



# “It was meant to be a bit of fun”

Leader and frontman **Phil Mogg** put more than 50 years into his beloved **UFO** before a heart attack led him to bring down the curtain on the band in favour of a new – perhaps less chaotic – venture, *Moggs Motel*. *Neil Jeffries* spends an afternoon in the pub with master raconteur Mogg reliving half a decade of rock’n’roll madness... Jealous? You should be!

**PHIL MOGG GRINS AT** me across the pub table, a twinkle in those blue eyes beneath the brim of his pork-pie hat. I’ve just asked him about Mike Clink, a young engineer working for producer Ron Nevison on UFO’s brilliant seventh album ‘Obsession’ back in 1978.

“Yeah, he was Nevo’s understudy at that point. A nice chap. Very amusing times...”

Yet, instead of following on with some enlightening discourse about the teenager who nine years later would produce ‘Appetite For Destruction’ for a band called Guns N’ Roses, Mogg switches tack.

“I remember pulling into this place in America one night, the most foul hotel, and it had these vibrating beds. Across the road was a bar that opened for the workers of the nearby factory when they finished their shift at six in the morning. They’d been working all night so wanted to go in for a drink, then go home and have a sleep. Well, we’d been up all night, too, so we thought... here’s a good one. And it was good. We had a couple of drinks, then went back to the hotel – and had a go on these beds.

“My one collapsed, in the middle, where the heating element blew a gasket and sent steam billowing into the room. I’ve never been in such a sh\*thole. Well, I’ve been in a few, but this particular place was *really* rocky. I walked out and went to sleep on the bus.”

Time spent with Mogg is time spent taking a tour around a museum led by a guide who has the keys to every room but visits them in random order, sometimes hesitating at one before moving unbidden to another. It’s hilariously chaotic. Today’s concession to healthy living is drinking gluten-free Peroni. But he’s not drunk. And

the bed story has reminded him of the name of his new band, *Moggs Motel*.

“We’ve got a motel to open, *Moggs Motel*. No apostrophe. You can’t do them in neon. I’ve booked out a lot of the rooms, obviously. Some are more privileged than others. But I have a few spare rooms, so I shall speak to my booking clerk, ha ha ha... It’s a nice place. A bit seedy, but you know! I’ve brought in some vibrating beds. The 25-cent ones. What do you get for 25 cents? Not a lot... a bit of a wiggle, that’s it.”

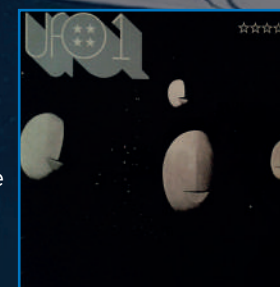
**AFTER UFO’S** farewell tour was rudely curtailed by an August 2022 heart problem for the singer, *Moggs Motel* proves he wasn’t looking to retire. Or die.

“I got lucky, I think. [Erstwhile UFO guitarist] Paul [‘Tonka’ Chapman] didn’t, and the other Paul [keyboardist and guitarist Raymond] didn’t. Tonka was a bit of a shock. He went on his birthday. Well, at least I could imagine what he was doing...”

“Biff from Saxon got lucky, too. I’ve read his report because we’re all now checking each others’ notes. Brian May was quite funny: ‘I haven’t *done*

anything! I don’t drink, I don’t smoke, I don’t do drugs...’ Biff, though: ‘I ‘ad a triple bypass and just got on wi’it.’ That’s a Yorkshireman!”

Mogg had heart surgery to insert a couple of stents, and a period of rest-and-recovery has left the now 76-year-old singer in rude health – as was demonstrated by the speed at which he walked up the hill from his coastal bus-stop to meet me in Brighton and on to a pub for our chat. He waves away any suggestion he might have considered retirement by explaining the final



“WHEN ‘PHENOMENON’ CAME OUT AND ‘DOCTOR DOCTOR’ WAS THE SINGLE, CHRYSALIS SOLD 20 COPIES! I WENT UP THE WALL. I SAID, ‘GIVE ME THE RECORD, I CAN GO DOWN OXFORD STREET AND SELL MORE THAN 20 COPIES!’”

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