

GQ

Edition Britain



MUSIC

New Hope Club on their dream collaborations with 'BTS and Paul McCartney'

By [Daphne Bugler](#)
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Each week, we ask one artist or band a set of quick-fire questions that all start with 'the first', from their first albums to the first time they fell in love. Up next is New Hope Club...

Reece Bibby, Blake Richardson and George Smith made their name originally as a support act for The Vamps, with whom they share a management team, but the trio are now headliners in their own right, with shows lined up across the continent for when lockdown is over.

New Hope Club found their fame online. Starting with viral videos originally on their Musical.ly account, the band have won over thousands of fans across their social channels, using social media as a way to connect and share content with their engaged audiences. They regularly cover songs by artists with well-established followings, from [Harry Styles](#) to [Lewis Capaldi](#), tapping into existing fanbases and constantly growing their own following with Instagram Lives and Twitter Q&As. While their debut album may only have dropped three months ago, New Hope Club are already back with new music in the form of their single “Worse”.

While under lockdown, *GQ* asked the band about their formative firsts.



The first time you had stage fright...

Reece Bibby: It was the first time we supported The Vamps. There were 16,000 people and it was our first ever gig together. We sat in the dark backstage, not talking to each other, lights off, trying to get ourselves hyped up and in the zone. We couldn't even speak to our management, we were so out of it, but we did really well in the end.

The first song you wrote...

Blake Richardson: First song I wrote was an absolute hit called “Not Gonna Waste”. I wrote it when I was about 12. It was quite an emotional song all about something I was going through at 12 years old.

The first time you went viral...

George Smith: When we were 17 we had Musical.ly before it became TikTok and had done a dance to “Chunky” by Bruno Mars. We put it on Facebook and for some reason it got nine to ten million views and we had no idea why. Two weeks later Facebook took it down and told us they would deactivate our page if we posted it again. We didn’t think they would actually do it so we put another one up and were deactivated for a whole month.

The first time you met a fan...

BR: The first time that I met a fan was when we went to go and see The Vamps backstage before we toured with them. One of their sisters had put us on her Instagram story and so a few of their fans knew who we were. George and I were walking around the arena and we got stopped for a picture and we were like, “We've only got 2,000 followers, but you want a picture with us and that's really cool.”

RB: You get used to it, but I still have those moments where I'm like, “This is very strange.” It's more when my friends come and see me and they're like, “Why are they screaming for you? It's only you.”

The first song you sing at karaoke...

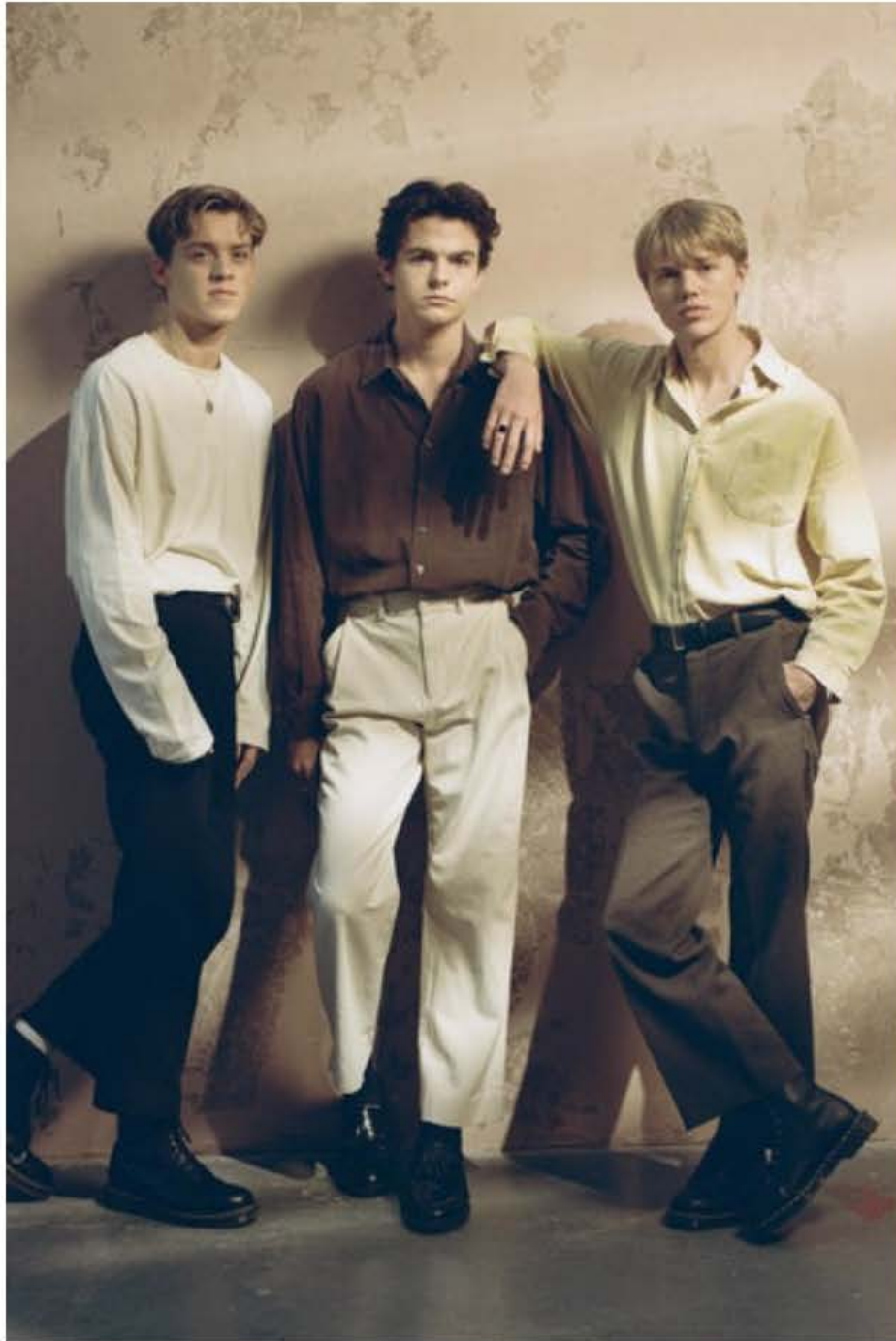
BR: Reece and I sing “Don't Go Breaking My Heart”. And if he doesn’t say that then he is not a true friend.

RB: Of course, “Don't Go Breaking My Heart” – it's a classic.

GS: “Islands In The Stream”. I'm not the biggest country fan ever, but it's fun to do the American twangy bits.

The first concert you went to...

BR: The first concert I went to was Bruno Mars, right at the start of his career at the Apollo in Manchester. He was unreal, honestly one of the best gigs I've ever been to. He was just such an amazing performer and now he does stadiums, which is kind of crazy.



If you weren't in the music industry, what's the first job you want to do?

BR: I love painting, so I would say something to do with painting or art, like an interior designer. That'd be fun.

GS: I really enjoyed history at school and learning about wars so I would like to think I would be doing something with that, but I don't know if I would have gotten into college. In reality, I would probably be doing gardening. I enjoy cutting the grass. That sounds so lame but it's really therapeutic to make it all the same and Gardener George has a ring to it.

The first record you ever bought...

RB: *Please Please Me* by The Beatles.

BR: First record I bought was Razorlight's self-titled album, which is full of bangers. I think I was six or seven and I went and got it with some pocket money. Great album.

What's the first thing you do in the morning?

GS: I'm on the top level of my house currently and I wake up every morning without fail at 7:49am on the dot because there are birds nesting above me. I just hear scratching and tapping around. It gets me out of bed, though.

BR: First thing I do every morning is snooze my alarm. I always set my alarm about 45 minutes earlier than I need to be up so that I feel like I've had a longer sleep. It's a great feeling.

The first person you want to collaborate with...

BR: I would say BTS because we have been talking with them a little bit online, so that'd be really cool, but in terms of dream collaborations it would be Paul McCartney.

RB: I would just love to be in a studio with Paul McCartney, just to watch his writing process. We're the biggest Beatles fans and, since I can remember, I've been watching YouTube videos and old footage of the Beatles doing their thing.

What's the first piece of advice you would give your 16-year-old self?

RB: Don't worry about what people say too much. In the early days, I focused a lot on the mean comments and the people trying to drag us down. I live in quite a small town and my friends reacted weirdly to me doing this and I got caught up on that. In the end, your real friends will stick around.

GS: Be yourself more. Since we've grown up and had more experience on the stage we've become more confident in ourselves and have learned to just go for it. Now, I feel like we've got our own style on stage.

BR: I always get really deep about these things and say I wouldn't say anything because I wouldn't be where I was right now if I changed things. What I would say, though, is I need to just chill out a bit. I stress too much sometimes and I let little things build up. Also, really appreciate all the gigs you play because in 2020 all the gigs you're going to book will get cancelled.

First celebrity crush...

RB: Miranda Cosgrove from *iCarly*.

BR: My first celebrity crush was Vanessa Hudgens in *High School Musical*. She was the one. I wanted to be in those films and I am not ashamed to be a *High School Musical* fan, I'll tell you that.

The first time you were starstruck...

GS: I'm the biggest *Star Wars* fan ever and when we went to the *Star Wars* premiere Mark Hamill was walking down the red carpet and I really freaked out. I got my phone out and was pretending to take a selfie video and then just zoomed in on him. It's so weird meeting people in person, really surreal. I tried to play it cool but, you know, on this red carpet I was already probably the least cool person there.

The first time you had your heart broken...

RB: My girlfriend cheated on me in high school with a guy I hated. It would have been fine if it was someone innocent, maybe, but he was just the worst kind of person. I remember I was so gutted.

The first thing you're doing to keep busy during quarantine...

RB: Writing... I've just been writing every day. I mean, it's what we do anyway, but isolation is kind of perfect for a songwriter because you have nothing to do but sit with your thoughts and write down what you're thinking, so it's kind of been a songwriting haven.

BR: I'm trying to write nearly a song a day, which is hard but also fun. We're trying to get album two to a nice place so that after quarantine we can sit down and look at all the songs we've written.

What's the first album getting you through quarantine?

GS: My go-to album right now is *All Things Must Pass* by George Harrison. The musicianship in it is so good. I turn all the lights off and shut my windows and listen to it through.

RB: I've been listening to a lot of Tom Misch, as he just released an album. It's chills me out, especially when the weather is nice.

BR: I would say the new 1975 song – it's a good tune.

The first thing you would do if you were prime minister...

RB: Bloody hell, I'd put more funding into hospitals and the nursing teams. My mum's a nurse so I'm biased, but I'd put it all into that.

BR: I would hold an election so I was not prime minister anymore. I would not want that job.

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