

ME AND MY MONEY

Ian Anderson
Jethro Tull singer

IAN ANDERSON is the lead singer, flautist and acoustic guitarist of the British rock band Jethro Tull, who have sold more than 60 million albums since being formed in 1967, writes **YORK MEMBERY**. The 78-year-old has also released six solo albums.

The father-of-two and his second wife Shona divide their time between their homes in Wiltshire and London. Their daughter Gael is married to The Walking Dead actor Andrew Lincoln.

Jethro Tull tour the UK in April and May, with further concerts across Europe.

Q What did your parents teach you about money?

A I grew up in Murrayfield, a sort of middle class area of Edinburgh, to a Scottish father, James, and English mother, Irene. Dad ran a boiler fluid company.

We had a car and the first black-and-white telly on our street, but we were comfortable rather than well off.

I got sixpence in pocket money a week but was told to spend it wisely rather than blow it all on sweets.

I put aside a penny a week, so a few weeks later I had enough to give my mother sixpence, in a white envelope, for her birthday.

I was quite proud of myself, but my relatives all laughed at me in a rather derisory way, so I thought: 'You lot are off my Christmas card list now!'

Q Have you ever struggled to make ends meet?

A After failing to become a cub reporter or a police cadet on leaving school in Blackpool, where we moved when I was 12, I thought I'd try Plan C: music.

I headed down south with some friends, and found myself an attic bedsit in Luton, with a toilet five floors down. Money was so tight I couldn't afford to put on the gas fire.

I had to wear a thick woollen coat in bed to stay warm and woke up some mornings to find that the glass of water by my bed had ice on top. At one point I was surviving on tins of Irish stew mixed up with Spillers dog biscuits.

Q Have you ever been paid silly money?

A You could, I suppose, argue that, given what I do for a living, any money that I make is silly money.

But the money has never come first for me. I've always just been grateful that I could make a living from doing what I love.

I've been offered silly – serious – money to perform at a birthday party for an oligarch or two.

But I've always turned down invitations to play for such hugely wealthy, and sometimes quite dreadful, people because I felt it was a bit like being a musical hooker for hire. It just made me feel uncomfortable.

Q What was the best year of your financial life?

A Probably 1972, when the royalties from Tull's first few albums were starting to trickle through. Our 1971 album, *Aqualung*, would do especially well, going on to sell seven million worldwide, though it was a

Before I hit the big time I survived on tins of Irish stew mixed with dog biscuits!



'sleeper' hit. For the first time in my life, I realised I was actually very well off, and consequently soon faced an enormous tax bill.

Not that I've ever minded paying my UK tax bill.

Q The most expensive thing you bought for fun?

A A platinum flute which I never take on tour with me, because it's too valuable, but I take it out and play it two or three times a year for fun.

I bought my first flute for £30 in the 1960s with the money I made from selling a Standard Stratocaster electric guitar which had once belonged to [Motorhead legend] Lemmy when he was in the *The Rockin' Vickers*, before he switched to bass.

Q What was your biggest money mistake?

A We once had an accountant who unfortunately could not resist pilfering some unpaid band royalties, siphoning them off into another bank account.

I only learnt about what had happened when the Inland Revenue

launched an investigation, so I had to launch a dawn raid on our accountant's offices to get hold of all our records. The guilty man – the senior partner, as it happens – vanished and went off and bought himself a house in Arizona, where he later snuffed it.

Q Best money decision you have made?

A Deciding when I got married to Shona to give all of my money to her to look after – she has a genuine aptitude for, and interest in, managing our finances.

Our son James is now quite involved in looking after the Jethro Tull brand and royalties.

Q Will you pass down your money or spend it all?

A I'd like to pass on the bulk of our assets under the tax-free 'gifting' [seven-year] rules to my children and grandchildren before it's too late. But I'll make charitable donations too.

I've always believed in giving something back – every year I put on fundraising concerts for churches and cathedrals.

FLAIR: Ian Anderson's career has spanned seven decades

Q Do you have a pension?

A Yes, I've got various private pensions, some of which pay better than others; I don't take the state pension because I don't need it. I hope to keep playing 50 to 60 shows a year for as long as I can – it helps keep me in shape, mentally and physically. Thankfully, I'm not in a line of business where I have a forced retirement.

Q Do you own any property?

A Yes, my main property is a house in Wiltshire dating back to the 1750s, set in 400 acres of farmland and grassland.

We also have a small house in London which we occasionally use, as well as a property in Cornwall which we rent out and occasionally stay in ourselves.

Q If you were Chancellor what would you do?

A I'd have a stiff drink, enjoy a soak in a warm bath and think of the England that used to be – and how we could return to those glory days!

Q What is your number one financial priority?

A To keep my financial house in order and ensure that I can afford the, no doubt, astronomical later-life care costs that my wife and I will one day face.

My pet hate right now? All those dreadful adverts for cheap funerals claiming they want to give you a good send off, when all they really want is your money.

● Jethro Tull tour the UK from April 19. Tickets details at jethrotull.com/tour-dates

