

# Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 56

## 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> February

1455 – Traditionally the date of publication of the Gutenberg Bible, the first Western book printed with movable type.

1903 – Cuba leases Guantánamo Bay to the United States "in perpetuity".

1954 – The first mass inoculation of children against polio with the Salk vaccine begins in Pittsburgh.

Mashramani-Republic Day (Guyana)

Meteri (Latvia)

National Day (Brunei)

## A Grim Almanac of Sussex

**1819** – Either on Tuesday night or early on the following morning three prisoners escaped from Lewes House of Correction. There were sometimes queries about the frequency of escapes and questions asked about the collusion of keepers at such times.

## Births

1633 – Samuel Pepys

1955 – Howard Jones

1983 – Emily Blunt

## Deaths

1792 – Joshua Reynolds

1821 – John Keats

1965 – Stan Laurel

1976 – L. S. Lowry

2000 – Stanley Matthews

## Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1965 - The Kinks - Tired Of Waiting For You

Number 1 album in 1985 - The Smiths - Meat Is Murder

Number 1 compilation album in 2005 - Various - Love Songs - The Ultimate Love Collection

## #vss365

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

You don't act like you're of #royal descent. Drinking in the inns with the commoners, canoodling with the daughters of blacksmiths and bakers alike. It's not the right example for a future king to be setting.

That's because I wasn't born to be king. I know I was adopted.

#vss365

## Joke

Two old friends were just about to tee off at the first hole of their local golf course when a chap carrying a golf bag called out to them, "Do you mind if I join you? My partner didn't turn up." "Sure," they said, "You're welcome." So, they started playing and enjoyed the game and the company of the newcomer. Part way around the course, one of the friends asked

the newcomer, "What do you do for a living?" "I'm a hit man," was the reply. "You're joking!" was the response. "No, I'm not," he said, reaching into his golf bag, and pulling out a beautiful Martini sniper's rifle with a large telescopic sight. "Here are my tools." "That's a beautiful telescopic sight," said the other friend, "Can I take a look? I think I might be able to see my house from here." So, he picked up the rifle and looked through the sight in the direction of his house. "Yeah, I can see my house all right. This sight is fantastic. I can see right in the window." "Wow, I can see my wife in the bedroom. Ha Ha, I can see she's naked! What's that? Wait a minute, that's my neighbour in there with her.....He's naked as well! The bitch!" He turned to the hitman, "How much do you charge for a hit?" "I do a flat rate, for you, one thousand dollars every time I pull the trigger." "Can you do two for me now?" "Sure, what do you want?" "First, shoot my wife, she's always been mouthy, so shoot her in the mouth. Then the neighbour, he's a mate of mine, a bit of a lad, so just shoot his dick off to teach him a lesson." The hitman took the rifle and took aim, standing perfectly still for a few minutes. "Are you going to do it or not?" said the friend impatiently. "Just wait a moment, be patient," said the hitman calmly, "I think I can save you a grand here."

## **Drabble**

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

### **That Wasn't Quite What We Asked For**

Will it work I could hear them all say? Ever since I had announced that I had a panacea for all the problems on the planet there had been a buzz about what it would be. What was it that could possibly solve war, hunger, poverty, disease and more all in one go?

As I addressed the world by video link from my secret location, I laid out the plan to put an end to all the problems of the world. The countdown to it being released was now on.

My planet splitting bomb would wipe it all out.

BOOM!

## **Random Items**

### **Facts**

A group of frogs is called an army.

Elephants are the only animals in the world that can't jump.

The longest recorded flight of a chicken is thirteen seconds

### **Thoughts**

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

Why don't you ever see the headline "Psychic Wins Lottery"?

Why in films, When they are alone, do all foreigners prefer to speak English to each other?

### **A Word A Day**

#### **Anthropomorphic**

ADJECTIVE

Anthropomorphic describes non-human objects that are given human characteristics, for example ascribing human traits to animals in children's stories. The word derives from the Latin word anthropomorphus, which itself comes from the Greek anthropos meaning 'human being,' and morphe, or form.

*All the anthropomorphic characters in the Winnie-the-Pooh books all have distinctive human traits. We all know an Eeyore!*

## Flash Fiction

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

### A Deadly Thaw

Mankind has an overwhelming desire to explore; whether over land, across the oceans, under the seas, or into space; they have to know what is there, and to bring it back to whence they came. Sometimes this desire is a bad thing, and they shouldn't go there, and they should just leave everything the hell alone.

If it hadn't been for the global warming, they might never have found the entrance to the cave system. The tundra had been frozen since before mankind was around in their homo-sapiens state. Without a thaw the truck would never have broken through the thin layer of soil that capped that first cavern. This was part of Siberia that hadn't attracted oil or gas exploration over the years.

Now that the caves beneath the surface had been exposed the explorers came. Those who wanted the thrill of new deep caves to add to their already impressive collections; and the scientists, excited to try and make a discovery that would make their name. To have a new species, or even an element named after them, that was their dream. And so, teams of them descended upon the site. There were enough passages in every direction to support them all without treading on each other's toes.

It was the Brazilian team, those probably least suited to the weather on the frozen steppes, who made the fateful discovery. They had painstakingly made their way down, deeper than they'd thought it would be possible to go. Through twists and turns and holes barely big enough to pass through; over twenty-five miles they had made their way down to – if their instrumentation was to be believed – two and a half miles below ground level.

It was there they found the most enormous cavern. One they could have stood the statue of Christ the Redeemer up in, and the size of at least twenty Maracanã stadiums. And covering most of the surface down there was ice. No hint of melted water, just solid, meters thick ice. It was unprecedented. No one had found ice this far beneath the surface, and certainly not in such quantities as this. They explored the cavern. It appeared to be the end of the road for exploration, there were no other passageways leading out from it. There was just this huge space and the single way in they'd entered it from.

And they started work, taking samples of everything they could find, all the rocks and minerals, and of course the ancient ice. Loading up more boxes and bags than they could easily carry, they dragged it all back up the long and winding route to the surface.

Word didn't take long to spread through the makeshift town that had sprung up around the original cavern. The Brazilian's lab was the place to be, every other nation tried to get at least one of their own into that space. To see just what was in that ice. Some long-forgotten species perhaps? They waited for the ice to melt, only to get a surprise.

The ice didn't melt, it didn't slowly thaw and become water. It just evaporated without any trace. As if it was dry ice, but without the smoky effect so loved by musicians and night clubs.

The containers the ice had been brought up to the surface just emptied, leaving not a trace that there had been anything in them. It was such a bitter disappointment to the Brazilians. They felt a level of humiliation in front of the whole scientific community that had gathered to witness their find.

What nobody knew was there had been a discovery. Within the frozen gas was a microbe. One that had been deliberately frozen and trapped in that seeming inaccessible cave. One that had wiped out a long-departed alien race. Aliens who had figured out a way to stop the microbes. Too late to save themselves and other planets from extinction, but enough to prevent it killing off anything else on Earth.

But it was free now, and the collection of scientists had inhaled them. And the microbes explored their new hosts, figuring out their biological structure, and finding they were the perfect food source. And so, the human race's future was sealed, and it was to be a short one.

The first death didn't even cause an eyelid to be batted; neither did the second, it wasn't until they hit double figures that the penny dropped. But by then it was too late, scientists had travelled home, and their deaths had released the microbes into the atmosphere all over the globe, each host having allowed the microbes to multiply.

Back in Siberia the cracks made to the ice lake by the Brazilians in getting their samples of death had tipped the careful balance of the frozen gas prison out of kilter, and the whole lot evaporated, and another sub-terranean level below the ice was exposed, releasing the preserved, millennia old microbes back into the atmosphere, angry and hungry.

Civilisations that had taken ten thousand years to build came to an end in less than ten months. Not one single human survived, and more than twenty percent of all species disappeared. But out in the warmth of the atmosphere and with no viable hosts to attach themselves to the microbes started to die out as well, they had been too successful a killing machine for their own good.

## Leicestershire

### Belgrave Hall

Set in the ancient Briton settlement of Belgrave, which lies to the north of the city, and was swallowed up by the city during its expansion in 1892.

Belgrave Hall was built from 1709 to 1713 by Edmund Craddock, and his wife Anne, and his initials can be seen on various parts of the structure. He was the nephew of Henry Hastings who lived at Belgrave Old Hall

It was unusual for a property of this rather modest size to take so long to build, but the plans for it were changed during its construction, which can be seen in the brick work, and by the design and layout of the house, and would explain the rather unusual positions of the stairs and the kitchen. The stables were built in 1710, and today house the Beaumanor Coach, which Sir William Herrick of Beaumanor Hall had made in 1740. The walled gardens to the rear of the house cover two acres and are laid out in a variety of styles.

The house, fronting onto Church Road, is a three-storey building in an unadorned classical style, from blue and red bricks, laid in Flemish bond, creating a chequered pattern. The road frontage has imposing wrought iron gates which incorporate an 'EC' monogram leading to a recessed doorway, and a brick parapet which hides the three hipped gables of the roof, creating a very rectangular facade.

The Craddocks died in 1715, and the house left the family, and in 1716 it was purchased by John Simons of Thurmaston for £1,350. John Simons had previously inherited the land opposite the hall, which at that time were orchards and paddocks running down to the River Soar. This is now Belgrave Gardens.

After John Simons' son Nicholas had defaulted on a mortgage, he took out on the Hall in 1767, Thomas Southwell of Nottingham purchased the estate to lease to his in-laws, the Vann family, whose head William Vann was the High Sheriff of Leicestershire. It passed to his brother James, who was also the High Sheriff, and then to James' widow. The Vann family built the Belgrave house, which stands opposite the front of the house, and actually moved into this to live.

After her death in 1844 the hall was acquired by John Ellis, the foremost name in the driving of the railways in Leicestershire, he was the principal sponsor of the Leicester and Swannington Railway, and by the time of his death in 1862, was the chairman of the Midland Railway. Ellis moved from his previous residence in Beaumont Leys, leaving that property to his son Robert. It was John Ellis who rearranged the gardens to the rear of the property into the decorative layout that has been kept to this day.

When he died Belgrave Hall was kept by his seven daughters, all of whom were socially active in Leicester, supporting various charities and societies, and being leading lights in the local suffragette movement. They reacquired the meadowlands behind Belgrave house and laid them out in the style of woodland gardens, as they are today.

When the last of the Ellis women died in 1923, Thomas Morley bought the house, and was the last private owner of the house, as in 1936 the Leicester Corporation bought the house for £10,500, and turned it into the museum and public gardens, The museum was furnished to present a moderately well-to-do eighteenth and early-nineteenth century household. The furniture came from a wide variety of sources, some of it, such as the lion-mask chairs and settee in the Drawing Room, from much grander settings than this. A refit in 2005 added more details about the servant's quarters and shows the contrasting lifestyles of an upper-middle-class family and domestic servants in Victorian society.

The grounds hold a couple of interesting monuments. There is a statue, simply known as the statue of religion which was made by Louis Roubiliac from white Carrara marble in 1760 and was presented to the city of Leicester in 1857 by Richard William Penn Earl Howe, and was moved to the gardens when the hall was opened as a museum.

It was originally dedicated to Edward Houldsworth and was in Gopsal Hall, as was the Cenotaph that stands at the end of the gardens. This was made in 1764 by Richard Hayward, and bears the image of Virgil's tomb, the reclining figure of Genius, Virgil's bust, and an inscription paying tribute to Edward Houldsworth in Latin. Former outbuildings have been converted to a small 'craft village' of six workshop units.

Four statues remain from an original collection of 16 that were bought by the Vanns sometime before 1790. These appear to have been a diverse collection of mythological subjects bought in Italy by Colonel Hewitt of Stretton Hall and bought from his estate by the Vanns. They were described by John Throsby in his 'Leicestershire Views' as being "Pomona; Diana; Flora; Ceres; Hercules; Venus; a Satyr; a Turk and his consort; two Emperors and a Pope".

Hannah Vann's will, at her death in 1842, notes the statues as items she hoped could stay in the family. Twelve appear to have been taken to Enderby by her heirs, where they were locally known as the 'Twelve Apostles' but have since been dispersed and mostly not been traced. Of the four that remain, perhaps because they were larger and less easily moved, two are in the formal gardens, and may be Throsby's 'Ceres' and 'Hercules'. The other two stand inside what were once the gates to Belgrave House, now part of Belgrave Gardens, and are both statues of the Greek god Telamon, but may be what Throsby describes as the two Emperors.

In 1999, Belgrave Hall became famous across the world when two ghostly figures were recorded on security cameras outside the Hall. The building remained of interest to ghost hunters long after this sighting was explained. The ISPR (International Society for Paranormal Research) examined the footage and decided the image was environmental in nature rather than paranormal, namely a falling leaf, but went on to 'identify' quite a few cold spots and 'residual forces'. The team from Ghost Hunters International concluded it was most likely people with reflective jackets walking around. Living TV's Most Haunted crew investigated here in 2003 with celebrity guests Vic Reeves and his wife Nancy Sorrell. Belgrave Hall was featured on the 26 June 2012 episode of Fact or Faked: Paranormal Files.

The hall is named in the title of C.A. McIntosh's 2017 book "Beast of Belgrave Hall (Misadventures of Blackwood and Cain Book 1)" which mentions the Ellis family's daughters.

The council recently made the decision to use the house and gardens as a heritage site rather than a museum, and it is now only open at certain times during the summer months, usually the first Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday of the month from April to September. It is also available for private functions, such as weddings and ghost watches.

### **St Peter and St Paul's, Syston**

The earliest parts of the church date from the 13th century. The nave and tower were restored by Frederick Webster Ordish of Queniborough at a cost of £1,600 and reopened in February 1872. The chancel was replaced in 1880 at a cost of £2,300. Duston stone was used for the walls with Clipstone and Bath stone for the pillars and corbels. The floor was laid with Portland and red Mansfield stone, the aisles being laid with Staffordshire quarries. The carving was done by Thomas Earp of London. It re-opened on 27 May 1881. The organ dates from 1887 and is by Taylor of Leicester A specification of the organ can be found on the National Pipe Organ Register.

The church is a Grade I listed building, which was listed on 1st June 1966.

The listing reads:

Parish church, partially C13, with early C14 and Perpendicular work, and externally substantially as restored by Ordish, c1870-80. Pink granite rubble with white limestone dressings. West Tower, nave with clerestory and two aisles, and chancel. Buttressed tower is Perpendicular, four stages with west doorway in roll-moulded and hollow chamfered ogee archway with outer squared hood mould on large and worn corbel heads, with quatrefoils etc., in the spandrels. The door itself is C19 with blank traceried patterns. Large 3-light geometric traceried light above. Two-tiered paired lights to bell chamber. Upper stage is of white ashlar. Quatrefoil frieze below embattled parapet with slender angle pinnacles. South aisle is the work of Ordish, but porch is C14; a shallow coped gable, and buttresses with moulded archway springing from a chamfer with a niche over it. Two tiny windows in its east and west walls with stained glass. The fenestration of the aisle is a heavy geometric style with pointed arched stilted hood moulds, with corbels. Ogee arched doorway to east. Ashlar parapet with masks etc. Tomb recess in south wall; moulded arch with inner ogee, early C14. Clerestory is Perpendicular with embattled parapet and grotesque gargoyles on pilasters between the windows. The Chancel is of c1870-80. It has a 5-light tiered east window with statue in niche above. Quatrefoil frieze to north and pilasters. One pinnacle, and a larger pinnacle marking its eastern end with mutilated fleurons. North aisle details similar to those of south.

Inside, the Church is largely Perpendicular. The west tower arch and its 3-sided responds are embellished with trefoiled panels in the stone. Steep pitch of former nave roof visible above. Nave of 5 bays with two arcades, their hexagonal piers, and broad-chamfered arches again all decorated with traceried panels. Corbel heads to outer hood-mould. Reveals of clerestory windows also panelled. Good Perpendicular nave roof, with moulded and chamfered tie-beams, and sculptural King and Queen posts, human effigies. Painted wood angel wall posts support the tie beams by curved braces, stiffly carved figures carrying emblems and now minus their wings (the two eastern most are restorations) standing on grotesque stone corbel heads. Various carved and painted bosses, foliage, green men etc. North and South aisles both c1879-80, painted rubble. Perpendicular chancel arch, with panelled decoration, but Victorian plain chamfered responds, and low marble screen wall, with fine brass gates, presumably by Ordish. Chancel, north vestry, and south chapel are entirely Victorian. Chancel roof of angular timbering; long struts supporting a high collar. Inlaid marble reredos and aumbrey to north with fine brass hinges. Intricately traceried wood screens to north and south. The Sedilia to the south is a C13 survival.

10-sided font, probably C13, with unornamented shield-shaped panels, slightly mutilated, on solid base with four shafts. Wood Victorian pulpit, very elaborate; leaning angels support the main body of it, which has carved figures in highly wrought traceried niches. Curved sounding board and canopy above, also ornately worked. Stained glass in the south

aisle and in one north aisle window, 1870- 80, unattributed. Central panels depicting biblical scenes etc., in wide margins with floral motifs. Chancel window has saints, prophets etc., in architectural settings.

The church is part of The Fosse Team Parish which comprises the following churches: St Mary's Church, Barkby; St Hilda's Church, East Goscote; Holy Trinity Church, Thrussington; St Botolph's Church, Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake; St Michael and All Angels' Church, Rearsby; St Mary's Church, Queniborough; St Michael and All Angels' Church, Thurmaston.

## **Drayton**

Drayton is a small village and civil parish in the Harborough district of south-east Leicestershire, bordering Northamptonshire and Rutland. It is situated 6.7 miles (11 km) northeast of Market Harborough and 5 miles (7.5 km) southwest of Uppingham on the north side of the Welland valley. Nearby villages are Bringham, Great Easton and Nevill Holt. The church of St James in Drayton is one of the smaller churches in England.

Drayton grew up around an oval green of which the present green is the north-western end. West of the green, Drayton House is a tall red-brick structure, built in 1851–52 for Bryan Ward, a tenant of the Rockingham estate. South of the road to Great Easton the present Manor House Farm, or College Farm, was built c. 1870–80, probably for a relative of Lord Sondes, whose arms it carries. Its cart shed, a dilapidated ironstone structure retaining several stone-mullioned windows, was once a large house carrying the inscription 'H.N. 1651 T.W.' on a stone now built into the wall of the field behind. This was probably the chief messuage of the manor belonging to Henry Nevill and occupied by his tenants, the Watson family.

The older houses in the village are of ironstone and include a thatched cottage south of Drayton House in which part of a cruck blade has been re-used as a principal rafter. A mutilated cruck truss is visible in a derelict stone cottage north of the road to Easton. The former Plough Inn is a stone building, partly thatched, of which the older portions probably date from the 17th century. A stone cottage on the road to Easton has a tablet of 1791, a date at which ironstone was evidently still in general use. The village contains several 19th-century brick cottages, including a row dated 1870. There are two pairs of council houses on the Great Easton road built after the First World War and three pairs on the road to Nevill Holt, built in 1950. The village hall, given by Mr Webb of Drayton House, is a wooden structure which was opened in 1925.

The present civil parishes of Drayton and Great Easton were formerly part of the ancient parish of Bringham which possesses the mother church of St James church in Drayton. In 1086 the manor of Easton, which included the greater part of Bringham parish, belonged to the Abbey of Peterborough. The only portions of Bringham parish not controlled by the abbey were Drayton and the lost medieval village of Prestgrave. Land in these places, which was omitted from the Domesday Survey, came under the lordship of the Bassets of Weldon (Northants). At the time of the 1381 poll tax 133 persons were listed in Easton, 43 in Drayton, 26 in Bringham, an order of size that has since been maintained. In 1563 there were 70 households in Easton and 21 in Bringham and Drayton combined. At the 2011 Census, Drayton had 68 households and a population of 190.

Drayton is one of 62 conservation areas within the Harborough District of Leicestershire. The Conservation Area embraces the area of the village around the village green together with the older part of the village along the road to Great Easton. Blocks of later development on the Great Easton Road and the Nevill Holt Road are excluded as the style of buildings does not contribute to the traditional feel of the village. The Conservation Area includes the traditional and newer buildings around the green and along Hall Lane and the main street towards Great Easton. Visually the most dominant part of the Conservation Area is around the open space of the village green which gives cohesion to the settlement. From the Medbourne Road the entrance to this open area is sudden and is firmly defined by a former farmhouse and its agricultural buildings. These extend partially along one side of the triangular Green. Open roads run on each of the three sides of the green in whose centre is the tiny single-cell Church of St James.

The church of St James stands on the green in Drayton and was listed as being Grade II on 7 December 1966. It is a single room built of stone and roofed with slate, constructed on the site of the former chapel which fell out of religious use in the 18th century and had been converted into a bakehouse by 1794. In 1878, George Lewis Watson of Rockingham Castle bought the building and proceeded to remodel it throughout 1878-79 into a mission church. The door is in the centre of the south side; the east end has one, and the west end two, lancet windows. A bell on a bracket projects from the east end. A large semi-circular arch internally suggests that it was of 12th century origin. It is said to be Leicestershire's smallest consecrated church.

## Life's What You Make It

Excerpts from life writing.

### Burn Baby Burn

My dad had had cancer for several years. He hadn't let it slow him down; despite the fact it couldn't be removed. The last couple of months were different. He went downhill rapidly, so much so that when he took the final turn, he went in less than a day. Not enough time for my brother and me to get there before he died.

The funeral service was going to take place at the crematorium. It wasn't going to be the traditional Irish catholic funeral. The coffin wasn't going to lie in state at the church overnight before the funeral. The body wasn't in a state where it could be left out to be viewed anyway. Even after death the cancer was still eating away at the body.

The funeral procession made its way across from the house in Morecambe, around the Byzantine one-way system on the way into Lancaster, and out to the crematorium. As one of the pall bearers I had the rear left corner, but to probably my amusement only, it did make it difficult for all the other bearers, as I was at least six inches taller than any of them, so there was a distinct slope down to the front right corner.

I was glad I'd worn a suit with shoulder pads in. Coffins are a lot heavier than they look. I thought they'd given up the idea of building lead lined coffins years ago. It wasn't as if it was going to sit in a bloody catacomb for centuries to come, was it?

With no Latin mass, or burning incense, the service whipped by. There had been a couple of Irish diddly diddly songs played during the service, but I was distracted. I was sat, and stood, and knelt, and then sat again, all whilst thinking of what songs I would want played when I died. I was thinking about The Jam's "Going Underground" if I was to be buried. But I couldn't decide between David Bowie's "Ashes To Ashes" or The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown's "Fire" if I was going to be cremated. I was having to bite the inside of my cheeks to stop myself from smiling.

When the coffin was being rolled through the thick burgundy velvet curtains, I suddenly got one of the old school jokes rolling around in my head.

"Little Johnny turns up late for school, and his teacher wants to know why he's late. Johnny tells her that he was delayed this morning by the fact that his grandfather had been caught in a fire. The teacher was concerned and asked Johnny if his grandfather had been badly burnt. To which Johnny had replied, 'yeah, they don't fuck about at the crematorium'."

It was all I could do not to burst out laughing. I'm not sure the rest of the family would have seen the funny side. So, I had to stand there with my hand over my mouth to prevent the laughter from escaping.

Then everyone was outside. Milling around, no one wanting to be the first to make the break to the pub and the wake. You could see them itching to go and start drinking. All of them watching my mum for when she was going to leave. You could probably have heard the collective sigh of relief for miles around when she got back into the funeral car to head off.

The wake was in the upstairs room at The Palantine, one of my dad's favourite pubs. The view out of the window was across the esplanade and out into Morecambe Bay beyond. It was a clear day, and you could see all the way across to Barrow, and up to the mountains of the Lake District beyond.

As the day, and the drinking, went on then the tongues got looser, and the knives were drawn. On the plus side no one had a bad word to say about my dad. It was all funny stories about what he had done that no one else in their right mind would have considered.

But outside of that it was open season on catty remarks about the other members of the family. That we only saw each other at funerals. I had heard mutterings about a sweepstake on who would be next.

It was true, the next time I would see them it would be at another funeral. In some cases, their own. I wouldn't see them in person, just them lying there with their pine overcoats on for their final journey.

## Top Tens

### Random Top Ten

The ten countries with the most Alpine Skiing Olympic medals.

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Austria	37	41	43	121
2	Switzerland	22	22	22	66
3	USA	17	20	10	47
4	France	15	16	17	48
5	Italy	14	9	9	32
6	Germany	12	7	7	26
7	Norway	11	13	12	36
8	Sweden	7	2	9	18
9	Canada	4	1	6	11
10	Croatia	4	6	0	10

### Chart

The top ten in the UK singles chart on this day in 1966

Position	Last Week's Position	Title	Artist	Label	Peak Position	Weeks on Chart
1	4	THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKIN'	NANCY SINATRA	REPRISE	1	4
2	14	NINETEENTH NERVOUS BREAKDOWN	THE ROLLING STONES	DECCA	2	2
3	2	YOU WERE ON MY MIND	CRISPIAN ST. PETERS	DECCA	2	7
4	3	SPANISH FLEA	HERB ALPERT AND THE TIJUANA BRASS	PYE INTERNATIONAL	3	11
5	1	MICHELLE	OVERLANDERS	PYE	1	6
6	7	GROOVY KIND OF LOVE	MINDBENDERS	FONTANA	6	6
7	5	LOVE'S JUST A BROKEN HEART	CILLA BLACK	PARLOPHONE	5	6
8	6	KEEP ON RUNNING	SPENCER DAVIS GROUP	FONTANA	1	12
9	19	TOMORROW	SANDIE SHAW	PYE	9	4
10	9	MIRROR, MIRROR	PINKERTON'S ASSORTED COLOURS	DECCA	9	6



## Poetry Corner

### Panic Bye

Is it greed or are you a sheep following the crowd?  
Despite not knowing the story you're shouting it out loud.  
No thoughts for others, it's all about me me me.  
Stockpiling items with a sense of inordinate glee.  
You don't really need seven hundred toilet rolls.  
Or enough pasta to fill three hundred bowls.  
And why fill twenty-four jerry cans all at once.  
What are you going to do with it? Drink it for lunch?  
A rumour has turned your brain to mush.  
Making you think that you have to rush.  
To the shop or the garage and fill up your car.  
So, you can show the world how selfish you are.  
People like you on this world are a bane.  
Just being twats and stockpiling again.

## Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

### **Carmel – The Drum Is Everything**

Carmel are a British jazz / soul group formed in Manchester, in the early 1980s by singer-songwriter Carmel McCourt with Jim Paris and drummer Gerry Darby (Paris' cousin). Their debut single, "Storm" reached No. 1 in the UK independent chart and Carmel was signed immediately to London Records. Their second album *The Drum is Everything* (produced by Mike Thorne) drew some praise. Parris and Darby conjured the effect of a full ensemble backing to McCourt's vocals, and alternated between soulful ballads, gospel, blues, and jazz. The resulting singles "Bad Day" and "More, More, More" both went Top 25 in the UK Singles Chart.

This was the groups second album, and the first to be released on London Records (Catalogue number SH 8555) in March 1984. It was a difficult record to pigeonhole from a genre point of view, it has been labelled as Soul-Jazz, Modern Electric Blues, Cool Jazz, Jazz Pop and even Punk Jazz. Discogs says this album drew some praise. Parris and Darby conjured the effect of a full ensemble backing to McCourt's vocals, and alternated between soulful ballads, gospel, blues, and jazz. The resulting singles "Bad Day" and "More, More, More" both went Top 25 in the UK Singles Chart. The album reached number 19 in the UK charts and was on the charts for eight weeks.

Their fifth single (and fourth from the album) "More, More, More" was included on *Now That's What I Call Music II* and was one of my favourites from that album. that was an edited down version of the track on the album. I did buy this album a few years later and really enjoyed the mix of jazz, pop, and blues that was on this (and subsequent albums). I hadn't listened to it for years, and it was one of the albums I sold when I downsized my collection a few years ago, making the assumption I'd converted it to mp3. Only to find I hadn't. So, I bought a copy cheap on Amazon and was pleasantly surprised by just how well I knew most of the tracks on the album, and how good it was.

### **Track listing**

#### **Side 1**

- 1 – More, More, More, Arranged By [Horns] – Brian Pendleton, Backing Vocals – Shirley Laidley, Horns – Sounds 18, Written-By – McCourt, Darby, Paris, Saunders. Fourth single released from the album; the B-side was non-album track "Hot Dog". Was the B-side of 1987 single release "It's All In The Game"? Reached number 23 in the UK singles chart and stayed on the chart for 7 weeks.
- 2 – Stormy Weather, Written-By – Arlen, Koehler. Cover of the jazz standard, originally recorded by Ethel Waters in 1933, and previously covered by such luminaries as Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Etta James, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Dinah Washington, Clodagh Rodgers, and Billie Holiday.
- 3 – The Drum Is Everything, Written-By – Lincoln Chase. Third single released from the album (though released in Japan only), the B-side was "Willow Weep For Me". It is a part cover of Shirley Ellis's "The Clapping Song".
- 4 – I Thought I Was Going Mad, Backing Vocals – Shirley Laidley, Written-By – McCourt, Darby, Paris.
- 5 – The Prayer, Drums – Isaac "Kofi" Osapanin, Johnny Folarin, Written-By – McCourt, Darby, Paris.

## Side 2

1 – Rockin' On Suicide, Arranged By [Horns] – Brian Pendleton, Horns – Sounds 18, Written-By – McCourt, Darby, Paris.

2 – Rue St. Denis (Version), Drums – Isaac "Kofi" Osapanin, Johnny Folarin, Toasting – Crazy Joe, Written-By – McCourt, Darby, Paris.

3 – Willow Weep For Me, Written-By – Ann Ronell. Second single released from the album, the B-side was non-album track "That's Cool, That's Neat". was also the B-side for the single release of "The Drum Is Everything". It is a cover of the 1932 song by Ted FioRito & His Orchestra. Reached number 79 in the UK singles chart and stayed in the top 100 for 3 weeks.

4 – Tracks Of My Tears, Written-By – Tarplin, Moore, Robinson. A very stripped back (and almost unrecognisable) cover of the Smokey Robinson & The Miracles classic song. It has been sampled twice.

5 – Bad Day, Backing Vocals – Rush Winters, Engineer – John Etschells, Mixed By – Dennis Weinreich, Organ – Steve Nieve, Written-By – McCourt, Darby, Paris. First single released from the album, the B-side was non-album track "Lament". Sampled in four songs. Reached number 15 in the UK singles chart and stayed on the chart for 10 weeks.

## Technical Details

Recorded At – Rampart Studios, Sarm West Studios, Jam Studios

Mixed At – Sarm West Studios

Mastered At – Sterling Sound and Master Room

Lacquer Cut at – Master Room

Pressed By – PRS Ltd.

Published By – Savage Music Ltd., CBS Songs Ltd., Lawrence Wright Music, ATV Music, EMI Music, Red Flame, Virgin Music Ltd., EMI Music Ltd., Jobete Music

## Credits

Artwork – Serge Clerc

Backing Vocals – Helen Watson (tracks: A1, A4, B10)

Double Bass – Jimmy Paris

Drums – Gerry Darby

Engineer [Assistant] – Butch Yates, Dave Megan

Mastered By – Aaron Chakraverty, Jack Skinner

Organ – Pete Saunders (tracks: A1, B8, B9)

Photography By – Steve Tynan

Producer – Mike Thorne

Recorded By, Mixed By – Harvey Goldberg (tracks: A1 to B9)

Vocals – Carmel

## Story Time

### The Four Tattoos Of The Apocalypse

It's amazing what a good idea some things sound like after a few drinks.

The four of them – Andy, Steve, Will, and Tom – had met up for some drinks that Saturday morning. As they did most weeks. All day breakfast and then pints as they watched whatever the early Saturday afternoon live TV game was. The Station wasn't the most imaginatively named pub in the world, being situated as it was next to Lowtown station. And Lowtown wasn't the most salubrious part of the city, but the drinks were cheap, and the food was edible, and it was a central point for them to meet up now they had moved out of their parents' houses and didn't live on the same street anymore.

The day's game was a stinker, one of those chosen to fulfil the contract to have all the teams on TV so many times a season. It looked as if Burnley and Newcastle could play all day and not score. And so, as interest in the game waned, the four of them went on to discussing any topic that took their fancy.

This was how they stumbled into talking about tattoos. None of them had a tattoo, but all of them had been interested in doing so, though none had actually taken the plunge so far. It was Steve who made the suggestion of why didn't they go and get tattoos that afternoon? There was a lot of umming and aahing about it, but after another couple of drinks, not only had everyone bought into the idea, but also into Tom's suggestion that they all get matching ones. After a quick search on phones, they found there was a tattoo parlour just around the corner from the pub right there in Lowtown. They laughed about the name of it as well, honestly, what kind of name is Zebub's?

If only they had known.

Drinks finished the four of them left the pub, blinking out into the sunlight of the day, only to plunge into the shade as they found the narrow unlit alleyway the parlour was hidden away down.

No one could be seen inside as they peered through the grimy windows, and after one last check amongst themselves they took the plunge and opened the door. The parlour was empty, no one was sat in any of the variety of chairs strewn around the open space. Every wall was covered with images of designs, either on some random person's body part, or just as a drawing on a page. It was dark inside, with little light coming through the windows, and there was only a single spotlight on a big padded reclining chair in the centre of the open space.

And then, as if by magic, a man appeared in the gloom, smiling, and looking as far away from the image the four of them might have expected. Blonde, clean shaven, dressed in chinos, a short-sleeved shirt, with a jumper tied around his neck, and not a sign of a tattoo on his own skin that they could see. He looked as if he'd stepped out of an American nineties sitcom, that perfect preppy cousin of the main character.

There was no introduction, no sign of any check on sobriety and no ID check of age. Just the questions, "who's first and what do you want doing?" When Andy said, "we're looking at getting matching tattoos, we're just not sure what of yet," they didn't notice the tattooist's eyes light up at the matching, or the eagerness that suddenly came into his voice.

"Any idea of the kind of tattoo or subject – size, theme, etcetera?"

The four of them had talked about getting it on the upper part of their left arms, and for it to be about the size of the base of a pint glass, with it probably being some kind of animal, but that was as far as they had gotten. The tattooist was about to make a suggestion when Will saw the picture on the wall.

"How about that lads?" he said pointing to an image of a gargoyle. The others agreed, it would be something unusual, something unique to the four of them, they couldn't imagine there would be loads of people walking around with gargoyles for tattoos.

There was a level of enthusiasm in the tattooist's voice that the four of them failed to notice as he asked,

"Can I make a suggestion?" They nodded and he continued, "How about you all have the same design, but in different colours, a standard blue one perhaps, black for another, red even, and for you sir," he said pointed to Will, "perhaps white would show better for your skin tone?"

They agreed, but only after Steve and Tom had argued over who was going to have black or blue, a discussion only settled with a coin toss.

By the time they had all gotten their tattoos it was darker than ever inside the parlour. Any light from the window had disappeared with the onset of night. The four of them paid, half listened to the self-care instructions and made their way back to The Station. Any alcohol they'd consumed earlier had worn off and there was a feeling they could do with another drink.

As the tattoo parlour closed behind them, the tattooist moved to it and locked it. He turned and said to a shape hidden in the shadows; one that had been there all the time unnoticed,

"It is done."

There was an unearthly cackle from the shape, and it disappeared. The tattooist never made it home that night, he was hit and crushed by an empty bus whose brakes had given up and allowed it to career down Gallowtree Hill. By the time the four guys had woken up on Sunday morning, Zebub's tattoo parlour was no more either. It had become a brightly lit café with sparkling clean windows, yellow walls with paintings of the sea adorning them, and bright fluorescent strip lights flooding the open space above a mish mash of chairs and tables.

The following week when the four of them met up, the first words spoken were, "No effing tattoos this week." All of them were complaining the tattoos were itching like hell, but they got a photo of the four arms next to each other with the different colours and matching designs. It looked to them as if the eyes on the gargoyles were shining on the photo.

Steve, who had won the coin toss to get the black ink, was complaining that it looked more brown than black. Much to the amusement of the other three, "so, basically you've got a sh1te coloured tattoo then mate," Tom said, "looks like I won the coin toss after all."

As the weeks went by mentions of the tattoos disappeared. After the itching had died down, they began to notice a little spread of their tattoos; a line from a wing tip extended, a growing horn, the claws looking as if they were dripping blood. They didn't mention it to each other and thought that they were imagining it. It was nearly another month later when the others noticed little white tendrils of ink appearing below the sleeve of Will's t-shirt.

"Is that your tattoo?" Andy asked.

Will pulled the sleeve of his t-shirt down to try and cover it, appearing embarrassed that any of the others had noticed it. But Andy opened his shirt and showed his arm to the others,

“Is it like this?”

All of them then showed their arms. All four had larger patterns growing out from their original tattoos. They finished their drinks and headed out to go and see the tattooist at Zebub’s.

Only to find Angel’s Café where they thought the tattoo parlour had been. Confusion abounded when, after asking what had happened to the tattoo parlour that had used to be here, they were told the café had been there for seventeen years, and they couldn’t remember any tattoo parlour ever being in the alleys around there. A search on Google confused them even more. There was no listing for a tattoo parlour called Zebub’s. Not in Lowtown, not in their city, or as far as the search results would suggest, anywhere in the world. In fact, there were no results with the word Zebub in at all.

They made their way back to The Station in a state of shock and sat drinking and asking questions none of them could answer.

It was another couple of weeks later they decided to find another tattoo artist to see if they could help out. By now the design coming off of the original gargoyle was spreading more rapidly. None of them could wear t-shirts, and patterns were spreading to their chests and backs. They didn’t meet at The Station that Saturday, instead going to the top-rated parlour in the city – The Art of Ink.

The tattooists there could offer no answers. None of them had ever seen anything like this before. In fact, one of them doubted they were actually tattoos at all. Yes, it looked like ink and the patterns showed signs of being hand drawn, but the colour and consistency didn’t look like any other tattoo he had done or seen.

The next visits they made were to their doctors. Tests were made, but no explanation could be made as to the ever-expanding artwork on their bodies. There was no sign of any poisoning or cancerous cells. Nothing abnormal showed on any test the doctors could make.

And still the designs grew, spreading out across their bodies, to their other arms and down towards their legs. They became more intricate and densely packed together. The original gargoyle mirrored itself on their right arms, and other beasts surrounded arcane patterns on their skin. Tom took photos and put them online asking for help in identifying the patterns, but no sensible suggestions came back. He got an email from a Crowleywasking@hotmail.com address identifying the images as occult summoning runes. Tom almost dismissed this reply as more lunacy from another crank; and would have done if it weren’t for the last paragraph where the sender asked whether Tom was the only one to have the runes? Or were there three others in red, white, and brown? His finger moved from the delete icon to reply and he asked why they would ask that?

It was the following Saturday as they met, more out of habit now than anything else, that Tom showed the other three the response.

“The book of Revelation spoke of the four horsemen of the apocalypse, but in reality, they weren’t war, pestilence, death and famine so mistranslated from ancient bible scripts. They were aligned to the elemental forces that transcended organised religion; the ones found in the stories of every race on the planet. The four horsemen should have been described as Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind and each was assigned its own colour: Earth was brown; fire – red; water – blue; and wind – white. When all four came together they would summon the underworld by opening their gates, but first they had to be summoned themselves.

Aleister Crowley had spent a lifetime trying to find the way to summon them, searching every arcane document in every language, modern or forgotten, to find the way to do it. Since his death, his followers had been doing the same, all without success, and yet it would seem that someone knew how and had set the summons underway on their bodies.”

The sender of the e-mail had also gone on to tell them how funny the name of the tattoo parlour was to them. It was obviously a nod to the mistaken belief that Beelzebub was a devil, whereas he was no such thing, and even the dark creatures in the underworld had never had such a name. It was another mistranslation over the years, giving a name to something that should remain nameless.

The four of them sat at their table in The Station looking at the untouched drinks in front of them, and the now cold and congealing food on their plates. They were having difficulties taking in what was being said. It wasn’t something they would have thought possible, but it wasn’t as if there was any other reasonable explanation available as to what was happening to them.

Asking if there was any way to stop the self-expanding tattoos only brought scorn from the e-mail address.

“There is no way to stop what has been set in motion, and even if there was, why would I, as someone who has longed for this day for most of my life, want to give you the way to stop it.”

They were covered from neck to toe, only their heads and hands had no pattern upon them, and it stayed that way for a few weeks, as the patterns on their bodies became thicker and multi layered. Only for on Saturday morning the ink to rush out onto their heads and hands.

There was no pub that Saturday, instead gloves, hoodies, masks and sunglasses were thrown on as they all congregated at Steve’s flat. Ashamed to be uncovered on the street in their current state they had slink across the city covered up despite the unseasonably warm weather, getting strange looks. But surely not as strange as those they would have gotten if they had been uncovered.

Once inside the flat they uncovered and sat not speaking for ages until Andy put a voice to their thoughts.

“Is this it then? Is this the end phase to what that occultist freak told us? The final runes being drawn. Are we going to bring in the apocalypse because we had a few drinks and decided to get matching tattoos?”

“Yeah, we will be the four idiots of the apocalypse,” will said, “and of course I’d be the black horse of the apocalypse.” Not even his self-depreciating humour could raise a laugh here.

Steve got up to go to the kitchen, “I’m getting a beer, anyone else want one?”

There were unenthusiastic nods and as Steve crossed the room into the open plan kitchen it started. It was Andy who first showed the signs, heating up quickly so his clothes caught alight. The flames were quickly blown towards the kitchen as a gust of wind came from where Will was sat. Steve could see Tom become a shimmering image, a wave of water about to be unleashed, and Steve screamed out “NO” and before the earth could form in himself, he grabbed the carving knife from the block on the granite work surface and drove it between his own ribs into his heart.

The next scream wasn’t his own, but that of the earth demon who was about to step through into this realm and open the gates behind him. His own gateway slammed closed as Steve dropped dead onto his kitchen floor.

Hours later Andy, Tom and Will awoke, sat in chairs in Steve’s living room, not quite sure of what had happened. They looked at each other, noticing there was no sign of the tattoos that had covered them just hours before. All that remained was the original gargoyle on their left arms. They were no longer different colours, all three of them were now black. Proper black, not the sh1tty brown colour that Steve’s had been. They found Steve on the kitchen floor, knife sticking out of his chest, lying in a pool of his own blood.

They realised he must have killed himself to stop the summoning, and in doing so he had saved the rest of them, and if what the occultist had said was true, then he had saved the whole planet. Now all that was left was for them to try and explain how Steve had died.

Nothing is ever easy.

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

<b><u>Las Lajas Sanctuary</u></b>	
City / Country	Ipiiales, Colombia
Height (including depth in this case)	100 meters
Commenced Building	1916
Character	18
Global Fame	66
Top Trumps Rating	59
Details	Las Lajas Sanctuary is built inside the deep canyon of Guaitara River, in the place where an apparition of the Virgin Mary was seen in 1754. It is commonly referred to as “a miracle of God in the abyss” and was dedicated a minor basilica by the Catholic Church in 1954

## Chapter and Verse

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

### The Talisman – Chapter 2

Hodson hadn't even seen the priest at first; he was stood at a market stall in the main square in Nessianville on the Tuesday morning when he heard someone shouting. Not being the nosy kind, he hadn't even turned around to look at the source of the commotion. Despite the lack of interest, he could hear the shouting getting louder; as it got closer to him before suddenly the priest appeared directly in front of Hodson and prostrated himself at Hodson's feet.

The priest was shouting, "I am not worthy, dearest chosen one, show your mercy to me, let me be your disciple, I am yours to do with as you will."

Hodson looked at the priest as if the poor man had lost his senses, being knelt before and proclaimed as the chosen one was a little bit unnerving, and without a doubt the priest had got the wrong man, and Hodson had tried to tell him so, but the priest would hear nothing of the sort, and the more he tried to put the priest off, the more the priest insisted he was the chosen one. A crowd had gathered around the pair of them, with more people joining the throng every second. Hodson had spent the last few years of his life quite happily keeping his head down and being ignored, the undue attention was making him anxious, and he needed to get out of there.

The priest was still prostrating himself, and if he weren't mistaken, he could feel the bare part of his feet in his sandals being licked. He shuddered at the feeling and scanned the crowd for a way out and away from the madman at his feet. As he did, he saw another priest, in the corner of the square, with his cowl up over his head, throwing a shadow over his face so that he could not be seen, but it appeared that this priest was also staring intently in his direction. From another corner of the square, he saw some local militia making their way over, obviously the noise and the gathering of people had attracted their attention, and they were on their way over to investigate.

That was something that he could without, local militia in any town were a law unto themselves, although they were supposed to uphold the laws of the empire, the further you got away from the capital of the empire, the less they became laws, and the more they became guidelines, with local practises blended in with them. Being a border town, Nessianville's militia were notoriously flaky at best, and downright brutal at worst, and so Hodson turned, and jumped over the fruit stall he had been perusing when the priest turned up, dislodging various items much to the obvious annoyance of the stall owner, and he ran down the alley to side of the square and away from the crowd, and the shouting from both the priest and the stall holder.

He had kept running until he was at the town's South-East gates, gates that were a grand idea, but only really used because they had a road running through them. With no walls to the town, people could enter and leave it wherever they wanted, but it was rough terrain around most of the town, so the various roads in and out of the town through the grand gates, were the main routes for the majority of travellers and townsfolk alike. He hadn't made it all the way through the gates when the second priest he had seen in the square suddenly appeared in front of him, something which shouldn't have been possible, Hodson thought he had taken the most direct route, and had run all the way, but this priest had beaten him here, a feat not just of speed, but also foresight.

The cowed priest obviously saw the puzzlement on his face, and set out to allay any fears,

"Don't be alarmed, I'm not going to prostrate myself at your feet like my over eager colleague did in the market, but I am here to give you some advice about that talisman that you wear around your neck. It is the reason for my unfortunate colleague's outbursts, but before I do, I have a request and a question for you about it."

Hodson looked at the priest, still unable to make out any features under the cowl, and thought for a few seconds before replying, trying to get his breath back, and to compose himself before speaking, still wondering how the priest had beaten him here without showing any signs of being as out of breath as he felt himself.

"Feel free to make your requests, but please be aware I may not be able to meet them to yours or my satisfaction." Was the best that Hodson could muster as a response?

The priest didn't move, and a voice came out from the cowl, "I wish to have a closer look at the talisman, and to feel the materials of it, and then the question for you is where did you happen to come across it?"

Hodson considered the requests, he didn't see any harm in letting the priest inspect the talisman, and he might be able to shed some light on being able to remove it if he knew anything about it. The question was a different matter, he wasn't sure that the full truth of the matter needed to be known by a stranger whose face he couldn't see.

"Feel free to look at the talisman, priest, and whilst you do, I shall tell you where I found it."

The priest leant into him and put his fingers under the pendant, turning it different ways, before feeling round the chain it was on.

The man told the priest, “the talisman came into my possession just under two weeks ago, whilst I was in the village of Friedsham, it was a gift, unasked for, but given all the same.”

The priest made a chuckling sound within the cowl. “A very good answer my fine fellow, truthful enough I feel, but definitely not the whole story, something that you should keep in mind to use again if anyone else was to ask you a similar question.”

“If I was you, I would keep that talisman hidden, as it would appear that you cannot remove it, despite your best efforts, I would make sure you wear something that hides it from general view, a scarf or something similar would do the job. You may be fine in smaller villages, but in any town of size, the talisman may draw attention as it did here today.”

“Furthermore, I cannot say with certainty what the talisman is, but there is a chance that it does match something which has been foretold of old. It is not for me to tell you, a stranger, what to do, but I would suggest that you go to the Cathedral in Malimiland City, and search out a priest there called Aristor. Let him examine the talisman, he will know for certain if it is the thing that my colleague lost his mind for earlier, and also what I think it to be. It could be in your benefit and to the benefit of many others if you were to do this. But whatever you consider doing, keep it hidden.”

Without waiting for a response, the priest had then just disappeared back into the shadows in the town. The man stood there in the gateway, somewhat perplexed about what he had heard, and wondering whether any of it could be true, or if people were taking the opportunity to have some fun with him. He was still stood there pondering about what he had been told when he heard the uniform footsteps of a militia unit, and he made his way through the rest of the gateway and out into the open road beyond. He hurried down the road and headed for the cover of the nearby trees, he didn't want anything to do with the local militia, regardless of the talisman, and they were the more immediate worry.

## 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/@onetruekey>. 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>

In addition, the first chapter of "Where The Lights Shine Brightest", and my other completed book, "The Talisman", are available on my Goodreads page <https://www.goodreads.com/story/list/77442053-kev-neylon> and the first chapters of two of the four books I have in progress at the moment are on there now and the others will go on there in time. The follow up to "The Talisman" – "The Magicusians" is at <https://www.goodreads.com/story/show/1253978-the-magicusians> and "The Repsuli Deception" is at <https://www.goodreads.com/story/show/1253979-the-repsuli-deception>

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>

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 colours left (not many at the moment).

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

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