

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 21

Introduction

The first rule of Flanagan's Running Club is everyone should be telling everyone they know about Flanagan's Running Club! After all, sharing is caring.

Feel free to forward on to anyone you want, tell people about it the works, and just get them to sign up. It's quick and easy at the website homepage of <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/> enter the e-mail address and select whether you want Flanagan's Running Club or blog post updates or both and then hit submit.

Can I ask you all a favour, please can you review my book on Inkitt, and the link is below. Even if you don't take time to read it properly, please flick through a few chapters, give it ratings and a review and vote for it please. It may help me get it published.

<https://www.inkitt.com/stories/thriller/201530>

Pub Crawl

The 2019 Pub Crawl is fast approaching. This year it is going to be a trip through Brighton & Hove, and it will be happening on Saturday 22nd June. Usual 12pm start, 12 pubs and a curry.

Liam is organising the route, and he has just about finalised it, so full details will be available in the next issue.

On This Day – 19th April

1770 – Captain James Cook, still holding the rank of lieutenant, sights the eastern coast of what is now Australia.

1770 – Marie Antoinette marries Louis XVI of France in a proxy wedding.

1987 – The Simpsons first appear as a series of shorts on The Tracey Ullman Show, first starting with Good Night.

It's Dutch-American Friendship Day in the USA,
King Mswati III's birthday in Swaziland (or eSwatini), and
Landing of the 33 Patriots Day in Uruguay

365 Reasons To Be Proud To Be A Londoner - Magical Moments in London's History

A Currency Of Note

The British Pound is the world's oldest currency still in use - we've been spending them for 1,200 years. Back in 775 AD, the Anglo-Saxon King Offa introduced pennies of pure silver. By 1279 the Royal Mint was creating out coins in the Tower of London. The first fully printed banknotes were introduced today in 1853 by the Bank of England, in Threadneedle Street. Before then each note was numbered and signed by hand by a Bank cashier. A pound is worth less today than it used to be: in 980 AD, £1 could buy you 15 cows; today it doesn't even stretch to a burger.

Chuck D Presents This Day In Rap And Hip-Hop History

1994 - Nas releases his landmark debut album "Illmatic" on Columbia.

Nas's penchant for creative lyrical storytelling of his inner-city life, as well as confident and articulate flow, would make this a highly anticipated debut. It lived up to the hype, garnering universal acclaim. The legendary first set by the Queensbridge MC featured masterful production by Large Professor, Pete Rock, L.E.S., Q-Tip of A Tribe Called Quest, and DJ Premier.

Debuting at #12 on the Billboard 200 and peaking at #2 on the R&B chart, the platinum-selling set contained now-classic singles like "One Love", "It Ain't Hard To Tell", which hit the Billboard Hot 100, "Life's a B1 tch" (featuring AZ), "Halftime", and "The World Is Yours". Other fan favourite cuts like "N.Y. State Of Mind", "One Time 4 Your Mind", and "Represent" quickly propelled "Illmatic" and Nas to icon Status.

Births

1903 – Eliot Ness
1933 – Jayne Mansfield
1970 – Kelly Holmes
1979 – Kate Hudson

Deaths

1824 – Lord Byron

1881 – Benjamin Disraeli
1882 – Charles Darwin

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1998 - Run DMC vs Jason Nevins - It's Like That
Number 1 album in 2010 - Plan B - The Defamation Of Strickland Banks
Number 1 compilation album in 1991 - Various - Now 19

Drabble

A drabble is a complete story that is exactly one hundred words long.

Overhearing

The two men sat behind them wouldn't shut up. There wasn't a subject too boring for them to talk at great length about. The problem was that their grasp of facts and reality was so limited. If one of them asserted something, the other would agree whole heartedly.

They were supposed to be here to watch the game, but the amount of times they questioned each other about what was going on, as they hadn't heard announcements or been watching the game properly.

It was taking every last ounce of self-restraint not to turn round and correct their inane wittering.

Joke

Four teens are tragically killed when their light aircraft crashes in dreadful conditions. Investigators quickly arrive on the scene and find only a chimpanzee alive by the plane. Dazed the chimp starts making signs and gestures. "I think he's trying to tell us something," says the chief investigator, crouching down. "Do you understand me?" he asks the chimp. The primate nods. "Can you show me what these people were doing before the aircraft crashed?" Slowly the chimp raises a hand to his mouth and makes drinking gestures. "Drinking booze," says the chief, "what else?" The chimp pretends to smoke. "Smoking drugs too, eh?" The chimp nods. "Anything else?" The chimp grabs the man's leg and thrusts away. "They were having sex?!" The chimp nods it head. "No wonder they crashed," sighs the investigator, "but I'm confused, what did these idiots want with you?" The chimp grins, hops back into the wreckage and sits proudly on the front seat. "He finally gone cold on you chief?" asks an on-looking officer. "No," says the chief, "he was the pilot."

Random Items

Facts

Winnie the Pooh's real name is Edward Bear.

Arsenal have been in the top flight continuously since the end of World War 1, when they were elected to the 1st division, despite finishing 6th in Division 2 the season before the war started.

Thoughts

Does pushing the elevator button more than once make it arrive faster?

If love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?

Forgotten English

Centesimation

A military punishment for desertion, mutiny or the like, where one person in a hundred is selected for execution.

Words You Should Know

Pithy

Brief and to the point, but whereas a Laconic remark is laid back, a pithy one is sharp and forceful. The witticisms of Oscar Wilde and Groucho Marx are widely quoted, but the actor/cowboy Will Rogers was also renowned for pithy comments. They include, 'Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there' and 'Politics has become so expensive that it takes a lot of money even to be defeated'. Pithy is related to the white pith of an orange;

the world can also mean vigour or energy, which is what Hamlet had in mind when he talked about 'enterprises of great pith and moment'.

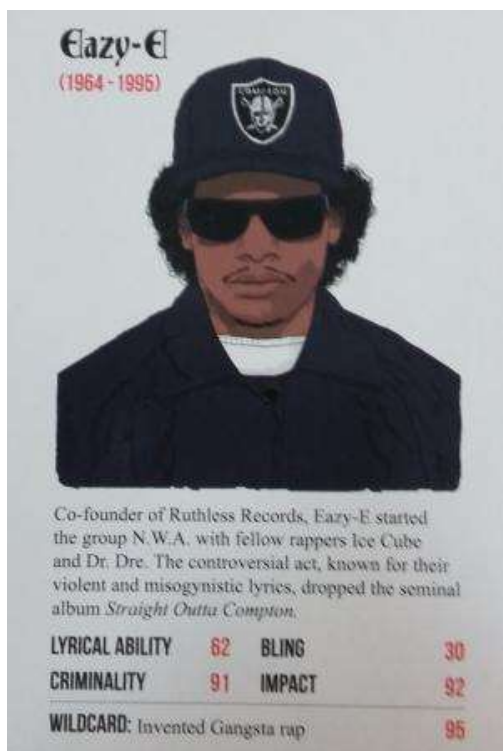
Popular Expressions – What They Mean And Where We Got Them

As Old as Methuselah

This means to be very old indeed. Methuselah is the oldest man referred to in the bible, and it is written in Genesis (5:27) that he died at the impossibly great age of 969 years.

'As old as the hills' is probably a more realistic simile as hills are indeed extremely ancient features of the landscape.

Rappers of the Nineties Trumps



Flash Fiction

Something between the 100 word shortness of a Drabble, and the short story, these are works of fiction somewhere between five hundred and seven hundred words.

Rip Time

Lillian was scared. There had been rumours of dark happenings in Whitechapel for weeks. Her parents had tried to shield her from it, to prevent their youngest daughter from experiencing the horrors of the city. She'd known something was wrong when all three of her older sisters escorted her to and from school every day. They all carried on towards work together. They weren't working the normal long hours in the shop. None of the women were. No one wanted women out after dark, even in groups.

She'd heard about the murders at school, the gossip was always there. Women brutally killed in Whitechapel. They may have all been the other side of Whitechapel Road, but that was only a short walk from their house on Union Row. She wasn't allowed out into the yards and alleys that wound out to Fieldgate Street, Mulberry Street or Holloway Street. She missed being outside.

A few days ago her father had come home announcing he'd joined the police as a special. A far cry from the warehouseman he'd been for years. Yesterday four men had moved into their already cramped house. They were policemen, brought in from Essex. It was difficult for her parents to hide the seriousness of the situation now.

It couldn't have happened at a worse time for her, she'd just started seeing a boy, Thomas, whose family had moved into Tenter Street North. They lived five minutes away from each other, but as far as she was concerned, it might as well be five-thousand miles. She was trapped and unable to send him a message. Her father watched Lillian

and her sisters like a hawk, and had curtailed their Sunday walks in the public gardens by St. George's. She wondered if Thomas waited for her anyway.

Her father would have frowned on her seeing an Irish boy, he often complained about the influx of Irish into the area. This morning she'd heard him talking with the policemen in the house. They were all sure that the murderer haunting their streets was an Irish immigrant. "Damn potato farmers don't know how to behave when they're in the city," was what she'd heard.

Her sister Peg was sympathetic though. She had her own boyfriend, and agreed to pass a message to Thomas for Lillian, if she helped Peg sneak out for the evening. Lillian had jumped at the offer.

Yet now there was a commotion in the kitchen. Her father and the policemen staying in the house were putting on their boots and jackets. Another man had knocked to rouse them. A body had been found; they were off to scour the streets.

Lillian worried about the body being Peg. She'd helped her to slip out, but no one else knew she had been out since before dusk and hadn't come back. It was too late to own up to helping her. She'd have to wait and see and hope the body wasn't Peg.

Leicester

Random Historic Item

The Romans

The name of Ratae Coritanorum (or Corieltauvorum as is now thought to be more likely) was given to Leicester by the Roman invaders when they came to the Ancient Briton settlement just after 43AD. It is believed that a fort was constructed upon settlement by the Romans, but its location is a mystery as no remains have been found, however a later military installation has been indicated at a crossing point to the river, probably from the period 85-95AD.

Early in the 2nd Century the grid like street pattern of the Roman town was laid out, and it was this grid pattern that was to form much of the basis for the town's streets for the next 1500 years. Remains of buildings from this period have been discovered. The main example being the Jewry Wall site, just to the west of the current city centre, and not very far from the east bank of the river. The wall that still exists at the east of the site next to St. Nicholas' Church is the largest remaining Roman wall in Britain. The site also included the Forum and Basilica, and the public baths, and would have been the local government buildings of the day, and the local shopping centre and market.

However such was the commercial prosperity of the town that by the end of the 2nd Century a new separate market place was required, and was built just to the north of the site (where Holy Bones is now). The remains of a Roman temple are said to have been found on the site of the current Leicester Cathedral St. Martin's. There were also a great number of family dwellings and it is at this time that at least one family moved and built a house on the west side of the river (the first known occurrence of this) that is known as the Norfolk Street Villa. It was at this time and continuing into the 3rd Century that the town was provided with defences. The defences consisted of an earthen bank, with a stone wall and ditch. There were 4 main gates (set virtually at North, East, South, and West) and it is likely that there were numerous interval towers. The gates to the Roman town stood as follows. (Present day locations given) North Gate - Junction between Highcross Street, Great Central Street, Northgate, Sanvey Gate, and Soar Lane. East Gate - Between the main entrance to the Shires and Cheapside across what is now Eastgates. South Gate - Millstone Lane between Wycliffe Street and Marble Street. West Gates - Stood on the Town side of what is now West Bridge. (But was then just a ford across the river)

After this time there is very little new information as to the history during the Roman times, and it is clear that after the Romans left the town as was fell into disrepair, and much of the very good infrastructure was lost.

However there are still examples of the Roman legacy in and around Leicester. To the south of the city by the side of the Aylestone road there is the Raw Dykes earthwork which was part of the Roman irrigation works. There is also an example of Roman mosaic on the wall outside the Alliance & Leicester building on Market Place South. There are many main Roman roads that go through the county. The Fosse Way which linked Lincoln to Exeter, and still shows that the Romans knew how to build straight roads as it is now used by the A46 to the north of the city (which was an ancient trackway that the Romans improved) and the B4114 to the south. This met up with the ancient Salt Way at Six Hills, and the Romans again improved this road to the east of Six Hills, which left the county through the Vale of Belvoir. To the south the Fosse Way left the county at Venonis (High Cross) which is where it crossed another Roman road, Watling Street, which linked London to Chester, and is now used by the A5, and for most of its route through Leicestershire forms the county border. Furthermore there was another (unnamed) road which goes out to the South West of the county at Manduessedum (Mancetter) at the point it crossed Watling Street. Then there was the Gartree road which linked Leicester to Colchester, and left Leicestershire just after going through the settlement of Medbourne. Another (unnamed) came into Medbourne from the east and linked up to another Roman Road - Ermine

Street, it is thought that his road may have continued on through Medbourne and out to a burial site at Smeeton Westerby. Ermine Street itself forms the north east border of the county, and was adapted from the ancient Sewstern Lane. It can be seen from this that the Romans have helped to shape the county, and its borders. Further proof of this is that the other two major settlements are on or just over the county borders. To the north on the Fosse Way stood Vernemetum (Willoughby), and at virtually the most southerly part of the county on Watling Street stood Tripontium (Caves Inn).

Besides the Major settlements mentioned above, and the Norfolk Street Villas mentioned previously the remains of Roman villas have been found at, West Langton, Hamilton, Syston, Rothley and Lockington. Substantial building works have been found at Sapcote, Drayton and just north of Lockington. Pottery Kilns were found at Desford and Shilton Heath (Earl Shilton). There have been numerous burial sites found in the county at Wymeswold, Eaton, Waltham on the Wolds, Saxby, Owston, East Norton, Kings Norton, Thurnby, Humberstone, Queniborough, Oadby, Burton Overy, Great Bowden, Smeeton Westerby, Stony Stanton, Elmsethorpe, Rothley, Barrow, Sileby, and at Dane Hills in Leicester.

There have also been various miscellaneous finds at Market Bosworth, Desford, Barwell, Hinckley, Bittesby, Kibworth Harcourt, Great Glen, Glen Parva, Wymondham, Goadby Marwood, Knipton, Wanlip, and at Thurmaston, where in a quarry pit was found Hadrian's Stone, which was made to commemorate the visit of Emperor Hadrian to Leicester in approx. AD110, and is now on show at the Jewry Wall museum.

It can be seen from all of this that the Roman occupation of the county was large and widespread, and that they considered it to be an important part of their empire in Britain.

A Leicestershire Church

St Andrews's - Aylestone

Set to the south of the city centre, Aylestone was a Saxon village, which was incorporated into the City of Leicester during the 20th century expansion of the city.

The church was originally of Saxon origin, but was rebuilt in the 13th century. The current tower dates from the early 13th century and in the north wall of the tower stands one of the original Saxon windows, which due to the addition of the choir vestry in 1935, can now only be seen from the belfry inside the church. The north arcade, nave and chancel would have been built at the same time.

The north arcade was enlarged during the 14th century, as was the chancel, which is unusual in it is larger than the nave, being both higher and longer. This is due to the fact that the chancel was the responsibility of the clergy, and at the time of the enlargement the incumbent was very rich and did the improvement on a grand scale, the nave was the responsibility of the parishioners, and as a poor parish they felt unable to compete and therefore did nothing.

The clerestory, new tower arch and south arcade were added during the 15th century, after which little was done with the church until in 1799 it was noticed that the church was in serious disrepair, and by the 1830's the chancel roof, belfry doors, north door, and bells all needed serious restoration or replacement, and there was no organ. It had improved somewhat by 1842, and in 1894 the chancel roof was altered and repaired, an organ had arrived, and was moved into the chancel from its position blocking entrance to the tower. In 1926 the porch was rebuilt, and in 1935 the choir belfry was added.

The church has eight bells, the oldest of which dates back to 1412, others were added in 1580 (recast in 1887), 1602, 1609, 1887, 1896, and the final two in 1948.

Top Ten

The 10 countries with the longest rail networks in miles

No	Country	Miles
1	USA	140,274
2	Russia	92,584
3	China	42,957
4	India	39,093
5	Germany	25,368

6	Canada	22,440
7	Australia	21,014
8	Argentina	20,967
9	France	19,846
10	Mexico	19,292

Poetry Corner

The Long Lonely Road

It's not quite light as I step out today.
 Back on the road I'd left the night before.
 When it had become too dark to see my way.
 When my legs, my body and my mind were sore.
 The only sound there is comes from my feet.
 No car engines revving as I walk along.
 Not even the chance of another person to meet.
 The birds have all gone, there is no morning song.
 The road is damp, just like the clothes on my back.
 Dead trees offer scant cover from the never-ending mist.
 Everything I own is wet and carried in my pack.
 Thoughts of what I have lost makes me clench my fist.
 Perhaps today my journey will finally finish.
 My shoes are almost worn through from all of the miles.
 But with each passing day my hopes diminish.
 All of the clocks now are missing their dials.
 What cruel twist of fate has left me alive?
 Everywhere death has been, it has come and gone.
 Am I really the only person that did survive?
 The only living creature to remember when the sun shone.
 A noise in the distance brings a spring to my stride.
 I run up the road to the crest of a hill.
 Disappointment in what I see is like a knife to my side.
 Doubling over to retch, I feel such a chill.
 A collapsed building's dust is what I can see.
 No human appears, there is no cause for cheer.
 I carry on walking past houses so crumbly.
 Then I see the end of this road is close, is near.
 It ends at a place where once there was a wife.
 I walk to the place where my home used to be.
 It has gone, disappeared along with the rest of my life.
 I let out a scream and I walk into the sea.

Cathedral Fact Files

Cathedral	Rochester Cathedral		
Dedicated To	Christ and St Mary (Formerly St Andrew)		
Type	Medieval	Architecture	Norman
Religion	COE	Tower / Spire	1 Spire
Site Founded	604	Height (External)	156ft
Church Founded	1077	Height (Internal)	55ft
Bishopric Founded	604	Length	324ft
Current Bishopric Founded	604	Width	146ft

Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

Paul Young – No Parlez

No Parlez was the debut solo album by English singer Paul Young. Released in 1983, it reached number one on the UK Albums Chart (for a non-consecutive total of 5 weeks) and remained in the UK Top 100 for 119 weeks. The album has been certified triple platinum by the BPI for UK sales in excess of 900,000 copies.

Paul Young had been the lead singer of short-lived groups Kat Kool & the Kool Cats and Streetband, and of the Q-Tips, who started out as a soul covers band, but caught the eye of record labels when they started to add their own songs into sets. They released two albums and seven singles without ever troubling the charts, and split when Young got a solo recording contract.

Initially, the first two singles, *"Iron Out the Rough Spots"* and a remake of *"Love of the Common People"*, had no success, but the third, a cover of the Marvin Gaye classic *"Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)"*, was No. 1 in the UK Singles Chart for three weeks in the summer of 1983, and the first of Young's 14 British Top 40 singles. Similar success followed in continental Europe. In the UK, the follow-up single *"Come Back and Stay"* reached No. 4, and the re-release of *"Love of the Common People"* made it to No. 2 in late 1983.

Track listing - Original UK vinyl edition

Track - Title (Writer(s)) - Running Time

Side one

1. - *"Come Back and Stay"* (Jack Lee) – 4:57. Is a cover of the 1981 song by Jack Lee. Was covered for the Radio 1 at 40 compilation for the year 1983 by James Morrison. Fourth single release off the album, it reached number 4 in the UK, number 22 in the US and was top ten in Austria, France, Ireland, The Netherlands and Norway and number one in Belgium, Germany, New Zealand and Switzerland. Was sampled by Chicane for their 2010 single "Come Back"

2. - *"Love Will Tear Us Apart"* (Ian Curtis, Peter Hook, Stephen Morris, Bernard Sumner) - 5:01. Is a cover of the 1980 song by Joy Division. Fifth single release from the album, it didn't chart in the UK, but was top ten in both Belgium and The Netherlands.

3. - *"Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)"* (Marvin Gaye, Barrett Strong, Norman Whitfield) – 5:18. Is a cover of the 1962 song by Marvin Gaye. Third single released from the album and the first to chart, making it all the way to number one and kick starting Young's career. Also reached number one in Ireland, number 70 in the US and was top ten in New Zealand and Sweden.

4. - *"Ku Ku Kurama"* (Steve Bolton) – 4:20

5. - *"No Parlez"* (Anthony Moore) – 4:54

Side two

1. - *"Love of the Common People"* (John Hurley, Ronnie Wilkins) – 4:56. Is a cover of the 1967 song by The Four Preps. Second single released from the album, didn't chart at first but was re-released after the success of *"Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)"* and *"Come Back and Stay"* and reached number 2 in the UK. Reached number 1 in Belgium, The Netherlands, Ireland and Italy, and was top ten in Australia, Austria, Germany, South Africa, New Zealand and Switzerland.

2. - *"Oh Women"* (Jack Lee) – 3:34

3. - *"Iron Out the Rough Spots"* (Steve Cropper, Booker T. Jones, David Porter) – 4:47. Is a cover of the 1966 song by Don Covay and the Goodtimers. Was the first single released from the album, but didn't chart.

4. - *"Broken Man"* (Ian Kewley, Paul Young) – 3:55. Was the B-side of *"Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)"*.

5. - *"Tender Trap"* (Ian Kewley, Paul Young) – 4:31. Was the B-side of the original release of *"Love of the Common People"*.

6. - *"Sex"* (Jack Lee) – 4:49. Sampled James Brown's *"Get Up (I feel Like Being A) Sex Machine"*. Was the B-Side of *"Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)"* on its US 12" single release.

Production

Arranged by Ian Kewley and Laurie Latham

Produced by Laurie Latham

Mastered by Tim Young

Personnel

Paul Young – lead vocals, guitar

Ian Kewley - drums, keyboards, percussion, backing vocals

Matt Irving - keyboards, bass guitar, drums, backing vocals, programming

Steve Bolton – guitar, keyboards

Mark Pinder - drums, percussion, programming

Ntobi Lekan, Pino Palladino – bass guitar

Laurie Latham (E.T), Kim Leslie – percussion

Rico Rodriguez – trombone

Nimsa Calliza, Dagmar, Chief Dawethi, Eyethu, Zundi Lekau, Kim Lesley, Wally Loate, Jabu Mbato, Fats Mogoboya,

Maz Roberts, Norman Zulu – backing vocals

Released - 18 July 1983

Recorded - 1982–83

Studio - The Workhouse, London

Club Fact File

Pittsburgh Steelers

Founded

1933

First Season Played

1933

First Season in NFL	1933
Ground	Heinz Field
Capacity	69,918
Previous Stadium(s)	Forbes Field, Shibe Park, Comiskey Park, Pitt Stadium, Three Rivers Stadium
Previous Names	Pittsburgh Pirates, Phil-Pitt Steagles, Card-Pitt
Trophies	
NFL Champions	None
Superbowl Winners	1975, 1976, 1979, 1980, 2006, 2009
AFC Champions	1975, 1976, 1979, 1980, 1994, 2006, 2009, 2011
AFC Central Division Winners	1972, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1983, 1984, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2001
AFC North Division Winners	2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2017
NFL West Division Winners	None
Wildcard Playoff Berths	1947, 1973, 1982, 1989, 1993, 2005, 2011, 2015
League Seasons	
Seasons in NFL/AFL	86
Seasons in AFC	49
Seasons in NFL Eastern Division	33
Seasons in NFL Western Division	1
Seasons in NFL East (Century) Division	3
Seasons in AFC Central Division	32
Seasons in AFC North Division	17

Story Time

Never Go Back

It is funny how your mind plays tricks on you. How childhood memories can be so different from the reality of it. I had been to this house numerous times as a child. I had slept in this house, played in and around this house, eaten in this house. I stood outside it now, and it didn't look the same as the picture from my memories.

When I saw the address in the auction guide I did a double take. 39 Dartford Road it said. I didn't think it could be the same house my grandparents lived in when I was a child. There would have to be any number of Dartford Roads in the country. Why would a Leicester address be in a property auction taking place in Guildford? But it was the same one. It said it was in Leicester and had the LE2 postcode I knew to be correct for the area. The basic description in the guide was about as I remembered it: two reception rooms, large kitchen, two large bedrooms, bathroom, small yard and outbuildings to rear.

I wasn't at the auction to buy a terraced house in Leicester. I had gone to bid for a pair of dilapidated semi-detached houses on the outskirts of Guildford on the way to Wokingham. Yet once I saw my grandparents' house, everything else went out of my head. The guide price was low. I guessed it would need a lot of work from the price. Even so, the bidding took it past the guide price quickly. I ended up paying over twenty grand more than the guide price. I missed out on the semis completely.

My wife was somewhat less than impressed with my purchase. If it had been something I had picked up in a shop, I would have been taking it back the next morning to get a refund. Not something I could do with a house. When I told her I had bought it because it had been my grandparents' house she went ballistic, calling me a sentimental idiot and throwing random items at me. I ducked just enough to avoid the incoming plant pot. It scared the life out of the poor dog. He spent the next few minutes trying to shake all the earth and pottery out of his fur.

I was sent to Leicester by myself to check out what needed doing in the house. The fact that I had to pass Coventry to get to my old home city wasn't lost on me. I had already been sent there by the wife before I left for the trip.

Stood outside of the house it all looked different. I had been sure that the house had bay windows to the front when I was a child, but they were flat now. The front door was up a step, but it opens right on to the pavement. I look along the street and not a single house in the row had bay windows. Why would they have when the doors open on to the street as they do? I must have taken the bay windows from my own childhood home and transplanted them here. UPVC double glazed windows and door give the house a different look as well. I have visions of sash windows and a thick wooden door in my head.

I had also remembered the corner shop next door to my grandparents' house. I was sent round to get cigarettes on quite a few occasions. My grandparents used to joke they should put a serving hatch in the wall so they could stick their head into the shop and ask for what they needed without leaving the house.

It isn't a shop anymore. It's a legal advice centre, and nowhere near as enticing as the shop used to be. Furthermore, it isn't even on the corner of the street. There is a house beyond what used to be the shop. I had blocked that out of my memory for nearly forty years. Yet as I see the door to the house around the corner in Erith Road, it comes back to me. The old couple that ran the shop lived there. A connecting door led from the house to the shop. I doubted the legal advice centre had such a door through now.

I open the door to step into the corridor beyond, only to find there is no corridor now. It is an open space into the front room. The dividing wall has been removed. Badly, it would appear looking at the raised bump in the wooden flooring, and the tracks across the ceiling. The wall to the side next to what was the shop is flat. There is no chimney breast in the middle of the wall anymore. I walk over to the wall and tap on it. It is plasterboard, and it sounds hollow at either end and more solid in the middle. A previous owner has just added a plasterboard wall across the whole room instead of working with or removing the chimney breast. I wonder where the utility meters have been moved to. I hope they aren't still in their original places, now hidden behind a plasterboard wall.

A further fake wall has been added across the back of the room. The small entrance to the cupboard under the stairs is no longer there, or if it is it is hidden away. The door in the new wall is a coated chipboard number. The solid wooden panelled door that came in from the hall at an angle is long gone.

The hall is now no more than a downstairs landing. With the corner space from the entrance to the front room gone and the lack of a corridor it seems enclosed. The stairs are the same as they were, going up halfway to a landing and then turning back to end up above my head. The thick maroon velvet curtain that once covered the opening under the upper stairs is now another chipboard door. It was ugly, but better than the lack of a door in the frame through to the living room.

The living room is large, granted not as large as I remembered as a child, and the lack of furniture means there is an echo to any noise I make. The chimney breast and fireplace are still prominent here. The green and white tiles around the hearth are still the ones I remember. The cupboard under the stairs landing is still there. I can't find the light for it, and it is difficult to make out the far end. It goes all the way across now, and I think I can see where the door from the front room is, but that may just be wishful thinking.

I turn and look out of the window into the yard. Not much has changed out there. Concrete slabs cover the small yard area outside down to the brick coal shed. The fact the paint is peeling from the walls seems to be the only difference I can see. The bin store and outside privy are hidden away by the corner of the outside wall of the kitchen.

Walking into the kitchen itself I am horrified by what I see. The larder has been ripped out. Another poor job, as the signs of its walls can still be seen. What is worse is the polished stone, split level floor is no more. A sloping floor down from the back of the kitchen to the doors is covered by tatty looking lino. The enormous square sink is gone. Where a fireplace used to sit at the back of the room there is now a door. It leads into what had been the outside privy. There is still a toilet there, and a hand basin, and it is indoors, but it isn't the same.

I go back to the hall and plodded up the stairs to the landing. I am not looking forward to what I will see if the downstairs of the house is anything to go by. The two main bedrooms haven't been that badly mangled. New windows and fitted wardrobes were in both. Whoever had installed the wardrobes had used the space either side of the chimney breasts to good effect, but it doesn't feel the same to me.

I walk along the corridor to the rear of the house and step down into the bathroom. Only to find no bath there. A shower cubicle is sat on one side of where the cast iron bath tub used to be. It is difficult to tell where the mould ends and the shower screen begins. More of the same tatty lino from the kitchen covers the floor.

Beyond the bathroom is a box room. Large patches of damp covers the ceiling and the tops of the walls. The ancient copper boiler still sits in the corner of the room. The wooden surround to it is gone, and the room only has the bare floorboards to walk on. I had slept in this room as a child on a lot of occasions. A short single bed had been in here. In winter it was the warmest room in the house at night, sleeping next to the boiler cupboard. I had never noticed just how small the room had been as a child. The only way I would be able to sleep in here now would be diagonally.

I take pictures of everything as I wander around the house, and make lots of notes. From a business perspective, there is the potential to do a great deal with the house. It is close enough to both the universities to appeal to the large student population once done up. It could easily have four large bedsit rooms, and a comfortable shared kitchen diner space. But it would take a lot of effort, time and money to do it. Everything needs doing, it certainly needs rewiring, and the central heating needs replacing before anyone in their right mind would move in.

If I'm honest that's not what I bought the house for. I bought it for my memories. And in that sense it is an unmitigated disaster. All of the old charm I thought the house had was gone. There is nothing here for me now.

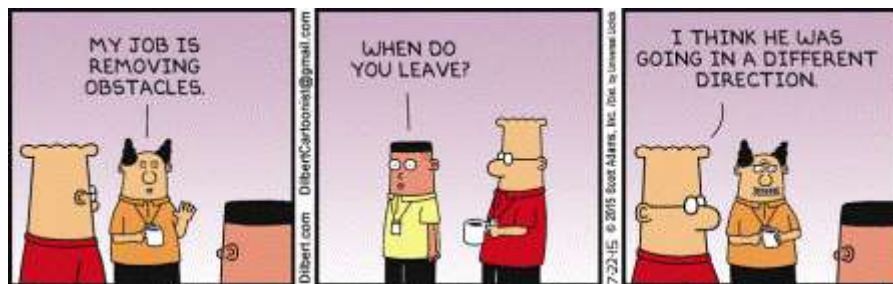
I have been a sentimental fool and fully realise it now. It was something my wife had been more than willing to tell me right after I had told her about the house.

I don't want to renovate the house. I can't be objective about it. I would be stuck on trying to restore it to how it was in my head, how it had been when my grandparents had lived here. I may have liked it once finished, but it wasn't practical for today. I am going to have to sell the house on. I don't want anything to do with it now. I will speak to the auction house and see if any of the other bidders still want to buy it.

I will lose money on it. There was no doubt on that score. As it turned out it would be over ten grand. The money doesn't sting that much, it isn't great, but it is tax deductible. The ear bending from the wife doesn't sting that much either. I probably deserve it.

No, what stings the most is ruining my childhood memories of my grandparents' house. I won't be able to put those memories back in the same order or the same place again. I had come back here to enhance my memories, and instead I have managed to ruin them all.

Dilbert



22/07/2015

Epilogue

If you want to catch up on old issues, Drabbles I've had published, or the random scribbling from a bored mind on my blog then they are all available at <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/> there are links to a number of older publications I have done in the past, with more of the old stuff being added as time goes by.

Sign up to the mailing list on the home page there. E-mail any ideas or suggestions to kev@onetruekev.co.uk

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