

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 3

Introduction

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

On This Day

1646 – Battle of Torrington, Devon: The last major battle of the first English Civil War.

1899 – Iceland's first football club, Knattspyrnufélag Reykjavíkur, is founded.

1923 – Howard Carter unseals the burial chamber of Pharaoh Tutankhamun.

In North Korea it's the Day of the Shining Star (Kim Jong-il's Birthday)

Mapping The London Year

1895 – Oscar Wilde's play "The Important Of Being Earnest" is reviewed by the daily press, including George Bernard Shaw in the Saturday Review.

The play had its premiere at the St James Theatre on 14 February and although the audience response was extremely enthusiastic, the critical response was mixed. Shaw said that he went to the theatre to be moved to laughter and that Wilde's play, although extremely funny, had left him unmoved. Audiences continue to love it, however, and it remains Wilde's most popular and enduring work.

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

2Pac releases his second solo album "Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z..." on Interscope

Loaded with political and socially conscious content, the thoughtful album debuted at #24 on the Billboard 200 and has since been certified double platinum.

The album contained singles with deep introspective lyrics like "Keep Ya Head Up," featuring Dave Hollister, "Papa'z Song," "Holler If Ya Hear Me," and "I Get Around," all of which charted on the Billboard Hot 100, R&B, and Rap charts.

Guests on the set included Ice-T, Ice Cube, Deadly Threat, Live Squad, Treach of Naughty By Nature, Apache, Wycked, and Poppi, as well as Shock G and Money-B of Digital Underground.

365 – Great Stories From History For Every Day Of The Year

1940 Tonight is a remarkable feat of naval derring-do, a British destroyer operating under Admiralty instructions intercepted a German supply ship making her way home along the coast of Norway. With searchlights blazing on her target, HMS Cossack pursued the Altmark into a narrow fjord where the supply ship ran aground. A boarding party killed seven German defenders, then opened the hatches to get at the cargo in the holds. The Altmark's cargo was 300 sailors of the British Merchant Navy, the captured crews of nine merchant vessels sunk the previous autumn by the German raider Graf Spee. By midnight Cossack was out to sea again, heading with her rescued cargo for the Firth of Forth.

It was, of course, a notable achievement by the Royal Navy and one greatly welcomed by a British public looking for purposeful engagement with the enemy during that trancelike opening period of the Second World War that came to be called the Phoney War or the Sitzkrieg. But the Altmark incident had the effect of putting the fat in the fire.

Neutral Norway vehemently protested the British violation of its territorial waters in vain. To Germany the incident demonstrated that Great Britain was willing to violate Norwegian neutrality and that Norway was unable or unwilling to prevent such action. The state of affairs threatened Germany's supply of Swedish iron ore, so vital to the Third Reich's heavy industries and much of it shipped through Norwegian waters. On 21 February Hitler ordered Exercise Weser – his planned invasion of Norway and Denmark – moved to the highest operational priority, ahead of Case Yellow, the invasion of France and the Low Countries.

In their reporting of the Altmark incident some British newspapers included this description from a Cossack sailor's account of the boarding, "...Meanwhile our boys were opening up the hatches. One of them shouted: "Are there any English down there?" There was a yell of "yes!" You should have heard the cheer our men shouted back: "Well, the Navy's here."” Some days later in London the First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill appropriate this phrase to good effect addressing a large audience at the Guildhall: "To Nelson's immortal signal of 135 years ago, "England expects that every man will do his duty," there may now be added last week's not less proud reply, "The Navy's here."

During the night of 6 April 1940, German naval forces and troop ships left their north German ports and sailed for Norway. The Phoney War was almost over. The real war was about to begin.

Births

1935 – Sonny Bono
1958 – Ice-T (Born Tracy Morrow)
1959 – John McEnroe
1973 – Cathy Freeman
1979 – Valentino Rossi
1982 – Lupe Fiasco

Deaths

2016 – Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1982 - The Jam - Town Called Malice / Precious
Number 1 album in 1988 - Terence Trent D'arby - Introducing The Hardline According To Terence Trent D'arby
Number 1 compilation album in 1991 – The Lost Boys (OST)

Random Results

1991 – Portsmouth 1 – Tottenham Hotspur 2
2014 – Leicester Tigers 11 – Gloucester 8
2017 – Oklahoma City Thunder 116 – New York Knicks 105

Drabble

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

No E's Allowed

A small conundrum for you to think on.
Can you find what is unusual within this story?
Long and short, high and low, as this short story grows, so will your hints.
What is missing, you cry, how did you do it, and why?
A common thing all day, all night, is now hiding out of sight.
A book is full of this common digit. But you can't find it!
A paragraph with zilch is hard to find, it's always shouting in your mind.
And so this story is at a finish, don't look too hard for what will diminish.

Joke

Just after getting married, a sailor is informed his next naval posting will be a remote Pacific island. A few weeks after arriving, he begins to miss his new wife and so writes her a letter. "My love", he writes, "we will be apart for a year, far too long. Already I am missing you and there is not much to do here. Worse, we're constantly surrounded by young, nubile native girls. Do you think if I had a hobby of some kind I would not be tempted?"

A few weeks later, a parcel arrives from his wife, containing a harmonica and a note saying, "Why don't you learn to play this?"

Several months later, his tour of duty ends, and he rushes back to his wife. "Darling," he cries, "I can't wait to get you into bed so that we can make passionate love!"

The wife frowns at him, "First things first", she replies, "I want to see you play that harmonica."

Random Items

Fact

Butterflies taste with their feet. (Can you imagine? How carefully would people walk around if we were the same?)

Firsts

1883 – Lewis E Waterman introduced the first fountain pen.

1938 – Laszlo Biro patents the first ballpoint pen

1978 – Gillette invents the first erasable ballpoint pen, known as the eraser mate.

Thought

If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

Rappers of the Nineties Trumps

Snoop Dogg
(B. 1971)

Snoop got his nickname from his mother because he looked like the character in the *Peanuts* cartoon. His first album, *Doggystyle*, climbed its way to the number one spot on Billboard's hip hop 200, with a little help from producer Dr. Dre.

LYRICAL ABILITY	80	BLING	85
CRIMINALITY	94	IMPACT	76
WILDCARD: Became "Snoop Lion"			07

Quote

Quiz Bozos

Caligula, the Roman emperor was apparently assassinated in 1980
1996, 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013 were all considered to have been years in the noughties!
Some bright spark thought there had been 9163 episodes of Family Guy.

Going Underground

Langdon Park

The station carries the name of the nearby park that opened in 1963. The park and a local school are named after the Reverend C.G. Langdon, vicar of All Angels, Bromley-By-Bow between 1913 and 1925, for his work among the poor.

The station opened on 9 December 2007.

Top Ten

Ten pairs of countries with the longest borders with each other.

No	Countries	Length of Border
1	United States and Canada	8,893 km
2	Russia and Kazakhstan	7,644 km
3	Argentina and Chile	6,691 km
4	China and Mongolia	4,630 km
5	China and Russia	4,179 km
6	India and Bangladesh	4,142 km
7	Russia and Mongolia	3,452 km
8	Brazil and Bolivia	3,403 km
9	India and Pakistan	3,190 km
10	United States and Mexico	3,155 km

Cathedral Fact Files

Cathedral	Canterbury Cathedral		
Dedicated To	Christ Church		
Type	Medieval	Architecture	Gothic
Religion	COE	Tower / Spire	3 Towers
Site Founded	597	Height (External)	235ft
Church Founded	1070	Height (Internal)	80ft
Bishopric Founded	597	Length	547ft
Current Bishopric Founded	597	Width	171ft

Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

Green Day – Dookie

Green Day's "Dookie", was released in February 1994, though it didn't see the light of the charts until November in the UK, and when it did, the new wave punk scene really arrived. Their first release on a major label (Reprise – Home of Frank Sinatra!) caught the imagination of a disaffected youth, and over 20 years on Green Day are still one of the top bands in the world. Though the album never cracked the top 10 (its highest position was 13), it did have longevity all over it, as it stayed on the

chart for over a year, and produced 4 top 30 singles. It was written by front man Billie Joe Armstrong, and was produced by Rob Carvallo, it went on to sell over 10 million copies and won the 1995 Grammy for best "Alternative" album.

Track 1 – "*Burnout*" Starts the album as it means to go on, fast and edgy.

Track 2 – "*Having a Blast*", quite literally, with the promise of "No one here is getting out alive".

Track 3 – "*Chump*", when friendship is over, you see all the faults you never saw before.

Track 4 – "*Longview*", the boredom of a teenage life with nothing to do, the original first single release, it didn't chart until it re-released after the success of "*Basket Case*" and "*Welcome To Paradise*", hitting number 30.

Track 5 – "*Welcome to Paradise*", the single that cracked the top 20 and brought the group the UK attention they deserved.

Track 6 – "*Pulling Teeth*", Sang from the viewpoint of being on the receiving end of sado/masochism.

Track 7 – "*Basket Case*", Everyone knows this stoner classic, and their biggest hit to date, it cracked the top ten on a re-release after the success of "*Welcome to Paradise*", and the track that finally got the album into the UK album charts.

Track 8 – "*She*", all about being there for a schizophrenic girlfriend!

Track 9 – "*Sassafras Roots*", more smoking, and generally wasting your time.

Track 10 – "*When I Come Around*", the last single culled from the album, and the mellow point of the album.

Track 11 – "*Coming Clean*", and growing up.

Track 12 – "*Emetius Sleepus*", overdid it slightly at the party and "Think I'm sick and I wanna go home".

Track 13 – "*In The End*", when it all goes wrong, escape from the other half.

Track 14 – "*F.O.D.*", lulls you into a false sense of security as it ambles along gently for a minute and a half, before launching into a frenetic finale.

Hidden Track – "*All By Myself*", well it would have done, however hidden in the depths of track 14, after a minute and 20 seconds of silence is this slow jarring effort about, surprisingly enough, being by themselves.

Story Time

A Walk On The Pier

I always say that the first thing that I ever notice about a female is their hair, not their legs, nor their breasts, not even their bottoms, always their hair, I normally see the hair and make that split second automatic decision about whether to bother to take a second look, a second look to see the rest of them. Black hair will guarantee grabbing my attention, with the chance of looking twice decreasing the lighter the shade goes, blondes being almost invisible to me. I don't know just how many wonderful women I have missed out on meeting because of that reflex over the years, it's such an arbitrary thing to make a decision on, but no one ever said I was normal, far from it. The really bizarre thing about it is that apart from my first fiancée over thirty years ago, every major relationship I have had since has been with a blonde, as it would seem my heart has a better selection criterion than my eyes and brain.

Saying all that though, I can say without any fear of contradiction, that the first thing I noticed about the woman was the bright red, patent leather, high heeled shoes as they swung out from the passenger side of the car she had arrived in. I wish that she had exited the car head first, however ungainly that exit may have been, as her flame coloured hair would have meant that I would have kept walking, passing her by without a second glance, and in so doing, saving myself. Instead I found myself detouring to the car, and I ground to a halt by the door, offering my hand to her, so that she could help herself out of it.

I couldn't tell you a single proper detail about the car, not even the colour, though I imagine that it should have also been red, all I could say is that it was made of metal, probably had wheels on it, and most importantly it had a door that opened to let this woman out. It wasn't even my usual apathy towards cars that was in effect here, it was those shoes, and as my gaze made its way up from the ground to meet her eyes as I helped her out of the car, I lost sight of everything else around me in the world at that point in time, I was engulfed in a frenzy of red. The shoes and the hair I have already mentioned, in between was a red dress, sleeveless, with a high neck, that finished barely an inch above her knees. The fingernails of the hand she had given me in acceptance of my offer to help

her out of the car were bright red, hard and long like talons. Her glistening lipstick was the same shade as the fingernails, surrounding the smile that she gave me, and I could have sworn that on first glance her eyes were the same shade of red as everything else, but a blink later they were shining an amazing emerald green shade.

She was as tall as I was when she eventually raised herself to her full standing height, moving out from the car as graceful as a red swan, she nudged the car door closed with a slight movement from her hips, no sooner had the door clicked into place in its frame, then the mystery driver of the car drove off leaving the woman on the pavement in front of me.

"Thank you, young man," the woman drawled with a southern states accent. A southern American accent certainly wasn't what I was expecting from her appearance, and definitely not here on the promenade in Brighton. The way the words were delivered was almost hypnotic, and being called a young man was not something I was used to hearing, especially from a beautiful woman who looked at least a decade younger than I was. I just about managed to force out some words, I think that I said, "Think nothing of it," or at least I hoped I did, but in all honesty, it could have been almost any random string of words plucked out of the air.

"Oh, but I do," came more honey covered words from the vision in front of me, "there is far too little chivalry left in the world today, it is nice to be treated like a lady, gentlemen are few and far between nowadays."

I managed to resist snorting out a laugh, when I had seen the shoes, then the legs gliding through the air to the pavement, it certainly wasn't chivalrous thoughts that were going through my mind, I really wasn't thinking about being a gentleman, and as more of her emerged from the car, the less gentlemanly my thoughts got. The woman gave me a knowing smile, as if she knew what was going on inside my head as I replied,

"I'm hardly the chivalrous type, but I do help people from time to time when the wind is in the right direction."

Even as the words came out of my mouth I thought that they sounded trite, but if they did then she didn't seem to notice, or was too polite to say. What I did notice though was that I was still holding her hand. I went to remove my hand from hers only to find her hold on to it, reluctant to let it go.

"Would you do me the honour of escorting me along the pier young man? It's nice to have a young man to escort me, it gives me a sense of stability you see, it has been known for my heels to become stuck between boards when walking on the pier."

I should have just said no outright, then disentangled my hand from hers, and walked away to stand elsewhere near the pier, but it appeared that my mind had other ideas,

"I would love to, although I really can't spend too much time on the pier, I am due to meet my wife here soon."

"Lucky her, perhaps I can come back this way with you, I really would love to meet her."

Although that comment should have waved big red flags above my head, it didn't somehow, and I turned towards the pier, with the woman's arm joined with my own, and the pair of us started walking.

As we walked in silence along the pier arm in arm, the people we passed that were going in the opposite direction I could see two distinct sets of emotions in those people, there were those of the passers-by who looked at the woman, then after looking at me, their eyebrows raised a little bit, and a somewhat envious look crept into their features. The other passers-by had the same methodology of looking at the pair of us individually before putting the two of us together in the same look. The look on this second group of passers-by was quite different, it was a sweeter, more understanding look, and as we passed those people by I am sure that I heard at least one of them say "bless" as they passed.

The two of us got to the end of the pier, I looked around as I did so, to find to my surprise that there was no one else in sight, a near impossible feat on Brighton pier at any time it was open, and it appeared as if the two of us were completely alone. The woman must have noticed as well, although I hadn't seen her look round once, as she leant further in towards me and whispered in my ear,

"Kiss me."

Intoxicated as I was by her presence here, and with her proximity to me, I felt that I was unable to resist the temptation the invite had stirred, and I took her fully within my arms and kissed her deeply.

Time stood still for me, I have no idea how long our lips were locked together in the embrace for, but I had never felt anything like that sensation in my life before, such a feeling of ecstasy engulfed my very being, I could feel every good moment of my life running through my mind, giving me a kind of high that any drug addict could only dream about. That feeling came to a crashing and sudden end when our lips finally parted. I felt like a used up old husk of a man, as the woman smiled at me with a twinkle in her eye, before she spoke with her melodious tones once again,

"My, my, my, young man, there was just so much good in you, I really could feel it flowing from you, tell me something, did you enjoy that as much as I did?"

A feeble sounding "yes" just about managed to make it up my throat, past my teeth and between my lips to tumble out of my mouth.

"That's what I like to hear young man, it's always good to be appreciated, shall we make our way back up the pier so that you can make that appointment with your wife?"

Another feeble "yes" emerged, oh my god, my wife, what the hell did I think I was doing? I would look so guilty when I saw her, especially with this gorgeous woman upon my arm, what the hell was I going to do? With my mind frantically working out what I could possibly say, we started making our way back up the pier, and as we did I could detect a shift in the reaction from people we passed, gone were the raised eyebrows and envious looks, just the sweet, understanding look remained in everyone. I wondered what had changed in our appearance and demeanour for this change in attitude towards us from some people, or was it that we were just passing people who were like that anyway?

As we came off the pier onto the promenade, I saw my wife, patiently waiting to meet me, I felt myself shudder a little as we approached her, still trying to sort out in my head what needed to come out of my mouth. I needn't have bothered, as the woman spoke first.

"You must be Graham's wife, you do have such a wonderful young man here, he was ever such a dear, helping me along the pier so that I wouldn't fall and hurt myself."

I was so sure that I was looking guilty that the fact the woman knew my name almost slipped by me, had I told her my name? I didn't remember doing so, in fact I couldn't remember saying much to her at all. I was now sure that I was developing a puzzled look on my face, which was probably helped along the way by my wife's response.

"It must have been your lucky day dear, he's normally such a miserable old grouch with strangers, he tries to avoid talking to anyone, to be honest I'm surprised he managed to drag himself away from the doughnut stall, and those doughnuts he thinks he's secretly eating without me around to tell him off."

"He really isn't known for helping little old ladies out at all!"

I stared at my wife as if she had lost her mind, what did she mean 'little old lady'? Couldn't she see the tall red-headed goddess next to me? The woman herself let out a throaty little chuckle before saying,

“Could you support me one last time please Graham, as I take my shoes off, they are more for show than they are functional, my car will be here in a minute to pick me up, and my feet are beginning to ache.”

As the woman leant on me to take her shoes off she whispered to me as her eyes changed to red as I thought they had before,

“My father, Lucifer himself, always told me taking souls is so much easier when you look like a million dollars.”

I looked down to see a frail white haired old woman, suddenly seeing what it would seem everyone else had seen since the kiss, and that some had seen before it. She was a very old woman. A very old woman who had relieved me of my soul.

Dilbert



Epilogue

If you want to catch up on old issues, Drabbles I've had published, or the random scribbling from a bored mind then they are all available at <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/>