

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 82

Introduction

The first rule of Flanagan's Running Club is everyone should be telling everyone they know about Flanagan's Running Club! After all, sharing is caring. Details of how to sign up is in the epilogue.

There is no need to panic, there is no actual running involved, it is not a running club in that sense. The title is made up from extending the title of my favourite book – Flanagan's Run by Tom McNab.

So, sit back, grab a cup of coffee (or beer, wine, rum, port, Pepsi, or whatever), and enjoy the read.

On This Day – 29th April

1429 – Joan of Arc arrives to relieve the Siege of Orléans.

1770 – James Cook arrives in Australia at Botany Bay, which he names.

1916 – Easter Rising: After six days of fighting, Irish rebel leaders surrender to British forces in Dublin, bringing the Easter Rising to an end.

1967 – After refusing induction into the United States Army the previous day, Muhammad Ali is stripped of his boxing title.

Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare

International Dance Day

Shōwa Day, traditionally the start of the Golden Week holiday period. (Japan)

Births

1899 – Duke Ellington

1931 – Lonnie Donegan

1945 – Tammi Terrell

1958 – Michelle Pfeiffer

1970 – Andre Agassi

1970 – Uma Thurman

Deaths

1980 – Alfred Hitchcock

1993 – Mick Ronson

2014 – Bob Hoskins

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1966 – Dusty Springfield – You Don't Have To Say You Love Me

Number 1 album in 1988 – Iron Maiden – Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son

Number 1 compilation album in 1991 – Various – Now 19

#vss365

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

The #guitar was outside my front door one day. I don't know who put it there, but they were fiends.

I picked it up and strummed on it occasionally. Badly of course, with my lack of musical talent.

It took longer to realise each time I played it someone close to me died.

#vss365

Joke

All eyes turned to stare as a gorgeous redhead walked into the costume party stark naked. The alarmed host rushed to intercept her. "Where's your costume?" he hissed through clenched teeth. "This is it," she calmly explained. "I came as Adam." "Adam?" her host exploded. "You don't even have a dick!" "I just got here, Jeremy," she replied. "Give me a few minutes."

Drabble

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

Olivine

The olivine was there. It was everywhere, and not just on Earth. It had been found on the Moon, on Mars, in comets, and on asteroids, it was on them all, wherever a sample was taken from, it was there. It was ingrained into every surface, and it was able to soak up every molecule of water in the universe and be thirsty for more.

But it didn't touch a drop.

It wasn't the time. The olivine was patient. It had a plan. It wasn't just inanimate mineral. It was alive. And at the right time it would take over.

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.

Enter Darkness

The darkness seeps in. When everything else has been cleansed away, the void of the mind will accept anything. It abhors the emptiness. But the darkness is an unintended consequence to the owner of the mind. It quickly fills the void with its tendrils of inky blackness, chasing out the nothingness of the void. Only to replace it with its own twisted version of nothingness.

The hero had aspirations. She had the most optimistic outlook. It was of a vision of light, a vision of colour, and a vision of joy. It was going to be hard to succeed with the implementation of the vision. She had needed more focus, and the wizard had suggested about doing meditation. About how cleansing her mind of everything would enable her to be able to create that required focus.

But the wizard had tricked her. He had got her to empty her mind, but there was never any intention that that would help her with her vision. The wizard and his kind didn't want the light, the colour, or the joy. He didn't want the chance of it shining upon him. Of others being able to see just what he and his kind were. He only ever wanted the darkness, the black, the night, the fear it induced in all. It is what he fed off. That was his aspiration, and to get it he had tricked her into giving up her own aspirations. He had replaced the good with something else. Evil some may call it, but that wasn't a strong enough term for what it was.

She was supposed to be the hero, as she had been in so many stories before now. She had seen the way the wizards intervened, and interfered, and interrupted the lives of so many, and yet she had still fallen for the trick one of them played.

The sword by her side had found its way into her hand, and within a heartbeat it had cut through the air between her and the wizard, and there followed two thuds. The first of his severed head falling from his neck and bouncing on the floor, to be followed seconds later by the collapse of the rest of the wizard's body.

The smallest flicker of light inside her had hoped that this last act of defiance would save her very being from the enveloping darkness. By cutting off the wizard's head it would make those inky black tendrils die and retreat.

Instead, it sealed off the light forever.

The dark had her now. Never more would she be the hero. The crowds wouldn't chant her name in worshipful reverence. Now when her name would leave someone's lips it would be accompanied by a scream of terror. Not that the scream would save them. To see this newly appointed antihero meant death would quickly follow.

Her name was now death, and she was coming for us all.

Leicestershire

Castle Gardens

Laid out and opened in 1926, they lie alongside part of what is known as the Mile Straight on the River Soar. The River was not always straight through this part of Leicester and was known as a wide, meandering river, until it was straightened and Canalised in 1890, from the 15th century a mill stood on the river on part of the castle gardens.

Immediately prior to development of the modern Castle Gardens part of the site was utilised as allotments or 'Guinea Gardens'.

The Castle Gardens were established by Leicester Corporation and opened to the public in 1926. The initial phase of establishment incorporated the site of the former West Bridge Mills/Corporation Yard, together with reclaimed lands fronting the River Soar/Grand Union Canal.

The construction of the gardens as we know them today, occupying the entire canal frontage between the Newarke Bridge and the West Bridge, and incorporating the Castle motte and Castle Terrace, was made possible by the leasing of land from the Trinity Hospital and Leicestershire County Council. The southernmost part of the gardens, lands formerly belonging to Trinity Hospital (and today owned by Leicester De Montfort University) was leased in 1937.

At the north end of the grounds, near to the exit on to St. Nicholas Circle, was the original site of the statue dedicated to Richard III, commemorating his ties to Leicester, and dedicated by the Richard III society, part of who's aims are to point out that he is not such a cruel character as he is often portrayed to be. The statue has now been moved to a spot outside the Cathedral since his remains were found at Greyfriars in 2013.

At the south end of the grounds, disguised by clever landscaping stands the old Castle motte, which although now being 40ft high would have been a great deal higher, but was flattened off in Victorian times to create a bowling green. Next to this you can see the rear of the Castle Great Hall, and John of Gaunt's cellar.

Climbing to the top of the motte is well worth it, as you get a great view of all the surrounding historic buildings, from the Great hall of the castle, St. Mary de Castro's, Trinity Hospital, the Newarke Houses, and the Magazine, plus a view out over the castle gardens, and the various new developments going up just across the river.

Walking through the gardens it is difficult to believe that you are only 5 minutes away from the bustling city centre of one of England's biggest cities, and this is part of the reason that the gardens were laid out, to offer a quiet spot for the citizens of Leicester.

Features of the Gardens include; a rock garden, mixed borders, a small pond with waterfall, a section of specimen trees and 'formal grass areas' to picnic and relax in. The River Soar and Grand Union Canal with a river boat landing stage are situated to the west of the gardens.

During May, the site hosts may-pole dancing around its iconic may pole.

Shackerstone

Shackerstone is a village and civil parish in the Hinckley and Bosworth district of Leicestershire, England. It is situated on the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal and the River Sence. According to the 2001 census the parish, which also includes the village of Barton in the Beans, had a population of 811, including Odstone and rising to 921 at the 2011 census.

In the Elizabethan era the Hall family were prominent in the village. They occupied the hall next to the church, known as Shakerstone Mannor. They sold this property in 1843, 13 years after Henry Edward and Sarah Theodosia Hall (William Shakespeare Hall's parents) had moved the family to the Swan River Colony.

During the Civil War, Shackerstone was near enough to Ashby de la Zouch to attract the attention of both parties. Parliamentary soldiers from Tamworth and Coventry stole horses, including a mare worth ten pounds from Mr. Hall. The local vicar, the Rev. John Hodges, was ejected from the living in 1646 and brought before the parliamentary sequestration committee for deserting his parish to join the royalist garrison at Ashby for four months. The commissioners charged him with frequenting the village alehouse on Sundays, and of being "a companion with fidlers and singers".

In the early eighteenth century, John Nichols records a fine church, a water mill and an absentee parson, Dr Adamthwaite, a prolific and energetic letter-writer, who was vicar from 1779 to 1811. This was a poor parish. By 1789 time the parson complained that he could not afford to live there, residing instead in Hampton in Arden, in Warwickshire some 24 miles away, where he had a curacy. He claimed that the parsonage had been "miserably beggared" by the previous incumbent who died insolvent in a gaol. The vicarage was "so entirely let down as that no sign remains of there ever having been one".

By 1 April 1805, the population seems to have slightly increased, a local census counting 51 families in Shackerstone, 53 families in Odstone and six in Barton, providing a total population of around 375.

In 1804 the Ashby Canal was opened and Shackerstone is passed by it on the east. There are public moorings prior to bridge 52, and between bridges 52 and 53 are private moorings. The sharp turn by the station has been known to cause a certain amount of entertainment for the unwary boater.

Shackerstone railway station is on the Battlefield Line Railway, a preserved steam and diesel museum, which runs trains to Bosworth Battlefield. The railway came to Shackerstone in 1873 and continued providing passenger services until 1931, after which only freight ran on the rails of the Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway. The line was finally closed by British Rail in 1970 at which point the railway society arrived and has restored the station and reopened the line to Shenton Station, the terminus for Bosworth Battlefield.

During World War II, the remains of the motte-and-bailey castle in the village had an air raid shelter dug into it. It is believed that this still has a rocking chair within it. Located close to Shackerstone was the stately home of Gopsall Hall home of Charles Jennens, a librettist and friend of George Frideric Handel.

Shackerstone also hosts a large family festival, usually in the first week of September that covers everything from vintage cars to aerobatic stunt planes. This charity event is based around the three organising parties: the village, the canal and the railway. The festival is usually well attended by the public.

Life's What You Make It

Excerpts from life writing.

The Garden

For the first twenty-four years of my life, I lived in the same house, with the same garden. Well, I say the same, but it did change over the years.

The house was an Edwardian terrace, built somewhere between 1900 and 1910, though sources and maps differ on the exact date that number 15 Lancashire was built.

Unlike my grandparents' terrace on the other side of the city there was a garden here, and not just the yard with the shared entry with next door, the shed and outside toilet, and a little strip to put the bin. In addition, we had a reasonable sized plot beyond the archway.

The archway was added by my parents before I could remember, and originally it was just a wood lattice, but by the time I moved out, a fully formed thick ivy arch was there, and the blackbirds would build a nest in it every year.

Parts of the garden never changed, such as the five-foot-high dividing wall to number 13, and the bramble fence / hedge separating us from number 17. The bamboo poles against the wall were there for the runner beans to grow every year, and the raised flower bed and path at the end of the garden in front of the wall dividing us from the next street.

Over time the rest of it did change. Originally the top two thirds were grass, and then there was picket style dividing fence through to a vegetable plot. Peas grew against the fence, but that didn't last too long. My dad got an allotment and moved the peas and most of the vegetables there. Mainly the peas, as I couldn't be trusted not to eat them all fresh from the pods.

When the fence came down, we briefly had a pond. Dug just over a foot deep and filled with water. We then went to the brook and caught ourselves some sticklebacks and minnows, grabbed some plants and put them in the pond. But with no flow they all died and in less than a year the stagnant mess went.

A greenhouse arrived. Keep out I was told. I had no issue with that. It smelt funny.

And then there was a new lawn going to be put down. I had a few weeks of dry dirt over the whole stretch during a summer, and I made it into a rally track to race my Matchbox cars around on. I had favourites which I would push harder to make them go further and win the imaginary races I was running.

The lawn being full length meant more football and cricket could be played. And that led to annoying the hell out of the neighbours to get various balls back.

My parents were happier with us on the lawn as it meant we weren't playing ball games in the yard, and the broken window count came down. Number 17 would have been happier on that count as well. They never really got over the

shock of my shoe flying off when playing football in the yard, going over the wall and smashing their kitchen window and landing in the sink as they were washing up.

Each year the lawn would get slightly smaller. My dad would edge it to straighten up the flower beds either side. If he were still alive today, and my parents were still living there, I'm sure that all there would be left of the lawn would be a little strip down the middle of the garden, with massive flower beds to either side.

After moving out I went yard, yard, yard, flat, yard, yard, yard, flat, maisonette, flat, yard, flat, flat before having a garden again. But nowadays it has no peas for me to eat, and I have no knees to speak of to allow the football or cricket.

Poetry Corner

The Lily Pond

The wooden bridge had seen better days
And to get around the pond there were better ways
The pond used to be larger more like a lake
To walk around it, over two hours it would take

Now it's only ten minutes if you are going slow
And the water is stagnant, there is no flow
The bridge is just for decoration in this day and age
A good spot for artists to sketch images on a page

Lilies cover the surface hiding the water beneath
And occasional reeds stick up like broken teeth
If there are fish below, they are well hidden
But still the signs say angling is forbidden

The sun's rays make this look a pleasant place
Full of peace and quiet, of charm and grace
But when clouds move in, and the light is dimming
It takes on an eery feeling of desolation incoming

The bridge disappears enveloped by the gloom
Footsteps on it sound the knell of impending doom
A splash is heard, the pond briefly swells
In time with the chimes of the church's midnight bells

When daylight returns it is picturesque again
And the lilies flutter with the impact of falling rain
They hide all signs of the body which fell
And lies beneath them in the watery hell

People stop and take photos of the bridge and pond
And look back years later at them with memories fond
Only to have them ruined with the severe drought
When the police arrive, and everybody finds out

About all the dead who were hidden in plain sight
Dumped from the bridge over the years in the middle of the night
Now shown because the water had all dissipated
And the murderer's hiding place has evaporated

The bridge will never be seen in the same light
Its picture is now one only connected with fright
Large fences now prevent access to one and all
And the bridge rots and crumbles and into the pond falls

Did I Really Blog That?

A Wander Around Kirkby Lonsdale



A day trip to Kirkby Lonsdale was suggested. We always try to go at least one way by the scenic route. I'd seen the sign for the A683 to Kirkby Lonsdale so many times as I've passed going in or out of Morecambe, as the turn is at junction 34 on the M6 that we always use. I'd never driven that way, and despite suggestions by my mum to the contrary I'd never been to Kirkby Lonsdale before. And not many people have driven that route whilst there is a demented raver sat next to them waving hands everywhere.



We found a car park close to the town council building and started a wander around. Past the post office, which had queues out of the door and onwards towards the church of St Mary the Virgin (which I cover in more detail below), through Jackson's Iron Gates.



They date from 1823, and were built by local blacksmith William Jackson, and have an unusual and innovative hinge action. One that has been copied throughout the town.



And after the tour of the church, we headed on to Ruskin's View (although I'm not sure why it wasn't called Turner's view).



The path around the brow is closed for repairs by the town council, even though the plaque would suggest it is the parish council's responsibility.



The view is over the River Lune as it curves around the landscape across to Kirfit Hall, and the scene had been painted by JMW Turner before Ruskin arrived to describe it.



There does seem to be a general lack of care of the view despite the strong words in the parish plaque, as the one to commemorate Westmorland merging with Cumberland to form Cumbria in 1974 is getting quite overgrown.



It is a very nice town with lots of stone buildings from the Victorian and Edwardian eras in its compact centre. There are lots of nice pubs, hotels, and eateries, although I'm not convinced about some of the menu items as they are trying to disappear up their own arse.

cultured butter {v}

Cultured butter? As my better half Helen put it, has the butter been to the opera?



We walked down to the Swinemarket with Abbot's Hall behind it (the former courthouse),



down to the Manor House, which was known as the Elizabethan House, despite the fact that some of the building is older than that, and some is more modern, with none of it being from the Elizabethan period.



This lit alley led to where we did end up having lunch. A couple of items on the menu caught my eye.

SALT & CHILLI KALE (Ve)
Rock sea salt, chilli flakes

Salt and Chili Kale. It had me right up until they printed the word Kale. No need at all.

ANYBODY GOT ANY SALMON?
Smoked salmon, dill cream chees

Then “Anyone Got Any Salmon”? A nice reference to the Shamen’s “Ebenezer Goode,” though I’m not sure how many of their clientele will get the reference though. And I was a tad disappointed that the next item on the menu wasn’t called “Sorted!”



There was this interesting plaque about Salt Pie Lane.



The Snooty Fox in Kirkby Lonsdale certainly looks more salubrious than the one in my hometown of Crawley.



The town is full of very interesting (as opposed to “interesting”) and individual shops, with little sign of corporate chains, with only Fat Face on the Main Street and Booth’s on the edge of town being names I recognised.



The market square has this wonderful building, paid for by one of the vicars of the church in 1905 to serve as a sheltered butter market.



Behind the square is this magnificent building, now a private residence, but it used to be the TSB Bank.



To the side runs Jingling Lane, a wonderful name for a street anywhere, and it leads down to Jingling Barn.



On the other side of the market is the Royal Hotel, an old seventeenth century manor house originally called Jackson Hall.



We carried on, going in most shops, though showing great restraint in purchases, and even eschewing the opportunity to go into the bookshop and jigsaw shops. Although most people would need a second mortgage to buy items from a lot of the individual shops.



It was interesting seeing the effort that had been made for Christmas decorations on a number of doorways, of both businesses and private residences.



After completing the lap of the town and getting back to the car it was time to head back. I chose the motorway route home. There's less to point out that way and I can see without interference.



Story Time

Sam

To most, Sam was a perfectly normal schoolboy. He had friends in his class, and he joined in with all sorts of activities. He seemed to be a normal, happy little child.

But looks can be deceiving. Sam was an extraordinary child. Well, if the truth be told he wasn't really a child in the sense we know and accept. He was a changeling. In his natural state he was a rabbit, but he didn't spend much time as a rabbit, preferring to live and function as a human child.

Sam wasn't sure where he came from. His parents were none the wiser either. They weren't his biological parents. They had found him alone, lying in a meadow at the back of their house when he was a baby. They had taken him home with the plan of taking him to the police to find his actual parents. Only for them to notice a very extraordinary change, as the little baby changed before their eyes and became a rabbit.

They watched the rabbit hop around the house and out into their small garden behind the house. The rabbit wandered around nibbling at various items in the garden, the grass, flowers, tree bark, and the moss between the paving slabs. And then suddenly, to their surprise, and not a little delight, the rabbit turned back into a baby.

Over the next few days and weeks this happened a few times. The baby boy would transform into a rabbit and then once out in the garden it would eat and transform back into a boy.

It probably took them longer than it should have done to realise that something in what the rabbit was eating was transforming it into a boy. But when they did realise that may be the case, they picked an array of plants from the garden and stored them in the fridge ready for the next transformation.

When it came, they tried each of them one by one. Some grass to start and then a little wait. When nothing happened, they moved onto bark. Then moss, crocuses, violets, bluebells, with none of them showing any sign of working. But then came the daffodils. A little nibble on one and the transformation started. The rabbit disappeared and the baby returned. When the next transformation came, daffodil was the first thing they tried to feed the rabbit. And it worked. They knew what it was and went out and collected all the daffodils they could find and stored them away. Only to find by the time winter came they had run out. The baby transformed into a rabbit, and nothing would turn it back. There wasn't a daffodil to be found anywhere.

For most of those first winter months Sam's parents were distraught. Lost without the extraordinary child they had found. Worried that come the new year the rabbit might not transform back. And so, when the first reports of daffodils sprouting reached them, they rushed to pick some, and with trepidation fed some to the rabbit. The boy came back, bigger than before and they were happy and relieved.

From that point on they harvested every daffodil they could find, and after trying out many different concoctions they found that if it were mashed into a paste the rabbit would eat it and be transformed.

As Sam grew older, he found he could tell when a transformation was coming, and he could make it home, or find a safe place to transform if he didn't have some paste with him. And as he grew, they found out the amount needed increased, and so more daffodils were needed with each passing year.

Sam and his parents thought they managed fine. So well that they thought no one noticed.

But there was someone. Another child had taken great interest in Sam. How long Max had been watching no one knew. But Max had noticed the funny little paste Sam would eat, or the way he suddenly ran for home or to hide somewhere. Whether Max had seen a transformation before or not no one knew, but one day Sam felt a transformation coming on. He reached for his rucksack only to find the little tub of paste he was expecting to find missing. And so, he rushed to find a safe place. And as he ran, Max followed.

Sam reached the meadow that his house backed onto. The one his parents had found him in all those years before, and as he did, he relaxed, and the transformation took place. Only Max was there, waiting for him to hop out from the pile of clothes that was his school uniform. And Max carried him off home and locked him in a hutch. From his bag, Max took the little tub of paste he had stolen earlier and placed it in the corner of the hutch.

Max must have been asleep when it happened. Because when he woke there was no hutch, just a collection of splinters from where Sam's transformation had torn the wooden hutch to pieces.

Sam's parents were besides themselves with worry. But they realised there was little they could really do. How ridiculous would it sound? Who would believe them if they said Max had put Sam into a hutch when he had transformed into a rabbit?

And so, they sent Sam to school, and made sure there were plenty of tubs of daffodil paste in his bag. Only for when the next transformation came, his bag and the tubs were snatched away from him by Max. Sam gave chase only to transform in the open, away from all safety, and for Max to put him in a new bigger cage of wire mesh and with an iron frame.

It was two days before Max left any paste, and once again it was only the following morning that Max awoke to find the cage torn asunder and no sign of Sam.

That morning on the way to school, Max was knocked down and seriously injured in a hit and run incident. Sam's parents, although glad to see him alive and a boy, were seriously worried. They felt they would have to move away to protect Sam. When Sam returned from school and told them of Max's accident they felt some relief, as they had some time to make the move happen.

Max meanwhile, recovered slowly, and despite the fact neither of Sam's parents drove, he felt sure it was them who had deliberately run him down, and so he plotted his revenge.

Sam and his family were to be moving at the end of the week. Sam said he was going to miss the meadow behind the house. It was where he had been found and taken in by his parents. And so, when he felt the next transformation coming on, they let him transform for a final time in the meadow.

What none of them knew was Max was there. Watching as he always was now. Waiting for his opportunity. To be able to snatch Sam for a third and final time.

And so it came to be that Sam, in his rabbit form, was in a new cage. One which had taken months to construct. Razor sharp, criss crossing tungsten blades were locked and bolted in place on all five open sides of the cage.

Max wasn't going to miss the next transformation by being asleep. As soon as it was light the next morning he took a chair, placed it in front of the cage, sat in it and proceeded to drop paste through the gaps in the cage. And then he waited.

For most of the day, the rabbit ignored the lumps of paste on the floor of the cage, but as the light of the day dimmed, it started to eat. And Max smiled.

A few second later the transformation started. The screams could be heard for miles around it is said. As Sam expanded back into his human form the tungsten blades pressed into his skin and cut him badly as his body grew.

But the cage, despite its strength didn't hold together. One of the rods snapped and a large chunk of one of the blades flew out and pierced Max right between his eyes. His manic grin captured on his face for all eternity as the tungsten blade penetrated his brain and ended his life.

Sam survived, but was never the same again. The scars all over his body would never leave him. He wouldn't grow back the three fingers or two toes he had lost to the blades. And each time he felt a transformation coming he would curl up, tremble and cry. So much so his parents started to mix daffodils into all his meals. And he never transformed to rabbit form again.

Chapter and Verse

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

Five Go Mad In Manchester – Issue Wheeler

A week that has seen the return of the tip top kind of weekend that chez Didsbury was once renowned for.

Friday started somewhat tentatively with a few hours sat round at home before Squirrel, G Man and Ricky Organ departed to head into town, leaving Hopalong in sole control of the baby. First stop was Font, for some hip hop, before heading on to the Attic, where it appeared that a few scallies had put on a night at the equivalent of the local youth club. It was quickly decided that this wasn't to be the destination for the evening, and so the move was made to go to Subspace for Northern Funk, stopping on the way to pick up (in true cheapskate style) some discarded flyers off the street to enable half price entry.

It didn't take long to hit the dance floor, where once again G Man was up to his normal training techniques, as he singled out his latest victim, a split second intervention from Ricky Organ saw the prey escape as if by teleporter, but G Man was not to be denied this time, and by sheer persistence, and the nightclub equivalent of Chinese water torture, did manage to get off with her by the end of the night, despite the fact she was a lesbian doctor with the highly unlikely name of Nada. After closing time it was off to the casino (Viva Las Vegas) where both Ricky Organ and G Man came away up on the evening, before heading to McDonalds for food.

Saturday morning saw Squirrel off to the record fair, and a hefty dent to his bank account, meanwhile Mummy and Daddy G took G Man out for lunch. Ricky Organ was picked up by the current love of his life and spent the day with her. After an afternoon of lounging watching football, Squirrel, G Man and Hopalong went out in search of somewhere to play pool, and after taking Hopalong on what he claimed was his longest walk of 2003 they arrived at Ye Olde Cock Inn, only to find that their pool table was out of order. After a few quite rapid drinks it was decided that a move to a venue with pool tables might be in order, and so another journey was started, but this time the use of a bus or taxi was required, as they made their way to the Golden Lion, where they did indeed find pool tables, and proceeded to play pool for the remainder of the evening, before leaving the venue and getting food from next door.

Despite the fact that it was only a reasonably short walk home, Hopalong insisted on getting a taxi, and therefore an hour later they eventually got home via the cash point and garage where Hopalong had to get tabs, after abusing and harassing every one he came in contact with trying to get cigarettes, including one bloke in the take away who had a top with loads of what looked like scout badges on, and one of which G Man insisted was a tab smoking badge.

Sunday saw very little motion, apart from some darts, and goggle box watching, with the only real motion of the day being Dylan moving into a new flat, twenty seconds from the Friendship, and sharing with one other bloke and six women, and Ricky Organ springing into action when Chez Didsbury extensive grounds got invaded by four young scallies, and shouting at them, and scaring them so much that one fell over. Whether he would have been the same if it were older scallies is debateable.

Monday was much the same, as was Tuesday, with only Ricky Organ breaking the trend by going out with his beloved again, and when he got back going for a cosy chat, which prevented any of the other residents of Chez Didsbury having an early night, as they didn't want to overhear his cosy chat. Yet again more of the same on Wednesday and Thursday

Squirrel managed to find his lost phone after a few days. It wasn't in the fridge for a change, but in another jacket on silent – Tit!

And an announcement.

To all the females who seem to have lost their minds this week, just two minor things that need pointing out. 1. Justin Timberlake has not rung you, doesn't have your number, and will never ever ring you. 2. Justin Timberlake is not your boyfriend, does not know who you are, and will never be your boyfriend. So get a grip, and stop talking utter shite in pubs, as that is the role of the residents of Chez Didsbury.

And from the letters page.

Several readers wrote with connection to the "Boy who cried fire" story last week. First it must be said that most of the story was factual, with only the last couple of paragraphs made up, and that the man in question G Man, also managed to have an imaginary bomb scare at the Aquatics Centre on Thursday evening. Secondly, it was mentioned that the story seemed a bit morose with the deaths at the end. Squirrel would like to say that fire is an extremely serious subject kiddiewinks and should not be treated lightly. Fire kills, normally by burning, so watching out for fire is important, however making up instances of fire is not good form, and should be frowned upon and ridiculed.

Books

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

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

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

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

Epilogue – Where To Find More Of My Writing

To get people to sign up, point them in the direction of my website's homepage of <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/> scroll down past the menu and then enter their e-mail address and select whether they want Flanagan's Running Club or blog post updates or both and then hit submit.

If you want to catch up on old issues, go to the website at <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/frc.php> where all the issues are available.

For blog posts go to <https://onetruekev.co.uk/Mutterings/> which will have the most current post and the ability to scroll back in time.

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

There are various short story competition entries on my Reedsy prompts page at <https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/author/kev-neylon/>

For all previous works including the old Surerandomality pieces go to <https://onetruekev.co.uk/Mutterings/else/> where pretty much everything I've written before is linked through to.

I've recently been submitting to Paragraph Planet and have had some pieces published there, they will be in the archive somewhere, one piece a month from me since June. <https://www.paragraphplanet.com/index.php>

You can also follow me on Twitter, where I will occasionally put up some micro fiction or micro poems, my Twitter handle is @Onetruekev – <https://twitter.com/onetruekev>

You can also follow all my writing on the Facebook page Onetruekev which is at <https://www.facebook.com/Onetruekev-102649357993650/>

And also, now on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/onetruekev/>

E-mail any ideas or suggestions to kev@onetruekev.co.uk

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