mum and dad.

EPISODE ONE: LOCAL BOYS MAKE GOOD

Ray and Derek Shulman tend to talk quite a lot when they get going and often at the same time, and I was even tempted to write all their speech down as one person called Derekanray Shulman but unfortunately quotes like "Ray was still at school" could introduce elements of schizophrenia. Our two heroes finally spilled the beans on Giant's pre-history after years of trying to forget they were ever called Simon Dupree and The Big Sound. Amongst other things it gives an interesting insight into the machinations of the pop business in the sixties:

ZZ: Where does the saga begin?

RS: Derek and our other brother Phil were born in Glasgow... in the Gorbals. They moved down when Derek was a very small little boy to Portsmouth, 'cos it's much nicer there and it's by the sea and the Gorbals was 'orrible. Daddy got posted there in the war.

ZZ: And what was daddy's occupation?

RS: Musician... he was a jazz trumpeter. I was born in Portsmouth... we were raised in a terraced house in Eastney Road, Southsea. Working class—father out every night doing gigs and working during the day as a sales rep. He gave music lessons as well so the house was always full of musicians and middle-aged drop-outs.

ZZ: Were you influenced by your environment?

RS: I must have been really—house full of musicians and instruments... I started learning trumpet when I was five just because it was there and then took up violin when I was seven. We were made to practice for an hour a day at least, when we really wanted to go out and play. I suppose it was a good thing we were really, and eventually I wanted to do it anyway... I wasn't formally taught at all. I liked music and singing and dad bought me an electric guitar when I was ten.... The first group we had was me strumming the violin, Derek on his Vox Shadow Guitar... £20... through the radiogram.



Derek-guitar, Ray-violin and cousin Paul and brother Terry.

DS: Fourth year school friends, a cakestand as a cymbal and pots as drums... I was sixteen and Ray was thirteen.... We went through all the traumas—somebody's got to leave the band—the drummer's not good enough—a school friend—how can I tell him he's out of the band?—all in our front room!.... Our first semi-pro band was called The Howling Wolves.

ZZ: What kind of music?

RS: R&B of course. The Stones were IT then. We did about a gig a month and then we started getting gigs at schools and things. We just had a couple of amplifiers—no PA. We thought we'd be venturesome and get a manager so we asked our brother Phil... And a van as well—a manager and a van. The first priority was a van but we couldn't afford the £25 so we asked Phil to be our manager. He was at teacher training college at the time and he got us a gig there for £18 which at the time we couldn't believe.... After that we thought he was a great manager and he also bought the van, The band developed into 'The Road Runners' and got more gigs and we decided we needed an organist... and soon we had an amplifier each and Ray Feast had a Fender Strat. That was it—a *Fender guitar!*... I couldn't believe it. We decided that to get an authentic R&B sound we needed a horn in the band so we said to Phil: "Can you blow a sax and play it?" and he said OK and bought a sax... It was an Adolph Sax silver saxophone wasn't it?

DS: He learnt to play it and started doing some numbers with us. We were doing Johnny Rivers and Howlin' Wolf stuff and we decided that now that Phil was in the band he couldn't really manage us but we'd heard of a guy who was managing another band in Portsmouth and getting them gigs in Southampton! We figured he must be good so we asked him to manage us and he said, "Okay, but you've got to change your name to Simon Dupree and The Big Sound". So we said OK, although it

sounded a bit duff. He wasn't very good so our brother-in-law, John King, who was a producer at the BBC, started managing us. We were getting about five or six gigs a month at twenty or twentyfive quid which wasn't proving very satisfactory. We were still at school but we were really quite big round the south and Portsmouth. John took us down to Bristol to do a demo and said it was to get a recording contract and we thought, "Fxxk, a recording contract!" We did a number (in mono, I think) called 'I See The Light' which we had in the act—it was a number by the Five Americans and we rearranged it for our show. John took the tape to EMI and they asked us to come up and do an audition so we played like an hour's set in front of these three producers. It was ridiculous, really embarrassing. Anyway the outcome was they signed us for five years. In those days a record contract really meant something.

ZZ: Did you get an advance?

DS: There were no such things in those days—to get a record contract was unbelievable. We went to Arthur Howes Agency and said we'd got a recording contract with EMI and they took us on. There was this bullshit story in the papers saying we'd signed for a quarter of a million pounds or something. They got us a package tour with The Beach Boys and Helen Shapiro.

RS: That was amazing. The first gig we did on that kind of circuit was the ABC Blackpool and we'd been used to playing clubs with 400 people and suddenly we were thrust into this seemingly enormous place with 2,000 people. We recorded 'I See The Light' as a single and it made 45 in the charts. Radio Caroline and Radio London played us a lot.

DS: I'd just finished school and we started playing all round the country—five or six nights a week. Ray was still at school, and Phil was teaching. Eric, my schoolfriend on keyboards, had also just left school and we realised that we were earning thirty quid a week each from gigs alone so we turned pro in 1966-67. And then for two years we did the clubs and ballroom circuit and built up a name for ourselves. We put out 'Reservations' which got to number thirty and 'Daytime Nighttime' which didn't do quite so well...

RS: We were getting something like £300 a night which was good money in those days and we got around with one van, one roadie and very little gear.

DS: We asked John to find us a hit single because writing your own material was almost unheard of then and he went to Robbins Music and got a song called 'Kites' which we said was utter shxt. We said "No thanks, we're not gonna record it—we're a rock band. Forget it." He said, "Play it for me," and we just fxxked it up deliberately and he walked out in disgust and said "You've got to record it or else I'm not your manager," so we said OK we'd record it. We recorded it under duress in 2 1/2 hours, did Top Of The Pops and went off to tour Sweden. We came back and a secretary from the office came up and said that it was straight in the charts at number twenty-one. We couldn't believe that it had made it (a *ballad*) instead of the others. It got to about number five, we did some more package tours, not through any choice of our own we started getting very pop orientated.

RS: Unfortunately we listened to other people's opinions and we weren't strongwilled enough at the time to control our own future. We had a glamour image with frilly shirts and suits. The irony of it was that we were doing what we wanted on our own circuit before the hit single and the gig money didn't go up that much after that anyway. We were getting maybe fifty or a hundred more but that's all. We were a sweaty rock band really and suddenly we had this stupid ballad type image.

DS: We started doing cabaret and that was the final crunch. We did a couple of weeks and then said, "Right, that's it, let's break the band up". Stockton Fiesta clinched

it and at the next gig at Bath we told the band "We're breaking up tonight"—which was a fair shock.

RS: We just announced to the band it was the last gig and they said "What are you talking about, we're doing well" and we said we couldn't do it any more. It was utter crap and we had no respect for each other musically—that was the thing.

ZZ: Couldn't you have just left the band?

RS: Not really because we were into it too deeply and Derek was known by then as 'Simon Dupree'!

ZZ: Did you do interviews as Simon Dupree?

RS: Yeah sure, I used to get asked, 'What's it like having a famous brother?' and things like that.

DS: I felt so false doing it, I was so embarrassed. I was told to say things by publicists who I thought knew better than me. Eventually I started blowing things out and saying the wrong things 'cos I was so fed up.

RS: We used to have these publicity stunts where like a snake would be delivered to a theatre where we were playing as a present from some 'Eastern fan' and *it went missing!*

DS: Those sort of things got into the national newspapers and it was so embarrassing. It was even embarrassing at the time. The last year was so frustrating but we had to do it because we were feathering our nest for what turned out to be Gentle Giant. We broke up the band at the end of 1969 and we had enough money to rest for a year and find a new band.

EPISODE TWO: ENTER THE GIANT

ZZ: When did you decide to form Giant? Did you know what form it would take?

RS: Well, we knew we couldn't continue with the musicians we'd had before. We weren't interested in the other musicians in the band—they couldn't contribute anything. We had to teach them what to do. It got rather heavy when we could play drums better than the drummer, and even on records we were doing more and more of it with overdubs. It got stupid having a band like that.

The first thing was to get some musicians of a higher standard. It was a great bit of luck finding Kerry [Minnear] and he was the first person we contacted. He'd just come out of the Royal College of Music and then gone straight off to Germany with a band called Rust. He had a very bad time—he was conned. There was no money, no food and no gigs, and he had to stay there for four months, just to try and save enough to get back. He got his parents to repatriate him. We found him a week after he got back, living in a bedsit in Clapham. We invited him down to Portsmouth for a blow and he brought down this guitarist he knew. We spent a week playing each others' compositions and we decided that Kerry was just the person we were looking for but the guitarist didn't fit in. We were a bit nervous about telling Kerry we didn't want the guitarist but it turned out all right because he was planning to ask us the same thing.

DS: We auditioned guitarists for about four months through ads in the *Melody Maker*, saying "Wanted-guitarist for band with recording contract, prospects etc".

ZZ: Did you have a recording contract then?

DS: No, but we'd had offers. Anyway we looked around for a guitarist and found Gary [Green] eventually. He was about the fortyfifth guitarist we'd auditioned and about the only one who asked to tune up before playing which encouraged us for a start. We asked him what sort of things he liked and he said Freddie King, B. B. King and Soft Machine and we said, "Oh well, can you play this?" and he played it straight

away. He wasn't particularly into what we were doing but he wanted to get out of the blues thing and do something experimental. We didn't have any aims ourselves really—we just had a few compositions which we'd written that year.

By then we had the whole six-piece band so we went into rehearsal for about six months and then started recording the first album with Tony Visconti. We had a management deal with Gerry Bron and recording with Vertigo. It was 1970 and King Crimson were happening. Yes were just coming up and we were into the same sort of thing. The album didn't do very great shakes but it got our name known. We recorded the next album, *Acquiring The Taste*, without any idea of what it would be like before we got into the studio. It was a very experimental album and we still didn't have an ultimate direction. It turned out surprisingly well but it was definitely our weirdest. Tony was taking a backseat by then—he was well into it but we'd taken over most of the production. Phil and Martin the drummer weren't getting on too well so Martin left and we got Malcolm Mortimore in on drums. We left Gerry Bron because he wasn't into what we were doing and we agreed to split amicably.

RS: We released the *Three Friends* album and when we toured Europe with Jethro Tull we established ourselves in our own right. We did very well in Italy, Germany and Switzerland and we followed that up immediately with our own tours in those places. Then we were due to tour Britain with the Groundhogs and Malcolm had a motorcycle accident so we got John Weathers in at a week's notice. We knew he was a good drummer 'cos we'd met him before but we didn't know what he was into. We took him anyway and he changed the band quite a lot, 'cos he was very laid down, solid offbeat sort of thing, whereas the previous drummers were quite fiddly, and it shaped us into a solid unit.

DS: We toured the States and then came back to record the *Octopus* album which was quite a success especially in the States. Relations between Phil and the rest of the band had been deteriorating for a while and when we went to Italy we decided he must go and to keep it as a five piece.

RS: With *Octopus* doing well in the States we went out there and did a very good tour and although we were doing well we weren't feeling too good with all the business about Phil and we rushed back and recorded *In A Glasshouse*.

DS: We haven't done much this last year because of managerial reorganisation but we did do the tour of Britain in March. We tried to get a more spontaneous feel with the current album, *The Power And The Glory*, by doing it all on first or second takes. It's done very well in the States—in the charts, but here twenty thousand copies were leaked before the release date so it hasn't had the same impact.

Days after we had this interview, Derek was told that he had to rest because of a stomach ulcer and Giant's British tour was shelved. At the same time they switched management to Chrysalis. No new plans for England have yet been made.

EPISODE THREE: GARY BLUE PLAYS THE GREENS

Suddenly with the help of modern science, we beam down to the BBC for a chat with the other members of the band—their hopes, their fears and their pre-history as well. First in the chair is Gary Green with a bunged-up nose:

ZZ: Take it from the top.

GG: I was born in Stroud Green, November 20, 1950. It was quite amazing actually 'cos like fourteen years later I formed a band at school and there was another

guy in the band called Austin Bigg and he was born on the same day as me. I went home and told my mum about it and she said, "Austin, that's a strange name. The only other little boy I remember called Austin was a boy born in the next bed to you," and sure enough it was this geezer—bedmates almost.

I grew up in Tufnell Park, North London, and went to a mixed primary school. Then we moved, dad got another job, selling jewellery, and we moved out to Essex and I started to work as a messenger boy for a commercial art studio under the guise that they would teach me the tricks of the trade. I was doing like about four hours commuting a day for about a fiver a week so I gave that up and became a messenger for Drake Personnel and other boring jobs. Finally I ended up in the Co-op at Brentwood and I got so down and depressed that I started answering adverts in the Melody Maker. There were millions of auditions and then I went to one at The Pied Bull in Islington—I walked in and it was this team you know, loads of equipment and 'Simon Dupree And The Big Sound' on the bass drum and I thought, "Aargh, what am I doing?" I wasn't into SD&TBS at all, I thought they were a soul band and I was into blues and all that—but it turned out it wasn't them—they'd changed! It wasn't even a box advert—it was just like a normal ad: "Guitarist wanted to play with name musicians" so I went along, got the job. I was surprised.

ZZ: Wasn't it a bit odd playing Giant music after the blues?

GG: No, not really 'cos I'd like played the blues with the kids at school at lunchtimes and developed an interest in it from there. I kept playing the guitar, and didn't break away from the blues, but I started to lean towards jazz 'cos my dad's a jazz freak and my brother's got millions of jazz albums by Duke Ellington and everyone.

ZZ: Did you play with any other bands before Giant?

GG: Yes, semi-pro. I formed a group at school, oh dear, dare I say it, called The In Sect. Then we changed it to The Outcry—same line-up, same tunes.... Then after that, there was a friend of my brother's who was reputedly a friend of John Mayall's and he managed to get a residency at this place called New Merlin's Cave in Mount Pleasant and we called the band Kokomo Phoenix. There was me other brother on drums, this bloke John Hawkins and a bass player called Dan. It was quite a good band really—Peter Green came down to listen to us, Duster Bennett was doing spots with us and then a band called Fish Hook came down to the place to do a couple of weeks and they asked me to join. I joined them and that was like my first proper semi-pro band. Good band that was. Shame nobody ever heard us—real stomping band, Nicky Connell on guitar, Des Fisher—we used to rehearse in his dad's plastic extruding factory up in Loughton. We did a few local gigs round Essex—I think the furthest we went was Bridgend which was like a day out—packed sandwiches—really good.

I left school at fifteen. We had a ludicrous choice at school. We had to choose between woodwork, art, and music—you could only do one of them. I went to the woodwork class and that was full up so I went to the music class and that was full up, so I did art and I failed that....

ZZ: Did it take long to shape up a direction in Giant's music?

GG: Relatively quickly, strangely enough, because most of the material was already written or partly written and we spent quite a few months just rehearsing in Portsmouth. It started off being a very experimental band. I mean we didn't really care too much about whether the audience was going to like us or not. I wanted to get away from blues and to lay down the sort of expression I was putting into blues into another sort of music. That's what I believe Derek and Ray were feeling 'cos they'd just come out of a pop group and they must have been pretty frustrated. Kerry was fresh out of the Academy brimming with ideas and with the new toy of a ready made group at his

fingertips—raring to go. After a couple of years we found our pattern—I suppose anyone does really. I couldn't put my finger on it exactly but I suppose it's down to arrangement, that's our trademark really.

EPISODE FOUR: KERRY ON PLAYING THE CLASSICS

Kerry Minnear comes from the West Country and plays lots of instruments. According to Brillo, he is also the first person in ten years to have come out of the Royal Academy with a degree in composition.

KM: I was born in Salisbury and then moved to Gloucester. I went to two schools—my mother taught at the first and my father taught at the second so I felt very much at home at school, if you see what I mean. It was a bit tough 'cos they had to overact the impartiality bit. When we moved to Bath I had three interviews after the eleven plus to decide if I should go to grammar school or secondary modern 'cos I was right on the borderline. They decided "All right he's keen, he's turned up to all three interviews—he can go the grammar school," which was a pretty bad move really 'cos it was a tough place but I found refuge playing tymps in the school orchestra.

I was seven when I started playing the piano. My parents had it all arranged—they said "We've got a teacher for you" so I did my da-da-da, da-da-da and so on and then I did it with the left hand when I was about fourteen and then.... No, really, about five years elapsed and meanwhile I was just singing (I used to sing a bit before my voice broke), my dad was a tenor and we used to sing duets. I think I was sixteen before anything drastic happened. I had to take an extra O level because of this thing of taking and passing so many O levels so you could go on to the sixth form, so I had to take up music to make up the number and I liked it—I really enjoyed it.

I was always interested in music but the O level made me realise that I wanted to listen to classical music, learn it, write it, and then I went on to take the A level. I applied for positions in various universities to read music and I got some offers, but I favoured the Royal Academy of Music above the others just because of the name, I suppose, to be quite honest. I was told that composition should be my first concern so I became a composer at the RA for three years and got my degree and ventured forth on this rugged trail.



Kerry Minnear (far right) with The Phantoms.

When I was at school I had a group—I started as a drummer and then progressed to guitarist because I was the only one who knew the chords to 'She Loves You'. While I was at the Academy I didn't pay much attention to pop although I was

aware of it and I only went to see two groups—one was King Crimson in their early days and the other was Yes in their early days and I was impressed by both. I was impressed with the noise for one thing. I was quite interested in jazz—I used to go to Ronnie Scott's about once a year which was pretty good for me 'cos it was rather expensive. I thought I'd probably teach when I left the Academy and write in my spare time but I fancied trying a group first. I joined a group called Rust and ended up stuck in Germany with no money, no food—I've never been so near to starvation—living literally on rice and goulash. I was recovering from that when the boys contacted me through a mutual friend and I joined the band in 1970,

ZZ: Was the group anything like you expected?

KM: Well, anything was an improvement on what I'd just experienced, quite honestly. We do things on a very sound basis. Meagre though it may be we never go without. At the time it was an offer of £20 which was pretty good. My opinion of the band has always been that there aren't many bands I would rather have been in at that stage and definitely no other band now. I hope I keep a grasp on classical music 'cos I'm very fond of it—I wouldn't like to get to the stage where I just enjoyed it and couldn't construct anything vaguely like it, if you see what I mean, but obviously at the moment one can't 'cos I'm in a rock band working with rock instruments and even though you can try and write classically influenced material it's not going to sound great on electric instruments. It's obviously not practical to write classical music in terms of rock instruments but the influence is bound to be there. I don't consciously write in a classical vein any more but I hope that the will to do so remains.

ZZ: Did you find it easy moving from classical composition to writing rock material?

KM: It took about three years to get the idea. It wasn't until *Octopus* when John [Weathers] arrived that I really woke up to it 'cos he offered a different type of drumming to anything I'd heard before or taken any notice of before and it brought me round to the fact that we really are a rock band and we can rock as much as an out-and-out rock'n'roll band and obviously it was something they never taught at the Academy so I didn't know about it.

ZZ: Did you find the Academy starchy?

KM: It wasn't a great social place—the food was cheap in the canteen but there wasn't any other reason to stay there outside lessons. On the whole they were very friendly people but the competition is rather high in a place like that—especially in the more common instruments like violin and piano you get a lot of cattiness and a lot of drug taking before exams and people collapsing and leaving, and tears in the corridor and stuff like that—quite amusing really.

EPISODE FIVE: WEATHERS FINE

John Weathers is not only a drummer—he is also a piece of living history as important in his own way as the Elgin Marbles or the Petrified Forest. He's played with many a legendary band, lived life to excess and tells a mean story too. I cannot vouch for the height or otherwise of the following dialogue but at least it's colourful. It might even be true....

JW: I was born in Carmarthen, South Wales—main interests, motor cycles and punchin' people up, dances—that's where I got interested in music in fact. I used to go and watch people like Gene Vincent, Duffy Power, The Outlaws and Jerry Lee Lewis. We used to have a big dance hall about fifteen miles away and every Saturday there

was a big rock group—they had a lot of American rock acts come over. I also spent a lot of time living in Liverpool with some in-laws just when the Beatles were sort of exploding. In fact the first job I got playing was because all the local groups were very keen on having me 'cos I could play the 'Mersey beat' as it were.

ZZ: But what about your pre-teen history?

JW: I just told you—drinking and fighting. We were well into drinking when we were eleven or twelve. I wasn't very interested in education at all—bit of a rebel. I kept sneaking off from school all the time.

ZZ: And what did you do when you were five years old?

JW: Ah well, when I was five I was taking away and driving other people's lorries. No, I learnt to drive at a very early age, about six, six and a half. There used to be this old wrecked tin works place where I lived and there were loads of old lorries there that were still running but quite sort of delapidated and all the kids used to drive them around and play bumpers. It was very exciting. And looking for rats, fishing—only a bit of fishing. I wasn't too keen on that, it was a bit too quiet for me. Rugby, I was quite keen on that. Nothing much else—Dinky Toys. I was very fortunate—my mother used to clean a pub at the time and the owners were quite well off and the two sons of the pub misbehaved quite a lot and whenever they misbehaved their mother would take their Dinky Toys and give them to my mother in a fit of rage and say, "Take them to your son, he's a much better child," and consequently I had millions of Dinky Toys and never paid anything for them. My mother used to come home with about two or three a week. Anyhow, that's up to sixteen. The first group I was in we turned pro, stupidly, when we were getting about three bookings a week at fourteen guineas a time. We started getting a few gigs in England. That was a major task that was. Torquay was a three day job—took a day just getting up to Cardiff, stopping at every pub on the way. That petered out after about a month of starvation, so I got a job as a timekeeper and then as a labourer when I realised that the guys I was clocking in were getting three times as much as me. Then I was going to be a male nurse, mainly because we were working on a hospital and I could see all the pussy rushing back and forth and I thought: "Christ, there's not many men and the only male nurses we ran up against were all queer," so I thought "It's all there for me. All I've gotta do is become a male nurse and get laid every night."

The biggest local group at the time was Eyes Of Blue and their drummer quit so they asked me to fill in. It became a permanent thing so I never made the male nurse thing although I passed the exams. I was in Eyes Of Blue from 1965 to 1970. We won the Melody Maker Beat competition in 1966—I've still got the cup—that was the worst thing we ever did, we were a good group and that was the kiss of death. Rick Gunnell was doing agency at the time, dear Mr Gunnell, and that was the first time we ran across being conned. A couple of times we did gigs (billed of course as 'Winner of MM 1966 Beat Competition') and the blokes said "Shall we pay you now or send it to the office?" and we said, "Oh, piss up! We'll take it now," and we thought it was sixty quid and the guy would come up with a hundred quid and say, "There you go, there's the money," and we'd say, "No, it's not a hundred quid, it's sixty quid," and he'd whip out his contract and there it would be, a hundred quid, and we'd whip out ours and there it would be—sixty quid plus we were paying him 10% of the sixty on ours! We just drifted into oblivion eventually and I joined Pete Brown in Piblokto Mark III for a while.

ZZ: What was Eyes Of Blue like?

JW: All kinds. We started off as a soul band playing all-American stuff, which was very progressive at the time. Skinheads with suits and stuff—that was during the

mod era. Everybody else was playing R&B at the time. Then we went on to play West Coast stuff and then we started to write our own stuff. We had a terrible rat who was ripping us off, he was quite famous, but I shouldn't mention him. We were the roadies of Britain's collective favourite group. We used to pack the Speakeasy with roadies—it was great it was, We were just a group of piss artists—how we survived I'll never know. It would be really an occasion if we got to the gig. If we got to the gig that was great, set the gear up and go and get pissed just to celebrate the whole thing—we didn't make any money.

I joined Wild Turkey for abit but I left before they made the stage, and joined Graham Bond's Magic. I starved more than ever with Graham—it was weird. We used to go on gigs, get paid twenty quid and come back short. I'd spend the five quid I'd taken for expenses plus the twenty quid I'd got paid and come back penniless. Happy mind but penniless. Graham knew all these old tenor players I'd never heard of. Eventually it used to be me, Graham and his wife travelling in one car and anybody who fancied coming along for a blow in the other.

Then I joined the last six or eight months of The Greaseband. It pulled me together—I was quite a prat before that, I wasn't a very nice person to know, I'm not much better now but it did improve my demeanour a bit because I thought I was playing great when I wasn't you see, and they soon told me I wasn't. We did one tour of Europe with Leon Russell which was quite amazing because Henry [McCulloch] was going through it then. He eventually managed to break his hand. He went out drinking one night and they had all these old English songs on the speaker system like 'Roll Out The Barrel' and stuff, and after five or six litres of this gear we started singing them, you see, and all these Swedes started getting a bit uptight so we told them to piss off and this guy pinched the hat I wearing 'cos I was very conscious about my forthcoming baldness and Henry turned round and smacked him in the mouth and so a great fight ensued with all these Swedes piling in. I just sat down, I couldn't believe it—I'm a bit of a pacifist really. I was holding this guy, mind! He broke a couple of fingers then, but he made a good job of it later when he hit somebody else. We weren't playing well that tour, but the last couple of gigs we did were at the Rainbow in London and they were really great. All it did was cool my head a bit 'cos they were so wild—they were really desperate characters—great musicians to a man, all of them, and I wasn't ready to meet people like that. I wasn't anywhere near good enough to even talk to them and they just cooled my head out completely. Meeting people like that and them being so wild, I went away thinking how fortunate I was to be less wild than them but how unfortunate not to be able to play like them. So I went back to work just to get my head together—carrying carpets. Then I joined this lot. I'd known them in Simon Dupree days and they gave me a ring.

ZZ: How did you find it—joining an 'arranged music' band?

JW: Well you see, towards the end, Eyes Of Blue was a very arranged band so I was used to doing that but also I liked playing rock music—I liked playing both. Four to the bar is great if it can be complemented with arrangements and little fancy bits. I mean you hear some great players about—Bill Bruford and such—but they don't seem to hold it down That's why they got me in 'cos I could hold it down and play arrangements as well.

ZZ: Is this the band you want it to be?

JW: I think so. I think if you're completely happy with what's going on you get into a terrible rut. It's only minor things the same as any other band. You're always improving—it goes on and on but I'm completely happy. They can rock these boys, you know.

The Boys in the Band

A LETTER FROM PHIL SHULMAN

[I had a very lengthy and pleasant letter from Phil Shulman a short time after the first issue of the newsletter was sent out. The following is an edited version of the correspondence. - GH]

Dear Geir (does that rhyme?) [No, it doesn't, the 'ei' is like ay in May, but shorter - GH],

thanks for the G. G. Newsletter. I'm staggered that anybody is remotely interested in that particular dinosaur - still it is a kind of compliment and I am grateful, I suppose, enough to contact you and offer some kind of assistance for future editions. Although in the main I'm a private person the omission of my background as a founder-member of Gentle Giant has stimulated me into some kind of response to your very kind interest in the band. I hope the following may be of some use to you in any future newsletter published and I am prepared to correspond provided my privacy is not unduly invaded.

[From the letter and the following interview I have established a profile similar to the WWA band member profiles from 1974, in the last issue of the newsletter. This was a time after Phil had left the group, and consequently I had no profile on him.- GH]

GENTLE GIANT - Profile

Name:	Philip Arthur Shulman.
Instruments:	Various brass and saxophones, backing and lead vocals.
Birth Place:	Glasgow, Scotland.
Date of Birth:	27. 8. 1937.
Education:	Portsmouth Grammar School (scholarship), Portsmouth College of Education and Portsmouth Polytechnic.
Qualifications:	Cert. in Education (Teaching Diploma) and Bach. Education. (honors).
Musical Training:	Musical family background, father a professional brassplayer.
Musical Influences:	All music and my literary backbround which has stimulated my lyric writing and album themes in the past.
Personal Compositions:	All themes (concepts) and lyrics of the first four Gentle Giant albums.
Inspiration:	The creative process and motivation - inexplicable.
Favourite Albums:	Too many to list. Love English symphonic music (Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, Walton, Britten et al.)
Favourite Musician:	Again too many to mention.
Favourite Singer:	Again too many to mention.
Favourite Songwriter:	The above composers.
Residence:	Shop and flat (apartment) in Gosport, Hampshire.
Family:	Wife: Roberta (Botti), three children: Calvin, Adele and Damon, two grandchildren: Amy and Sam.
Instruments:	Yamaha trumpet and Selmer saxophones.

[letter continued]:

Derrick [yes, that's how the parents spelt it, officially] is married with two children, lives in New York and is very much involved in the music business as a Company Director with Phonogram. Raymond is London based, married and is quite an eminent record producer and is also involved writing television themes and advertising 'jingles'.

Gentle Giant grew automatically from the break up of Simon Dupree and the Big Sound. My brothers and I had decided that the direction of the Big Sound had taken us too far away from our original intentions - a rock, R/B, soul band influenced by the mid-sixties sounds of groups like Love, Buffalo Springfield, Spirit, Three Dog Night etc. Dupree often included good three part harmony and original arrangements and used the eventual G. G. format of multi-instrumental approach to concerts, gigs and broadcasts. S. Dupree & B. Sound was one of the first bands to carry a multi-keyboard layer using mellotron, Hammond organ, electric piano and vibraphone along with brass and conventional guitars. Although the band had only one Top Ten hit; Kites [though they didn't like it, they made something out of it, so that it was quite different from what had been presented to them, Phil said], it had had several Top 30 and 40 chart places at a time when competition was fierce and had a big British following appearing in concert venues with The Beach Boys, Gene Pitney, Status Quo and in multi Wembley Arena shows. S. D. & B. S. was also known at the BBC as 'the session band' and recorded literally dozens of broadcasts for the then 'light programme' and thence Radio I.

When we broke the band in late 1969 we envisaged the future G. G. band as a quality 'Future Rock' multi-instrumental group - playing original material only. We retained Martin Smith from [the later] Simon Dupree as drummer, and were extremely lucky to find Kerry Minnear almost at once. My wife and I were friendly with a young journalist from Dorset called David Rose who was a school friend of Kerry's and knew then that Kerry was at a loose end - having just emerged from the Royal Academy of Music, embarked on a disastrous sojourn in Germany with a rock band, had returned with his tail between his legs to a rather squalid flat in Clapham, London, where our offer was made - Come and join us at rehearsals in Portsmouth, on a solid wage and see what we can produce. Kerry, being a loyal fellow, insisted on bringing with him a guitarist called Lindsay (?) from his previous band, but this quickly fell apart in that the guitarist was out-of-step with what we were trying to do and we were soon advertising in the Melody Maker for a new guitar player. From auditions held in London Gary Green was discovered, a young guitar player very much in the blues tradition, but with some technique and, more importantly, an open mind.

Kerry, on the other hand, was a miracle find. A great keyboard, percussionist, vibes player, his writing was very much in tune with what my brothers and I had visualised. A good singer and also something of a cellist he was a Godsend to our band. During the first six months of G. G.'s inception he stayed with my family and much of the first album was conceived and written.

Incidentally, and by no means a small matter, the band was on a patronage wage from Gerry Bron, head of Bron music, who had been S. Dupree's last manager/agent and promised to sponsor anything my brothers and I wanted to put together. Gerry had kept his word and obviously had signed the band to his record company, management and agency. Without this support the launching of the G. G. band would have been virtually impossible. Gerry and then wife Lilian were our chief protagonists and financed the band while we rehearsed our repertoire and first album - approxi-

mately one year.

Eventually our synthesis, our music emerged in the first album *Gentle Giant* - the name rather obviously given to us by G. Bron as a sort of description of the qualities the band exhibited - large and eclectic or gentle and acoustic.

The initial tour with the new album released was quite well received - the press were quite generous with reviews and audiences were becoming more expectant with groups like King Crimson, Yes, ELP, Soft Machine, Colosseum emerging at almost the same time - bands exhibiting their own synthesis of rock/jazz/folk/classical styles and influences. We toured Germany, Holland and Denmark with the John Hiseman band Colosseum and enjoyed large enthusiastic audiences. Back in Britain the band found it difficult to shake off the old Simon Dupree pop tag (and this would continue), but abroad with less pre-conception or pigeon-holing the reception for G. G. was very encouraging.

However, back in England we felt that all was not quite right and the second album *Acquiring the Taste* was written and recorded. This had a cynical and somewhat 'down' atmosphere - more surrealist and with greater emphasis and reference to absurdist/existentialist philosophy, abstract art and a somewhat sceptical attitude to the "music business". The album cover was originally intended to be a tongue literally licking the arse of "Pop/Rock Music" Industry, which requires consumer products at all times and has no room for taste or esoteric difference.

Not long after this album we recorded a third - *Three Friends*, with a new drummer Malcolm Mortimore who was young and quite gifted but rather erratic. The album was a concept album and fairly self-explanatory. My son Calvin, then 10 years old, is the boy's voice on *Schooldays*.

Both of these albums were quite well received, but not quite what the band really was. Again we chased and finally found our drummer John Wathers. My brothers and I had known John for a long while - since his days with the Welsh bands The Eyes of Blue and Man and with The Grease Band, and finally we tracked him down with the Graham Bond Organisation. John really was the 'gel' for the band and encouraged us to exhibit what we could really do with the writing and recording of *Octopus*.

By now the band had acquired a following of sorts though college and club gigs - European escapades and we had pretty well established our own brand of music, call it what you like - symphonic rock, progressive rock, it did not really matter - just that the band were drawing on our various resources to write what we thought was right for us - exploiting our various talents.

Octopus was our real watershed album in that it was enjoyable, quite fulfilling, and was received well by the press and public. The title was coined by my wife Roberta: Eight works on the album, that is 'octo-opus', and exhibiting the tentacles of G. G. music reaching out to the various aspects which is in some way inspired us. The literary aspect is again apparent in the album - A cry for everyone inspired by Camus, Knots obviously R. D. Laing (the psychiatrist/psychologist/poet), The Advent of Panurge drawing again on the Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel. The album was the most enjoyable to make so far - drawing the band together in our various back-up talents. We all at some time played instruments previously untried and exhibited quite a bit of humour and fun I hope.

Around this time the band changed management to WWA, who seemed to have greater leverage in the concert and tour circuits in that they managed the heavy metal band had quite a following at this time - Black Sabbath. In fact the first tour of the USA and Canada was accompanying Black Sabbath firstly and then Jethro Tull,

although in several venues we actually headlined on our own. WWA also signed us to the CBS, the most influential US company at that time - 1972. The tour was massive and very concentrated. We had previously toured Europe supporting Jethro Tull, playing just about every European country and had got ourselves quite together. I remember fantastic gigs in Berlin and Vienna, in Copenhagen, and yes, even in Oslo.

In North America I remember great occasions in Montreal and Quebec where we appeared at the universities to great acclaim. There was a wonderful gig at Madison Square Garden in New York, The Hollywood bowl on the West Coast and an enormous festival at Evansville. On returning to England we were immediately lined up for a tour of Italy and for me this was my 'final curtain'. With some acrimony I left the band after the Italian tour, choosing wife and children over any personal ambition and chose 'family life' and teaching. The alternative was too painful to consider - losing wife and family, and I have never regretted the decision.

As it happens I am still happily married to the same wonderful Roberta - Botti to me, we have a gift shop in Gosport and I still occasionally teach - substitute or supply. My children are my great pleasure and are quite successful in their lives and careers. My oldest son Calvin is a sports journalist with the Portsmouth Evening News, a prestigious provincial newspaper, and is deputy Sports Editor. My daughter Adele is a clerical worker with Portsmouth City Council as is my youngest son Damon.

Damon is the one who is carrying on the Shulman family tradition of music. He is a very talented guitar player (also on bass and drums) and has an excellent band: The Working Stiffs. I like their music very much and feel there is certainly some Gentle Giant influence there. So far the band have not managed to gain a recording contract with a big 'promo' company, but nevertheless record regularly under patronage. Apparently in the near future we have some gigs lined up in Holland and Germany. I have enclosed a couple of Working Stiffs tapes which might interest you - being on the ground floor of a new G. G. perhaps?

Best wishes,
Phil Shulman.

So many thanks to Phil for his encouragement, and for the tapes, which will be reviewed in a future issue. He has promised to search the attic and nooks and crannies for press cuttings and the like and to supply the newsletter as much as we need. And he has talked with Kerry lately, about Kerry's ideas for a solo project, but inability to work out good lyrics. They are going to talk again soon, so let us hope something comes from it. -gh.

Acquiring the Taste

The plan is to carry a brief description of artists whom the newsletter's readers feel are of importance to people fond of artistically created "contemporary popular music". Anyone wishing to describe some of his or hers favourites are welcome. First out is our new UK distributor, Pete Gray.

GNIDROLOG by Pete Gray.

I discovered Gnidrolog recently, purely by chance, and have since been extolling their virtues to Gentle Giant fans (and aficionados of the 70's progressive era) who have all been suitably impressed. The band recorded two LPs for RCA in 1971-72: *In spite of Harry's toe-nail* and *Lady Lake*. Both LPs have long been regulars on the collector's market with *Harry's toe-nail* selling for £20 to £30 and the rarer *Lady Lake* achieving prices as high as £70 (when complete with the original insert). *Lady Lake* has been reissued on vinyl with copies selling at the more acceptable price of about £12 and recently a Japanese CD has been issued (from the original master tapes) which sounds superb and sells for about £20. *Harry's toe-nail* appears to have been neglected by the reissue companies so far as I know.

The line-up of the band was as follows:

Colin Goldring: Lead vocals, guitars, recorders, tenor sax, horn, harmonica,

Stewart Goldring: Lead guitar, vocals,

Peter Cowling: Bass, cello,

Nigel Pegrum: Percussion, flute, oboe, piano.

John Earle (on *Lady Lake*): Soprano, tenor and baritone saxes, as well as flute and lead vocals (on one track only).

In spite of Harry's toe-nail.

The opening track; *Long live man dead*, is in two sections. It opens with some violent guitar playing, before settling into a brief 'Giant' type verse followed by a meandering instrumental section, which is again reminiscent of Giant. The song basically tells of how difficult it is for a 'good man' to be more than anyone else in today's mass produced synthetic world and how we all end up the same, behind our office desks, controlled by computers.

The next track; *Peter*, is a brief appendix to the first track, telling of the rebel who realises the population isn't interested in his views and so ends up imprisoned in a 'computer mock mansion' living a meaningless existence. The music is very pastoral with a depressing tinge.

Snails comes next, which blends some strong guitar work (uncannily reminiscent of Gary Green) with some softer typically open-ended and disjointed melodies together with vaguely 'Giant' style vocal harmonies. The music and time structures on this piece beg comparison with Gentle Giant, sometimes even emulating phrases from Giant's repertoire.

Time and space opens the second side and employs strings in a typical 'Giant' arrangement with Colin Goldring on vocals even sounding vaguely like Derek Shulman in places. Disjointed, stepping-stone riffs follow in a fashion similar to *So Sincere*. The lyrics tell of a dream inspired by too much whiskey, a vision which the music perfectly conjures up. The song winds up with a pumping 'Floyd' type bass line,

over the top of which Stewart Goldring plays a superb guitar solo before Nigel Pegrum goes mad on his tin whistle in classic Ian Anderson style.

Who spoke is a short pastoral ditty not similar to but reminiscent of 'Giant' tracks such as **A reunion** in its general style.

The final and title track is as the first track in two sections. It starts off in a peaceful manner, with soothing flutes before evolving into a typical 70's progressive jam, featuring one of Stewart's finest guitar riffs on the LP.

Lady Lake.

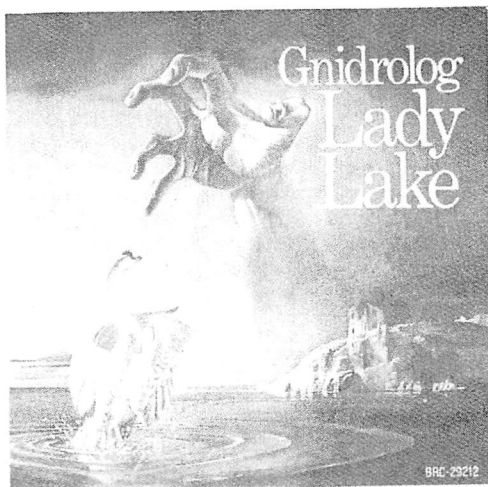
This album opens with the all-time classic **I could never be a soldier**. It is something of a mystery to me that this is possibly Gnidrolog's finest hour, and yet retains little from the first LP or from the remainder of the second! This is folk rock at its strongest; all the elements are present: pastoral beauty, protest, mystery and a rousing chorus (yes, a chorus, and it's very relevant here). Far from emulating Giant this track treads ground closer to Jethro Tull and Wishbone Ash. The track is lengthy (not a complaint but a blessing) and on its own strength would justify purchase of the album.

The second track; **The ship**, again moves in a totally different direction. It is perhaps the most commercial track Gnidrolog recorded, whilst most of their music sounds vaguely disturbing, with even the melodic interludes harbouring a sense of foreboding, **The Ship** is bright in its outlook. Therefore to me it is vaguely out of place and perhaps a track inspired by record company moguls hoping to show a profit on the band, something the lyrics of **Long live man dead** tell me the band would have done their utmost to have avoided. It is strongly reminiscent of fellow 70's band Fantasy, and Colin Goldring's vocal style (which had changed vastly from the first LP) sounds very similar to Fantasy's Paul Lawrence. They both are very akin to early Bowie, a vocal style that perhaps was favoured at the time, but sounds slightly dated now.

The third track; **A dog with no collar**, is a brief melodic and acoustic lament in the more typical Gnidrolog fashion.

The title track; **Lady Lake**, is seminal Gnidrolog though the brass section is far heavier than it was on their first LP. This was doubtless due to the arrival of John Earle. A hypnotic bass line, overloaded with brass, leads into a mournful verse with shades of King Crimson, then a second hypnotic melody builds into a menacing crescendo with brass at the forefront again. The whole thing sounds like a demented working of **Swan Lake**. Not that this is any criticism, the track is in fact a fitting testament to Gnidrolog's own persona.

The final two pieces; **Same dreams** and **Social embarrassment** are rather disappointing and at best can be described as good examples of eccentric, early British



progressive rock. They are possibly only disappointing due to the promise Gnidrolog breathed with *Harry's toe-nail* and somehow failed to fulfil with *Lady Lake*.

Conclusions.

Both LPs are vital to anyone who appreciates fine progressive music. The first LP is essential to any Gentle Giant fan, though perhaps it is even less commercial than Giant and has a very depressing, doomy feel to it. It is, however, a completely faultless LP with some of the finest music ever recorded in the 70's. The second LP is of less interest to Giant fans and despite exceeding new heights for over half its running time, is a partial disappointment. This is not to say that it isn't worth investigating.

Information.

I am sorry that I am not able to supply further information on Gnidrolog. If any reader can, please get in touch with me. I will also gladly buy any memorabilia, whatsoever, and magazine cuttings etc. I would be interested if anyone has any information regarding band members pre and post Gnidrolog, or knowledge of any Gnidrolog recordings including 7"s. I would be very interested to hear the opinion of Gentle Giant fans on Gnidrolog's music and if they actually recall the band from the 70's era. If anyone has difficulties tracing Gnidrolog recordings (originals or reissues) do not hesitate to contact me and I will do my best to help. [Address p. 39.]

Editor's note:

The brothers Goldring appeared on John Kirkpatrick and Sue Harris' album *Going Spare* in 1978. Colin even played recorder on *The Yes Album* in 1971, and Stewart played keyboards on Steeleye Span's Tim Hart's first solo album in 1979. Pete Cowling has appeared on a few minor people's albums and played regularly with Pat Travers from 1976 to 1982 (at least), while Nigel Pegrum has played in many different line-ups, the most well-known being Steeleye Span from 1974 to 1980. John Earle, however, has the most impressive record in terms of productivity; he played with Graham Parker from 76 to 78, and has recorded regularly as a studio musician since then, but apart from Thin Lizzy his lot is a rather dull one, with groups that pray to be forgotten.

Personally, I don't agree that *Harry's toe-nail* is so much better than *Lady Lake*, the LPs are both in many ways superb and ought to be on every prog collector's shelf. *Lady Lake* reminds me in many ways of early Tull; Gnidrolog reminds me of as diverse artists as Gryphon, Yes and Pekka Pohjola, so they clearly belong to that era in which so many groups tried to break new ground both melodically, harmonically, and in instrumentation. The main weakness of the group is the tendency (as with most other groups at the time) to overdo the jam upon a repeated pattern of chords. In addition, the lack of compositional ability which is also typical with for instance Gryphon and PFM, leads to fragmented compositions lacking the development such as only the likes of Gentle Giant, ELP and Focus, to mention a few, managed to fulfil. Gnidrolog aimed high and sometimes it didn't click. However, my main impression is a fairly good one. Gnidrolog delivered outstanding and original compositions, and much of their material has stood the test of time.

Memories of Old Days

Gentle Giant - Memories from Norway by Bjørn Are Davidsen.

Photographs from the concert in Chateau Neuf, Oslo, 16th. September 1976,
by Espen Schram.

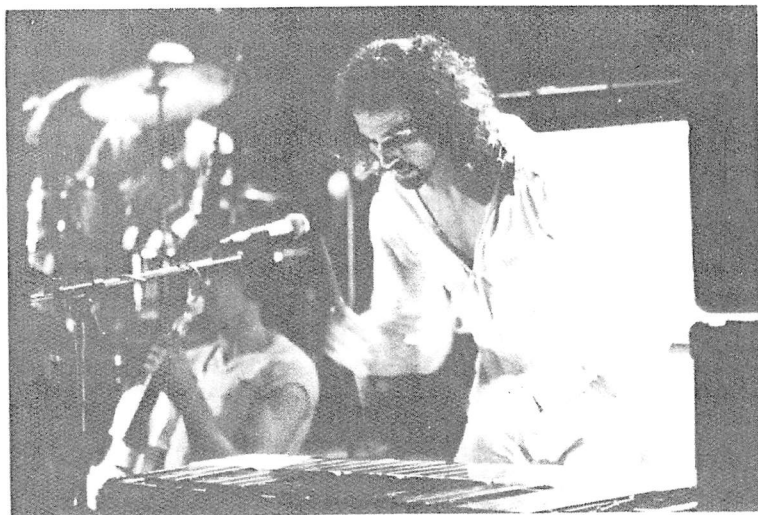
No rock groups occupied a larger part of my musical life (which means as a listener) in the 1970's than Gentle Giant. I first noticed the group in early 1974 when as a fifteen year old I read a review of *In a Glasshouse* in *Dagbladet*, a Norwegian newspaper better known for it's headlines than it's articles. The review was raving (it's still the most enthusiastic review of any rock record I have seen) about this group "which succeeds where Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Yes and other top heavy mammoths fails, in their attempt to combine elements from classical and rock music". As a fan of both ELP and Yes I found this intriguing. Some days later I took the opportunity to listen to *Three Friends* in a musical store. I found the music strange - but appealing.

In late april, as part of an exchange program between Norwegian and German schools, I visited Germany (Bonn) and there bought *In a Glasshouse* at a flea market, of all places. It was surprising to see that Gentle Giant seemed rather well known in Germany. At a discoteque at the school we were visiting, the DJ actually played *The Runaway* (though a bit urged on by an eager Norwegian).

Talking about the group to some friends of mine we ended up buying among us all of their records and enjoying them tremendously (even if some other friends kept teasing us about this group which seemed to play their music as if "through a telephone").

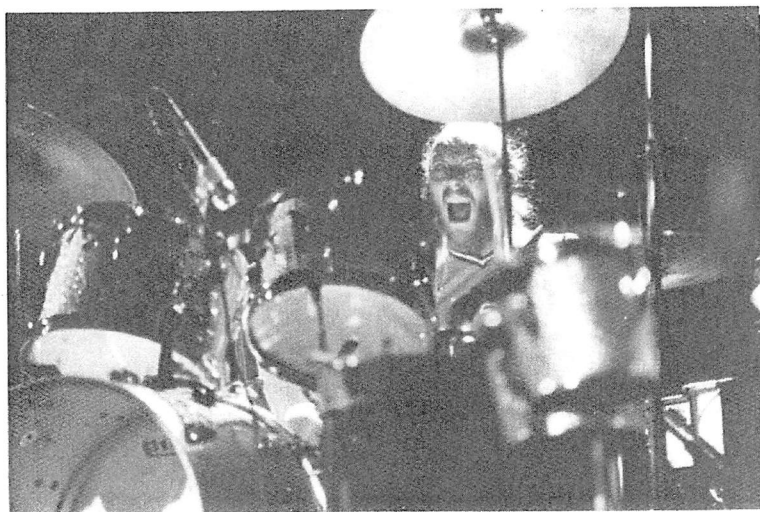
The most popular radio show on rock music in Norway at this time was called "Pop Spesial". Just before Gentle Giant was to play in Oslo in 1975, this show presented the group ("formed march 1972") by playing *Talybont* and *Just the Same* from the *Free*





Hand album, on the 27th of October 1975. Then they went on and said there had been a lot of complaints about the radio show because they never played anything by Bay City Rollers. To amend for this they started playing a BCR-song. When the song was over the show went right on playing Gentle Giant, because that group "at least knew how to play music". So Pop Spezial finished that evening with a third piece by Giant, *His Last Voyage*. For your information: Usually this show played just ONE piece by each group.

Gentle Giant had first performed in Norway in, I think 1972, as "warmers up" for Jethro Tull. A friend of mine told me years later that the group had got a good

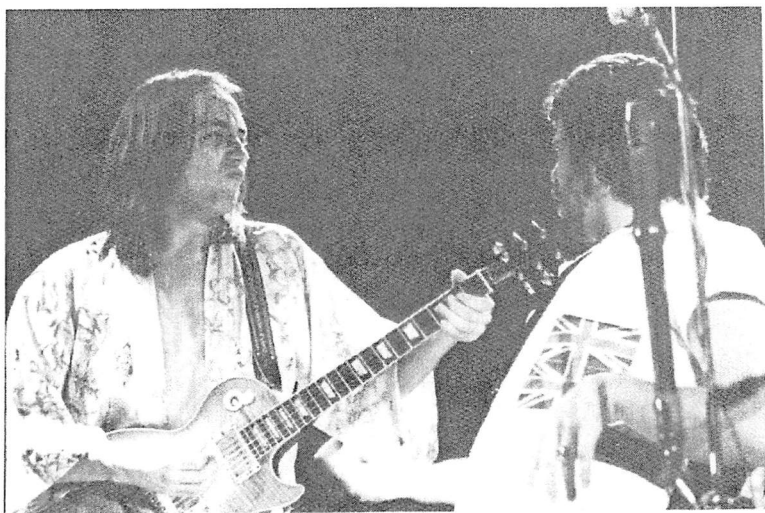


response for their innovative and melodic music. And they were back with their own show on November 10th 1975. I remember especially the opening sequence where Giant showed slides (I think with very rapid changes from one slide to the other), accompanied by intensely beautiful chords. I don't think I have found this on any record, but I would be very glad to hear if anyone knows more about it [actually, I think this is the opening sequence of the bootleg *Amongst the Darkers* - gh]. As it turned out I think the show that night for atmosphere and music is the best I have ever seen by any group, which means better than Genesis (both with and without Gabriel), Yes, Rick Wakeman, Mahavisnu Orchestra, Billy Cobham, Peter Gabriel (as solo artist), Camel, Procol Harum, Jethro Tull and Pink Floyd, to mention some. The members obviously enjoyed the show themselves, smiling and joking in and between the playing. As an eager hobby photographer I took a lot of slides, and I still get part of the feeling from that night when I view them.

A year later, on the 16th of September 1976, Gentle Giant performed once more in Norway. For some reason (I may have had too great expectations) I thought this show inferior to the former, and I don't really remember a lot from it.

On both occasions there must have been about 1500 in the audience (which means that all seats were taken). Gentle Giant had no problems with unsold tickets in Norway. Deeming from the enthusiasm in Norway (and Germany), it still puzzles me why they went on and changed their music to a more "commercial" sound during the next years [the answer to this riddle in the forthcoming issues - gh]. The people really enjoying Gentle Giant for what they were, became disappointed. At most they half heartedly continued to buy their records, while the ones the group - not to mention the record company - tried to reach with the new sound, seldom were converted. I guess this also was part of a general tendency after the mid 70's, where most symphonic rock groups departed from their "progressive" attitude and advanced/classical way of composing, in favour of more traditional "poppy" tunes and simpler ways of making music.

Bjørn Are Davidsen, Oslo, June 1992



Words from the Wise

For some reason "*Glass House*" must not have been so popular as some of the other albums, but I think it captures as well as any other album all of the elements that make Gentle Giant so extraordinary. I was spellbound twenty years ago when I first heard "*Three Friends*", and Gentle Giant's music is still as innovative and invigorating (or plaintive) as when I first heard it.

W. Lake Hearne, Shreveport, LA.

In a Glass House was less popular with the record companies only. -gh.

I know of a few more venues which were filmed; ABC TV showed a concert on channel 7 in 1975, appr. 15 min. on the *Midnight Special*, and there is a silent boot from Montreal in 1980. I have not got these myself, but will try to track them down...

If you are going to print lyrics from the albums, the first candidate should be *The Missing Piece*, since it contained none in the first place. When it comes out on CD, it would be nice if they add them.

I'm always amazed at how people write and complain about the lack of availability of certain albums as such. I walked into a record store and in the used section, picked up 4 Giant albums in mint condition for \$3 each. I always see others around here and there, so if anyone has any needs, I may be of assistance...

Too bad Chrysalis drags their feet when it comes to releasing certain material. They do it with Tull too! So Line records jumped in and started making these CD's, apparently without permission. Then Vertigo decided to release them, and Line no longer makes them. They may have become collector's items now, in such a short period of time, and are now only available from Line directly. But this is what it takes for them to get off their ass and do something about consumer demands. Line went and made the first 4 albums off mint condition vinyl, not the studio masters, and layed them on CD. The reason I can tell you this is because on the Vertigo copy of *Octopus*, the imported vinyl copy has a mean skip in the first minute or so of *River* and that came out as a small scratch sound on the CD. I took my vinyl copy back three times to the record store and every copy had the same scratch in the same place. However, the CD's overall sound is good, being taken off well-pressed Vertigo copies. That is the only way they could have come close to the master without consent. But by the flip side of the same token, the *Free Hand* CD may have been copied off a Chrysalis vinyl record, because it has a very shallow sound to it and is not an official Chrysalis or Capitol release. It is easily one of the worst sounding CD's on the market. Chrysalis' vinyl had a lower sound level than the Capitol copies. But, in comparison the *Power and the Glory* CD on Capitol records is of excellent quality and one of the best CD's I have ever heard.

David Armas, Los Angeles, CA.

I thought about printing the lyrics to *The Missing Piece* first, but then decided to make a chronological series about all records, because so many fans have later editions or CDs without lyrics of every album. So the lyrics to that album is scheduled for issue #11. As for Line records, they actually got the permission to issue the CDs, and that was because Phonogram thought the material uninteresting and worthless. Only when Phonogram perceived that there was some interest still (what, really?), did they decide to make their own copies. And you know from #1 that Phonogram therefore had no intent of paying royalties to the group, but this was settled peacefully. So, in the same

way, Chrysalis thinks the Gentle Giant material not especially commercial. However, the artist who did the artwork for the two new CDs has also made a sleeve design for a *Best of* compilation on Chrysalis a while ago. Nothing has come out of this, and that is quite OK, because I want Chrysalis to put out the complete albums. Something they apparently would decide upon after having seen how the compilation sold. -gh.

A hearty hurrah for the first issue... It is a bloody good effort and long overdue in my opinion. If this one is any indication of what is to follow, I'm sure we will have many instances to gorge ourselves on these gourmet banquets of progressive faire.

Hopefully, reports of current status and interest will be sufficient to keep things from being too nostalgic, yet being that the Giant is no more, that would be difficult. Of course, we long for the days when musical taste was more open-minded. I am reminded of an odd incident that happened back in '78 or thereabout, which shows just how things have changed. I was walking the street next to the local university, when out of the building came two students singing. They were singing the opening refrains of *On Reflection*. Mind you, we are in the heart of southern rock and country and western here. Well, what could I do but join in. So the three of us completed the madrigal, humming where lyrics failed us, had a laugh, shook hands, and I never saw them again. Funny how you recall such things, yet such a thing is hardly likely to ever happen again I'm sure. I've always had a feeling that if Giant would have stuck to it a couple more years, they would have survived the eighties. Pink Floyd, Tull, Genesis and Yes made it to the other side, and Giant were, dare I say it, a little ahead of the others as far as concept realization is concerned. To me, *The Missing Piece* was the last great giant record, and I feel the last two, as great as they were, were a failing attempt at commercial success; a place the likes of Giant's artistry doesn't belong anyway. Hopefully, the next giant record (yes, it will happen, there's too many of us around to take no for an answer) will be a return to mid-seventies form. God, what a day that will be!

Interesting that you request a reader's poll right off the bat. A very good idea really. Of course, you realize that by causing Giant fans to consider which is best, will cause distress and much wringing of hands...

Mike Walker, Florence, AL.

If we ever get around to having a Gentle Giant convention, I will distribute *On Reflection* sheet music out on beforehand to be sung there. And *Knots*, maybe? -gh.

Dutch broadcasting co. VARA once showed a one-hour concert of Gentle Giant on Dutch television, but these tapes will most probably have been destroyed as Dutch broadcasters destroy almost everything they make after a few years. It could be worth a try; it was a rather dry and clinical registration, but still a good performance. Their address is VARA, Postbus 175, NL 1200 AD Hilversum, Nederland.

Robert K. Eksteen, Amsterdam, Nederland.

Having been a Gentle Giant fan in the past 20 years, it's nice to know that someone cares enough about the band to create a publication and share inspiration with other fans and in a sense keeps the band alive. A gentleman from Massachusetts embarked on a similar undertaking 3 years ago. You might have heard about him, Jason Rubin, and his newsletter, *APEX*. It basically was a tribute to progressive music and to his favourite band, Gentle Giant...

Brett C. Travis, Woodland Hills, CA.

I would be very interested to know more about Jason Rubin and APEX. -gh.

Hello! I'm 29 years old, married, and passionate fan of Gentle Giant. I'm dreaming of collecting all LPs of the band, but they are impossible to get here. Is there any way you can help me? The problem is that because of the current situation, I can not send you any money. I can, however, trade different Soviet goods, like books, artbooks, unused stamps, banknotes, musical and Communist party propaganda posters etc...

Boris Ignatov, K. Marx-St. 53/26, Kokchetav 475000, Kazakhstan, C. I. S.

What do you say, folks, have you got something? Let's help this guy. Write to him beforehand, though, to ensure your letter gets through. Are tapes ok, Boris? -gh.

Sadly enough I've only seen one live concert of GG (in 1976/77? in Nijmegen, Holland). It was a magnificent, unforgettable experience. Gentle Giant still attracts a lot of attention of record collectors here in Holland. I know some GG fans from the first hour and they still wax lyrical about the unrivalled live concerts...

Jos Witjes, Amsterdam, Nederland.

Why Not?

Terrapin Trucking Co., 12 Park Road, Crouch End, London N8 8TD, have issued *In a Glass House* and *The Power and the Glory* on CD, as briefly mentioned on p. 3. See ad on next page, arrived today as I deliver this to the printer. They were in my opinion too cheap on the price! Could have charged much more! Nevertheless, call them on +81 341 5174 or +81 342 8851 to reserve yours while you struggle pushing the payment through the post or use a copy of the order form (you will not cut the mag, will you?).

Plastic Factory, 189 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6RG, have both CDs and other collector's items available for Gentle Giant collectors.

CD Centrale, Bei Wellfair, Blitzkuhlenstr. 12, W-4350 Recklingshausen, Germany, offers *Amongst the Darkers* and *The Last Giant Step* at \$18, *Gargantua* in the edition I know at \$21, and in another pressing (not Aulica, but Mater) with probably the same contents, but who knows, at \$20. This was in an American magazine called *Goldmine*, so Europeans will probably get those CDs cheaper. Supply may be short so better call first. Postage at \$6 with each additional CD at \$2 extra.

A New Day, the Jethro Tull fanzine, can be most highly recommended. A highly interesting magazine, heavily illustrated, now also in color. 34 full-packed issues in the last 5 years, at subscription prices £6 for 5 issues (UK), £10 for 7 issues (Europe), or £10 for 6 issues (USA and Canada), to *A New Day*, David Rees, 75 Wren Way, Farnborough, Hants GU14 8TA, England.

All Gentle Giant items bought, sold, traded. If selling, state condition and your price or ask for my offer. For my list send SAE or IRC. [Pete has, according to his lists, all the different Gentle Giant records in one condition or another in stock permanently.-gh]

Pete Gray, 2 Coniston Close, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6UD, England

COLIN HAYES ,
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CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO 'COLIN HAYES'. P & P £1.50 AND 70p. WANTS LISTS WELCOME.

TYPE.	ARTIST	TITLE	DETAILS	STATE
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	ACQUIRING THE TASTE	(VERTIGO GATEFOLD 1971)	EX - M
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	AMONGST THE DARKERS	(LIVE IN BALTIMORE U.S.A. 1975)	EX
VID	GENTLE GIANT **	BBC 'IN CONCERT'	(LIVE IN CONCERT U.K. 1978 -PHONE)	FAIR
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	BBC 'IN CONCERT'	(BBC TRANSCRIPTION LIVE DOUBLE '79)	EX
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	CIVILIAN	(CHRYSALIS 7107625 1980)	M/M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	CIVILIAN	(CHRYSALIS CHR1285 1980)	EX - M
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	CZECH OUT	(LIVE IN PRAGUE 1975)	EX
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	FREE HAND	(CHRYSALIS CHR 1093 1975)	EX - M
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	GARGANTUA	(LIVE IN ESSEN , GERMANY 1971)	EX
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	GENTLE GIANT	(VERTIGO GATEFOLD 1970)	EX - M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	GIANT FOR A DAY	(CHRYSALIS CHR 1186 1978)	EX - M
2LP	GENTLE GIANT **	GIANT STEPS	(VERTIGO GATEFOLD 1975)	EX - M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	IN A GLASS HOUSE	(SCREEN COVER WMA 002 1973)	EX - M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	INTERVIEW	(CHRYSALIS CHR 115 1976)	VG/VG
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	OCTOPUS	(COLUMBIA3203 CANADIAN.DIFF SLEEVE)	EX - M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	OCTOPUS	(VERTIGO GATEFOLD 1972)	EX - M
2LP	GENTLE GIANT **	PLAYING THE FOOL	(LIVE DOUBLE GATEFOLD CTY 1133)	EX/M/M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	POWER AND THE GLORY	(CAPITOL US SHAPED SLEEVE W/INSERT)	EX/EX
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	POWER AND THE GLORY	(SHAPED CONCEPT ALBUM WMA 010 1974)	EX - M
2LP	GENTLE GIANT **	PRETENTIOUS	(VERTIGO 6641629 G/FOLD DOUBLE '77)	EX/M/M
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	STAKE IN THE HEART	(LIVE NEW YORK U.S. TOUR 1975)	EX
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	THE LAST GIANT STEP	(LIVE IN NEW YORK 1980.DBLE PLAY!)	EX
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	THE MISSING PIECE	(CHRYSALIS '77 P/S)	M/M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	THREE FRIENDS	(COLUMBIA3164 CANADIAN.DIFF SLEEVE)	M/M
LP	GENTLE GIANT **	THREE FRIENDS	(VERTIGO GATEFOLD 1972)	EX - M
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	TOAD'S PLACE	(LIVE AT NEWHAVEN '80.DDOUBLE PLAY!)	EX
MC	GENTLE GIANT **	ULTRASONIC PALLADIUM	(2 LIVE FM SHOWS '74 & '75.DOUBLE!)	EX
MC	M:~NEAR KERRY	THE REAPERS XMAS ALBUM	(EX GENTLE GIANT MAN!CASSETTE-ONLY)	M/M

(** = MORE IS AVAILABLE BY THIS ARTIST - PLEASE RING!)

INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS AND INTERNATIONAL REPLY COUPONS ACCEPTED FROM OVERSEAS BUYERS.

Any Simon Dupree material.
Any other Giant related material.

- Playing the Foole, bootleg 1975, excell. roadie boot, vinyl, \$35
- same, tape copy
- Amongst the Darkers, bootleg 1975, CD, excell. roadie boot.
- same, tape copy of vinyl boot.
- Roxy Theatre, West Hollywood, June 14, 1980, tape copy of excell. roadie boot.
- Live in Colorado, 1980, tape copy of excell. roadie boot.
- 94.7 KMET radio broadcast, LA, March 1975, tape copy, taken from boots, one different mix.
- T-shirt iron-ons of the Giant head.


AUCTION LIST Min. bid \$5.

Gentle Giant first album	2 copies	vg++	/ vg
Acquiring the Taste	2 US copies	vg++	/ vg
(same)	1 swirl label	vg++	/ vg++
(same)	1 Line CD	m	/ m
Three Friends	1 Brit. copy	vg++	/ vg
(same)	3 US copies	vg++	/ vg
(same)	1 Brit. copy	vg+++	/ m-
Octopus	1 US die cut.	vg	/ vg
(same)	2 US full cover	vg	/ vg
Free Hand	1 US copy	m-	/ m-
Interview	1 US copy	vg	/ m-
Giant for a Day	1 US copy	m-	/ m-
Pretentious	1 Vertigo copy	m-	/ m-
(min. bid \$20)			
Superstar, Italian comp. w/ book, sealed, (min. bid \$10).			
Without Reservations SD&BS	1 US copy	m-	/ m-
(min. bid \$20)			
Jethro Tull – Stand Up	1 US pop-up copy	m-	/ m
Genesis – Death in Anytown, Live at Felt Forum 73		m-	/ m
(min. bid \$20)			
Camel – Rain Dances	1 Japanese CD	m	/ m

If you need help in locating CDs or vinyl albums, I may be of assistance. Write to David Armas, 3730 Stockbridge Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90032, USA


GENTLE GIANT

Gentle Giant



THE POWER & THE GLORY

Now available – digitally enhanced for improved sound quality – includes rare track.
"The Power & The Glory" – only previously available on a 15.
A limited edition picture CD



IN A GLASS HOUSE

Available for the very 1st time anywhere in the world on CD – digitally enhanced for improved sound quality.
A limited edition picture CD
Both titles contain original sleeve designs and lyrics, plus notes and info.

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POWER & THE GLORY		
IN A GLASS HOUSE		
CD'S ARE:	TOTAL	
£12.00 EACH (UK/N. IRELAND)		
£14.00 EACH (EUROPE)		
£16.00 EACH (ELSEWHERE)		
ALL PRICES INCLUDE POST & PACKING		
SEND TO: ROAD GOES ON FOREVER		
UNIT 8, 8D PARK ROAD, CROUCH END,		
LONDON W6 6TD		

Videos on Jethro Tull, Gentle Giant [those mentioned in #1 -gh], etc. for sale. Send SAE and IRC to *Wazza Kanazza Studios*, Aldo Pancotti, via Napoli, 54, I-00045 Genzano (Roma), Italy.

Progressive rock, literature, collectors' items etc. Write for lists from Warren Peace, Haight-Ashbury, P. O. Box 12355, San Francisco, CA 94112, USA.

Gentle Giant items wanted. Anything to sell or trade? I have live CDs and some rare live videos. Enrico Ponzone, Via Giovanni da Milano 17, I-20122 Milano, Italy.

Mr. Class and Quality

I am a 35 years old research scientist in the field of composing ('designing' is not all) large computer systems, especially inside telecommunications. This newsletter is done in my sparetime, and unfortunately, when my work demands my sparetime too, as it has done for much of the last year, the newsletter has to wait. On a personal note, the last year hasn't been my happiest, as my mother, who was my great musical influence, died of a brain tumor last Christmas. She introduced me to all the great composers, discussed music with me from I was a little child, bought Beatles records and made me play the piano and sing in a choir, and she even listened patiently to Gentle Giant. She did not suffer much, luckily. Then my father had to have a heart surgery this summer, but he recovered quickly. On the lighter side, but not easing the task of survival, I can mention that my wife bore our fifth child, a boy, in May, and he is now patiently listening to the stereo while crawling on the carpet beside me. Therefore, to ease our family life I renovated the kitchen in July while the rest of the family were on holiday with my wife's parents. I have lived much in Oslo this autumn, helping a company develop a special telephone exchange. So you see what I mean with all my funny ways why I have had to put this work aside. I can only apologize to all of you who have been wondering whether this newsletter would come at all. However, the strains at work have been lifted and we have lived a normal family life from the middle of November (if it can be called normal that I have had time off in a month now and still have a month off if I want to - but I'm taking it next summer). Thanks to all of you for your patience, your kind letters and your support.

The reason why I make this newsletter is simply that noone else does. My credo is that important music was created in the rock idiom in the 60s and 70s, and that someone has to save these pieces of art from being forgotten. A whole way of composing with influences from many genres has simply stopped dead, probably because record companies concentrate on more commercial music and, not less important, that the youth making today's music, have been exposed too much to popular music so that the influence of other forms on those making today's music is minimal - probably due to the rising availability of channels on the radio and the television. Therefore the newsletter is not limited to Gentle Giant alone. I am convinced that only by publishing the sheet music of these groups, making them available for other people to play, can we save this branch of musical development. All the other parts of this newsletter are sheer fun between fans, but, hopefully, through distributing the newsletter, we will also spread the music out to people eager to find something challenging to play. All university courses have their roots in the work of a fan.

So Sincere

The Occasional Gentle Giant Newsletter was edited by Geir Hasnes and published by Classica Forlag AS, Trondheim, Norway, December 1992. 200 copies were printed.

The newsletter is issued as often as I manage to get it out, usually twice a year. It all depends on the number of letters with interesting material in them. Cost will be used to cover production and postage. The more readers, the more pages.

I will take subscriptions for four issues at a time. Subscription prices: Scandinavia NKR 60.-, Rest of Europe NKR 70.-, Overseas NKR 80.-. The payment should be sent to *Classica Forlag AS, Ragnhilds gt. 10, N-7030 Trondheim, Norway*. Please don't send cheques in foreign currency, it costs so much to cash them. You may, however send £6 or \$12 in cash.

If living in the UK, you may send money directly to Pete Gray, 2 Coniston Close, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6UD. If living in the USA, send money directly to David Armas, 3730 Stockbridge Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90032. They will distribute the newsletter, receive money and make the financial transactions with me here in Norway after their costs have been covered. With this method, you may use cheques or whatever you prefer.

I don't sell or trade anything as I haven't got the time. See the Why Not? section for those things. Issue #1 of the newsletter is sold out, but with sufficient interest I can print a new edition.

The newsletter is written in **Microsoft Word** on a **Macintosh**. I would prefer submitted material to be delivered on a floppydisc. I can take almost all PC formats. I can also scan all typewritten or photaset material, so don't bother too much with a floppy disc if you can send me a nice printout. All correspondence and material should be sent to me here in Norway.



Gentle Giant



Photo: Richard Aaron Aug. 1977



Chrysalis