

# ODE TO A HARD-ROCKIN' BIRD

How Can It Be? A Rock & Roll Diary

By Ronnie Wood



“I thought ‘How can it be that I kept a diary?’ and that is why we used my song title for the name of this book” – Ronnie Wood.

With a foreword by Charlie Watts

**When Ronnie Wood jotted down the odd fact, figure and faux-pas in his day-to-day diary, he didn't quite expect it to ever see the light of day let alone being published for all to see... But it has!**

At age 17, whilst on the road across Britain supporting acts like the Who in part with his first commercially successful outfit the Birds (they were signed to Decca for a few singles), young Ronnie Wood tended to jot down the odd bit of info in his daily planner. So in that respect we're not really talking a diary in the more elaborate sense, like a journal complete with lock to keep intruding eyes away from one's innermost feelings. But it's informative nevertheless. As tends to happen with these handy little booklets, Ronnie had lost sight of his 1965 edition until a few years ago when it turned out that his brothers had kept it safe for him, together with some of his early drawings.

These personal drawings, plus illustrations of ticket stubs, adverts and snap shots of life light years away, form with the original jottings a great palette for Ronnie to reminisce on and dot around foot notes where needed to deepen our understanding of what was going on as he carefully pieces together this particular stage in his early career. So, put on your Birds CD (you do have one?!!) and flick from the first of the first as Ronnie wakes up at 11:30 ready to take on a highly productive new year.

Many gigs and venues pass the revue, from Bath and Catford to the Bristol Corn Exchange and everything in between. In Salisbury on 9<sup>th</sup> January, young Ronnie wrote about: "The best reception so far in the group's career. The scene was almost riotous," paired with Ronnie's current comment: "They literally wanted a piece of you down in Salisbury: a chunk of your hair or a chunk of your clothes!" before elaborating on how the increased energy of a riotous audience seemingly increased the quality of his playing.

Also many fellow artists pop up along the way such as Donovan in the pub, a party for Freddie & the Dreamers, meeting Gene Vincent backstage and a young Lemmy out of Motorhead who follows the band around and stays the night. We see his future being shaped as young

Ronnie Wood is already backing Bo Diddley in those days, bumping into life-long pals Jeff Beck and Rod Stewart as well as sharing bookings with John Mayall's Blues Breakers with Mick Taylor already moving in & out. It becomes apparent how close Ronnie became to peers like Eric Clapton whom he met at a Yardbirds gig and with whom he's still in touch as well as members of the Who, in particular Keith Moon. Ronnie writes in as far as that Keith Moon actually could determine whether he should leave his then girlfriend Krissy for new girl Jo ...or not! "He had the power to stop it, and he would've done so if he hadn't liked her," Ronnie confides. A particular poignant excerpt about another pal can be found on the pages of 'Notes for 1966' talking about the following year: "In the Autumn of 1966, I shared a flat for a week with Jimi Hendrix and P.P. Arnold. When Jimi left to go on tour, he gave me his basset hound, called Loopy. The last time I saw Jimi, he was leaving Ronnie Scott's with his arm around a girl. I said, 'Hey Jimi, say goodnight', and he turned around, waved and said, 'Goodnight'. That was the night he died."

Then there are lots of Birds-related ups and (some) downs such as the appearance at the Glad Rag Ball, a front page mention in the Melody Maker, the making and releasing of their single *Leaving Here* and yet failing their BBC audition. The book closes with some further notes on key events from 1968 (American tour with Jeff Beck), 1973 (The Faces' Kilburn show with Keith Richards guesting) and 1975 (joining the Stones) before signing off with a free download code on the inside of the dust jacket giving access to Ronnie's early composition with the Birds which also provided the title of the book: *How Can It be?*

Genesis Publishing are bringing this tome to the market and this time apart from the lavish limited edition we normally expect from them, they have simultaneously down-scaled the publication for a separate, smaller run to reach a wider audience with a more affordable price tag of around the £25 mark (available on general release with some distributors presently offering it for prices as low as £15). However, if you want to shelve out on the one with all the trimmings, here's the write-up from Genesis of the more lavish edition at £295 available directly from them:

"In this limited edition of only 1,965 copies, each book is signed by Ronnie Wood. The Collector Copies are numbered 351-1,965. Hand-bound in antiqued leather, with gold blocking and page edging, the binding replicates Wood's original diary down to its scuffs and scratches. Loose-leaf facsimile items include posters, nightclub

tickets and rare photographs. Within the book's slipcase a pull-out tray holds a 45rpm record featuring 'How Can It Be?'. The song was one of Ronnie Wood's first compositions, written for the Birds and recorded in 1965. The B-side unveils a new specially made recording of the same song. Wood has created the artwork for the 7in picture disc - a cubist-style self-portrait, complete with guitar and 1965 diary."

More info, including a nice video clip with Ronnie on his book:

<http://www.genesis-publications.com/how-can-it-be-a-rock-and-roll-diary-by-ronnie-wood/>

...and his fine art prints, also for sale:

<http://www.genesis-publications.com/how-can-it-be-fine-art-prints-by-ronnie-wood/default.htm>

