

# Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 65

## 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 – 23<sup>rd</sup> November

1963 – The BBC broadcasts An Unearthly Child (starring William Hartnell), the first episode of the first story from the first series of Doctor Who, which is now the world's longest running science fiction drama.

1992 – The first smartphone, the IBM Simon, is introduced at COMDEX in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Repudiation Day (Frederick County, Maryland, United States)

Rudolf Maister Day (Slovenia)

### A Grim Almanac of Sussex

**1860** – The Lancer published a letter from an unnamed gentleman who had two months earlier bought a house 'in one of those fine eastern terraces facing the sea at Kemp Town, Brighton'. Shortly after moving in he became 'annoyed by a foul effluvia from the drains and soon afterwards the cook was prostrated with fever, and confined to her bed during a space of ten days. My children and servants sickened in succession and were attacked with headache, sickness and febrile derangements, clearly attributable to poisonous atmospheric agency. Examination showed that the drainage of the house was wretchedly imperfect. My youngest child did not, unhappily, escape so lightly as the rest of my household, and I have just brought her back to London, suffering from a most severe form of diphtheria which, I need not tell your readers, arises almost invariably from bad drainage.'

The writer had no luck when he approached the town council. There was no officer responsible for public health matters and the town council had done nothing to remedy the objectionable state of the drainage, even though it had been urged to do so on many occasions. Even the Board of Health in London, though aware of Brighton's drainage problems, had no jurisdiction over the town council.

The writer quoted a recent report by the Registrar General which said 'the mortality in many of the towns has been excessively high, and this has been notably the case in Brighton. To take one instance, the deaths (386) exceeded the births (377) in St Peter's, Brighton.' The report added that 'the inhabitants of this sub-district are chiefly artisans, mechanics and the labouring poor. In many of their dwellings, a very insufficient supply of water has been available to them, owing to the dryness of the weather in the first portion of the quarter, the water in the wells in use having been very low. There is no effectual drainage attached to their dwellings, and the cesspool system is in general use.'

### Births

1887 – Boris Karloff

1948 – Frank Worthington

1970 – Zoë Ball

1979 – Kelly Brook

1992 – Miley Cyrus

### Deaths

1990 – Roald Dahl

2001 – Mary Whitehouse

2012 – Larry Hagman

### Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1970 - The Jimi Hendrix Experience - Voodoo Child

Number 1 album in 1985 - Sade - Promise

Number 1 compilation album in 1991 - Various - Hardcore Ecstasy

## #vss365

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

Forget about the eyes, LeMouch had built an actual #mirror to the soul. As word spread the queue to use it was constant.

It only showed the person's soul for five seconds. Long enough for the demon inside it to be able to make it theirs.

The city would soon be soulless.

#vss365

## Joke

Bill worked in a pickle factory. He had been employed there for a number of years when he came home one day to confess to his wife that he had terrible compulsion. He had an urge to stick his penis into the pickle slicer. His wife suggested that he should see a sex therapist to talk about it, but Bill said he would be too embarrassed. He vowed to overcome the compulsion on his own. One day a few weeks later, Bill came home. His wife could see at once that something was seriously wrong. "What's wrong, Bill?" she asked. "Do you remember that I told you how I had this tremendous urge to put my penis into the pickle slicer?" "Oh, Bill, you didn't." "Yes, I did." "My God, Bill, what happened?" "I got fired." "No, Bill. I mean, what happened with the pickle slicer?" "Oh...she got fired too."

## Drabble

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

### The Only Machine

The boy found it by accident. He tripped over the thing hidden in the long grass on the wasteland he always took a shortcut through it on his way home from school. He picked it up and put it in his bag and took it home; despite knowing that any such item was banned on the planet and that it should have been destroyed after the Tech Wars.

Two days later the machine turned itself on, vibrating and with flashing lights and a humming noise it was working. And with that he had the only working machine on the planet.

## Random Items

### Facts

February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon

Your stomach has to produce a new layer of mucus every two weeks otherwise it will digest itself.

The Sanskrit word for "war" means "desire for more cows."

### Thoughts

Are fat people just nutritional overachievers?

Why are there three letters in the word why when surely one (y) would do?

Is e-mail a tool or is it just used by tools?

### A Word A Day

#### **Eavesdrop**

Verb

The eaves of a building are the overhanging parts of the roof that cover the external walls. Therefore, the eaves' drops are the drips of rainwater dropping from the roof onto the ground below. In one of many creative uses of the English language a rather dull effect of the weather became a verb describing the activity of listening in on other people's conversations – presumably, in a figurative sense, catching drips and drops of information.

*Shakespeare's plays, especially the comedies, are marred by the repetitive use of eavesdropping as a plot device.*

## 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.

### Automation

There is talk of a robot being used to do repetitive tasks at work, a machine to do some of the mind numbing, spirit crushing, and sleep-inducing tasks that form a part of a lot of employees' days.

Apparently, there is already one working in the company in the finance section that we could look at using some of its capacity to do things for us. I've been in the finance section and never noticed a robot, but they've been using it for months.

They have called it "Aye", which with them being based in Scotland is a nice play on words. You get the impression that it answering yes, it can do it, and also enabling the staff there to say, yes, aye will do it, and people will assume that they have said "I will do it". Not some god damn robot.

The most disappointing aspect of the robot was it was not a physical being. It's a program within a computer. I was expecting and hoping for some kind of Metal Mickey style silver robot sat in the corner of the room bashing away at the computer keyboard.

I was hoping that it could be set up to automatically go around and slap people who deserved it. Much like Bowerick Wowbagger went around insulting everyone in the universe throughout time in alphabetical order in The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy.

I could easily imagine a big metal robot wandering up to some imbecile or other and giving them a slap, and then wandering off again, heading for the next target. Obviously, it would only be a matter of time before it turned up to slap me, but I think that slap would be worth it to see it whack a few people on my list.

## Leicestershire

### Kirby Muxloe Castle



Standing a few miles to the south west of Leicester, just off junction 21a of the M1 is the village of Kirby Muxloe. To the north east of the village standing back from the road is the building called Kirby Muxloe Castle.

Although it is in the style of a ruined castle, and the fact that it has a moat, and a drawbridge and gatehouse, it is in fact not a castle at all. It is actually a fortified manor house, built to its current state in the late 15th century.

There was a manor house on the site with a gateway, drawbridge, and smaller moat, dating back to the 13th century, at which stage the manor and the land were owned by Sir William Herle. His daughter married Sir Ralph Hastings, and when Sir William Herle's son, Sir Robert Herle died the estate passed to the son of Sir Ralph Hastings, also Sir Ralph. Once in the Hastings family it was passed down until it became the property of Sir William Hastings in 1455, as a close friend and ally of King Edward IV, he was made Lord Hastings of Hastings in 1461, and ten years later was given license to fortify his manor houses in Leicestershire (which included Ashby de la Zouch).

Sir William Hastings started work on the house by levelling the original house in 1480, with the exception of the hall and north wing, which were incorporated into the new structure. A new grand structure was planned, and work started. The moat was widened so that it was between 45 and 70 feet in width, and the land in the middle was a rectangle of 175 feet from North West to south east, and 245 feet from north east to south west. There was a wall around the compound with square towers at the four corners, and a gatehouse in the middle of the North West side. A portcullis was put in the

gatehouse, and the grand west (or Hastings) tower was built higher than the rest. This left a courtyard of 100 feet by 160 feet.

The moat was supplied by diverting the flow from nearby brook and little brook, using a series of dams, sluices and stoppers, to get the water to flow into the moat, and a system of being able to drain it if required.



However, with the death of Edward IV, came Sir William's demise, and he was executed for treason by the future Richard III in the summer of 1483. Work on the manor stopped, only to restart temporarily later in the year, but it came to a complete halt in December 1484 in the state it is found today.

The grounds stayed in the Hastings family until about 1630, when they came into the hands of Sir Robert Banaster, and then by William Wollaston. Over the course of the rest of the century, Kirby Muxloe Castle was abandoned; it was robbed for its building materials, and became used for agricultural purposes.

The castle was purchased from the Wollaston family in 1788 by Clement Winstanley. In 1790, the remains of the north tower were still standing, albeit in very poor condition. Clement Winstanley reportedly wanted to pull the northern ruins down, intending to reuse the bricks to make a barn, but his son, also called Clement, intervened, and subsequently carried out repairs to the castle. By the 19th century the ruins were covered in ivy; by the early 20th century, trees were growing out of the tops of the walls, which were frequented by grazing goats and cattle. Much of the moat had silted up and the remains of the bridge had been buried by the accumulated debris.

In 1911 Major Richard Winstanley placed the building under the guardianship of the commissioners of works. They went about the repair and clearing of the grounds and moat, and by 1930 had completed the task. They repaired the dangerous west tower, by using similar brick to the original, and they found the foundations of the original ancient manor house, which they left exposed for viewing.

The property today is run by English Heritage, and is open for visits at various times throughout the year. It is a Grade I listed building and considered to be a "spectacular example of a late medieval quadrangular castle of the highest status".

### **St Michael and All Angels, Diseworth**



Diseworth Parish Church, which is dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels, stands at 'The Cross', where the four 'Gates' of Diseworth (Hall Gate, Lady Gate, Grimes Gate and Clements Gate) meet. The Village War Memorial is set into the church-yard wall beside the church gates. It was originally the private chapel for nearby Langley Priory. The villagers at this time were obliged to walk to Long Whatton to worship.

The church is built of local stone, predominantly in the transitional or Early English style, with a broach spire. The oldest parts of the fabric, the remains of a Saxon single-cell church, can be seen in the north wall. There are traces of

herringbone walling at foundation level on the nave wall and Saxon long-and-short work, quoins, on the NE angle of the nave. The two blocked windows in the chancel are of Saxo-Norman type. Herringbone work can also be seen inside the building at the base of the old external nave wall in the south aisle chapel.

Near the corner of the chancel and the south aisle is a blocked 'lowside' or 'leper' window. Through it, lepers, or the sick in times of plague, could see the altar and take part in the service without entering the church. The south aisle is primarily 13th century work. Its stonework is not tied in to the main building but is simply butted up against the existing walls, with buttresses for stability. The original pent roof line can be seen in the east and west walls. On the parapet of the south wall and near the top of the west wall are four heads, much defaced by weathering. The E and SW windows in this aisle are early 13th century. The taller window on the S wall, which cuts through the original roof line, is early 14th century, showing the date by which, the roof was raised and pitched. The south doorway is 13th century and much weathered.

The tower and spire may date from the 1300s. The tower has four triple-chamfered bell openings, their tracery and cusping now removed. The spire has tall broaches and one tier of lucarnes (dormers). There is a ring of six bells. The external west door under the tower was blocked and a new window created when the tower and spire were restored in 1896. The building was originally thatched. The roof was leaded in about 1699. The increased weight led to distortion of the chancel arch so the brick buttress on the north wall was built. Some of the sheets of 1699 lead have markings of shoe outlines, made with a sharp tool. Much of the stone coping from the parapet of the north wall is missing. The church is entered through the north porch which was built in 1661. However, the outer arch is in the same style as that of the north and south doors, and may be made from reused stone as it is very heavily weathered.

The church forms part of a Benefice with St Andrew's, Kegworth, 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 07/12/1962), the listing is below.

Parish church. C11-C12 in origin but substantially C13 with early C14 tower. North porch dated 1661. C19 and C20 restorations. Rubble stone with ashlar tower and lead roofs. West tower, nave, south aisle, north porch, chancel. West tower is of 2 stages with diagonal buttresses, 2-light traceried west window, and wide arched single lights in double-chamfered surrounds to bell-chamber. Broach spire-with single tier of lucarnes. Nave has some herringbone stone work at base of north wall, a short length of moulded plinth, and a coved cornice. Large C19 brick buttress at north east corner. North side has 2 large arched single lights in double-chamfered surrounds, and moulded arched doorway with inner order on shafts. North porch has coped gable and moulded arch.

South aisle has covered eaves and restored traceried windows, the west end with 2-light window, the south side with 3-light window to left and tall 2-light window to right, the east end with another 3-light window. Both 3-light windows have intersecting tracery. Moulded south doorway is partly infilled and has small door. Chancel retains outline and inner splays of small C11-C12 arched single light now blocked, in north wall, and one other blocked single light with traces of carving over arched head. South side has 2 C19 2-light traceried windows in Decorated style, and blocked lowside window. Large 3-light east window with cusped tracery.

INTERIOR: is much restored and stripped of plaster. Double-chamfered arches to tower, chancel and south arcade. South arcade is of 3 bays and has octagonal piers, moulded capitals, with dogtooth ornament, and label with carved stops. Nave roof renewed 1949, south aisle roof 1902 and chancel roof 1964. Chancel has aumbry in east wall, and arched piscina with rebate in south wall. Fittings include a font with round bowl, possibly C11-C12, on later base with 4 filleted shafts, and a panelled pulpit and tester dated RC 1713. By the font are fragments of wall plaster from No 31 Hall Gate, with small incised figures. Other fittings are C19.

Marble wall MEMORIALS include a late C18 tablet to Calet Lowdhan and family, and C19 tablets to members of the Cheslyn family. Tablet to Anne Cheslyn 1823 has relief carving of a mourning lady leaning on a tomb.

## **Shepshed**

Shepshed, often known until 1888 as Sheepshed, (also Sheepshead – a name derived from the village being heavily involved in the wool industry) is a town in Leicestershire, England with a population of around 14,000 people, measured at 13,505 at the 2011 census. It sits within the borough of Charnwood local authority, where Shepshed is the second biggest settlement after the town of Loughborough.

The town is twinned with the Parisian suburb of Domont.

The town originally grew as a centre for the wool trade. However, since the construction of the M1 motorway nearby, it has become a dormitory town for Loughborough, Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. It was officially a village until recently and claimed to be Britain's largest, and claimed to have the highest number of pubs per head of population in the country. As of 2019, however, it is home to only ten public houses.

There has been much controversy about the origin of the name of the town. The earliest form is Scepeshefde Regis as mentioned in the Domesday Book, which means "(King's) hill where sheep graze", but since then there have been many changes until the present form, Shepshed, was adopted in 1888. The addition of the suffix 'Regis' signifies that there was once a royal lodge in the area.

Very little information about the settlement on the site of Shepshed appears before the Domesday Book but the name is certainly Anglo-Saxon: local history books claim that Shepshed has two of the oldest roads in the country, Ring Fence and Sullington Road, the latter being an ancient British track named after the goddess Solina. Anglo-Saxon Shepshed cannot have been much more than a hamlet in a large district of forest. However, succeeding centuries provide an abundance of historical material. The prosperity of medieval Shepshed was based on the wool industry and "Well Yard" on Forest Street may well be a corruption of "Wool Yard", where Bradford wool merchants congregated to buy from local inhabitants. In addition, there is considerable evidence to suggest that a weekly market was held, at least until the 14th century.

The 11th century Parish church of St Botolph (the westernmost parish church in England to bear the name) and its land the Oakley Wood was originally given to Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror, after the Norman Conquest in 1066. The ownership of the estate reverted to the Crown a number of times including in 1534. A wood carving exists in the church depicting a visit of Queen Elizabeth I though it is at present unclear if the Queen ever came to Shepshed itself, but if she did, it would have been the farthest north that she travelled in the country. The older part of the town is still centred on the church.

The church's original patronage came from Leicester Abbey. Between 1699 and 1856, however, the patrons were the Phillips family of Garendon Hall. This family has been Lords of the Manor since its purchase by Sir Ambrose Phillips (1637–1691) in 1683. Garendon Hall (demolished 1964) was built on the site of Garendon Abbey, a prominent Cistercian house which was founded in 1133 by Robert de Beaumont, 2nd Earl of Leicester and survived until its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1536. Garendon Abbey, whose economy was largely based on sheep farming, was one of the most important possessors of granges in Leicestershire.

The 18th century saw the enclosure of the common lands around Shepshed. There had been enclosures in the 15th and 16th centuries, but towards the end of the 18th century the last remaining common land, approximately 2,000 acres (8 km<sup>2</sup>), was enclosed and divided among the principal commoners of the village. Much destruction was caused in the town when in 1753, 85 bays of buildings were destroyed by fire which had happened at what is now known as Hallcroft named after the school which had been burnt down in the fire.

There were many changes during the 19th century. Shepshed was briefly linked by canal to Loughborough, and to the coalmines of West Leicestershire when the Charnwood Forest Canal was opened in 1798, but success was only short lived. By 1804 the canal had proved an uneconomic venture and was abandoned, though modern roads and footpaths still follow the course it took through Shepshed. The Charnwood Forest Railway (nicknamed the Bluebell Line on account of the proliferation of the flower) was opened in 1883, but regular passenger services ceased in 1931. However, the goods service did not close until 1963. Shepshed railway station no longer stands though part of the old line forms a bridleway between the town and Thringstone including the now redundant viaduct at Grace Dieu.

Shepshed had a riot on Election Day in 1868, two hundred policemen were brought into the village the next day and 33 arrests were made (13 of the rioters being sentenced to 3 months imprisonment). Upon release they were met at the boundary by the local brass band and feted as heroes.

## **Life's What You Make It**

Excerpts from life writing.

### **Where's Monkey?**

I was sat on platform thirteen at Piccadilly station. That was unusual for me, as I normally got the bus back out to where I lived. I don't know the exact reason for getting the train this particular day; I must have been over that side of the city for a change. I was sat waiting for a train to take me the two stops out to Burnage station. As usual I had headphones in and sunglasses on. I'm an unsociable person when sober, and they act as great barriers to prevent making eye contact and from hearing people.

However, today they weren't going to work. A trio of the local scallies were on the platform as well and they were desperately trying to attract my attention. Eventually I relented and snapped at them,

"What?"

"You're Johnny Vegas."

A deep sigh followed, "No, I'm not."

"Yeah you are, tell us a joke."

"No, I'm not Johnny Vegas, just fuck off."

"Where's Monkey?"

"What?"

"You don't have monkey with you."

"There's a good reason for that."

"What's that then Johnny?"

"I'm not Johnny Vegas you fuckwits."

"Yeah you are, tell us a joke."

I'm losing the will to live by this stage so I say to them, "If I tell you a joke will you fuck off?"

"Yeah, of course Johnny."

"OK then, what position is the best one to have sex in if you want to have really ugly children?"

"Dunno, what position is it Johnny?"

"Go and ask your fucking parents."

"Ha ha, good one Johnny."

"Now, fuck off you little shits."

And they did, leaving me alone with my headphones and sunglasses. Bloody scallies.

## Top Tens

### Random Top Ten

The first ten world cup finals.

Year	Winner	Score	Runners-Up
1930	Uruguay	4-2	Argentina
1934	Italy	2-1 (a.e.t.)	Czechoslovakia
1938	Italy	4-2	Hungary
1954	West Germany	3-2	Hungary
1958	Brazil	5-2	Sweden
1962	Brazil	3-1	Czechoslovakia
1966	England	4-2 (a.e.t.)	West Germany
1970	Brazil	4-1	Italy
1974	West Germany	2-1	Netherlands
1978	Argentina	3-1 (a.e.t.)	Netherlands

**NB** – The 1950 tournament did not have a final. The winners were decided in a group phase.

## Chart

The top ten in the UK singles chart on this day in 1954

Position	Last Week's Position	Title	Artist	Label	Peak Position	Weeks on Chart
1	2	HOLD MY HAND	DON CORNELL	VOGUE	1	12
2	3	THIS OLE HOUSE	ROSEMARY CLOONEY	PHILIPS	2	7
2	1	MY SON MY SON	VERA LYNN	DECCA	1	6
4	6	IF I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU	JOAN REGAN	DECCA	4	5
5	4	IF I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU	DORIS DAY WITH THE MELLOMEN	PHILIPS	4	8
6	5	THIS OLE HOUSE	BILLIE ANTHONY	COLUMBIA	4	6
7	7	SMILE	NAT 'KING' COLE	CAPITOL	2	11
8	12	CARA MIA	DAVID WHITFIELD WITH MANTOVANI AND HIS ORCHESTRA	DECCA	1	23
9	16	NO ONE BUT YOU	BILLY ECKSTINE	MGM	9	2
10	9	RAIN RAIN RAIN	FRANKIE LAINE AND THE FOUR LADS	PHILIPS	8	5

## Poetry Corner

### Simply Complicated



Nothing is ever simple nowadays, is it?  
Everything seems to make me want to froth and spit  
They say that the process is changed to make it easier  
Yet after jumping through new hoops I just feel queasier

I used to be able to put money into a slot  
But I can't do that now without a Byzantine plot  
Twenty-seven buttons that I must press together  
Yet the required outcome I obtain almost never

Press the hash button to give myself more time  
As the instructions make no sense, have no reason or rhyme  
Use the app the posters on the wall all shout and scream  
Forgetting about pensioners, treating them like a bad dream

I can't talk to a person, use their website instead  
Those little words on their form that fills me with dread  
No number to ring, no personal contact allowed  
No clarity or transparency, hidden away as if under a shroud

Do it their way or I needn't bother to do it at all  
Their complicated instructions just set me up for a fall  
A hundred ways in with not a single way out



Obscuring the truth forever leaving me in doubt

They say the modern way of life makes it easy, without strife  
Freeing up my time so I have a much better life  
Yet a lot of the time I do wish things stayed more dated  
It would mean that my life would be a lot less complicated

## Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

### **Michael Jackson - Thriller**

Thriller was the sixth studio album by the American singer and songwriter Michael Jackson, released on November 30, 1982, by Epic Records. It was produced by Quincy Jones, who had previously worked with Jackson on his 1979 album *Off the Wall*. Jackson wanted to create an album where "every song was a killer". With the ongoing backlash against disco music at the time, he moved in a new musical direction, resulting in a mix of pop, post-disco, rock, funk, and R&B sounds. Thriller foreshadows the contradictory themes of Jackson's personal life, as he began using a motif of paranoia and darker themes. Paul McCartney appears on "The Girl Is Mine", the first credited appearance of a featured artist on a Michael Jackson album. Recording took place from April to November 1982 at Westlake Recording Studios in Los Angeles, California, with a budget of \$750,000.

Thriller became Jackson's first number-one album on the US Billboard Top LPs & Tapes chart, where it spent a record 37 non-consecutive weeks at number one, from February 26, 1983, to April 14, 1984. Seven singles were released: "The Girl Is Mine", "Billie Jean", "Beat It", "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'", "Human Nature", "P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing)", and "Thriller". They all reached the top 10 on the US Billboard Hot 100 chart, setting a (then) record for the most top 10 singles from an album, with "Beat It" and "Billie Jean" reaching number one.

With 32 million copies sold worldwide by the end of 1983, Thriller became the best-selling album of all time. It was the best-selling album of 1983 worldwide, and in 1984 it became the first album to become the best-selling in the United States for two years. It set industry standards with its songs, music videos, and promotional strategies influencing artists, record labels, producers, marketers, and choreographers. The success gave Jackson an unprecedented level of cultural significance for a black American, breaking racial barriers in popular music, earning him regular airplay on MTV and leading to a meeting with US President Ronald Reagan at the White House. Thriller was among the first albums to use music videos as promotional tools; the videos for "Billie Jean", "Beat It" and "Thriller" are credited for transforming music videos into a serious art form.

Thriller remains the best-selling album of all time, with sales of 70 million copies worldwide. It is the best-selling non-compilation album and second-best-selling album overall in the United States and was certified 34x platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) in 2021. It won a record-breaking eight Grammy Awards at the 1984 Grammy Awards, including Album of the Year, while "Beat It" won Record of the Year. Jackson also won a record-breaking eight American Music Awards at the 1984 American Music Awards. The album has been a frequent inclusion in lists of the greatest albums of all time. In 2008, it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. In the same year, the Library of Congress added it to the National Recording Registry of "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant recordings".

In the UK album charts it reached number one on multiple occasions during 1983 and 1984. It spent a total of 8 weeks at number one, and a staggering 286 weeks in the chart, with additional runs coming on its twenty fifth and fortieth anniversary re-releases, and after his death in 2009.

The cover for Thriller features Jackson in a white suit that belonged to photographer Dick Zimmerman. The gatefold sleeve reveals a tiger cub at Jackson's leg, which, according to Zimmerman, Jackson kept away from his face, fearing he would be scratched. Another picture from the shoot, with Jackson embracing the cub, was used for the 2001 special edition of Thriller.

The "Billie Jean" music video debuted on March 10, 1983, on MTV. It brought MTV—until then a fairly new and unknown music channel—to mainstream attention. It was one of the first videos by a black artist to be aired regularly by the channel, as the network's executives felt black music was not "rock" enough. Directed by Steve Barron, the video shows a photographer who follows Jackson. The paparazzo never catches him, and when photographed Jackson fails to materialize on the developed picture. He dances to Billie Jean's hotel room and as he walks along a sidewalk, each tile lights up at his touch.

The "Beat It" music video had its premiere on MTV during primetime on March 31, 1983. To add authenticity to the production but also to foster peace between them, Jackson had the idea to cast members of rival Los Angeles street gangs the Crips and the Bloods, and included around 80 genuine gang members. Its plot is Jackson bringing two gangsters together through the power of music and dance. It is also notable for its "mass choreography" of synchronized dancers, which was the start of Jackson's trademark music videos.

The "Thriller" music video premiered on MTV on December 2, 1983. In the video, Jackson and his girlfriend (played by Ola Ray) are confronted by zombies while walking home from a movie theatre; Jackson becomes a zombie and performs a dance routine with a horde of the undead. It was named the greatest video of all time by MTV in 1999 and by VH1 and Time in 2001. In 2009, it became the first music video to be selected for the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress.

## Track listing

### Side one

No. - Title - Writer(s) - Producer(s) - Length

1 - "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'" - Michael Jackson - Quincy Jones, Jackson - 6:03. Fourth single released from the album, it reached number 8 on the UK singles chart and racked up 16 weeks on the chart in total. The original B-side was a live version of The Jacksons doing "Rock With You". Has been sampled seventy-nine times, and covered twenty-three times. Contains a sample of Manu Dibango's "Soul Makossa".

2 - "Baby Be Mine" - Rod Temperton - Jones - 4:21. Only track on the album not released as a single, but was the B-side of the single release of "Human Nature". Has been sampled twenty-eight times, and covered nine times.

3 - "The Girl Is Mine" (with Paul McCartney) - Jackson - Jones, Jackson - 3:42. First single released from the album, it reached number 8 on the UK singles chart and racked up 12 weeks on the chart in total. Was re-released in 2008 Michael Jackson and Will.I.Am and reached number 32, spending another six weeks on the chart. The original B-side was a non-album track "Can't Getta Outta The Rain." Has been sampled eleven times, and covered twenty-seven times.

4 - "Thriller" - Temperton - Jones - 5:58. Seventh single released from the album (fifth release in the UK), it reached number 10 on the UK singles chart and racked up 58 weeks on the chart in total. The original B-side was a live version of The Jacksons doing "Things I Do For You". Has been sampled 263 times, and covered ninety-eight times.

### Side two

1 - "Beat It" - Jackson - Jones, Jackson - 4:18. Third single released from the album, it reached number 3 on the UK singles chart and racked up 22 weeks on the chart in total. The original B-side was a non-album track "Get On The Floor." Has been sampled seventy-three times, and covered seventy-eight times. Contains a sample of an untitled track by Denny Jaeger.

2 - "Billie Jean" - Jackson - Jones, Jackson - 4:54. Second single released from the album, it reached number 1 on the UK singles chart and racked up 33 weeks on the chart in total. The original B-side was a non-album track "It's The Falling In Love." Has been sampled 181 times, and covered 176 times.

3 - "Human Nature" - Steve Porcaro, John Bettis - Jones - 4:06. Fifth single released from the album, it wasn't released as a single in the UK, but it reached number 62 on the UK singles chart and racked up 2 weeks on the chart in total on downloads following his death in 2009. The original B-side was "Baby Be Mine." Has been sampled sixty-eight times, and covered seventy-three times.

4 - "P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing)" - James Ingram, Jones - Jones - 3:59. Sixth single released from the album, it reached number 11 on the UK singles chart and racked up 9 weeks on the chart in total. The original B-side was a version of The Jacksons doing "This Place Hotel". Has been sampled forty times, and covered eighteen times.

## Personnel

Tom Bahler – Synclavier (track 5)

Brian Banks – synthesizer (track 4), synthesizer programming (2)

Steve Bates – assistant engineer (tracks 3, 7–9)

Michael Boddicker – synthesizers (tracks 1, 2), Emulator (6–9), Vocoder (8), background vocals (1)

Bruce Cannon – effects (track 4)

Leon "Ndugu" Chancler – drums (tracks 2, 6, 8)

Paulinho da Costa – percussion (tracks 1, 7)

Mark Ettel – assistant engineer (tracks 3, 7–9)

Matt Forger – engineer (tracks 2, 3, 7–9)

David Foster – synthesizer (track 3), synthesizer arrangement (3)

Humberto Gatica – engineer (tracks 3, 7–9)

Gary Grant – trumpet and flugelhorn (tracks 1, 2, 4)

Bernie Grundman – mastering engineer (tracks 2, 3, 7–9)

Nelson Hayes – bathroom stomp board (track 1)

Howard Hewett – background vocals (track 8)

Jerry Hey – horn arrangements, trumpet, and flugelhorn (tracks 1, 2, 4), string arrangements (3, 6), strings conductor (3)

Bunny Hull – background vocals (tracks 1, 8)

James Ingram – background vocals (tracks 1, 8), keyboards, handclaps, and musical arrangements (8)

Janet Jackson – background vocals (track 8)

La Toya Jackson – background vocals (track 8)

Michael Jackson – co-producer (tracks 1, 3, 5, 6), lead vocals (all tracks), background vocals (1–7, 9), drum programming (1, 4), drum case beater (track 5), handclaps (8), horn arrangements and bathroom stomp board (1), vocal arrangements (1, 3, 5, 6), rhythm arrangements (1, 5, 6), synthesizer arrangements (6), theremin (4)

Paul Jackson Jr. – guitar (tracks 5, 8, 9)  
Louis Johnson – bass guitar (tracks 1, 3, 6, 8, 9), handclaps (8)  
Quincy Jones – producer (all tracks), rhythm arrangements (tracks 1, 3, 5), vocal arrangements (3), musical arrangements (8)  
Becky López – background vocals (tracks 1, 8)  
Jerry Lubbock – strings conductor (track 6)  
Steve Lukather – guitars (tracks 3, 5, 7), bass guitar (5), musical arrangements (7)  
Anthony Marinelli – synthesizer programming (tracks 2, 4)  
Paul McCartney – lead vocals (track 3)  
David Paich – synthesizers (tracks 2, 7, 9), rhythm arrangements and piano (3), musical arrangements (7)  
Dean Parks – guitar (track 3)  
Greg Phillinganes – keyboards (2, 4), synthesizers (1, 2, 4–6, 8), Fender Rhodes (1, 3, 5, 6, 9), synthesizer programming and handclaps (8)  
Jeff Porcaro – drums (tracks 3, 5, 7, 9)  
Steve Porcaro – synthesizers (tracks 5, 7, 9), synthesizer programming (2, 3, 5, 7), musical arrangements (7)  
Vincent Price – voice-over (track 4)  
Steven Ray – bathroom stomp board (track 1), handclaps (8)  
Bill Reichenbach – trombone (tracks 1, 2, 4)  
Greg Smith – Synergy (track 5), synthesizer (6)  
Bruce Swedien – recording engineer and audio mixer (all tracks), effects (4)  
Chris Shepard – vibraslap (track 5)  
Rod Temperton – synthesizer (track 4), rhythm and vocal arrangements (2, 4, 9)  
Eddie Van Halen – guitar solo (track 5)  
Jerry Vinci – concertmaster (track 3)  
Julia Waters – background vocals (track 1)  
Maxine Waters – background vocals (track 1)  
Oren Waters – background vocals (track 1)  
David Williams – guitar (tracks 1, 2, 4, 6)  
Larry Williams – saxophone and flute (tracks 1, 2, 4)  
Bill Wolfer – keyboards (track 5), synthesizer (1, 6), programming (6)

## **Charts**

Weekly charts

Chart - Peak position

Australian Albums – 1

Austrian Albums – 3

Belgian Albums – 50

Canada Top Albums – 1

Danish Albums – 30

Dutch Albums – 1

Finnish Albums – 1

French Albums – 83

German Albums – 1

Greece Albums – 2

Italian Albums – 2

New Zealand Albums – 1

Norwegian Albums – 6

Spanish Albums – 40

Swedish Albums – 1

Swiss Albums – 4

UK Albums – 1

US Billboard – 1

## **Certifications and sales**

Region – Certification – Certified units/sales

Argentina – Diamond – 576,779

Australia – 16× Platinum – 1,150,000

Austria – 8× Platinum – 400,000

Belgium – 300,000

Brazil – 1,500,000

Canada – 2× Diamond – 2,400,000

Chile – 40,000

Colombia – 300,000

Denmark – 6× Platinum – 480,000

Finland – Platinum – 119,061

France – Diamond – 3,500,000

Germany – 3x Platinum – 1,500,000  
Hong Kong – Platinum – 50,000  
Hungary – Platinum  
India – 100,000  
Israel – 2x Platinum – 80,000  
Italy – 700,000  
Japan – Gold – 2,500,000  
Mexico – 2x Diamond+2x Platinum+Gold – 2,600,000  
Netherlands – 8x Platinum – 1,400,000  
New Zealand – 12x Platinum – 180,000  
Norway – 150,000  
South Africa – 3x Platinum – 120,000  
South Korea – 50,000  
Sweden – 4x Platinum – 400,000  
Switzerland – 6x Platinum – 300,000  
United Kingdom – 15x Platinum – 4,500,000  
United States – 34x Platinum – 34,000,000  
Yugoslavia – 112,000  
Zimbabwe – 8,000

## Story Time

### Resolutions

There were six of us sat around that table in The Crown on New Year's Eve. The same six of us who met in the pub nearly every week; Dave, Chris, Tony, Karl, Simon, and me. Doing what we always did; drinking lots of beers and taking the mickey out of each other.

We had all made New Year's resolutions previous years, big fanfare announcements to the rest of the boys. Promises to give up bad habits, or to take up something new, change something in our personality, trying to better ourselves.

None of them ever stuck, so we had a new idea this year, make secret resolutions. Not tell each other what they were. Instead, we would write them on a piece of paper, put that in our wallets, and then the following year we would reveal them to the others and see how well we did. Or more likely, how badly we did.

So, we sat there in the pub drinking pints like they were going out of fashion, and each of us wrote some words on pieces of paper, one by one, as only Chris had a pen, then folded them and slipped them into our wallets. My own was simple, poorly written by alcohol impaired hands, "I will change nothing." How could I fail? It would be easy.

How little did I know then.

In a haze the following morning I thought about our resolutions and wanted to check mine. I stumbled about the flat searching for my jeans, only to find them hanging off the handle of the fridge door. I got my wallet out and retrieved the piece of paper I'd written on the night before. Only the words I found there bore no resemblance to what I thought I had written. The writing wasn't mine either, and far too neat to have been written under the influence. And it wasn't as if what was written was even possible.

*"I resolve to take up whatever activity the other five gave up on their written resolutions this year. I will continue to do these activities until such time as the resolution has been broken by the person who wrote it."*

I laughed, I didn't know what the others' resolutions were, so how could I possibly take up anything if I didn't know what it was? I folded up the paper and put it back in my wallet anyway and went to make myself a cup of coffee. For some reason I just fancied one. It took me a few minutes to find the jar of instant coffee, stuck away in the back of a cupboard. Lord knows how long it had been there, but it took a few attempts to smash some granules loose of the lump it had become. I'd need to go and buy some new, I couldn't be doing this a few times a day.

So, after drinking my cup of coffee, which was more bitter than I had remembered coffee being, I threw some clothes on and went out. It was New Year's Day so there wasn't going to be much open, but the Best One up at the parade of shops would be, they were always open. I'd seen they were even open on Christmas Day, no rest for some nowadays. They had more brands of coffee than I expected they would, and not all of it instant, though the filter and cafetière coffee would have to wait for another day; I'd need to get a proper coffee machine or cafetière first.

I put the coffee down on the counter and asked for twenty Benson & Hedges as well. I was surprised to see the box covered in images of cancerous cells. I was expecting the classic gold coloured box I remembered from years ago. I paid and took the bag they'd put the items in and left the shop, took the cigarettes out of the bag, took the film wrap off

the packet and took one out and stuck it in my mouth. Only to realise I didn't have a lighter or matches to light it with. Back into the shop to get a lighter then.

I lit it and coughed with the first inhalation of smoke. I wasn't used to smoke; it must have been ten years or so since I'd last had a cigarette. Yet the cough didn't put me off, and I took another drag and started to walk towards home.

Only for the bright lights of the bookies to call to me. I was surprised they were open, and as I walked in, I was shouted at that there was no smoking allowed. Another thing that was different from my memories. Bookies used to be smoked filled dens of iniquity when my dad used to go in them. I supposed that stopped at the same time they banned smoking in pubs. I finished the cigarette, stubbed it out on the wall and went back into the bookies.

Only to realise I had no idea what I was doing. I didn't even know what events were on. Did they have horse racing on New Year's Day? In the end I had to get the girl behind the counter to help me fill out a betting slip. The horse lost, but that didn't deter me. I put bet after bet on races as they happened, bet on football matches, and even on the darts. And whilst waiting for results I played on their casino style fruit machines. I had a couple of wins but was probably the fat end of two hundred quid down by the time I was asked to leave as they were closing. I didn't realise I'd been in there so long, but it was dark when I left, and I lit another cigarette as I wandered home.

Four coffees and half a pack of cigarettes later I went to bed, but found myself too wired to sleep, the caffeine I supposed. So, I started some tidying up, putting stuff away, emptying the bins and generally clearing up. Whilst doing so I found a few of my girlfriend's clothes in the airing cupboard. And before I knew it, I had them on, surprised by how well they fit me, and how comfortable they felt on me. So much so I wore them to bed and slept like a baby.

The next morning, I got up and reluctantly took my girlfriend's clothes off, got dressed in my own clothes, had a cup of coffee and a cigarette, and headed into town. I needed to do some shopping. Argos for a filter coffee machine and a cafetière, Costa for a coffee, Sainsbury's for some filter coffee and cigarettes, Starbucks for a coffee, and then into the charity shop. Usually, it would be for books and records, but instead I found myself perusing the women's clothing. And buying skirts, blouses, dresses, and even some shoes, and a long coat. Only to nearly leave the lot in the bookies after a couple of hours of gambling. And losses.

I went out that evening, wearing some of the clothes I bought at the charity shop, and I just hung about in the alley behind the local parade of shops, where there were no lights shining the way, hidden between the dumpsters. I stood there waiting until I heard footsteps, and then I stepped out in front of the person walking past, not knowing who they were, male or female, old or young, tall, or short. And then the knife was in my hand, I had no recollection of even bringing the knife – the big carving one from the wooden block in my kitchen – and then it was in them. It was a man, in their thirties or possibly forties, and they looked shocked. Whether it was at me dressed in women's clothing, or at the knife that was now stuck in between his ribs, I wasn't sure. He slumped to the ground, never crying out.

I found that I was more prepared than I thought possible. I had just killed a man, yet felt nothing, I opened one of the dumpsters, took out a load of the black sacks full of who knows what, and then lifted the man into the dumpster and put all the black sacks back in on top of him. And headed back to the flat as if nothing had happened.

It took ten minutes from getting into my flat for the crashing realisation of what I'd done to hit me. I passed the mirror in the hall and saw the blood on the clothes I was wearing. The blood of the man I'd just coldly killed and dumped. I ran to the bathroom and vomited my guts up, retching long after there was nothing left in my stomach. Although it would appear, I only had coffee in there.

I took the clothes off, and put them in a bin bag, had a long shower, got dressed in my usual clothes and took the bin bag and put in the bins of the next block of flats to mine. As I walked back to the flat sucking on a B&H I had the dawning realisation that I was doing five new things. The coffee, the cigarettes, the gambling, the cross dressing, and now the murdering.

I spent the rest of the evening and most of the night thinking about which of my friends had had these habits. Things I had never noticed about them. Things I never knew about them. Things I didn't want to know about them. Could I look at any of them in the same way. Their previous behaviours, the ones they had resolved to give up were going to cost me. My health, my job, my flat, my girlfriend, and my liberty if I didn't sort them out. The cigarettes and coffee weren't too bad apart from to my health, the gambling was more of an issue if I carried on spending at the rate, I had for the last two days. The women's clothes were going to be an issue if Sue caught me doing it, especially in her own clothes. But the murder was off the scale.

I needed them to start doing what they used to, and soon. But how could I get them to start over?

For the next few days, I kept myself barricaded in the flat, drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes whilst wandering around in women's clothes – refusing to see Sue, and declining invites to meet the others in the pub. I opened half a dozen online gambling accounts to pass the time, all whilst keeping an eye on the local news, looking out for a story about a dead body being found. I hung as far out of the bathroom window as I could a couple of times to have a look if there

was any activity in the alley behind the shops, but there was nothing. Until the missing person plea on Facebook. I recognised the picture immediately, and I knew where they were, not that it would help those looking for him.

I'd seen lots of these appeals before, and now wondered about them. Could they be other victims? How many had one of my friends murdered?

I took a swig of coffee. And spat it back out. I hated coffee, what the hell was I doing? And I breathed a sigh of relief. Whichever of my friends had given up coffee as a resolution had failed after only a few days. Perhaps there was hope. After having rung in sick for a couple of days I went back to work on the Wednesday. And was distracted all day. The knickers and bra I wore weren't really big enough and cut into me, and they were as irritating as hell, I needed to get rid of them, and by lunch I had, they were dumped into the bin in the toilets, it should be an interesting find for the cleaners. Then there were the cigarette breaks and the dirty looks from some of the others in the office. Plus, I found that not all of the gambling sites were blocked on the work internet. I couldn't wait to get out at five and head home.

There was no rush, I trudged alongside the canal, a route I walked many times, even in the dark the chalky white path lit up against the murky darkness of the water it ran alongside. As I walked along smoking, I could see someone walking towards me. I bent down and picked up a rock from the edge of the path and as they drew level with me, I smashed the rock down on their head and pushed them into the canal. They landed face down and I watched as the water gently took them alongside the path in the direction I was walking. There was no movement, no attempt to try and get their head above the surface. No one could hold their breath for that long, they were dead, and I picked up the pace and continued to head for home.

Once there, another bout of vomiting came as the enormity of what I'd done hit me again. I'd killed two people in under a week. I needed to find out who it was who had been killing people before. And so, I called around and arranged to meet everyone on the Friday night. I didn't tell them it was about their resolutions.

Work was still awkward, although it would appear, I had lost the need to dress in women's clothes. There was a report on the news about a man had been found drowned in the canal with a head injury. But the reports suggested that there were no suspicions of foul play, that it looked as if it was a tragic accident. The sigh of relief must have been heard all around the office. I just hoped the sob that followed as I read the man was a father of four wasn't.

More relief came on the Friday, I was in the middle of cigarette break number four when I coughed again and spat out the cigarette I was smoking, trying to spit out the disgusting taste of it in my mouth and lungs. The smoker had taken their habit back up, lasting a little over a week. I was down to two now. The biggest threat to my bank account, and the biggest threat to the population at large.

I got to the pub early, bought myself a drink and went to feed the fruit machine. They used to be coin operated only years ago, but nowadays they took notes and cards. The thing was I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I didn't know when to hold, or what the features did, I was just blindly pushing buttons and hoping for the best. As I was doing so, Karl sidled up to the fruit machine and started telling me where I was going wrong. I asked him to show me what I should be doing, and he stepped in to take control. A few spins later there was eighty quid in winnings spilling out of the machine. I took it and turned my back on the machine. I think it was safe to say Karl was the secret gambler amongst us.

When everyone was there and we'd had a couple of beers I began to tell them of the strange things that had happened around the resolutions and the strange one I had found in my wallet the morning after, and without mentioning what I'd taken up I told them I'd picked up five new habits this year. They all laughed, more at me than with me, and there were a couple of uncomfortable looking lads around the table.

At the end of the night, I still hadn't worked out who was the murderer, Dave and Tony had looked the most uncomfortable as I had been talking about the resolutions, and no one had wanted to share their piece of paper yet. I left with Simon as he lived close to me, and as we walked alongside the church, he said he wanted to show me one of the gravestones. I laughed and said wouldn't it be easier to see it in the light, but he insisted and so I followed him into the graveyard.

As I stand here now, I realise I have made a mistake. Simon is standing next to a new headstone, shiny pink marble amongst the dark slate. Gold printed letters on the headstone. I recognise the name, we all knew Danny, he had hung himself three years ago.

"Only he didn't," Simon said, "he wrote the note, but couldn't go through with it, so I helped him complete. Pushed him off the banister and watched him swing there, fighting to get out of the noose he had tied for himself. I enjoyed it. Enjoyed it so much I started finding random people to kill, making it seem like accidents or hiding the body so well they weren't found."

I'm flabbergasted, of all of us Simon would be the one I'd least expect to be a killer.

“It was my resolution to give up killing people, but I like it too much, even after a week I’m missing it, but then you’d know about that now wouldn’t you. I will take the burden off you though, I will kill again, but as you know my secret, you can’t be allowed to go running around telling people.”

And then I saw the knife in his hand, I saw it as it entered my chest, felt the cold metal penetrate my skin and then I felt nothing.

## **World’s Greatest Cathedrals Top Trumps**

<b>Ely Cathedral</b>	
City / Country	Ely, UK
Height	66 metres
Commenced Building	970
Character	15
Global Fame	72
Top Trumps Rating	73
Details	Ely Cathedral is widely acknowledged as “one of the wonders of the medieval world”. Visible for miles around the cathedral is often referred to as “The Ship of the Fens”. In addition to its unique Octagon Tower and magnificent lady Chapel, Ely has the third longest nave of any UK cathedral.

## **Chapter and Verse**

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

### **Where The Lights Shine Brightest – Chapter 2**

He woke suddenly, shaken from his slumber by something deep in his consciousness, covered in sweat, and slightly disorientated, as was often the case after this particular dream. It was dark, a lot darker than expected, and he took a few seconds to remember that he was in a hotel room. The blackout blinds were drawn, and not a single ray of light could be seen peeping through.

He instinctively looked at his watch, only to realise as he moved his arm that it wasn’t in the normal place on his wrist. Even if it had still been on his wrist, he doubted that he’d have been able to see it in the darkness. He couldn’t remember taking it off before getting into bed, though that may have had more to do with the number of drinks he’d had the previous night, before getting into his bed.

He slowly dragged himself to a sitting position and after feeling where the edge of the bed was, swung his legs round to put his feet on the floor. As he edged along the side of the bed towards the foot of it, he could see some light filtering through from the corridor under the door into his room.

He reached over to switch on a light, and after a few seconds fumbling around, managed to switch on a light, finding the one that shone directly into his eyes, pretty much blinding himself. He shuddered at the memory of the dream it triggered as he closed his eyes, letting them settle for a few seconds, before moving his head away from the light and re-opening them, and looking around the room. He initially searched for his watch on the various surfaces around the room, but with no immediate success, he stood up, and walked gingerly to the bathroom, turning on another searing light, and then stood blinking at his reflection.

As normal, the hair and five o’clock shadow was in the exact same style, nothing ever seemed to change there, and he was happy to see there were no unidentified drinking injuries on his reflection, then again, he didn’t expect to see anything untoward, his outward appearance never seemed to change no matter what had happened.

His watch was sat by the side of the sink, face down, with some remnants of toothpaste on. He’d obviously taken it off before brushing his teeth when he’d got back to the room, and not been particularly careful with the brush strokes, little white splatters were all around the sink, and on the mirror in front of him.

It would also appear he’d taken a shower, a used towel on the floor, and small puddles of water were the tell-tale signs. He had definitely been on automatic pilot when he’d gotten in, and was just thankful that he’d not slipped, or broken something whilst showering.

He picked the watch up and turned it over to check the time. It told him it was just before seven, he’d asked for a quarter past alarm call, so he was slightly ahead of the game for a change. He quickly jumped in the shower to wash the sheen of sweat he’d woken up with off himself, and to try and bring him round to the land of the living. He turned the temperature

down as far as he could, and within a few seconds blasts of cold water were coming through. He endured the icy water for as long as he could, and then turned the water off.

He picked up a fresh towel, and began to dry himself off, and he thought about having a shave. His early morning brain obviously not up to speed yet as he remembered how pointless that would be anyway, and the fact he didn't have carry a razor with him anymore. Five years down the line and he still hadn't shaken off the automatic thought to shave after a shower.

He walked over to the windows and opened the blinds; the room brightened a bit with the hint of daylight, but not as much as he hoped. It would seem that the British weather still left a lot to be desired, even in what was supposed to be their summertime. Rain ran down the outside of the window, and the flat roofs of the surrounding buildings were covered in several small puddles.

He stood looking out of the window, admiring the different, and sometimes contrasting styles of buildings that he could see. London was amazing like that, as he looked round, he could probably see buildings that had been built in six or seven different centuries, seemingly happily co-existing together. He may have stood there a while longer, but was interrupted by the alarm call, and he moved away from the window and picked the phone up, heard the automatic robotic voice message, and put the receiver back down.

He looked properly around the room for the first time that morning, and besides his watch, everything else was exactly where he'd expect it to be in the room, he hadn't taken much out of his case, and he'd piled up his clothes from the previous evening neatly on the chair in the corner of the room. His pre-prepared clothes were hanging up, ready to go, and he wandered over, took them off the hanger and got dressed.

He took the lift down to the basement of the hotel to the restaurant where breakfast was served. It was a relative success, a decent buffet choice, he hadn't eaten the healthiest options, but at least he hadn't spilt any of it on himself, always a bonus when already dressed. He got hot and cold drinks inside him, and felt a whole lot better when leaving to go back up to his room.

He did another check round every drawer, wardrobe, cupboard, and even under the bed in the room to make sure he had everything that he'd arrived with, and wheeled his case out of his room and down to reception.

He checked out, and was glad to find he'd not randomly ordered any food or drink when he had got back to the hotel the night before, and that there was nothing else to pay on his bill. He headed out of the hotel, and across the square, and then down into the Underground station next to the hotel, to do the journey out to the airport.

He had been over to London so much recently, he'd acquired an Oyster card for travel around the city, and public transport was pretty good, although it was carnage during their rush hour. He realised that it was going to be smack bang in the middle of rush hour as he made his way through the ticket barriers, fighting with them to get his case through behind him, and made his way down to the platform.

As he turned from the bottom of the stairs and stepped onto the platform, the train was on the platform and its doors slid shut and it started to move off, he wasn't surprised, and it didn't really matter, he always missed the damn Tube by seconds, it didn't matter what time of day or when he was going, whenever he arrived the doors were always shutting. It seemed to him that it was the same with all public transport anywhere around the world; it was almost as if the driver could sense him nearing the doors and therefore knew it was time to go, leaving him behind.

He had first noticed that five years ago, just after his strange experience, and it had started to make him feel a bit paranoid, however his sense of paranoia had reduced over the years, as his previous belief that it was part of a global conspiracy to drive him to distraction was just crazy thinking. As if transport operators all over the world had nothing better to do than to make their transport leave as he arrived.

And anyway, the good thing today was that he had plenty of time to get to Heathrow and on the line he had chosen, the Tube was frequent, and once on a train he wouldn't have to change, if he could get a seat, he could relax all the way to the end of the line and the waiting airport.

**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 some pieces published there, 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](mailto:kev@onetruekev.co.uk)

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