

Strictly ELVIS UK



ELVIS
TRAVEL SERVICE

Newsletter No. 28

Summer 2022

Good Morning,

What a world we live in - nations want to fight, Covid doesn't want to go away, gas prices are through the roof, the England football team can't find the back of the net and now the train drivers choose to strike just when petrol prices are at their highest – although I have no doubt that by the time you read this, they'll be even higher. All I can say is thank goodness for Elvis. Yes, Elvis the man and ELVIS the movie. He's always held us all together and given us plenty to appreciate and now, with the movie something else for us to enjoy...or at least I hope so. As we go to press I haven't seen it (funny but they didn't invite me to attend the Cannes Film Festival) but I will soon, at a special showing that we've arranged in Leicester...and hopefully we'll raise some money for Charity at the same time. I think Elvis would like that.

Speaking of Charity the 90 or so of us who attended the Elvis Long-Weekend Break at Bournemouth recently had a fabulous time in what must have been one of the nicest hotels we've ever used...anywhere. With music by Gregg G's Undaunted, Rockin' Dave Riley and Elvis (via DJ Mark Monaghan and his air orchestra) the weekend in Britain's premier resort really went with a swing and our Charity Raffle raised £500 which was split equally between two Ukraine Charities – the Red Cross Ukraine Appeal and Highway 2 Help. Thanks to all for their generosity.

Enclosed with this Newsletter you'll find a brochure for next year's USA Spring Break – the one that features Hawaii and Seattle. The current oil crisis has, sadly, also affected the Exchange rates (bit of a double whammy for all travellers to the USA) but you'll see that we've kept the prices as low as we could given the destinations, duration and quality of the tour. Those of you who have put down a £50 Advance deposit can now pay the remainder in order for us to continue to hold you a place or you can have your Advance Deposit back or you can move it to another of our tours. And if you haven't yet booked and want to take advantage of this lovely holiday then please



do so soon – even if you just wish to do the Memphis/Tupelo sector. This really is a great deal (based on what we include we are more than confident that we offer the best value there is) – and late April/early May is a fabulous time to visit those destinations...not at all cold, not too hot, just about perfect.

In this issue we are featuring 3 articles written by fans who were on those really early trips in the 1970's and who saw Elvis perform in Las Vegas. They all really know how lucky they were and are so grateful for the Elvis Travel Service (then working with the fan club) for giving them that opportunity. And I'm grateful to them, and for the thousands of others who, over these 50 years, have supported the Elvis Travel Service. Loyalty is a two-way street and Strictly Elvis UK/Elvis Travel Service will be there for you for as long as you need us to be.

By the way, if you are in Memphis during Elvis Week 2022 then come and join our 50th Year Celebrations at the Hard Rock Café in the evening of 14th August (see advertisement on Page) as we'll have great music and some amazing Guests.

That's it – have a great Summer.

T
Cheers for now

B

David J. Wade

DIARY UPDATE

Find us on...



The Elvis Presley Travel
Service/Strictly Elvis



@ElvisTravel



@StrictlyElvis

News spreads pretty quickly and whilst we'll always update you via our newsletters, if you're on Facebook head over to our page and give it a 'Like' by clicking the big blue thumb and being part of our friendly Elvis on-line family you'll get to see all of our latest news, photos, videos and even the odd free prize giveaway as soon as we post it.

FOR FANS, BY FANS

Strictly Elvis UK/Elvis Travel Service

Unit D Bristol Court
Martlesham Heath Business Park

Ipswich, Suffolk, IP5 3RY, UK

Tel: 01473 621 564

Email: enquiries@strictlyelvis.net

Website: www.strictlyelvis.net

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.

2022



LVIS 45th ANNIVERSARY – The Elvis Aficionados Tour!

10th-17th August 2022

(Memphis & Tupelo)

45th Anniversary Plus:

10th to 28th August 2022

(Memphis, Tupelo, Las Vegas,
Palm Springs and Hollywood)

A trip to Memphis and Tupelo during Elvis week – especially on a major anniversary, is always special but if you can afford the time join us for one of the most comprehensive Elvis tours that we've ever done. You'll see all of Elvis' homes that are still standing, visit movie locations and where Elvis became the biggest name in Las Vegas' history. What a great way to celebrate our own 50 Years of Elvis travel.

Bad Nauheim & European Elvis Festival 11th-15th August 2022

Join us for a lovely long-weekend in the beautiful spa town of Bad Nauheim, Germany, where Elvis lived during his tour of duty with the US Army. As well as seeing all the Elvis sights (including the fabulous new statue, you'll be able to join in the fun of the European Elvis Festival – concerts, classic car and Harley parades, Elvis movies, stalls, attractions and special guests.

We are delighted to announce that John Coventry is re-joining the Elvis Travel Service/Strictly Elvis team. Many of you will remember John

from earlier Elvis Festivals and USA tours.... one of the best, and most professional, Tour Managers around. John will be Tour Manager on our Elvis in Germany tour this August.

Welcome back JC!



Elvis Festival, Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth 9th – 16th September 2022

This is the largest weeklong gathering of Elvis fans anywhere in the world other than Elvis Week in Memphis – and whilst we might not be able to compete with EPE on numbers we certainly can on enjoyment. With great Celebrity Guests including the lovely Linda Thompson and a whole host of superb bands, rockin' Elvis Disco's, Elvis on the big screen, an Elvis Marketplace and much more besides this is definitely the place to be.

2023

Memphis & Tupelo Luxury Break 19th – 25th April 2023

Memphis & Tupelo plus Hawaii & Seattle Extension 19th April – 4th May 2023

Every few years the Elvis Travel Service adds a fabulous Hawaii Extension onto its Memphis and Tupelo tour and this time we've chosen to do it in the Spring in order to take advantage of better weather (not too cold or too hot) and more reasonable flight and hotel prices. Further details of these two great tours are included in the middle of this Newsletter.

Elvis 46th Anniversary Tour 9th to 20th August 2023 Nashville, Memphis and Tupelo

Just sometimes the simplest tours are the best and, for many, this will be no exception. Direct flights to and from Nashville, great hotel stays in Nashville (3 nights), Memphis 5 nights and Tupelo (2 nights) plus more sightseeing than you could shake a stick at...not that we expect you to of course! For further Advance Details see Pages 7, 8 and 9).

AND MORE!

In addition during 2023 we'll have another UK Spring Break (with a difference), the return of the Elvis Thames Cruise, a Charity Ball plus lots more besides.

LEARN – LAUGH – LINGER – ENJOY!

Strictly Elvis has a great selection of Elvis books to choose from and the prices all include postage and packing.

Unlocked

*By Dixie Locke &
Kristi Emmons Jones*

Hardback

£27.95 unsigned

£39.95 signed

Elvis Style

By Zoey Goto

Paperback

& signed

£12.95

Elvis, We'll

Remember You

By Ed Bonja

Hardback

£21.95

Music Lessons

by Norbert Putnam

Paperback

& signed

£14.95

Destined to

Die Young

by Sally Hoedel

Paperback &

signed by author

£27.95

ELVIS:

Safe & Sound

by Dick Grob

Hardback

£29.95

Elvis in Paris

By Jean-Marie

Pouzenc

Paperback

£23.90

Taking Care of Elvis

by Letetia 'Tish' Henley Kirk

Paperback & signed

£24.95

To order any these books please phone us on 01473 621 564 or 07721 435 291 with your Credit/Debit Card details, send a cheque to the Strictly Elvis office or pay by PayPal to DavidWade@strictlyelvis.net remembering to say which book/s you require and provide your address....and if you order more than one book then there's a special £1 per book discount.

BAD NAUHEIM/G I BLUES TOUR REPORT

by Neil Cameron

Back in 1958, fans had to wait two long years for Elvis to complete his military service and return to show-business. We know exactly how they felt!

Due to the pandemic, we had also waited for two years for our G.I. Blues Tour. But we're proud to say that, despite world events, none of our tours and events were cancelled, but merely postponed until it was safe enough for them to operate.

And so finally in March our lucky group of the Elvis Family headed off to Germany for a very special Elvis Travel Service tour. Our home for the long weekend would be equally as special, as it was the very hotel that Elvis had lived in during his time in Bad Nauheim; the Hotel Grunewald.

Slapped with a preservation order by the German authorities, much of the hotel is exactly the same as it was when Elvis was in residence. Our group took no time in scouring every inch, and lining up the exact locations of Elvis in photos that were printed in the handy guidebook we gave everyone. It's not everyday that you can play the piano that Elvis had, or lounge on the very sofa that Elvis had relaxed on.

Our first full day was our walking tour of Bad Nauheim. Whether we're in the USA or Germany, you can be assured that the Elvis Travel Service has diligently researched the Elvis history, and so will you give you the



most comprehensive tour. Our tour of this beautiful German town takes in a multitude of Elvis sights, accompanied by vintage photos and facts and stories that you won't get with any other tour. The highlight though was a chance to see the new 'Elvis in Bronze' statue. It's a truly stunning tribute, probably the best Elvis statue we've seen, and we spent a long time admiring it and taking photos. No words can really do it justice though – join us on a future tour and see it in person!



Day two was our look at the locations from G.I. Blues. As always on an Elvis Travel Service tour we had a few surprises in store, and we were joined by members of the local German Fan Club who, knowing the group were in town, offered to act as our guides for the day. Nothing beats the worldwide camaraderie of our Elvis Family and they gave us a fantastic day of fun and Elvis as we drove from location

to location through the picturesque countryside, the sun shining down and Elvis serenading us with the G.I.Blues soundtrack. One of the Fan Club members, Claus Kurt, knew Elvis personally and has many photos of them together (along with a staggering 700+ autographs!). He was soon on the phone to arrange another exclusive just for our group, a chance to meet another local who had spent time with Elvis. Peter Weidemann had met Elvis at a nearby lake, the two had talked and Elvis had even borrowed Peter's radio. There's some great photos of them, and Peter even bought along the exact same radio that he had lent Elvis! It was a very special way to finish an even more special day.

A good night's sleep after such a jam-packed day saw the group up and at 'em early for a visit to nearby Friedberg, the location of Ray Barracks, Elvis' Army base. Although long closed, we were still able to tour the perimeter of the base, see the monument dedicated to Elvis and hear more stories of Elvis' life and work here. A quick stroll back into town saw us arrive just in time to have lunch in the Elvis Café, filled with memorabilia and pictures it was the perfect

spot for refreshments. We didn't stop for long though, as it was back to Bad Nauheim to prepare for the evening's main event!

Here at the Elvis Travel Service, we like to give our Elvis Family the kind of experiences that you just can't get anywhere else. This was definitely one of those experiences. During his time living at the Hotel Grunewald, Elvis was well known for throwing parties, and so it seemed fitting we did the same! In the very room Elvis lived in, we laid on drinks, snacks (including some of the famous 'Elvis Cake' made at the local bakery) and played Elvis loud and proud. We were once again joined by the German Fan Club (by now properly inducted into the Strictly Elvis Family) and it was a fabulous night partying in the very room Elvis had done the same in (and again we recreated those famous 'Presley Poses' – including quite a few who sat in the, thankfully empty, bath!).

The wait was definitely worth it, this was another fantastic Elvis Travel Service tour. We had a whole lot of fun as we explored the history of Elvis in a way that only the Travel Service can.



ELVIS – THE MOVIE

by Carol Pugh

The long wait is over for the much-anticipated Baz Luhrmann movie, ELVIS. The lead up to it created a global buzz and the film has already changed the way presenters and interviewers, now talk about Elvis - with a new reverence and respect, using terms such as “cultural icon” and “legendary performer” as opposed to the mickey taking jibes that we fans have endured for far too long.



Whilst we hope that this film will engage a whole new generation of Elvis fans, Baz Luhrmann is also keenly aware that Elvis fans are the most loyal, defensive and well-read when it comes to the details surrounding Elvis, therefore it is somewhat reassuring to see the intensive research and for thought that has driven this project, much of which is captured in excerpts from an article published in Vogue Living-Australia. Written by Baz Luhrmann's partner in life and work (so she knows a thing or two about both!) we felt that you'd enjoy these snippets.

BEALE STREET: Andrew ‘Sunbeam’ Mitchell ran nightclubs for more than 40 years and one of these was Club Handy, situated on the 2nd floor of his eponymous hotel on Beale Street. During segregation Black performers were unable to stay in White hotels and the Mitchell Hotel boasted 30 rooms and had many famous patrons including Nat King Cole, Muddy Waters and B B King. Ernest Withers was a Black photographer located on Beale Street who captured many performers at Club Handy. There is one photo in particular he took of the main stage at Club Handy that we used to re-create many of the design elements for this set – such as the Beale Street mural backdrop that sat behind the stage.

Baz wanted us to conjure the atmosphere when all of these extraordinary artists such as Little Richard and Sister Rosetta Tharpe were performing

GRACELAND: Baz and I were extremely fortunate to be provided with unprecedented access to Graceland and its archives. As we donned our white gloves and carefully sifted through the extensive archives of Elvis’ life, we were very cognisant of how special this moment was. Along with the actual experience of Graceland and its archives we used countless photo’s of Graceland in books that have been published over the years.

Baz wanted to capture Elvis’ excitement at purchasing Graceland, which coincided with his rising stardom and subsequent wealth. We illustrated this by expressing on screen the evolution of both the exterior and interior décor of the house. Elvis arrives in 1957 to a working farm and the exterior of Graceland changes by the summer of ’68 to the exterior we know today. Similarly the interior had three iterations – the moving in, the establishment of the blue-and-red ‘50s look, and subsequently the interior of Graceland as we know it today.

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL: Although there are some photographs of Elvis’ suite and Baz was lucky enough to visit what was left of it before the suite was completely renovated in 2018 there were limited visual references for this set. Of course we leaned heavily on the plans and drawings of the hotel to deduce as much as possible of what the structure of the room might have been, however Baz was clear that Elvis’ suite needed to represent the gilded cage that ‘Vegas was in Elvis’ life story. He described to us a luxurious sarcophagus that underlined Elvis’ loneliness, isolation and withdrawal from the world. We looked to dark colours, heavy drapes and painted the ceiling navy to match it to the carpet. For the Colonel’s suite we leaned into Americana and carnival posters. It’s a perfect example of how objects can enhance an audience’s understanding of character through the collection of their trinkets and treasures, It is possible to feel and understand Colonel Parker’s history from carnival barker to promoter on top of the world just from the artifacts in his suite.

We can’t wait to see the final recreations of these iconic locations in Elvis’ history. If you’d like to see the real sights, then join us on an Elvis Travel Service tour to see these and so many more.

ELVIS 46TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR & MORE

ADVANCE DETAILS

by David Wade

My goodness, doesn't time fly? This was a fact brought home to me when we did a short Travel Service Talk at the recent Elvis Weekend Break in Bournemouth...and what a great weekend that turned out to be. We asked for suggestions for future destinations in the USA – either as stand-alone or to combine with Memphis and Tupelo. Niagara Falls was suggested, then Toronto – both having Elvis connections and are great places to visit. What about New York we were asked, to replace the visit that was Covid-cancelled – now that's a place we could easily combine with Memphis & Tupelo or it would make a great long-weekender on its own. And then the discussion really got going...how about Crystal River – Biloxi – New Orleans someone asked, combining 'Follow That Dream' with 'King Creole' and we know that Elvis loved Biloxi as that's where he would stay with girlfriend June Juanico. Train trips were mentioned – as well as a 'proper' cruise on the Mississippi, plus numerous other destinations – some we've been to, some we haven't...but I bet we will!

However with the Cost of Living going up and the world in a degree of turmoil we thought that it'd be best to keep next August's tour simple, relatively short and as economic as possible.... we'll look at the rest of the suggestions later. So for August 2023, the 46th Anniversary, here's what we plan to do. Departing on Wednesday 9th August it'll be an itinerary featuring 3 nights in Nashville, 5 nights in Memphis, 2 nights in Tupelo and one in the air – making 11 nights/12 days in total. The good thing about flying to Nashville is that there are direct flights from London – so no having to change planes. Also the city seems to be on a mission to become one of America's most exciting tourist destinations – with so much live music, great bars and restaurants and sights to see...especially Elvis sights. Then we travel on, visiting the Johnny Cash ranch on route, to Memphis to see Graceland and all the Elvis sights that this amazing city has to offer and to enjoy the entertainment of Elvis Week. Onward then to Tupelo where, instead of a recently more usual day-trip, we'll enjoy two nights staying at a hotel smack bang in the heart of this delightful town with ample time to visit the Birthplace, 'The Hands' Elvis statue, Tupelo Hardware and the other stores, and to get to know this, the friendliest little city in the Deep South. Finally we return to Nashville but, because our flight isn't until the evening we'll call in to Muscle Shoals, Alabama. One time 'Hit Capital of the World' many of Elvis musicians have hailed from here (as did Sam Phillips and Chips Moman) and its two recording studios must have been sprinkled with some kind of musical magic dust. We arrive home on Sunday 20th August - a fascinating end to a simple yet perfect tour.

It will be a few months before we can give an accurate price for this tour simply because the airlines only compute their fares 11 months out (at the earliest) but, as usual, we'll keep the prices as low as we can and the quality as high. If you are interested in Joining us please drop us a line to the address on Page 2, email us at enquiries@strictlyelvis.net or phone us on 01473 621 564 and we'll make sure that you receive a copy of our 2023 46th Anniversary Tour brochure 'hot off the press'.



COMING SOON – AN EXCITING NEW ELVIS BOOK

From Sally A. Hoedel the author of the highly acclaimed, and award winning, book 'Elvis: Destined to Die Young', comes her second book – 'Destined to Fly: The Story of Pilot Ron Strauss -From Iowa to Elvis'.

Stories of a simple childhood in rural Iowa, twelve years of service in the United States Air Force during Vietnam, a hijacking as an airline pilot and flying Elvis Presley from tour to tour are all captured in this book. Ron's story is one of bravery, patriotism, hard work, perseverance, love, family and flying.

For Elvis fans, this book offers new information not only about the airplane itself, but also provides a glimpse of Elvis Presley as a boss. A professional relationship was maintained with the crew of the Lisa Marie that was vastly different from others around him. Destined to Fly will also become a resource for fans as it features incredible documentation, including never-before-seen photographs and a complete flight log detailing Elvis' tour and travel schedule aboard the Lisa Marie.

We know that this will be another big hit with the Elvis Family, and Sally has very kindly allowed Strictly Elvis UK the opportunity to handle all sales for fans in the UK and Europe for this new book.

Expected Mid-September 2022, be guaranteed a copy in the first batch delivered by sending a pre-order deposit of just £5 by cheque (made payable to 'Strictly Elvis UK') with the form below to Strictly Elvis UK, Unit D, Bristol Court, Martlesham Heath, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP5 3RY or by calling 01473 621564 to pay with credit/debit card



DESTINED TO FLY THE STORY OF PILOT RON STRAUSS FROM IOWA TO ELVIS

SALLY A. HOEDEL

Please reserve me ___ copies of the new book from Sally A. Hoedel 'Destined to Fly: The Story of Pilot Ron Strauss -From Iowa to Elvis'

I enclose £5 for each copy ordered (please make cheques payable to Strictly Elvis UK)

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

THE HARD ROCK CAFE, MEMPHIS

8:00PM 'TIL MIDNIGHT
SUNDAY AUGUST 14TH 2022

ADMISSION

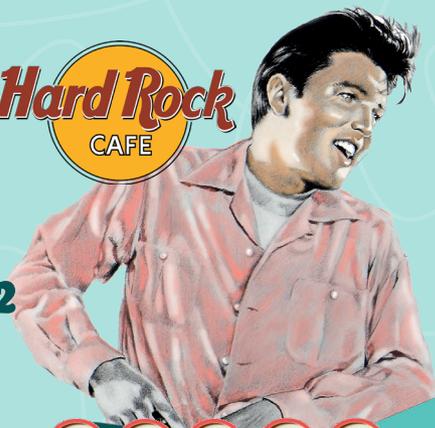
ONLY £10 (\$13)

FROM

STRICTLY ELVIS UK

01473 621 564 OR EMAIL

ENQUIRIES@STRICTLYELVIS.NET



ELVIS

ONE NIGHT
ON BEALE



HOSTED BY ELVIS' COUSIN
DONNA PRESLEY



LIVE MUSIC FROM
BRAD BIRKEDAHL
& HIS BIG BAND



100% ELVIS DISCO WITH
SCOTLAND'S FINEST DJ
PAUL DOWNIE

Strictly
ELVIS UK

ELVIS
TRAVEL SERVICE

MEMORIES.....

by Jenny Young

50 years of Elvis travel - where do I start...I was so lucky to be going on the very first trip to America with the Elvis Travel Service. We flew out of Gatwick in the early hours of August Bank Holiday Monday, 28th August. I saw my room-mate briefly before we departed, but spent the flight not knowing anyone. All that changed when we landed as we obviously all had something in common - a love of Elvis. We spent our first night in Nashville and were invited to attend the recordings of a TV show of country and western star - Porter Wagoner - and were shocked to see that the security guards all carried guns! On that show was a young unknown singer named Dolly Parton! We travelled by bus to Memphis and I remember it feeling very surreal when we drove into Memphis, like I had actually "made it" after having the dream for such a long time. DJ Tony Prince was on that first trip and he took a group of us to Graceland. We were allowed into the grounds by Elvis' Uncle Vester who manned the gatehouse at Graceland. It was a strange, wonderful feeling to be walking up the drive and seeing Graceland for the first time. We stayed at the Peabody Hotel and marvelled at the famous Peabody Ducks swimming

around the fountain in the foyer of the hotel. We had a dance and quiz one night and I was so surprised to win and receive a copy of the single "Burning Love" before it was actually released. We travelled by bus to Tupelo to see Elvis' birthplace, and were given a great southern welcome by the people of Tupelo.

After a few days in Memphis, we flew to Las Vegas. I'll never forget the first night at the International Hotel when my friend and I stood outside the showroom door and we could hear Elvis singing inside. Las Vegas was amazing, a totally unreal kind of place with people going crazy playing a number of one-armed bandits at once, and the most amazing all-you-can-eat buffets at ridiculously low prices. On seeing Elvis on stage for the first time, I just couldn't get my head around the fact that I was actually there. He was, of course, amazing.

After Vegas we went by bus through the Mojave Desert to Los Angeles where we stayed at the wonderful Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, we visited Disneyland where we had an amazing fun time and went exploring on Sunset Strip. That holiday was one of the best, if not the best holiday I've ever had, and I have a lasting memory of waiting at the baggage carousel very early in the morning on our return home to Gatwick Airport, and seeing all those enormous hound dogs purchased from the Colonel in Las Vegas coming around the baggage belt. What a sight, and a perfect end to a perfect holiday.

After 1972 I went with the Travel Service in 1973, 75, 76, 78, 80, 83, 2002 and 2007 - all these holidays were great and different in many ways with the only



disappointing occasion occurred on the 1975 trip. We flew into Vegas only to find that Elvis had flown back to hospital in Memphis. This meant no Elvis concerts for the whole of that holiday, and it was a dreadful blow to us all. We made the best of it though and it was the only holiday where we had the time to visit lots of other hotels and see different shows. We saw the Carpenters and Neil Sedaka at the Riviera; The Dick Clark Rock and Roll Show at the Thunderbird, Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme at Caesars Palace and Bob Newhart. We really made the best of it and still had a good holiday.

All the holidays I went on were amazing but in different ways. I have visited Acapulco, Mexico City and the Pyramids, Tijuana, New Orleans, San Francisco, Florida (Orlando and Miami, plus the Everglades), and the wonderful, beautiful Hawaiian Islands - Oahu, tropical Kauai, the Big Island with the amazing volcanic national park. There were so many highlights to these holidays. Being able to visit and go inside Graceland was an amazing experience and an insight into the private side of Elvis; Helicopter trips over San Francisco and over the

Hawaiian Islands; flying through the Grand Canyon in a small plane; actually going inside the prison on Alcatraz; sunbathing on the beach at Hanauma Bay (the beautiful beach in Blue Hawaii), and so many more wonderful memories. I haven't even touched on all the European weekends which were so much fun. I have attended so many Elvis events over the years and been lucky enough to meet Priscilla Presley (lovely lady), all of the original TCB Band, JD Sumner and the Stamps Quartet, Myrna Smith and the Sweet Inspirations, The Imperials, Ben Weisman (who wrote some Elvis songs), and also chatted to Jerry Scheff on Union Avenue in Memphis.

I want to thank David Wade and the Elvis Travel Service team for making all of these special holidays possible and for his irrepressible, untiring enthusiasm which never seems to wane. The one enduring thing about all these holidays is that I have made many friends for life, for which I am very grateful, and as David so rightly says - "it's an Elvis family" and one of which I am proud to be a member.



....SWEET MEMORIES

by Steve Reeves

I was on the '73 trip Stateside, on Keith Harris' coach, and it was certainly a memorable trip. Not least for seeing Elvis on stage at the Hilton and also for staying at the 'Todd Motel' in Las Vegas (which is still there!). What a great time – stopping in the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, visiting Tupelo and, at the end of the tour, staying at the Sheraton Huntingdon Beach just south of L. A. Whilst in 'Vegas we also went out to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and that night we had a bit of a party at the Lodge where we were staying, although because this was in a 'dry' county we had to 'import' some alcohol. The whole trip flew by - I was only 21 years old at the time and little did I know what would follow in the years ahead.

When I got back to 'good old Blighty' a friend of mine, Colin (sadly no longer with us) who was also a big Elvis fan, said that the next time I went that he wanted to come too. This happened in the Summer of '75 and whilst in Memphis The Osmonds were appearing at the Mid South Coliseum so a whole group of us decided to go and see them. After the concert David Wade and I were 'the last two standing' as we'd been organising taxis to get everyone back to the downtown hotel, perhaps forgetting that we too had to get back! It was a long night, but we eventually made it.

Who would have thought that as our plane landed in Las Vegas Elvis' would be leaving to take him home to his sick bed in Memphis. This was a three-week trip ending in San Francisco and it was during that trip that Colin and I became lifelong friends with so many people and for many years after we would all meet up at fan conventions and events at European destinations such as Paris, Luxembourg, Brussels, Amsterdam and, not forgetting, Hamburg (what a trip that was – my lips are sealed!). We even went to Aviemore, Scotland – in 1978 I believe?.

My final trip to see Elvis was in Nov/Dec 1976. We took off from Heathrow on a TWA 747 Jumbo. Firstly flying to Paris to get some fuel (there was a tanker drivers strike in the UK) before heading out over 'the pond'. After an hour or so into the flight the pilot announced that we were returning to Paris as one of the engines had caught fire! We (somewhat nervously) returned, they fixed the problem and we finally arrived into a freezing cold Memphis some 25 hours after originally taking off. And Las Vegas wasn't a whole lot warmer when we arrived there either. It was the first time that we'd had to purchase tickets in advance to see Elvis. The ticket got you into the Showroom but you had to 'bribe' the Ushers to get you a better seat. We got lucky the last time we saw Elvis as we were seated in one of the semi-circular booths just back from the stage and slightly left of centre. Best seats in the house! Halfway through the show Elvis introduced Roy Orbison and Engelbert Humperdinck. It was then we realised they were sitting in the very next booth to our right. Wow!

Two nights previously we had come out of the show and gone into the Hilton Coffee Shop to have something to eat. There was about 6 of us and the Coffee Shop was full. Oh no, we were starving! Anyway, the waiter told us to follow him and he led us into a large room filled with circular tables. He seated us and said that somebody would come and take our order. We were all on our lonesome...but not for long! Through a door at the rear of the room came The Stamps, members of the TCB Band, Charlie Hodge and, later, Vernon Presley. We were speechless – what a surprise! I spent the night going from table to table chatting with them and collecting autographs. I've got to say The Stamps were brilliant and really made me feel welcome as did James Burton. Charlie Hodge chatted with us for a long time and we tried to get him to get Elvis to sing 'The Last Farewell' for us at our next show. We failed miserably on that but this is another fantastic memory that I love sharing.

Just writing about this has made me recall so many happy memories of the friendships that were formed along the way. Absolutely brilliant and congratulations to David (Dave) Wade and the Elvis Travel Service team past and present for providing 50 years of 1st Class service to Elvis fans. It's great that after all this time they are still 'taking care of business'.

"I WAS THERE!"

SEEING ELVIS LIVE IN CONCERT

by David Hawthorne

In June 1977 I travelled to America, along with 200 other members of the Elvis Presley Fan Club of Great Britain, to see Elvis in concert in Cincinnati and Indianapolis on 25 and 26 June. As fate would have it these would be Elvis' last two concerts, before his untimely death in August of that year.

We flew from Gatwick Airport, and we boarded our specially chartered plane, by passing under the legs of a large 20 foot high Elvis cut out, depicting him singing 'Teddy Bear' from the film 'Loving You'. It had been strategically placed at the foot of the steps leading to the plane.

We arrived into Chicago, and no expense was spared, as The Elvis Travel Service booked us into the Chicago Hilton. This hotel has been featured in many films, The Fugitive, starring Harrison Ford being one of them.

On June 25th we boarded our coach and headed to Cincinnati to see Elvis perform at the Riverfront Coliseum. On the way we checked into our hotel, where Col. Parker had delivered a box of Elvis Summer Festival polystyrene boater hats, the same as the ones on sale in Las Vegas. We all wore our hats and our arrival at the concert was filmed by a CBS TV camera crew, who used some of the footage in the forthcoming Elvis In Concert TV Special.

The Coliseum held around 15,000 and was sold out. I sat in my seat, about 12 rows from the front of the stage, anxiously waiting for the show to begin. Everyone seemed to be rushing around buying posters, programmes and popcorn.

Soon the house lights dimmed and the strains of the 2001 theme began to grow louder and louder. I nervously clutched my 8mm cine camera, hoping security guards wouldn't confiscate it.

Suddenly, Elvis leapt on to the stage, he had a big grin on his face, he nodded and waved to the audience as he walked across the stage. He looked splendid in his Mexican Sundial jumpsuit and although slightly overweight, he did not appear as unwell as seen in the TV Special.

The arena lit up like a Christmas tree, and the noise of screaming fans was deafening.

Elvis apologised for arriving late, and said he had to visit the dentist. He was in good form and very much in control.

As for the concert itself, what can I say... magical, unbelievable, here I was seeing my idol in person. The man whose records I bought and whose films I had watched in my local cinema as a boy.

There is no need for me to mention the songs or the show, we all know the routine by now. 'CC Rider/Amen' etc.

But one song that stands out was 'Unchained Melody'. An unusual song for Elvis and a song I had not heard him sing, it had yet to be released. Back then bootleg records had not taken off and live shows were only available as poor quality audience cassette recordings. As I was close to the high stage, I couldn't see





Mexican Sundial suit and I remember feeling disappointed, as I would have liked to have seen him in a different outfit.

Elvis waved to the audience, shook hands with fans at the front of the stage, before putting on his guitar and diving straight into CC Rider. When Elvis had finished the opening numbers he took off his guitar and without looking round tossed it into the air behind him, where Charlie Hodge duly caught it, amid cheers from the audience.

Elvis seated at the piano; so I sat in silence, along with everyone else, listening to him perform 'Unchained Melody'. The event is etched in my memory and whenever I hear that song, it takes me back to that concert.

One other incident I recall was making eye contact with Elvis. Now whether Elvis actually spotted me is doubtful, but as I was filming him he looked over in my direction and I could see into his eyes and my heart skipped a beat. I know that sounds fanciful, but it happened and I can only imagine what it must have been like to actually meet the man.

During the concert Elvis mentioned that 200 British Fan Club members were in the audience, and a massive cheer went up, that must have surprised the local crowd.

But all too soon the concert came to an end. As the piano intro of 'Can't Help Falling in Love' sounded the audience gasped a sigh, everyone knew it was the end of the concert.

We all left the building and headed back to the hotel, knowing we would all be back to see The King the next evening.

The following day June 26th, we were off to The Market Square Arena in Indianapolis. I took my seat, which this time was on a stand to the right of the stage, and again I sat clutching my cine camera, as the lights dimmed and the 2001 theme sounded.

From where I was seated I could see back stage and I managed to film Elvis as he approached the steps and climbed onto the stage. He was wearing the same

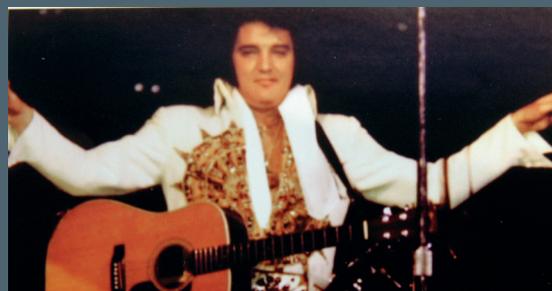
The screams continued, the flash bulbs popped, yes it was Take 2 and Elvis was doing what he does best. Many regard this concert as one of the best of his later shows. Highlights were, 'You Gave Me A Mountain', 'Release Me', 'Bridge Over Troubled Water', 'Hurt', and 'I Really Don't Want To Know'.

During the introductions Elvis referred to his replacement drummer, Larrie Londin, as being as big as London, (no doubt this was for the benefit of the British fans). He also brought his father on stage and introduced his new girlfriend Ginger, who stood up to cheers from the crowd.

At the closing of the concert and before singing 'Can't Help Falling In Love', Elvis announced it was the last day of the tour' but if you want us back, call us and we'll be back. Aidios'.

Little did anyone realise that this would be Elvis' last live appearance. From where I was seated I kept my cine camera rolling as Joe Esposito put his arm around Elvis and guided him off the stage, and down the steps to an awaiting limo. Elvis was about to leave the building for the last time.

Ironically, as I made my way back to the hotel, I said to myself 'I'm coming back next year to see him again, alas it was not to be.

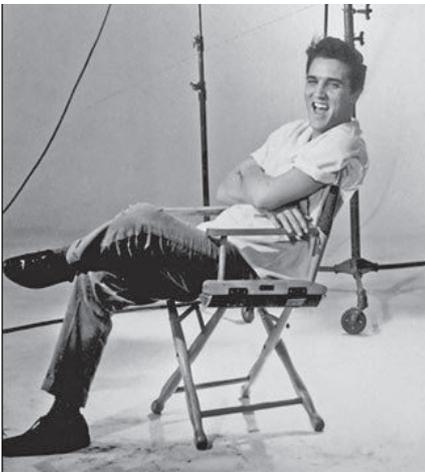


The Elvis Presley Film Society

(Officially recognised by Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc)

The Elvis Presley Film Society has now been in existence for 27 years and enjoys mostly local support at events in and around Glasgow - its operational base. Over the years we have presented shows elsewhere, generally with very positive reaction. Our time at Great Yarmouth in 2019 at the invitation of the Strictly Elvis organization was a great experience and helped to generate further interest in our work and ambitions as a functioning Film Society dedicated solely to Elvis Presley and his remarkable career.

We have produced many of our own programmes through the years, and there is a sizeable selection of DVDs available. There are themed programmes and/or specific subjects on Elvis' career within this collection - all available at £5 per disc plus postage. For all information relating to discs or indeed for any other information on the Film Society please contact us at elvispresley.filmsociety@ntlworld.com



A Message from Reverend Derek



Hello everybody,

Elvis once recorded the song
**HOW CAN YOU LOSE
WHAT YOU NEVER HAD?**

Sadly, today so many people have lost what they've always had.

I'm thinking of this last period as our country coped with the restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

We have lived so close to fear and grief and for 2 years, we have been on the **EDGE OF REALITY** and even now, we live with difficult **MEMORIES**.

I'm also thinking of the terrible situation in Ukraine where people have lost so much of what everyone takes for granted- their livelihood, their homes, their freedom and even their coun-try.

Much of what we have we hardly notice until it's gone. I guess the same goes for those things around us. As someone once said "nobody notices what I do, until I **DON'T** do it!!" Actually, somebody in my home recently said the same thing (it wasn't me!!). We need to cherish all that we have, including those people close to us.

So, amidst all that would cause us despair, I recall the Easter story when the disciples of Jesus thought they'd lost everything when he was crucified on Good Friday. However, 3 days later, through the resurrection, they were offered a completely new future, unexpected but **NEVER ENDING**. They now knew that it would not always be dark.

So, **IF I CAN DREAM** and my dreams can come true, **IS IT SO STRANGE** that I **BELIEVE THERE'S A BRAND NEW DAY ON THE HORIZON**. So, **C'MON EVERYBODY**, please **LET US PRAY** that it happens.

With every blessing,

Rev Derek

5 Star Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth

ELVIS FESTIVAL GREAT YARMOUTH 2022

**FRIDAY 9 TO FRIDAY 16
SEPTEMBER 2022**

★ **THE SWINGING BLUE JEANS** ★

★ **EARL JACKSON** ★

★ **GREGGI G'S UNDAUNTED** ★

★ **THE TOP CATS** ★

★ **GLENN DARREN & THE KREW KATS** ★

★ **MEMPHIS LEE AND THE CREEPERS** ★

★ **THE FABULOUS FONTAINES** ★

★ **THE V8 ROCKETS** ★

★ **THE STUPENDOUS DAVE B'S
RICKY NELSON ROCK & ROLL SHOW** ★

★ **ROCKIN' DAVE RILEY** ★

★ **SPECIAL GUESTS INCLUDING
DJ TONY PRINCE** ★

STAR GUEST
FROM THE USA
**LINDA
THOMPSON**

**CHOOSE FROM
3, 4 OR 7
NIGHTS**



3 night break from
£100

per person. Based on sharing an Owl holiday home

4 night break from
£108

per person. Based on sharing an Owl holiday home

7 night break from
£170

per person. Based on sharing an Owl holiday home

For more information and booking go to

www.elvisfestivaluk.com
or call **0330 818 0671**

T & C's - Prices above based on full occupancy of an Owl holiday home which sleeps 4 people. Owl prices - 3 Nights £399 from 09/09/22, 4 nights £429 from 12/09/22 and 7 nights £709 from 09/09/22. Prices correct at time of print and are subject to change. A range of accommodation available for all budgets.