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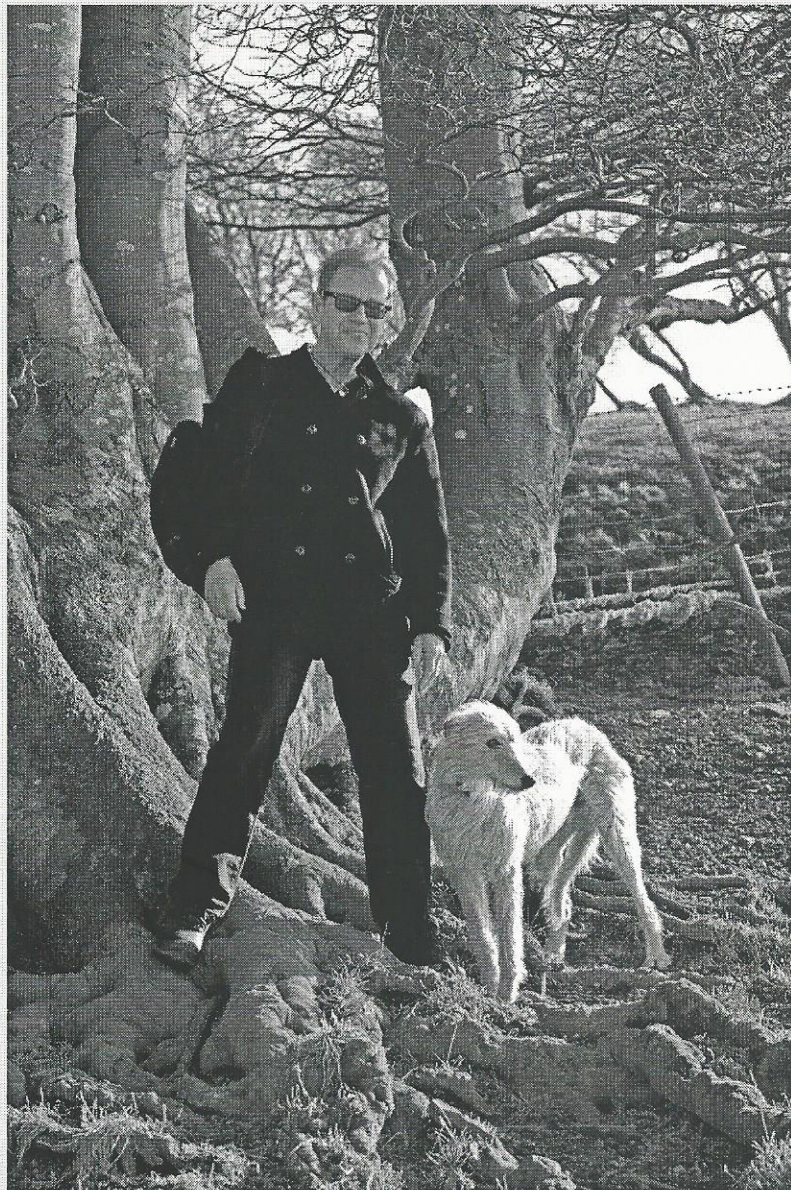
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John Jones and the Reluctant Ramblers – Feet Don't Fail Me Now tour



John Jones of folk rock legends Oysterband is about to set off on the most challenging tour of his life – as he'll be WALKING to each of the venues on the route.

Part endurance test, part completely mad idea, and part celebration of

the British countryside he loves, Feet Don't Fail Me Now will see John walking the tour – appropriately, in two legs – from his home in the Welsh borders to two of the country's best folk festivals, and stopping to play gigs at around a dozen venues along the way. The first leg, in May, will bring him from Herefordshire to Wychwood Festival in Oxfordshire. The second leg sees him hiking to The Big Session, the festival hosted by the Oysterband at De Montfort Hall in Leicester.

Some days will see John powering more than 20 miles over rugged terrain to reach the evening's destination – only to play a full-blown gig on arrival. He'll be joined en-route by various Reluctant Ramblers – surprise celebrity guests from the music world who will be pulling on their walking boots and trying to match John step for step. Various Reluctant Ramblers will even be joining him onstage at each of the gigs.

So is hiking the new rock and roll? "You'd be surprised," John laughs. "I'd always thought serious walking must be a bit boring, but I've been a keen walker for about 10 years now. I've spent so much of my working life travelling, but it's mostly been sitting in a tour bus, watching the countryside out my window and trying to catch a glimpse of the hares in the fields. It felt like a missed opportunity."

John is particularly passionate about the border country where he lives, the untamed Welsh woodland contrasting so strongly with the tidy black-and-white villages of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The first leg of the tour will see him stopping in the celebrated book town of Hay-on-Wye, the pretty little village of Titley in Herefordshire, Leominster, Hereford, Worcester, Cheltenham and Nettlebed.

The tour cuts a swathe right through some of Britain's most beautiful countryside, and John says that re-connecting the music with the landscape has been one of the main inspirations behind the tour and his soon-to-be-released solo album: "A lot of the songs I'm singing are traditional, and some of the ones I've written for the album have a real sense of place. I'm not a very urban animal; I feel folk music to be rural and open. When I sing, I'm visualising the story, and the landscape is a big part of that. These songs, and this tour, are completely different from what I do with the Oysterband. It's almost a way of coming at the music at a different pace."

There certainly won't be any of the usual rock-star embellishments - a hot bath and a hearty pub meal are the most thrilling items on the rider, but John finds this surprisingly appealing: "You know, we've come through an extraordinary period of self indulgence – and musicians are always quite indulged! There's something about walking; it makes you conquer your selfishness and meet very personal challenges. And there's a great exhilaration in finishing things when there's pain and a bit of a struggle involved. But you get through that, and it's an amazing feeling."

Walk this way: some additional information about the Feet Don't Fail Me Now tour

- One of John's first serious walks was the annual Radnor Ramble, which takes in 25 miles in a single day
- He has walked across Wales in two days – on three separate occasions.
- The first leg of the tour will cover around 100 miles in 8 days of walking; the second approximately 75 miles over 6 days.
- Wychwood festival takes place 29 – 31 May at Cheltenham Racecourse
- The Big Session Festival takes place 19 - 21 June at De Montfort Hall and Gardens in Leicester
- Tour dates for the first leg of Feet Don't Fail Me Now are:

Thursday 21 May, The Globe, Hay-on-Wye / 01497 821 762 /
www.globeathay.co.uk

Friday 22 May, Titley Village Hall, Titley / 0154 423 1383

Saturday 23 May, The Blue Note, Leominster / www.thebluenote.co.uk

Monday 25 May, The Barrels, Hereford / 01432 278118 / 01432
274968

Wednesday 27 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester / 01905 611427 /
www.worcesterlive.co.uk

Friday 29 May, Wychwood Festival, Cheltenham / 01993 772580 /
www.wychwoodfestival.com

Monday 1 June, The Village Club, Nettlebed / 01628 636620 /
www.nettlebedfolkclub.co.uk

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