

FAME AND FORTUNE STEVE HACKETT

My earning power with Genesis was a revelation

The guitarist made his name with the rock group in the 1970s — and enough to buy a London townhouse, he tells *York Membery*

The guitarist Steve Hackett was a member of Genesis in the 1970s, playing on some of their best-known songs such as *Firth of Fifth* and *Supper's Ready*. The band was formed in 1967 by singer Peter Gabriel and four fellow pupils at Charterhouse, a public school in Surrey. They were joined in 1970 by Phil Collins on drums.

Hackett was recruited the following year, after Gabriel spotted an advert he had placed in *Melody Maker*: "Guitarist/writer seeks receptive musicians determined to strive beyond existing musical forms."

Hackett, 68, who grew up on the Churchill Gardens estate in Pimlico, southwest London, was struck by his bandmates' privileged backgrounds. "They seemed to have their own language and back story," he said. "They liked to rehearse out in the countryside living together in a cottage, which was strange for me, a real city boy."

In 1977, following the release of the band's *Wind & Wuthering* album, Hackett left to pursue a solo career, and has since released a number of albums. Although the band went on to greater commercial success after he left, he says he does not regret his departure: "Creative fulfilment for me has always been more valuable than money."

Hackett brings his eight-date Genesis

revisited tour, in which his band is joined by a 41-piece orchestra, to Britain in October.

He lives in Teddington, southwest London, with his third wife, Jo.

How much money do you have in your wallet?
About a hundred quid.

What credit cards do you use?
I mainly use a debit card — I don't like owing any money, I'd rather get on with the creative stuff. I like to have plastic but I like to have cash, too, to get myself out of trouble as quickly as possible.

“We invested in a laser for a stage show. It cost £120,000 but failed to function, so it was goodbye £120,000!”



Still rocking: Steve Hackett has made 30 solo albums since leaving Genesis in 1977. The band 'shared the songwriting credits, so the royalties were pretty good'

Are you a saver or a spender?

I'm a saver and a spender. I'm not extravagant, but I spend where necessary. If you take a six-piece band, plus crew, out on the road, as I do, you need a lot of money up front just to pay transport and freight costs.

Do you own a property?

We've got a 1970s two-storey house in Teddington. It has four bedrooms now but will soon have five — we're building up into the loft. I bought it a couple of years ago for just under £1m. Thankfully I'm mortgage-free. I record a lot of new material in my living room. I've owned recording studios in the past but you don't need to these days: your studio is the same size as your computer screen.

Are you better off than your parents?

Yes. My late father, Peter, who became a professional artist after working in an office, and my powerhouse of a mother, June, who's now in her late eighties, were both hard-working but struggled. I grew up in a succession of council flats.

My mother's family originally came from Poland but fled to England to escape the pogroms of the 1880s. They started out in London's East End,

worked like crazy and made their way in the world. I'm proud of my Jewish heritage, which has given me much of my drive.

How much did you earn last year?

I don't know. I reinvest a lot of the money I make in my stage show, so people head home after a gig saying: "Wow, what a show!" People assume I make loads of money from my tours, but I don't. If you hire an orchestra to tour with you, as I will do again this year, the best you can hope for is to break even.

When did you first feel wealthy?

When I recorded my first solo album in 1975, while still in Genesis, I spent half the £20,000 advance on making the record and the other half on a deposit on a £35,500 townhouse in Holland Park, west London. So I felt quite flush at that point. By then we had just released the album *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* and had hit the big time. We'd just done a big tour of Britain and America but, after nine months on the road, found ourselves in a financial hole to the tune of £250,000. It's often a case of the better the show, the less the profit.

The townhouse turned out to be a very good investment. I sold it in 1984, as I wanted to move out of central London.

Have you ever worried about how you were going to make ends meet?

The worst time was probably after my divorce from my second wife [the Brazilian artist Kim Poor]. I became desperate financially. I found it hard to sleep because I was so worried — I was living through a fog of anxiety. Before Genesis I did five years of dead-end jobs that didn't pay much. Then I stuck the ad in *Melody Maker* that Gabriel saw. We hit it off and the rest is history.

What was your first job?

When I was 12, I spent a summer working in the amusement arcade at Battersea Funfair. I was paid peanuts but it was a great experience. My first job after leaving school at 16 was working as a filing clerk for the examinations board — I held that down for about six months. Playing the guitar had been an obsession from 14 and once I started dreaming about a career in music, I knew it was time to leave.

What has been your most lucrative work?

The success of my solo stuff has gradually caught up with my Genesis work and both my solo and Genesis material is popular live. I recorded a mere seven or eight albums with Genesis but I've made about 30 solo albums.

When I was in Genesis we shared the songwriting credits, so the royalties were pretty good. Touring is my main bread and butter these days and my Genesis Revisited tours of the past few years, in which I perform tracks from the classic Genesis period alongside some of my solo work, have proved very successful.

Do you invest in shares?

I haven't so far. I don't think I've got a head for that sort of thing.

What's best for retirement — property or pension?

They're both a good idea. I need a roof over my head and I have a private pension that brings in a regular income.

What's been your best business decision?

Inviting my wife, Jo, whose background is in film and theatre, to join me in business. Love brought us together, but the business side of things has gone from strength to strength.

And your best investment?

I bought a classic Goldtop 1957 Les Paul



Hackett, front, with Genesis in 1975

guitar for \$800 from a guy who came backstage after a Genesis show in America in the early 1970s. I was offered £40,000 for it some years ago but having been played on so many Genesis tracks, I've been told it could be worth as much as £100,000. I have had three guitars stolen while on the road, so it would be tempting fate to take it on tour.

What about your worst investment?

The rest of Genesis and I made a collective investment in a laser for the *Wind & Wuthering* stage show. It cost £120,000 to develop but failed to function, so it was goodbye £120,000!

What's your money weakness?

Stringed instruments. I recently bought a Dobro metallic guitar — which conjures up the sound of America's Deep South — for about £400. I also got an oud, an Iraqi lute, for a couple of hundred quid. I spend a lot of money on travel, too. I'm increasingly influenced by world music.

What's your financial priority in the years ahead?

I want to continue to be able to play live and travel without any financial worries. I also think it's important to support charities close to one's heart, in my case Save the Children.

What aspect of the tax system would you change?

I think taxes on the very wealthy should be higher to help support things such as the NHS. We led the world in having a welfare state postwar and it looks like we're in danger of not being the country my parents subscribed to. I'd also like more tax breaks given to help reinvigorate British industry.

What would you do if you won the lottery jackpot?

I'd make a very considerable donation to children's charities such as Save the Children and Action Aid, which I've supported for many years. I'd probably also buy a bigger house and plough more money into the shows.

What's the most important lesson you've learnt about money?

That it gives you a degree of security and freedom, but it's important not to let it take you over — it's a means to an end.

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Forget 'banking experiences', I only need to pay in a cheque

PETER CONRADI



Fancy a day out at the bank? No, me neither. Halifax, part of Lloyds Banking Group, is clearly hoping that you and I are not typical.

With its swanky new three-storey mega-branch in London, Halifax wants to transform a routine trip to pay in a cheque or track down the debit card that never arrived, or whatever it is people still need to do in branches these days, into an "experience".

As we report on page 15, the new premises near Tottenham Court Road Tube have a brightly painted home hub, travel zone, kids' savings zone and coffee shop — with people who aren't Halifax customers welcome to pop in, too, presumably in the hope they will be persuaded to open an account.

This is not a strategy confined to the banks, of course. Canny local bookshops have long since learnt that a cafe lures in punters (not that there is a shortage of places to get a caffeine fix on most high streets). Apple has made a visit to its stores an aesthetically

pleasing experience; the same, sadly, cannot be said of a trip to WH Smith.

Many retail chains have failed to grasp this, with predictably disastrous consequences: House of Fraser, which last week announced the closure of more than half of its 59 stores, is only the latest to retrench, following Mothercare, Carpetright and more.

The challenges faced by the financial sector are different from those confronting retailers. Despite the emergence of web and app-based institutions offering savings, mortgages and other products, the banks are not in danger of being wiped out by the likes of Amazon — at least not yet.

They are having to adapt to a changing world, though. The strategy pursued by the big names so far has been mass branch closures, which has left many small towns without a single bank and, in some cases, even a cash dispenser. Yet as Halifax's latest move suggests, physical branches will not disappear altogether. Indeed, its rivals are opening super-sized establishments of their own.

Whether that is what suits their customers is another matter. If someone were to ask me what I wanted in a bank, it wouldn't be a coffee shop or, indeed, an "experience" of any sort. I would be happy enough just to have a

cashier sitting behind each of the three windows — rather than just one — and to know that if I had a simple question, they would be able to answer it. What about you?

A loser's game

As a shareholder in Games Workshop, which has proved a stock-market sensation over the past few years thanks to its reinvention of the toy soldier, I ended last week several hundreds of pounds poorer.

The company's shares slid almost 10% after it issued a trading update on Friday. So what calamity produced such a rout?

Er, none at all, as far as I can see. On the contrary: the firm predicted its pre-tax profits will hit £74m, almost double the £38.4m it made last year.

The problem, it seems, was that the results were merely in line with expectations — which, far from being a reason for analysts to congratulate themselves on what good forecasters they are, instead served as a reason to sell the shares. Oh, and despite these blistering results, the company is cutting its dividend. Strange things, stock markets. @peter_conradi