

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – January 2022. Edition 85.



Hello again. I hope you have enjoyed a peaceful Christmas and have recharged your batteries in order to face another year on this planet. Time seems to elapse so quickly and next I will be 58 – it doesn't seem so long ago that I was fanatical about football and looking forward to breaktime at school so that I could have a game in the school playground with my school friends!

If you enjoy reading this publication, you could maybe get involved with us in some way (not homophobic, sexist or racist) by contacting us at: dean@fthm.org.uk Best wishes, Dean.

[MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS](#)

[GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ](#)

[JUNE'S WORLD](#)

[BATH](#)

[LETTERS PAGE](#)

[BIBLE TALK](#)

[GRAHAM'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF SPORT](#)

[JUNE'S WONDERFUL RECIPES](#)

[BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER](#)

[ALBUM REVIEW – EQUALS – BY ED SHEERAN](#)

[MORE FROM KRISHNA FRANCIS](#)

[ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH](#)

MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov

Someone who really likes pork chops and is not particularly ethical will ask you out this month, but their intentions towards you are pure and so you should give their request some serious consideration. Christmas may not have been as enjoyable as you hoped it would be, but be happy

that you are at peace with yourself. Eat more tuna sandwiches and belch.

Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec

This year will be professionally the best one you have ever had as all your hard work will start to come together – you might even get paid for it! A post person will soon deliver a letter that will change your life for the better and make you glad you hung in there when things were tough. Try and be less boring though, as you tend to lack a bit of colour.

Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan

Life has recently been financially very tough, but don't worry, as you will soon have more disposable income and be able to treat yourself and loved ones. An older person will give you some excellent advice so don't let your ego prevent you from following it. Even though you look like a toad, it might be a good time to incorporate frog's legs into your limited diet.

Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb

Now is a good time to show appreciation to all those who worked during the festive period. Start eating more bananas and dance a jig at seven o'clock each morning. Someone from Europe will be good to you this month and you definitely won't want to exit from their life. You must decide if a friend is really in need - or is just taking advantage of your kindness.

Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar

You seem to think that money is the most important thing in life, but do you ever wonder why you have so little love and warmth in it? A beautiful person who is ugly inside will try and seduce you this month and remember that not only is beauty skin deep, but it hides a lot of less desirable characteristics. Why not start to keep homing pigeons? Smoke less.

Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr

Your level of obesity is a worry to those around you so do consider marrying dietary changes with exercise – ask for help as you are no longer alone. Also, now that you have recharged your batteries, move full steam ahead with your plans and capitalise on your positive train of thought. A religious person may astound you with their kindness. Use more cannabis oil?

Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May

Love is not so far away for you, so don't prostitute yourself by going with someone with money but who is not the one for you. It is that time of year when you are tempted to join a gym and spend a lot of money trying to shed the pounds, but why not just start walking more on a regular basis? You may have already broken your New Year resolution but so what?

Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun

A friend will show their true colours this month when they turn up in your hour of need. Someone you used to love will come back into your life but is it just coincidence that your stock has risen? A Christmas present will now come into its own and prove invaluable in the year ahead. Changes are afoot that will soon have you walking with a spring in your step.

Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul

You may be finding it hard to motivate yourself at the moment, but just be patient with yourself and you'll get back into the groove and prove yourself. Life was hard for you last year but sunshine will soon emerge and you will be able to bathe in the warmth of the love that is coming your way. Greedy politicians may enrage you but concentrate on your life.

Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug

This year will be a very good one for you with excellent health and the diminishing of your piles. It is time to become a doer and not a watcher – T.V. will still be there when you are an older person. Give your friends a good laugh by dancing like a fool on Saturday evening. An unattractive friend will prove their weight in gold helping you with a problem you encounter.

Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep

It is the perfect time to perfect your culinary skills and give your partner a break from the kitchen – concentrate first on making gingerbread people. A child you meet will astound you with their precocity. Maybe invest in some sexy underwear as even if no one else ever sees it, you will at least feel good in it. Consider forming your own calypso band and move!

Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct

This month it would be a good idea to start planning for your summer holidays so that you've something to look forward to during these cold winter nights. A conversation with a stranger may shed some light on a longstanding concern you've had. Your mood swings are of concern to your friends and family so it might be a good idea to talk to a doctor about them.

GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ



Questions:

- (1) Which player won the 2021 Women's Ballon d'Or?
- (2) What nationality is Psy, the singer who had notable hits with the songs "Gangnam Style" and "Gentleman"?
- (3) Who was the third President of the United States of America?
- (4) Pawpaws are a type of which food?
- (5) Jack Dorsey resigned as CEO of which social media company in November 2021?
- (6) Which element has the atomic number 1?
- (7) What is the capital of Switzerland?
- (8) Who wrote the book "Charlie and the Chocolate

Factory?

- (9) What name is given to Ayers Rock by Australian Aboriginal people?
- (10) Who painted the "Mona Lisa"?
- (11) What temperature does water boil at?
- (12) Which marine mammals sleep holding hands?
- (13) What is the French word for ham?
- (14) Maida Vale is a district of which English city?
- (15) Rachin Ravindra plays international cricket for which country?
- (16) What name is given to people who collect watches or clocks?
- (17) Michael Hutchence was best known as the vocalist with which Australian rock band?
- (18) Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were the key members of which poetry school?
- (19) What is the name of Saturn's largest moon?
- (20) Which country invented ice cream?

Answers

(1) Alexia Putellas (2) South Korean (3) Thomas Jefferson (4) Fruit (5) Twitter (6) Hydrogen (7) Bern (8) Roald Dahl (9) Uluru (10) Leonardo da Vinci (11) 100° Centigrade/212° Fahrenheit (12) Sea Otters (13) Jambon (14) London (15) New Zealand (16) Horologist (17) INXS (18) the Lake Poets (19) Titan (20) China

JUNE'S WORLD



Hello again. I hope you are all well and in good health.

I've been for my blood test to see if everything is alright, and now I have to wait for a few days for the results. The weather today is beautiful, the sun is shining and the sky is blue with lovely

white clouds. As I am writing this article, the sun is shining through the window and making the room lovely and warm without having to have the fire on. I'm thinking that when I have finished this article, it would be nice to go out and get some fresh air and maybe go for a walk – we never let the weather bother us, because if you're well-wrapped up, what harm can the cold weather do? When we're back from our walk, we'll probably go to a café and have a look around Garforth.

As I write, the Covid numbers are still increasing which is worrying and maybe down to a large number of people no longer wearing masks in public places such as cafes and shops – they're acting as if everything is back to normal which it clearly is not. Will it ever be back to what we used to call normal?

We could not go to Selby on Monday as our car has been getting repaired, hopefully we will be able to go there next Monday all being well. If we go to Garforth today, we will be getting a bus which is obviously no big deal as many people do without owning a car. The problem is that you get used to having a car and so you get out of waiting at bus stops in the cold weather.

We're due to go to Halifax next week so that is something I look forward to. We meet our son once a month although we keep in touch by phone on a daily basis. But it's nice to meet up for a meal. As I've mentioned in previous articles, I love going to Halifax on the train and having a look around the shops. Well, I haven't much more to say so I'll say goodbye for now. June.

BATH



The lovely city of Bath is to be found in the county of Somerset, England in the Avon Valley. It is 97 miles west of London and 11 miles southeast of Bristol and is named after the Roman-built baths. Bath attracts up to 1,000,000 staying visitors each year and 3,800,000 day-visitors and offers many attractions like the Abbey, the

Royal Crescent, spas and Parade Gardens and can be viewed from bus and canal boat tours. The city is relatively small in size as it only covers 11 square miles.

Bath has a fascinating history which was heavily influenced by the Romans who, amongst other things, in 60 AD, built baths and a temple in the valley of the River Avon. However, human activity in the hills at Bathampton Down has been detected earlier than this, which date back to the Mesolithic age. It is also thought that the site of the Roman baths' main spring may have been a shrine for the Britons and was dedicated to the Goddess Sulis which explains the town's earlier name of Aquae Sulis ("the water of Sulis"). The Romans were also clever enough to construct a bathing complex over 300 years in the city.

With the demise of the Romans in the first decade of the 5th century, much fell into disrepair like the baths which were eventually lost due to rising water and silting. Interestingly, 30,000 silver Roman coins from the 3rd century were discovered in 2012, 450 ft from the Roman baths, during an archaeological dig.

In 500 AD, Bath is thought to have been the site of the Battle of Badon when King Arthur is believed to have defeated the Anglo-Saxons, and then in 577 AD, the town was captured by the West Saxons. Significantly, a monastery was founded by Osric, King of the Hwicce in 675 AD, and then King Offa of Mercia took control of it in 781 AD and rebuilt the church dedicating it to St Peter.

Bath looked very different from the 9th century onwards, as there was a loss of the Roman street pattern and the town had become a royal possession with King Alfred reorganising the layout. Edward the Elder helped organise the town's economy by minting coins in Bath and then in 973 AD, Edgar of England was crowned king of England in Bath Abbey and set a precedent for all future coronations – it is worth noting that the fabulous Bath Abbey which was originally founded in the 7th century was rebuilt in the 12th and 16th centuries and is today a major attraction in the city.

1088 AD, saw the sacking of Bath during the Rebellion and following this John Tours was granted control of the town, abbey and mint and eventually became Bishop of Bath. Also new baths were built around the three springs in the town and later on 'the hospital of baths' was built for their health-giving properties and also to provide poor people with shelter. It is worth stating that Bath began to prosper around this time with wealthy merchants building the first guildhall in the 13th century and, by 1590 AD, after Elizabeth I granted it a Royal Charter, it became a city and attracted many members of the aristocracy.

But, during the English Civil War, Bath was easily taken by parliamentary forces and became part of the New Model Army under William Waller until it was retaken by royalists in July 1643. Once the status quo was restored, several areas of the city were developed (during the Stuart period) and more building work was undertaken to satisfy visitor demand. The layout of the streets was designed by John Wood the Elder and his son and they transformed Bath using Bath stone.

In the early 18th century, the first purpose-built theatre was constructed and later rebuilt as the Theatre Royal, and of course, Bath became a very fashionable spa town attracting many notable and wealthy visitors. According to the census of 1801, Bath had become one of the largest cities in Britain with over 40,020 people living there. In modern times, an interesting historical fact is that Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia spent 4 years in exile in Bath from 1936 – 1940.

Obviously, Bath didn't escape the ravages of the Second World War, and during the Baedeker Blitz, 400 people were killed and more than 19,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged. This was followed by a Post-War clearance and redevelopment of the city in a style that was very unlike the existing Georgian one – much of it was council housing. However, in 1987,

the city was selected by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site because of its international cultural significance.

The city has witnessed major redevelopment since 2000, which has included: the Southgate Shopping Centre and the Thermae Bath Spa – in 2021, Bath became part of a second UNESCO World Heritage Site which consists of a group of spa towns across Europe that are known as the “Great Spas of Europe”.

It is true to say that the economic sectors in Bath have changed like in many other British cities. In the past, it was involved in things like furniture manufacture, printing, quarries and Plasticine production. It is now involved in software development, publishing and other service-orientated industries. Major employers are the NHS, the two universities, the Bath and North East Somerset Council and the Ministry of Defence. Happily, it is experiencing growing employment in information and communication technologies and the creative and cultural industries.

But one cannot understate the role of tourism in Bath’s economy today, and, in fact, there is much to see like the Roman Baths, the Royal Crescent, the Thermae Bath Spa and, of course, the lovely Georgian architecture and the Roman archaeological sites in the central area of the city. Of course, Bath Abbey is a must-see for any visitor. As mentioned, much of what Bath has to offer can be experienced from open top bus tours, tours on foot and by river. There are over 80 hotels and bed and breakfasts available and also many excellent restaurants, pubs and bars to enjoy.

On a cultural level, Bath has much to offer like the many annual festivals it holds and places to visit like the Victoria Art Gallery, the Jane Austen Centre, the Fashion Museum and, of course, the Roman Baths. There are many beautiful parks in the city including the Royal Victoria Park, Parade Gardens and Alice Park.

If you like sport, you will like what Bath has to offer including rugby union, football, cricket, swimming, athletics, netball, hockey etc. Or if you prefer to shop, why not visit one of the modern shopping centres or maybe one of the many artisan shops at Walcott Street. You could also sample local food like the Sally Lunn Buns which are a delicious type of teacake.

Also, if you are thinking of doing a degree in the future why not consider going to the University of Bath or Bath Spa University, or if you want to progress in further education, you could attend Bath College or Norland College?

Because of the large number of overseas visitors to Bath, it is not surprising that it benefits mutually by being twinned with Aix-en-Provence (France), Alkmaar (Netherlands), Braunschweig (Germany) and Kaposvar (Hungary).

Bath is a relatively small city but is linked by the A4 road to Bristol and to many other rail stations in the South of England, so it is perfectly accessible by rail, road and is connected to Bristol and the sea by the River Avon. If you fancy a new adventure, then do pay a visit to Bath!

* With a lot of help from Wikipedia - More from [Dean’s Places here](#)

LETTERS PAGE



Dear Editor

I read in a past issue of your magazine a letter in which someone suggested reforms to the road regulations in Britain. I too think that people should be re-tested to improve road safety as too many very young and very old drivers are arguably not fit to be on the road. May I therefore, suggest that all drivers are

re-tested at least every ten years.

Sandra Brown, Lincoln

Dear Editor

Even though the British government has allegedly been hypocritical concerning lockdowns and parties at 10 Downing Street, I do think we must all continue to follow the rules in order to cope with this terrible pandemic and to try and protect everyone's well-being.

Alison Pickering, Swansea

Dear Editor

Does any other decent and caring person get frustrated by the vast amount of charity appeals that now seem to bombard us all-year round?

I think it is healthy to give a little to less fortunate beings, but in many cases, it seems we are asked to pay for damage and injury caused by other people – who arguably pay nothing e.g., the abuse of animals.

I also think that however, we live in an affluent society and that if the fat cats released some of their ill-gotten money, then genuine charities would be superfluous as there is enough money and resources to go around.

Fred Grainger, Leeds

Dear Editor

I read your interesting interview with the person who is anti-vaccine and who, seems, anti any kind of authority – however well-meaning. I think Covid and its strains are a real danger to everyone and any possible potential protection against them is most welcome. Vaccines are not just put on the market without thorough testing. Some people are so foolish!

Brian Smith, Norwich

Dear Editor

As an old-fashioned working-class person, I must admit that I find being idle very uncomfortable as I seem to have been brain-washed to work until I drop! Does anyone else feel the same way or am I just being silly? I have spent lots of my life working to make other people rich yet I find it hard to do nothing when I am not busy.

Freida White, London

Dear Editor

I have a right-wing friend who says that the economy must come before the environment. I find this very short-sighted as without a healthy planet upon which we rely on for our existence we have nothing. Surely, it is time that 'money people' put the health of planet Earth before their bank balance?

Theresa Albright, Wigan

Dear Editor

Can I just say that whoever had been in power at the time of this pandemic, would have found it very challenging with insurmountable obstacles? We have not faced such difficult times before in our lifetime and must put politics aside to beat this problem before it is too late.

Wilma Green, Leeds

Dear Editor

Like many people I never know whether to give to a person who is begging as I don't know if they are genuine or not – or whether the money is for drugs/alcohol. I have offered food to some beggars and they said they only wanted money. I have also talked to a homeless charity and they told me that the beggars in their town all had accommodation and benefits and, therefore, that I should not give them anything.

However, I am sure that there are people out there in genuine need but how do you know who they are?

Mark Kelly, Bradford

Dear Editor

I am of the opinion that Britain really needs a new mainstream political party to breathe some fresh air into our world of stagnant politics.

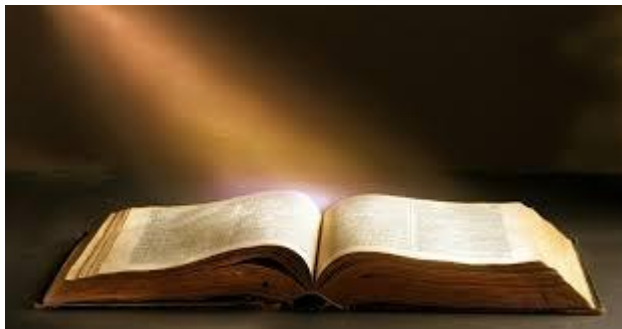
On the one hand (simplistically put) we have a set of privately educated people who are dedicated to retaining the status quo so that they continue to cream off much of the nation's wealth, whilst trying to self-off our fabulous NHS which is the envy of much of the rest of the world. On the other hand, we have the Labour party which is up against a vicious right-wing press, but also has the tendency to shoot itself in the foot – I think the way that Jeremy Corbyn was treated by most people was disgusting and very nasty. Then, in between

these two political monsters, we find the wishy-washy Lib-Dems who proved they would get into bed with anyone, to be in power, as they did with the Tory Party.

So, in conclusion, I think the time is ripe for the emergence of a new and fresh political party in Britain that recognises that we are all really “in this together” and that works towards a fairer and more equal society than the one we clearly have now.

Brian Jones, Colchester

BIBLE TALK



Sent in by Peter Smith

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

(1 John 5:11,12)

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,

I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me.

(Revelation 3:20)

He who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.

(John 5:24)

When someone asks Jesus into their heart, all their sins are forgiven, and they become a new person.

Then, they do not do good to earn a place in paradise.

They do good to please God; to thank him for already reserving them a place in paradise.

(Quotes: NKJV)

Catch up on FTHM Back issues (for those reading on the web):

<https://fromthehorsemouth.org.uk/back-issues/>

GRAHAM'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF SPORT



Happy New Year everyone!

So, 2022 is here and we are straight into the action as far as major sporting events are concerned. Judging by the outcome of the first two test matches, The Ashes may well be over by the time the fourth test begins on 5th January at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The fifth and final test takes place at the

Bellerive Oval in Hobart, a debut Ashes venue, from 14th to 18th January.

The first tennis major of 2022 commences on 17th January, in Melbourne, in the guise of the Australian Open. There was some conjecture as to whether Novak Djokovic would be defending the title he won in 2021 however, he has confirmed his entry for this event along with Rafa Nadal and all of the other top 20 ranked men's players, the exception being Roger Federer who is absent due to a long-term injury that will keep him out for some months yet.

We reach a vital stage in the NFL season this month. The Wild Card matches take place over the weekend of 15th/17th January. The Divisional Rounds take place over the weekend of 22nd/23rd January and the Championship Games, which decide the Superbowl participants, take place on Sunday 30th January.

In the world of football, the Africa Cup of Nations commences on 9th January. The event reaches its conclusion on 6th February. It will be interesting to see how the event impacts the top teams across the globe, especially in Europe, as they lose a host of top stars to this tournament. Also, in England, the FA Cup reaches the stage where the Premier League and Championship teams join the fray and the lower league teams that are still in the competition dream of a giant killing. Four non-league teams remain namely, Chesterfield, Boreham Wood, Yeovil and Kidderminster, the latter having extinguished the hopes of my home town team FC Halifax Town in the previous round.

Elsewhere we have the Masters Snooker event at the Alexandra Palace in London, from 9th to 16th January.

All this entertainment should keep you going throughout the month.

Until next time... stay safe and be happy!

* With a little help from Wikipedia

PS – If you fancy a further sports fix, I record a weekly podcast, you can view it at - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQAG_vzf_Qq0XIKczwd117Q

JUNE'S WONDERFUL RECIPES



Farmhouse Cream Scones

Ingredients:

1lb of self-raising flour
1 tsp. of baking powder
¼ tsp. of salt
4 oz of butter
1 egg
½ pint of milk
1 tbsp of cream

1 oz of sugar

Method:

Sieve together flour, baking powder and salt. Rub in butter, stir in beaten egg and mix with milk to an elastic dough. Add cream and knead lightly on a floured board. Roll out to 3-inch thickness and cut into rounds with a small cutter. Place on a greased, floured baking tray. Brush tops with rest of milk sweetened with sugar. Bake immediately in hot oven for 12 – 15 minutes at 450F or gas mark 8.



Coconut Butter Biscuits

Ingredients:

2 oz of butter or margarine
2 oz of coconut
3 oz of sugar
4 oz of self-raising flour
1 level tsp. of bicarbonate soda
1 level tbsp of golden syrup

Grated rind of orange or lemon

Method:

Melt butter and syrup in a pan. Add rest of ingredients. Roll into tiny balls and flatten with a palette knife. Bake for 10 – 15 minutes at gas mark 3 or 325F.



Australian Crunchie

Ingredients:

8 oz of margarine
5 oz of sugar
3 oz of coconut
2 ½ oz of crushed cornflakes

1 tbsp of cocoa
5 oz of self-raising flour

Method:

Melt margarine over a low heat, stir in the cocoa, sugar, coconut and cornflakes and then gradually stir in the flour. Turn into a greased, Swiss roll tin. Level with a knife and bake in a moderate oven at gas mark 4 or 350F. Cut into triangles while still warm and, when cold, cover with chocolate.



Spanish Omelette

Ingredients:

3 eggs
3 tsp. of cold water
1 tbs of oil
2 oz of cooked, diced potato
2 oz of chopped bacon
2 oz of chopped onion
1 oz of chopped pepper
Seasoning

Method:

Break the eggs into a basin, add water and seasoning. Whisk. Heat the oil in a 7-inch frying pan and add bacon, onion and pepper. Cook slowly until soft. Add diced potato. Pour in the eggs and cook until the underside is firm. Then place the pan under a hot grill until the top is brown

BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



Pelicans

Pelicans are large water birds that belong to the family Pelecanidae. There are now eight pelican species which live on every continent barring Antarctica. All possess pale plumage with the exception of the Brown and Peruvian examples.

All pelicans have a large beak and throat pouch in which they catch prey and drain out water prior to swallowing. They live in inland and coastal waters where they feed

mainly on fish (which they catch near the surface of water) although they also occasionally feed on insects, turtles, birds and small mammals.

Pelicans are sociable birds and travel in flocks and hunt and breed together. Four white species tend to nest on the ground and four brown-grey plumaged species nest in trees. Males are generally larger than females and have longer bills. The smallest is the brown pelican. Pelicans are good swimmers due to having webbed feet and strong legs and often float with a little of their bodies below the surface of the water.

Interestingly, the bills, pouches and bare facial skin of all pelicans tends to become brighter just before the breeding season begins. Notably, the American white pelican grows a knob on its bill that sheds once the females have laid their eggs. When chicks hatch, they are pink and naked turning grey or black after about 14 days.

Unfortunately, some pelicans have been targeted by commercial fishermen due to their competing with them for fish, and their numbers have also fallen due to habitat destruction and pollution. However, European colonies have seen an increase in numbers and places like Lake Prespa in Greece now has about 1,400 breeding pairs. Also, the Australian pelican has an estimated population of between 300,000 and 500,000 individuals.

Ref. Wikipedia

ALBUM REVIEW – EQUALS – BY ED SHEERAN



By Graham Townsend

This is the fourth studio album by Sheeran. The album follows in the footsteps of his previous three albums (“+”, “X” and “÷”) by using a mathematical reference for its title.

The album has a running time of approximately forty-eight and a half minutes. It has already spawned two UK number one singles in “Bad Habits” and “Shivers”. Additionally, “Overpass Graffiti” also reached number four and, if you waited for the Christmas Edition of the album to be released, “Merry Christmas”, a duet with Elton John, has recently been announced as the UK’s Christmas number one single.

The album itself has already reached the chart summit in both the UK and US. So what is it like and is it actually any good?

The opening track “Tides” is quite rocky and is one of the best songs here in my opinion. I feel it is always a good idea to get an album off to an up-tempo start like this. I can imagine him opening one of his forthcoming stadium gigs with this song.

The two big hit singles are catchy sing-along numbers, something that might upset some of his long term fans. Personally I don’t mind either song, probably because I have heard both of

them so many times already although, to be fair, I don't feel bored of listening to them so, that has to be classed as a positive. The aforementioned "Graffiti Overpass" has a touch of Americana about it. I'm hoping it will grow on me.

I feel there is a hint of "A Team" about "First Times" which is quite whimsical in my opinion with lots of references to his now wife. In fact, a lot of the album's lyrics relate to his family life. He is now the father of a young daughter. She even has a track dedicated to her in "Sandman". I would describe this as a lullaby and I'm not sure it is one I will be playing too often to be honest. "Visiting Hours" is about a music promoter friend who died and, again referencing his daughter, not being able to go and visit him in heaven. The song is poignant and a nice tribute.

"Collide" is not bad but a bit shall we say sickly sweet. Another one that fits this category is perhaps "2Step" which also has its moments.

I can imagine some people will accuse Ed of over commercialism here. Perhaps they will feel there is too much synthesiser and not enough acoustic guitar. There is none of what has now become his quite familiar rapped vocals either. Others may feel there is a lack of depth to the lyrics. Maybe his priorities have changed since "Divide" was released. On the whole I mostly enjoyed listening to the album however, it is not his best and there are a few weak tracks, as already pointed out above.

MY STAR RATING = *** out of 5

MORE FROM KRISHNA FRANCIS

It's the end of one year and the start of the next. No surprise there.

The moment after Christmas, whilst we await the coming of the turn, we pootle around making up things to do whilst we await the return of regular duties. Those of us, that is, who don't do jobs that, require our presence to make the world go round. Nurses, doctors, power plant operators, warehouse workers, the list, though not quite endless, is certainly a lot longer than that. Meanwhile, the rest of us fill up our time in doing things the significance of which is not easy to understand. It's a period that helps the able bodied to comprehend the position of those like me who find themselves in a strange in-between place.

Being in a wheelchair, or in any other way disabled, can be a sort of permanent after-Christmas state. There is nothing we are called back to do. We are often in receipt of state benefits and, therefore, don't have jobs awaiting our return. It isn't always the case. There are many disabled people who manage to do jobs. However, it is recognised that disability puts a person at a disadvantage. It means we have a good reason to make peace with the fact that we can't easily put our remaining skills to use.

Yet for all that feeling that there is no great requirement for our input, there is still the fact of us. In truth, I'm really saying there is still the fact of me. What do I do to fill up my time alongside watching endless streamed entertainment or reading books, or meeting friends for

coffee? There's a sense that something organised is needed. Some of this can be filled through volunteering. Some I fill being a full participant in family life.

Finally, our chief objective is being true to ourselves. Festivals give us that time to reflect and search within whilst participating in the longed-for organisational element of festivities. I spent this Christmas Day with a friend who has never, since childhood celebrated Christmas. Instead, he has always chosen to spend the day alone. I asked if it was possible to share a meal with him, having not managed to organise a more traditional family event. So, we met and ate and talked. It was good. In that moment, I felt as valid as I have ever felt at Christmas. I helped imbue the day with a special meaning for two people that didn't simply grow from the expectations of the world at large. In all of the noise and sparkle there was a real connection.

That's, I guess, why I'm writing this. I put down my thoughts and recollections of my daily life as a way of reaching out. Shards of my experience reflect back a world to the reader in which they may see something of themselves. Ideally something that they hadn't realised or didn't have the words to express. It seems like a good way to spend the time between two feast days at the end of a pretty taxing year. I hope you agree.

ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



Questions:

- (1) Who invented the first computer?
- (2) What is the French word for 'tongue'?
- (3) Who is currently the men's 400 metres hurdles record holder?
- (4) What is the currency of Iran?
- (5) Who plays Tyrone Dobbs in the British soap Coronation Street?
- (6) Who was crowned Miss World in 2020?
- (7) Which US state is Denver in?
- (8) Where did Winston Churchill die?
- (9) Who was the first actor to play Sherlock Holmes on TV?
- (10) What is a tisane?
- (11) Who is the most capped US female footballer?
- (12) What is a fait accompli?
- (13) What is the capital of Bulgaria?
- (14) Who is the richest person in the world?
- (15) How old was the singer Bobby Darin when he died?
- (16) How many films did James Dean star in?
- (17) What is the Spanish word for 'street'?
- (18) How many wives did King Henry VIII have?
- (19) What is 12 minutes past 7 on the 24-hour clock?
- (20) Where did the bread chapati originate?

Answers:

(1) Charles Babbage (2) Langue (3) Karsten Warholm (4) Iranian rial (5) Alan Halsall (6) Toni-Ann Singh (7) Colorado (8) Kensington, London (9) Louis Hector (10) A herbal tea (11) Carli Lloyd (12) A thing that has already happened leaving one with no option but to accept it (13) Sofia (14) Jeff Bezos (15) 37 (16) 10 (17) Calle (18) 6 (19) 19:12 (20) The Indian subcontinent

Editor's Final Word: Thank you for taking the time and the trouble to read this e-magazine. I hope you are okay and will consider getting involved with us at: dean@fthm.org.uk Best wishes, Dean, Brenda, Robert and Graham. Happy New Year!