

BANTRY-BASED DRUMMER STILL GETTING SATISFACTION FROM THOSE HEADY DAYS

'The Stones weren't like rock stars, they were real people'

■ Sarah Horgan

A MUSICIAN who became Rolling Stones star Ronnie Wood's right-hand man is still receiving fan mail at his West Cork recording studio years after touring with him.

Wayne P Sheehy who was born in Worcester and raised in Bantry, toured with Ronnie Wood and his band from 1990 to 2000.

The drummer also worked on a number of records with the star who he still remains friends with.

Wayne rose to fame in his own right back in the eighties with the band Cactus World News. The group had a huge fan-base at the time.

One day, while on tour, Wayne was greeted by a cake outside his dressing room. "There was a note on it saying 'this will be our wedding cake'," he recalled.

"Those were the kind of fans we had back then. This particular woman continued sending gifts. It did freak me out a bit at the time. To this day, I still get stuff from her. It's mostly just cards that arrive at the studio from her now. Other people send me items associated with my business, Ocean Studios. "They might be blue or connected with the theme of the studio in some way."

But the attention of fans today fades into insignificance in contrast to his touring days.

"I can remember sitting down with Ronnie one evening in our dressing room when something extraordinary happened," he said.

"I thought Ron was teasing when he nudged me and told me to look at the skylight. At that moment a man came through the ceiling.

"He was hanging eight foot off the ground and looked a bit like Meatloaf in his heyday. A pile of CDs and vinyls had fallen with him. I said let's call 'Wolfey' who was our security guy at the time."

However, Ron stopped me and said: "let's just see what he has to say."

What happened next left Wayne highly amused.

"He explained that he couldn't get tickets for the show and wanted Ronnie to sign his albums. I went to get him a drink and Ronnie signed everything.



Wayne P Sheehy, who was born in Worcester and raised in Bantry, toured with Ronnie Wood and his band from 1990 to 2000.

"He kept saying thank you. Ron joked that if he said thanks once more time he would have him thrown out. We had to be very careful as we had received a death threat not long before that from someone saying they had a gun in the audience.

"However, we still made sure he could watch the show from the side of the stage. He turned out to be a normal and very nice guy."

While Wayne loved gigging, he stressed that the real fun happened on the tour bus.

"Ron had never done the tour bus thing and enjoyed the novelty of it. Each night we would all sit in it together and watch recordings of that evening's concert."

He described the surreal touring experience. "I can actually remember one member of the band taking baths in champagne. We used to raid the crew's tour bus like pirates to steal their cigarett

ttes and booze when we ran out. It was a really fun time."

But Wayne always kept his feet on the ground.

"I was raised in West Cork so was a real culchie. That definitely put manners on me. I think that's how I survived all the craziness."

The Bantry native puts his success in the industry down to hard graft.

"One thing leads to another in the music industry. If you do a good job it spreads like wildfire."

His initial meeting with Ronnie hadn't gone as planned.

"I got dropped off at Ron's house in a Morris Minor. It actually hit a pillar on his property, but that didn't matter to Ron.

"I was only meant to be doing one song but ended up working on five or six. I got a message at a soundcheck saying that I was to contact the Stones office. When I did, they asked me what I was doing for the next three years.

"When Ron said I was going to be his drummer I didn't believe it."

Wayne eventually struck up a friendship with the other Rolling Stones members too.

"They weren't like rock stars. They were real people who didn't tolerate 'BS'," he said.

Wayne is now enjoying a quiet life in West Cork but enjoys catching up with friends in the industry.

"I've had a few well-known guests here. They love West Cork as it's a great place to just hide away. West Cork people are brilliant around celebrities and always very respectful."

Wayne has been lucky enough to share the stage with a host of musical icons in his time such as Bono, the Edge, Hot-House Flowers, Damien Dempsey, Van Morrison and Rod Stewart.

His business Ocean Studios in Kilcrohane has welcomed celebrities a little closer to home including renowned financial advisor Eddie Hobbs, who penned the lyrics to the song 'Trump is a Langer'.

■ To find out more about Wayne's colourful life in the music industry visit www.oceanstudiosireland.com



Rolling Stones stars Mick Jagger and Ronnie Wood.

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