

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 63

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.

Published

OK, my name may not be on the cover, but I have work in print in three published collections this month, available on Amazon as a Kindle download or a physical book. I have a poem and two short stories in the Leicestershire section of the East Midlands Collection.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/East-Midlands-Collection-Anthologies-Publications/dp/B0BCWJYTJK/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

and a poem in the Sussex section of the Home Counties Collection.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Home-Counties-Collection-Anthologies-Publications/dp/B0BCSBGQXF/ref=rvi_sccl_3/262-8008469-2324914?pd_rd_w=WKNcy&content-id=amzn1.sym.febd3956-4d60-4288-b8f2-cb468eb6674d&pf_rd_p=febd3956-4d60-4288-b8f2-cb468eb6674d&pf_rd_r=7Y7NEGVCBMTH6KPHEA1H&pd_rd_wg=F7gF4&pd_rd_r=93e02f23-c629-4207-96af-75ae79940656&pd_rd_i=B0BCSBGQXF&psc=1

and a poem and a short story in the Ireland Collection

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/B0BF2XB9WQ/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

On This Day – 23rd September

2002 – The first public version of the web browser Mozilla Firefox ("Phoenix 0.1") is released.

2019 – The British travel company, Thomas Cook Group, declares bankruptcy, leaving employees without jobs and 600,000 customers stranded abroad. Hotels throughout the world are stuck with £338 million (U.S. \$415 million) in unpaid bills

Teachers' Day (Brunei)
Celebrate Bisexuality Day
International Day of Sign Languages

A Grim Almanac of Sussex

1798 – Seaman John Hanning, who killed one of the press gang at Newhaven, was discovered hanging with a handkerchief round his neck from the bars of his cell by the keeper of Lewes House of Correction. On the day before, Hanning asked another prisoner to write two letters for him, one to his sister and another to a young woman in Dover, in which he stated that he would never see them again and left them his few possessions – a watch, some silver spoons and his clothes. He was buried at the crossroads near St John's Church, 'but the stake, commonly used on such occasions, was dispensed with'.

Births

1930 – Ray Charles
1949 – Floella Benjamin
1949 – Bruce Springsteen

Deaths

1889 – Wilkie Collins

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1970 - Freda Payne - Band Of Gold

Number 1 album in 1971 - The Who - Who's Next

Number 1 compilation album in 1994 - Various - The Best Rock Album In The World ... Ever!

#vss365

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

I'd been in a cold sweat since the invite had landed on my mat. My #deipnophobia was kicking in.

I couldn't decline, mother wouldn't understand, or care.

Just don't sit me next to the archbishop again. I don't think he's recovered from me spitting coffee on him last time.

#vss365

Joke

A lawyer married a woman who had previously divorced ten husbands. On their wedding night, she told her new husband, "Please be gentle; I'm still a virgin. What?" said the puzzled groom. "How can that be if you've been married ten times?" "Well, husband number 1 was a Sales Representative; he kept telling me how great it was going to be. Husband number 2 was in Software Services; he was never really sure how it was supposed to function, but he said he'd look into it and get back to me. Husband number 3 was from Field Services; he said everything checked out diagnostically, but he just couldn't get the system up. Husband number 4 was in Telemarketing; even though he knew he had the order, didn't know when he would be able to deliver. Husband number 5 was an Engineer; he understood the basic process but wanted three years to research, implement, and design a new state-of-the-art method. Husband number 6 was from Finance and Administration; he thought he knew how, but he wasn't sure whether it was his job or not. Husband number 7 was in Marketing; although he had a product, he was never sure how to position it. Husband number 8 was a psychiatrist; all he ever did was talk about it. Husband number 9 was a gynaecologist; all he did was look at it. Husband number 10 was a stamp collector; all he ever did was ... God, I miss him! "But now that I've married you, I'm really excited!" "Good," said the husband, "but, why?" "Duh; you're a LAWYER. This time I KNOW I'm going to get screwed!"

Drabble

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

The Sterile Planet

The crew and passengers of the deep space colonisation ship recognised a whole host of the plants on the planet. There were a whole host of vegetables that were the same as ones on Earth before they had left. Even if they had arrived on the wrong planet, it looked as this would be a good place to set up their colony.

But it turned out they were the last generation to live there. The plant had absorbed chemicals from the planet that were subtly toxic to The Human Race. They killed from within as they made them all sterile.

Random Items

Facts

Among the Abipone people of Paraguay, individuals who abstain from alcohol are thought to be "cowardly, degenerate and stupid."

On average, 100 people choke to death on ballpoint pens every year.

A snail can sleep for three years.

Thoughts

Good judgment comes from bad experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

Cheap things are of no value, valuable things are not cheap.

Only the doctor can suffer from good health

A Word A Day

Lewd

Adjective

Another word with a somewhat murky origin and one with various meanings that have evolved over time. It is thought that the origins of the word date back to the Old English word *laewede*, meaning 'layman', and was coined to distinguish the laity from the clergy. Given that the clergy were educated and most of the laity were not, over time the word took on the meaning of being stupid or ignorant. By the Middle English period, however, *lewd* had begun to take on its contemporary meaning of lascivious, obscene, and vulgar, as evidenced by Chaucer using the word in this sense in the prologue to *The Miller's Tale*:

*Lat be thy lewed dornken harlotrye.
It is a sinne and eek a greet folye
To apeiren any man, or him diffame,
And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame
(Stop your drunken talk about sex!
It's a sin and bad form
To hurt another man's reputation with such stories,
Especially when you drag their wives into it too.)
(Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (1476))*

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.

A Bored Interlude

He was bored, any more bored and he could pass himself off as an MDF kitchen work surface.

Nothing worked any more, the more he tried to get things to work the more frustrating it became, he was being left with his thoughts again - dangerous ground for a man with a mind like his, there would be no limit to what kind of devastation he could cause given time alone with his thoughts. No target would be considered too sacred, no miniscule detail would be considered too trivial.

The portal was open and there was no known force in the universe that could stop the flow in and out of his mind. It was like traffic flowing through Spaghetti Junction, occasionally become log jammed, BUT nothing that decent colonic irrigation couldn't fix.

The colours all came at once, right across the spectrum from black to white, like an acid trip in full Technicolor, and along with them came the sounds, from the sounds of silence like the high pitched frequency of the dog whistle, to the low hypnotic rumble of an earthquake, with sudden violent bursts of volume that offended the ear drums like a Garth Brooks greatest hits CD.

And now he was at peace, with all senses working at the very limit of their own existence, his nose smelling everything, from the particles of sweat on his forehead, cooling the fever he was feeling, to the remnants of Stella on his breath from intake the night before, he felt hot, cold and somewhere in between, not quite sure which was which.

In this peaceful trance he had induced it became very clear that the meaning of life that everyone had searched so hard for was within reach. It was so simple as well. To reach that plain of nirvana all he had to do was give up working, give up sleep all together and take up drinking as a 24/7 occupation, the only thing that prevented this was being able to find a sucker to sponsor this new life opportunity.

But it was back to reality, back to life, back to the feature on a Friday night. Things had by some strange miracle of fate started working again, which meant by the definition set down by Richard Laymon in his morally terrifying book *Beast House*, that nothing would ever be the same again. Or even sane again for that matter. The portal he had found open had collapsed on itself like a card house on a table that had been kicked by a baby elephant.

He would now have to work at a pace similar to one set by a sadistic whip master on an ancient Roman Galleon in order to escape from work to get to the pub before their happy hour was over, or he would never be able to maximize the drinking capabilities of the money that he didn't have in his wallet or his bank account.

Such is life, BUT on the less shitty side of the stick it wasn't death, and you can't be MDF if you're busy, just a busy little bastard.

Leicestershire

Wistow Hall

Wistow Hall is a 17th-century country house in Wistow, Leicestershire, England which has been converted into an apartment building. It is Grade II* listed.

The Hall was built to an H-plan of rendered brick with a Swithland slate hipped roof. It has a seven-window frontage with two storeys of sash windows and a row of dormer windows in the roof behind a parapet. At each corner are turret buttresses.

Wistow Hall, which may be built on or near the site of the earlier medieval house, retains the form of a large house of early-17th-century date. It consists of two stories with attics, built of red brick with stone dressings and now completely stuccoed on all sides. The original plan appears to have been H-shaped consisting of a central hall between two cross-wings which extended westwards to enclose a rear court. Then, as now, the principal front faced east with a central entrance, while the south wing contained the parlour rooms and the north wing the kitchen and service rooms. The map of 1632 shows the house with its H-plan having two three-storied tower-like features with pyramidal roofs standing at the front of each wing on their outer sides. Formal gardens are also shown to the south and east of the house.

The Wistow estate was bought by the Halford family in 1603. The Hall was built for Richard Halford, who was High Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1621 and a prominent Royalist during the Civil War. He was made a baronet by King Charles I in 1641 after having been imprisoned (and then released) by the Parliamentarians. King Charles slept at Wistow the night before the Battle of Naseby and returned to the house after his defeat to change horses, leaving his elaborate saddle behind.

The estate descended in the Halford family to the 7th Baronet, Sir Charles Halford, who died in 1780. His widow continued to live at the house until her own death in 1814, during which time the Grand Union Canal was built through the estate. The property then passed to Sir Henry Halford, 1st Baronet the king's physician who had been made a Baronet in his own right and was later to be the President of the Royal College of Physicians for many years. Born Henry Vaughan, he had changed his name to Halford in 1809 when made Baronet in anticipation of the inheritance. Sir Henry made several improvements to the park, rerouting a road and creating a lake. It subsequently passed to his son, Sir Henry Halford, 2nd Baronet, the MP for Leicestershire South and the latter's son, Sir Henry St. John Halford, 3rd Baronet and Chairman of Leicestershire County Council

Little work appears to have been done to the house between 1783 and 1814. In 1814, the building was in poor condition and subsequently underwent a drastic remodelling: this involved removing the gables on the north, south, and east sides and substituting hipped slate roofs with dormer windows set behind a tall parapet. A large glass hot-house was added at the south-west corner of the house in 1819 which has since been demolished. Later in the 19th century the same side of the house received two semi-circular bay windows, the work of the second Sir Henry Halford, who was also responsible for laying out a small formal garden. The rococo decoration in the south wing is probably of this period.

In 1912 and the following years the balustrade and parapet were removed, and additional dormer windows were provided, and in 1960 parts of the house were converted into five self-contained flats. The interior has few features of distinction, but the fine wrought-iron staircase balustrade built in the inner hall by Sir Charles Halford is similar in design to the wrought-iron gates of the Halford chapel in the church.

The last Sir Henry was very interested in the development of the rifle and had a shooting range installed at the park, where working with William Ellis Metford he made some significant developments in rifling and bullet design. On his death he left the Hall to his friend and rifle development collaborator, Thomas Fremantle, 3rd Baron Cottesloe. During the First World War the Hall was used as a hospital. The hall passed to John Fremantle, 4th Baron Cottesloe and during the Second World War was used as a refuge for Lutheran priests, one of whom stayed on after the war and ran, together with the 4th Baron's wife Lisbet, the International Christian Centre for Friendship and Service until 1958. It was then given to Lord Fremantle's daughter, Ann, who had married Timothy Brooks, and the couple renovated and modernised the house, converting part of it into apartments.

During work on the house in 1960 certain early features were exposed; these included stone dressings in the rear wall of the hall marking the position of a large lateral chimney stack, and a blocked north window and quoins in the existing west wall of the house apparently surviving from a former south extension of the kitchen wing. The first-floor rooms in the north wing have reset panelling of the 17th century and more of a similar date is preserved piecemeal in the attic rooms. One stone doorway with a Tudor head remains in the side wall of the south wing. The multi-gabled appearance of the house with finials, kneelers, and large lateral stacks remained more or less unaltered until after the end of the 18th century.

Timothy Brooks served as High Sheriff of the county in 1979, Lord Lieutenant from 1989 to 2003 and was subsequently knighted. Sir Timothy's son Richard was also High Sheriff in 2012.

St Andrews, Kegworth



The Parish Church stands on a commanding site overlooking the Market Place where Kegworth people have worshipped for a thousand years and where the present building has stood almost unchanged since 1387.

Most Medieval churches are a mixture of styles, having been altered and added to down the centuries. Kegworth church is unusual as far as it is mainly all from the same period of time. The present church is one of the largest parish churches in Leicestershire, complete with chancel, nave and aisles, wide transepts and a large western tower and spire. All that remains of the previous Norman church is the rough stone walling of the lower part of the tower, the large double buttresses and the elegant Spire are all 14th century.

Originally the church had steeply pitched roofs, but in the 15th century the Nave walls were raised to accommodate Clerestory windows to flood the Nave with light. The present flat pitched roof is spanned by great oak tie beams carrying matching purlins with elaborate carved bosses at the intersections. Its unique feature is a series of fourteen figures representing medieval bands-men with their instruments - including a bagpipe, a tambourine, a trumpet and a harp. Unfortunately, only one of the figures is original, the remainder were beautifully re-carved in the restoration of 1860. In the Pre-reformation times, there were three chantry chapels in the Transepts, evidence by the three Piscenae which still remain. On the south side of the Chancel is an old Aumbry recess besides a forth Piscena and two sedilla.

The church forms part of a Benefice with St Michael & All Angels, Diseworth, St Peter & St Paul, Hathern, St John The Baptist, Belton, St Mary The Virgin, Osgathorpe, and All Saints, Long Whatton. It is a Grade II* listed building (listed on 07/12/1962), and the listing is below.

Parish church. Lower part of tower is C13, remainder of church all C14 and C15 clerestory. Restored 1859-60 by Joseph Mitchell of Sheffield. Further restoration to tower and spire 1875 and 1886. Ashlar, with lead roofs. Cruciform plan with west tower, aisled nave, and contemporary vestry to north of chancel. Fine large building in Decorated style, with moulded plinth and sill strings, battlemented parapets, off-set buttresses, and large arched windows with restored reticulated tracery. Earlier west tower is of 4 stages with chamfered lancets to 2 lower stages, and C13 2-light openings with colonnette mullions to third stage. New bell-chamber added C14 with 2-light traceried openings, embattled parapet, and fine octagonal spire.

Spire has 2 tiers of lucarnes. C19-C20 door with Caernarvon arch inserted into south side of tower. Nave has C15 clerestory with 6 bays of rectangular 3-light windows, all with ogee tracery. Remainder of church is in Decorated style as before, mostly with 3-light windows. Aisles are of 4 bays and have double-chamfered arched doors to north and south. South porch has wide moulded arch and 2-light traceried side windows. Transepts each have one west window, 2 east windows, and 2 windows to north or south. 3-bay chancel with carved gargoyles and 5-light east window. North vestry is of 2 storeys, with C19 2-light traceried east window, moulded north door, and slit windows to upper storey.

INTERIOR is much restored and scraped. Tower arch is C13, double-chamfered, with outer order on shafts. Lancet window above. Nave has 4-bay arcades to aisles and wider single arches to transepts, all double chamfered, the quatrefoil piers with fillets and moulded capitals and bases. Between clerestory windows are small stone corbels. C15

roof of nave is very fine, with moulded beams, richly carved foliated bosses, and C19 carved wooden corbels in the form of figures playing musical instruments. Aisle and transept roofs are C19-C20. South transept has cusped ogee piscinae in east and south walls, and a similar cusped niche in east wall. North transept has cusped piscina only in east wall. Chancel arch is double chamfered and dies into jambs. Chancel has aumbry with shelf, and much restored piscina and sedilia with cusped ogee arches and finials. Chamfered arched doorway to north vestry. C19 roof.

FITTINGS: over the chancel arch is a very fine royal coat of arms dated CR 1684, carved in plaster and restored and repainted 1935. In the chancel there is also a small carved wooden shield with the royal arms, of c1500. One C15-C16 wooden chest. Octagonal stone font with traceried panels is much restored. C18 and C19 memorial tablets.

Scalford

Scalford is a village and civil parish in the Melton borough of Leicestershire, England. It lies 4 miles to the north of Melton Mowbray at the southern end of the Vale of Belvoir. In the 2011 census the parish (including Thorpe Arnold and Wycomb) had a population of 608.

The name of the village is derived from Old English and originally meant shallow ford. It has retained its current spelling for at least 440 years, being shown as 'Scalford' on the map of Warwickshire and Leicestershire produced (in Latin) in 1576 by Christopher Saxton as part of his Atlas of England and Wales.

In addition to Scalford village, the civil parish includes two hamlets, Wycomb and Chadwell. The latter has a tiny Church of England church, St Mary's, which was damaged in the 17th century and is now restored in a smaller form.

The Scalford parish church, which is on a small hill in the centre of the village, is named after St Egelwin the Martyr (alias St Ethelwin) and is believed to be the only one in the country named after this saint. A Grade II* listed building, it was built circa 1100 AD. It has been refurbished internally in 2014 to include a kitchen and toilet area with the original pews having been cleaned and restored; the old tile floor has been uncovered, cleaned and repaired; new under-pew, under-floor and radiator heating has been installed together with new up- and spot-lighting. The church is again used for services, the nearest alternative places of C of E worship being the churches in Chadwell and Waltham on the Wolds. The Vicar is responsible for a number of other parishes in addition to Scalford.

The Scalford Methodist Church, built in 1844 and recently redecorated throughout, has its own minister, is very active and is currently the only place of weekly Christian worship in Scalford. It is a very picturesque setting for weddings as all the internal pine pews, organ, fixtures and furniture are still in place. It serves an area extending into the Vale of Belvoir and has members from Eastwell to the north, Waltham on the Wolds to the east, Ab Kettleby to the west, and Melton Mowbray to the south. There are war graves at the chapel and also at the church which also has a fine war memorial to the first and second world wars. Fund raising takes place also at the Village Hall.

In times gone by, the village was entirely surrounded by a triangle of railways. Scalford station was on the GNR and LNWR Joint Line from Market Harborough to Bottesford, while a number of mineral lines, attracted by the iron-ore mining which used to take place in this part of the Vale of Belvoir, completed the triangle.

Before 1939 the lines were often used for transporting horses to local races and point to point meetings. Regular passenger services ended in 1953 but the lines survived for freight and summer specials until final closure came in 1962. Some of the railway infrastructure still exists in the form of various cuttings and embankments, which have largely become incorporated into the countryside but leaving in place a few bridges and footpaths.

Scalford is situated on the Jubilee Way footpath from Melton Mowbray to Belvoir Castle, and a 'stop off' for walkers between Melton and the Vale of Belvoir. Scalford can be reached from Melton or the Vale by regular buses, and there is more than adequate parking at the village hall, which is overseen by nearby houses.

Scalford hall, on the outskirts of the village, is an Edwardian mansion house which is now an 88-room hotel and wedding venue. In the 1940s it was the home of Colonel Colman, of the Colman's mustard company. The Colonel was a friend of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, and throughout their much-publicised courtship, Edward and American divorcee Wallis Simpson regularly stayed at Scalford Hall. Colonel Colman died in the hunting field as he might have wished but his late wife is still remembered by older people in the village.

Scalford railway station was a railway station serving the village of Scalford, Leicestershire on the Great Northern and London and North Western Joint Railway. It opened in 1879 and closed to regular traffic in 1953. It was the junction for a branch line to Waltham on the Wolds which was built to exploit ironstone deposits in the area.

Life's What You Make It

Excerpts from life writing.

The Wedding Reception

It must have been 1989. That was the year we spent most of our Friday and Saturday nights in the Leicester Dome. A lot of the time we were pretty much the only ones in there.

This particular Saturday night was different. In any normal universe we shouldn't have been allowed in. It had been hired for the night as a venue for a wedding reception. But we were the regulars who kept the place going the rest of the time. So, we were ushered in, and didn't even have to pay for a change.

I don't know what time the reception had started in the Dome, but by the time we got there I don't think anyone was sober.

It was a rough do, and it was pretty clear that the bride's and groom's families didn't get on. They were sat either side of the dance floor like it was a fifties dance hall where the males and females hugged opposite walls. It appeared there must be a line drawn down the middle of the dancefloor.

We propped the bar up, not wanting to be seen taking sides. I don't know what it had been like for the first dance, but the bride and groom were dancing around each other as if they were cocks sizing each other up ready for the fight.

It wasn't much later when Karl and I had gone downstairs to raid the buffet. I went into the bloke's toilets and from one of the cubicles came the unmistakable sound of a couple shagging.

And then came the whirlwind. The bride and a few of her family members came stomping down the stairs. They were looking for the groom. The bride was screaming, "I know he's sloped off with that little slag Tracey." It was always a Tracey.

The bride and family were in Karl and my faces. "Have you seen them?" We played dumb, no idea what they look like.

"The fucking groom, grey suit, bug fuck off carnation in the buttonhole. Her, pink bridesmaid dress with her tits falling out the top of it. I replied, nope not seen them.

"Who's in the men's bogs?"

"Dunno, but there's someone in trap one puking their guts up. It fucking stinks in there."

It did, someone always puked in the men's toilets, and the wedding booze had obviously helped. I was surprised anyone could be shagging in there with that smell. Right on cue the groom staggered out of the toilets, puke on his shoes, obviously having heard the none too quiet conversation.

The bride still wasn't convinced, "Where's Tracey then."

I was surprised when Karl piped up, "well she was giving me a blow job until sir puke a lot here turned up. I left her stood on the toilet bowl; she didn't want to get any of the puke on her shoes."

The bride stormed in, and sure enough, Tracey was in the position Karl had shouted out.

We walked back upstairs to find the line between the two clans had been broken. Fist fights were taking place all over the dancefloor. The bouncers weren't breaking them up. They were just going around randomly slapping people.

The groom came up to me at the bar to say thanks. I told him I hadn't said anything to help him, only to try and prevent the blood on the dancefloor scene that was now playing out. I shouldn't have fucking bothered.

Karl did get his blow job though, just before the police turned up and carted most of the wedding party away.

Top Tens

Random Top Ten

The ten Football League clubs with the lowest average home attendance in the 2021-22 season.

Pos	Team	Average Attendance
1	Salford City	2,155
2	Crawley Town	2,293
3	Harrogate Town	2,312
4	Forest Green Rovers	2,738
5	Scunthorpe United	2,781
6	Colchester United	2,813
7	Stevenage	2,814
8	Rochdale	2,914
9	Accrington Stanley	2,915
10	Sutton United	3,089

Chart

The top ten in the UK singles chart on this day in 2014

Position	Last Week's Position	Title	Artist	Label	Peak Position	Weeks on Chart
1	New	CHANGING	SIGMA FT PALOMA FAITH	3 BEAT/AATW	1	1
2	1	BLAME	CALVIN HARRIS FT JOHN NEWMAN	COLUMBIA	1	2
3	2	PRAYER IN C	LILLY WOOD & ROBIN SCHULZ	ATLANTIC	1	4
4	New	LULLABY	PROFESSOR GREEN FT TORI KELLY	VIRGIN	4	1
5	4	SHAKE IT OFF	TAYLOR SWIFT	EMI	4	5
6	3	I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE	SAM SMITH	CAPITOL	3	8
7	5	BLACK WIDOW	IGGY AZALEA FT RITA ORA	EMI	4	7
8	8	SUPERHEROES	SCRIPT	COLUMBIA	3	3
9	9	RUDE	MAGIC	SONY MUSIC	1	11
10	20	BLAME IT ON ME	GEORGE EZRA	COLUMBIA	10	6

Poetry Corner

Smile

Smile
 Make me
 I will do
 Like to see you try
 Everyone smiles sometimes, even you

Smile
 Miserable git
 Indicate some joy
 Let yourself be happy
 Even the darkest day had a little light in it

Smile
 Mona Lisa
 Intense staring eyes
 Lose the permanent frown
 Enigmatic really isn't the best look for you

Smile
Mercy, please
I'll tell a joke
Leave it out will you
Elephants only have Big Ears because Noddy wouldn't pay the ransom

Success
Much better
I love your smile
Lighting up your beautiful face
Each time you smile the world smiles back at you

Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

The Prodigy - Experience

Experience (also known as The Prodigy Experience) was the debut studio album by English electronic music group the Prodigy. It was first released on 28 September 1992 by XL Recordings in the United Kingdom and by Elektra Records in the United States.

Apart from Liam Howlett - who was the sole composer - of the additional three members at that time, only Maxim Reality actually contributed to the album, performing the vocals on the last track. A wide variety of artists in the breakbeat hardcore scene in the early 1990s are given respect and namechecked in the sleeve notes of the album, including SL2, Carl Cox, Moby, Tim Westwood, Orbital and Aphex Twin. Experience peaked at No. 12 in the UK Albums Chart and went on to achieve platinum status in that country, spending a total of 52 weeks on the chart. It also went gold in Poland.

Experience received very positive reviews upon its release. AllMusic gave the album 5 out of 5 stars, saying that it "shows the Prodigy near the peak of their game from the get go" and stating that "almost every song sounds like a potential chart topper". Tom Ewing of Freaky Trigger commended the album as "four-minute-warnings, [...] hyperactive ravey blasts which boasted genuine irreverence rather than learned attitude." Moby credited Experience with changing his perception about dance albums; previously he felt that "dance albums had always failed [...] because they didn't work over the full length of the record. Mostly they were singles collections which was exactly what I didn't want to do," and noted that Experience "impressed me because they'd managed to create a full listening experience which encompassed various styles. This was the kind of vision I had for my debut album."

Track listing

All tracks are written by Liam Howlett.

No. - Title - Length

Side 1

1. - "Jericho" - 3:42. Third single from the album, a double A side with "Fire". It reached number 11 on the UK singles chart and spent 4 weeks on the chart. Contains samples from The Revolutionaries' "Kunta Kinte", Hijack's "The Badman Is Robbin'", Jungle Brothers' "What U Waitin' 4?", AC/DC's "For Those About To Rock (We Salute You)", Manix's "Feel Real Good", Tiger & Anthony Malvo's "Come Back To Me", and Uptown's "Dope On Plastic". Sampled once and covered twice.
2. - "Music Reach (1/2/3/4)" - 4:12. Was on the B side of the double A single release of "Out Of Space" / "Ruff In The Jungle Bizness". Contains samples of James Brown and The Famous Flames' "Shout And Shimmy", Lyn Collins' "We Want To Parrry, Parrry, Parrry", Jimmy Crash's "Crash Course", Addis Posse's "Let The Warriors Dance", and Sudden Def's "Fall Like Rain". Sampled once.
3. - "Wind It Up" - 4:33. Fifth single from the album. It reached number 11 on the UK singles chart and spent 9 weeks on the chart. Had "Weather Experience", and non-album track "We Are The Ruffest" on the B Side. Re-released in 1996 as part of a complete re-release of all the singles on CD. But it didn't chart. Contains samples of Anthony Johnson's "Equal Rights", Just Ice's "Latoya", and Time Zone's "The Wildstyle". Has been sampled once.
4. - "Your Love" (Remix) - 5:30. Was one of the tracks on the B side of the original release of "Charly". Samples Circuit feat Koffi's "Shelter", Spectrum's "Brazil", Gary Taylor's "Compassion", Trigger's "Wisdom", and N-Joi's "Phoenix". Has been sampled ten times.
5. - "Hyperspeed (G-Force Part 2)" - 5:16. Contains samples of Captain Rock's "The Return of Captain Rock", Kate Bush's "Hello Earth", T La Rock's "Breaking Bells", Big Daddy Kane feat Biz Markie's "Just Rhymin' With Biz", Ultramagnetic MC's "Critical Beatdown", and Asher D and Daddy Freddy's "Ragamuffin Hip-Hop". Has been sampled six times.
6. - "Charly" (Trip into Drum and Bass Version) - 5:12. First single from the album. It reached number 3 on the UK singles chart and spent 10 weeks on the chart. Had a remix, album track "Your Love", and non-album track "Pandemonium". Re-released in 1996 as part of a complete re-release of all the singles on CD. it hit number 66 in the UK singles chart and spent another 4 weeks on the chart. Re-released again in 2004 it hit number 73 in the UK singles chart and spent another 4 weeks on the chart. Famously sampled the 1970's public information adverts called Mummy Should Know - Charley Says. In addition, sampled James Brown's "Godfather Runnin' The Joint", Bobby Byrd's "Hot

Pants", and Meat Beat Manifesto's "Radio Babylon". Other mixes also sampled MC Shan's "Juice Crew Law", The Mohawks' "The Champ", T La Rock's "Breaking Bells", and Rhythim Is Rhythim's "Drama". Has been sampled thirty-one times itself, and covered twice.

Side 2

1. - "Out of Space" - 4:57. Fourth single from the album, a double A side with "Ruff In The Jungle Bizness" (although that track is rarely mentioned / played), also had "Music Reach (1,2,3,4) (Live)" on the B side. It reached number 5 on the UK singles chart and spent 12 weeks on the chart. Re-released in 1996 as part of a complete re-release of all the singles on CD. It hit number 52 in the UK singles chart and spent another 7 weeks on the chart. Contains samples from Max Romeo's "Chase The Devil", Ultramagnetic MC's "Critical Beatdown", The Shamen's "Hyperreal Selector", Shades of Rhythm's "Homicide", 2 Bad Mice's "Bombscare", Run DMC's "Peter Piper", and William Hanna and Joseph Barbera's "Boing". Has been sampled in ten songs, and covered four times.

2. - "Everybody in the Place (155 and Rising)" - 4:10. Second single from the album. It reached number 2 on the UK singles chart and spent 9 weeks on the chart. It had non album tracks "Crazy Man", G-Force", and "Rip Up The Soundsystem" on the B side. Re-released in 1996 as part of a complete re-release of all the singles on CD. It hit number 69 in the UK singles chart and spent another 5 weeks on the chart. Contains samples of MC Duke and Merlin's "Freestyle Part 2" and "Freestyle Part 1", N-Joi's "Phoenix" and "Untitled (B3)", and Trouble's "I Get Hype". Has been sampled three times.

3. - "Weather Experience" - 8:06. Was on the B Side of the single release of "Wind It Up". Contains samples of Uptown's "Dope On Plastic", Zero-G's "31 - Untitled", Queen's "The Kiss (Aura Resurrects Flash)", and Flowmasters' "Let It Take Control". Sampled twice.

4. - "Fire" (Sunrise Version) - 4:57. Third single from the album, a double A side with "Jericho". It reached number 11 on the UK singles chart and spent 4 weeks on the chart. Re-released in 1996 as part of a complete re-release of all the singles on CD. It hit number 63 in the UK singles chart and spent another 3 weeks on the chart. Contains samples of The Crazy World of Arthur Brown's "Fire", Pablo Gad's "Hard Times", Aswad's "Soca Rumba", Daddy Freddy's "Live Jam", and DJ Mink feat The K.I.D. and Carruthers' "Hey! Hey! Can U Relate".

5. - "Ruff in the Jungle Bizness" - 5:10. Fourth single from the album, a double A side with "Out Of Space" (although mainly disregarded on that release), also had "Music Reach (1,2,3,4) (Live)" on the B side. It reached number 5 on the UK singles chart and spent 12 weeks on the chart. Contain samples of Wilson Pickett's "Get Me Back On Time, Engine Number 9", Asher D and Daddy Freddy's "The Ragamuffin Duo Take Charge", Plez's "Can't Stop (Acid)", and Southside Movement's "Save The World". Sampled six times.

6. - "Death of the Prodigy Dancers" (Live) - 3:43. Contains samples of Plez's "Can't Stop (Acid)", DJ Seduction's "Cukoo In The Jungle", Grandmaster Melle Mel's "White Lines (Don't Don't Do It)", and Bomb The Bass' "Megablast Rap". Sampled once.

Personnel

Liam Howlett – production, keyboards, synthesizers, sampling, programming, engineering

Maxim Reality – vocals on "Death of the Prodigy Dancers (Live)"

Simone – vocals on "Music Reach (1/2/3/4)", "Ruff in the Jungle Bizness" and "Rip up the Sound System" (non-album song)

Alex Garland – artwork

Mike Champion – management

Charts

Chart - Peak position

Australia - 163

Dutch Albums - 20

Finnish Albums - 39

French Albums - 59

German Albums - 75

UK Album - 12

Certifications

Region - Certification - Certified units/sales

Poland - Gold - 50,000

United Kingdom - Platinum - 300,000

Story Time

Pumping Gas

I was cleaning again. I never understood how the pumps got so dirty so quickly. It wasn't as if there was a never-ending stream of strangers passing through, and even the trickle that did, didn't use the pumps themselves.

There was no self-service back then. It would be me, or possibly Doreen if I could get her to drag herself away from her latest book to help occasionally. We would be the ones filling up the variety of cars as they came through. And gas

would be all they would get then. We weren't a fancy filling station. Just the gas. No shop, no drinks, no food, no mechanic, just a toilet. And even then, only if you were buying gas.

The gas company had dug the pits in the twenties and put three pumps over the top next to the old toll house. We lived in the old wooden single-story building. We took the money for the gas and sent the drivers on their way. Sometimes with a wave, but often coughing in the dust they threw up as they sped out of there to continue to wherever they were going.

It was all that dust that stuck to the pumps that I was in the process of cleaning that day. It was late in the day and the blue sky was darkening, with the sun just about skimming over the tops of the surrounding trees. Another few minutes and the sun would be hidden, the sky would be turning to indigo, and the lights on the pump and the one on the rusty, squeaking, metal sign would be all the light there would be out here.

I felt cold by then. I had kept my waistcoat on as I scrubbed at the pumps, but I wished I had my jacket as well. There was a wind blowing through the gap in the trees the road had carved out, and with the sun too low to add any heat to the day it was becoming a bitter chill.

There was only a couple of hours before closing time. Not that I was expecting any more customers. It was a road less travelled since the interstate had been put in a couple of year ago. The constant stream of traffic had become a trickle. I knew a lot of other gas stations similar to ours had closed down. But ours wouldn't. It was protected by state law for toll house stations. Even if we never had another customer again, the gas company had to keep the lights on and pay us to be here. I didn't mind, it was an easy enough life apart from the damn dust.

That evening would be like any other I thought. I finished the cleaning to my satisfaction and walked back inside. Only for me the hear the bell ring for a customer as soon as I had closed the door.

I hadn't heard a car approach, but there it was. A brand new, shiny, red, Chevy El Camino looking as it had just come out of the dealership that day.

Without much enthusiasm I wandered around to the driver's side to ask what they needed, but the window stayed closed. I sighed and then knocked on the window and the man slowly wound the window down.

Although to this day I'm not sure whether it was a man or not, or even human for that matter. The face flickered like a television with poor reception, and its features were not fixed. I'm not going to lie, I was afraid and looked away. Looked anywhere except at the form in the car.

The words 'fill it up with regular' appeared in my head, but I don't know whether the words were spoken from the being in the car or whether they were broadcast straight into my head. I didn't care by that point. I just did it. Anything to take my mind off what I thought I'd seen. I filled the tank, closed the cap and replaced the nozzle back on its pump. I didn't even register how much fuel had been pumped. I didn't ask for any payment. Just shouted 'all done' and waved them away. And the car pulled away as silently as it had approached.

And there on the dusty ground underneath where the car had parked up to be filled was an envelope. It had my name written on the front, and when I opened it up, inside the flap it read 'for the gas', and inside was two dollars and seventeen cents. I turned back to look at the pump and checked the figures. Sure enough, it was an exact match.

It felt like I was at a magician's show, and they had just pulled my card out of their pocket, making me mumble 'yes, that's my card' whilst my mind goes wow and how in damnation did they do that at the same time.

I didn't tell Doreen about it, what would have been the point of that. All it would have done is freaked her out as well. It was bad enough that I was freaked out by it all. So much so, that I stood there with the envelope in my hand for longer than I thought was possible. By the time I'd refocused it was a black sky above me, in which the odd star was dotted about, and a thin crescent moon was just peaking above the tree line.

Looking at my watch I realised I should have closed down over an hour ago. So, I stumbled inside, turned the lights and the pumps off, set the envelope to the side of the register and went to bed.

I saw that red El Camino numerous times over the next couple of years. I never did knock on the window again. I didn't want to see what it was that was driving. Each visit would finish with the same magic trick with the envelope, the exact money in it every time. Well, probably. It got so I didn't even check. I just placed the envelopes in a special box in the office drawer. I didn't want to touch the money.

And then there was that final day the car turned up. It didn't look shiny or new anymore. The paintwork had faded, and little chips were showing from where stones had flown up from the surfaces of the roads the car had travelled down. I filled it up as usual and waved it away as I always did.

But it didn't move immediately. The window on the driver's side wound down and the words appeared in my head as they had done years before. "Farewell, you should never have been afraid." And then it was gone.

There wasn't an envelope where the car had been this time, but instead a small metal cash box. I picked it up and went inside.

I sat staring at the box for hours before I opened it. And when I did, I couldn't believe what I saw. It was crammed full of hundred-dollar bills.

I never counted it all, and never knew exactly how much was in that cash box. But I did know there was enough so we would never have to work again. We could move out of this toll house, away from the gas station. No more pumping gas for us. They could find some other poor unfortunate to do that in the future.

And so, we moved away to California, bought ourselves a nice new house overlooking the ocean and we grew fat.

Whenever I see a red El Camino now, I salute.

I don't care now what it was in the car, but I am thankful it stopped for gas that first time, and that I knocked on that window.

I suppose they were right, I shouldn't have been afraid.

World's Greatest Cathedrals Top Trumps

<u>Cathedral of Christ the Saviour</u>	
City / Country	Moscow, Russia
Height	103 metres
Commenced Building	1937
Character	12
Global Fame	72
Top Trumps Rating	66
Details	The original 19 th century church was demolished in 1931 on the order of Soviet leader Stalin, and in 1990 permission was granted for the reconstruction. In 2000, the cathedral was the venue for the canonisation of the Romanovs, when Russia's last Tsar, Nicholas II, and his family were glorified as saints.

Chapter and Verse

A chapter from one of my completed books, works in progress, or novella length short stories.

They're Here – Chapter 1 – Josie And Vance

Josie stopped to scratch again. Vance was surprised there was anything left of her ankle. She'd been scratching pretty much non-stop since they'd left Alton Towers. Nearly four hours on the drive back to Skegness and now again on the walk to the pub.

"Can't you just leave it alone?"

"No Vance, you know what it's like when you have an itch, you can't help wanting to scratch it."

"Perhaps you should put something on it then."

"There's not much there to put anything on. Just two little white spots. The more I scratch the whiter they get."

Vance leaned in to have a look. Sure enough, two perfectly round little white spots shone against that background of red irritated skin.

"Jeez, they really are white. Did something bite you?"

"Not that I know of. I didn't feel anything bite me. My ankle was just itchy when I got off Oblivion. If something bit me when I was on there, I would never have noticed I was too busy cacking myself."

"They look odd Josie; you should get them checked out."

Josie carried on attacking her ankle, but instead of scratching she dug into one of the spots with her nails until a spurt of white pus like material came out, falling onto the wall she had her foot up on. She then attacked the other spot in the same manner, and more white pus came out, this time falling into the front garden of the house the wall belonged to. Vance looked disgusted.

“Urg, that’s horrible.”

Josie laughed and reached out and wiped her finger on Vance’s jacket.

“Get off you dirty cow.”

Josie carried on laughing and wiped her other finger on his jacket for good measure. She got a tissue out of her pocket and wiped any remnants of the pus off her acrylics onto it before blowing her nose on the tissue. Vance was still complaining about her wiping her fingers on him, so she went after him with the tissue. He turned and ran off in the direction of the pub.

Josie put the tissue back in her bag and followed on. The itching on her ankle seemed to have stopped as well. She could enjoy herself at the pub after all. And then her nose started to itch. Vance was probably going to get both barrels later on.

Dilbert



Medium

Some of my blog posts were 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.

UPDATE, I’ve now become eligible to earn on Medium as I have over 100 followers, and so recent posts are on what they call the metered site, so full members of Medium who read or like my posts generate me money, which is good. It also means I become part of their referral scheme. So, if you are not a member, and are considering [subscribing to Medium](#) if you do so through that link then you will be supporting my writing and you may also discover lots of other great writers, posts, and articles, including those I have already published [here](#).

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.

There are various short story competition entries on my Reedsy prompts page at <https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/author/kev-neylon/>

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>

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>

I've recently been submitting to Paragraph Planet and have had four pieces published there so far, they will be in the archive somewhere, one piece a month from me since June. <https://www.paragraphplanet.com/index.php>

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/>

And also, now on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/onetruekev/>

Speak to me about getting a pen, there are a few pens left in one colour if you are quick.

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

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