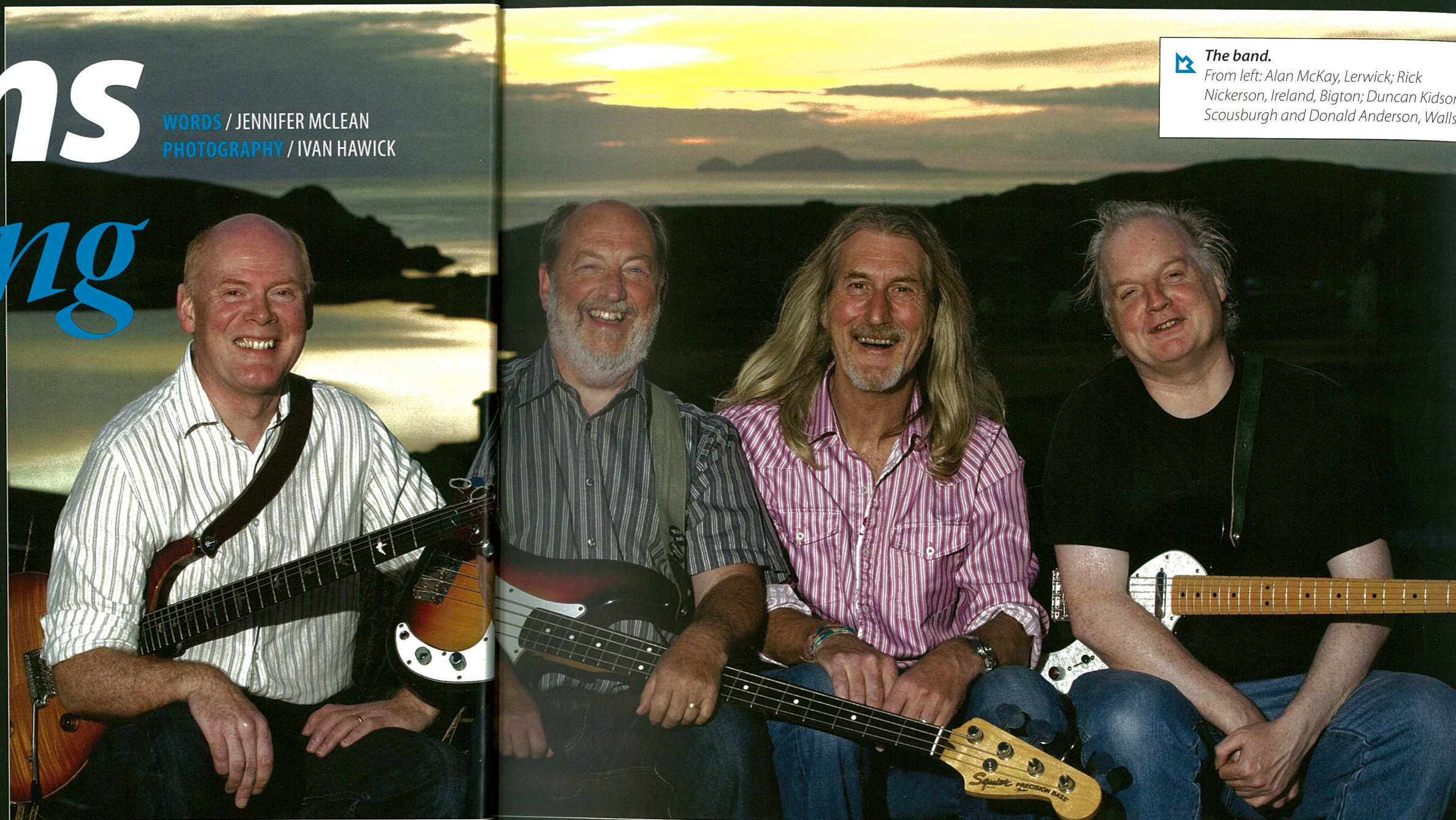


# Sultans of swing

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**The band.**  
From left: Alan McKay, Lerwick; Rick Nickerson, Ireland, Bigton; Duncan Kidson, Scousburgh and Donald Anderson, Walls.



**T**HE DONALD ANDERSON BAND is celebrating the release of their debut album, *In Passing*. Recorded in Ronavik Studios in Aith, with the help of Marvin Smith in mixing and production, this collection of contemporary rock songs has been three years in the making.

Lead vocalist, guitar and harmonica player Donald Anderson is joined by Duncan Kidson on drums, Alan McKay on guitar and Rick Nickerson on bass and vocals. The album showcases a variety of influences brought to each song by different members of the band with flavours such as rhythm and blues, reggae and folk complimenting their common love of rock music.

Donald has been writing songs for many years and released a solo album in 2005 called *Waterhead Sky*.

He said: "I've always been more interested in songs and singers so I listen to a wide variety of stuff."

Donald began playing guitar when he was around 18 and was "obsessed" with working out songs. This passion for lyrics and music was soon coupled with a love of playing that has never left him.

"If I had the opportunity, I probably would play just about every night. I do really enjoy playing, it's some sort of attention seeking thing. I've always really enjoyed it and got something out of it and it doesn't matter whether it's playing in a situation with an audience, or just to practise at Duncan's, or going to Alan's for a tune on the acoustics or I'm sitting in my own kitchen - it sometimes comes even to that."

The band began in its initial form around ten years ago, with Donald and Duncan the two remaining original members. Duncan, originally from Whitby, North Yorkshire, got his first drum kit when he was just nine years old and played in various bands from school onwards, taking inspiration from the likes of Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin.

Later, they recruited the experienced Rick Nickerson on bass. Rick, originally from Canada, played professionally at one time in his career, recording on the Tom Cochrane album, *Hang on to Your Resistance*. Rick has always been a fan of British bands such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, but his biggest influence has come from his lifelong favourite, The Band.

The last piece of the jigsaw was highly regarded guitar player Alan McKay. They were initially apprehensive about approaching Alan for fear he wouldn't be interested. But the "guitar god", as Duncan described him, duly accepted. Alan started on the bagpipe chanter as a bairn but soon switched to guitar when he discovered he could "make more noise with an electric guitar". He's never put his guitar down since.

Alan said: "It was country players I really liked, like Jed Atkins, but

then I heard the stuff of Jimi Hendrix. I played in country bands with Hendrix licks!"

He added: "Anything that tickles your ear or makes you feel something - classical, jazz, anything that's got a bit of heart and soul in it - that makes it good."

With the line up becoming settled the band began playing gigs including a slot at the first Flavour of Shetland in 2007. Having initially played material from Donald's solo record they moved on to develop his new material as a band. Having creative input is something each member very much enjoys and together they decided to release the album.

Duncan said: "I played in a north east working men's club circuit band which was probably the hardest and most interesting time of my life. We played everything from the hit parade at the time - it had to be that. But I always wanted to play in a band where we did our own stuff. It's really refreshing and I think that's why we keep going. Doing your own stuff means you can put your own ideas in. Even for a drummer, it's great."

Rick added: "We started working on the new stuff and we decided, lets do it, lets do a CD, just to have it for posterity. It just evolved and we've actually got another 10 songs that we could do another CD

next week."

In order to distribute the CD, Rick set up his own record label, Making Waves Records. Although its initial purpose was to serve as a vehicle for the band, Rick now has a number of other projects in the pipeline.

Duncan joked: "We're still waiting to see how much the record label is taking off us."

The band have a pretty relaxed rehearsal schedule as they juggle this with full time careers - Donald, Literature Development Officer for Shetland Arts, Duncan, the section leader for engineering at NAFC Marine Centre, Alan who owns his own architecture practice and Rick, councillor for Shetland Islands Council. They get together whenever they can, usually about once a month and play occasional gigs, for example at the recent Shetland Blues Festival and the Tall Ships Races. Donald and Alan also play occasional acoustic gigs.

With Alan being the only native Shetlander, the other three members have been influenced by everything Shetland has to offer. Donald was born in Hong Kong and grew up in the west of Scotland. He came to Shetland in January 1992 to take up a post as an English teacher at the Anderson High School in Lerwick.

He said: "There's something about living here. There's something

about the culture of this place that kind of inspires. It's to do with the place, the landscape and the weather, but it's also the culture. It is a really positive place and there are a lot of people who are really supportive.

"There's quite a little network of folk that I can talk to about song writing and stuff and then the band is really important because before I didn't have the same outlet for the songs. I think it's really important that it gets out there and it's not just you sitting in the kitchen or wherever. Working with the band and having that outlet has been really important. The same possibilities didn't seem to present themselves in other places that I've lived. There's much more music just happens here."

Rick agrees: "There's a lot of peer support in Shetland and you find that whether you're a painter or a singer-songwriter or a poet - there is a strong affinity with talent and creativity here. It's an amazing place."

*In Passing* is on sale now at local shops including High Level Music and Clive's Record Shop. It is also available to download on the internet. The band hope to officially launch the CD in Shetland in October.

For more information visit [www.thedonaldandersonband.com](http://www.thedonaldandersonband.com)