

Beggars Banquet

When is an album born? Is it when the first lyrics are written? The first notes played? The first track is laid down? Or is it later, when the accumulated efforts of the artists begin to look like something that needs a name? Or does it take an album cover sleeve? Something from which we remove and return the album, with a strong visual connection? The Stones entered Olympic Studios in London on March 17, 1968 to begin a roughly two-week session during which they would begin recording songs that would appear on *Beggars Banquet*. The album remained unnamed for 111 days. It would not be released until December 6, 1968 153 days after it was publicly named.

Every good Stones fan knows the story of the “graffiti” cover for *Beggars Banquet*, fewer know that was not the first choice for the album cover. This is the story of how *Beggars Banquet* came to look like an invitation that was embarrassingly close to the Beatles *White Album*.

The Rolling Stones needed a win, “Cause you see I’m on a losing streak.” Andrew Loog Oldham was gone, Keith who stole Brian’s girl may have had her borrowed by Mick who was filming love scenes with her in *Performance* as Keith penned *Gimme Shelter*. The drug busts had slowed but their aftermath churned on, Brian was on his way out and the rock and roll lifestyles went on. After the psychedelic debacle of *Their Satanic Majesties Request* the new album was a make or break endeavor. Mick had hoped to have the album come out on June 26, his 25th birthday. You can’t always get what you want.

In an unauthorized biography, Keith Richards is quoted as saying, “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” is my fucking favorite of all Stones songs.” It was one of the first cuts for what would become *Beggars Banquet*. But Decca Records pressured the Stones to de-select it as an album track and release it as a single Decca felt

Christopher Henry Gibbs (29 July 1938 – 28 July 2018) was an Englishman as well as an aesthete, dandy, antiques dealer, and lover of Morocco. He has been credited with inventing Swinging London and was also a regular presence in the Stones social circle. Jagger is said to have seen Gibbs as his entranceway to a life that the singer dreamed about but couldn’t achieve until he met a sponsor to the world of being a proper Englishman. Gibbs, an antique collector, felt the beauty of the past. He is credited with styling the photo session that was to have produced the album’s cover as well. Gibbs designed sets for the 1970 film *Performance* and is godfather to one of Mick Jagger’s children.

was long overdue. That left *Sympathy for the Devil*, track 1, as the undeniable centerpiece of the new album and it could easily have been the attention-grabbing concept for the entire album. Unfortunately, *Their Satanic Majesties Request* spoiled that possibility and a different title was needed. Keith Richards tells us the album’s title was thought up by Christopher Gibbs, a man of wealth and taste, who was decorating Jagger’s Chelsea flat in the summer of 1968. That title - *Beggars Banquet* - brings to mind Old English legends of kings waiting at tables on serfs. It also aligned nicely with the Stones’ British reputation as lords of misrule. Some thought the title was an allusion to the Beggar’s Opera, written by John Gay and Johann Christoph Pepusch as more of a satirical anti-opera than an opera. They were mistaken.

Michael Joseph was chosen to shoot the photographs for the new album based on his extensive advertising portfolio. Joseph cites his White Horse Whiskey ads from 1965 as work that drew the attention of the Stones. One ad featured Paulene Stone in a white bathtub in a lavish set with a white horse breathing down her neck. Another ad featured a panelled boardroom scene, which inadvertently had a Mick Jagger lookalike sitting on the table, surrounded by advisors, smoking cigars with a white



White Horse Whiskey ad

horse at the head of the table. This was wacky stuff for 1965 and it apparently appealed to the Stones. The Stones and their labels, Decca for the UK and London for the US, were looking forward to a summer release for the new album. As the album neared completion Mick decided on a little time-tripping that would reposition the Stones as the heirs and legatees of the courtly troubadours of Old. The Stones would play Grail-seeking jongleurs on a mission to preserve the romantic mysteries for a self-destructive nuclear world. For the cover the Stones wanted a photo with the power to shock. The first attempt would be a highly stylized and overtly art-directed shoot that presented the album's title in literal form, with a cast of characters at a medieval banquet table. The album cover would have the Stones dressed as medieval minstrels attending a dissolute feast in a crumbling manor. The search for a site was on.

Sarum Chase, a neo-Tudor mansion at 23 West Heath Road, Hampstead, London was identified by Joseph and Jagger as the site for the interior photoshoot. Described as a "pure Hollywood Tudor" it was built in 1932 as the home and studio of portrait artist Frank O. Salisbury by Vyvyan Salisbury, his nephew. Sarum is the old name for the town of Salisbury. On 7 June 1968, it was the setting of an interior photoshoot for The Rolling Stones' still unnamed album. It rented for £45 a day.

The band's reputation for questionable behavior may have informed a conversation Joseph had when he went to scout the location with a representative of the British Council of Churches to whom Salisbury had bequeathed Sarum Chase on his death in 1962. Concerned that the banquet and animals might leave a mess Joseph learned the B.C.C.'s only concern, 'was if there might be "ladies" in it'. Joseph questioned the representative about this and his reply was, "Well, Mr. Joseph, if any of the ladies are naked we charge £10 extra".

The site had been dressed by Jackie Crier, hired by Joseph to be the stylist for the shoot. Joseph and Crier had been introduced by David Puttnam, later Baron Puttnam, who had a photographic agency and represented them both at that time. Crier also dressed the band in their fabulous tatterdemalion attire.

Bill Wyman noted that the Stones hired two bays in the Cadogan Square car park for three full days from

Sir Jack Hobbs was cricket's most prolific batsman. He finished with 61,237 first-class runs and 197 centuries, most of them stylishly made from the top of the Surrey or England batting orders.

<http://www.espncricinfo.com/england/content/player/14225.html>

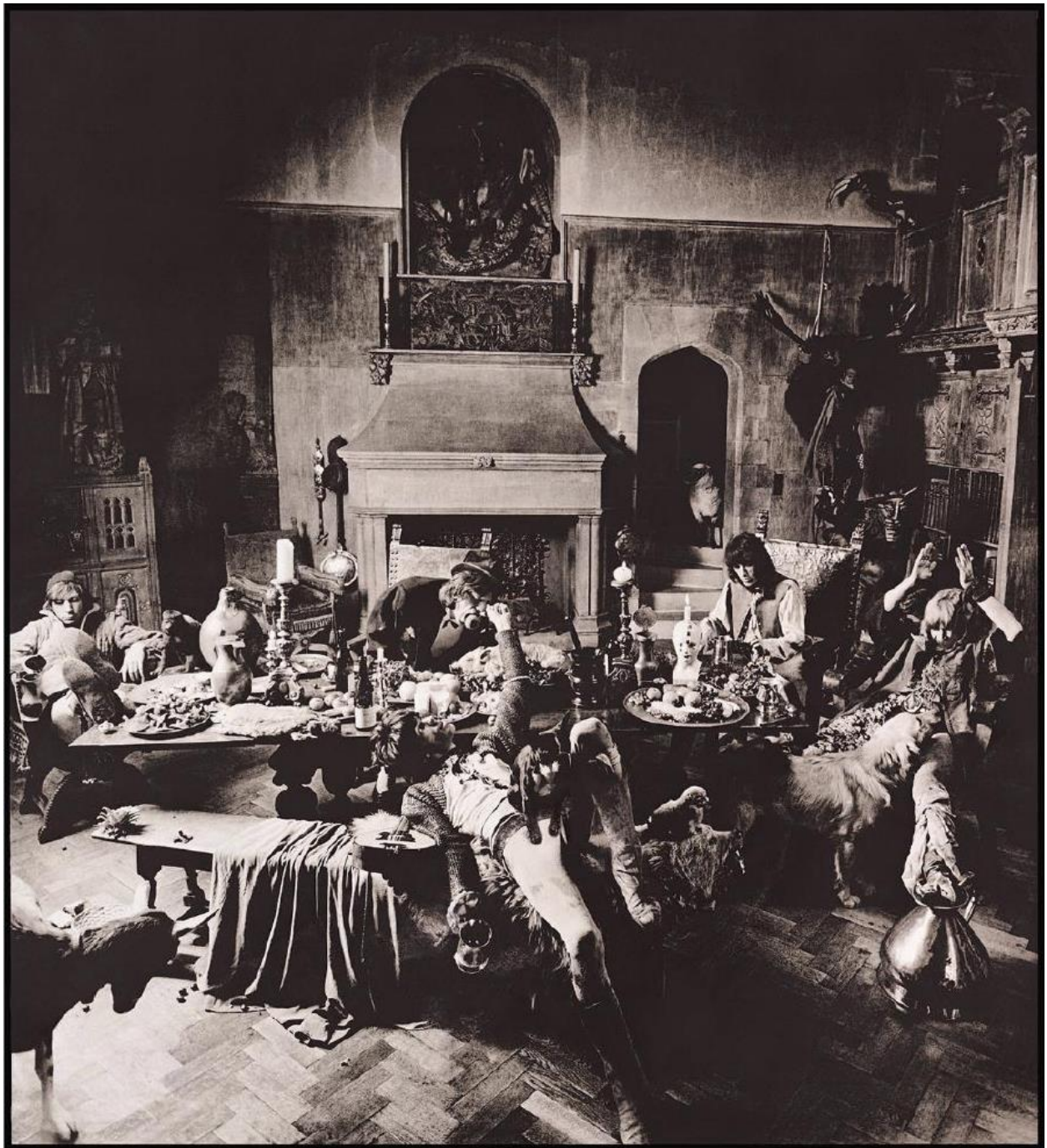
June 7 for the purpose of painting a grand piano, a prop for some photos. The office ordered 5 pairs of cricket pads, stumps, bails, two balls and two bats from the cricket firm of Jack Hobbs. From theatrical costumiers Berman and Nathan the Stones ordered some outlandish costumes. Mick dressed as a swell (a person dressed in the height of fashion or a person of high social position or outstanding competence) wearing trousers, top hat, a tailcoat and pumps. Charlie dressed as a stable groom and wore shirt,

tricorn, breeches, waistcoat, boots and stock, and a black skullcap. The rest of the Stones wore assorted hats, boots, cord trousers and medieval tunics. To vary the costumes there were also black skullcaps, a variety of medieval shirts, breeches, seven pairs of tights, tunics and rough leather jerkins on hand.

Joseph had only two hours to photograph the band at Sarum Chase. Let Michael Joseph take the story from here, “When the Stones arrived punctually at 11am, I was coaching the animals – a goat, a sheep, a cat and three variously sized dogs – with my megaphone, my Sinar 10×8 large format camera was on an impressive monopod and we had very impressive lighting, a giant swimming pool light on a tall stand and a few strobe strips at odd angles, and the table dressed with bizarre stuffed animals, food including a suckling pig and luckily a few bottles of a very good claret that I had from a previous shoot. They were awestruck!” Describing his megaphone technique for controlling the animals, Joseph said, “I made all sorts of noises through the megaphone to keep them amused and they obeyed me implicitly,’ he says, ‘luckily the Stones also behaved likewise! They could relax and I’d shoot on “three” and a few odd noises later!”

Joseph describes the scene, “We only had two hours for the whole session, so literally within 10 minutes, the band were all changed. They just put on whatever costume they fancied and we didn’t bother with makeup – it wasn’t necessary. I put Keith Richards in the centre of the photo because he was the best-looking and the youngest. Bill Wyman, not so good-looking, so we put him further back. On the right, Brian Jones was very happy playing with a labrador. Charlie Watts was chatting up the stuffed monkey that’s on the table. Mick was happy to be centre-stage, standing on the table, cuddling some of the animals. There were other shots from this session where he’s holding a baby eagle, but then he got bored with that.”

The room at Sarum Chase was decorated in medieval style with a huge banquet table including a suckling pig that cost £25. Pictures were taken in a variety of garb and poses. Samples can be found here and with a careful Internet search, see for example <https://www.snapgalleries.com/portfolio-items/michael-joseph/>. A photograph, reasonably close to that used for the gatefold, is shown below.



Sarum Chase photo by Michael Joseph



Sarum Chase as it looks today is seen at left. Over the course of June 7-8, Joseph shot a sequence of photographs to use as an album cover and to promote the new album. The first day was at Sarum Chase, the second day at Swarkestone Pavilion. The Stones enjoyed working with Joseph enough that at the end of the June 7 shoot Mick Jagger invited Joseph and his girlfriend to travel to the next day's location in his car with Marianne Faithfull. The following

Google Earth view of Sarum Chase as it looks today

day, June 8, the Stones drove in convoy up the newly opened M1 to Swarkestone Hall Pavillion, near Derby. Mick and his party in his Daimler sped along as Bill Wyman and his long time (1967-1983) girlfriend Astrid Lundstrom in their Mercedes 250 trailed Keith and Tom Keylock, chauffeur and fixer for the Stones, in Keith's Bentley at speeds up to 120 mph. They all arrived well before Crier who was travelling in a van with both the Sinar camera and the props for the shoot. To keep everyone occupied as they waited for Crier, Joseph began shooting numerous little cameos with his Hasselblad.

For the second straight day the Stones donned tattered bygone threads while smoke bombs were used to create atmosphere in a field where the grass was so long they could hardly walk. Anachronistically, cricket was played for some of the photos. Joseph took as many shots as possible in hopes that one would produce an album cover or a suitable bit of promotional art.

These shots were to have been used for the cover of *Beggars Banquet* and for publicity photos. Michael Joseph had chosen a ruined 17th century jousting pavilion called Balcony field for the shoot. The pavilion stands in a large field called The Cuttle, named for a creek that runs through it, near the ruins of Swarkestone Hall. The original purpose of the building is not known. It may have been a grandstand, summerhouse, or, appropriately for the shoot, a banqueting house. It was chosen from among several candidates because this site was derelict and a total ruin. Even the grass was considered perfect. When Crier arrived, Joseph shot the back cover shot first. In it the band played cricket in the long grass of the field, a three-legged piano, recently painted white, stood wonderfully incongruous in the rural scene.



Balcony Field cricket photo by Michael Joseph

The final shots of the photo session were to have produced the front cover. They feature the Rolling Stones lying in the grass in front of the pavilion with smoke atmospherically pouring from its windows. The cover could have been one of the following photos.



Balcony Field front cover candidate photos

The photo sessions with the Stones dressed as tramps and beggars in medieval costumes did not inspire Mick. No cover photo emerged from the shoot, although one of the photographs that the band

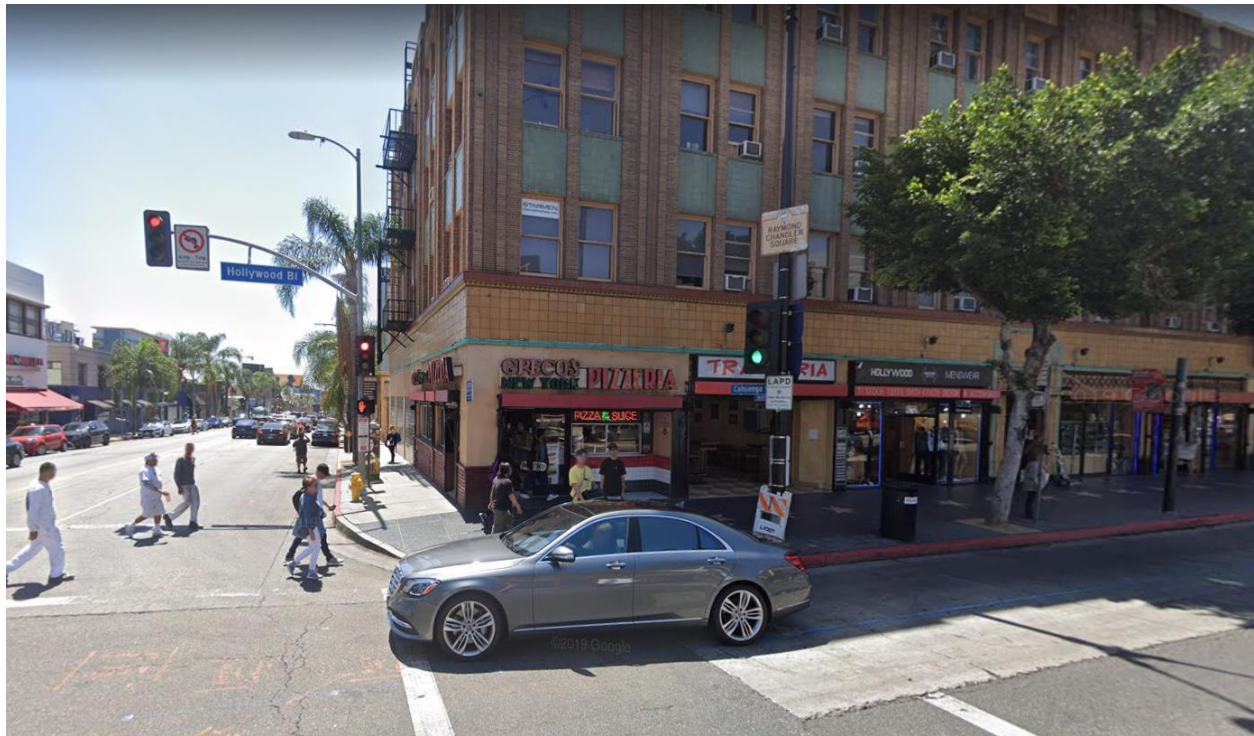
commissioned from Joseph was chosen for the gatefold artwork. After the shoot on June 7, Joseph had one of his banquet photographs, which he had shot on Kodak Kodalith, a super high contrast 35mm black and white film, printed up. The next day while having tea after completing the Swarkestone shoot he showed the print to Jagger. "Did Mick go over the moon!", Joseph says, "He had never seen anything like it. But he felt it was boring in black and white, so he took it away and to my horror he hand-coloured it very garishly..." Jagger's hand-coloured version of the photograph is how it appeared on the album sleeve and, as Joseph concludes, 'the rest is history'.

The photos taken over these two days evoked the work of Old Masters such as Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel. Depicting the group dressed in outlandish clothes seemed to blend Swinging 60s London with the Dickensian rascals they depicted. The recording sessions for *Sympathy for the Devil*, documented in Jean-Luc Goddard's film, *One Plus One*, had begun three days earlier at Olympic Sound Studios in Barnes, south west London. The sessions would continue for three days after the photographic shoot. It seems appropriate that this song evolved around this particular shoot. One might even speculate that the experience of this multi-layered and unconventional shoot may have even influenced the tempo of the tracks, lending an epic historical sweep to the musical style of the album's signature song. None of the photos would make the cover of *Beggars Banquet*. The search was on for an alternate album cover was on.

Mick, Marianne Faithful and Jimmy Miller flew to Los Angeles on July 5 to join Glynn Johns to do some mixing on the album at Sunset Sound Studio. On July 6, the Rolling Stones officially announced the title of their next album would be *Beggars Banquet*. Charlie and Shirley Watts arrived July 9, on July 20 Keith, Anita Pallenberg, Michael Cooper and Gram Parsons joined the group. While in LA Mick, Keith and Anita came across some particularly filthy lavatories with graffiti-covered walls. Bill Wyman says Mick, Keith and Anita had a "brainwave," which was presumably to shoot one of these walls for the album cover.

Art director Tom Wilkes is credited with the idea to photograph a seedy toilet at a Porsche repair shop in LA. The photos were taken by Wilkes' business partner, Barry Feinstein, who began his career as a Life photographer. Feinstein was also the husband of Mary Travers of Peter, Paul, and Mary. Michael Vosse, himself a journalist and records publicist, in a written description of how the cover was made said, "Tom Wilkes did the front cover drawing with crayons on the grungy wall of the tiny bathroom at a Porsche dealership above Hollywood Blvd. and Cahuenga- Barry Feinstein shot the wall."

On July 26, 1968 Wilkes, Michael Vosse and Feinstein, collectively known as "The Corporate Head," brought Jagger and Richards, (in some versions accompanied by Anita) to the bathroom of Wilkes' Hollywood Porsche mechanic to enhance the graffiti on the wall. Let Vosse continue the story from here, "We brought Mick and Keith to the site but did not tell them how vile the bathroom was. There was about an inch and half of thick dark liquid on the floor and the place stank. The boys arrived in velvet suits and expensive Italian shoes, we'd waded into the muck. Mick looked startled when he peered into the loo, Keith just laughed. Meanwhile Tom and Barry had scrubbed the lettering off the wall. We gave Mick and Keith crayons and felt pens and they wrote the credits and everything else on the back cover. Their shoes were soaked and covered with god knows what was in that thick liquid. Their beautiful bell bottom velvet pants were soiled from the bottom cuffs up about four inches. And they got into it. Laughing, hooting even stomping in the muck to splash more on their clothes. Took them almost an hour. They left giggly and happy in their limo." Feinstein added a few inscriptions of his own before taking the back-cover photo.



Google Earth view of presumed Porsche repair shop site where Beggars Banquet graffiti cover was shot.

The Graffiti

Mick and Keith showed the photos to the managers of their record companies. What did it take to shock the United Kingdom and the United States in 1968? Less than it does now. The first proposed cover for Beggars Banquet is shown below, the front cover on the right the back cover on the left. Each item of graffiti is identified by a number. Most of the entries have been identified and are shown between quotation marks. Unintelligible entries or partial entries are indicated by question marks. The cover with a graffiti guide is shown below. Items are coded by location on the album cover. Words appear in quotations. Question marks are used when some or all of the graffiti cannot be clearly discerned.

Graffiti-coded Beggars Banquet front cover:

00. Part of a drawing
 0. "Savoy, super???"
 1. Skull and cross bones and "Death before dishonor USMC"
 2. "Freaks"
 3. "Downey"
 4. Shooting five-point star
 5. Kilroy was here cartoon
 6. "Beef jerky-sectioned and formed"
 7. "Wilmas love"-torso with breasts and pubic triangle
 8. "Froskey"
 9. "Randy '68"
10. Stylized cross with five rays of light "Toon Unkle"
11. "-13-"
12. "Alan, tengo la madre colgando solas" (Alan, I have the mother hanging alone)
13. "Peter is a faggot"
14. "THE ROLLING STONES"
15. "God rolls his own!!"
16. ">El gato<"
17. Peace sign
18. "Lyndon is a friend of mine"
19. "All roads???"
20. "Herb Alpert 1963 ???"
21. An Ankh
22. "Taco thighs"
23. "Dear Carol I want you to know that I love you when I was sitting here" *signed* "Barry"
24. "Snack time"
25. "Bob Dylans Dream"-near a red blotch of paint, under it a handle and a squiggle to the toilet flush handle, this is a song title from the *Free Wheelin' Bob Dylan* about being reunited with loved ones
26. "Keep out!"
27. "Here I sit broken hearted came to"-*the rest is smudged but likely read "shit but only farted"*
28. "Sid 68"
29. "Gail Cahn 442 S. 12th St S. F. Calif. HO 1-2177"
30. "Oh so red"
31. A loopy squiggle as if aroma coming from an empty bottle on toilet top
32. X's to right of bottle
33. A right hand with "LOVE" on the 4 fingers
34. Bar of soap
35. Champion spark plug sticker on underside of toilet lid

For "art" the front cover has the torso of a naked woman whose left nipple is shaped like a heart. The U.S. Marines graffiti is decorated with a crude skull and cross bones. Other artwork includes a radiant cross, Kilroy, a shooting five-point star and a peace sign. An ankh, probably a right hand tattooed with L-

O-V-E and the flush handle that appears to be Dylan's Dream round out the art on the front of the sleeve. There is a roll of soiled toilet paper that appears as if it may have been used affixed to the left wall. To the right of the toilet there may be an old can of cleanser and the orange handle of a plunger.

The back of the album sleeve shows a different view of the same lavatory. This is clearly the wall as doctored by Mick and Keith. The corner sewage pipe and the top of the toilet confirm this is the same location. The absence of a toilet paper roll on the rear of the cover appears to be a result of a different angle for the shot. There are no clear common elements of graffiti on the two shots, save for the arrow head pointing to the flush handle found on the toilet tank itself, so Wilkes and Feinstein did a thorough job of scrubbing the wall clean. Given the controversy that arose, it is interesting that the graffiti on neither the front nor back cover is as bawdy, sexual or juvenile as graffiti often tends to be.

Graffiti-coded rear cover photo

36. "You are here"
37. Naked woman parachuting and "Parachute woman land on me tonite"
38. "Spanish Tony where are you"
39. "what's ??? baby"
40. ???
41. "crannis"
42. "Prodigal son"
43. Factory girl with a factory spewing smoke and a girl whose hair is made of smoky curls
44. "Prodigal son written by Reverend Robert Wilkins"
45. "Picnic on Pluto"
46. "Zappa in the sistern" (they must have been tempted to use Zappa in the crappa)
47. "Produced by Jimmy Miller"
48. "[Ring Fremont 9627 after 7]"
49. "Dave thanks"
50. "Beggars Banquet"
51. "Stones"
52. "Studio Olympic in London"
53. "Mick Keith wrote it" inscribed in a heart
54. "Charlie Watts"
55. "Bill"
56. "Hank Ruby Tuesday"
57. "Boy scouts"
58. "Jigsaw puzzle"
59. "Corporate head"-aka, Tom Wilkes, Michael Vosse and Barry Feinstein
60. "Watch out for a sunset show west of Azusa St."
61. "no they didn't"
62. "Meet me at Leicester Sq 11 pm-Ricky" (A notorious gay cruising spot)
63. "yes they does"
64. "Sunset Sound in L.A." (the US studio)
65. "Why"
66. "Music from big brown"— parodying the Band's country classic Music from Big Pink, this is a known Keith contribution

67. "is a day pray while you sit"
68. "???" to the ???"
69. "Stray cat blues"-with a drawing of a strange stray cat
70. "Is all a lie"- with a squiggle over is
71. "F. Bartram Bartram" – Google sources identify several Frederick Bartram's as English citizens
72. "Who's anal"
73. "Rent-a-cop"
74. "No expectations meet me at the station"
75. "Ronald Regan is a sissy"
76. "Brian is a paranoid genius"-with a stylized X above his name
77. "you can trust ME"
78. "Engineers – Glyns, Eddie, Gene, Ricky" (Glyns John, Eddie Kramer, Gene of the unknown surname)
79. "Jaime in South America"
80. "The credits Barry (photo) Tom (graphics) Vosse lives" photographer Barry Feinstein, graphic designer Tom Wilkes, Michael Vosse
81. "Lyndon loves Mao XXX"
82. "take heed Tom Keylock"
83. "St. Christopher (Gibbs)"
84. "And Dave XX" (Dave Mason?)
85. "Taj"-with a drawing of Taj Mahal
86. "Dear Doctor"
87. "Stones"
88. "You F. O."-with 3 UFO's drawn below it
89. "Thanks, Nicky"- encircled in a heart
90. "Marahishi was here"
91. "(P)Rick"
92. Drawing of a cross
93. "Street fightin' man"
94. "Hello troops and Korea"
95. "What here too" part of the 3 UFOs
96. "beggars banquet"
97. "Sympathy for the Devil"
98. Profile of a long haired man with a big nose, if done today I'd say Ron Wood
99. "Lester Pursky must be joking"
100. "John loves Yoko"- encircled in a heart
101. ???
102. Cock and balls drawing
103. R????
104. "John Michelle LA" (Phillips)
105. "Rocky on Bongos" (Rocky Dijon)
106. "Nutter"
107. Star of David in a circle
108. "Wot no paper!"
109. "There'll always be an England"
110. "Strawberry Bob for President" under an American flag drawing (Bob Fraser)

- 111. "If you want something hot call me ???"
- 112. ???
- 113. Heart with a trident arrow through it
- 114. "Lenny you are great a fan" (Lenny Bruce)
- 115. "The salt of the earth"
- 116. "A horse a horse my kingdom for a horse—W. Shakespeare"
- 117. "Jimmy Sloane was here"
- 118. "there was a young lady from ??????"
- 119. "Kee???"

The artwork on the back is a tad more elaborate, perhaps reflecting the artistic bent of its creators. The parachute woman is nude with her arms fully extended above her head as she appears to alight with her feet in the first position. A very clever factory girl looms above a factory, her hair tight ringlets of smoke from the factory smokestacks. The features of her face comprise a smaller factory with a single smoke stack. The strange stray cat is diabolical in appearance. Three UFO's appear poised for an attack on the sewage pipe. A little farther to the right is half a profile of a long-haired man with a long and prominent nose. He is a little reminiscent of Ringo Starr. A Christian cross looms behind the profile, a Jewish star of David appears to the left and below the profile. Neither is far from Sympathy for the Devil.

The Taj Mahal is depicted crudely near the cross. A heart, pierced by either a trident arrow or a three-pronged fork floats on its own or it is possibly attached to the Lenny Bruce tribute. Strawberry Bob's endorsement for president is topped by a stylized American flag. An arrow points toward the toilet top. Hearts encircle John and Yoko, Thanks Nicky, and Mick Keith wrote it. The latter heart is pierced by Cupid's arrow. Prodigal Son, No Expectation and Music by Big Brown are all crudely "circled." Then there is the ubiquitous cock and balls drawing. The remnants of the hand with LOVE on the fingers is faintly visible at the top of the toilet tank. All of the artwork is simplistic and with one exception, it is devoid of most of the bathroom wall's classic artworks.

The Stones loved the cover. The record companies didn't.

In early August the Stones office learned that both Decca and London had refused to release the album with the toilet cover. The graffiti on the toilet wall caused Decca to erupt. Sir Edward Lewis, the founder of Decca Records, rejected the image out of hand. Vosse takes up the story again, "After the head of Decca saw the design he freaked out-said the cover was disgusting and pornographic and refused to release it." He told Mick the graffiti picture was in dubious taste. Meanwhile, London Records in America, also rejected the cover insisting that it had to have the name of the band to ensure maximum sales. The battle was on.



Mick's response to Sir Edward, found in the British press, was that he found the picture of an exploding atom bomb on Tom Jones's *Atomic Jones* LP released by the same company more upsetting and offensive.

Mick later said, somewhat tongue in cheek, "We really have tried to keep the album within the bounds of good taste. I mean we haven't shown the whole lavatory. That would have been rude. We've only shown the top half! Two people at the record company have told us that the sleeve is terribly offensive. Apart from them we have been unable to find anyone else who it offends. I asked one person to pick out something that offended

Atomic Jones LP cover found more offensive
by Mick Jagger than the graffiti cover of *Beggars Banquet*

him and he quite seriously picked out Bob Dylan. Apparently Bob Dylan's *Dream* on the wall offends him... We've gone as far as we can in terms of concessions over the release of this sleeve. I even suggested that they put it in a brown paper bag with Unfit For Children and the title of the album on the outside. But no, they wouldn't have it. They stuck to their guns... It was simply an idea that had not been done before and we chose to put the writing on a lavatory wall because that's where you see most writings on walls. There's really nothing obscene there except in people's own minds... We'll get this album distributed somehow even if I have to go down the end of Greek Street and Carlisle Street at two o'clock on Saturday morning and sell them myself."

Selected excerpts from Andrew's Blues

...Come and get it little Andrew, before
Sir Edward takes it away from you,
Come on get her cunt Sir Edward, come
on now...Sir Edward where are you,
Andrew is makin through
Andrew, come on Andrew shit
Oh fuck Sir Andrew, yeah!

Decca refused to release *Beggars Banquet* with the cover the Stones had chosen. The Stones refused to change it. Decca had signed the Rolling Stones out of fear of repeating their failure to sign the Beatles. They enjoyed great success with their records but too much of what Sir Edward and Decca were doing was the result of luck. The Stones operated almost independently of Decca, they did not even use their recording studios after early 1964. Sir Edward appreciated the importance of the Stones to his label, if not their work. The Stones made their feelings about Sir Edward

brutally known in the unreleased song *Andrew's Blues*.

Glyn Johns, the engineer for *Beggars Banquet*, also worked for Decca, he said, "I believe Sir Edward took legal advice and discovered that if Decca had put out the sleeve they would probably be sued for obscenity. From that level on there was a big lack of communication and Allen Klein was in the middle. Klein is a strange man. I think his greatest secret is not telling artists exactly what is going on, and not telling the people he is dealing with what is going on but letting them feel they also know. I don't think Decca ever felt that they knew what was going on. Sir Edward was always saying to me, 'I'm not sure what's going on,' and I think one of the great things he wanted me to do was to have direct communication with Jagger on a very informal basis, just so that we could make sure that we knew that everything that we were saying and we were agreeing to was getting back to the Stones."

Keith, with no record to promote joined the fray, saying, "The job of the record company is to distribute. All they've got to do is put it in the shops, not dictate to people what they should or should not have." Mick said, "What it all comes down to is that we design the sleeves and make the records—just like we have been doing for the last five years." Mick later added, "What really worries me is the principle of being dictated to over our product by our distributors. I am opposed to all forms of censorship. The only censorship one can have is by the artists themselves, which we do subconsciously anyway."

Decca and London refused to release the album until another cover was submitted. The Stones dug in their heels and refused to cave. Keith was especially adamant, "What the Beatles and ourselves wanted—the most important thing—was to break the record companies' control. If you're writing songs and you're playing 'em, nobody should have the right to tell you how it should be done. You make the record, and you give it to the company."

The battle over the cover was deadlocked. Even so, the record needed to be promoted. Mammoth color posters of the eventual gatefold photo went up on hoardings in London, Manchester and Birmingham. These cost £450 a month and it is the first time a rock band used such a promotion technique. Unfortunately, they were advertising an album that no one could buy and fans were getting restless.

Keith recalled in 1971 "They really wouldn't budge. It stopped the album coming out [sooner]. Eventually it got to them saying, 'We don't give a shit if your album never goes out.' After that, we knew it was impossible and started looking around to do it differently."

Decca may have been thinking of how rival EMI had to recall 500,000 copies of a Beatles album because of the cover problem in 1966. EMI's U.S. subsidiary, Capitol Records, showed the Beatles, in butcher smocks, laden with chunks of raw meat and the decapitated bodies of dolls. The Stones insisted that unlike the Beatles of two years ago, they will not change their cover. "We don't find it at all offensive, so we must stand by it," said Mick Jagger. "If we allow them to dictate to us what we can and cannot do in the way of packaging, next they are going to try to tell us what to sing." The lawyers for both sides must have made out handsomely. While the impasse dragged on, the Stones were poking the bull by hinting that the cover of their next album whose subject is the Pope, would make the graffiti wall cute by comparison.

The deadlock which had symbolically begun when the photo was shot in July threatened to extend into November. The all-important Christmas season for record sales was approaching and the deadlock had to be broken. The Decca chief would not budge, he was willing to eat the loss. Meetings were held at Decca house between various Stones, Allen Klein and Sir Edward Lewis. Vosse said, "So, the cover was replaced with a hastily thrown together mock dinner invitation." The Daily Mail on October 30 said the Stones lost their fight on the toilet cover "Now a new sleeve, in the form of an invitation card, has been designed." In the end the stubborn antiauthoritarian band succumbed. Sir Edward said "We agreed to dump the graffiti design. We finally settled on an acceptable cover for *Beggars Banquet*." The compromise produced agreement on an invitation to the Beggars Banquet. The album was released with a simple cover in the form of a wedding invitation with the name of the band and *Beggars Banquet* in black italics with RSVP at the bottom. Originally slated for release in the summer of 1968 the cover controversy had pushed the release of *Beggars Banquet* into December.

Michael Vosse reports that “London Records refused to pay but the Stones paid us in full. And we won Rolling Stones Magazine’s best album cover of the year. The only time it’s been given to an album cover that was not released.”



Deadlock breaking compromise cover for *Beggars Banquet*

Turn the sleeve over and you will find the ten songs enclosed listed in two facing columns of five titles each. Center bottom you will find writing, production, recording, and engineering credits with the notation “All selections Gideon Music-BMI.” There is also the note, “We are deeply indebted to Nicky Hopkins and to many friends.” The record label appears along with an annotation about the fidelity of the enclosed LP. London Records’ address makes up the remainder of the rear cover for the US release.

The first sleeve was printed by Garrod and Lofthouse International Limited with the notation "Patent Pending" and of course, the Decca label. The time between the cover design decision and manufacturing was, undoubtedly, very short. There would have been no time to register the Patent. That notation was removed from later pressings.



The cover debacle made the Stones resolve that their next album for Decca would be the last. It is pretty safe to say that the Stones' discontent over the situation led directly to their interest in starting their own label. "Around this time, the band also learned that the corporate parent of Decca was using the record company's vast profits to

No Expectations provided Brian's last moment of greatness with the Stones as he played shimmering slide guitar lines over the sober lyrics of blues desolation.

underwrite research for its military radar and arms business. Incredibly, the Stones realized they'd been contributing to the Vietnam War effort."

The cover design bears a resemblance to the Beatles White Album that pinhead Beatles fans are much too quick to make much too much of.

The use of a gatefold in an album was popularized in the 1960s and *Beggars Banquet* had an elaborate one. One of the June 7 photographs taken at Sarum Chase found its way into the *Beggars Banquet* gatefold. This was the Beggars' Banquet. It is a black and white photo with the hands and faces of the Stones roughly flesh colored, there is a green apple that looked suspiciously Beatles-esque. Knowing this is a reproduction of some of Mick's doodlings leaves no doubt the apple was skewered on Keith's knife and Mick was quite deliberate in his intent to take a bite out of this apple, in an obvious and clear dig at the Beatles, their friendly competition. Red marks on a bust are also present, complements of Mr. Jagger.



Beggars Banquet gatefold

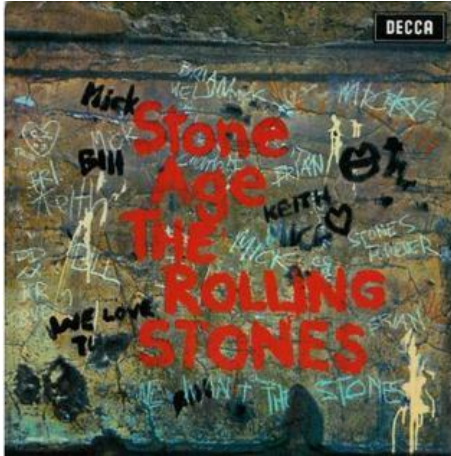
The banquet room has a long wooden table as its centerpiece. Chairs flank its ends and a bench parallels its bottom side in a room dominated by a large fireplace and a recessed stairwell. There are two stuffed monkeys, three dogs, a goat, and a sheep in attendance, although the sheep is reticently lurking in the stairway. A stuffed moose, pheasant and toucan grace the far-right wall, although the toucan has been cropped out of the gatefold. Garrod and Lofthouse printed for most UK record companies besides Decca. They were given special permission to produce the Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet*, one of Decca's first gatefold sleeves, as Decca's in-house staff could not manage the complex production to the volume required.

Charlie, on the far left. Has his feet up on the table, his hands are at rest. There is a serving plate of mushrooms on the table foreground with a plate of bread behind it. There is a capped pitcher in the center of the table with a (stuffed) monkey sitting behind it. Dead game sets on the table to the right of

the mushrooms. Apples and a banana rest on a plate behind the game. There are scattered wine bottles and candles large and small found on the table.

A goat with its head under the bench graces the left front foreground. The left side of the bench is bare,

In 1971, Decca Records released *Stone Age* a compilation of songs that had never appeared on a UK studio album. The Stones strongly opposed this release. In full-page ads in *Record Mirror* and *NME* on 20 March 1971, they stated, "We didn't know this record was going to be released. It is, in our opinion, below the standard we try to keep up, both in choice of content and cover design." The cover was, ironically, filled with graffiti, so recently judged to be in poor taste.



blemished by an upside down mushroom and a pineapple top. The right side is draped in a fine cape that abuts a magnificent bearskin, its menacing head extending from the end of the bench, upon which a second monkey perches. There is a troubador's lute resting on the collar of the cape and Keith's right shoulder rests on the lute. There is a pewter beer stein with a hinged lid in his right hand. His left arm is extended across the table, the knife in his hand has skewered a vivid green Beatles-like apple, which Mick prepares to take a huge bite out of. On Keith's lap sits a black (Staffordshire bull) terrier named Jocko, with a white forechest. Near his left foot is a small dog of uncertain provenance. By Keith's head is a plate of cheeses and tomatoes.

Across the table Mick rises from his chair and leans across a table strewn with plates of fruit, bread, an eggplant and to Mick's left a roasted piglet and a large bunch of grapes. Mick is dressed in tattered formal wear. Behind Mick is the grand fireplace that is not in use. It is flanked by a bellow.

Above Keith's knee there appears to be a wooden bucket with a masher or sprinkler in it. Nearby is a candle stand with a spherical candle alit upon it. Bill Wyman sits at the corner of the table in a leather vest and puffy shirt with ties instead of buttons. In his right hand is a stein, his left hand

draped on the arm of his chair. On the table before him are more round trays of apples, grapes, oranges and bananas. An odd white bust with scored skin and a lighted candle in its head sets on the table before him. The bust has red rectangles from the crown of the head to the bridge of the noses, a red star on its right cheek.

Brian sits somewhat away from the table at the corner opposite Bill. On that corner rests a pewter mug and short wooden rod. Brian's breeches are festooned with colorful scarves tied about the knees. A large buckle with a breechloading pistol stuffed into his belt are obscured by a great feathery retriever dog. Both hands are raised above his head, a scarf tied about his right wrist. He wears a brocade shirt with a vestcoat on top.

Continuing the medieval theme the Stones office tried to book the Tower of London for a press party to announce the album's release but it was not available for commercial events. On December 4, 1969 Brian, Charlie, Mick and Bill dressed as beggars for a seven course Elizabethan banquet including boar's head at the Kensington Gore Hotel. A custard pie fight broke out after Mick hit Brian in the face with a piece of pie.

Between Brian and Bill there is what appears to be an apelike figure wearing a wooden voodoo mask, foreshadowing the Voodoo lounge cover. Up the stairway over Bill's right shoulder is the sheep. Behind Bill's chair is a scarfed moose and stuffed pheasant.

Beggars Banquet was the Stones' first masterpiece. Some say it is the album that changed everything for the Stones. The delay in the cover art may have actually had an even more significant effect on the future of the Stones. The downtime gave Mick time to make his acting debut in the

film *Performance*. It was there that he had a torrid onset affair with Keith's woman, Anita Pallenberg. So, the cover controversy played an interesting role in Rolling Stones dynamics. Mick and Anita coupled and Keith erupted, likely setting the stage for future rifts among the Stones. Losing your best girl to your best friend was a big one to swallow.

It was not until 1984 with the initial CD remastering of *Beggars Banquet* that the original cover art was released. In 2002, ABKCO Records remastered and reissued *Beggars Banquet*, this time restoring each song to its proper, slightly faster speed. These differences were subtle but important, and the remastered version is about 30 seconds shorter than the original. The 50th Anniversary reissue includes both covers.

So, when did *Beggars Banquet* become an album? The band can speak for the band. For us fans it becomes an album when we first encounter the album cover. That is what we see and experience first. We may have heard a few songs on the radio but *Beggars Banquet* became an album when we first laid eyes on the cover art. There it was, an invitation to attend a Beggars' Banquet. Flip and you saw the list of songs, you hoped they would be good ones. We struggled to remove the shrinkwrap and opened it to a complex gatefold of a medieval feast hosted by and for the Rolling Stones. And us.

Now I wonder, how might it have changed my impression, my enjoyment, my memories of this album, if I had held the graffiti encrusted album cover in my hands in the summer of 1968. It may have taken me longer to crack it open as I perused the graffiti but I think my enjoyment would have been affected not at all for me, but who knows. I was oblivious to the back stories, to the art, to the process of making music and creating an album. I was drunk on the Stones music and I needed another round, they could have covered the album with the Stones in medieval garb at a jousting pavillion and I would have been no less intoxicated. Or so I think, 50 years later.

Sources

Bockris, Victor. (1993) Keith Richards The Biography. Simon and Schuster, New York.

Bowyer, Alison. (1999) Delia Smith The Biography. Andre Deutsch Limited, London.

Clayson, Alan. (2008) The Rolling Stones Beggars Banquet. Flame Tree Publishing, London.

Davis, Stephen. (2001) Old Gods Almost Dead The 40-Year Odyssey Of The Rolling Stones. Broadway Book, New York.

Egan, Sean. (2005) The Rolling Stones And The Making Of Let It Bleed. Unanimous Limited, London.

Fornatale, Pete (2013) *Myths & Stories From Half A Century Of The Rolling Stones 50 Licks*. Bloomsbury Publishing, London.

Greenfield, Robert. (2014). *Ain't It Time We Said Goodbye, The Rolling Stones On The Road to Exile*. Da capo Press, Philadelphia.

Greenfield, Robert. (2006) *Exile On Main Street A Season In Hell With The Rolling Stones*, Da Capo, Philadelphia.

Janovitz, Bill. (2013) *Rocks Off 50 Tracks That Tell The Story of The Rolling Stones*. St. Martin's Press, New York.

Karnbach, James and Bernson, Carol. (1997) *It's Only Rock And Roll, The Ultimate Guide To The Rolling Stones*. Facts on File, Inc., New York.

Margotin, Philippe and Guedson, Jean-Michel. (2016) *The Rolling Stones All the Songs The Story Behind Every Track*. Blackdog and Leventhall Publishers.

Norman, Philip. (2012) *Mick Jagger*. Harper Collins: New York.

Richards, Keith with Fox, James. (2010) *Life*. Little Brown and Company, New York.

Selvin, Joel. (2016) *Altamont The Rolling Stones, The Hells Angels, And The Inside Story of Rock's Darkest Day*. Harper Collins, New York.

Wyman, Bill with Coleman, Ray. (1991). *Stone Alone the Story of a Rock 'n' Roll Band*. Penguin, New York.

Wyman, Bill with Havers, Richard. (2002) *Rolling With The Stones*. DK Publishing, Inc., New York.

<http://www.espncriinfo.com/england/content/player/14225.html>

<https://www.snapgalleries.com/portfolio-items/michael-joseph/>

<https://www.udiscovermusic.com/stories/beggars-banquet-rolling-stones-album/>

<https://50licks.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/beggars-banquet-album-cover-controversy-extended-book-excerpt/>

<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/sir-edward-lewis-mn0002055282/biography>

<https://ultimateclassicrock.com/rolling-stones-court-controversy-over-beggars-banquet-cover/>

<https://mouchegallery.com/portfolio-item/michael-joseph/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beggars_Banquet

<http://www.feelnumb.com/2011/04/19/the-rolling-stones-beggars-banquet-dirty-bathroom-toilet-album-cover/>

<https://www.stonesondecca.com/the-60s-london/beggars-banquet/>

<https://www.popsike.com/Rolling-Stones-Beggars-Banquet-LP-TOILET-GRAFFITI-COVER-SLICK/221128956844.html>

<https://www.stonesondecca.com/the-60s-decca/beggars-banquet/>

<https://recordmecca.com/item-archives/rolling-stones-album-cover-proofs-for-banned-beggars-banquet-toilet-album-cover-from-art-director-tom-wilkesarchive/>

<https://themusicuniverse.com/the-rolling-stones-beggars-banquet-50th-anniversary-edition-detailed/>

<https://50licks.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/beggars-banquet-album-cover-controversy-extended-book-excerpt/>
https://dangerousminds.net/comments/chris_jagger_the_rolling_stones_photoshoot_for_beggars_banquet_1968
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beggars_Banquet
<https://www.snapgalleries.com/portfolio-items/michael-joseph/>
<https://www.stonesondecca.com/the-60s-london/beggars-banquet/>
<https://tapeop.com/interviews/18/phil-brown/>
<https://slate.com/culture/2018/12/rolling-stones-beggars-banquet-50th-anniversary-1968-album.html>
<https://www.stonesondecca.com/the-60s-decca/beggars-banquet/>
https://web.archive.org/web/20120312214353/http://www.metroimaging.co.uk/ourwork/ourworkexpanded.asp?ourwork_id=8
<http://cavehollywood.com/rolling-stones-beggars-banquet-50th-anniversary-edition/>
<https://iorr.org/talk/read.php?1,988482>
<https://www.ft.com/content/2b312c24-6570-11e0-b150-00144feab49a>
<https://www.udiscovermusic.com/stories/beggars-banquet-rolling-stones-album/>
<https://thedailyhatch.org/2017/03/27/music-monday-rolling-stones-1968-beggars-banquet-full-album/>
https://dangerousminds.net/comments/chris_jagger_the_rolling_stones_photoshoot_for_beggars_banquet_1968
<https://www.snapgalleries.com/portfolio-items/michael-joseph/>
<https://recordmecca.com/item-archives/rolling-stones-album-cover-proofs-for-banned-beggars-banquet-toilet-album-cover-from-art-director-tom-wilkesarchive/>
<https://gottahaverockandroll.com/rolling-stones-1968-beggars-banquet-gatefold-lp--lot266.aspx>
<https://www.thelondonmagazine.org/interview-rolling-stones-beggars-banquet-michael-joseph/>
<https://pleasekillme.com/mick-jagger-christopher-gibbs/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/oct/17/the-rolling-stones-beggars-banquet-michael-joseph-best-photograph>