

Strictly ELVIS UK



ELVIS
TRAVEL SERVICE

Newsletter No. 25

Winter 2020/2021

Good Morning,

As you know I'm not often lost for words but for this Editorial I've sat here for the last 30 minutes (and two mugs of coffee!) wondering where to start. Does the newly announced vaccine mean the end of the Covid19 pandemic that has caused us all so much heartache, lost jobs and abandoned holidays? Do I, as a person always averse to meddling in politics, Elvis or otherwise, mention the US Presidential Election and risk upsetting any Trump or Biden supporters – because, as you well know, there are lots of people out there just waiting to be offended, or do I just stick to what's happening at Strictly Elvis, even tho' much of what we do has been, or could be, affected by either or both of the above.

2020 has been a horrible year for us. Only one of our tours or events made it – the superb 85th Birthday Tour in January – everything else has had to be postponed. It has hurt, both financially and in the knowledge that we were not able to bring our Elvis family together at a time when we all needed each other. It so obviously wasn't safe to do so and your safety was always highest on our list of priorities. You are aware that we don't charge a subscription for Elvis fans to be part of the Strictly Elvis family and yet, as a professional organisation, we still have rent to pay, electric and phone bills, insurance, printing, postage and all kinds of other costs – these are usually covered by the relatively small margins included on all the tours and events but, there's been nothing – except bills that is! – since January. Don't worry, there's no risk of 'Strictly' not being there for you but we would appreciate a little assistance now and again so please consider buying one (or more) of the badges or calendars advertised on Page 9 – not a lot of money, good value anyway and it really helps.

As you can see from the inserted brochures or on our Diary pages, we've been busy planning for next year which will see an even bigger and better choice of tours and events for you to enjoy...a minimum of two USA tours; two Germany tours; a new Elvis Spring Break in the UK; a Thames Cruise; the Elvis Festival which, with such a great array of bands and some brilliant guests including the lovely Linda Thompson, promises to be the biggest ever; a themed Charity Ball plus a few other ideas that we're still working on. There'll be something for everyone. I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter and if you have any



questions or suggestions please don't hesitate to contact us – we always love to hear from you. Oh, and by the way before anyone asks, we are looking to include New Orleans as well as Las Vegas/Palm Springs and even Hawaii in our tour programmes for 2022 or 2023...watch this space!

Finally can I go back to my opening paragraph and say that the American election has taught me something. Firstly that being honest with people (and with oneself) is what wins votes and builds trust. Trying to change history or the truth doesn't; it merely makes people doubt you more and wonder what your motives really are. There are people in the Elvis world who could learn from that. And with regard to Covid; none of us knows what the future will hold. We mustn't keep thinking that 'there's still time' or that we'll 'do that later' as we never know when it might be 'too late' (for whatever reason) and then we'll never do it – and probably regret it. Is that negative thinking? No, it has spurred me, and all of the Strictly Elvis UK team, on to do more, to set our goals even higher, to achieve more for fellow Elvis fans and to continue to be the best we can be. For Elvis...and for you.

Please continue to take care everyone – Stay Safe – and have a wonderful Christmas.

T
Cheers for now
B

David J. Wade



DIARY UPDATE

Find us on...



The Elvis Presley Travel
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@StrictlyElvis

2021

ELVIS LUXURY BREAK TO THE USA

20th-26th April 2021

(Memphis & Tupelo)

20th April-2nd May 2021

(Memphis, Tupelo and Florida)

This tour continues the success of our great April trips to Memphis, staying at the luxurious Guest House at Graceland and featuring a visit to Graceland, a full day's comprehensive guided tour of Memphis, a day trip to Tupelo including a visit to Elvis' Birthplace plus a tour of the Elvis sights of Tupelo and time to explore or relax. We are also offering an Extension tour to Florida, following in Elvis' footsteps as he made the movie 'Follow That Dream' here. We'll visit the film location sights and also have lots of fun in the resorts of Crystal River and Orlando. For a brochure with full details of the itinerary and what's included phone us on 01473 621 564

ELVIS SPRING BREAK IN BOURNEMOUTH

14th-17th May 2021

Moved with so much disappointment from May 2020 but we certainly weren't going to lose this great Elvis long-weekender. A gorgeous hotel, a wonderful resort, great entertainment and above all... ELVIS! See advert on back cover. Look out Bournemouth...here we come!

BAD NAUHEIM AND G I BLUES TOUR

17th-21st June 2021

Let us take you on a wonderful tour of Elvis' Germany - to stay in the Grunewald Hotel in Bad Nauheim where Elvis lived for much of his time whilst stationed at Ray Barracks in nearby Friedberg. And we've reserved every room in this lovely hotel so it'll be very much a Strictly Elvis 'house party' with everyone in the group being able to visit the room that Elvis stayed in. We'll also show you all the Elvis sights of this beautiful Spa town, take you to see and explore Friedberg and we also have a full day tour to Idstein, Wiesbaden and Rudesheim, historic towns used as the backdrop for the movie G I Blues. Only a few places left so call us on 01473 621 564 for more information or to reserve your place.

ELVIS THAMES CRUISE

18th July 2021

Arranged in conjunction with Elvis in Essex, this 4-hour Charity



Cruise aboard the MV Dixie Queen - the largest passenger boat on the Thames - features an all-Elvis Disco with DJ Mark

Monaghan plus live entertainment from Rockin' Dave Riley. Great music, the chance of a dance and the opportunity to catch up with old friends as we glide along this famous river. Tickets are £27.50 from Strictly Elvis UK on 01473 621 564

ELVIS 44th ANNIVERSARY TOUR TO THE USA

8th-23rd August 2021

Now extended by an extra day in Nashville, this glorious tour features the Elvis and main tourist sights of three of the USA's greatest cities – New York, Memphis (for Elvis Week) and Nashville plus visits to Tupelo, Dollywood, Jack Daniels and more. With your flights, first class hotels, coach travel, sightseeing tours and over £300 worth of Admission charges included this is a great value dream tour for all Elvis fans. Full details including the full day-by-day itinerary included in the brochure that accompanies this Newsletter.



EUROPEAN ELVIS FESTIVAL IN BAD NAUHEIM

12th-16th August 2021

Join us for a lovely long weekend in the beautiful spa town of Bad Nauheim in Germany where Elvis lived during his tour of duty with the US Army based in nearby Friedberg. As well as us showing you all of the Elvis sights there you'll have time to join in the fun of the European Elvis Festival arranged by the Elvis Fan Club of Germany together with the local Tourist Office...concerts, classic car and Harley parades, Elvis movies, stalls, attractions and special guests. Further details on pages 7 and 8 of this Newsletter.

ELVIS COMEBACK FESTIVAL

10th-17th September 2021

This is THE BIG ONE and if you do nothing else in 2021 just make sure that you join us for this amazing event. It's a week-long celebration of Elvis and we've combined all the good things that we were going to have at the 2020 Festival with what we had already got planned for 2021...so you can rest assured that this will be something very, very, special. With great bands including the amazing Showaddywaddy,

and star guests including the lovely Linda Thompson as well as the chance to win a trip to Graceland, you can bet your boots that this'll be the place to be. Full details are enclosed with this Newsletter.

ELVIS CHARITY BALL

Another, albeit delayed somewhat, opportunity to bring out those 'posh frocks' and have a knees-up to Elvis music in aid of Charity. Live Band, great Disco, lovely food and lots of fun. Date and venue to be advised.



FOR FANS, BY FANS

Strictly Elvis UK/Elvis Travel Service

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Strictly Elvis UK is the Newsletter of Strictly Elvis UK and the Elvis Travel Service – trading names of David Wade Ltd, an organisation that has led the way in Elvis holidays and events since being founded by lifelong Elvis fan David Wade in 1972. This professional organisation is registered with Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc and works closely with them to promote Graceland, the Guest House at Graceland, Graceland's Chapel in the Woods and Elvis' legacy. The names 'Elvis', 'Elvis Presley', 'Graceland' and 'The Guest House at Graceland' are registered to Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc with the USPTO.

ELVIS WEEK THROUGH THE YEARS

By David Hawthorne

2020 will be remembered as the year of the Coronavirus, enforcing global lockdowns that suddenly changed everyone's life. As fans could not travel to Memphis this year, Graceland organised a Virtual Elvis Week, enabling fans to still celebrate the anniversary. Realising how this annual event had gradually evolved, I thought I'd write about the changes I had experienced in 'Elvis Week' over many years.

I first visited Memphis in 1979, and it was a very different place back then. I hopped on a local bus that passed through Beale Street. I was shocked; Beale Street was rundown and deserted, shops were boarded up. I asked the driver if it was



possible to stop to take a photo. "We don't stop here", he replied. I could see why. The only people on the street were men drinking from bottles in brown paper bags. I quickly took a photo through the rear window of the bus. My next stop was Sun Records. It had just opened and there was no tour. You entered the

building and walked into the studio. It was really an empty room, with a few shelves of Elvis records for sale.

I then visited Graceland. The house had not yet opened to the public. You simply walked through the gates to the Meditation Garden. I chatted for a while with Vester Presley at the gates, before paying my respects to Elvis. I noticed Vernon's grave beside Elvis', he had died just three months earlier. Across the street were the independently owned souvenir shops and a restaurant. Graceland Plaza did not exist and the Lisa Marie and Hound Dog II planes had yet to arrive.

In 1987, the 10th anniversary. I was amazed at how Memphis had changed and how Elvis Week was taking shape. Thousands of fans were there, and they all flocked to the newly built Graceland Plaza, and the planes had now 'landed'. Elvis impersonators would walk around The Plaza. Fans would pose with them for photographs. EPE had not yet



Jumpsuits hung on coat hangers with just a few mannequins. The cars, including the pink Cadillac, were under a carport, and you could look inside. Fans had photos taken sitting in the 'Blue Hawaii' jeep.

Our Memphis tour visited American Sound Studios Two years later the building was demolished. We also visited Libertyland to ride the Zippin Pippin



endorsed these impersonators. Graceland had been open to the public for five years and the displays were very different from today.

rollercoaster that Elvis favoured. Sun Studios was up and running with tours, as was Humes High School. We also visited Overton

Shell where Elvis give his first public performance in 1954. A larger than life size statue of Elvis had been placed at the top of Beale Street, opposite Lansky's Clothing Store which was still in operation. The statue featured Elvis wearing fringed top, carrying his guitar by his side. The big event that year was the concert at Mud Island. George Klein was MC and Ronnie McDowell sang with the Jordanaires. Among the guests was Rufus Thomas.

In 1997, the 20th anniversary, EPE organised the first virtual Elvis In Concert. This was to be a one off, featuring Elvis on the big screen with the TCB Band performing live on stage. To celebrate the event Lisa Marie recorded a video singing Don't Cry Daddy as a duet with her father. The concert was held in The Mid-South Coliseum, where Elvis performed in the 1970's. This 'one off' event would go on to tour the world. It premiered in London in 1999 and continued to revisit the UK right up to December 2019. The Hard Rock Café had now opened on Beale Street.

Elvis Week 2000 saw the Memphis Mafia hold their Second Annual Reunion in the Ramada Inn. Marian Cocke hosted her 12th Annual Memorial

Dinner in The Peabody Hotel and Guest of honour was Sam Phillips. Back then tour buses drove past Lauderdale Courts and guides tried to point out the former Presley home.



It wasn't safe to enter the development. Fans visited 'Poplar Tunes' record store to purchase records in the same store Elvis once bought his. Mike

Freeman gave tours of Presley's former home at Audubon Drive. The original statue on Beale Street was relocated inside the Tourist Office on Riverside Drive. It was replaced with a life size Elvis statue in a 50's pose playing guitar.

The 25th anniversary saw the largest ever gathering of fans invade Memphis in 2002. Thousands thronged Beale Street to watch a spectacular parade of floats paying tribute to Elvis and Memphis. Elvis in Concert was held in The Pyramid and Lisa Marie introduced another specially prepared duet with her father performing In The Ghetto. Elvis Presley's Memphis restaurant had opened in the former Lansky Bros. building and on 16 August, Priscilla and Lisa, with her new husband Nicholas Cage, joined the celebrations with fans at the restaurant. Lansky's had relocated to The Peabody Hotel.

2004 marked the 50th anniversary of the release of 'That's All Right'. A concert was held in The Cannon Centre, featuring Scotty Moore, D.J. Fontana,



Ronnie McDowell, Boots Randolph, Billy Swan, Lee Rocker and The TCB Band with Terry Mike Jeffrey. Elvis Presley's Memphis restaurant closed.

2007 saw 90,000 fans flock to Memphis for the 30th anniversary. Elvis in Concert moved to the new FedEx Forum. Lisa recorded a duet with her father, singing 'I Love You Because'. The Baptist

Memorial Hospital was partly demolished this year. Overton Shell was now renamed Levitt Shell, the original wooden benches would soon be removed. Lauderdale Courts was regenerated in 2005 and the Presley's former apartment opened to the public. The Zippin Pippin at Libertyland was being dismantled.

2008 saw the quietest Elvis Week to date, probably because so many had attended the previous year and the global economic downturn didn't help. The big attraction was the Insiders Conference in the Cannon Centre. Known as 'Elvis Expo' it featured dozens of stalls selling merchandise and memorabilia. Graceland introduced their VIP tour. In 2012 the 35th anniversary concert was again in The FedEx Forum. A tribute to Elvis' recording at

Stax was held at the studio with Norbert Putman attending. The Memphis Boys were honoured with a Brass Note on Beale's Walk of Fame. Chips Moman and Marty Lacker attended.

EW 2013 was marked by the 40th Anniversary of 'Aloha', a special screening and a new DVD with unseen footage was launched. The Jerry Lee Lewis Club opened on Beale. As with other years Vernon's former home on Dolan Drive was open to tours. This year Graceland allowed access to the stables to see and pet the horses. The special guest at Graceland was Mother Dolores Hart, who melted everyone's heart when she spoke about working with Elvis in 'Loving You' and 'King Creole'.

2016 saw the closure of the Heartbreak Hotel as the new Guest House at Graceland was about to open. The Hard Rock Café moved into the former premises of Elvis Presley's Memphis and D.J.



Fontana was awarded a Brass Note on Beale. The vacant Hotel Chisca, where in 1954 Dewy Phillips became the first DJ to play an Elvis record on the radio, was now transformed into an apartment building.

2017: The 40th anniversary. It was indeed all change at Graceland. The new luxurious Guest House at Graceland had opened along with the magnificent spacious Exhibit Centre. Gone was the old Graceland Plaza. Love it or loath it, the new centre is no doubt impressive, but along the way EPE seemed have lost touch. Elvis fans are 'a family', we like to socialise, and the new complex lacked that intimacy and projected a sense of coldness.

Priscilla welcomed everyone to the Candlelight Vigil, and it was a solemn, touching moment when Lisa Marie accompanied by her family slowly walked down the driveway carrying the Eternal Flame to begin the vigil. Who could have imagined then, that just three years later Ben would be buried near his grandfather in the Meditation Garden.

EW in 2020 was very different and although the first days of the online experience focussed on the ETAs, which is not to everyone's taste, there was some interesting events, including interviews conducted by Tom Brown with Charles Stone, Marlyn Mason all via Zoom as well as revisiting concerts and interviews from previous EWs. Angie Marchese (Vice President of Archives and Exhibits) was also on hand to step inside the archives and recap on some "Through The Gates of Graceland" material.

Well there you have it a glimpse of previous Elvis Weeks. One wonders what next year will bring?



USA LUXURY SPRING BREAK 2021

For many a trip to Graceland would be a dream come true – something that’s top of the ‘bucket list’ but generally just unaffordable....and that’s why we introduced our special Spring Break as it’s then that the flight and hotel prices are still low but the weather is fabulous. Join us on Tuesday 20th April when we head off to Memphis, staying in the luxurious Guest House at Graceland hotel for 5 nights and with your flights, coach transfers, admission and tour of Graceland, a full days tour of the sights of Elvis’ Memphis, a day trip to Tupelo and the services of an experienced Tour Manager all included in the incredible price of just £1998 in a single or £1648 twin-share (and even cheaper if sharing a family room for 3 or 4 persons!). The tour returns to the UK on Monday 26th April.

And for an extra treat you could extend your fabulous vacation by flying on with us to Crystal River in Florida where Elvis filmed ‘Follow That Dream’ and where we’ll show you the movie location sites as you enjoy the Florida sunshine. Onward then for three further days of fun amid the theme parks of Orlando. The Extension tour returns to the UK on Sunday 2nd

May and the price for the combined tours (ie including the Memphis part) is £2998 in a single and £2298 in a twin, again with even lower prices for 3 or 4 persons sharing and in addition to what’s included in Memphis & Tupelo the holiday also includes your flight to Tampa, Florida, 3 nights each in 1st Class hotels in Crystal River and Orlando, coach travel and the ‘Follow That Dream’ movie tour in Crystal River and admission to the Mermaid Show in Weeki Wachee Springs.

For more details including a day-by-day itinerary contact us on 01473 621 564 or email us at Enquiries@strictlyelvis.net



August 2021

**Join the Elvis Travel Service for another fabulous tour of Elvis' Germany.
We'll show you all of the great Elvis sights as well as taking in the European Elvis Festival
in Bad Nauheim on a tour that is fast becoming a favourite for the Elvis Family.**

Day 1. Thursday 12th August 2021

You'll fly from your selected UK Airport in the late morning direct to Frankfurt from where you'll transfer by coach to the Dolce Hotel. This First Class hotel is the heart of the Elvis Festival, meaning that you won't miss any of the action of this Elvis-filled weekend. Evening at leisure.

Day 2. Friday 13th August

Breakfast will be served at the hotel each day.

Morning's guided walking tour of Bad Nauheim – seeing many of the features of this beautiful and historic spa town but majoring on the Elvis sights – the hotel and house where he lived, where he shopped and relaxed and the locations of many of the iconic photo's that were taken of him there.

During this Elvis Festival Weekend there's a whole programme of Elvis events, activities and concerts for you to enjoy – full details will be mailed to you when finalised. In addition many of the shops, bars and restaurants become Elvis-themed for the weekend, adding to the fun as they welcome fans from all over Europe.

Day 3 and Day 4. Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th August

Two full days at leisure – where there will be time enough to explore Bad Nauheim further, enjoy many of the events featured in the Festival programme or to pay a visit to Friedberg to see what's left of the (now closed) US Army base where Elvis was stationed. Visit some of the interesting shops there, explore the medieval castle or to stop for a coffee and one of those delicious cream cakes! Or you could join your Tour Manager for a trip up the Johannisberg hilltop for splendid views over the surrounding countryside and to visit the café where, as the story goes, Elvis signed a tablecloth for a fan before the lady owner of the café snatched it off him and promptly washed it. Oh dear – if only she'd known!

Day 5. Monday 16th August

Morning short visit to the village of Steinfurth (famous throughout Germany for its roses) where Elvis and a work party from the base erected a war memorial; before heading to Frankfurt Airport to connect with your return flight to the UK, arriving in the late afternoon.



INFORMATION

Dolce Hotel

This First Class Art Deco-styled hotel is located alongside Kurpark Spa Gardens in the centre of town. The hotel complex is the main venue for the Festival events, allowing you to enjoy everything that will be taking place right 'on your doorstep'. The hotel has an indoor swimming pool, bar, elegant restaurant and a theatre. A superb buffet breakfast is included and all rooms have en-suite bathroom, cable TV, WiFi, minibar and hair dryer.

Holiday Price

All prices are in £'s per adult – child/family room prices on request

Single Room £1098

Double Room £848



If travelling alone but willing to share please contact us on 01473 621 564 with regard to our Room-mate Service.

The tour price is inclusive of:

*Return flights from London Heathrow

(regional airports available at supplementary charge)

* UK Departure Tax and other airport taxes and fuel surcharges

* 4 nights First Class hotel accommodation inclusive of breakfast and taxes

* Coach transfers between Frankfurt Airport and Bad Nauheim and return

* The guided walking tour of Bad Nauheim

* Driver gratuities

* The services of an experienced Tour manager

Insurance

It is mandatory that all passengers have sufficient travel insurance. If you do not already have this cover please contact 'America as you like it' on 020 8742 8299 who will be pleased to quote and arrange cover for you. Cover is not effective until the premium has been paid and your Application approved by the Insurers.

Flights

The Heathrow flight will be economy class on British Airways or Lufthansa and the tour price is based on fares current at the time of printing this brochure. Should these increase before confirming your booking then we will contact you to advise of any extra costs. Once confirmed however there would be no increase other than if the airline imposed additional security or fuel charges.

Your flight timings will be advised to you on your Confirmation-Invoice. Please note we are able to provide flights from other regional airports but only if the timings fall in line with those of the main London flights.

For details of these please call us on 020 8742 8299.

Exchange Rates

The tour price is based on the rate of exchange as of 1st November 2020 £1 = 1.09 Euros

Passports and Visas

A Passport issued by a member of the European Union and valid for at least 6 months after the return date of travel is required for this tour. No Visas (or vaccinations) are required by British Citizens. Holders of other countries passports should check with the German Embassy with regard to visa requirements.

Telephone Enquiries

To check the availability on this holiday or to make a provisional booking please don't hesitate to phone the Elvis Travel Service on 01473 621 564 or our agents 'America as you like it' on 020 8742 8299 (Monday to Friday 9:15am – 5:00pm). Telephone Reservations must be confirmed with a completed Reservation Form within 5 working days.

Travel Documents

Upon receipt of your Reservation Form and Payment (and obviously subject to places being available) you will be sent a Confirmation-Invoice. Approximately two weeks before departure you will be sent a Travel Wallet containing your E-Ticket/s, baggage tags, a final detailed itinerary and tour joining instructions.

Payment Schedule

A deposit of £250 is required with your Reservation Form, a further £250 is required by 15th February and the balance needs to be settled by 15th April 2021. Payments can be made by cheque, debit card or credit card.

How to Book

To book simply complete the Reservation Form and return it with your deposit to:-

Elvis Travel Service, c/o America as you like it, 2 Oxford House, 24 Oxford Road North, London W4 4DH

Bonding

The holiday in this brochure is ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under America as you like it's ATOL 2966

RESPONSIBILITY

The tour in this brochure is the responsibility of 'America as you like it'. Your Contract is subject to their Reservation Conditions which are available by post by calling 020 8742 8299.

The holiday is co-ordinated by the Elvis Travel Service/Strictly Elvis UK, the trading names of David Wade Ltd, an organisation that has led the way in Elvis holidays and events for over 48 years. David Wade Ltd is registered with Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc.

The names 'Elvis', 'Elvis Presley' and 'Graceland' are registered to Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc with the USPTO.

Strictly
ELVIS UK

A small, stylized portrait of Elvis Presley's face, positioned to the right of the 'Strictly ELVIS UK' text.

SOUVENIR ENAMEL PIN-BADGES

Support us and, at the same time, show the world that you're a member of the Elvis family with this unique and beautifully British-made Strictly Elvis UK enamel pin badge. At 35mm long by 12mm high it's the perfect size for wearing in a lapel but would be equally attractive worn on a jumper or fastened to a bag. Or add it to your badge collection because this 1st Edition is sure to become a Collector's item.



Priced at just £4.95* (and that includes VAT, postage, packing!) it's a lovely little treat for yourself or would make a great present for family and friends.

For your badge/s simply call us on 01473 621 564 or 07721 435 291 with Credit or Debit card details to hand and we'll take your order over the phone. Alternatively, if you would prefer to pay by cheque or Postal Order simply send your name and address with the correct payment and we'll forward you the badge/s.

Remember, Strictly Elvis UK doesn't charge anything for you to be a member of our Elvis family and hopefully we'll never have to, but it does cost thousands of £'s to print and mail out our Newsletters so the support that you show by purchasing a badge helps pay for these and that's so appreciated by us all.

ELVIS TRAVEL SERVICE MEMORIES CALENDAR 2021



Keep track of the days in 2021 with one of our great CD-size Calendars. Each month has a great photo of an Elvis-related scene taken by fans whilst on one of our tours to Memphis and Tupelo...Graceland, the Birthplace, the Music Gates, the Elvis statues plus more besides. Great reminders perhaps of your time there or views of places you'd love to see for yourself.

The calendars are a perfect size – large enough to view easily yet perfect for desk, mantelpiece, bedside cabinet or just about anywhere. And at just £7.95* including postage, packing and VAT they won't break the bank either. They'd also make great Christmas presents for friends and family.

Bonus Offer: We are giving (absolutely FREE!) a Strictly Elvis Wall Planner with every Calendar sold – perfect for writing reminders for appointments, noting holiday dates and Birthdays.

To order your Calendars simply phone us on 01473 621 564 or 07721 435 291 with your Credit or Debit Card details to hand and we'll process the order there and then. Alternatively send full payment by cheque or Postal order (made payable to Strictly Elvis UK) to Elvis Travel Service, Unit D Bristol Court, Martlesham Heath Business Park, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP5 3RY

* Special 10% discount on multiple orders of any two or more items



LOOKING BACK

By Carol Pugh

The Elvis in the Cathedral concerts have now taken on legendary status so perhaps it's worth looking back at how they were first started.

In 2010 Mike Davis, assisted by members of the Elvis Travel Service put together an Elvis Gospel concert in Canterbury Cathedral which featured Nick Pacey's Always Elvis Gospel Group. What struck home about that concert was the magnificent surroundings and what the possibilities were in growing the concept. Alongside this was a long-standing seed of an idea of using a Male Voice Choir to celebrate Elvis' music in a unique way. I had years before picked up a CD of the Morrister Orpheus Male Voice Choir who had covered many of the Elvis classics but excelled at the Elvis Gospels and it was obvious that those powerful voices needed a venue to maximise their sound but how, what and where?

Fast forward to Elvis on the big screen at Birmingham NEC, a post-concert conversation with The Imperials and the opportunity to talk through some of the ideas that had been building; a set of concerts with a Male Voice Choir was met with scepticism, "so a 100+ male voice choir singing Elvis?" "How would we fit in?" "When?", "Where?" At which point David stepped in to explain that it will be in some of our most beautiful and iconic settings - it would be "Elvis in the

Cathedral". It's strange how our American friends are swayed by cathedrals and castles but hey we weren't about to miss an opportunity to make this happen!

So with a hand-shake agreement we set about planning. The Imperials were in place, the choir was on standby and we asked our good friend Jenson Bloomer to add his talent to the line-up. Next the Cathedrals, never did I imagine that we would be meeting with the hierarchy of the various cathedrals to explain there was far more to Elvis than Hound Dog and Heartbreak Hotel and that it was indeed his gospels that he received the most acclaim for, the Grammy winning albums and Elvis' love and passion for gospel singing that we wanted represented in their hallowed chambers. The agreement followed from Cardiff's historic Llandaff Cathedral and from awesome Coventry Cathedral and our prayers were answered. Here's a report from Eileen Gurney and Carol Chamberlain who volunteered to help us ...



It was a lovely morning as Carol and I, with our 'chauffeur' Bob Bacon, drove to Llandaff. We arrived at the Cathedral just about lunchtime and went to the restaurant to meet Carol Pugh, David and the Imperials which was a great start to the weekend.

Later that day we went to the Cathedral to help with the programmes etc. and waited for everyone to arrive. The acoustics in the Cathedral were fantastic and the atmosphere was great. Of course, it goes without saying, that the Imperials were absolutely mind-blowing. The same goes for Jenson and the Morriston Orpheus Choir.

Next day, off to Coventry Cathedral which was entirely different to Llandaff – much grander but somehow not as 'cosy' as Llandaff. We carried out our little 'jobs' and then had the privilege of sitting in the Cathedral all through rehearsals – a kind of "private concert" Joe Moscheo remarked. It was a great day again and at the end – while Carol and I were waiting for our 'chauffeur-driven car' to arrive - Joe Moscheo came over, put his arms round our shoulders, thanked us for helping, and then asked if we were ok for a lift. We thought that was very thoughtful of him and made the ending to our weekend extra special.
Eileen & Carol

Since then Strictly Elvis UK have arranged other concerts with The Imperials and the Morriston Orpheus Choir in Cathedrals and in theatres – will we do it again in the future? Who knows, but I do hope so.

What A Wonderful World: It was a nice coincidence that staying at the same hotel in Cardiff ready to attend the Llandaff Cathedral Concert was none other than massive Elvis fan the Rev. Derek Aldridge and his lovely wife Janet. We got talking, introduced them to the members of The Imperials and that was the start of a wonderful friendship and how Derek became a valuable member of the 'Strictly' team.



STRICTLY MEMORIES

What were your thoughts when you saw Graceland for the first time? When you had that photo alongside the Music Gates, stood under the columned portico or walked through the front door? How did you feel when entering the Jungle Room or Meditation Garden? Did you visit during Elvis Week and participate in the Candlelight Vigil or perhaps over the Birthday to enjoy the Celebration of Elvis' life as well as to see the amazing Christmas decorations? Did you leave a message on the wall and did you explore Memphis to see all the other places that are so significant to Elvis' life? And what about Tupelo – how was that visit for you, what did you think of the Birthplace...were you moved by Elvis' humble beginnings and by the amount of love still shown in this community for 'their boy'? Did you ever get to visit Hawaii, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Texas, Crystal River, Bad Nauheim, Paris or participate in any of the UK holidays or events with the Elvis Travel Service/Strictly Elvis? What thoughts/feelings/emotions did you experience during those?

Oh we could go on forever with questions but one of our 'family' members, Graham Brown, would like to produce a book of your memories so that they are saved forever and can be shared with all Elvis fans, both now and in the future. This won't be a 'travelogue list' about what you saw but about what you felt at the time, how it affected you then, and perhaps how it still affects you today. We all have our 'Elvis Memories' and many involve the people we've met and the friendships we've made on the tours – all so important and these are stories that need to be shared.

If you are interested in participating please write (anything from a few lines to a few pages) to Graham c/o the address below with your memories or thoughts as well as your contact details so that he can discuss it with you. All participants will receive a complimentary copy of the book which will also be available to purchase at a 'sensible' price with all profits being donated to one of Elvis' favourite charities - The St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

Write to: Graham Brown, c/o Strictly Elvis UK, Unit D Bristol Court, Martlesham Heath Business Park, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP5 3RY or by email to Enquiries@strictlyelvis.net marking the Subject: Graham Brown.

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The Society has presented many events in the Glasgow area and beyond, given talks on Elvis' career and exhibitions of film related materials. Documentaries on specific moments/events have been produced and screened resulting in a very positive reaction from audiences.

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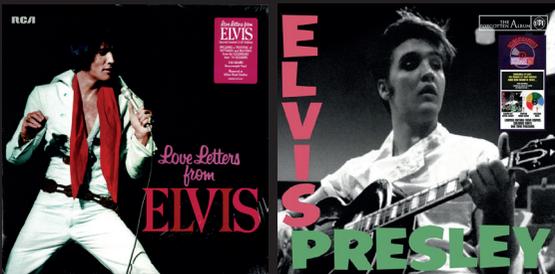
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A Message from the Reverend Derek

Hello to everyone

At this time of the year many people's minds are filled with thoughts about Christmas— cards to write and send, presents to be bought and kept hidden, meals to be planned and visits to be made. It's usually such a busy time.



I like the Christmas story and enjoy all the carols and songs that Elvis recorded and are so loved by us. I recall that particular part of the story which tells how the shepherds out on the hillside first heard the news regarding the birth of Jesus. The Bible tells us that "they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger". I can't help wondering if that was the first Christmas rush!! However, I suspect that for numerous people much of this hustle and bustle will not happen since this year's Christmas will be a very difficult time.

Coping with the effect of the pandemic has already made a huge difference. In fact, in one of the words of Elvis' songs this will be such a "Blue Christmas" although I hope that Father Christmas will be exempt from any travel restrictions!! I need to remind myself that part of the Christmas story tells me that Jesus was born in the night. In other words he who called himself the "Light of the World" came into the world when things were at their darkest.

My hope and prayer this year is that those who feel they are in the darkest place may come to know that the light continues to shine. It shines in the brightness of the memories of loved ones they have lost, it shines in the hope that things will get better, it shines in the love and compassion that we still can find in our lives and in the lives of others.

Elvis once sang "You Gave Me A Mountain". Together we will climb that mountain strengthened by each other's love and drawn by the light which the darkness has never extinguished. We are not alone. So we travel on and make our journey through and beyond Christmas always remembering that the name "Immanuel" actually means "God with us".

My thoughts and prayers go with you all.

Reverend Derek

KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

by David Wade

It's somewhat of a tradition with some hauliers to give names to their lorries – probably the Eddie Stobart ones being the most noticeable because there are so many of them but I remember a haulage company near where I grew up in Suffolk who's big green and yellow lorries were named after obscure Norse Gods and I read recently about the East Riding of Yorkshire Council grit lorries also all being given names – Freezy Rider and Gritty MacGrifface amongst them! One company tho' beats the lot as far as I'm concerned. W. H. Betts & Sons of March in Cambridgeshire with its fleet of 20 beautifully kept 44 tonners, mostly used for hauling grain and other agricultural produce, have 'christened' all of their lorries after Elvis songs. As you do, of course! Clearly this company was run properly and so I couldn't resist giving their Managing Director, Martin Betts, a call.

The business was started by his grandfather William – one of 7 brothers who ran Betts Brothers a company specialising in fen drainage, cereal threshing and other agricultural work. William split from that and concentrated on the threshing work before the business was handed down to Martin's father Gordon who, spotting an opportunity, invested in lorries to deliver straw around the country including to the Royal Mews at Buckingham Palace – one could even say 'working for the King!' Martin joined 'the family firm' more out of necessity than choice when his mother died young and his father needed help running the business – especially on the

administration side. Martin may even have gone into the music business instead as he had been playing the organ semi-professionally (well at least he got paid) from around the age of 13 and this love of music and performing progressed via a duo (with drums) and then a trio (and a guitar) to social clubs, wedding receptions and local dances. And this is where Martin's and my chat really started to get interesting. Did he play much Elvis and was he a fan? The answer to both was 'Yes - absolutely' – he loved to include Elvis numbers when he was playing simply because everyone knew them and there was such a variation that he could include numbers suitable for a waltz, quickstep (remember we're going back a bit here!!) and, of course, jive. And what did he listen to himself? Well Elvis of course.

You know the expression 'it's good to talk' – well it was. What I thought would be a 20-minute conversation turned into well over an hour as we compared notes and Elvis stories. Martin had been to Graceland 5 times, certainly knew his Elvis and has a superb collection. It was difficult to stick to the actual subject of lorries (what lorries?) which was what I'd called about in the first place but eventually I remembered that I should at least ask him about his fleet – all individually named after an Elvis song title. Why, for a start? "Well why not – it spreads the word, it's a great conversation piece and being an Elvis fan is something to be proud of". But it's not him who chooses the names – nor Martin's wife Liz who helps run the business, nor one of his sons, Jon



or his colleague Richard who are in charge of day-to-day operations – it's the drivers themselves. Now obviously they'd want to choose a suitable name (I doubt if 'A Fool Such As I' or 'True Love Travels On A Gravel Road' would be appropriate) but the drivers are equally proud of their 'wagons' and of working for such a progressive organisation and they say that their customers – the farmers, the mill staff etc love it, as do they. So, if you see a big blue & red W H Betts & Sons Scania truck named 'King Creole', 'Polk Salad Annie', 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy' or another well-known Elvis

song along the way – give the driver a cheery wave. He's helping us 'educate' the world into Elvis and bringing a smile to many faces....as Martin did to mine.



2021 THAMES ELVIS CRUISE



Delayed from 2020 the Elvis Thames Charity Cruise now takes place on Sunday 18th July 2021 and by then won't we all be desperate for our 'floating fix' of Elvis? The Cruise departs at 2:00pm and returns to the pier at 6:00pm so 4 hours of fun aboard the Dixie Queen, a Mississippi-style double decked vessel that's the largest passenger boat on

the Thames. And as we cruise along the Thames seeing many of the sights of our great capital city we'll have DJ Mark Monaghan playing the Elvis hits and Rockin' Dave Riley singing his heart out to a mixture of Elvis and great Rock&Roll numbers. With 2 bars on board you shouldn't go thirsty either so sign up for tickets on this great voyage. Call us on 01473 621 564 for tickets at £27.50 per person.

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