

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 51

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.

So, sit back, grab a cup of coffee (or beer or wine or whatever), and enjoy the read.

On This Day – 12th September

490 BC – Battle of Marathon: The conventionally accepted date for the Battle of Marathon. The Athenians and their Plataean allies defeat the first Persian invasion force of Greece.

1885 – Arbroath 36–0 Bon Accord, a world record score line in professional Association football.

1890 – Salisbury, Rhodesia, is founded.

1933 – Leó Szilárd, waiting for a red light on Southampton Row in Bloomsbury, conceives the idea of the nuclear chain reaction.

1940 – Cave paintings are discovered in Lascaux, France.

Day of Conception (Russia)

Earliest date on which Programmers' Day can fall, while September 13 is the latest; celebrated on the 256th day of the year (Russia and programmers around the world. It falls on this date during leap years)

National Day of Encouragement (United States)

Saragarhi Day (Sikhism)

United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation

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

Sir Ewan Forbes, b.1912, d.1991

Sir Ewan Forbes of Craigievar, 11th Bt, doctor, landowner, and farmer, who died aged seventy-nine, was registered as a girl at birth and went by the name of Elizabeth Forbes-Sempill until 1952, when he re-registered his birth and changed his name to Ewan Forbes-Sempill; he later became embroiled in a three-year dispute to establish his claim to the baronetcy.

He was born on 6th September 1912 and baptised Elizabeth as the third and youngest daughter of the 18th Lord Sempill. Young 'Betty' endured a girlhood that was dominated by general gender insecurity. Sir Ewan later remarked that 'everyone realised my difficulties, but it was hard in those days for anyone to know what to do'.

During the Second World War she went to Aberdeen University to study Medicine and, after graduating in 1944, worked for a year as a senior casualty officer at the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. In 1945 she took up practice in the Alford district and it was from this point onward that Elizabeth Forbes-Sempill looked and behaved like the man she knew she really was.

Then, on 12th September 1952, there appeared a notice in the advertisement columns of The Press and Journal, Aberdeen, which stated that henceforth Dr Forbes-Sempill wished to be known as Dr Ewan Forbes-Sempill. Some three weeks later the doctor announced that he was to wed Isabella ('Pat') Mitchell, his housekeeper. It was a quiet ceremony.

On the death of his brother, the 19th Lord Sempill, in 1965, the barony passed in the female line to the 19th Lord's eldest daughter. It was assumed that the baronetcy would pass to Ewan Forbes-Sempill, but his cousin, John Forbes-Sempill (only son of the 18th Lord Sempill's youngest brother, Rear Admiral Arthur Forbes-Sempill), challenged the succession.

The dispute was taken to the Home Secretary, in whose office the Roll of Baronets is kept by Royal Warrant.

The Lord Advocate was consulted by the Home Secretary, James Callaghan, and eventually, in December 1968, Mr Callaghan directed that the name of Sir Ewan Forbes of Craigievar (he had dropped the name of Sempill) should be entered in the Roll of Baronets.

Births

1818 – Richard Jordan Gatling

1914 – Desmond Llewelyn

1940 – Linda Gray
1973 – Paul Walker

Deaths

1368 – Blanche of Lancaster
1977 – Steve Biko

#vss365

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

People were concerned about him and often commented about how he might have #alexithymia, but that wasn't true. It wasn't a case of him being unable to recognise or describe his emotions; it was the fact that he didn't feel anything.

Not one of them knew he was a cyborg.

#vss365

Joke

Two golfers were approaching the first tee. The first guy goes into his golf bag to get a ball and says to his friend, "hey, why don't you try this ball?" He draws a green golf ball out of his bag. "Use this one, you can't lose it." His friend replies, "What do you mean you can't lose it?" the first man replies, "I'm serious, you can't lose it. If you hit it into the woods, it makes a beeping sound, if you hit it into the water, it produces bubbles, and if you hit it on the fairway, smoke comes up in order for you to find it." Obviously, his friend doesn't believe him, but he shows him all the possibilities until he is convinced. The friend says, "Wow, that's incredible, where did you get that ball?" The man replies, "I found it."

Drabble

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

Wrong Door

All of her life they had prepared her to perform the ritual. They had taught her the Ellandi language needed to perform the incantation; the sword play required and herb lore so she could make the ointments.

She had been chosen and trained to be the one to open the portal to hell. The whole village was gathered to see her bring about what they thought was their destiny.

But they had taught her too well; she knew the one word within the incantation to change to make it a portal utopia.

That was where she was going to go.

Random Items

Facts

A quarter has 119 grooves around the edge

Napoleon constructed his battle plans in a sandbox

Virginia Woolf wrote all her books standing

Thoughts

Why is there always too much month left at the end of my money?

Is the bank account for a girdle business called a truss fund?

If god never meant pigs to fly, why do the police have helicopters?

Never Eat Shredded Wheat

Weird Ways to Remember Things.

The colours of the rainbow

We traditionally learn that there are seven colours in the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The distinctions between blue, indigo, and violet are controversial: the inclusion of indigo seems to date to Isaac Newton who, as well as being a great scientist, was prone to superstition and was fascinated by alchemy. The story is that he imposed a seventh colour because of the magical or sacred properties of the number seven. We shouldn't be too pedantic, however, as we could equally argue that, as a continuum, the rainbow could be arbitrarily divided into any number of colours. So, let's stick with the traditional version of seven colours.

Some people simply remember that Roy G. Biv sounds like a person's name (or even a planet or asteroid). Alternatively, the most commonly used mnemonic historically has been:

Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain. (or Gainly Battled)

Savoir Faire

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

Jodhpurs \ jod-purz \ (Hindi)

Riding trousers cut wide at the hip.

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

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

Rotten Bottom

Of all the Bottoms of Britain, Rotten Bottom is probably the one with the most distinctive air about it. Set amongst the hills and valleys of Moffat, Rotten Bottom is also a place of archaeological distinction, for it is there in the bogs that the Rotten Bottom Bow was found, a weapon made from yew dating to 3500-4000 BC. Impressive, but unlikely to quell the fart gags.

Brewers Britain & Ireland

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

Morecambe

An Old Celtic name recorded as *Morikambe* c.AD 150, and meaning 'curved inlet', referring to the estuary of the LUNE, and revived for the name of the town in 1889.

A seaside resort in Lancashire, 3 miles northwest of Lancaster and contiguous with HEYSHAM to the south. At the end of the late 18th century people began to visit the seaside villages here, which expanded with the coming of the railway: it brought thousands of holidaymakers from Lancashire mill towns (hence the nickname *Bradford by the Sea*) and provided a means of trading the area's shrimps and mussels. As the villages developed into a town, it adopted the name of Morecambe (1889), and has since been a thoroughly bucket and spade, kiss me quick kind of place. However, its attempt to rival BLACKPOOL in the early 1990s by erecting a theme park called Blobbyland failed miserably. As one *Mitteleuropaische* visitor has commented, the town has 'all the virtues of Buda, and all the vices of Pest'.

Morecambe (its inhabitants are Sandgrown'uns) was the hometown of the comedian John Eric Bartholomew (1926-1984), who, when he embarked upon his partnership with Ernie Wise, adopted the stage name Eric Morecambe. The town had reciprocated the gesture by erecting a statue to the great man, with leg uplifted in the duo's trademark 'Give Me Sunshine' dance. Morecambe was also the birthplace of the actress Thora Hird (1911-2003).

The town overlooks **Morecambe Bay**, a 9-mile-wide inlet of the Irish Sea between FURNESS peninsula and Cumbria and the northwest coast of Lancashire. At low tide it is possible to walk across the bay to GRANGE-OVER-SANDS, but the route is treacherous, so the journey should only be undertaken in the company of the one remaining professional guide. The position of Queen's Guide to the Sands has been by royal appointment since the 14th century, and the current 'sand pilot' of Morecambe Bay has been, since 1963, Cedric Robinson, who in his book 'Sand Walker: A Lifetime on Morecambe Bay (2000)', describes the place as 'the wet Sahara', and advises

There's only two people you can put your trust in when crossing these sands: God and the sand pilot.

Morecambe Bay potted shrimps are highly regarded.

Hazards include not only tides that come in faster than you can walk, cutting off the unwary, but also hidden holes called melgraves covered by firm looking skin but concealing quick sands ten feet or more deep, which can set around you like concrete. On 5th February 2004 these dangers were illustrated when 21 Chinese cockle pickers were drowned after they were cut off by rising tides.

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.

The Misery Of Heat

It was definitely edging towards being the hottest day of the year. The sun was beaming down through cloudless skies, and the pavements were warm to the touch. A slight breeze blew, gently moving the leaves on the trees and making the heat seem bearable. Yet once the breeze stopped the full force of the furnace hit you.

No one in their right mind would want to be out in this. A gang of restless twelve-year-old boys were milling around at the shops. They were hiding in the shade given by the overhang of the flats that sat above the shops. All of the boys had their t-shirts off; either held in their hands or slung over one shoulder. All of them were monochrome sets. They were either in black or white, sometimes both.

Two Spanish men were having an animated conversation in their native tongue outside of the newsagent. One had a tight grip on the lead that connected to a harness on the light, almost beige coloured pug at their feet. There was no need for the owner to be holding the lead so tightly. The pug was splayed out on the cool paving slabs in the shade. Each of its four legs pointing in a different direction as the poor little sod desperately panted away, trying against the odds to keep cool. Its discomfort apparently unnoticed by its oblivious owner, more used to these searing climes.

Yet in this early afternoon on this oven baked day the man went out. A man who over the previous, cooler few days, had gone around in shorts and t-shirt, had decided that today was the day to go out in his new full-length trousers, and a long-sleeved shirt. He was off to walk into the town centre. And the reason for this walk in the hot sun?

Of course, it was to make the almost daily pilgrimage to Starbucks. Yes, he was going out in the heat of this, the warmest of days, to get a coffee. Something he could have had in the cool shade of the kitchen. But no, a fifteen-minute walk into town to get a hot coffee in the warmest set of clothes he had worn in days, and then to sit drinking the said hot coffee in the sun of the open square.

He would sit there watching the children, who, having not lost their senses, were gleefully playing. Running through the jets of water as the spurted up into the air, shrieking with delight as they did so.

Once the man had finished his coffee, he walked back home in the heat, only to complain how warm it was when he arrived back home. This whilst eating his late lunch before retiring to play distorted rock riffs on his guitar in his sun-baked bedroom.

Leicestershire

Leicester Castle



Started in 1068, all of the original Castle buildings have disappeared or been replaced over time, the only parts that remains is the Castle Motte, which is accessible from the Castle Gardens, and the Great Hall. It stands at just about 40 feet high, but when started it would have been several feet higher and would have had a timber fort stood upon the top of it. Next to the motte would have stood the castle bailey (or enclosure) which would have consisted of a number of buildings surrounded by a ditch and a timber fence on top of a bank.

It was originally built over the Roman town walls.

Over the years the defences were rebuilt, and the timber fences were replaced by a stone wall. In the bailey as well as the general buildings, a great hall was built from around 1070, and in 1107 the church of St. Mary de Castro was built. Along the walls around the Castle were built two gateways, both of which survive today.

The Castle itself fell into disrepair and was eventually demolished at some stage during the middle ages.

The Castle site is a scheduled monument. One of the existing buildings within the site is now reopened as The Castle Inn.

Castle Gateway



Built in the 15th century this gateway was badly damaged by fire in 1445/6. The timber work in the current gateway, and the adjoining Castle house, that can be seen today, date from the renovation work required after the fire.

Originally the rooms above the gateway continued across and were joined to St. Mary de Castro's church; however, this part of the building was demolished in 1848. To the other side of the Castle house stands a further building which, is now part of Castle house, and was added in the Georgian style in the 18th century.

Turret Gateway



This gateway connected the Castle to the Newarke. It was built in 1423, and had a portcullis, the signs of which can be seen today. It is also known as Rupert's gateway, named after Prince Rupert, who based himself in Leicester during the Civil war, however the gateway survived the civil war due to the fact that fighting during the siege of Leicester took place some 150 yards away from the gateway. The poor state of repair that can be seen today is actually due to damage caused to it in an election riot in 1832.

Great Hall



The Great Hall was originally built just after the Castle was started in about 1070. It was originally built with stone walls and no roof. The roof was added later onto the great oak aisle posts in about 1150. The roof was later replaced in the early 16th century, but the original posts survive, and must have been growing as oak trees at the time of the Danish invasion of Leicester in 877.

It is likely that on at least one of the 3 occasions that parliament met in Leicester, they met in the Great hall, most likely in 1425/26 for the Parliament of Bats.

The Great Hall survived the demolishing of the rest of the Castle, probably because it was used at the local court. In the late 1600's a new brick frontage was put onto the building and is the Queen Anne style frontage which can be seen today.

The hall itself was separated in to two separate courts, one used for criminal cases and one for civil cases., and were used as such right up until 1992, when new courts were built, and 'power' transferred to them. Part of the reason for this is that the Great Hall itself had become too small to hold all those waiting for cases, and the narrow roads and gateways into the Castle courtyard made it more difficult for the modern vehicles necessary to get in and out.

John of Gaunt's Cellar



The medieval cellar is all that is still there of the original stone kitchen / chamber at the south of the great hall. However, the building that is above the cellar has long since disappeared. The cellar is named after John of Gaunt, 2nd Duke of Lancaster; however, it was built over 200 years before he came to be resident at the castle. Though he did die at the Castle in 1399, as had his wife, Constance of Castille before him in 1394.

BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir



Located on the corner of Catherine Street and Gypsy Lane is the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Mandir (BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha), a white limestone Hindu temple. The mandir building is a former denim factory and it has now become one of the largest and most stunning mandirs in the Midlands.

Featuring a style of temple architecture found across northern India, the stonework was created by craftsmen in Gujarat, and then brought to Leicester and assembled on site, culminating in consecration, and opening 9 October 2011.

The mandir was funded with donations collected by volunteers and devotees over a three-year period. A large proportion of the mandir congregation are part of the Kenyan and Ugandan Asian community who emigrated to Leicester after Idi Amin expelled them from Uganda in the early 1970s. His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj inspired the local Hindu community to build a place of worship, culture and community and it was funded entirely by the congregation and members of the local community. It has a cafe, bookshop and sports hall and celebrates Diwali and other major Hindu festivals throughout the year as well as running classes for young Hindus so that they can learn more about their religion. Since it opened in 2011 this magnificent building has brought the community together and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Exquisite carvings with both religious and cultural motifs can be found throughout the building and lotus flowers and peacocks, both symbolising peace and beauty, are carved into the stonework. The domes, pillars and carvings all make this a temple built to impress and adding to the dramatic effect are the three Shikhar towers with gold painted pinnacles rising out of the roof. These towers represent the mountain peaks of the Himalayas.

A Mandir is a sacred Hindu place of worship. It represents the earthly home of Bhagwan, where one can visit to quiet the mind and experience spirituality. Visitors and devotees come to mandir to offer prayers before the murtis, or sacred images, as well as to attend cultural classes and religious services known as sabhas. BAPS Swaminarayan mandirs serve to both foster and further personal and collective worship. Mahant Swami Maharaj, the spiritual leader and guru to BAPS, supports the establishment of mandirs as a means to cultivate peace within communities and connect individuals to Bhagwan.

Mandirs represent a Vedic tradition of building, maintaining, and preserving physical spaces to uphold the philosophy of Hinduism. The rituals and traditions celebrated at mandirs connect individuals to their families, communities, and to Bhagwan. Mandirs ensure that the legacy of Hinduism's oldest teachings is shared with future generations for many years to come.

The size of mandirs varies from small, simple shrines to elaborate stone edifices. BAPS mandirs are traditionally categorized as either 'shikharbadhha mandirs' or 'hari mandirs'. Shikharbadhha mandirs are built largely of stone and signature architectural pinnacles whereas hari mandirs are built using modern materials such as steel, concrete, cement. Another major distinction is that in shikharbadhha mandirs, the arti is performed five times daily, while in hari mandirs, the arti is performed twice daily.

In addition to spiritual practice, BAPS mandirs teach the arts, language, music, and philosophy that are the roots of Hindu heritage. BAPS mandirs also host various charitable efforts for local communities throughout the year such as sponsored walks, health fairs, blood drives, and more.

Tilton on the Hill

Tilton on the Hill is a village in the civil parish of Tilton on the Hill and Halstead in the Harborough district of Leicestershire. The population of the civil parish at the 2011 census was 601. It lies 2 miles north of the A47, on the B6047 to Melton Mowbray. Halstead civil parish was merged with Tilton in 1935, while the deserted medieval village of Whatborough was merged in 1994. Marefield remains a separate civil parish but is part of the Tilton Electoral Ward. St Peter's Tilton, the Parish Church is in the parish of Halstead, as is the vicarage.

Tilton on the Hill is one of the highest places in East Leicestershire at 719 feet (219 m) above sea level, with the Mill House standing at the highest point. Whatborough is the highest summit in the eastern half of the county. The centre of the village was designated a Conservation Area in 1975, with the boundaries updated in 1994 and 2005.

In 2009, the village was named as the "Best Village in Leicestershire" in the Calor Village of the Year competition and also won Calor "Sustainability Village of the Year" for the Midlands.

Tilton railway station on the Great Northern Railway was closed to passengers in 1953. The line continued to be used for freight for another ten years, mostly to take ore away from the iron ore quarry, which closed in 1961. The railway cutting is a Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest and is owned and managed by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

The first known mention of a religious establishment in Tilton is a reference in the Domesday Book to a priest. Much of the current church dates to the 13th and 14th Century and is a landmark for miles around. In 1854 substantial restoration work was carried out, overseen by R.C. Hussey, which led to the removal of the gallery at the west end of the church,

as well as the medieval chancel screen. New roofs were installed but the bosses and corbel heads are thought to be 15th century originals, Also installed in 1854 were new flooring, pulpit, reading desk and open benches. The total cost was £1200. In 2014 the Church undertook a £193,000 repair of the belltower and spire.

St Peter's contains the tombs of Sir Johan de Diggebye and his wife, dated 1269. The tomb of Sir Everard Digby is dated 1509. In the Churchyard there is a medieval cross and the village memorial to those killed in World War I.

A Methodist Society began in Halstead in 1811, and the Wesleyan chapel was built in 1813 on land let on a 99-year lease by T. Sikes esq. for a nominal 3 peppercorn rent. The chapel was enlarged in 1852, and a plaque on the front marks a further extension in 1866. It was renovated internally in the late 1980s. In the 19th century it was part of the Stamford and Rutland Circuit. It is now in the Leicester Trinity Methodist Circuit.

There are 5 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Tilton parish:

Pond on the east side of the moated site, 17014, Moated site beside Loddington Road, Tilton. A square house platform with some grass-covered stonework, now heavily overgrown, is surrounded by a broad moat, water filled on the eastern side.

Churchyard Cross. A 13th century cross base and shaft standing 2.4 metres (7.9 ft.) high, in its original position in St Peter's churchyard.

Mound 220yds north-west of church, thought to be a mound for a windmill of either medieval or post-medieval date. Robin a tiptoe Hill. Defended enclosure on Robin-a-Tiptoe Hill of some 4.5 hectares (11 acres), possibly an Iron Age enclosure although the dating is uncertain.

Whatborough Hill, near Tilton on the Hill, 17090, Whatborough deserted medieval village

St Peter's Church is grade I listed; while a further 18 buildings are grade II listed

Iron Ore was quarried to the east of Halstead on the north side of the Oakham Road between 1880 and about 1900, between 1912 and 1921 and between 1924 and 1961. Between 1880 and 1950 the quarries were on the west side of railway and from 1950 to 1961 on the east side. At first the ore was taken by standard gauge tramway to a tipping stage north of Tilton station where it was tipped into railway wagons in sidings. Horses pulled wagons on the tramway. From 1912 a narrow-gauge tramway was used, still with horse haulage. Steam locomotives replaced the horses in 1928 which operated until 1950. When the new quarries in the east of the railway were opened in that year and the old tramway closed, the ore was taken to the tipping dock by lorries which crossed over the railway by a new Bailey Bridge. Quarrying was done by hand with the aid of explosives until 1933 when a petrol paraffin machine was brought in. From 1936 diesel machines were used.

The main visible remains of the quarry operation are the final gullet on the west side (dating from 1950) near Halstead House, the tipping dock, the supports of the former Bailey bridge and traces of the lorry road leading to it.

Top Ten

The first ten novels by Robert Crais featuring the private detective Elvis Cole and his silent partner Joe Pike.

| | Title | Released |
|----|-----------------------|----------|
| 1 | The Monkey's Raincoat | 1987 |
| 2 | Stalking The Angel | 1989 |
| 3 | Lullaby Town | 1992 |
| 4 | Free Fall | 1993 |
| 5 | Voodoo River | 1995 |
| 6 | Sunset Express | 1996 |
| 7 | Indigo Slam | 1997 |
| 8 | L.A. Requiem | 1999 |
| 9 | The Last Detective | 2003 |
| 10 | The Forgotten Man | 2005 |

Poetry Corner

Change In Attitude

What day is it please? Does anybody really know?
Not that it matters of course, I've nowhere to go.
Nothing to do except maybe gaze out of the window
And get fatter eating pizza and some hot cookie dough

The lockdown at the same time both sucks and blows
And when it will end is something nobody knows
The lack of motivation for me to do anything grows
And my stomach is so big now I can't see my toes

I stare at a screen for countless hours every single day
Whether working or personal use all I feel is dismay
All the colour is gone and now all around me is grey
For someone to shoot me I might just fork out and pay

I wonder if the next time I move will it be sometime in May
Or will it be later in the year just in time for Santa's sleigh
By which time God only knows how much I will weigh
And I'll have forgotten how to speak, instead I'll bray

The news is depressing it's all about death and misery
Or people who are self-obsessed chanting me me me
I sit and wonder how on earth it is they can't see
How their selfishness affects absolutely everybody

It's not rocket science and they don't need a degree
To see that there is more to life than taking a selfie
It isn't as if everybody in the world always has to agree
But wouldn't it be good to try and make others happy

Now I know I'm not known to have on my face a smile
And that every day in lockdown can be such a trial
It's difficult to prevent my usual outpouring of bile
But perhaps a change of outlook would be worthwhile

I could go la la la, fingers in my ears in a state of denial
And keep everything the same on my personal file
But I am going to try and go that extra mile
So that I end up being at the top of the dial

Musical Madness

This Day In Music

Born
1944 – Barry White
Died
2003 – Johnny Cash
Event
1988 – Pogues singer Shane MacGowan was admitted to a Dublin hospital suffering from “nervous exhaustion”.

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

1995 - Kool G Rap releases his debut solo album “4, 5, 6” on Cold Chillin’.

Peaking at #24 on the Billboard 200 and topping the R&B charts, “4, 5, 6” was Kool G Rap's first release after disbanding with DJ Polo, as well as his final Cold Chillin' release.

Producers include Dr. Butcher, T-Ray, Naughty Shorts, Buckwild, and Salaam Remi. "4, 5, 6" topped the Rap and R&B charts and produced the hit singles "Fast Life", featuring Nas, which reached #74 on the Billboard Hot 100, "It's a Shame", and the title track. Other guests on the album included MF Grimm and B-1.

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1970 - Smokey Robinson & The Miracles - Tears Of A Clown

Number 1 album in 2001 - Jamiroquai - A Funk Odyssey

Number 1 compilation album in 2009 - Anthems - Electronic 80s

Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

Public Enemy – Fear Of A Black Planet

Fear of a Black Planet was the third studio album by Public Enemy. It was released on April 10, 1990, by Def Jam Recordings and Columbia Records, and produced by the group's production team The Bomb Squad, who expanded on the sample-layered sound of Public Enemy's 1988 album It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back. Having fulfilled their initial creative ambitions with that album, the group aspired to create what lead rapper Chuck D called "a deep, complex album". Their song writing was partly inspired by the controversy surrounding member Professor Griff and his dismissal from the group in 1989.

Fear of a Black Planet explores themes of organization and empowerment within the black community, social issues affecting African Americans, and race relations at the time. The record's criticism of institutional racism, white supremacy, and the power elite was partly inspired by Dr. Frances Cress Welsing's views on colour.

A commercial and critical hit, Fear of a Black Planet sold two million copies in the United States and received rave reviews from critics, many of whom named it one of the year's best albums. Its success contributed significantly to the popularity of Afrocentric and political subject matter in hip hop and the genre's mainstream resurgence at the time.

In May 1989, Chuck D, Bomb Squad producer Hank Shocklee, and publicist Bill Stephey were negotiating with several labels for a production deal from a major record company, their goal since starting Public Enemy in the early 1980s. As they were in negotiations, group member Professor Griff made anti-Semitic remarks in an interview with The Washington Times, in which he said that Jews were the cause of "the majority of the wickedness" in the world. Public Enemy received media scrutiny and criticism from religious organizations and liberal rock critics, which added to charges against the group's politics being racist, homophobic, and misogynistic.

Amid the controversy, Chuck D was given an ultimatum by Shocklee and Stephey to dismiss Griff from the group or the production deal would fall through. He fired Griff in June, but he later re-joined and has since denied holding anti-Semitic views and apologized for the remarks. Several people who had worked with Public Enemy expressed concern about Chuck D's leadership abilities and role as a social spokesman. Def Jam director of publicity Bill Adler later said that the controversy "partly ... fuelled the writing of the album".

Fear of a Black Planet was conceived during the golden age of hip hop, a period roughly between 1987 and 1992 when artists took advantage of emerging sampling technology before record labels and lawyers took notice. Accordingly, Public Enemy were not compelled to obtain sample clearance for the album. This preceded the legal limits and clearance costs later placed on sampling, which limited hip hop production and the complexity of its musical arrangements. In an interview with Stay Free! Chuck D said: "Public Enemy's music was affected more than anybody's because we were taking thousands of sounds. If you separated the sounds, they wouldn't have been anything--they were unrecognizable. The sounds were all collaged together to make a sonic wall." An analysis by law professors Peter DiCola and Kembrew McLeod estimated that under the sample clearance system that developed after the album's release, Public Enemy were to lose at least five dollars per copy if they were to clear the album's samples at 2010 rates, a loss of five million dollars on a platinum record.

For the album's artwork, Public Enemy enlisted B.E. Johnson, a NASA illustrator. His design illustrated Chuck D's concept of two planets, the "Black" planet and Earth, eclipsing. Cey Adams, creative director for Def Jam at the time, said: "It was so interesting to me that a black hip-hop act did an illustration for their album cover. At that time, black hip-hop artists, for the most part, had photos of themselves on their covers. But this was the first time someone took a chance to do something in the rock'n'roll vein".

Originally intended for an October 1989 release date, Fear of a Black Planet was released on April 10, 1990, by Def Jam Recordings and Columbia Records. Although It Takes a Nation garnered Public Enemy more exposure with black audiences and music journalists, urban radio outlets had mostly rejected Def Jam's requests to include the group's singles in their regular rotation. This incited Def Jam co-founder Russell Simmons to attempt grassroots promotional tactics from his earlier years of promoting hip hop shows. In promoting Fear of a Black Planet, he recruited young street crews to put up posters, billboards, and stickers on public surfaces, while Simmons himself met with nightclub DJs and college radio program directors to persuade them to add albums tracks such as "Fight the Power", "Welcome to the

Terrordome", and "911 Is a Joke" to their playlists. As singles, they were released on July 4, 1989, in January 1990, and in April, respectively. Two more singles were later released — "Brothers Gonna Work It Out" in June and "Can't Do Nuttin' for Ya Man" in October, with the latter also featured in the 1990 comedy film *House Party*.

Fear of a Black Planet debuted at number 40 on the *Billboard* Top Pop Albums chart. It also charted for 10 weeks and reached number four in the United Kingdom, while in Canada, it charted for 28 weeks and reached number 15. By July 1990, it had sold 1.5 million copies in the US, where it ultimately peaked at number 10 and charted for 27 weeks on the Top Pop Albums. After 1991, when the tracking system Nielsen SoundScan began tracking domestic sales data, *Fear of a Black Planet* sold 561,000 additional copies by 2010.

In 2004, the Library of Congress added *Fear of a Black Planet* to the National Recording Registry, which selects recordings annually that are "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant". According to a press release for the registry, "'Fear of a Black Planet' brought hip-hop respect from critics, millions of new fans and passionate debate over its political content. The album signalled the coupling of a strongly political message with hip-hop music".

Track listing

All tracks were produced by The Bomb Squad.

Side 1

No. - Title - Writer(s) - Length

1. - "Contract on the World Love Jam" - Keith Shocklee, Eric Sadler, Carl Ridenhour - 1:44. Samples The Spinners' "Together We Can Make Such Sweet Music", James Brown's "I Got You", The Meters' "Wat'cha Say", Billy Stewart's "Summertime", Kid Dynamite's "Uphill Peace Of Mind", Richard Pryor's "Just Us", Malcolm McLaren and World's Famous Supreme Team's "Hobo Scratch", Funkadelic's "Get Off Your Ass And Jam", and Biz Markie's "Nobody Beats The Biz". Sampled 15 times.
2. - "Brothers Gonna Work It Out" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 5:07. Third single release from the album, it reached number 31 on the US Dance chart, number 20 on their R&B chart, and number 22 on their Rap chart. It hit number 951 in Australia, 30 in New Zealand and 46 in the UK, spending 2 weeks on the chart. The B-Side included "Power To The People" and "Anti-Nigger Machine" in the US and "War at 33¹/₃" in the UK. Was one of the tracks featured on a double acetate promo release in 1990. Samples Prince's "Let's Go Crazy", Otis Redding's "Good To Me", George Clinton's "Atomic Dog", Melvin Bliss' "Synthetic Substitution", Roy Ayers' "Brother Green", James Brown's "Get Up Get Into It Get Involved" and "Say It Loud I'm Black And Proud", Bar Kays' "Too Hot To Stop", Boogie Boys feat Disco Dave, Kid Delight and Kool Ski's "Rappin' Ain't No Thing", DJ Grand Wizard Theodore's "Fantastic Freaks At The Dixie", Sly & The Family Stone's "Sing A Simple Song", and their own "Rebel Without A Pause", "Don't Believe The Hype", and "Bring The Noise". Sampled 14 times and covered twice.
3. - "911 Is a Joke" - William Drayton, Shocklee, Sadler - 3:17. Fourth single release from the album, it reached number 15 on the US R&B chart, and number 1 on their Rap chart. It hit number 64 in Australia, 71 in the Netherlands, 22 in New Zealand, 25 in Switzerland, and 41 in the UK, spending 3 weeks on the chart. Featured "Revolutionary Generation" as the B-side on some versions of the release. Samples Michael Jackson's "Thriller", Sound Experience's "Devil With The Bust", Mico Wave's "Misunderstood", Bad Bascomb's "I Feel Like Dancing", Eddie Murphy's "Singers" and "Hit By A Car", Lyn Collins' "Think", Parliament's "Flash Light", Incorporated Thang Band's "Body Jackin", and Big Daddy Kane's "Something Funky". Sampled 38 times and covered once.
4. - "Incident at 66.6 FM" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 1:37. Was one of the tracks featured on a double acetate promo release in 1990. Samples Steve Arrington's "Speak With your Body" and sampled five times.
5. - "Welcome to the Terrordome" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 5:25. Second single release from the album, it reached number 49 on the US Dance chart, number 15 on their R&B chart, and number 3 on their Rap chart. It hit number 81 in Australia, 21 in the Netherlands, 12 in New Zealand and 18 in the UK, spending 4 weeks on the chart. 12" versions of the release included non-album track "Terrorbeat" and a version of "Black Steel In The Hour Of Chaos" from their previous album "It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back". Released in 2003 in the Def Jam classics series as a double A with "Shut 'em Down". Includes samples of; The Temptations' "Psychedelic Shack" and "Cloud Nine", Geoffrey Sumner's "Train Sequence", TS Monk's "Bon Bon Vie", James Brown's "Cold Sweat", "Soul Power", "Get Up Get Into It Get Involved", "I Got To Move", "Blues And Pants", and "Give It Up or Turnit a Loose", Mikey Dread's "Operator's Choice", Dyke & The Blazers' "Let A Woman Be A Woman - Let A Man Be A Man", Instant Funk's "I Got My Mind Made Up", Gwen Guthrie's "Seventh Heaven", Kool & The Gang's "Jungle Boogie", Kurtis Blow's "AJ Scratch", Funk Inc's "Kool Is Back", and their own "You're Gonna Get Yours". Sampled 147 times and covered once.
6. - "Meet the G That Killed Me" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 0:44. Sampled twice.
7. - "Pollywanacraka" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 3:52. Samples Leon Hayward's "I Want'a Do Something Freaky To You", Average White Band's "School Boy Crush", Lee Dorsey's "Occapella", Bobby Brown's "My Prerogative", and Masters Of Ceremony's "Cracked Out". Sampled four times.
8. - "Anti-nigger Machine" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 3:17. Was one of the tracks on the B-side of the US release of "Brothers Gonna Work It Out". Released as a single sided 7" promo on CBS. Samples The 45 King's "The 900 Number", Zapp's "More Bounce To The Ounce", Supremes' "Love Child", Kool & The Gang's "Jungle Boogie", Parliament's "Flash Light", Esther Williams' "Last Night Changed It All", Schoolly D's "PSK What Does It Mean", Lyn Collins' "Think", Dyke & The Blazers' "We Got More Soul", Rufus Thomas' "Funky Hot Girls", Pleasure's "Let's Dance", Malcolm McLaren's "Buffalo Gals", Run DMC's "Beats To The Rhyme" and "Proud To Be Black", James Brown's "There

It Is", and "Give It Up or Turnit a Loose", Salt N Pepa's "My Mike Sounds Nice", Boogie Down Production's "South Bronx", and their own "Black Steel In The Hour Of Chaos". Sampled 22 times.

9. - "Burn Hollywood Burn" (featuring Ice Cube & Big Daddy Kane) - O'Shea Jackson, Antonio Hardy, Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 2:47. Featured on the B-Side of some versions of "Can't Do Nuttin' For Ya Man". Samples Badder Than Evil's "Hot Wheels", Herman Kelly & Life's "Dance To The Drummer's Beat", and James Brown's "Give It Up or Turnit a Loose". Sampled eight times.

10. - "Power to the People" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 3:50. Was one of the tracks on the B-side of the US release of "Brothers Gonna Work It Out". Samples Sly & The Family Stand's "Turn Me Loose" and "Let's Be Together", Isaac Hayes' "Theme From Shaft", The J.B.'s "Gimme Some More", The Time's "Wild And Loose", Trouble Funk's "Drop The Bomb", James Brown's "Soul Power", and Doctor Funnkenstein and DJ Cash Money's "Scratchin' To The Funk". Sampled 40 times.

Side 2

No. - Title - Writer(s) - Length

11. - "Who Stole the Soul?" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 3:49. Was one of the tracks featured on a double acetate promo release in 1990. Samples The Beatles' "A Day In The Life" and "Getting Better", Chi-lites "Have You Seen Her", Soul Searchers "Blow Your Whistle", Sly & The Family Stand's "Stand", James Brown's "It's A New Day So Let A Man Come In And Do The Popcorn", "Introduction to Show Time" and "Make It Funky", Bob Prescott and Cy Harrice's "The Elevator", Lyn Collins' "Think", Doctor Funnkenstein and DJ Cash Money's "Scratchin' To The Funk", Magic Disco Machine's "Scratchin'", NWA's "Straight Outta Compton", Whodini's "It's All In Mr Magic's Wand", and their own "Bring The Noise". Sampled three times and covered once.

12. - "Fear of a Black Planet" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 3:45. Was one of the tracks featured on a double acetate promo release in 1990. Samples Donald Byrd's "Flight Time", Sly & The Family Stand's "Underdog", Bar Kays' "Holy Ghost", Syl Johnson's "Different Strokes", Eddie Murphy's "Modern Woman", Kool & The Gang's "Spirit Of The Boogie", "Funky Stuff" and "Jungle Boogie", Mountain's "Long Red", Jim Cato's "Three To One", Nice & Smooth's "Funky For You", and their own "Fight The Power". Sampled three times.

13. - "Revolutionary Generation" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 5:43. Was the B-side of some versions of "911 Is A Joke". Samples Aretha Franklin's "Respect", Musical Youth's "Pass The Dutchie", Baby Huey's "Listen To Me", CJ & Co's "We Got Our Own Thing", Brothers Johnson's "Ain't We Funkin' Now", The Soul Children feat. Jesse Jackson's "I Don't Know What This World Is Coming To", Double Dee & Steinski's "Lesson 2", EU's "Knock Him Out Sugar Ray", Run DMC's "Peter Piper", Edwin Starr's "Twenty Five Miles", Funk Inc's "Kool Is Back", Bobby Byrd's "Hot Pants I'm Coming I'm Coming, I'm Coming", James Brown's "Give It Up or Turnit a Loose", Supremes' "Where Did Our Love Go", and their own "Show 'Em Whatcha Got". Sampled twice.

14. - "Can't Do Nuttin' for Ya Man" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 2:46. Fifth single release from the album, it reached number 11 on the US Rap chart. It hit number 59 in Australia, 15 in New Zealand and 53 in the UK, spending 2 weeks on the chart. Had "Burn Hollywood Burn" and non-album track "Get The Fuck Outta Dodge" as B-sides on some versions. Samples Michael Jackson's "Don't Stop Til You Get Enough", Jackson Sisters "I Believe In Miracles", Fred Wesley and The J.B.'s' "If You Don't Get It Right The First Time Back Up & Try It Again Parrry", Bobby Byrd's "Hot Pants", Dynamic Corvettes' "Funky Music Is The Thing", and their own "Terminator X Speaks With His Hands". Sampled 15 times and covered once.

15. - "Reggie Jax" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 1:35. Was one of the tracks featured on a double acetate promo release in 1990.

16. - "Leave This Off Your fuckin' Charts" - Norman Rogers - 2:31. Samples Daryl Hall & John Oates' "I Can't Go For That", Chic's "Good Times", Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "It's Nasty", Richard Pryor's "The Goodnight Kiss", Pleasure's "Joyous", Donny Hathaway's "The Ghetto", Big Daddy Kane and Biz Markie's "Just Rhymin' With Biz" and Stop The Violence Movement's "Self-Destruction". Sampled once.

17. - "B Side Wins Again" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 3:45. Samples Kool & The Gang's "N.T.", Commodores "The Assembly Line", Juice "Catch A Groove", DJ Grand Wizard Theodore's "Live Convention '82" (side A and B), John Davis and the Monster Orchestra's "I Can't Stop", Run DMC's "Tougher Than Leather", and their own "Black Steel In The Hour Of Chaos". Sampled 69 times and covered once.

18. - "War at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ " - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 2:07. Was the B-Side of the UK release of "Brothers Gonna Work It Out". Samples Edwin Starr's "War" and has been sampled four times.

19. - "Final Count of the Collision Between Us and the Damned" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 0:48. Samples Mother Freedom Band's "When You're Hot You're Hot" and has been sampled twice.

20. - "Fight the Power" - Shocklee, Sadler, Ridenhour - 4:42. First single from the album, it was the main song in Spike Lee's "Do The Right Thing", and as such the single was release on Motown Records and not Def Jam, as all Spike Lee soundtracks at the time were contractually released on Motown. It reached number 20 on the US R&B chart and number 1 on their Rap chart. It charted at number 24 in the Netherlands, and number 29 in the UK where it spent 5 weeks on the chart. A revamped version of the song was included on their 2020 album "What You Gonna Do When The Grid Goes Down" featuring Nas, Rhapsody, Black Thought, Jami, YG and Questlove. Was included on the B-side of 1992 single release "Shake Your Booty". Contains Samples of James Brown's "Funky Drummer" and "Funky President", Syl Johnson's "Different Strokes", Isley Brothers' "Fight The Power", Sly & The Family Stone's "Sing A Simple Song", The Soul Children feat. Jesse Jackson's "I Don't Know What This World Is Coming To", The J.B.'s' "Hot Pants Road", Bob Marley & The Wailers' "I Shot The Sheriff", The Dramatics' "Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get", Afrika Bambaataa & Soulsonic Force's "Planet Rock", Wilson Pickett's "Land of 1000 Dances", Bobby Byrd's "I Know You Got Soul", Trouble

Funk's "Pump Me Up" and "Saturday Night Live From Washington DC pt. 1", Rick James' "Give It To Me Baby", Guy's "Teddy's Jam", West Street Mob's "Let's Dance", Kurtis Blow's "AJ Scratch", Spoonie Gee's "Love Rap", Dyke & The Blazers' "Let A Woman Be A Woman - Let A Man Be A Man", and their own "Yo! Bum Rush The Show". has been sampled 47 times and covered 6 times.

Personnel

Agent Attitude – performer
Kamarra Alford – assistant engineer
Jules Allen – photography
Big Daddy Kane – rapper
The Bomb Squad – producer
Mike Bona – engineer, mixing
Brother James I – performer
Brother Mike – performer
Chris Champion – assistant engineer
Chuck D – arranger, director, producer, rapper, sequencing
Jody Clay – assistant engineer
Tom Conway – assistant engineer
The Drawing Board – art direction
Paul Eulin – engineer, mixing
Flavor Flav – rapper
Dave Harrington – assistant engineer
Robin Holland – photography
Rod Hui – engineer, mixing
Ice Cube – rapper
James Bomb – performer
B.E. Johnson – cover art
Steve Loeb – engineer
Branford Marsalis – saxophone
Dave Patillo – assistant engineer
Alan "JJ/Scott" Plotkin – engineer, mixing, vocals
Professor Griff – rapper
Eric "Vietnam" Sadler – arranger, director, programming, producer, sequencing
Nick Sansano – engineer, mixing
Paul Shabazz – programming
Christopher Shaw – engineer, mixing
Hank Shocklee – arranger, director, producer, sequencing
Keith Shocklee – arranger, director, producer, sequencing
James Staub – assistant engineer
Terminator X – scratching
Ashman Walcott – photography
Howie Weinberg – mastering
Russell Winter – photography
Wizard K-Jee – scratching
Dan Wood – engineer, mixing
Kirk Yano – engineer

Charts

Chart - Peak position
Australian Albums - 30
Canadian Albums - 15
Dutch Albums - 17
German Albums - 30
New Zealand Albums - 15
Swedish Albums - 24
Swiss Albums - 19
UK Albums - 4
US Billboard 200 - 10
US Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums (Billboard) - 3

Certifications

Region - Certification - Certified units/sales
Canada - Gold - 50,000
United Kingdom - Gold - 100,000
United States - Platinum - 1,000,000

Top 10

The top ten in the UK singles chart on this day in 2013

| Position | Last Week's Position | Title | Artist | Label | Peak Position | Weeks on Chart |
|----------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | New | ROAR | KATY PERRY | VIRGIN | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | BURN | ELLIE GOULDING | POLYDOR | 1 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 | WAKE ME UP | AVICII | POSITIVA/PRMD | 1 | 8 |
| 4 | 3 | SONNENTANZ (SUN DON'T SHINE) | KLANGKARUSSELL FT WILL HEARD | ISLAND | 3 | 3 |
| 5 | 4 | SUMMERTIME SADNESS | LANA DEL REY VS CEDRIC GERVAIS | POLYDOR | 4 | 8 |
| 6 | 9 | HOLD ON WE'RE GOING HOME | DRAKE FT MAJID JORDAN | CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC RECORDS | 6 | 5 |
| 7 | 5 | WE CAN'T STOP | MILEY CYRUS | RCA | 1 | 5 |
| 8 | 7 | APPLAUSE | LADY GAGA | INTERSCOPE | 5 | 4 |
| 9 | 6 | LOST GENERATION | RIZZLE KICKS | ISLAND | 6 | 2 |
| 10 | 8 | EARTHQUAKE | DJ FRESH/DIPLO/DOMINIQUE YOUNG | MINISTRY OF SOUND | 4 | 3 |

A Single Life

R. Dean Taylor – There's A Ghost In My House

This is one of those singles that first got me into both Northern Soul and Motown music. A friend at school included it on a C60 of Northern Soul tracks for me when I was thirteen, and then it got heavy rotation when I bought myself the cassette of "Motown Hits Of Gold Volume 7". It was one of the first Motown singles I bought as my record collecting took off in the mid-eighties.

There's a Ghost in My House was a single recorded by R. Dean Taylor, a Canadian song writer who part of the Motown Hit Factory in the late 1960's. It was written by Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier, and Eddie Holland of Motown Records, together with R. Dean Taylor. It was originally recorded by Taylor in 1966.

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier, it was released as a single on the Motown subsidiary V.I.P. label in April 1967, with a B-Side of "Don't Fool Around" (catalogue number V.I.P. 25042) but was not a hit. However, after it had become a popular dance song in Northern soul clubs in Britain, such as the Blackpool Mecca and Wigan Casino, R. Dean Taylor's record was reissued on EMI's Tamla Motown label with a B-side of "Let's Go Somewhere" (catalogue number TMG 896), and reached no. 3 on the UK Singles Chart in 1974, spending 12 weeks on the chart.

Taylor had been the first white artist on Motown to have a top twenty hit when "Gotta See Jane" reached number 17 in 1968. He also had a number 2 hit in 1971 with "Indiana Wants Me". He was the first and is one of only three white Motown artists to have top three hits. The others being Charlene, and, of all people, Bruce Willis!

His scheduled release on Tamla Motown of "Ain't It A Sad Thing b/w Back Street" on TMG786 was never actually released, instead it was shifted over to the new subsidiary label "Rare Earth" which concentrated on a more white, rock orientated roster of artists and was given the first label number on the new label - RES101. Demo copies of the original Tamla Motown label exist and will set you back three if not four-digit sums.

Versions of the song were later recorded by British bands Yachts (1980), B.E.F. (British Electric Foundation) featuring Paul Jones (1982), and the Very Things (1987). A version recorded by the Fall in 1987 became their first single to reach the top 50 in the UK, peaking at no. 30, and was included on their album The Frenz Experiment. A version was included by Graham Parker in 2000 on Loose Monkeys, an album of out-takes.

Story Time

Downpour

"It's another warm one today then Ken."

Norman was the master of both, the understatement, and in stating the bleeding obvious. I grunted an acknowledgement to him. I didn't want to get drawn into another mind-numbing, spirit-sapping conversation on the weather. Yes, it was true; it was another warm one as Norman so succinctly put it. To my mind it was always a warm one in this office.

Regardless of the time of year, or the weather outside the building, the furnace in the basement would be pumping out heat to the ancient metal radiators that clanked and rattled whenever they felt like it. This building may have been state of the art when it opened in 1954, but forty years on it wasn't in any fit state to cope with the summer of '94.

It had been sunny every day since the start of June, and the floor to ceiling windows helped attract and trap all of the Sun's heat into the office. There was none of the modern air-conditioning that our sister offices had elsewhere in the city. There weren't even enough plug sockets to stick any fans into either. They had struggled to get enough sockets in play when they put computers onto everyone's desks when they brought the new system in. There were still a number of desks that didn't have computers on.

The windows that were adding to the heat of the office weren't any help to try and get rid of it either. Only a small slit towards the ceiling could be opened, and then only on every third window around the office. It wasn't enough to get any kind of air flow going around the office, and during the day the air outside was nearly as warm. To top it off, some idiot kept closing the windows every night, so there was nowhere for the heat to escape when it cooled off outside. Plus, they had to be opened by maintenance staff with a special pole, because we weren't allowed to stand on the stone looking ledges at the base of the windows because, typically for the time, they had been made with asbestos included inside them.

So, I sat here and melted, for eight hours every day. Trying to ignore the inane comments from my colleagues and staring open-mouthed at those who came in wearing jumpers and coats. I had taken to wearing t-shirts and shorts, much to the obvious disgust of my supervisor. He had complained, but there was nothing in the dress code to prevent me from wearing what I did. Even if there had have been I would have worn them anyway. If it was fine for the women in the office to wear short skirts and sleeveless tops, then I was perfectly entitled to wear something in a similar vein.

The attire had the additional bonus of meaning I wouldn't get sent out to the counter area to deal with the various claimants coming into the office. Apparently, I wasn't dressed professionally enough to see the general public. Not that any of the general public would have given a shit what I looked like. As long as I could sort them out a giro, whether it be for income support or a social fund loan, they wouldn't care if I was naked apart from some tinsel to cover my bits. It was only a couple of weeks ago when a fifty-something year-old woman had turned up to the office completely naked. Wanting to get a social fund loan for some clothes, as she claimed all of hers had been stolen overnight.

I sat staring at my screen. The little green cursor sat blinking in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen waiting for me to type something in. It might have a long wait; I had no intention of typing anything. That would involve moving. Granted it would only be my fingers, but it would still be movement on my part. If I moved, I sweated more. I was sweating more than enough sat perfectly still. In fact, not only was I sweating profusely, but it was so hot that even my sweat was sweating.

I didn't understand those people who went on holiday to hot countries. What possible pleasure could be derived by melting on some beach or other in 40-degree temperatures? The 30 degrees it had been here for the last six weeks was unbearable. Perhaps I should book a holiday to somewhere like Siberia or Iceland, where I didn't feel so hot that I felt like my face might burst open like a grape.

I looked across the desk at my can of drink. It would involve movement to reach out, then lift the can to my mouth and tip some liquid in. But I needed the liquid. My face may have felt like a grape waiting to explode, but the rest of me felt as if I was dried up like a raisin. I went for it; my arm made a weird kind of slurping noise as I peeled it off the desk. It had stuck to the surface with the heat, I could do with a couple of sheets of A4 to put under my forearms to stop them sticking to the desk.

I started to take a swig from my drink, which turned into a glug, and then into a guzzle, and before I paused for breath half the can was gone. At this rate the couple of cans I had picked up on the way into work that morning would be gone by ten, and I would have to venture out into the heat of the day to get more supplies. Everyone else on my bank of desks had a cup of tea or coffee on the go, with steam rising up from the depths of the cup. I would have shaken my head in some kind of disbelief, but that would have involved more movement.

My mind wandered for most of the morning, I managed to avoid getting involved in any of the conversations going on around me, and just stared at my screen. I had diverted my phone to some random extension number on another floor

when I got in, so wasn't being distracted by the stream of idiot enquiries that usually came through. My tranquil morning was only disrupted by hearing someone exclaim,

"Rain!"

I moved for the first time in hours as I spun my desk round to look out of the window behind me. It was true; spots of water were appearing on the window, changing the colour of the grime on them from light, almost gold shade to a dark muddy brown. As I watched, even more transfixed than I had been with my screen, the rain got steadily heavier. It was becoming torrential.

I jumped up out of my chair and headed for the door. I glanced at the lift that had become my friend in these hot days, but it would take too long to get up from the ground floor to where I was and then back down again. Instead, I headed for the stairs and slid down the six bannisters to the ground floor. I hit the exit button and wandered out into the rain.

It felt great as the cool water splashed down on me. Within seconds I was wet through. I could feel water dripping down my face from my hair. A drop was forming at the end of my nose, which I blew away, causing a little spray to arch away from my face to the wet pavement in front of me. Yet it wasn't enough for me to just be wet, I felt I needed to be soaked. I got down onto the pavement and lay on my back spread-eagled, making myself into a little star shape. I lay in the small puddles that had already formed on the pavement and smiled as the whole of the front of my body was pounded by the torrential downpour.

Three of the office regulars, the ones that used the office as something to do before another night of sleeping on the streets or in the night shelter, came and joined me lying on the floor. I wondered whether this was the first shower any of them had had for months.

I don't know how long I lay there, happily getting soaked by the first rain in weeks. I ignored the colleagues who came and tried to get me off the floor. I ignored the passers-by that eyed me with suspicion and muttered as they walked on. I only stopped to get back up when the rain began to abate.

As I made my way back to my desk, I could feel the eyes of my colleagues on me. I was fully aware of the state I must look. Dripping cold water on the carpet I walked across. I plonked myself down in my chair, the damp of my clothes taking seconds to soak into the cloth covering of it. It would still be damp tomorrow when I came in dry. That was an issue for another day.

The wet clothes kept me cool for a few minutes, and then the heat of the office began creeping through to me again. The downpour had done nothing to cool the office down, only to cool me down. I felt my face warming up again; making its way up to the state where it would feel like it was going to burst. Little wisps of what looked like steam started to rise off of my arms.

I looked back out of the window into the bright sunny afternoon again. I hoped there would be another downpour soon.

World's Greatest Cathedrals Top Trumps

| <u>Duomo Di Milano</u> | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| City / Country | Milan, Italy |
| Height | 108.5 metres |
| Commenced Building | 1386 |
| Character | 11 |
| Global Fame | 82 |
| Top Trumps Rating | 89 |
| Details | The Duomo of Milan is one of the largest gothic cathedrals in Europe. It took thousands of workers, a new canal system and over six centuries to complete. They say there are more statues on this gothic style cathedral than any other building in the world. There are 3,400 statues, 135 gargoyles and 700 figures that decorate Milan Duomo. |

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>. A lot has gone onto this site recently, and it would be good if you are on there looking at my work if you could register and become a standard member – it's free for the basic member level, but it allows you to follow me on that site and allows for claps and comments to be made on pieces. Anything to help with profile raising is much appreciated.

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 now twelve colours available with some new arrivals: red, black, dark green, light blue, maroon, orange, purple, grey, bright pink, dark blue, coral, and white. In addition, speak to me about Flanagan's Running Club torches, limited stock, bright little so and sos available in red or blue. And now three colours of small leather style notepads in green, red, and black, with mini pens and various size sticky notes. Then there are the hand sanitiser bottles, 100 ml of near pure alcohol.

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

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