

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH – December 2024. Edition No. 120.



Hello again. It's nearly Christmas! Let's count our blessings!

Well, the magazine has now been going in its present form for ten years thanks to the efforts of many people – especially you the reader, who make it all worthwhile.

I do hope you have a good rest over the holidays and share many enjoyable experiences.

You are very welcome to get involved with us in a non-homophobic, non-sexist and non-racist way and

can do so by contacting us at: dean@fthm.org.uk

Please note that our website address is: www.fromthehorsesmouth.org.uk Best wishes,
Dean Charlton.

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MY NOT VERY SERIOUS STARS



Scorpio 24 Oct – 22 Nov

With Christmas fast approaching, it is time you reviewed your gift buying and avoided buying the crap you usually do. This

month, an alien will come into your life and teach you the fundamentals of existence that you have so far overlooked. Now is the time to cease sending sycophantic communications to famous people who don't really care about you.

Sagittarius 23 Nov – 21 Dec

The love that you have been craving will manifest itself in a surprising form, so don't be stupid and blow it. An ugly woman will astonish you with her kindness this month and show you that beauty comes in many forms. A surprise email will drop in your mailbox with a career opportunity you have been hoping for. Do something about your hair; it is a mess!

Capricorn 22 Dec – 20 Jan

Someone dressed as Santa will come onto you at the office party, but do you want what he is trying to give you? You have put on a lot of weight recently, so now is the time to stop eating like a pig. You may receive some bad news, but try and hold on to the fact that everything in life is temporary and will pass. It's a good time to look around the charity shops for a bargain.

Aquarius 21 Jan – 19 Feb

A boss at work may be incompetent, but just humour him until he is exposed by higher management. Your mobile phone may break this week, but don't rush into a new contract that you can't really afford. You may make a big boob of yourself at a party when you tell someone with massive boobs that you have always admired them. Try to be less superficial.

Pisces 20 Feb – 20 Mar

Someone may question if you are on this planet, but just politely explain that you are sure of the path you are following and very happy with your life. It is a good time to decorate your life with people who may be ugly, but who have your best interests at heart. The chance of having an affair with a married person may present itself, so be sure of what you are doing.

Aries 21 Mar – 20 Apr

Money may be a problem at the moment, so now would be a good time to stop drinking alcohol like a fool. A woman in a smart suit will credit you with making her happy, but be aware that you may be paying out for a long time if you allow it. Next year will be a great year for you if you continue to work hard when you are fit to do so. Buy a teddy bear.

Taurus 21 Apr – 21 May

Maybe consider booking a cheap holiday for next year if it doesn't break your budget. Someone you desire may be more attainable if you slow down a bit and don't scare them away. At the moment, you look like a demented scarecrow, so smarten yourself up and show you are not a dummy. No ring on their finger doesn't necessarily mean they are single.

Gemini 22 May – 21 Jun

Life is not always easy and sometimes leads down a dead-end, but learn to enjoy the journey and remember it really is a team game. It is foolish to live in an ivory tower, so get out there! The stars indicate that you and your partner are now very fertile if you want to try for a baby. Be very kind to someone who is not as able as you. Buy a new fridge freezer today. Scratch.

Cancer 22 Jun – 23 Jul

You are about as empathetic as a lion on the hunt, so don't be surprised if you find it difficult to sustain a romantic relationship. Money is very important to you, but you have missed the point that it is just a key to open some doors. Christmas is a time for sharing, so why not fully give yourself to friends and family at this time of the year. Scoff some mince pies. Smile.

Leo 24 Jul – 23 Aug

It is a good time to buy your partner a meaningful present as they have stood by you through thick and thin this year. Someone in a café may catch your eye, though they may be with someone else at the moment. Be careful what you get up to this Christmas, otherwise you may meet other people in the clinic who have also been promiscuous. Bake a nice cake. Dance.

Virgo 24 Aug – 23 Sep

This week you will find a brand-new umbrella, and this will enable you to spread your wings socially, whatever the weather. Someone you love will show an interest in you, but make sure that you don't get your fingers burnt. An email will arrive that will change your life, but will it change your personality too? Buy a new pet only as long as you are responsible. Swallow.

Libra 24 Sep – 23 Oct

On the second Thursday before Christmas day, you may win a great deal of money if you are willing to gamble big. A braless woman will invite you to go climbing after Christmas, but are you into conquering peaks or would you prefer a quieter life? You may think that you are young and time is on your side, but start putting everything into the present moment now.

JUNE'S WORLD



Hello everybody. I hope you are all well and looking after yourselves.

Today, I'll write about when I was a young girl around 12 or 13. At this time, I was at school in Three Lane Ends, Castleford. I lived in the potteries, which was part of the town. One day, the teacher informed us that there was going to be a daytrip to Whitby and told us we should ask our parents if we could go. I was so excited

as I had never seen the sea. Lots of my classmates said they had been to the seaside when they were younger, whereas I had never been further than Castleford and Leeds. My mother worked hard in the pea fields and picked potatoes to keep the family together; she hardly ever had any spare money to spend on trips out of town.

Anyway, I was keen to get the money together for the trip to Whitby, so I knocked on people's doors and asked if they had any old jam jars or if I could run any messages for them.

One old lady gave me some jars in exchange for me doing a bit of cleaning. She was very kind and gave me a couple of pennies, which I put with the money I got from taking the jam jars to the shop. I also told my grandad about the trip and he gave me some money, which meant I now had enough to go with a bit of spending money.

When the day of the trip arrived, a single bus picked us up and sped away to the coast. We were all very excited! It took about one and a half hours to get to Whitby. It was lovely to see Whitby Abbey, but the first thing I wanted to do was to go to the beach to look for jet. We managed to find some and took it to a jet shop who bought it from us to make it into necklaces and broaches. Nowadays, its nearly all imported. It had become fashionable when Prince Albert died and Queen Victoria constantly wore black jet jewellery. The last place we visited was where the smoked kippers were sold, which I found fascinating.

Before we knew it, it was time to get back on the bus bound for Castleford. Everyone expressed how much they had enjoyed the trip and couldn't wait for the one. Well, I'll say goodbye for now and will write again in the future.

AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW WITH WILLOW



Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, Willow? I'm a 23-year-old. I live in this beautiful town called Halifax with my family.

What's it like living with your family? Occasionally, I can find it a little suffocating when you feel you're living on top of each other but, on the whole, it's nice to be around family. There's the added benefit of not having to cook as often, and it's cheaper!

Has it changed since you've gotten older? Definitely. The dynamic changed as soon as I went to university.

Where did you go? I went to Durham University. I graduated in January with BSc Natural Sciences.

What did that entail? The Natural Sciences course at Durham is a lot less prescriptive than other universities. As long as you did enough modules in one discipline, you could study most combinations of science subject – it wasn't a set course. I studied an unusual combination of subjects; approximately 70% of my course was chemistry, the other 30% consisted of geography modules. I focused on physical geography in particular. These were modules where my knowledge of chemistry came in handy and where my interests lie.

What did you think of being a student? Did you like it? I have very mixed feelings and thoughts on being a student. I liked the freedom – there was nobody asking where I was and what time I'd be home. However, I found it lonely most of the time.

Were you skint all the time? I was fairly sensible with my student loan, and it helped that I didn't have the typical university experience of going out every week. In second and third year, I went out maybe once a term. After rent, my greatest expense was eating out and

takeaways. In fact, the money I had left over after my final year, I used to go inter-railing for 2 months.

Where did you go? I went to Brussels, Amsterdam, Cologne, Berlin, Prague, Munich, Lake Bled, Vienna, Budapest, Zagreb, Split, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Podgorica, Rome, Florence, and finally Milan.

Where was your favourite place to visit? I couldn't choose. I know that seems like a cop-out, but they all offered something different. Prague was perhaps the most surprising. For some reason, I wasn't expecting much, but I was pleasantly surprised. The people were friendly, the food was delicious, and it was a great night out! Berlin was the most interesting place I visited on account of the history surrounding the city.

What kind of food do you like? Are you vegetarian/vegan? I am vegan. My favourite regional food is Asian food, particularly Thai food.

Why are you vegan? Being vegan aligns with my morals. I don't like the thought of indirectly causing harm to animals; I want to minimise this as much as possible. It makes sense that my diet and lifestyle reflect this. Generally speaking, I think it can be healthier. Although, there is such thing as a "junk food vegan".

How long have you been vegan? Since I was thirteen or fourteen, so almost a decade.

How does that fit in with family life? Are you all vegan at home? No. My sister is vegetarian, but that's it.

I noticed from your surname you have a double-barrelled foreign name. Why is that? The first half of my surname is my mother's, and the second half is my father's. My father's half of the family are Ukrainian.

Are you working at the moment? I work part-time in beauty at Boots, and part-time at a bar. I'm saving for a Master's degree right now, so working two jobs part-time works out better for the hours.

Do you like those jobs? I like the people I work with. It can be exhausting, though. Some weeks, I'll have 3-4 days of back-to-back shifts where I'm doing a dayshift at Boots and then a nightshift at the bar.

What are your hobbies? My main hobby is aerial hoop and silks. I did some trapeze at the beginning too, but it's not as enjoyable as the other two in my opinion.

Are you any good? I'm not bad. Considering how long I've been doing it; I'm picking it up fast. I did gymnastics when I was younger, so that helps. It requires upper body strength, and I've really enjoyed seeing myself develop that.

Are you interested in politics? I'm not as interested as I should be. It's hard to get involved when it seems politicians have no integrity.

What do you think you'll be doing in 5 years? As I said, I'm planning on starting a Master's next September, so I'm going to have finished that. The course is only a year, so I also want to have a job. Preferably, a job where my degree is necessary.

What Master's degree do you want to do? Green chemistry.

What is green chemistry? Green chemistry is a discipline within chemistry focused on developing processes that minimise waste in the design of molecules, materials and products

and eliminate the utilisation and production of hazardous substances. Essentially, it is sustainable, environmentally-friendly chemistry.

Are you hoping to have a family? Not in the traditional sense.

What do you mean? The idea of having a husband and children doesn't appeal to me. I don't want to sacrifice my life and my body for a child. I think it's a beautiful thing that other people do, but I don't think it's for me.

I remember realising when I was around fourteen the concept that you could choose whether to have children. My best friend at the time told me she wasn't going to have children, and it blew my mind. I always thought it was a given that women have them.

ALICE'S THING OF THE MONTH



Hello and welcome back to Alice's Thing of The Month! This month, we are going to be talking about The World of Tim Burton.

November 1st was my birthday and I travelled to London to see a Tim Burton Exhibition called “The World of Tim Burton” at the Design Museum. The exhibition is on until 25th April 2025 and started on the 25th October this year. I was excited when I found out about it; I had seen it advertised on a video. I have been a huge Tim Burton fan since I was a child, so I knew I had to go.

When we arrived, there was a queue waiting to go in. You have to prebook tickets online, and you get to choose a time slot for when you would like to go. It sells out very quickly. The day we went it was sold

out. After waiting a short while to get in, we finally made it into the first room. It starts off with a dark corridor, and there is a timeline on the wall of Tim Burton's career from when he was born and all the films he has done up until 2024, as well as other projects he has been involved in.

After you leave the dark corridor, you're into the second part of the first room, which was beautiful. It looked like pastel houses on the walls which all had drawings on from films like *Corpse Bride* and *Hansel and Gretel*, which was a short horror film by Tim. In the middle of the room was two glass cabinets with more drawings and at the very end was Tim's desk and bulletin boards with ideas. It was spectacular! On his desk were characters like Jack Skellington. There were other characters on a shelf; the most interesting was a rainbow one called Stain Boy who looked like Superman. Again, the desk had many drawings, paints and brushes, a camera, pens and other arty things. It gave a good example of what it would be like to see Tim Burton at work and creating.

The second room was one of my favourites from the whole exhibition. This is where they had all the models from the animated films such as *Corpse Bride*, *A Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Frankenweenie*. It was fascinating! They even showed the insides of the models and how they work and move for the stop motion – it was very clever. Stop motion animation is an amazing art form, and it takes a lot of time and dedication to produce an animation. Growing

up, my favourite film was *A Nightmare Before Christmas*. It was one of the first films I remember seeing as a child, so it was amazing for me to see the characters in real life. My favourite character from the film is a dog named Zero; he is a ghost and belongs to Jack Skellington.

The room also had many drawings and ideas for the stop motion films, demonstrating how these eventually turned into characters for the films. It was nice to see inspirations from other films, books and magazines that Tim Burton had watched and read growing up. One of the films that had inspired him to create his own spooky characters was *The Brain Eaters*, and there was also a magazine called *Famous Monsters*. Another thing I loved about this room was a collection of clown paintings and drawings. I've never seen these before. The colours really stood out, and one of the paintings reminded me of Van Gogh, who is another one of my favourite artists. Lastly, I want to make an honourable mention to a display of napkins Tim had drawn on with various ideas and characters; these really stood out for me.

We then moved onto the third room which was quite dark but had displays in glass cabinets that were lit up with a dim, purple light to make it feel mysterious. As the exhibition went on, I felt the rooms got better every time. This room had different costumes from various Tim Burton films and shows, such as the Batgirl outfit from *Batman*, the famous dress and suit from *Wednesday*, and a hand painted dress from *Sleepy Hollow* as well as many other displays. My favourite one was the outfit from *Edward Scissorhands* that Johnny Depp wore in the film. *Edward Scissorhands* is one of my all-time favourite films, and this was the thing I was looking most forward to seeing. I also got my photo taken with the outfit.

This room also had some dioramas – typically a three-dimensional replica of a scene – that included funny figures like the Oompa Loompas as well as some spooky ones. There were even more drawings from the films. One that really stood out for me was a drawing of Sally from *A Nightmare Before Christmas*. It was done in the style of Van Gogh and was reminiscent of *The Starry Night*. There was a note next to it saying Tim was inspired by Van Gogh's art style. It was wonderful to learn this and to know two of my favourite artists are somewhat connected to each other.

The next section we moved onto was a corridor which was black and white and looked like an illusion. The floor was checkered and distorted, and the walls and door frames were at angles, so it looked as if the room was moving and crooked. This area had more art, sculptures, and photographs but what made these different was that these things weren't solely focused on his films but other projects and ideas he had worked on.

The most interesting part of the corridor was a cute Christmas themed photoshoot of Tim's dog Poppy with reindeer antlers in the background – it looked like the dog was wearing them! There was a sculpture in a cabinet which had a cactus as the base, barbed wire legs and an eyeball at the top which resembled a flower. There were also some photographs next to it which were captured in a desert showcasing intricate shapes created by shadows. This was supposed to be used in the film *Mars Attacks*. The last was a photoshoot called *The Blue Girl Series* which is a set of five photos of a woman with blue paint on her body and stitches drawn in certain parts, making her look like she has been cut up and sewn back together. This, to me, was a homage to his female characters such as Sally and The Corpse Bride.

When we finished going through the illusionary corridor, we had come to the final room. The first thing you see when you enter the room is a surreal psychedelic showpiece mixing bright, neon colours with disturbing figurines on a merry-go-round. It was beautiful. The rest of the room was dimly lit and had various drawings on the walls which included the numbers 1 to 13 drawn by Tim in his unique style, a neon sign which said "Theater", a book called *The Art*

of *Tim Burton*, which you could look through, and an outfit from an Alexander McQueen fashion show Tim had designed with the brand.

The last thing you notice before leaving is a little house in the corner of the room. It's white and has Christmas lights on. You can see there is a little Christmas tree in the window. It makes you think it is a lovely scene, until you look through the window. There's a little boy by the tree and blood all over the walls, and you can see legs poking out from the room behind him. I won't be forgetting that image any time soon! Seeing this reminded me of how dark Tim Burton's art can be. The term used for Tim's style is "Burtonesque".

After leaving the exhibition, there is a small gift shop with a number of items like books, keychains, art and ornaments from the films. The only thing that let it down was the prices which were extortionate. I bought two postcards from the shop which both had Tim's art on. There is also a photo opportunity on the way out of a spiral background and the tree from *A Nightmare Before Christmas*. I thought this was a nice touch. Overall, I had a wonderful time and would really recommend this exhibition if you're a Tim Burton fan. The trip down to London is worth it for the experience.

Thanks for reading.

GRAHAM TOWNSEND'S MONTHLY QUIZ

Questions:



- (1) What nationality was painter John William Waterhouse?
- (2) Which US rapper's real name is Austin Richard Post?
- (3) Who is the central character/main protagonist in the mobile game Royal Match?
- (4) Who was named the new head coach of the England football team in October 2024?
- (5) Which country has the largest Catholic population in the world?
- (6) Which animal did Abraham Lincoln reject as a gift from the King of Siam in 1862?
- (7) Which Christmas beverage is also known as "milk punch"?
- (8) The Dewey Decimal system is used to categorise what?
- (9) Which century saw many people die across Europe from the Bubonic Plague?
- (10) What is the name of the Chinese game played with small tiles?
- (11) What was the capital of the USA from 1790 to 1800?
- (12) What two words come after "Silent Night" in the song of the same name?
- (13) What is a bluebird the symbol of?
- (14) What does the Latin phrase "caveat emptor" mean?
- (15) Which legendary king was killed at the Battle of Camelford?
- (16) The movie *Miracle on 34th Street* is based on which real-life department store?
- (17) How many vertices does a square have?
- (18) In 1982, dentist Barney Clark became the first recipient of what?
- (19) In which Italian city do Atalanta play football?
- (20) Where was country singer Morgan Wallen born?

Answers:

(1) English/British (2) Post Malone (3) King Robert (4) Thomas Tuchel (5) Mexico (6) Elephant (7) Eggnog (8) Books (9) 14th (10) Mah-jong (11) Philadelphia (12) Holy night (13) Happiness (14) Let the buyer beware (15) King Arthur (16) Macy's (17) Four (18) Permanent Artificial Heart (19) Bergamo (20) Sneedville, Tennessee, USA

BRENDA'S WILDLIFE CORNER



Porcupine

The porcupine is a member of the rodent family. It is unusual because it protects itself with rigid or semi-rigid quills, which are modified hairs made of keratin. Notably, there are two types of porcupines: the Old-World porcupine and the New World porcupine. Interestingly, they are not closely related to each other

The Old-World porcupine is terrestrial and found in western and southern Asia, Italy and across most of Africa. It is a large, nocturnal rodent. The New World porcupine is generally smaller and less nocturnal. It is found in North and South America and lives in wooded areas, where it has the ability to climb trees. This is where it spends most of its life.

The North American porcupine climbs trees to find food like twigs, shrubs, herbs, green plants such as clover, and may even eat bark in the winter. The African porcupine forages on the ground and consumes roots, berries, fruit and farm crops. Porcupines themselves are eaten in countries like Kenya and Vietnam. Although porcupines are rarely eaten in western culture, the fact that that are eaten in certain parts of the world has led to a decline in the number of porcupines.

Both types of porcupines are brown, grey and white and measure 25–36 inch long with an 8–10-inch tail. Interestingly, baby porcupines, which are called porcupettes, have soft hairs when they are born which harden to quills withing a few days.

Quills play a large role in the defence of the porcupine. When impaled into a predator, they can cause injury or death. New quills grow to replace lost ones. Their quills have been used to create native American “porky roach” headdresses, and they may contain antibiotic properties which may be beneficial to humans.

DOING THE LAUNDRY

Written by Sharon Boothroyd

We don't see many launderettes around now, but they used to be a staple part of our communities. It's unbelievable now but, when I was young, I lived in rented accommodation and most of the properties didn't have a washing machine or a tumble dryer. If there was no launderette, I was expected to wash and wring out all my clothes, towels, and bedding by hand in the kitchen sink, and then dry them the best way I could. This involved either pegging them out on the line, using a clothes horse around a gas fire, or I'd shove them in the airing cupboard. This housed the boiler, so it was warm.

Therefore, it was easier to take a weekly trip to the nearby launderette. Still, it was a total pain in the neck! I needed a neat pile of change to feed the machines. This entailed a trip to the corner shop to buy things I didn't need in order to acquire the correct coins. As I recall, it was the same story to feed the gas meter! Once I'd got the correct change, I'd be waiting for a machine to become free. Then, I'd nab a washer only to wait ages for a dryer to become free. so, the weekly visit often took hours.

Most launderettes were small and tatty, with a scruffy lino floor, faded notices advertising church jumble sales and narrow, wooden benches as seats. Although, I remember one spacious launderette in a city suburb that was quite classy. It reminded me of an upmarket dentist's waiting room, with soft and squishy sofas, a cosy rug, a hot drinks machine and a stack of recent newspapers and magazines to read – this was way before people became permanently glued to their smart phones. I used to like going there every week as there was always someone to talk to. On Sundays, it was like a trendy student hang out!

A launderette was a warm, calm, cosy world where fellow users would cheerfully chat to one other, usually about the weather. It offered users time to chill out, read while the machines were on their cycles and enjoy a bit of peace and quiet. I'm now married and, like everyone else, we have a washing machine and a tumble dryer. No more trailing out every week in the lashing rain and bitter cold. Yet, I still miss my weekly visit to the local launderette and that friendly, chatty little community!

SPORTS TRADING – AN INSIGHT

Written by Graham Townsend

You may remember the updated interview I did with Dean in the last issue of the magazine that talked about matched betting. Matched betting is totally risk free. However, I wanted to talk about what is logically the next step for people who are looking to move their betting activities on, once they have exhausted all their bookmaker resources from matched betting. This next step is usually seen to be sports trading. The reason for this being that you don't need to use bookmaker accounts for sports trading as it all takes place using a betting exchange.

Sports trading involves two people who have opposing views on whether something will happen during a sporting event. For example, in football, Manchester City are playing

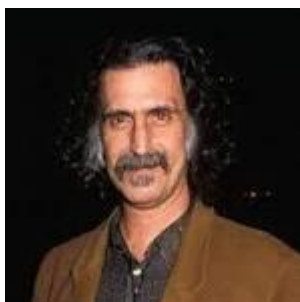
Liverpool. One person thinks Manchester City will win. The other thinks that it will either be a draw or Liverpool will win. The first person can place a bet backing Manchester City to win. The second person can place a bet which states simply that they won't win the match. The name given to the latter type of bet is a lay bet. These bets are facilitated by the betting exchange. They charge a commission fee, usually up to a maximum of five per cent of your winnings, to facilitate these bets. There are no bookmakers involved and the commission is how the exchanges make their money. The most well-known betting exchange is Betfair. Other exchanges include Smarkets, Matchbook, Betdaq and BetConnect. The idea behind sports trading is that the traders find an edge over their opponents to ensure that they can make a profit in the long run.

There are plenty of sports on which you can trade. The most popular ones tend to be football, tennis, horse racing, golf and cricket. Many professional traders suggest that you concentrate on one sport and very specific markets with those sports. An example of this being, if you want to trade football, look at the over 2.5 goals market or the match odds market, but don't try to run before you can walk and only do one at a time. Also, find something that fits with your lifestyle. If you have a job or a family, make sure you fit your trading hours around that and not the other way round.

I am just starting out on my trading journey. I already know that much research is required to find an edge. Additionally, you need to be able to have access to a bank of money that, in the worst-case scenario, you are prepared to lose and losing it won't have a significant impact on your financial wellbeing. I would like to point out that sports trading is not risk free and is something you should probably avoid if you have an addictive personality or have previously had gambling issues.

I hope you have enjoyed this brief insight into the world of sports trading. If you should decide to turn your hand to giving it a go, please make sure you have the right mindset, are prepared to do plenty of research and can be patient when you need to be.

FRANK ZAPPA



I have decided to write a brief article (with the help of Wikipedia) about Frank Zappa. I came across him at school around 1980. He was a very interesting musician, composer and bandleader, but there was so much more to him than this. He stood up against censorship in music, promoting freedom of speech, and was highly critical of organised religion and mainstream education.

Zappa was of Sicilian, Greek, French and Arab descent and was born in December 1940. He was raised in an Italian/American household. As a child, he moved around a lot due to his father's work as a chemist and mathematician in the defence industry. Unfortunately, he was a sickly child suffering with asthma, earache, and sinus problems, which he later referred to in his some of his lyrics.

He was a prolific musician who released more than 60 albums during his lifetime – 65 more were released posthumously. Not only did he compose rock masterpieces, he also used jazz, jazz fusion, orchestral and musique concrète in his work, both as a solo artist and with his

band the Mothers of Invention. It is definitely true that much of his music involved non-conformity, satire of American culture and experimentation. He was a real trailblazer.

Zappa was also responsible for music videos and feature-length films. He even designed his own album covers. He was considered by many to be a creative genius, who was the most innovative and diverse musician of his time, even being described by some as the “godfather” of comedy rock. He was a self-taught composer and performer and began his music career by writing classical music in high school and playing drums in local rhythm and blues bands. He later switched to electric guitar. It must also be said that his music tastes were diverse. He was influenced by many musicians and composers including Howlin’ Wolf and Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown.

The first studio album he was involved in was called “Freak Out!”. This established a pattern he was to follow throughout his music career of conventional and satirical rock and roll, huge experimentation, doo-wop and rhythm and blues.

In December 1960, he married Kathryn J “Kay” Sherman, but this marriage broke up in 1964 and he moved into a studio, which he renamed Studio Z. This was later torn down as he couldn’t pay the rent. At this time, Frank struggled to support himself and even spent ten days in prison after being charged with “conspiracy to commit pornography” for making a fake erotic episode on tape for \$100.

However, his love for music continued and, in April 1965, he joined a band called the Soul Giants as guitarist. The band debuted at the Broadside Club on May 10th 1965 and was soon renamed the Mothers. They were then spotted by record producer Tom Wilson who signed them to a division of MGM called Verve, who stipulated that they change their name to avoid offending some Americans. Consequently, they became the Mothers of Invention. As implied above, “Freak Out!” was the first album the band released.

In 1967, Zappa married Gail Sloatman, and this was far more successful than his first marriage. They went on to have four children including Moon Unit and Dweezil. Between 1966 and 1968, the band was a regular act at the Garrick Theatre in New York. In 1968, the band released an album called “We’re Only in It for the Money” which was produced by Zappa and Wilson. The songs on this album satirized the hippie and flower power phenomena and parodied the Beatles “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band”. After this, Zappa produced all albums that were released by the band and through his solo work.

In the late 1960s, Zappa became more involved in the business side of his music and, with manager Cohen, formed two labels to increase creative control and produce recordings by other artists, distributed by Warner Bros. Records. The band’s first release on the newly created Bizarre label was “Uncle Meat”. Although the band was successful in Europe, this was not the case in the US. Zappa even had to support the nine band members for a while through his publishing royalties. Consequently, he broke up the band but did use their unreleased recordings on the 1970s “Burnt Weeny Sandwich” and “Weasels Ripped My Flesh”. Interestingly, Zappa had released an acclaimed solo album called “Hot Rats” in the meantime, which was a major influence on the development of jazz-rock fusion. Other significant solo albums released around this time were “Chunga’s Revenge” (1970) and “200 Motels” (1971). The latter included the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Ringo Starr and Keith

Moon, but Zappa was dissatisfied with the result. Later in 1970, Zappa recreated the Mothers, mostly dropping the “of Invention”.

Two terrible things then happened to Zappa and his reformed band. There was the destruction of the Mother’s equipment at a concert in Switzerland due to a flare being thrown by an audience member, causing a huge fire. Then, there was an attack on Zappa himself by the jealous boyfriend of a besotted female fan. This resulted in Zappa having to use a wheelchair for some time, and he was unable to tour for over 6 months.

Although the current labels were discontinued, Zappa and Cohen created DiscReet, again distributed by Warner Bros., and other albums followed like “Apostrophe”, “Over-Nite sensation”, “Roxy and Elsewhere” and “One Size Fits All”. For the remainder of his artistic career, Frank Zappa continued to be a prolific composer and musician and released such classics as “Sheik Yerbouti” (1979) and the excellent “Tinsel Town Rebellion”. The list is endless. He even made some TV appearances as an actor and voice artist on Shelley Duvall’s *Faerie Tale Theatre*, for example.

One could write so much more about this man’s life and creativity, but I’m sure he would have preferred me to concentrate more on my own creative life than his. Frank Zappa died on 4th December 1983, at home with his family. In my opinion, he led an exemplary life of individuality and of being honest to himself.

THE PROS & CONS OF DYNAMIC PRICING

Written by Graham Townsend

This subject has been very much in the news headlines recently, most notably on the back of the ticket scramble to see Oasis on their reunion tour in 2025. Many people had probably never heard of it before then, and the majority probably wish they still hadn’t heard of it! Here in the UK, there was even an instance of an effigy of Ticketmaster and Oasis being burned at a bonfire a few days ago, that is how strongly people feel about this issue.

You are probably wondering why this article has the title that it does! Are there any pros you might ask? Well, there are, but not if you are one of the people who are trying to buy tickets to see your favourite artist or band. The only real beneficiaries of the system are the company selling the tickets and the artists themselves. It seems that the artists are powerless to stop the vendors. The argument from the vendors’ perspective revolves around the costs they incur when setting up a venue for an event, along with transportation costs for moving stages etc. around a country or continent.

The only positive I can think of from a customer perspective, and this is very tenuous, is that it weeds out casual fans who are put off by the prices and guarantees genuine fanatics of a performer. Whether even they are prepared to pay some of the prices out there remains to be seen.

I feel I was somewhat unwittingly a victim of the structure a few weeks back when buying a ticket to see Bruce Springsteen in Manchester next year on my birthday. I bought my ticket via the Live Nation – Ticketmaster’s parent company – pre-sale. Looking back, I would say I paid close to £100 more than what the original face value price was for the seat in question.

Part of the reason I accepted the price was because he is an artist on my bucket list, and it was a birthday treat. Otherwise, I would have chosen not to proceed with the purchase.

I'd also like to point out that dynamic pricing is not just a thing in terms of music events. Off the top of my head, I am aware of WWE using this model when selling tickets for their live events, especially their marquee shows such as Wrestlemania. It can be very specific at some events too. For example, it may only apply to certain sections of seating or even individual seats such as aisle seats.

As much as dynamic pricing is proving majorly unpopular with the general public, unless an entity such as the government is prepared to take companies to task over their tactics, I don't see an end to the process at any point in the near future.

ON PUGGING

Written by the fabulous Krishna Francis



Is it just me or does autumn suggest the past in a way that spring suggests the future? In autumn you store, in spring you plan. The weather, the mood, the habits in autumn all seem to look back towards what has been. As you gather fruit from the trees, the summer that gave you the crop is considered. There will be some thought given to what is going to be done with the apples, pears and plums. However, it is mostly a matter of gathering and storing against the coming scarcity.

As I grow older there are certain memories of mine that hold meaning beyond my simple recollection of them. It's as though they have a totemic quality, like a distance marker in the ground showing how far we've come. That is beginning to sound a little pretentious. Let's get to the story in hand.

Have you ever heard of pugging? No. It's not like that. It's not a species-specific form of dogging. It is a funny word. Even as I ask, it doesn't strike me as quite believable. Like me, it's from Southampton. It's not even widely used there, as I found out on a recent fact-finding visit. Anyway, that's where I first heard it. As odd as it may sound, it carries a distinctly Arthurian quality. This is due to one particular memory. A tale of an ordinary boy with surprising skills. This will be revealed as the ridiculous bombast of childish thinking, but stick with me.

Pugging was an activity that my brother and his friends got up to. It was the way they spent what leisure time they had. It involved a level of craft and innate ability. Certainly, that's how it sounded to my youthful, eager ears when it was explained to me. It sounded like the province of woodsmen and wise, old folk who worked the land. Unexamined, it probably retains those qualities for me as none of my own childhood friends every took it up. It belonged to an older generation than mine. Still, whatever the truth of my recollection, for all the times my brother and his friends may have done it, there's one legend that remains, glowing like an ember in a dying fire.

An easier question: have you got an older brother or sister? Perhaps even an uncle or aunt would do. Do you remember when they recounted an escapade? The way it struck you with the force of myth. That time when they went to the playground and faced off to a bigger kid who wouldn't let them play on the swings, that sort of thing. It's different from the story of a parent. Parent's tales carry authority. They seem somehow biblical. What about friends? Their stories are fine, but they're just anecdotes and often involve you anyway. They fill up time while you wait to tell your own, far more interesting yarn. The stories of friends' pale when compared to those of a big sister or an uncle. That's how this tale of pugging still seems to me.

I'd better clarify. Pugging requires a muddy bank, an expanse of water and a supple branch, preferably still green, fresh-snapped from a nearby tree or bush. Holly's good, and willow. You reach down into the clayey mud, find a clod that's nearly solid but with enough moisture to adhere to the end of the stick. It's a sport best undertaken in spring or autumn. The assurance of rain ensures a ready supply of pugs – that is what the lump of clay is called. Once attached, you flick the stick in a jerky fashion. The smooth move/stop action releases the glob of mud. It flies through the air and lands, ideally, where it is aimed. A good practitioner can guide it pretty effectively. The ponds of Southampton Common are filled with angry ducks that can attest to this.

I don't remember whether I was at home on the day in question. That is, I don't remember if I was there when Paul and Adrian Whickam called on my brother Shuni. They wanted him to join them on a pugging expedition. I definitely know I was there when my brother returned with his tale. He couldn't get through the door, but he was already telling it.

The Whickams lived just up the way from us in a small terrace house on Dover Street. Adrian was the youngest of three, mild-mannered and easy-going. Paul was the middle child always up to mischief, yet curiously caring. I remember one time when he offered to walk me to cubs to save my parents the job. It was early evening and the streetlights were on. In the gloom, he saw a stranger a little way ahead. Paul nudged me conspiratorially.

“Do you think I can hit him with this?” He showed me the core of the apple he'd just finished. Without giving me a chance to answer, he hauled off and threw the apple at the man. In the darkness, it was unclear whether it met its mark. Besides, Paul pulled me down behind a car so we couldn't see or be seen. No sound of injury or shock was uttered by the man, so I guess the apple core didn't make its mark. That was Paul though. He just loved ripping things up for shits and giggles.

Adrian was the same age as my brother, so the two of them shared the sense of muted respect for his instinct for low-key carnage. It was probably Paul that instigated the expedition. After calling at our house, the three of them had headed off to the common. I do remember it was a crisp, bright day. It always felt like a need to be doing spread through my body on a day like that. It still does, in spite of age. Leaves were thick on the ground, a yellow, orange and brown layer of rustling enticements to walk. I know what the common will have been like. I spent many similar afternoons there. People carpeted the pathways and fields. They flew kites, walked dogs, played on the swings and slides or just rambled.

At the boating lake, a young man had brought out his remote-control speed boat, clearly a source of pride. He was demonstrating it to his girlfriend. Her response to this talismanic, ersatz trophy vehicle wasn't recorded in my brother's retelling of events.

Switches of wood were collected from trees and bushes along the way, and Shuni, Adrian and Paul arrived at the boating lake prepared for some rivalry. My brother wouldn't have been too bothered about how he performed against the others. He tended to rely on his own quiet sense of competence. He liked to learn from the way in which others did things. The two brothers had a more competitive streak. After a few test shots, flicking the pugs out as far as they could get them, Adrian challenged Paul.

"Bet you can't hit that boat." Paul said nothing. He squinted into the low sun with an assessing eye. Watching the boat moving on the water, he gauged its speed, how the wake affected its movement, what sort of turns the operator was making. He felt the wind on his face and considered where and how fast it was blowing. This done, he bent and retrieved a sod of clay. He gave his apparatus a couple of whips, feeling the heft of it. Finally, he attached the pug to the end. After one last squint he pulled back his arm. A quick flick, arm to wrist. The switch bowed and stopped short. The pug was let fly.

The small blob of clay sailed through the autumn air. Its path direct; its speed deadly. Awed, my brother watched as his friend was proved wrong. Adrian had called it poorly. It was a good shot. Better than expected. Though not for the owner of the boat. The boat was hit directly and sank.

What made them stay suggests that chivalrous quality that was semi-evident in Paul. For reasons only he knew, he took responsibility for his actions. No doubt a certain amount of hubris underwrote the decision. In my experience of their performing misdemeanours, this was par for the course. I'd been scrumping with them once for plums. The owner of the tree they were stealing from observed them from a window. He came out and remonstrated with them. Instead of running off, they argued that he couldn't possibly make use of all the plums. He even agreed. Pointing to me, he told them they were leading me astray. If I wanted any, I only had to knock on and he'd let me have as many as I wanted. '*Great*' I thought, '*but I don't even like plums.*'

The man with the speed boat left his girlfriend with the remote control. He tore around the boating lake. He didn't bother with remonstrations. He just came up behind Paul and shoved.

"Get it back!" Was all that he said.

He did get it back. Thanks to Paul wading waist deep through the freezing water, feeling round on the bottom in the general area of its final sighting, then wading back with it in his hands. I've always wondered whether the man was able to salvage his damaged vehicle. That part is and always will be a mystery to me.

The first thing my brother announced as he came through the door is of Paul's journey home. The image that sticks. Bright though the day was, it was also very cold. The common sits a mile hence from the house where I grew up. My brother's delight was there in the joining of these elements. Paul had walked the entire way home, his clothes dripping, his shoes squelching. Nothing could be done but trudge. Proof of his glory and his desolation both on display in the state of his attire.

I haven't heard tell of Paul in forty years. Looking on my brother's Facebook page, I discovered they are still friends, or perhaps friends once more. He's probably done many things worthy of mention, though my brother hasn't mentioned him in any of our conversations. However, it's difficult to imagine any deed he's undertaken that will shine with the quality of legend that he achieved on that day, when he just set out to do what he liked with his brother and a friend. Those antics are immortal. Even when they get you into trouble, that trouble feels like a gift in a way. It's a trophy. In the rolling stock of our lives, few things stand out. This is something that makes me remember Paul fondly. It lends him weight and stature in my store of childhood memories. A sharp, glowing souvenir, pulled sword-like from the stone of the, apparently, immutable ordinary.

SOME TERRIFIC RECIPES FROM JUNE CHARLTON



Mincemeat

Ingredients:

- ½ lb of finely chopped beef suet
- ½ lb of raisins
- ½ lb of currants
- ½ lb of sultanas
- 4 oz of mixed peel
- 6 oz of moist sugar
- 4 large apples, grated
- The grated rind and juice of one lemon
- 1 heaped teaspoon of mixed spice

Gill of brandy

Method:

Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl, pack the mincemeat into jars and store them in a cool, dry place. It should be left to mature for 2 months before using and will last for a year if stirred occasionally and kept covered.



Hot Cross Buns

Ingredients:

- 1 lb of plain flour
- 1 oz of lard
- 3 oz of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of mixed spice
- Pinch of salt
- 3 oz of currants

- 1 oz of candied peel
- 1 egg
- ½ pint of warm milk
- ¾ of an oz of fresh yeast
- 1 oz of butter

Method:

Sift the flour, salt and mixed spice into a large warmed bowl. Rub in the fat and add the sugar and currants. Mix the yeast with a teaspoon of sugar and half of the warm milk. Make a hollow in the centre of the flour mixture and pour in the yeast mixture. Stir in a little of the flour to make a thin batter. Leave in a warm place for ten minutes. Then, stir in the beaten egg and the rest of the warm milk to form a soft dough. Cover it with a cloth and leave it in a warm place until it doubles in size. Divide the dough into 12 pieces and knead gently to form buns. Leave them on a baking tray in a warm place to rise again. Bake them in hot oven for 10–12 minutes. Glaze the tops with sugar and milk.



Rice Buns

Ingredients:

4 oz of butter
4 oz of sugar
4 eggs
4 oz of flour
8 oz of ground rice
1 teaspoon of baking powder
¼ pint of milk

Method:

Cream the butter and sugar, then add the eggs one by one, beating well each time. Stir in the milk and the dry ingredients with a light hand, and quickly spoon the mixture into bun tins. Bake for 15 minutes at a moderate heat in the oven.



Cheese and Onion Pasties

Ingredients:

2 large onions
2 boiled potatoes
Salt and pepper
3 oz of grated, strong cheese
4 oz of lard

Method:

Peel, slice and simmer the onions until soft. Drain them and mix in the grated cheese and boiled potatoes. Rub the lard into the flour and add enough cold water to make a stiff paste. Divide into four, and roll them out into circles. Put a ¼ of the cheese, onion and potato mixture in the centre of each and season well. Dampen the edges of the pastry circles and draw together to make pastry shapes, pressing well to seal. Brush with a little milk or egg and bake in a hot oven until crisp and browned.

CHRISTMAS CHAOS!

Written by Sharon Boothroyd

“I asked him to choose a pretty angel for the top of the tree,” I began. I'd met my sister Penny in our favourite cafe. It was decorated in white, blue and red sparkle. “But Gary came back with something that resembled one of those loo dollies from the 1970's!” When I showed her the photo on my phone, she chuckled. “It was a dolly wearing a candy pink ball gown!”

She shook her head. “You know what husbands are like at Christmas, Rachel.”

I did. *Especially mine.*

“I said to him: 'Where are the wings, robe and halo?' He looked blank and said 'Oh, I forgot about that. I spotted this on the toy stall on the market and thought it would do.' Honestly, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry!”

She smiled. “Laugh, hopefully.”

“Usually at Christmas, this plastic doll *would* do. I'd have fun making the wings, robe and halo myself. But this year, his posh Uncle Henry and Aunt Sybil are staying with us.”

Penny nodded. “You and Gary have mentioned them.”

“The entire house has to be perfect,” I said. “The tree, the decorations, the table settings, the meal, the wine, the music...”

“You sound pretty tense.” She drained her coffee.

“When we've finished here, I'm heading into town. I'm on the hunt for festive touches for their room: Christmas duvet covers, towels, cushions, maybe even a cosy rug.”

When Gary had announced that his Uncle Henry and Aunt Sybil were visiting us at Christmas, I'd turned to him and asked “They're just popping in for half an hour?” On Christmas day, Gary's Aunt and Uncle liked to drive around and see people.

“No. They're arriving on Christmas morning.” His eyes were glued to the TV. I was aghast.

“They'll expect Christmas lunch?”

“Yes, and a night's stay before going on to Steph's.” Steph was Gary's sister. We got on great.

“Wouldn't they prefer to stay in a hotel?” I asked.

“They're all booked up apparently,” he said.

A lot of hard work lay ahead. “In that case, I'll need your help.”

“Let me know what you'd like me to do.”

The Christmas tree angel had been first on the list. I wondered how he'd handle the second task of choosing wrapping paper.

I recalled what my mum-in-law had said about Henry and Sybil last year. They'd called in after we'd visited Gary's parents.

“We'd all gathered in the kitchen,” she'd said. “The dog happened to be sniffing around the food recycling bin, sniffing around for leftover scraps. As we chatted, the dog tipped the bin over. Before we could stop him, he'd ripped the contents of the caddy liner apart.”

I gasped. “Oh no!”

“There were all-sorts littering the kitchen floor – soggy Brussels sprouts, roast potatoes, giblets, orange peel... it stank to high heaven!”

“Go on.” Talk about Christmas chaos!

“Well, I was absolutely mortified! Dressed in their festive finery, the couple delicately stepped out of the cranberry sauce and gravy smeary mess. Oh, their faces... let's say they weren't very impressed!”

“But surely they'd understand that accidents occur at Christmas?” I'd put in. She'd pulled a face.

“You'd think so, wouldn't you, Rachel? We opened the back door to let the smell out, but the dog picked up a half-eaten turkey leg and ran off into the garden with it! Then, Gary's dad slipped on a Brussel sprout and bumped his head on the edge of the kitchen table!”

“Was he okay?”

“He was fine. We cleared the mess up of course and tried to joke about it, but Henry and Sybil beat a hasty retreat,” Gary's Mum finished.

A few days later, I discovered that Gary had bought the wrapping paper. To my dismay, it had comedy cartoon elves plastered all over it. It was hardly classy and sophisticated!

“I wanted plain shiny silver.” I stifled a sigh.

He hugged me. “Look, I'll be cooking Christmas dinner. That should ease the pressure for you.”

“It does, but we've still got to entertain them, and the house must be spotless.”

“Why must it be spotless, love? Does it matter if there's a satsuma squashed under the sofa?”

“Yes. I don't want to let you down.” Tears spurted.

“Look, this is getting ridiculous. I don't like to see you upset.” He took my hand.

“Enough is enough. They can take us as they find us.”

I grinned. “Good!”

I guessed he wasn't as bad as I'd made out. Then, the phone rang. Gary answered. When the call ended, he faced me. “That was Uncle Henry. They're not coming – they've accepted an invitation to a friend's instead.”

I felt hugely relieved. “So, let's invite Steph and Penny to stay instead.”

“That's a great idea. In fact, it's what I'd call a happy Christmas!” he beamed.

I couldn't argue with that!

ANOTHER FUN QUIZ FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



Questions:

- (1) What is the French word for spectacles?
- (2) What is the emblem of Portugal?
- (3) Who was the first male, black winner of Wimbledon?
- (4) Who invented the card game Poker?
- (5) Who was the first King of England?
- (6) Who invented the first practical

typewriter?

- (7) What is the German word for feather?
- (8) What are the symbols for 12 years of marriage?
- (9) What is xenophobia?
- (10) Who is the current female world champion squash player?
- (11) Where do Brighton and Hove Albion FC play?
- (12) How old was Sven Eriksson when he died?
- (13) Who first played Dracula?
- (14) What is a catalyst?
- (15) What is the currency of Bangladesh?
- (16) When did Marks & Spencers begin?
- (17) What is the capital of Aruba?
- (18) How many people make up a curling team?
- (19) Who invented Jack Daniels?
- (20) Which country grows the most soybeans?

Answers:

- (1) Lunettes (2) The Coat of Arms (3) Arthur Ashe (4) No-one person, evolved from other card games (5) Athelstan (6) Christopher Sholes (7) Feder (8) Silk, linen, the peony flower, jade, opal and oyster white (9) Dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries (10) Nour EL Sherbini (11) Falmer Stadium/Amex Stadium (12) 76 (13) Bela Lugosi (14) Any substance that increases the rate of a reaction without being used up (15) Bangladeshi Taka (16) 1884 (17) Oranjestad (18) 4 (19) Jasper Newton “Jack” Daniel (20) Brazil

Editor's Final Word: Thank you so much for taking the time and the trouble to read this e-magazine, which has lasted for ten years so far! We do hope you have a lovely Christmas and enjoy the New Year celebrations. All the best, Dean, Brenda, Robert, Graham and Willow.