

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 43

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. Details of how to sign up is in the epilogue.

There is no need to panic, there is no actual running involved, it is not a running club in that sense. The title is made up from extending the title of my favourite book – Flanagan's Run by Tom McNab.

It's a new year, and this brings a few changes to what is included and a shuffle around of some items. So, sit back, grab a cup of coffee (or beer or wine or whatever), and enjoy the read.

On This Day – 12th January

1866 – The Royal Aeronautical Society is formed in London.

1895 – The National Trust is founded in the United Kingdom.

1915 – The United States House of Representatives rejects a proposal to require states to give women the right to vote.

1932 – Hattie Caraway becomes the first woman elected to the United States Senate.

Memorial Day (Turkmenistan)

National Youth Day (India)

Prosecutor General's Day (Russia)

Zanzibar Revolution Day (Tanzania)

Thinker, Failure, Solider, Jailer. An Anthology of Great Lives in 365 Days

Lorna Wishart, b. 1911, d. 2000

Lorna Wishart, who died aged eighty-eight, was a ravishing beauty who broke the hearts of both Laurie Lee and Lucian Freud and inspired some of their best work.

Lorna Wishart had two brothers and six almost equally striking sisters. Of these, Kathleen became the mistress and later wife of Jacob Epstein, and Mary the wife of the South African poet Roy Campbell. Another sister married a French fisherman – “like Jean Marais, only better looking” – while another managed to seduce her idol T.E. Lawrence before retiring to a cottage with a lady named Philip de Winton.

But Lorna was the loveliest of all; tall, lean and feline, with dark hair and enormous deep blue eyes, she exerted an extraordinary seductive power over men. She was, as her daughter Yasmin later described her, ‘a dream for any creative artist... savage, wild, romantic, and completely without guilt.’

The writer Laurie Lee, who met her in 1937 on a beach in Cornwall, never stood a chance. He was playing his violin and Lorna beckoned him over, saying: “Boy, come and play for me.” Lee soon found himself caught up in a delirium of passion and, to impress her, went to fight in Spain as a Republican volunteer, albeit briefly – Lorna soon engineered his return. She then left her husband, Ernest Wishart, and her children and set up home with Lee in a small flat in Bloomsbury.

She returned to her husband in 1939, after bearing Lee's daughter, Yasmin, who was brought up as part of the Wishart family. Yasmin only learned Lee was her real father when she was twenty-one. Lorna's affair with Lee continued nonetheless. Hunched in a caravan or the back bedroom of a Bognor semi, Lee would wait for her to roll up in her Bentley, showering him with gifts of champagne, goose eggs, and ‘an edifying fragrance of irresistible passion’ – only for her to race back hours later to her life of domesticity and chic.

They continued to see each other until 1943, when she fell for the painter Lucien Freud, then twenty, whom Lawrence Gowing described as ‘fly, perceptive, lithe, with a hint of menace’. ‘This mad, unpleasant youth appeals to a sort of craving she has for corruption.’ Lee wrote in his diary, ‘She goes to him when I long for her.’ In time Freud too disappeared from the scene.

Bizarrely, with Lorna Wishart's encouragement, Laurie Lee later married one of her nieces, while Freud went on to marry the other.

She was born Lorna Garman on 12th January 1911, the daughter of a wealthy, brutal doctor, and his Irish wife. Strictly brought up and unhappy at boarding school, she jumped over the school tennis net with glee when she realised – aged twelve – that the death of her father meant she had to leave.

At fourteen she met Ernest Wishart, a Cambridge law student. Wishart was a Communist, but a rich one. His father, Colonel Sir Sidney Wishart, had extensive estates in Sussex. Lorna married at sixteen and had her first son, Michael at seventeen.

Despite her affairs, it was Wishart to whom Lorna always returned and who ultimately gave her the stability she needed. After leaving Lucien Freud, Lorna Wishart converted to Roman Catholicism and returned for good to her husband's Sussex home where she sculpted and cultivated a garden.

Births

1873 – Spyridon Louis
1930 – Tim Horton
1944 – Joe Frazier
1951 – Kirstie Alley

Deaths

1976 – Agatha Christie
2017 – William Peter Blatty
2017 – Graham Taylor

#vss365

A short story in 280 characters or less, based on a prompt word on Twitter

As she sat in the chair unable to move revelling in her #languor brought on by the hit of the drug, she thought it was the best she had ever felt.

It would be the last she ever felt as well, as her daughter had laced the drugs with poison.

It was time for her inheritance.

#vss365

Joke

Two prawns were swimming around in the sea, one called Justin and the other called Kristian. The prawns were constantly being harassed and threatened by sharks that inhabited the area. Finally, one day Justin said to Kristian, "I'm fed up with being a prawn, I wish I was a shark and then I wouldn't have any worries about being eaten". A large mysterious cod appeared and said, "Your wish is granted." Lo and behold Justin turned into a shark. Horrified, Kristian immediately swam away, afraid of being eaten by his old friend. Time passed (as it does) and Justin found like as a shark boring and lonely. All his old chums simply swam away whenever he came close to them. Justin gradually realised that his new menacing appearance was the cause of his sad plight. While swimming alone one day he saw the mysterious cod again and he thought perhaps the mysterious fish could change him back into a prawn. He approached the cod and begged to be changed back and lo and behold he found himself turned back into a prawn. With tears of joy in his tiny little eyes, Justin swam to Kristian's home. As he opened the coral gate, memories came flooding back. He banged on the door and shouted, "It's me Justin, your old friend, come out and see me again." Kristian replied, "No way man, you'll eat me. You're now a shark, the enemy, and I will not be tricked into being your dinner." Justin cried back, "No, I'm not. That was the old me I've changed. I've found cod, I'm a prawn again Kristian."

Drabble

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

Now Listen Up

She shouted out in frustration; her earphones had disappeared off the side again. The damn lodger had no concept of personal items or even ownership, he was forever taking items that were not his and using them in such a way that no one else would want to touch them again afterwards.

She went to retrieve her earphones. He was lying on the bed, with the pods in his ears and his eyes closed.

She would need new headphones yet again, but the lodger would not be taking them in the future. She had strangled him with the last set.

Random Items

Facts

Ingrown toenails are hereditary

Almonds are members of the peach family

The symbol on the "pound" key (#) is called an octothorpe

Thoughts

When someone asks you, "a penny for your thoughts" and you put your two cents in what happens to the other penny?

And if one synchronized swimmer drowns, must the rest drown also?

If the #2 pencil is the most popular, why is it still #2?

Never Eat Shredded Wheat – Weird Ways to Remember Things

Some mnemonics work by telling a story or can be reinforced by the use of a narrative. For instance, the acrostic

Happy Henry Likes Beer But Could Not Order For Nine

Is used to remember the first ten elements: Hydrogen, Helium, Lithium, Beryllium, Boron, Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen, Fluorine and Neon. You can reinforce your ability to recall this story if you remember Happy Henry and his friends walking into a bar, in three rows of three people, and the barman refusing to serve him beer for them all.

Savoir Faire – 1,000+ Foreign Words and Phrases You Should Know to Sound Smart

Absit omen \ ahb-sit oh-men \ (Latin)

"May this not be an omen." This is used when something foreboding happens. It is a plea for divine protection against the terrible thing you fear is to come.

Strumpshaw, Tincton & Giggleswick's Marvellous Map of Great British Place Names

Entries from the map of rude and odd place names of Great Britain.

Cocking

This part of West Sussex is a hotspot for amusing place names with a euphemistic quality very much in the mould of the Carry On films (one of which had its scenes filmed on the Sussex coast). The village of Cocking lends its name to nearby infrastructure such as Cocking Causeway and Cocking Tunnel, and joining in the bawdy seaside postcard fun in the vicinity are Lickfold, Titty Hill and Bushy Bottom. The South Downs national park is not just a pretty place...it's an innuendo admirer's utopia.

Brewers Britain & Ireland

The history, culture, folklore, and etymology of 7,500 places in these islands.

Herm

Probably from *Sarmia* in the early Antonine Itinerary, but its meaning is unknown.

One of the Channel Islands. Only 0.5 sq. miles in area, it lies off the north-eastern corner of Guernsey, from which it is separated by the 4-mile-wide Little Russel Channel. It is part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey. The smaller island of Jethou is just to the south.

In pre-Christian times Herm was used as a burial ground by the people of Guernsey and of nearby continental Europe – the idea being that the spirits could not escape across the water.

The lease to the island was bought in 1949 by Major Peter Wood, who over the decades that followed developed its infrastructure and introduced some (fairly restricted) facilities for visitors. No cars are allowed.

If anyone has any place names they'd like to see, then let me know and if they're in the book I'll put them in.

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.

Dead End

"Her name is Rio, and she dances in the sand.

The radio alarm blasted out Duran Duran and dragged Eleanor into the new day. She tried to remember the thread of her dream, but the music refused to let her piece together the broken fragments that would have made the dream whole again. All she could remember was being the pilot.

It was a common dream fragment, part of her psyche, a picture of what she wanted to be. She told strangers she was a pilot; a lie most were willing to accept with her living in Crawley close to Gatwick. Some did sneer back at her, asking if she meant stewardess instead of pilot, but she ignored the sexist jibes, after all what could she say, she wasn't a pilot anyway.

The closest she ever got to being in aviation was dealing with the spreadsheets for the aviation part of the business as she sat in her open plan office at Thales. She had been the first member of her family to go to university, and her parents had been so proud. Yet she had only come out with a 2:2 in Business Studies and had ended up in a dead-end admin job.

Eleanor had not let that stop her dreaming of better things, but most of her dreams were unrealistic. She had lived in a fantasy realm where she couldn't stop telling stupid little lies to make her and her life more interesting. She had claimed to have been an Olympic athlete, a backing singer for Take That, an extra on EastEnders and a Playboy centrefold before now.

It had cost her her marriage and custody of her children. Her husband had left after the episode where she swore she could walk through walls. The court had awarded custody of the children to her husband after she had insisted they had the power of telekinesis and that they were making household objects float around the living room as if in a mid-air dance. They had blamed the drinking, but she had been in denial about that, and had made a statement in court to that effect. Only for her blood tests to come back showing more alcohol in them than plasma.

As she sat up, she looked at her pillow and nearly freaked out. The pillowcase was red, and she thought her head must be bleeding badly; only to remember it was now the third Wednesday of the month and she'd had her monthly hair dying session the day before. The bright red dye was supposed to be colour fast, but her pillowcase always suggested otherwise.

Looking at her reflection in the bathroom mirror, her piercing blue eyes stared back at the mess she had become. The bad dye job and the lines on her face, along with the scar across the top of her shoulder suggested she was a lot older than her thirty-seven years. Her nose was uneven, not naturally, but from the incident as a child where she had shoved her finger so far up her left nostril it had got stuck; she had been taken to hospital by her worried parents to get it surgically removed.

In the kitchen she started to make her lunch to take to work. She opened the cupboard door, only for an avalanche of empty crisp packets she had been collecting to fall out of the cupboard and on to her. She was sure they hadn't been in that cupboard before. She wasn't forgetful; she was convinced it was something supernatural about the house. After all it had been owned by Uri Geller before, so who knows what residual powers he had left behind for her.

She found the right cupboard with the bread in and made her favourite salad cream sandwiches for her lunch, and popped in another pack of Harry Potter branded Bertie Bott's beans. She liked leaving these jellybeans out on her desk out of the packet; just so she could the faces her work colleagues would pull when they took one and it was one of the random savoury or worse flavours. Eleanor knew by sight now which ones were actually edible.

As she drove to work, she rapped along to The Sugarhill Gang's Rapper's Delight, she knew every word of its fourteen minutes. She had done it at karaoke enough times, and she had even been able to recite the whole things backwards. It cheered her up thinking about it.

And then she was at work. The spreadsheet on the screen in front of her sucked that little amount of joy back out of her. How she wished she had stayed in touch with her classmates from school back in Leicester. She felt sure that if she had then she could give Serge Pizzorno a call and he would find her a job helping the band out.

Leicestershire

De Montfort Hall



De Montfort Hall is a music and performance venue located in Leicester, England. It is situated adjacent to Victoria Park and is named after Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester.

The Hall was built by the Corporation of Leicester in the early 20th century, and was finished in 1913 costing £21,000. The architect was Shirley Harrison (1876–1961) son of Stockdale Harrison, architect of Vaughan College.

Its indoor auditorium seating capacity is approximately 2000, and the hall contains a restored pipe organ believed to be the only surviving example of a large concert organ constructed by the Leicester organ builders, Stephen Taylor & Son Ltd, in 1914. The pipe organ is a particularly fine example and comprises 6000 pipes, attracting many distinguished organists to play recitals. In the 2014 the pipe organ was estimated to be worth over five million GBP.

The hall features in Richard Attenborough's film *Grey Owl* (1999), in a re-enactment of Attenborough and his brother David's boyhood attendance at a wildlife lecture.

Most of the Hall's events take place in the indoor auditorium where the programme of events ranges from jazz, ballet, comedy, and opera, to world and roots music, West End musicals and classical music, featuring the world-famous Philharmonic Orchestra, which was set up by EMI and has been resident at the hall since 1997. The hall is said by the orchestra to be one of the best spaces in which to play music in England.

The Hall is also a common venue for the Leicester Philharmonic Choir, the Leicester Symphony Orchestra, the Bardi Symphony Orchestra and Bands which have performed several concerts there in the past.

It is also one of the major venues in Leicester to hold the Hindu festival of Navratri, selling out of tickets every year.

Events take place outdoors, including The Big Session Festival and the Summer Sundae music festival, took place every year until 2012.

Graduation ceremonies for the University of Leicester take place in the hall. De Montfort University have since moved their graduation ceremonies to the Curve (theatre)

Bob Dylan played the Hall on 2 May 1965 during his first tour of England. Dylan was the only artist apart from The Beatles to sell out the De Montfort Hall in the 1960s. Even The Rolling Stones did not sell out this venue.

Progressive rock group Genesis recorded the majority of their 1973 release *Genesis Live* at the Hall.

Iron Maiden performed here in 1980 (2x), 1982.

Neo-progressive rock group Marillion recorded part of their first live album *Real to Reel* at De Montfort Hall, along with other live performances recorded or otherwise.

In the 1990s Leicester City Council took De Montfort Hall off the gig circuit

In 2011, a tribute for Sir Norman Wisdom was held at the venue, raising money for the Roy Castle Fund. The charitable event also raised funds for Grand Order of Water Rats, of which Wisdom was a member, and featured notable appearances from members Bruce Jones, Nicholas Parsons, Johnny Mans, Rick Wakeman and Jess Conrad.

St Bartholomew's – Foston

Saint Bartholomew's Church goes back to the 10th Century and contains many items of historical interest. It is a Grade 2* Listed building and is still in use as a working Anglican church, with regular services twice a month.

The fabric dates back in part to C10 or C11 though most is early C14 and it was extensively restored and altered in 1874. Granite rubble with limestone dressings and Swithland slate roofs. West tower, nave with north aisle and chancel in one. Tower is wider than it is long since part of it collapsed and was re-built more narrowly. Angle buttressed, plain chamfered bell chamber lights with wood tracery. Embattled parapet with simple finials. South wall largely of 1874, in filling a former south arcade of the C14.

The windows are in a Perpendicular style. South door and porch also Victorian. 2 profiles of early roof structures visible against tower wall. Chancel has 3 light window, Victorian in Decorated style. Renewed 3 light Perpendicular window in north wall, blocked square headed opening and doorway with hollow and roll moulded architrave.

Inside, the west tower arch is early C13: narrow and double chamfered, the inner thick chamfer is carried on heavy corbel heads. Blocked south arcade of 3 bays is late C13 or early C14, double chamfered with stops and octagonal shafts and abaci. The north arcade however is C12: low round shafts have projecting abaci and stepped segmental arches. The eastern bay cuts the remains of an earlier round headed window with voussoirs, the sole visible evidence for the early dating of the church.

Nave roof is largely Victorian but using medieval tie beams. Eastern-most bay alongside the chancel is a later construction, probably C14, with double chamfered arch and semi-octagonal respond. Possible C17 communion table and C18 altar rails. Various C15 embossed patterned tiles in the north aisle. Glass in the style of Kempe in east window, 1896 depicting Saints Bartholomew and Philip with Christ.

Monuments in the north aisle: on the east wall a memorial stone in a broken pediment, black, yellow, and white marble, with urn commemorates Charles Skrymsler Boothby d.1774, the panegyric dedicated by his widow Anne, who is also interred below. Against the north wall, Henry Fawnt Esq., and Elizabeth who was his third wife. The two recumbent effigies lie on a tomb chest beneath an aedicule where red faced putti pull back curtains. The effigies are loosely shrouded. The carving is crude but exuberant and painted. Inscription behind the figures records the children of all Henry's marriages with their deaths, marriages, and issue.

Font is probably C12 or C13. Round basin on central shaft with four squared outer legs.

Saint Bartholomew

One of the Twelve Apostles, relatively little is known about Saint Bartholomew. In the New Testament, he is only mentioned in four Apostle lists. There has been some confusion regarding his name. The name Bartholomew is a family name, derived from the Hebrew "Bar – Tolmai" or "Bar – Talmai" (meaning "son of Tolmai"). He probably had a personal name as well, which is traditionally believed to be Nathanael, as mentioned by Saint John the Evangelist, but he was also called Philip by Jesus (John 1: 43-51)

His day is celebrated on 24 August, and it was on this date in 1572 that Charles IX of France ordered the slaughter of 30,000 French Protestants.

He is believed to have served as a missionary to Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, Parthia (now in Iran), Lycaonia (now in Turkey) and Armenia. He also took the Gospel according to Matthew to India, where it was found in the 2nd Century by Saint Pantaeus of Alexandria.

He was martyred after being flayed and beheaded (which gave rise to the use of a knife as his symbol) in Albanopolis, Armenia at the command of King Asyages. His relics were taken to the Church of Saint Bartholomew-in-the-Tiber, Rome.

Swithland

Swithland is a linear village in the Charnwood borough of Leicestershire, England. The population of the civil parish was estimated as 230 in 2004 and measured as 217 in the 2011 census. It is in the old Charnwood Forest, between Cropston, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves. Although small, it has a village hall, a parish church, and a pub, the Griffin Inn. The village is known for the slate that was quarried in the area.

Swithland was originally held by Groby. Part of the village had become held by the Danvers (originally called D'Anvers) family by 1412, and between 1509 and 1796, the whole village was held by the Danvers family. The village includes the 13th-century St Leonard's parish church, which retains the original arcades and has an 18th-century west tower built for Sir John Danvers. The church includes monuments to Agnes Scott, Sir John Danvers (actually installed on Danvers's instruction six years before his death) and five of his children. The churchyard of St. Leonard's includes the tomb of Sir Joseph Danvers, 1st Baronet (1686–1753), which was built half inside the graveyard and half outside (on Danvers' estate) to allow his favourite dog to be buried with him (the dog being buried on unconsecrated ground).

Swithland was designated a conservation area in 1993, and includes 31 listed buildings, including the Grade I Mountsorrel Cross, and several Grade II buildings, including the school, which was built in 1843, and a cottage from 1842. The village pub, the Griffin Inn, originally the Griffin Hotel, was built about 1700 and has been put to several uses in its history, including a brewery, bakery, and village mortuary. An annual village fair was held in Victorian times outside the pub on the Feast of St Leonard in November.

The Swithland Hall estate was held by the family of Danvers until 1796 but after the death of Sir John Danvers (the last male of his line) it passed to his son-in-law, Augustus Richard Butler, second son of the second Earl of Lanesborough, who adopted the surname of Danvers-Butler and afterwards inherited the title of Earl of Lanesborough.

The original Swithland Hall, which stood at the eastern end of the village as it is today, on the site now occupied by Hall Farm, was destroyed by fire in 1822, although part of the hall's boundary wall, including two towers are still in existence, both of which are in Main Street. The current hall, a Grade II listed building, was partially completed in 1834 and finished in 1852, on a different site to the south-east, in what was then known as Swithland Park, by John George Danvers Butler, sixth Earl of Lanesborough. The estate includes the lantern cross that originally stood in Mountsorrel that dates from about 1500 and was moved to its current location in Swithland Park in 1793 by Sir John Danvers, who replaced it with the Buttermarket Cross that still stands there.

Slate quarrying in the area dates back to Roman times, and was an important activity within the village between the 13th and 19th centuries. Until the mid-19th century, Swithland slate was much in demand for roofing. From the later 17th century until well into the 19th century, slate from Swithland was widely used for gravestones in Leicestershire and neighbouring counties, especially Nottinghamshire. The slate has a poorer cleavage than Welsh slate, but is often exquisitely carved. A distinguishing mark of Swithland slate is the rough texture of the uncarved face. Some gravestones were carved by members of the Hind family of Swithland, but many others were carved by masons elsewhere to whom the raw slate was sent. One gravestone type found mainly in a group of villages in the Vale of Belvoir is called a "Belvoir Angel". Slates from Swithland for roofing were once commonly used, but demand fell before slates from Wales, which were thinner and lighter.

Since then, the quarry has reverted to nature, with the slate pits now flooded and sometimes used by divers. A memorial stone stands in the centre of the village. The land to the north and south of the village is used for farming, both arable and dairy. Swithland Spring Water, based at Hall Farm, sells locally bottled spring water, which is collected from a spring beneath the farm.

Swithland Reservoir, completed in 1896, is the largest reservoir in Charnwood; it is situated to the north-east of the village. It is accessible via the causeway road to the east of the village and with a dam that can be reached by Kinchley Lane from Mountsorrel, and is a popular site for birdwatching, as well as for walking. Swithland Wood, to the south-west of the village, is near to Bradgate Park. This large area of woodland around a former slate quarry is a popular walking, riding, and picnicking spot.

Towards the Rothley end of the village runs the Great Central Railway, the last main line ever built linking the north of England with London. When opened on 15 March 1899, it was planned for Swithland to have its own station, the Great Central having visions of turning the area into a tourist spot. This never came into fruition, but a bricked-over stairway under the bridge of the railway provides evidence that these plans were taken into serious consideration. A small set of railway exchange sidings were built at this location, but the nearest passenger station was at Rothley.

The preserved Great Central Railway is restoring these sidings to working order. The railway line extends to Leicester North to the south and Quorn & Woodhouse and Loughborough to the north, crossing Swithland reservoir by a two-part viaduct.

Top Ten

The ten oldest clubs currently in the English leagues.

	Team	Founded
1	Stoke City	1863
2	Nottingham Forest	October 1865
3	Sheffield Wednesday	4th September 1867
4	Reading	25th December 1871
5	Aston Villa	21st November 1874
6	Bolton Wanderers	December 1874
7	Birmingham City	1875
8	Blackburn Rovers	5th November 1875
9	Middlesbrough	20th October 1876
10	Port Vale	December 1876

Poetry Corner

A Life Changing Journey

To the stars I was travelling as I made my escape
The hairs stood up on my neck in the nape
Fleeing from a life of crime into the great beyond
I wasn't leaving anything behind of which I was fond

I had stowed away on a spaceship painted blue
And I tried to stay hidden as into galaxies unknown I flew
I scavenged food left after sumptuous feasts above deck
To keep me alive on this life changing perilous trek

Three weeks and more did I creep about inside the craft
Changing my hiding place everywhere from the fore to the aft
Unable to speak to another being without giving myself away
Permanently on the lookout in case I was found every night and day

When I breathed in too deeply, I could perceive a terrible smell
It was me, I smelt like a demon that had burst forth from hell
The spaceship arrived on the new planet they had found
When no one was looking I left the craft with a single bound

I ran through the trees, up hills, and down dales
With my arms spread out and my tattered clothes like sails
I found a stream that was not blue, but instead was gold
And the liquid that ran in it was so bitterly cold

But it washed away from my body that stink
It cleared out my mind too and I was able to think
I drank some of the liquid and it filled me with fear
Of what I would have to do now that I was here

None of the others would know me or what I had done
I could make a new life story, yes that could be fun
Heroic deeds, generosity with no bounds, a benefactor
Or an unusual occupation, the planet's first chiropractor

Anything at all would be better than the truth
Give myself a new name, how about Amy or Ruth?
No one need know I was a petty little thief
That robbed everyone I met and caused them all grief

A respectable woman now, someone they could trust
For a change I wouldn't turn their dreams to rust
A new woman boldly walked back to where the ship had touched down
A big smile upon my face instead of the usual well-worn frown

As I broke the tree line and stepped into the light
One of the other passengers cried out with fright
They all turned to look at me as I emerged
They were looking at me as if I were a scourge

My new life lasted only a few seconds more
Their shots killed me dead, shots one two three and four
It was a change to my life, a drastic one at that
I suppose it was an apt ending for one who'd been a lifelong prat

Musical Madness

This Day In Music

Born
1961 – Suggs (Graham McPherson)
Died
1979 – Donny Hathaway
Event
1984 – BBC Radio 1 announced a ban on 'Relax' by Frankie Goes To Hollywood, after DJ Mike Read called it obscene. A BBC TV ban also followed, but the song still went on to become a UK No1, spending 48 weeks on the UK chart.

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

1981 – Blondie releases the classic smash hit single “Rapture” on Chrysalis

The hit song from Blondie's fifth album, “Autoamerican”, was an ode to the early New York hip-hop scene.

“Rapture”, which was the first rap record to top the charts, featured vocals from the group's lead singer Debbie Harry, who included a shout out to Fab Five Freddy (who also appeared in the video) and Grandmaster Flash on the classic track.

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 2015 - Mark Ronson feat Bruno Mars - Uptown Funk
Number 1 album in 1979 - Showaddywaddy - Greatest Hits
Number 1 compilation album in 1992 - Now 20

Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

The Style Council – Our Favourite Shop

Our Favourite Shop was the second studio album by the English group the Style Council. It was released on 8 June 1985, on Polydor, and was recorded ten months after the band's debut Café Bleu. It features guest vocalists, including Lenny Henry, Tracie Young, and Dee C Lee. The album contained "Come to Milton Keynes", "The Lodgers", "Boy Who Cried Wolf", and "Walls Come Tumbling Down!" which were all released as singles, with corresponding music videos. The three singles that were released in the UK all reached the top 40 on the UK charts. The album was released as Internationalists in the United States, with a reconfigured track listing.

It was the Style Council's most commercially successful album, it was an immediate commercial and critical success, and remained at the top of the charts for one-week, displacing Brothers in Arms by Dire Straits. The album was the Style Council's only number one album in the UK. According to the BPI, the record sold over 100,000 copies, and was certified gold.

The multigenre album incorporates diverse stylistic influences, including soul, rap, jazz, and rock styles. Recording was completed in March 1985. The cover, depicting the band posing inside a shop, was designed by Paul Weller and British artist Simon Halfon.

The album features fourteen original compositions (eight by Paul Weller, four co-written by Weller and Mick Talbot, and one co-written by Weller with Steve White), with one instrumental from Talbot.

Lyrical targets include racism, excessive consumerism, the effects of self-serving governments, the suicide of one of Weller's friends and what the band saw as an exasperating lack of opposition to the status quo. All of this pessimism is countered with an overarching sense of hope and delight that alternatives do actually exist—if only they can be seen. They also took a more overtly political approach than The Jam in their lyrics, with tracks such as "Walls Come Tumbling Down", "The Lodgers", and "Come to Milton Keynes" being deliberate attacks on 'middle England' and Thatcherite principles prevalent in the 1980s. "A Man of Great Promise" was Weller's eulogy to his school friend and early Jam member - Dave Waller - who had died from a heroin overdose in August 1982.

Track listing

All songs written by Paul Weller, except where noted.

Side one

1 - "Homebreakers" (Mick Talbot, Paul Weller)

2 - "All Gone Away"

3 - "Come to Milton Keynes". Second single release from the album, it reached number twenty-three on the UK singles chart and was on the chart for six weeks. In an interview given at the time of the song's release Paul Weller states that the song was inspired by the "Red Balloon" Milton Keynes advert which was produced on behalf of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation. However, Paul Weller biographer John Reed argues in 'Paul Weller: My Ever Changing Moods' that: The song's lyrics suggested a reality of drugs, violence, and 'losing our way' behind a façade of 'luscious houses 'where the 'curtains are drawn', the idea being to create a musical pastiche which matched the supposed artificiality of Milton Keynes itself."

4 - "Internationalists" (Talbot, Weller). Released as a promo only single in its own right in the US with "Walls Come Tumbling Down" as the B Side. Was also on the B side of the non-UK single "(When You) Call Me".

5 - "A Stones Throw Away"

6 - "The Stand Up Comic's Instructions"

7 - "Boy Who Cried Wolf". Fourth single release from the album, it wasn't released in the UK, only in Australia and New Zealand, reaching number thirty-eight on the Australian singles chart and number twenty-one on the New Zealand charts. The B side was "(When You) Call Me", itself a single release outside of the UK. The 12" single also contained Club Mix versions of both "Our Favourite Shop" and "The Lodgers"

Side two

1 - "A Man of Great Promise"

2 - "Down in the Seine"

3 - "The Lodgers (or She Was Only a Shopkeeper's Daughter)" (Talbot, Weller) - Sampled and covered once. Third single release from the album, it reached number thirteen on the UK singles chart and was on the chart for six weeks. The B Side contained A live version of "The Big Boss Groove", and the non-album single, "You're The Best Thing." The 12" single also contained a live version of "Move On Up" (a track from the Jam's final extended single "Beat Surrender"), and a live medley of "Money Go Round" (previous non album single) / "Soul Deep" (A Council Collective charity single) / "Strength Of Your Nature" (album track from "Cafe Bleu").

4 - "Luck" (Talbot, Weller)

5 - "With Everything to Lose" (Steve White, Weller)

6 - "Our Favourite Shop" (Talbot)

7 - "Walls Come Tumbling Down!" - Covered once. First single release from the album, it reached number six on the UK singles chart and was on the chart for eight weeks. The b side contained two new tracks - "The Whole Point II" and "Blood Sports (The song "Blood Sports", whose writing royalties went to the Bristol Defence Fund for two hunt saboteurs jailed for anti-blood sports activities.)", while the 12" single also contained the new track "Spin' Drifting".

Personnel

The Style Council

Paul Weller – vocals; guitars; bass guitar; synth

Mick Talbot – Hammond organ; keyboards

Steve White – drums; percussion

Dee C. Lee – vocals

Guest vocalists

Lenny Henry – vocals

Tracie Young – vocals

Alison Limerick – vocals

Session musicians

Camille Hinds – bass

Stewart Prosser – trumpet; flugelhorn

David DeFries – trumpet; flugelhorn

Mike Mower – flute; saxophone

Chris Lawrence – trombone
 Clark Kent – contra bass
 Gary Wallis – percussion
 John Mealing – orchestration; string arrangement
 Anne Stephenson – violin
 Charlie Buchanan – violin
 Jocelyn Pook – viola
 Audrey Riley – cello
 Peter Wilson – keyboard Sequencing
 Patrick Grundy-White – French Horn
 Steve Dawson – trumpet
 Billy Chapman – saxophone
 Kevin Miller – bass
 Helen Turner – piano

Charts

Chart - Peak position

Australia - 5

Austria - 23

Canada - 53

Dutch - 11

Germany - 23

Japan - 18

New Zealand - 6

Sweden - 30

UK - 1

US - 123

Certifications

Region - Certification - Certified units/sales

United Kingdom - Gold - 100,000

Released - 8 June 1985

Recorded - December 1984 to March 1985

Length - 49:01

Label - Polydor

Producers - Paul Weller (for Solid Bond Productions) and Peter Wilson

Top 10

The top ten in the UK singles chart on this day in 1989

Position	Last Week's Position	Title	Artist	Label	Peak Position	Weeks on Chart
1	1	ESPECIALLY FOR YOU	KYLIE MINOGUE AND JASON DONOVAN	PWL	1	6
2	2	CRACKERS INTERNATIONAL (EP)	ERASURE	MUTE	2	6
3	6	BUFFALO STANCE	NENEH CHERRY	CIRCA	3	6
4	4	GOOD LIFE	INNER CITY	10	4	6
5	3	SUDDENLY	ANGRY ANDERSON	FOOD FOR THOUGHT	3	9
6	9	FOUR LETTER WORD	KIM WILDE	MCA	6	7
7	7	LOCO IN ACAPULCO	THE FOUR TOPS	ARISTA	7	7
8	29	SHE DRIVES ME CRAZY	FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS	LONDON	8	2
9	25	ALL SHE WANTS IS	DURAN DURAN	EMI	9	2
10	39	BABY I LOVE YOUR WAY - FREE BIRD	WILL TO POWER	EPIC	10	2

A Single Life

Smokey Robinson & The Miracles – Tears of a Clown

I was properly introduced to Motown by a couple of school friends in my third year at senior school – John Weston & Dictino Garcia – they were both instrumental in bringing Motown and Northern Soul into my life. Something that has stayed with me ever since, and forms the basis for my record collecting.

I had heard some Motown songs prior to this time, but hadn't really understood where it all came from.

I was spending money from my paper round on getting the cassettes in the Motown Hits Of Gold series, and the week I bought volume four I played it to death. On the whole it covered the year 1970, the year of my birth, something I didn't notice until much later, and had all the big Motown stars of the time on it. The Supremes, both with and without Diana Ross, the start of Diana Ross's solo career, The Four Tops, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, The Jackson 5, Jimmy Ruffin, and Edwin Starr, but the track that caught my attention and has never let go since was Tears Of A Clown by Smokey Robinson and The Miracles.

The upbeat whirl-a-jig circus sound to the music is such an uplifting piece, but the lyrics are so sad, and even as a teenager they spoke to me and spoke of me. I was shy and introverted, and I liked my own company. Yet to try and overcome this I would try to be a class clown. But at times I would be at home, in my own room, or lying in bed at night and I would feel so unhappy, so down.

This song was me at that point in my life and has been at many times since. There have been tens of thousands of records that have passed through my ownership over the years; hundreds of thousands of songs that I have owned, listened to, and sang along to. But since the day I heard this song on that cassette it has been my favourite song, and I doubt anything will ever replace it.

Yet it could have all been so different. Originally it was a mere album track. Stevie Wonder and Motown producer Hank Cosby wrote the music for the 1966 Motown Christmas party, but couldn't come up with lyrics for it. Smokey Robinson could, lyrics that had such juxtaposition with the music. It was one of three songs written and recorded with The Miracles in a similar vein along with "My Smile Is Just A Frown (Turned Upside Down)" and "Tracks Of My Tears". "Behind A Painted Smile", also from 1967 by The Isley Brothers is in the same theme.

The song ended up on Smokey Robinson & The Miracles' 1967 album "Make It Happen". It only became a single by accident. Three years later The Miracles – without Smokey Robinson – were touring Europe, and had had recent chart success in the UK, but were lacking any new material. One of the office staffers in Motown's London office was pushing for "Tears Of A Clown" to be used as a single to keep the group's momentum going. There were some doubts, but it was eventually released as a single in the UK in July of that year (just a couple of weeks after I was born).

Two months later it was the UK number one single, Motown's first number one of the seventies. It was then released as a single in the US, and hit number one on the Billboard Hot 100. That belated success for a song only done as an album track meant it appeared on the Motown Hits Of Gold Volume four cassette that I had bought. (Along with countless other Motown compilations over the years as one of their biggest ever hits.)

It brought it to my attention, and I had to have the single. The original UK release with its now imprinted label number of TMG745 is not the most valuable record in my collection. It's fairly easy to come by as it was such a big hit at the time. But it is easily the most prized record I own. In fact, I have two copies, just in case!

On its original chart run in the UK it entered the chart on the 1st August 1970, got to number one on the 5th September 1970 and spent fourteen weeks on the chart. When it was reissued in 1976 it entered the chart on the 2nd October reaching number 34 and spending another 6 weeks on the chart. It was covered by the Beat as part of their first (double A side with "Ranking Full Stop") single in 1979, charting on the 8th December reaching number 6 on the chart and spending 11 weeks on the chart. It has been covered another 16 times, and was sampled in 9 songs (most notably by ABC in "When Smokey Sings"), is namechecked in two other songs, and was the theme for BBC sitcom "Boomers".

Story Time

If You Go Down To The Woods Tonight

The signs appeared. It was difficult to pinpoint exactly when, but no one would admit to seeing them being put up. And there was no indication to say who had put them there. Yet there they were. At regular intervals all the way around the outside of Hawth Woods; the bright yellow boards displayed the same message,

“By Order. No one is to enter Hawth Woods between sunset and sunrise until further notice.”

There was an indistinguishable signature at the bottom of the sign and a laurel garland logo, but neither told us who had installed the signs. The Borough Council denied it was them and pointed the finger at the County Council. The County Council denied it as well, saying it was the Borough Council's domain, and if it wasn't them it must have been Westminster. The local MP knew nothing about it, but promised to look into it.

The rumour mill kicked into overdrive as to the reason for the signs. Someone said the woods had become a no-go zone, that gangs of delinquent knife wielding youths had gone feral in there due to extended drug use. Another bright spark claimed that the Ministry of Defence were using the woods for secret tests. Then there was the story that global warming was causing toxic gases to seep out of the ancient iron ore pits during the night; making it dangerous to enter. There were dozens of other crackpot ideas as to what was happening, but no one knew for certain.

Being nosy like that, and as someone who isn't afraid of the dark, being armed with better night vision than day vision, I was going in there to find out. I had been waiting until there was a new moon, but when it was overcast a few nights before the new moon was due, I took it as a sign to make my move.

Dressed head to toe in black I headed out and made my way across Southgate playing fields. I had debated with myself at length where I would enter the woods, and the corner where the playing fields abutted the train tracks seemed the best place to me. It was furthest away from any potential prying eyes.

As I made my way into the woods, they seemed darker than ever. I had walked this path at night several times. Usually, the path stood out as a lighter shade drifting between the trees; showing me the way, but there was nothing this time. I was trying to stay on the path by the feel of it under my feet. I stopped and looked to my left and was met with only black. There was no residual light coming from the industrial estate or the back of Commonwealth Drive. It felt unnatural. I turned my head back to face forward, and as I did, I saw the briefest glimpse of light away to the right of the path in front of me. Coming from inside the woods. I moved slowly forward, my arm up diagonally in front of my face to prevent walking face first into a dangling branch. As I moved on, I was sure there was light in there somewhere. And it was getting brighter.

The light pulled me away from the path. It wasn't the white or yellow light that the sun or moon might cast, nor the harsh artificial light of a torch or streetlight. It was an almost warm, ethereal turquoise colour that crawled its way between the leaves, branches, and trunks of the trees. Casting no shadow, only appearing as an unworldly glow. As I got closer it became clear it was coming from the area of the amphitheatre, and as I crept towards it a murmuring of voices grew in volume.

Not that I could understand any of it. At the bank behind the amphitheatre, I stopped walking and slowly crawled up until I could see over the top. And when I could I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me. Never in my wildest dreams would I have expected the sight before me.

The epicentre of the light came from a figure sat on the ground. What the figure was I couldn't say for certain. Some may have called it a fairy, other an elf, or an alien perhaps. Whatever it was they weren't quite human, but they appeared to be at the centre of what was happening.

Surrounding the figure was every wild animal the locality had to offer. Flanking the figure in the light were two magnificent stags, with many prongs to their antlers. Other deer stood around the edge of the amphitheatre, as if they were the gate keepers to the gathering. A horse, some foxes, badgers, rabbits, and hedgehogs sat on the banking. Mice and rats lined up in front of the light. Squirrels, both red and grey, hung off the side of trees. Birds of many feathers stood on the ground or perched on low lying branches. Large seagulls nestled next to tiny wrens; pigeons, crows, tits, robins, starlings, swallows, and many more I had no clue about crowded around. Insect sat on or among the other animals.

Every species faced the figure in the light. As I watched I swear a brown bear wandered in past the deer to stand in the light. The murmuring I had heard had been the animals that had assembled. I noticed that there were no cats or dogs, or anything that could be considered domesticated. It struck me as being odd, but I was distracted from my thoughts as the murmuring stopped.

The figure started to speak. Well, I'm not sure whether speak would be the correct term. A wonderfully musical sound came from it. I was as rapt as the collected animals. I felt I was on the edge of understanding what was being communicated, but the actual meaning floated just beyond my grasp like mist.

The sound stopped and the animals started to move. And how they moved. All the species worked as if a single organism, I watched in awe as they swept through the wood in a slow wave, cleansing the whole area above and below ground. Items popped out of the soil, pushed out by the worms and ants. The hedgehogs rolled between the trees, picking up any scrap of paper lying on the ground. The birds picked their spines clean of the debris they collected.

The foxes, rabbits, badgers, and other medium sized animals dragged plastic wrappers, bottles, and cans from the undergrowth. Squirrels ran from branch to branch of the trees, dislodging and throwing anything down to the ground below. The horse and deer worked with the bear, and took responsibility for any larger items. A discarded Asda trolley, various items of clothing, a car tyre, and a fridge. Every single item that wasn't natural within that section of the wood was removed and piled up next to the skips at the back of the Hawth building.

The animals worked tirelessly through the night, right up until the point where a cockerel crowed the new dawning day. Within seconds the animals dispersed, along with the turquoise glow haze in the woods, and I was left alone in the pale light of the new day peeking its way into the woods.

I kept returning every night, never losing the wonder at what I was watching. I lost count of how many nights I spent in the woods, but I turned up one evening as I had every other night to find no turquoise haze. The light pollution from all around seeped into the woods instead. I could see the path between the trees as I had once been able to do so before. None of the animals were there either. They had done what they set out to do and had cleansed the entire woods of all human detritus.

I felt ashamed as a human having witnessed what seemed like the whole animal kingdom cleaning away our mess. The keep out signs had changed by the morning. The wording had been replaced with signs warning of dire consequences for littering in the woods. There were some who scoffed at the warnings. I didn't and the story that emerged a few days later of a man trampled to death by a deer didn't surprise me.

The animals, quite literally, weren't going to take our rubbish anymore.

World's Greatest Cathedrals Top Trumps

Santa Maria Del Fiore	
City / Country	Florence – Italy
Height	114.5m
Commenced Building	1296
Character	13
Global Fame	83
Top Trumps Rating	98
Details	Santa Maria del Fiore translates to 'Our Lady of the Flowers'. The dome is one of the most significant technical achievements of the Renaissance: a higher and wider octagonal dome than any built before; no internal forms or supports could be used during construction, and the architect Brunelleschi laid bricks in a herringbone pattern, making each course a horizontal arch that is self-supporting.

Dilbert



Epilogue – Where To Find More Of My Writing

To get people to sign up, point them in the direction of my website's homepage of <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/> scroll down past the menu and then enter their e-mail address and select whether they want Flanagan's Running Club or blog post updates or both and then hit submit.

If you want to catch up on old issues, go to the website at <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/frc.php> where all the issues are available.

For blog posts go to <https://onetruekev.co.uk/Mutterings/> which will have the most current post and the ability to scroll back in time.

Some of the blog posts also get published on my Medium account, especially ones that are picture heavy, as there are no hosting costs to store all the photos there, the link is <https://medium.com/@onetruekev>

For all previous works including the old Surerandomality pieces go to <https://onetruekev.co.uk/Mutterings/else/> where pretty much everything I've written before is linked through to.

Then there are my books. Nothing published yet, but I have one full book available online, it's called "Where The Lights Shine Brightest". 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>

In addition, the first chapter of "Where The Lights Shine Brightest", and my other completed book, "The Talisman", are available on my Goodreads page <https://www.goodreads.com/story/list/77442053-kev-neylon> and the first chapters of two of the four books I have in progress at the moment are on there now and the others will go on there in time. The follow up to "The Talisman" – "The Magicusians" is at <https://www.goodreads.com/story/show/1253978-the-magicusians> and "The Repsuli Deception" is at <https://www.goodreads.com/story/show/1253979-the-repsuli-deception>

I have had a number (seventy-three) of Drabbles published on the BookHippo web site, and they can all be found at <https://bookhippo.uk/profiles/kevin.neylon/drabbles>

You can also follow me on Twitter, where I will occasionally put up some micro fiction or micro poems, my Twitter handle is @Onetruekev – <https://twitter.com/onetruekev>

You can also follow all my writing on the Facebook page Onetruekev which is at <https://www.facebook.com/Onetruekev-102649357993650/>

Speak to me about getting a pen, there are currently eight colours available: red, black, dark green, blue, maroon, orange, purple and grey. In addition, speak to me about Flanagan's Running Club torches, limited stock, bright little so and sos available in red or blue. And new small green leather style notepads, with mini pens and various size sticky notes.

E-mail any ideas or suggestions to kev@onetruekev.co.uk

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