

# all over the shop

## THE CULT SHOP

*A pleasing purveyor of quality and quirk*

## FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

*A trinity of channels for charitable urges*

## THE SMART MONEY

*Studying form for the speculative enthusiast*

## THE GANNET

*Tucker tips for the galloping gourmet*



## WRY SOCIETY

# the ageing rocker

Reggie rejoices when his rebel rock band decides to re-form, but is he hip enough for an all-singing, all-dancing world tour?

I'm afraid the hip replacement simply cannot wait until after the world tour, Mr Black." Reggie's doctor was looking at him over his half-moons like he was a naughty schoolboy. If only he were a naughty schoolboy. Then he could blow a raspberry at the pinstripe, kiss his cutie receptionist and hotfoot it down Harley Street shouting, "Come and get me, you big Tory numpty!"

Oh, to run... to feel the wind in his hair (extensions)... to be young and free. His generation had wanted

to die before they got old, not go lame like a herd of old donkeys. They were the baby boomers, for goodness' sake. They were wired to boom! Not fizzle out in an old armchair.

Ever since Len, the band's frontman, had called him from his boutique vineyard in Mougins and suggested re-forming, Reggie had been up at 11am every morning finessing his riffs. Retirement was groovy and everything, but fly-fishing and alpaca breeding weren't exactly rock 'n' roll. There were only so many village fêtes

a man could open before he started to ferment like a pot of old marmalade.

Plus his funds weren't totally limitless. When a girl looked as good as Inka, she usually came with a high price tag – and in Inka's case, a large extended family, now ensconced in the west wing. At last count, he and the three other band members – Len, Mickey and Phil – had 23 biologically proven children between them, not to mention nine ex-wives, 15 vintage cars and two-and-a-bit Jackson Pollocks (Phil's third wife had only got two out of three parts of their triptych in the divorce settlement). Not bad going for a bunch of pretty boys from Barking.

Their rise from grammar school to Grammys had been stratospheric... and fairly hard to remember. As Mickey, the philosopher in the group, had said: "You don't burn that bright without falling on your backside." When Len

## How many fêtes could he open before he started to ferment?

was sent to prison for tax evasion in 1999, it seemed the obvious moment to disband. They had stayed in touch – meeting up once or twice a year at Phil's film premieres (his production company, Phil It In, was making some top-drawer biopics) and Mickey's art exhibitions. Unfortunately for Reggie, the group softie, this had resulted in him having to build another barn on his estate just to house Mick's watery watercolours of electric guitars.

Of the four men, Reggie was the most excited about the reunion. Last year he and Inka had choppered out of Glastonbury in a rage after watching a succession of teenage muppets prancing about in front of 20,000 people. If that was rock 'n' roll, he was Dolly Parton.

But as with everything in his life, Reggie hadn't been very moderate in his preparation for the world tour. In a misguided attempt at getting fit, he had embarked on a gruelling training programme – one half-hour jog a day followed by a series of stretches and exercises. It was the lunges that had got him. He'd lunged more like a 24-year-old reaching for a groupie than a 73-year-old reaching for a ginger nut, and – pop! Hip and pelvis.

"Please, doctor. I'll do anything, if you just give me a couple of months' grace."

The pinstripe shook his head firmly.

"Free tickets to the Miami show?" Reggie offered, weakly.

As he limped out onto Harley Street, Reggie took a deep breath and dialled Len's number. No gyrating, no high kicks, no strutting their funky stuff; Len was going to be livid.

"Lenny, mate, it's Reg. I'm afraid I've had a bit of a blow."

"Inka left you, mate?"

Reggie had to hold the phone away from his ear while Len's wheezy laugh subsided into a cough.

"No mate. I've, erm, I've gotta have a hip replacement next week, so I won't be as full of beans on the tour as

I'd hoped. The doc says I'll probably have to play sitting down."

Off Len went again, laughing till he coughed up the other lung.

"Well that's lucky, mate, seeing as it's an unplugged tour. You didn't think we were going to be strutting our ancient bones did yer, you daft git?" **CHLOE FOX**