

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 1

Introduction

The first rule of Flanagan's Running Club is no one talks about Flanagan's Running Club!

This is the first, and may be the last issue of Flanagan's Running Club, a title very heavily borrowed from my favourite book. If you are on the mailing list it is because you are trusted not to talk about Flanagan's Running Club. Due to the fact that fun at work has been banned in these dystopian times, I'm not making the distribution list known, and I'm asking for you not to forward this on to anyone.

There may be more issues to come, there may not, it depends on what I feel like doing. It certainly won't be weekly, or on any regular pattern. If any of you feel you can't be members of Flanagan's Running Club then just say, and I'll have you removed.

On This Day

1965 – In the United Kingdom, a 70 mph speed limit is applied to all rural roads including motorways for the first time.

1989 – Communist President of Romania Nicolae Ceausescu is overthrown by Ion Iliescu after days of bloody confrontations. The deposed dictator and his wife flee Bucharest in a helicopter as protesters erupt in cheers.

1989 – Berlin's Brandenburg Gate re-opens after nearly 30 years, effectively ending the division of East and West Germany.

1990 – Lech Walesa is elected President of Poland.

In India it is National Mathematics Day

1793 Today, Captain of Artillery Napoleone Buonaparte was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at the tender age of 24, rewarded for his heroic achievements during Republican France's victorious Siege of Toulon.

In late August French royalist counter-revolutionaries had treacherously welcomed an enemy Anglo-Spanish fleet under the command of Admiral Hood into the key French naval base of Toulon, just down the Mediterranean coast from Marseille. There the English had seized over 70 vessels, including 30 ships of the line, over half the French fleet. For reasons of both political prestige and military necessity, the Revolutionary government in Paris had resolved to wrest back the base and ordered a siege.

The siege began on 28 August. After several months of mutual cannonading, French soldiers at length captured the forts overlooking the port. Then on the afternoon of 18 December, Buonaparte, still an obscure captain in charge of the French artillery, focused withering fire from the secured forts directly on the English ships moored in the harbour. Forced to evacuate, the English burned more than half the French ships on their way out. In the evening the revolutionaries reoccupied the city and shot several hundred royalists who had not fled with the English.

Based on his successful use of artillery, Buonaparte became a hero and was jumped half a dozen ranks to brigadier general. With supreme confidence he wrote to the Committee of Public Safety in Paris, 'It is the artillery that takes places; the infantry can only aid it.' But, as remarkable as it was, his dizzying rise was a bit less spectacular in 1793 than it would be today, given that Buonaparte was a trained and professional soldier. During this self-same siege of Toulon the attacking French force was commanded by three successive generals, men who before the Revolution had been, respectively, a painter, a sugar planter and a dentist.

Births

1949 – Maurice Gibb

1949 – Robin Gibb

1970 – Ted Cruz

1984 – Basshunter

Deaths

1989 – Samuel Beckett

2002 – Joe Strummer
2014 – Joe Cocker

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 2009 - Rage Against The Machine - Killing In The Name
Number 1 album in 1965, 1966 & 1967 - The Sound Of Music (OST)
Number 1 compilation album in 1994 - Now 29, in fact a Now album has been the number one compilation album on this date every year since 1983 except for 1984 (Hits 1) and 1997 (Diana Princess Of Wales - Tribute (Royal Compilation Album))

Random Results

2001 - Tottenham Hotspur 1 - Ipswich Town 2
1985 - Dallas Cowboys 16 - San Francisco 49ers 31

Drabble

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

The Christmas Party

It's the work Christmas party tonight, for once let someone else be the star of the show, let someone else make a fool of themselves, it doesn't have to be you.

The meal is poor as always, you'd have been better off with burger and chips, but now the wine is flowing, there's always bottles of red left over.

It's that time of the night, glasses are dispensed with, drinking straight from the bottle.

Pass out in the corner and end up getting decorated with anything on hand by your colleagues.

At least you didn't moon the boss this year.

Joke

So the Pope is really early for his flight. He asks his driver on his way to the airport if he could drive around for a while because they have time to kill and he hasn't driven a car since becoming the pope. Naturally, he's a bit rusty, so he's driving poorly, when suddenly he sees police lights behind him. He pulls over and when the officer comes up to the window his eyes go wide. He says to the pope "Hold on for a minute," and goes back to his car to radio the chief.

Cop: "Chief we have a situation. I've pulled over an important figure."

Chief: "How important? A governor or something?"

Cop: "No sir. He's bigger."

Chief: "So, what? a celebrity or something?"

Cop: "More important, sir."

Chief: "A major politician?"

Cop: "No sir, he's much more important."

Chief: "WELL WHO IS IT!?"

Cop: "Well actually I'm not sure. But the Pope's his driver."

Random Fact

Donald Duck comics were banned in Finland because he doesn't wear pants.

Quote

Liam – I want a Whisky, no ice, I'll have it neat. With a splash of water in it.

Going Underground

King George V

The station is named after the nearby docks, in turn named after the reigning monarch at the time the building of the docks, by the Port of London Authority, began in 1912. Construction was delayed by the First World War and they opened in 1921.

The station opened on 6 December 2005.

Top Ten

Countries with largest Turkey Populations

No	Turkey Population	Country
1	237,500,000	USA
2	32,000,000	Chile
3	28,900,000	Brazil
4	24,500,000	Italy
5	20,190,000	France
6	20,000,000	Russia
7	11,500,000	Germany
8	10,000,000	Morocco
9	9,449,000	Poland
10	8,900,000	Tunisia

Cathedral Fact Files

Cathedral	Westminster Cathedral		
Dedicated To	Most Precious Blood Of Our Lord Jesus Christ		
Type	Modern	Architecture	Modern
Religion	Catholic	Tower / Spire	1 Spire
Site Founded	1895	Height (External)	284ft
Church Founded	1895	Height (Internal)	82ft
Bishopric Founded	1850	Length	360ft
Current Bishopric Founded	1850	Width	156ft

Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

The Jam – Setting Sons

For The Jam's fourth album, the plan was for it to be a concept album, based on three childhood friends as they grew up and grew apart. In the end the pressure was on to get the album released and therefore the concept was never fully finished, though 5 of the tracks (2, 4, 6, 7, & 9) were as intended, and three others (3, 5 & 8) were rewritten from the concepts laid down. Even though the concept was never finished it remains to me, The Jam's best album, and my favourite album of all time.

All the tracks were written by Paul Weller, except track 7 (written by Bruce Foxton), and track 10 (written by Motown geniuses Holland/Dozier/Holland) and the album was recorded between August 15 and October 10th, 1979 and released on 18th November the same year it got to number 4 in the charts. It stayed in the charts for 19 weeks. It was produced by Vic Coppersmith-Heaven, the cover and three brass figures moulded together was designed by Bill Smith with photos by Andrew Douglas and Andrew Rosen.

Track 1 – "*Girl on the Phone*" – Getting into stalking territory here, with a girl that "Knows everything about me", and "knows me so well, better than anyone, better than myself", and who rings to tell him this.

Track 2 – "*Thick as Thieves*" – Childhood friends grow up and apart, which is what the whole album was to be about, and pretty prophetic about what would happen to The Jam

Track 3 – “*Private Hell*” – Reworked into a female perspective, as a 40 something housewife slides in to depression over being cast adrift from the thoughts of her own family.

Track 4 – “*Little Boy Soldiers*” – Cynical view of war and how the government suddenly wants to know you when they want you to fight, and how they don’t really want to know when it all goes wrong.

Track 5 – “*Wasteland*” – More cynicism, this time aimed at the state of the state, and how bleak everything looks.

Track 6 – “*Burning Sky*” – One of the friends has become a materialistic businessman, who bumps into his old friends, only to dismiss what they once had as “Fun, but that’s all it was and never real”.

Track 7 – “*Smithers-Jones*” – As an aging office worker approaches 60 he’s “let go”, and he has to contemplate retirement.

Track 8 – “*Saturday’s Kids*” – Celebrating everything about being a teenager from a working-class background.

Track 9 – “*The Eton Rifles*” – All about class struggle, and the only single off the album. This is the single that catapulted The Jam into the really big time, becoming their first top ten hit. However, it has gotten tainted over the years with the amount of times you hear it and swear Paul Weller’s singing “Eating Trifles”.

Track 10 – “*Heat Wave*” – A favourite from there live shows over the previous two years, and shows Weller’s ongoing love of soul music.

Story Time

Is It Safe?

Tony had got the keys to his house that morning and made his way to the property to have a look around before starting to get any items he needed to fill it. When he had done viewings of the property prior to signing the final paperwork for it, there had been all sorts of furniture and debris in every room. He knew that it had been rented out, but didn’t know what the tenants were going to take with them, or what the owner would remove before contracts were exchanged.

He opened the front door and entered the house, there was lots of random items lying around in all of the rooms, various bed bases, pine bedroom furniture, unmade flat-packs for a whole range of kitchen units in a mismatch of styles and colours, an overgrown garden and two outhouses filled full of junk, one of which turned out to be a toilet. Then in the main front bedroom of the terraced house there was a big old style solid wooden desk and chair.

In the corner of that room sat another door, this was to a walk-in cupboard over the stairs, it was in the cupboard that Tony found the two most interesting items in the house.

The first was a six foot long cast iron road sign bearing the name “Evington Valley Road”. Tony stood there considering the sign; he was trying to work out just where that road was in comparison to his house. It must have been four miles away, and it was a heavy beast of a sign to move. Whoever had managed to remove it from its original location, probably at first floor level where these sign were normally set, and to carry it across the city to this house must have been on a mission and a half. He suspected there must have been a lot of alcohol involved. What was he going to do with it though? Was there a market for this sort of thing, or should he ring the council to come and pick it up? There’s a strong possibility it’s still in the outside shed all these years later.

The other item in the cupboard was a safe. Almost three feet long in all directions, it was made out of some real heavyweight kind of metal, with a brass frontage to its door and a large silver coloured handle next to a keyhole. Tony tried to move it, but couldn’t even budge it by himself, it was heavier than he was, not an inconsiderable feat. He went back to the set of keys and tried all of them without success.

He spent the rest of the day running errands, including getting a double mattress from MFI and carrying it up Western Road on his head and shoulders, the thick plastic making his head sweat profusely. He shuttled back and forth on the bus picking up certain items he could carry from his parents, and then spent the weekend moving larger items with help from his friends and someone he knew who had a van. By the end of the weekend he had a more up to date fridge freezer and cooker, a three piece suite that would normally be found in a conservatory and by the looks of it had probably

been swiped from Noah, plus countless boxes of books and records. With pubs and clubs taking up the night time hours it was the middle of the following week when Tony thought of the safe again.

He nipped into the estate agents and asked about the safe. Surely the previous owner would want it back. A series of phone calls followed. The previous owner had been renting the house out, so knew nothing of what had been left behind in it. The previous occupants just denied all knowledge of the safe; it was just a dead end. Tony asked around some of his dodgier friends, but none of them had safe cracking skills or would own up to knowing someone who did. Tony then went to the police, but they were only interested if it had been opened and there was something illegal in there. Another half an hour was wasted in a circular argument with the police around how would he know if there was something illegal in there if he couldn't open it, before he gave up. He rang a locksmith about it, but they were somewhat sceptical of his story and quoted him five hundred quid to open it for him, despite the advertised price being fifty. Eventually Tony gave up on trying to get into the safe and just used it to store stuff on.

It was only three years later when the police came to investigate potential mail fraud that they took any interest in the safe.

"What's in the safe?"

"Don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know?"

"I don't know as I can't open it."

"But it's your safe."

"No, it isn't, it was in the house, in this cupboard, when I bought it."

"Why haven't you got rid of it then?"

"Have you tried to move it? It's heavier than me, I can't move it myself so I use it to dump stuff on."

"Are you sure you haven't opened it, it's a bit difficult to believe you'd sit here with an unopened safe."

"I don't care what you believe. I tried to sort it out when I moved in, but the previous owner and occupiers all denied all knowledge of it. When I reported it to your mob, they weren't interested unless I could open it, and a locksmith wanted five hundred quid to open it, which is a bit excessive seeing as I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS IN THERE."

"So you don't have a key then?"

"Which part of 'I can't open it' didn't you understand?"

"There's no need to take that attitude with us sir."

"Try listening then. If you want to know what's in it, take it away and get it opened."

They looked at the safe, then back at Tony and agreed they would. They tried to move it themselves, but found it too heavy for the pair of them. Eventually they came back with four others and the six of them managed to remove it from the house, but not without one of them having an incident at the foot of the stairs that required a hospital visit with crush injuries.

They invited Tony to the station to view the opening of the safe. The locksmith arrived and struggled with it for nearly an hour before it was opened. The door swung open and half a dozen pairs of eyes looked into the space behind the now opened door.

There, on a shelf in the middle of the safe sat a small envelope and a piece of wood. One of the detectives took them out and put them on the table, and another put their arm into the safe feeling around the whole of the inside trying to find if there was anything else in there, only to stop and withdraw his arm whilst shaking his head.

The piece of wood looked old and weather beaten and the envelope had a single word written on the front of it.

PRONOEIA

“What the hell does that mean?”

“Look it up, you’re supposed to be a detective.”

They glared at Tony, but one of them left the room as if to find out. Another opened the envelope and took out a single piece of paper, and a couple of old photographs. The detective read out the words on the sheet of paper.

This is to verify that the wood held within this safe is a fragment said to be from the true cross of Christ. The pictures enclosed show the fragment in its original display in the Cathedral Church of Turin, and also of the original Latin document giving its providence signed by Landulf of Turin, bishop and restorer of the Cathedral, dated 1036. It was said that this fragment was removed from Turin to the Vatican archives in 1979, but that was a story put out to hide the theft of it the year before. I have however been unable to sell it in the years since, and I am not much longer for this world, so I am leaving it in this safe to be claimed by my relatives in years to come. Signed Vittorio Alberico, 14th May 1983.

Everyone in the room stood staring at the piece of wood on the table, gradually moving their heads to look at the picture from the envelope and back to the piece of wood.

Tony wasn’t interested, he didn’t belief in religion, and the item wasn’t his, so he moved to the door of the room to leave.

“Hey, where do you think you’re going?”

“Home,”

“Wait a minute; we need to deal with the contents of your safe.”

“As I keep telling you, it’s not my safe, it’s not my problem, I’m sure you can sort all of this out. As long as you can find someone that speaks Italian of course.”

Tony slammed the door behind him as he left.

He was sure he had several pieces of wood like that in his shed.

Dilbert



Merry Christmas to you all, and a happy New Year.