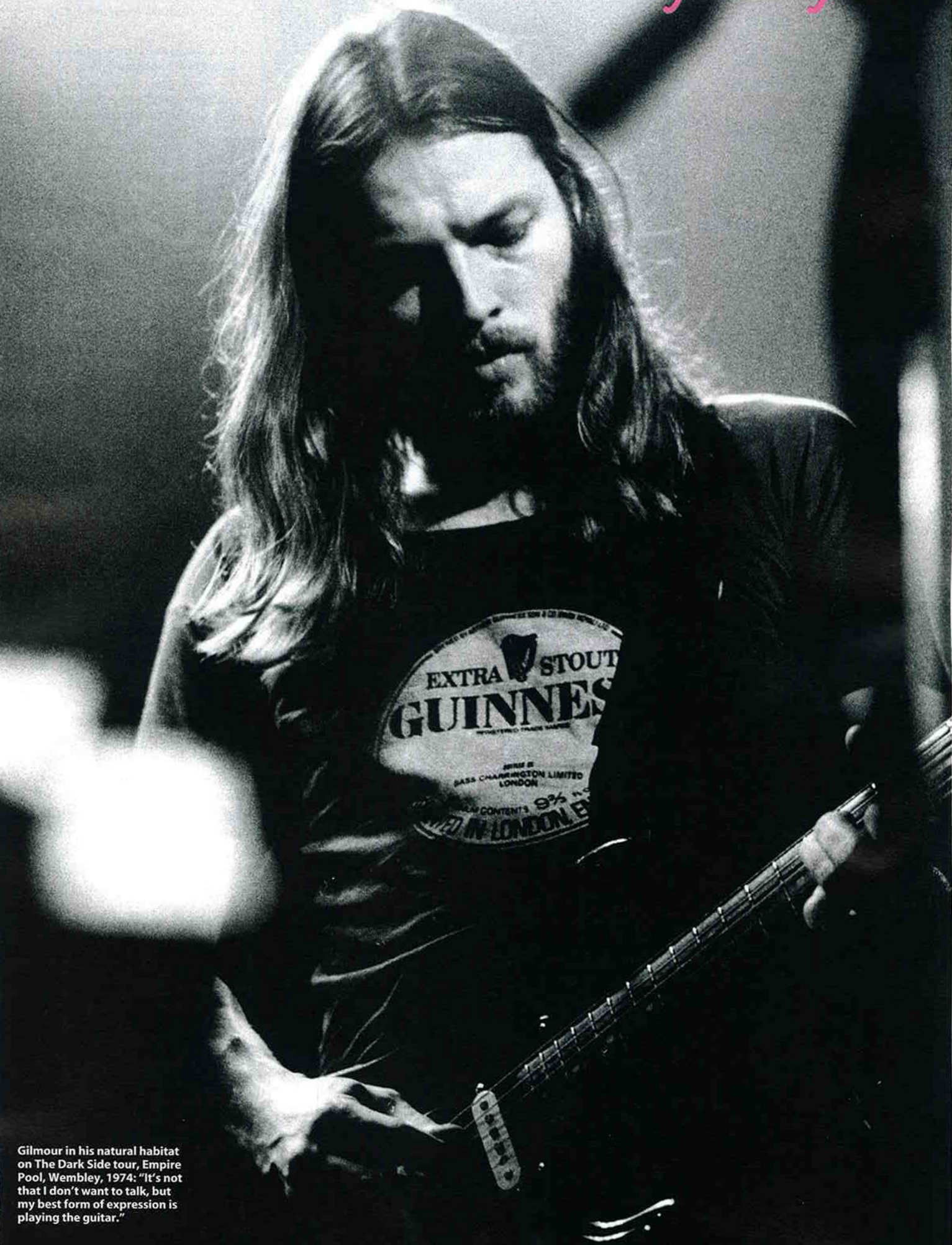


"I was 13... it's been pretty scary."



Gilmour in his natural habitat on The Dark Side tour, Empire Pool, Wembley, 1974: "It's not that I don't want to talk, but my best form of expression is playing the guitar."

In The Beginning...

...there was **Rado Klose!** Meet Floyd's original guitarist and Gilmour's childhood blues buddy.

"I LEARNED A lot from Rado Klose," says David Gilmour. "I've known him since we were literally born. He's a couple of years older than me and he's a brilliant guitar player. I used to learn a lot of stuff with him when I was 13 or 14."

To ardent Floyd fans Rado is better known as Bob Klose, the band's first guitarist who left in mid-1965 and who was last seen on 2002's recently reissued *The Pink Floyd And Syd Barrett Story* DVD.

"I don't know whether David actually took guitar lessons from me," says Klose today. "But we both played guitar together and David had the most amazing musical ear, even early on. I remember when The Ventures' *Walk Don't Run* came out [in September, 1960], he was one of the first guys that picked up how to play it. It took the rest of us a lot longer. David would have been a musician in any capacity, whatever happened in his life. That's what he is."

While in the mid-'60s Gilmour toiled in Cambridge groups, Klose joined Roger Waters, Nick Mason, Syd Barrett and Richard Wright in The Pink Floyd Sound.

"I have good memories of being in the Floyd, but I never thought, This is something I could make a living out of," recalls Klose. "It was a very collegial thing, a bit arty. Back then most people probably thought that you couldn't make a career out of it. But Syd had just begun to write his own songs, and you could see that he was going to become an irresistible force, and it was going to happen whether or not I left. His writing gave them the push to stop just doing R&B covers and go off in a more original direction."

Klose's only recordings with Pink Floyd consist of *I'm A King Bee* and *Lucy Leave*, two rare tracks recorded at Regent Sound Studios in London. Before the fledgling Floyd could record any more, however, Klose departed.

"I left because I felt it was time to change direction," he explains. "I felt adrift. The question everyone asks is, 'Would I have left had I known what was going to happen with the Floyd?' And, probably I wouldn't, but I probably should have. In the same way that Dave is a musician, I am a photographer. I wouldn't have picked up on that had I stayed in Pink Floyd – and that would have been a huge mistake in my life."

Today Klose is indeed a successful photographer, but he

refutes the suggestion that he left Floyd purely because of the band's musical shift away from their early R&B and blues roots.

"This idea that I left because I had issues with the psychedelic aspect of the band is way too glib. Also, the idea that the Floyd were a drugs-sodden shambles is an absolute nonsense. Syd was experimenting in that way. It influenced the music he played, but he didn't have to be stoned to do it."

I heard Floyd after I left and I even played a couple of gigs with them – as a stand-in."

His association with the band and Gilmour also means he is ideally placed to view Floyd's recruitment of his old friend.

"Syd was the rocket fuel but Dave was the steady burn. I know that Roger had this amazing creative impulse but a great band needs a great musician. You need someone that can sing and play and do all the very musical stuff aside from the grand concepts. They were extraordinarily lucky to find Dave."

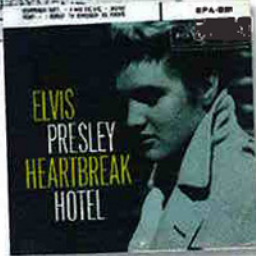
In the intervening 40 years since his time in Floyd, Klose has remained friends with Gilmour, his musical journey coming full circle with his appearance on the latter's *On An Island* set.

"It was great to play with David again," he concludes. "I'm proud of what he's achieved."

By Mark Blake



The Pink Floyd Sound (above) with Rado Klose, second right; a youthful Gilmour digs Elvis (left and below).



OK. But are you religious?

No, atheist. I've never had any religion. I'd prefer it if I did really. Even as a boy I just couldn't make myself believe. Mortality has been on my mind since I was 13.

That's young to be thinking about death. What happened then?

It wasn't one event, but it became a major terror. Suddenly realising what it all meant. I had to start getting used to the idea of my eventual demise. Very scary it was and it's been pretty scary for... Strangely enough, though, as I get older, while it's still on my mind, it's no longer a worry or particularly frightening. There's a coming to terms, to an extent a resignation to what will be. (Jumps up) Look! Black and white swans!

So there are, gliding gracefully above the river. Gilmour says he's never seen the like before. Later, when he checks the bird book in the studio, there's no mention of them. Mystified and excited by what he's seen, he offers tea before we resume our conversation, and head back to his roots.

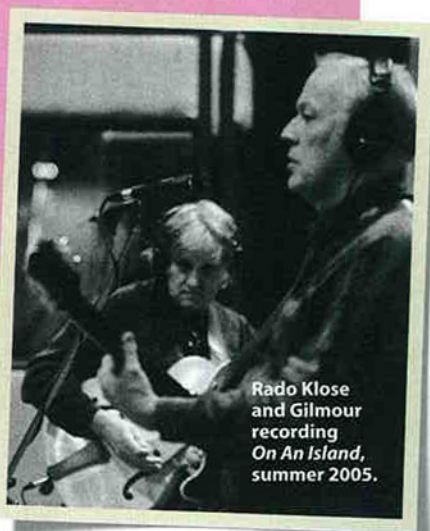
Cambridge gave David, his sister and two brothers the idyllic childhood you might imagine, with biking and boating extensively featured. His father was a zoology and genetics lecturer at the university, his mother a teacher then film editor (on *Junior Points Of View*). After

a few moves they ended up at one end of Grantchester Meadows, a natural playground. When Gilmour wasn't outdoors, Bill Haley and Elvis Presley on Radio Luxembourg were grabbing his imagination by the lapels. "Heartbreak Hotel was staggering, so spare, so perfect," he enthuses. "God, it's great. I still try to capture that magic. I don't see why you can't draw a line from Heartbreak Hotel to *The Dark Side Of The Moon*."

When his parents visited America, they brought back a stack of blues and folk 78s, plus Pete Seeger's teach-yourself guitar book and LP. At 13, he borrowed a guitar and soon realised that music was all he wanted to do. He started joining bands and gigging locally. Nothing glorious, just student bars, tea rooms, village halls, US air bases. Meanwhile, Gilmour and education fell out. He left the Perse public school – founded 1615, with a motto enigmatically declaring: "He who does things for others does them for himself" – where he'd been a day boy, and transferred to the tech, but then dropped out of his English and French 'A'-levels "in order to burn my bridges. I thought, I don't want to go to university, I'll give this a miss."

Veering away from educated middle-class expectations, he drove delivery vans and humped sheet metal or breeze blocks to buy a PA and microphones. Although he reckons, as a guitarist, he "wasn't very good for a very long time", by 1965-6 he was playing seven nights a week – popping Dexedrine and blues to keep going – with Cambridge's favourite party band, five-part-harmonied 4 Seasons fanciers, *Jokers Wild*.

One night, they even had Paul Simon yelling Johnny B. Goode with them when they supported him at a Cambridge birthday party in a marquee on a rich man's lawn (the house later featured on the cover of Floyd's 1969 set *Ummagumma*). Also on the bill was another band, with Cantabrians Syd Barrett on guitar and Roger Waters on bass, and Londoners Rick Wright on keyboards and Nick Mason on drums. They were hawking over whether to bill themselves as The T-Set or The Pink Floyd. But let's not get ahead of ourselves here...



Rado Klose and Gilmour recording *On An Island*, summer 2005.