

BEER CAT SCRATCHINGS

FOUR

Ruddles: "How come we don't get a mention?" Tanglefoot: "Beats me."

Continuity and other matters

"Well, here we are, at the Fleadh already"¹ So what? Well, one of the bands at the Fleadh was *The Pogues*, but that's not important right now. Runrig, as mentioned last time round, were also playing²³. Several other enjoyable bands were also playing, so a quick rundown of the event is in order. Of the three stage timetables, the only one running remotely to schedule was the originally named "Fleadh Stage". The "Mean Fiddlers' Marquee" was characterised by accurate timekeeping, but with not necessarily the advertised band. So much so, that the comment came out "Either I was *Much* drunker than I thought, or Mary Coughlan has had a severe body transplant"⁴. Capercaillie were either not there, or were in a different cosmic weather phase from the rest of us, so we didn't see them. We did, however, see Runrig, listened to the Hothouse Flowers, and almost heard Van Morrison, taking in a bit of the aforementioned John Martyn on the way⁵. And lo, the high spot of the evening – Bob Dylan⁶, which only goes to prove that sometimes, some people can be over publicised. After a couple of songs, one of which was probably *All Along the Watchtower*, we came to the conclusion that Bob dylan is a far, far better songwriter than singer, and the reaction of ever increasing numbers of the crowd was "Goodness, is that the time? I'd better be going", with the trickle of folk leaving looking set to become a flood, we took our chance and left.



The Flying 'Apple

No, it's not just another blob on the paper, it is actually meant to be symbolic⁷ of Alan and Donya's leaving party. Once again, fandom converged in a small village just outside Cambridge, and once again, so did the good weather. What can I say? If you were there, then you know what it was like, and if you weren't, then you missed something good⁸.Hugh Mascetti seemed to be desperate for ammunition, and noticed the beer we had brought; "Ahh, *Budweiser*—mortal ammunition. Oh, sorry, it's *real* Budweiser⁹. Is it cold yet?"..... I was drunk enough to remember some of the songs I knew at university¹⁰, as were a few others..... the fire jugglers this time remembered the advice about not doing the full, between the legs routine while wearing a long skirt..... the food lasted until very much late o'clock— as usual..... and finally, having driven to the B&B where were going to be staying, we discovered a room numbering

⁷or is that "shambolic"?

⁸I nearly put "you missed yourself", but then thought about the literal connotations of that, and realised that the phrase "...but only if it's a very sharp pen and a very small sword" sprang to mind. After all, if you missed yourself, what did you hit? More importantly, why is it considered bad if you did miss yourself? Unless, of course, the phrase was devised by a masochist. (*Thinks: does hitting yourself count as self-styled S&M?*)

⁹I worry about veracity in advertising. How can anyone call something the Genuine Article, when it is brewed under licence in a different country? Moral: stick to the Budvar, which everyone apart from Anheuser Busch thinks is the pukka stuff.

¹⁰But sober enough not to remember the really smutty ones.

¹John Martyn, who actually hails from Glasgow, giving his version of how to pronounce the word.

²Little known fact: Runrig, in their early days, used to play Gaelic numbers and old Thin Lizzy covers.

³This then became a running joke while we were there... "Of course, you do realise that (insert band name), started out by doing Thin Lizzy covers..."

⁴"Of course, you do realise that..."

⁵The kind of music that is probably best listened to while attempting to be very mellow and relaxed, if you know what I mean.

⁶"Of course, you do realise that Bob dylan started out by doing Thin Lizzy covers... in fact, he was doing them *before* they were Thin Lizzy covers!"

scheme probably inspired by an innumerate¹¹¹². We were in room 3, or so we thought, and attempted to fit the key in the lock. Just to add to our problems, the landing light refused to work, so we very quietly¹³ worked our way along the hallway until we found a door. Most of the doors had some kind of number on them, but "3" did not seem to be one of them. After a process of elimination, aided by another insomniac guest, who knocked on one of the other doors to ask "Which room are you?" The occupant, having been watching night time TV, with the help of a few beers, felt that this was a non-sequitur to end them all "What?" "What room are you" "Uh... I don't know"¹⁴. We finally found the room, which because of the reasons already stated, was not room 3, but room 03¹⁵.

The following morning, we returned to say our goodbyes properly, and were confronted by the usual assortment of hungry fen devouring breakfast. Strangely, the illest person there was Pam Wells, who hadn't even been drinking. Meanwhile, the lishes all felt fine. I'm sure there's a moral there somewhere...

And finally¹⁶, the bizarre bit¹⁷. After a long bit of

¹¹Or maybe someone with a very limited set of stick-on door numbers.

¹²As opposed to the *Write Now* dictionary, which was merely illiterate, as it wanted to spell the word "Innumerate". Still, at least it is not as cavalier as the *Locoscript* spelling checker, which will always try to find a match, even with people's names.

¹³Or at least as quietly as two people who have just left a party at 3-ish in the morning can be.

¹⁴He was probably very glad to know that the rooms did not act like the bridge (yes that one), from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*— "What is the airspeed velocity of a fully laden swallow?" "African or european swallow?" " Uh... I don't know—

Aaaaaaaaarghhhhh!"

¹⁵There was *also* a Room 3. Just to confuse, you understand.

¹⁶No, it's not a bid for the franchise of *News at Ten* (or any other time)

detective work¹⁸, I have discovered why some people seem to be having such a hard time handing over their hard-earned cash to become members of *Intersection* — the treasurer was actually moonlighting as Prime Minister of Canada. The disguise was minimal — changing her name from KIM to Kim — but all the rest was so obvious; the same name¹⁹, the same nationality, the same sex. What does she take us all for?²⁰

Talking of moonlighting, another bit of bizarre²¹ was indulged in by ourselves on Saturday²² in the nether reaches of Epping Forest. Deciding that Hitch's un-birthday party had reached that certain stage, all the real insomniacs²³ went outside into the forest to commune with the full moon. The obligatory wolf noises were muted, as it was disturbing a toad which was moonbathing on a fallen tree. If it wasn't for the glow of the street lights, and the noise of all the passing traffic²⁴, then it would have been totally magical, but as it was, it was only fairly totally magical.

A final plug — my work colleague, Hugh, is busy making a film. Anyone with any spare time, money and/or experience to help him finish it should let me know...



¹⁷Which is better than the *News at Ten*'s cute and cuddly "And Finally..." After all, does anyone really care whether Jacko the Budgie can do the Tango with next door's parrot?

¹⁸Oh, all right then, A short piece of silly thinking.

¹⁹Campbell, not Boadicea.

²⁰And that's *definitely* a rhetorical question, so you can forget all thoughts likely to result in legal action.

²¹or at least "Shock the Mundanes"

²²Does it really matter which Saturday? Probably not.

²³No doubt practising for our Hogmanay 1.1 party. (It should be obvious *when* it is!)

²⁴Real sad cases — if you haven't already found a good party by 3 am, then you'll just have to admit it — Wallymobile owners don't get invited to parties.