



## **John Lawton Band Delivers At The Borderline**

**Contributed by: Pete Wharton**

Not having seen John performing for a few months and knowing of the two personnel changes, this was a gig I was looking forward to. The start of a weekend of music. I wasn't going to be disappointed either. You knew from the moment of arriving at the Royal George pub that there was going to be a great atmosphere that night. The venue, situated down a small alleyway, looks dodgy from the outside, but intimate is

**Photo contributed by: Dana Dyck**

how it's described and that's pretty accurate. The pleasure for me started when I walked in and was introduced to Thijs van Leer of Focus by Louis Rentrop, and my boss from work had even come along with his wife. The education programme must be working. Then there were even more old friends to greet in the venue. A great friendly atmosphere indeed, which is due in no small measure to the esteem in which John Lawton is held by the Heepsters. A great guy who makes the effort to meet the fans and treat them as friends, knowing many of them on first name terms.

The show was excellent as you'd expect. The sound was really good which must have been very difficult to achieve considering the number of nooks and crannies the venue seemed to have. John was joined at times by Trevor Hensley and his wife Stella Hensley. Stella impressed me a lot more tonight than she did at Heepvention 2000, she seems to have grown a lot more in confidence and gained more power to her voice thereby. Of course Ken Hensley also joined John for a couple of songs, to rekindle something of the Hensley Lawton band. It was nice to hear the friendly interchange of banter between these great musicians.

Naturally with so many Heepsters there, they would want to hear some Heep music and the band did some excellent versions and the crowd had a great sing along too. Outstanding from that point of view was "Wise Man". The highlight of the night for Heep songs had to be a quite simply superb rendition of "Rain" where Steve Dunning plays the piano part at the beginning on his bass guitar. Truly classic to see some bass players in the audience standing there almost open mouthed in amazement then as if that isn't enough he does another stunning bass solo in the "Free Me" break. I just don't know how he seems to get better every time I see him. John's solo stuff wasn't neglected though with a number of tracks from the "Still Paying My Dues" CD including the title track done. It's been too long for me since John included enough tracks from that album in the set.

Thoughts on the new members of the band. Rick, an old friend of John's, on guitar. Well I'm glad to say that I think John has found a great replacement for young Reuben Kane. He has obviously got a lot of experience and was a lot more dynamic and easy on stage than Reuben ever was. It was his first gig with the band, so I think a few minor mistakes can be overlooked and I'm sure with a bit more time we'll get him playing a killer version of "Ride the Sky" which unfortunately they did not play, despite calls from a certain one person section of the audience :-)

Rich Stockwell on drums was a lot younger and with that seemingly perpetual smile on his face, I'm sure he's gonna be a bigger hit with the girls than Justin was. Looked absolutely comfortable in the drum seat, as if he'd been in the band for years. The best news of the night though was John's announcement that despite the rumours that he was gonna hang up his mike after this, that he was indeed going to continue for a while yet. Keep going John, you have a lot of fans and friends out there and with this band there will be more coming along.

Here's to more gigs like this in 2002.

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# Heep Festival Club 2001 Review

*Contributed by: Barry Hoffman*

Let me start by saying that if there were no concerts that week in London this event alone would have been worth the trip. I've never been to a Heepvention but I can't imagine they are much different from this in terms of meeting and mingling with other Heepsters. I want to also mention that this is not a comprehensive report of all the events as I wasn't present for some and others were kind of a blur due to excitement (can you blame me?)

My buddy Dave and I wandered over to the Kensington Hilton at 10:00 a.m. on the first day of the Festival and checked out the Roger Dean exhibit. This was in the first room where everyone hung out and got to recover from the previous nights John Lawton show. The exhibit was very impressive and made me appreciate Dean's art all the more. In the same room was also the Heep Store which had lots of cool stuff on sale. I found the staff of the store to be very nice and helpful people and had a good time talking to them. It was a real pleasure to spend time talking to Mike & Denise Taylor and Bob Winward. After only knowing these people on line it's cool to find out they are just as nice in person.

After hanging out for a while and getting aquatinted with some people I decided to head into the main conference room. To my surprise my buddy Dave had had the presence of mind to go in ahead of me and grab two front and center seats (Thank you Dave!) for us. As I sat and talked with some other Heepsters Mike Taylor was nice enough to come over to me and let me know that John Wetton was in the lobby. Well, of course Bob Winward and myself HAD to introduce ourselves to him. Let me tell you, he was an extremely nice gentleman and spent a few minutes talking with Bob and myself. When it looked like someone was trying to get John's attention I told him I didn't want to take up any more of his time to which he grabbed my arm and replied "We'll talk more. I'll be in town for a few days." John had a way of making you feel like more than just a fan.

Once we got back to our seats the festivities were about to begin. To my surprise (and awe) I suddenly had Ken Hensley, John Wetton, Mick, Trevor, Bernie, Phil and John Lawton walking right in front of me. I thought if odd that Lee Kerslake was absent though. I have to be honest in that I wondered if it had anything to do with Ken being there. They all took their seats at the front facing us for the press conference and I couldn't get over that my musical idols were sitting only 10 feet from me. Incredible! Bob Carruthers was MCing the event (and did a fantastic job I might add) and let the audience know what press conference was for. Basically it was a Q&A session for the fans and press and the interaction of the band with the fans and each other was very entertaining and loose. The PC was something I'll never forget. After that the fans were given the opportunity to go up front and get autographs and chat with every! one. Lee also made his appearance at that moment complaining about the trains. I took this chance up front to shake hands and chat with everyone. Bernie especially was outgoing and talked to me as if I was a buddy of his. Wow! I also got the opportunity to get some pictures with Mick and Lee.

After that I believe was the Classic Rock sales award which I don't remember a whole lot of but do remember enjoying the event. What I do remember was the "World's Biggest Heep Fan" contest which was MC'd by Tommy Vance. I had the opportunity to meet him outside in the lobby during a break and found him to be a quite nice man. He was a quite amusing speaker and hosted the contest in a very entertaining fashion. I'll be honest in that I didn't really like how they judged the winners as the only criteria seemed to be how many questions you answered without finding out

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*Photo contributed by: Mike "Muzzy" Fedysky*

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how many you actually had right. They narrowed it down to 3 people having answered all 30 questions. Louis, Tapio and a gentleman who's name I apologize for forgetting were the finalist who had to put on an air guitar show for us to decide the winner. Louis rightfully won but all were enthusiastic and entertaining. This pretty much ended the first days events for me and Dave as we headed home to get some sleep before "The Magician's Birthday Party" concert that night.

Day 2 began again at 10:00AM with everyone trying to recover again from the previous nights events. Luckily I kept my drinking down to a minimum as I didn't want to be hung over. The 2nd days events were just as interesting as we got a treat in having both Pip Williams and Roger Dean as speakers. Both were great with an audience and answered some fascinating questions. Pip filled us in on some of the impressive people he's worked with and then told us that Mick Box was one of the best guitarist he's ever produced. Roger told a funny story about going to Tokyo with YES and getting lost. Then seeing Ken Hensley across the street just as lost as him. Both Pip and Roger spoke for about 30 minutes each with Roger spending about 30 minutes afterwards signing anything put in front of him. Both were very gracious with their time.

Next came the highlight of day 2. An acoustic show with John Lawton. Once again I had a front and center seat and couldn't believe I was going to get such a small and intimate show by one of my favorite vocalist. John made the show a very casual thing talking and joking with the audience, encouraging questions from the fans. The man truly is an excellent entertainer with the ability to make all of us feel like friends. After playing many songs from both his Heep and solo records he had many of us come up on stage and sing "Lady in Black" with him. At first it was only Mike Taylor, Bob Winward and Merrick (AKA Madman) who went up but then many more of us (including yours truly) jumped up on stage to sing along. Once again it was such a thrill to be on stage singing with what I consider to be a legend. Unbelievable! These are memories I'll always have.

I didn't stick around for the Heep auction as I wanted to try to get some sleep before the Hensley / Wetton show that night. As I left the Festival I realized that this was probably a once in a lifetime event and was very glad that I bought the tickets for this event when they came on sale. Had I missed this I think I'd have been kicking myself severely.

## The Real Diary of A Madman

**Contributed by: Merrick Crittenden**

On my way to London for the Magician's B - day. It all started in the West palm beach airport drinking in the bar and some guy calling me Hippy. I didn't care he was buying this hippy a few beers hahahahaha. I got so into having fun i almost missed my flight. arrive in Cincinatti and as i board the plane for london I hear the voice of Dave White. needles to say you can imagine the fun we had. Once in london stood in line waiting for a cab then the caralina heepsters show up, this was at Victoria Station. I decided to tube it to the hotel with them. Lets just say we took th e roundabout way to the hotel. Even met up with Rodrigo on the way there. On our way to the hotel we all spotted Uriah Heep Magians b - day posters on a wall. then it really came into focus, this was going to be a great weekend.

Beers flowing , mingling with people it was time for John Lawton's show. hanging out with everyone before hand ws great and i met a few blokes going to the Steve vai show a block away. I had the time of my life at that show, everyone was great and the music thumbs up. Every night the Music was great, as far as URIAH HEEP doing magians B-day with gtr and drum attack i was in rock n roll heaven. I have always liked that song from the first time i heard it on 8 - track. The party afterwards was like a whole event on it's own. seeing Hensly and Wetton playing One way or another is something i never ever thought i would see live. All the music was great that weekend, sure i could nit pick and say something about this or that but i won't. The people the bands the whole vibe was very groovy. If any thing i would have to say negative was that it was over as soon as it started. I got there and then i was back on a plane home to the states. The weekend as whole was a very memorable ! and i wish i could go down the list of people i partyied with, laughed with and heard some of the greatest music in the world with. I will say to all of you HEEPSTERS, HEEPFANS, HEEP FREAKS etc and The bands URIAH HEEP JOHN LAWTON'S BAND and HENSLEY WETTON BAND. THANKS for making a dream come true. (lets do it again)

hahahahahahahahahahahaahahaha

MADMAN

P.S. URIAH HEEP FOREVER

Right: The cover art is already selected for the next Uriah Heep studio album, a classic Roger Dean original "City Spring". ©2001 Roger Dean. [www.roger-dean.com](http://www.roger-dean.com)

*So, one fan asks.....*

## **Where's The Heep?**



**Contributed by: Dale Fredericks**

I have been a fan of Uriah Heep since 1972 and I remember the one thing that attracted me to their music was the perfect blend of fantasy and heaviness delivered in a unique blend of voices, instruments and harmonies that, up till then, had been non-existent in any other music I had heard. I looked forward to, with great anticipation, each new album and where it would take me. Each new collection of songs was a whole new experience and I would immerse myself in every note and lyric that they had to offer. I look back now and realize that Uriah Heep fans never had it so good as they did in the period between 1970 to 1976. This is not to say that everything after these years is trash, not by a long shot, but these years brought out some of the most intriguing music that Uriah Heep has ever done. But alas, times change and music changes and with it so do the musicians who make the music. Uriah Heep was no exception and so there were personnel changes due to tragic events and internal turmoil, and questions as far as what direction Heep would go in next. The changes were very subtle at first and it appeared that Uriah Heep would try to hang on to their "mystical fantasy" image for a little while longer but by 1976 their popularity was beginning to fade and a new direction was needed to help sustain their careers and record sales. It was soon decided that they should try and become a little more mainstream and get away from the "Demons and Wizards" and "Fireflies". This move may have endeared them to a few new fans, but it totally alienated them from some of the core of fans that they had from the early 70's.

The next big attempt at changing their musical direction was a complete failure in 1980 and led to the second major change in personnel. But the band would not lay down and die and like a Phoenix that rises from the ashes, so did Uriah Heep. With a drive and determination that not only equaled but surpassed the feats of the mythological bird, Uriah Heep managed to blend in with the current 80's style of music and come up smelling like a rose. As a result of this resurgence by the group, many fans rediscovered Heep and jumped on the bandwagon once again. But the good times did not continue to roll and, as was done so many times before, it was time for a few more personnel changes. This new Uriah Heep was to become the most stable line-up ever and accomplished many outstanding things right from the beginning, like being the first band to play behind the Iron Curtain and playing to thousands of fans in Russia. They have continued to put out top-notch studio recordings while at the same time playing world-wide and giving us some great live albums as well. So what has happened???? It seems the well has run dry and it's been too long between new material. With the current release of "Remasters", they have succeeded in proving that they can put a new twist on 'classic' Uriah Heep material.....so what? We knew they could do that from listening to the live albums. Is it something they had to prove to Ken Hensley, who when asked about their two studio albums, said "They are pretty good pop albums, but not like the Uriah Heep I was in". Were the "Remasters" just a way to get ready for the Magician's Birthday Party and prove to Ken they were worthy of him performing with them? I think it's about time that Uriah Heep goes back to what got them this far.....forging ahead and using the wonderful gifts they possess to give us all a new world to explore, a new adventure to experience.