

# Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 86

## 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, wine, rum, port, Pepsi, or whatever), and enjoy the read.

## On This Day – 29<sup>th</sup> August

1009 – Mainz Cathedral suffers extensive damage from a fire, which destroys the building on the day of its inauguration.  
1728 – The city of Nuuk in Greenland is founded as the fort of Godt-Haab by the royal governor Claus Paars.  
1831 – Michael Faraday discovers electromagnetic induction.  
1869 – The Mount Washington Cog Railway opens, making it the world's first mountain-climbing rack railway.  
1885 – Gottlieb Daimler patents the world's first internal combustion motorcycle, the Reitwagen.  
1898 – The Goodyear tire company is founded in Akron, Ohio.  
1966 – The Beatles perform their last concert before paying fans at Candlestick Park in San Francisco.  
1997 – Netflix is launched as an internet DVD rental service.

International Day against Nuclear Tests  
Miners' Day (Ukraine)  
Municipal Police Day (Poland)  
National Sports Day (India)

### Births

1321 – John of Artois (somewhat disappointingly, he didn't marry a Stella, nor name any of his children Stella)  
1915 – Ingrid Bergman  
1923 – Richard Attenborough  
1947 – James Hunt  
1958 – Lenny Henry  
1958 – Michael Jackson

### Deaths

1877 – Brigham Young  
1930 – William Archibald Spooner  
1975 – Éamon de Valera  
1982 – Ingrid Bergman  
1987 – Lee Marvin  
2021 – Lee "Scratch" Perry

### Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1983 – KC And The Sunshine Band – Give It Up  
Number 1 album in 1995 – Black Grape – It's Great When You're Straight...Yeah  
Number 1 compilation album in 2012 – Various – Now 82

## #vss365

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

The photo was all over the internet, and it looked bad. This was the problem with the ease of photoshop nowadays.

However, I knew something they didn't, the original photo they had altered and spread everywhere wasn't digital, it was taken on film, and I had the #negative.

#vss365

## Joke

A man had a terrible passion for baked beans, but they always had a somewhat lively effect on him. After he met the woman of his dreams, he made the supreme sacrifice and gave them up; he couldn't imagine subjecting his new wife to his beastly emissions. On his birthday, his car broke down, so he called his wife and told her he'd have to walk home. He walked past a cafe and the wonderful aroma of baked beans overwhelmed him. Since he was still a couple of miles from home, he figured he could indulge, and then walk off any ill effects. So he had three extra-large helpings of beans, and he "put-putted" all the way home. His wife met him at the door and seemed somewhat excited. She exclaimed, "Darling, I have the most wonderful surprise for you for dinner tonight!" She blindfolded him, and led him to his chair at the head of the table, making him promise not to peek. At this point, he was beginning to feel another one coming on. Just as she was about to remove the blindfold, the telephone rang, and she went to answer it. While she was gone, he seized the opportunity. He shifted his weight to one leg and let go. It was not only loud, but ripe as a rotten egg. He gasped and felt for his napkin and fanned the air about him. He had just started to feel better when another urge came on. This one sounded like a diesel engine revving, and smelled worse. He tried flapping his arms, to clear the air. But another one snuck out, and the windows rattled, the dishes on the table shook, and a minute later, the flowers on the table were dead. When he heard his wife ending her conversation, he neatly laid his napkin on his lap and folded his hands on top of it. He was the picture of innocence when she walked in. Apologizing for taking so long, she asked if he had peeked at the dinner. He assured her he had not, so she removed the blindfold and yelled, "Surprise!!!" To his shock and horror, there were twelve dinner guests seated around the table for his surprise birthday party.

## Drabble

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

### Spike The Punch

I didn't want to be at the reunion. I hated them all. They had made my life a misery. But Bill surprised me when he caught me slipping the contents of my bottle in the big bowl of punch.

"Ha ha, are you trying to liven the party up there, Peter, that's some old school moves you've got going on there, slipping some spirits into the punch. Good one, didn't think you had it in you."

And he proceeded to take a big cup and start slurping.

He'd be the first one to die. The rest would follow suit soon.

## Flash Fiction

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

### The Survivor

I heard a noise. It sounded like footsteps amongst the trees and the brush. I hadn't heard footsteps in days. All I had seen was death and destruction. Buildings reduced to piles of rubble, bodies crushed amongst the brick, concrete, metal, and glass. Other bodies lay on the ground, on what used to be roads. And not just human bodies either; cats, dogs, birds, horses, cattle. Everything dead and withering away.

Since this all started, unbelievably only six days ago, it looked as if the entire world had died apart from the trees.

And myself of course.

I didn't understand why I was still alive. I didn't understand a lot of things anymore. I had no idea of what had caused this to happen. A solar flare possibly? Aliens? Human incompetence? I didn't know. Perhaps there was someone out there, somebody else who was still alive and who did know. But I doubted I would meet them.

Whatever it was it had affected everything. Made it all get old and wither and die. Lifeforms, buildings, transport. In a few hours it all fell apart, and the world as I had known it had ceased to exist. I watched people I know die, places I lived, and cars I had driven all become nothing before my eyes in hours.

And I kept expecting to go the same way, but I didn't.

Even the food went the same way. Its containers became shrivelled twisted parodies of their former selves and their contents spoiled. Drinks sprang forth from broken cans and bottles and drained into the ground through cracks that hadn't been there a day before.

I slowly plodded my way through the debris and detritus of the destroyed city scape; my clothes falling apart as I did so. My shoes disintegrating away until I was carrying on naked and ashamed, trying to cover myself self-consciously.

Only to find a few days later that it didn't matter to me. There was no one around to see my out of shape disgusting blob of a body. And no one to care either. But even so I walked in the cover of the trees, the only other survivors in the horror show that had evolved around me. A source of food to go with the water that collected in little puddles everywhere as the rain fell unabated.

And now after days of silence there had been that sound. I stopped and listened for it to come again. It was there. I wasn't imagining it. Somewhere away to my left I was sure there were footsteps. And so, I turned and headed towards where the noise was coming from. Only to stop as I caught a glimpse of something moving between the trees.

A figure, not much taller than me, but in a bright yellow covering. And then a second figure, and a third. I was holding my breath now. They turned as if one and pointed in my direction. I let the breath out and turned and ran, as fast as I could in bare feet and poor shape. Dodging between the trunks of the ancient trees, ducking under their low branches, twisting and turning, only for me to come around a tree and run straight into a yellow clad figure and fall to the ground.

Their words were muffled by their outfit as they bent over and lifted me from the ground, but I was sure I heard the words,

"We've found one."

Before I passed out.

## **Leicestershire**

### **High Cross**

High Cross is the name given to the crossroads of the Roman roads of Watling Street and Fosse Way in Leicestershire, England. It is about a mile west of the village of Claybrooke Magna and was in the hundred of Guthlaxton. It was the site of a Romano-British settlement known as Venonae or Venonis, with a nearby fort.

In modern times, this section of Watling Street is now a dual carriageway section of the A5, the southern part of the Fosse Way is a B road, and the northern route of the Fosse is now a track which is a part of a long-distance path called the Leicestershire Round.

High Cross is depicted on the coat of arms of Blaby District Council, which is the local authority for the area. Two black diagonal lines on the shield depict the Fosse Way and Watling Street.

### The Venonis Settlement

The only classical reference which mentions the name of this Romano-British settlement on the Watling Street is the Antonine Itinerary of the late-second century. This list of Roman routes across the empire contains fifteen routes within Britain, three of which pass through the settlement:

Iter II, the route from Hadrian's Wall to Richborough in Kent, as Venonis, twelve miles from Manduessedum (Mancetter, Warwickshire) and seventeen miles from Bannaventa (Whilton Lodge, Northamptonshire).

Iter VI, the route from London to Lincoln, again as Venonis, eight miles from Tripontium (Cave's Inn, Warwickshire) and twelve miles from Ratae (Leicester, Leicestershire).

Iter VIII, the route from York to London, once more as Venonis, again twelve miles from Leicester, though this time eighteen miles from Whilton Lodge.

The settlement lay about the intersection of Watling Street and the Fosse Way, extending at least 455m to south-east and 60m to north-west of the intersection. How far the settlement extended along the Fosse Way is unknown. Excavations on the south side of Watling Street revealed the post holes, gullies, and slots of timber buildings. No complete building plan was uncovered. Also found were hearths, pits, and gravel yard surfaces. Earliest pottery was Flavian (c. 69-96 AD), and the latest coin finds were of the House of Valentinian (c. 364-378 AD).

A small Roman fort lay less than a mile to the north-west of the settlement at Wigston Parva. The Watling Street was later built across its site.

### The Wigston Parva Fort

Discovered from the air by J.K. St. Joseph, this small fort of just two acres (c.0.81 ha) lies astride the Watling street about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile (c.1.2 km) north-west of the Venonis settlement (at N.G.Ref.: SP464894). The defences consisted of a turf-reverted rampart ten feet (3.1m) wide, fronted by a V-profile ditch eight feet (2.4m) wide and four feet (1.2m) deep. These features were levelled after a brief period of use when the Watling Street was later built across the site. The fort had timber gateways in the middle of the NW and SE sides, and apparently faced towards the NW. The 1969/70 excavations in the fort's interior revealed parts of a barrack-block, the cobbled surface of the intervallum road, also a water-tank near the eastern corner-angle.

### Ab Kettleby

The first settlement in Leicestershire alphabetically.

Ab Kettleby is a village and civil parish in the Melton district of Leicestershire, England, located three miles (4.8 km) north of Melton Mowbray, on the A606 road. It had a population of 501 in 2001; at the 2011 census this had increased to 529.

It is situated three miles (4.8 km) southeast of the border with Nottinghamshire. The village is situated 460 feet (140 m) above sea level. The neighbouring hamlets of Wartnaby and Holwell form part of the civil parish of Ab Kettleby.

A Roman mosaic and pavement were found beneath the present churchyard, indicating the presence of a villa. Ab Kettleby was first recorded in the Domesday Book as Chetelbi. Ab Kettleby is of Danish origin; its meaning is Ketil's homestead later differentiated from Eye Kettleby by Ab (a later holder of this land).

St. James's Church has a Norman font, and a memorial to Everard Digby one of the Gunpowder plotters. The remains of the villa and a ditch running from north to south underneath the nave have caused serious structural problems for the church. The church closed in 2006 due to its structural problems and, following the raising of over £250,000 for repairs, it re-opened in 2013. The church was mostly built in the 13th century but restored in 1852-3. The north aisle is Victorian. Iron ore was obtained in all three parts of the parish.

Quarrying took place at Ab Kettleby between 1892 and 1907. The quarries were to the north of the village: on either side of the lane to Holwell (which probably started first); in the triangle between the A606, the Six Hills to Eastwell road and the lane to Holwell Mouth from Ab Kettleby; and on the north side of the Six Hills to Eastwell road.

Quarrying was done by hand with the aid of explosives and the ore was taken by narrow gauge tramway to a tipping dock at the Midland Railway Holwell Branch north of Potter Hill. From there the ore was taken by train to Holwell Iron Works at Asfordby Hill.

The lower end of the tramway was a cable-worked incline. At the quarry end the line was probably worked by horses which were later replaced by steam locomotives. The gauge was, unusually, 2 ft. 8 in (813 mm). The main sign of quarrying now is that some of the fields are at a lower level than the roads. In 1986 there was still an upturned quarry wagon at the site of the old tipping dock.

The parish has a primary school, a public house named after Sugarloaf Mountain, a community centre, a guest house, a 17th-century manor house, and medieval farmhouses and farm buildings. One of those farms was home to the racehorse Desert Orchid for several years. Within the boundaries of the village is a holy well.

It also has a village duck pond next to a large horse-chestnut tree and megalithic spring. A public telephone box, once a common sight throughout the UK but now a protected building, has been released to the protection of Ab Kettleby's council.

Ab Kettleby Manor is an early 17th-century house in the village of Ab Kettleby, Leicestershire. Built of ironstone with a central brick chimney, the house is cruciform in plan.

Brewers Britain & Ireland -The history, culture, folklore, and etymology of 7,500 places in these islands, contains the following entry for Ab Kettleby.

Ab – denoting the manor owned by a man called Abba. Kettleby – “Ketli’s farmstead”, Old Scandi male personal name. Ketli + BY. A village in Leicestershire, about three miles northwest of Melton Mowbray.

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

Excerpts from life writing.

### **What's The Hold Up?**

We'd left work half an hour early to give us an opportunity to drop in home, let the dog out for a call of nature and then feed any poor starving animals that were at home.

Then we were off. Heading for Eastbourne to meet up with my mum and her friend Janet for an evening meal. They were staying at a hotel on the front near the pier on a Shearings' trip, and being fairly local we thought it would be good to meet up.

We bombed down the A23 in great time, and were up on to the A27 to head east without any problems, all for it to come to a grinding halt at Falmer. We thought it was just a traffic bottleneck, not being regular travellers past Brighton at rush hour, we wouldn't know the difference. However once past the junction, all we could see was the red glow from gridlocked traffic, fading away into the distance.

I checked the map only to find that there was no way off the A27 until we got to the outskirts of Lewes, nearly five miles on. Then I checked traffic alerts and they advised there had been an incident. When we passed a couple of cars with their drivers out on the road inspecting damage, one with their kilt being blown dangerously close to indecent exposure, we thought that might be the end of it, but it wasn't to be.

It was stop start, and half an hour later we had to part to let an ambulance through, we had barely done a mile in that time. We could see a garage in the distance, a welcome opportunity to use the facilities and to ring through and tell mum we were a bit held up.

There was a queue for the toilets, though as we found out five minutes later, unnecessarily so, as the woman at the front hadn't tried the door and the toilet wasn't occupied.

Traffic warnings were still showing on the phone, saying they were directing everyone off the A27 just before Lewes. It had taken us well over an hour to get those five miles, and then it was country roads down to Newhaven and along the coast road into Eastbourne, only an hour late. We'd missed dinner in the hotel, and so it was around the corner to a little Italian restaurant, in which we were the only customers.

The meal was lovely, and back in mum's hotel an x-factor reject was the night's entertainment, trying to get enthusiasm out of pensioners with some sixties standards. Too soon it was time to come home, only this time with clear roads. We found out the cause of the hold up the next day.

Three spotty herberts had stolen a Mercedes convertible and gone on a little joyride. They had been clocked by the police coming out of Brighton, had rammed a police car, and hit the A27. A chase ensued, and eventually the herberts stacked the car and caused an eight-car pile-up which closed the A27 for the stretch going past Lewes.

Not content with causing chaos and mayhem on the roads, the driver left his two companions to their arrests and tried to escape. On foot initially, before completing his particular triathlon by trying to swim away down the River Ouse. The halfwit (it's uncertain whether he was wearing a leotard or not.) failed to recognise that the police could walk quicker than he could swim, and he was arrested as he tried to clamber up the far bank of the River.

Suffering from a touch of hypothermia, he was taken to hospital, along with one of his fellow car thieves, and a poor unfortunate bystander who'd had their collar bone broken in the pile-up.

There really isn't any such thing as a quiet night out.

## **Poetry Corner**

### **The Night Is The Truth**

A single beam of light cuts through the gloom  
Illuminating a little circle of the way before us  
Showing us the way or tricking us, leading to our doom

I preferred the dark, unseeing, not knowing the way  
It is more honest, more even, less tempting, less leading  
The night should be dark, the light is for the day

Where the light is going makes me want to veer off  
But the others are drawn in, moth like, careless of the flame  
I beg, plead, implore them not to follow, but they scoff

We should stick together but I won't go with the light  
I turn and leave my companions and I go on alone  
Back into the gloom and the truth that is the night

It is late, all around me is black when the screams come through  
Whatever the light served has found those I once was with  
I shiver, both with fear and relief at what I felt I knew

I am now alone, but the darkness is my friend, not enemy  
Under its cover I walk on unmolested and untouched  
Safe and secure until the light returns to once more betray me

## **Did I Really Blog That?**

### **Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here**

The new Premier League season starts tomorrow, and I'm trying to dredge up the slightest bit of enthusiasm for it, and failing miserably. If Covid has taught me one thing, it's that I'm not very interested in football anymore. The signs have been on the door for a number of years, but it has been somewhat masked by the fact that for a number of seasons, Tottenham were punching above their weight, playing some really good football, and getting into the Champions League, even getting to the final in the season before last. But as usual, we haven't won anything.

For the last few years, my preseason prediction for how Spurs will do during the season have ended up seeming quite pessimistic. We've done better in the league than predicted and got further in the cups and European Competitions. Last year I was about spot on, but not in the way I expected. I didn't see Poch getting the sack, and I certainly didn't see that evil little hobgoblin Mourinho becoming our manager. The same tosser who, whilst at Chelsea said he wouldn't manage Spurs if they were the last club on earth. What a shame the poisonous twat can't stick to his word.

I've not had Sky Sports for a couple of years, as I've not been bothered about watching games. And midway through last season the magical little free BT Sports that had been running for years finally gave up the ghost as they realised, I wasn't a subscriber. During the extended mid-season break due to Covid, I didn't miss the football at all. When the season restarted and they put some games on Freeview I did have a couple on, mainly as background noise.

All this time I'm hearing chief imbecile of the anti-football brigade moaning how he hadn't had preseason with the team and so hadn't managed to get them playing as he wanted. Well, I watched the game against Bournemouth, as the only game that was on Freeview with Spurs in, and he had certainly had time with the squad by then. And they were effing awful. No pace, no style, unable to string more than a couple of passes together, they were pitiful. I still have no idea how a team as bad as Spurs were last season managed to qualify for Europe, and finish above Arsenal (who at least won a trophy and now the charity shield).

The brief off season hasn't inspired confidence. We've made a couple of signings, but they don't scream "We're going to make the team better." I mean, for crying out loud, one of them was Joe Hart. He may have been good ten years ago, but ever since he made those embarrassing Head and Shoulders adverts, he's been useless, and drummed out of more clubs than Keith Moon. Yes, we need a replacement for Lloris, who is far too prone to a rush of blood to the head, but Hart isn't it. Speaking of Lloris, it is a disgrace that he's still the club captain; he should have lost that title as soon as the charges for drink driving were known, but it's just a sign of how much Levy doesn't give a shit about the fans. A process that ended up with us having Mourinho the anti-football Christ as our manager.

I had to laugh when there was the big announcement of our third kit. It's a crappy lemon colour, and the players look embarrassed to be modelling it. At least it does mean that in some games this season we will look like lemons as well as playing like them.

So, what do I think we'll do this season then?

League – Scrape in to the top ten, ninth at best.  
Carabao Cup – third round exit  
FA Cup – third round exit  
Europa League – Fail to reach the group stages

Kane to score twenty goals again, but to have six weeks out with a knee or ankle injury sometime after Christmas, which he'll want to rush back from and the simpering fools at the club will pander to and so he'll be deadwood for six games

as usual. I hope he isn't injured, but if it does happen, please just say no to him, don't let him back near a pitch until fully fit, unless it's in the reserves.

Followed by Mourinho leaving (if this could be brought forward to Christmas it would be great), and the sale of anyone that a half decent team might be interested in, which after the turgid season in store for the team won't be many.

## Story Time

### Fields

The old man started with the sentence,

"When I was a child, all of this was fields."

It was a line that had been spun many times by many people over the years as they tried to explain how much their locality had changed since their youth. Most of them would be alluding to the fact that they thought the changes weren't for the better. That the changes had made their locality worse. That wasn't the impression I got from the old man.

And for once, it probably wasn't an exaggeration from the old man. He was likely to be correct with what I've been able to look up since. Well, he was right up to a point. A lot of the area he referred to had used to be fields, but a lot of it had been forest.

Which to be fair wasn't a surprise, after all Crawley's name includes trees in its title. It is made up from the Old English Crape for crows and Leah (changed to ley over the years) for land that was predominantly wooded, particularly managed woodland, whose usual meaning is 'cleared land in a wood' or a grove, or later meaning 'pasture land'.

By all accounts it wasn't the first time the old man had tried to tell a passer-by what had used to be here. He stood on the spot on the corner of Wakehurst Drive and Colliers Row every day. He stood facing St. Mary's Church and he would try and start up conversations with anyone who walked past him. Whether it was those coming or going to the row of shops, or those heading into The Downsman for a drink or a meal.

A lot of people knew the old man by sight, and a lot took detours to avoid having to speak to him. Apparently, it was one of those things that the locals just knew about. No one was ever nasty to him, but most would try their utmost to avoid being drawn into a conversation with him.

I, however, didn't know about him. I had seen the man standing on the corner plenty of time before, but I had never really paid him any attention. I never had a reason to be walking past him. Yet, on that particular morning I did. It has to be said that I'm not really one for talking to people, an introvert, bordering on being misanthropic. I try to avoid speaking to anyone, and for a split second I nearly kept on walking and ignoring the old man. But there was something about that first sentence that made me stop and listen to him.

I found myself replying,

"How long ago was that then?"

And so the old man told me. And as he did so I stood there transfixed as he spoke and gesticulated. He pointed to places he could see in his mind's eye that were now hidden from view by an army of bricks and concrete.

He started pointing back up towards the end of Wakehurst Drive to the left of the church.

"That used to be a farm down there, with fields full of different crops growing. We are stood in the middle of one of the fields. As I child I would walk or run through those fields, much to the annoyance of the farmer I can tell you. The farmhouse building is still there, hidden away amongst all these new build houses. Malthouse Farm it was called, that's why the road is named that, and it would have been the track that led to the farmhouse."

The old man swept his arm across to his right a bit, to point to where, hidden from view by the houses was Hawth Woods.

"They were bigger then, and marked the edge of the land belonging to Malthouse Farm. They weren't criss-crossed with paths as they are now, just a single track through. People didn't used to go walking in the woods then. There was no need for it. Most people walked everywhere anyway. There wasn't the mass use of cars there is today. None of this drive up to the row of shops behind us even though they only live across the road."

He continued on sweeping his arm to the right,

“The other side of the woods was another farm. I never used to go near the fields of that farm though. The farmer there was a bit trigger happy with his shotgun on trespassers. One of the other children I knew had forty-one pieces of buckshot picked out of the back of his legs, arms, and torso for trying to take a shortcut through one of his fields.

Furnace Farm it was called, of course that’s where Furnace Green got its name from. As with so much of Crawley and its estates, they used the names of what was here before they built the new town. Although the town grew up in what seemed like a blink of an eye, they made it seem as if it happened organically, as it had in towns and cities that had grown up over centuries.”

The old man continued his sweep to the right.

“Tilgate Forest has been there forever, it’s actually bigger now than it used to be, it was more open the other side of where they stuck the motorway. Yet where the houses of Tilgate are now never used to be forest at all, it was all open common meadows, or so it appeared, someone probably owned it, but it wasn’t enclosed.”

He had gone through a hundred and eighty degrees by now and was pointing over to Broadfield, from where if the wind were blowing in the right direction, we could easily hear the crowds from Crawley Town on match days.

“If what they built on for Tilgate wasn’t forest, Broadfield certainly was, there was no field at any time in my youth; it was the very edge of St. Leonards Forest. Trees covered the whole area up the hill and into Pease Pottage.”

Finally the old man turned so he had his back to the church and was looking through The Downsman.

“Over there was the old Inn. Not this modern identikit estate pub right in front of us, but the one on the other side of this Hogshill we stand upon. The Moon. There was an inn there on the road to Brighton before I was born, and I suppose there will be after I’m gone. That was the only route directly south out of Crawley back then.”

I looked at my watch and was surprised to see that twenty minutes had gone by since I’d stopped to listen to the old man. It hadn’t felt more than a few seconds. He smiled and thanked me for listening, saying hardly anyone did anymore. Everyone was in too much of a hurry nowadays. I told him that I should be thanking him for sharing his memories and knowledge with me. And I asked him if he had ever thought about writing them down; have them as a permanent record for future generations.

He laughed, saying no one would be interested. But I was, and I was sure there would be others who would be.

I’ve spoken to the old man – Clifford Dawes – on lots of occasions since that first time. I’m helping him write his memories of Crawley down. Perhaps he’ll get to see his book about them before he’s no longer able to tell anyone about them stood on the corner of the street.

## **Chapter and Verse**

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

### **Five Go Mad In Manchester – St Patrick’s Day**

And speaking of Scubar, one of the wildest drinking sessions took place there.

Squirrel wasn’t working on a Sunday for a change, and the Sunday was St Patrick’s Day. Back in Leicester Squirrel would have spent the day bouncing around various Irish pubs (not the fake plastic shit ones like O’Neill’s), the authentic, run by the Irish, drunk in by the Irish pubs. Whilst out with friends he would always bump into his dad in various pubs during the day.

But there wasn’t really the same array of Irish pubs in Manchester, or if there was Squirrel didn’t know them. And so with sport on all day he headed to Scubar at midday. And started on the drinks offers. A bottle of Becks and a shooter. And as there was football and rugby watched during the day, others dipped in and out of the place, and Squirrel worked his way through the entire shooters’ menu. All eighteen of them. Each with a bottle of Becks.

With Ireland playing Wales in the six nations there was somewhat of a St Patrick’s Day party vibe happening around him, which was probably sweeping the drinking along. Once the shooter menu had been exhausted, Squirrel moved onto the cocktail menu and demolished all eight of them as well.

The three types of goldfish bowl followed, during which Dylan stumbled in the prop the bar up with Squirrel. He had been out with his new girlfriend watching the rugby and was even worse for wear than Squirrel. And as they stood at the bar, they were downing pints of Stella and Guinness and whatever else was on tap, and helping the pints along by doing shots of tequila, before moving on to shots of Absinthe, the blue, green, and turquoise versions.



Squirrel blinked and Dylan had gone. Assumedly home, but who knows?

Well, it got to quarter past one and Squirrel was persuaded it might be a good idea for him to go home. So he walked the thirty yards or so to Oxford Road and went to get a bus.

Seeing a Finland's one coming, he stepped into the road to stop it. The door opened, he got on, put a pound down and said 'Rusholme please mate,' and sat down. The bus had been moving a while before Squirrel took any notice of his surroundings. There were no lights on. There was no one else on the bus. It wasn't in service. He supposed that if he'd have given a destination after Rusholme he wouldn't have been let on, but as it was a stop before the bus depot the driver probably thought, fuck it, let the pisshead on.

Once at the other end, Squirrel went for a wrap from the Lebanese place and whilst waiting checked for keys to prepare for arrival home at Heald Place. And in doing so he put them in a convenient, easy to get to, pocket.

Only to forget he had done that and not be able to find his keys ten minutes later when he arrived back at the house. He had to bang on the door until eventually Warm got up and let him in the front door. Squirrel had to then break into his own room to get to bed.

In the morning he fixed his room door and went to work with the spare set of keys he had had cut for just this kind of emergency.

It got to Friday after a full week at work and he was sorting his washing out, Squirrel found the original set of keys there in the wash basket.

He had put them in his shirt pocket for easy access when he got back to the house, only to forget his shirt even had a pocket in the ten-minute walk from the Lebanese place back to the house. Easily done.

At least they hadn't been through a week in the fridge unlike Squirrel's phone had done previously.

## **Books**

After years of prevaricating, I have finally gotten around to self-publishing some books. Since the last issue of this I now have three books available. The first is the novel which spent many years available on the Inkitt website. "Where The Lights Shine Brightest", this is available on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1738539601> .

Next up is a collection of drabbles, three hundred and sixty six of the little hundred word stories, under the title of "A Drabble A Day Keeps The Psychoanalyst Away", this is available on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/173853961X> .

Finally, there is an autobiographical work, released under my alter ego of Kevin Rodriguez-Sanchez, which covers a two-year period in the early noughties when I lived in Manchester – "Five Go Mad In Manchester". Again, this is available on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1738539628>

They are all available as paperback or eBook. And if you have Kindle Unlimited then they are available on there to read whenever. Please buy / read / leave reviews.

## **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.

Lots of stuff on my Medium page, clap, comment, or highlight any article and earn me a couple of cents. <https://medium.com/@onetruekev>

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.

I've 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 on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/onetruekev/>

E-mail any ideas or suggestions to [kev@onetruekev.co.uk](mailto:kev@onetruekev.co.uk)

[To Unsubscribe click on the word](#)