

GENT

WELCOME TO THE CLUB

MAY 2012 ISSUE I



John Haskell
He fought the Atlantic, and won..



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GENT

“We hope this is the start of something special and something you can enjoy with us.”

It's that time of the year again. The rain clouds are moving on and the bright summer sunshine is on its way to make an appearance.

To celebrate, in this May issue of *Gent Mag* we have looked at some of the music festivals taking place in Britain this summer, as well as testing some of the finest ales the world has to offer (all in the name of research for our readers, of course...)

We also have a special sports feature looking at the changing face of football, is it now shifting more towards being a business than a sport? A day watching League Two football soon set us straight.

Of course, with this being our first ever edition, we also made sure we went all out to bring you some of the finest personal stories around - look no further than John Haskell, the fire-fighting father of two who rowed across the Atlantic to raise money for charity. John took some time out of his busy schedule to speak to *Gent*, telling of how his biggest challenge is still to come.

That brings me on to you, our readers. This inaugural magazine has been put together after many weeks of arguing, hard work, and the occasional peace making pint. We would like to hear from you in order for us to keep improving on the content within, this is after all a magazine for each of our valued readers. Contact details can be found on the left hand side of this page.

All that's left for me to say is that we hope this is the start of something special and something which you can enjoy with us. Happy reading.

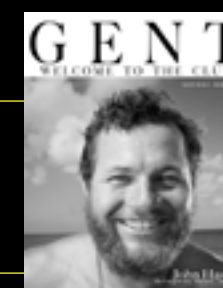
Daniel Lewis



My favourite features this month

1) Atlantic Rower p18
The extraordinary story of one man who rowed across the Atlantic for charity

2) Priced out of the game? p26
Are fans being charged too much to watch their side play?



3) Sounds of the summer p30
Going to a festival this month? Check out our guide to the hottest events taking place over the coming months.

4) Suds of the summer p1
Put on those shades and head to your local beer garden, we have tested some of the finest ales on offer, all for you.

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Beer Festival



Atlantic Rowing



Plymouth vs. Hereford

May News & Events

Flower Power

The Royal Chelsea Flower Show: 22 - 26 May

RHS CHELSEA
FLOWER SHOW



In one of London's loveliest and most naturally beautiful events, the Royal

Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show blooms with perfumed buds and imaginative floral displays between the 22nd and 26th May this year. Garden lovers from all over the UK will gather to witness nature's finest offerings.

The Chelsea Flower Show boasts a number of fantastic new features for the 2012 event, including Fresh - a brand new area which offers modern, inventive gardens and trade stands selling ingenious new products, as well as new food courts and restaurants which allow you to relax in luxurious style.

The Chelsea Flower Show has been held in the grounds of the Chelsea Hospital every year since 1913, (apart from gaps during the two World Wars) and is still going strong to this very day. Although it is not the biggest gardening event on the calendar, it is still certainly the most prestigious. It is also the flower show most associated with the royal family, who every year attend the opening ceremony of the event.

The Great Pavilion has been the stand-out feature of the Chelsea Flower Show for a number of years previous, with its show of awe-inspiring selection of colourful plants and garden displays where many have been left speechless at its beauty.

Last year's show was the most successful gardening exhibition in the history of the prestigious event, and this year they will look to go one better with plans being revealed for the creation of a 'new English style' garden by award-winning, landscape and garden designer Andy Sturgeon for three-time sponsors of the show M & G Investments.

Whatever you love about gardening, this year's Chelsea Flower show is set to be one of the best so far and certainly one that you daren't miss.

Tickets for the event are still available at www.rhs.org.uk/chelseaflovershow and range between £36-£55 for a day ticket and £16-£18 for a half day ticket. On Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 the event is only open to members. Those with a membership receive discount on tickets.

World Fair Trade Day

This May plays host to the 23rd World Fair Trade Day, taking place on Saturday May 12.

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on transparency and respect, that seeks more equal international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers.

However Fair Trade is more than just trading: it proves that greater justice in world trade is possible, and World Fair Trade Day is one of the ways in which this is highlighted. So check their website and find out what events are taking place in your local area and see what you can do to help promote fair trade.

2012 hours to go

London's brand new Olympic Stadium in Stratford is getting a test run on May 5.

With 40,000 fun-seekers attending the event dubbed 2012 Hours to Go. Set on the same day as the FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium, the city will be testing crowd capacity with a bash at the new arena that promises "stunts, games, challenges and prizes," all hosted by big-name celebrities.

The special ticketed event will follow on from the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) Visa Outdoor Athletics Championships.



Englebert's Euro Vision

Hitting our screens once again this month is the highly prestigious Eurovision song contest. This year's competition is the 57th to date and will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan following their triumph last year.

This year the United Kingdom have entered veteran pop-star Engelbert Humperdinck in a bid to bring the trophy home. The 75-year-old, who had number one hits in the form of 'Release Me' and 'The Last Waltz', has written a brand new track - 'Love will set me free' - for this year's competition.

Humperdinck will perform first in the lineup and faces stiff competition from the likes of Jónsi (Iceland), Pastora Soler (Spain), Sabana Babayova - of hosts Azerbaijan - and of course notorious twin double-act Jedward, representing Ireland. Eurovision - which generally tends to end badly for the United Kingdom - will take place on May 26.



Cannes Film Festival

This year marks the 65th annual edition of the renowned Cannes Film Festival which takes place during the 16th - 27th May this year. Founded in 1946, the event to this day has remained faithful and loyal to its purpose to 'draw attention to and raise the profile of films with the aim of contributing towards the development of cinema'.

This year the festival will open with the American film 'Moonrise Kingdom', directed by Wes Anderson, but will also lay foundations to a number of feature and short films in arguably the biggest film event on the calendar.

The film festival this year has also paid homage to the 50th anniversary of stunning actress Marilyn Monroe's death, by using an image of her as the official poster of the festival.

The festival is notorious for its variety and differentiation of cultural film that thousands of people can enjoy, laugh or cry at, and this year will be no different in what is, the most anticipated Cannes Film Festival yet.

SPORT - All the big events this May:

May 4 - Cricket: Opening round of Clydesdale Bank 40 fixtures.

May 5 - Football: FA Cup final: Chelsea vs. Liverpool

May 9 - Football: Europa League Final.

May 10-13 - Golf: Florida: The Players Championship.

May 13 - Formula One: Barcelona: Spanish Grand Prix.

May 17-21 - Cricket: First test, Lords: England vs. West Indies.

May 19 - Football: Champions League Final.

May 21 - Rugby Union: Heineken Cup Final.

May 25-29 - Cricket: Second test, Trent Bridge: England vs. West Indies.

May 26-28 - Football: Football league play-off finals.

May 27 - Rugby Union: RaboDirect Pro 12 final.

May 27 - Formula One: Monte Carlo: Monaco Grand Prix.

May 28 - Tennis: Start of the Roland Garros Open Grand Slam.

Football

The biggest sporting event this month comes in the form of the final of this year's UEFA Champions League, taking center stage in Germany on the 19th May. Hosted at the Allianz Arena in Munich, the venue will surely be a fitting place for what is the most sought after trophy in all of club football. This year's final will no doubt rival the class shown in last year's final between victors Barcelona and runner's up Manchester Utd, and the current holders who still find themselves in the competition, will be determined to hold on to their title. But the tournament is sure to throw up some unlikely twists and turns, for the teams looking towards the road to Germany, and to ultimately be crowned the champion of champions.



The 2012 FA Cup Final will be the 131st final in its history, in what is the world's oldest domestic football competition. Football fans around the UK are buzzing in anticipation when Wembley hosts the FA Cup Final on May 5th. In what will be a London vs. Merseyside final between Chelsea and Liverpool, new holders of the cup are guaranteed after Man City were knocked out in the third round. But who will be crowned the winner of the biggest English trophy and guarantee a place into European football next year?

FLASHBACK

As May sets upon us again, we take a look back at some of the defining moments the month of May has produced.



Ayrton Senna

Generally regarded as one of the greatest F1 drivers to have raced, Senna was tragically killed in a crash in May 1994 at Tamburello whilst leading the San Marino Grand Prix. Senna began his motorsport career in karting, moving up to open-wheel racing in 1981 and winning the British Formula 3 championship in 1983, before making his much anticipated Formula one debut in 1984 where he went down as one of the all time greats.



'Let it be'

Let it be was the 12th – and final – studio album released by The Beatles. It was released on 8 May 1970 by the band's Apple Records label, shortly after the group announced their emotional break-up. The album went down as one of the bands greatest, in fact it will be long remembered as one of the all time great albums, by one of the world's finest bands. It had the largest initial sales in record history up to that point.



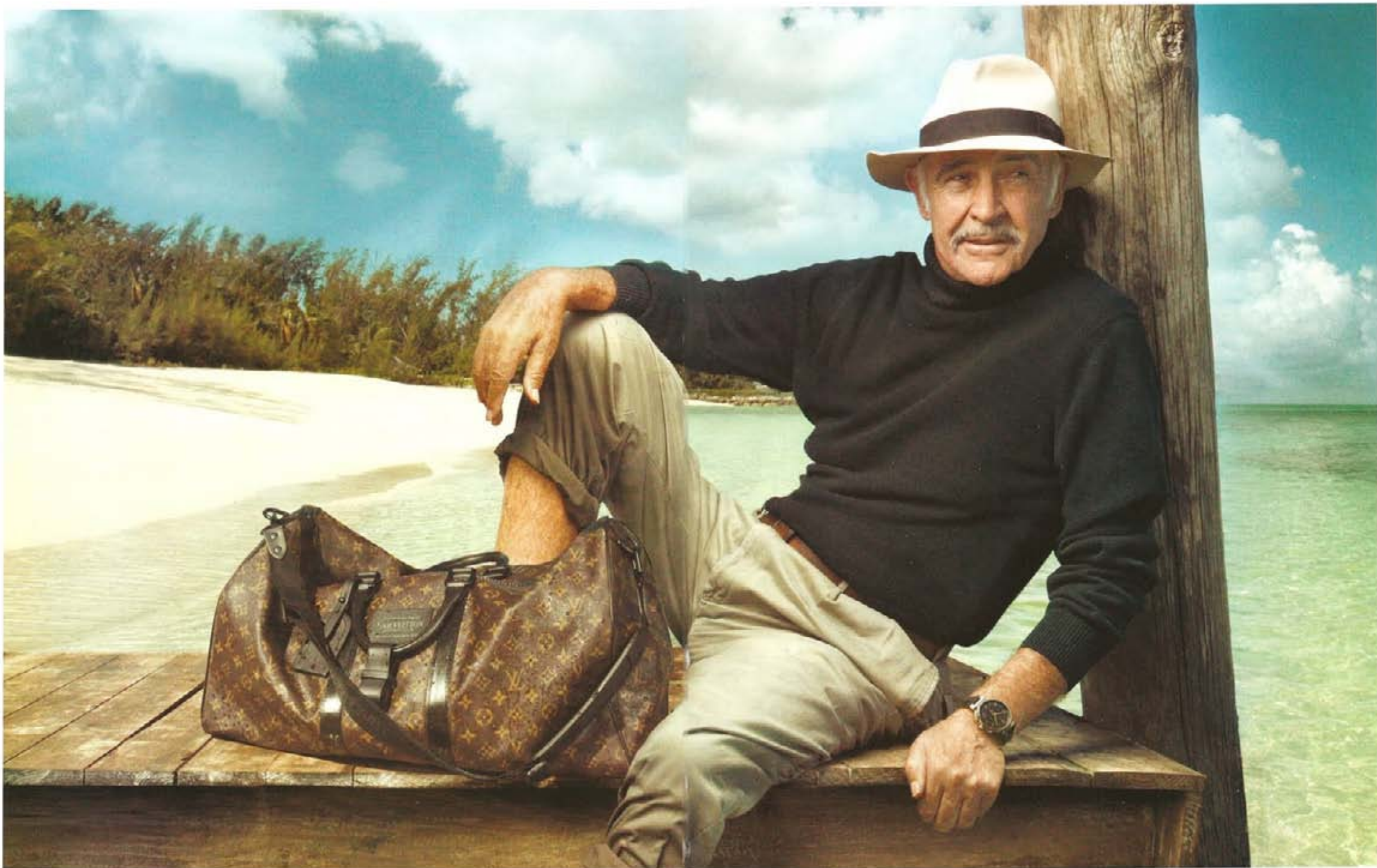
Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela served as President of South Africa from May 1994 through to June 1999, in which time he revolutionised the whole of Africa. The segregation between different cultures and races was abolished, with the country igniting as one. As president, he frequently gave priority to reconciliation, while introducing policies aimed at combating poverty and inequality in South Africa.



Rugby World Cup

The Rugby World Cup was first held in May 1987, with New Zealand and Australia co-hosting the inaugural event. New Zealand went into the tournament as favourites, living up to this tag by winning the trophy. The tournament went on to become the most eagerly anticipated event in the rugby fans' calendars, with it still being watched by millions across the world to this day.



There are journeys that turn into legends. Bahamas Islands, 10:07

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LOUIS VUITTON

Suds of the summer

Gent Mag went along to 'The world's biggest real-ale festival,' to see just what all the fuss is about.

Earlier this year, major supermarket groups announced that the demand for bottled ale was through the roof. In fact, in the run-up to Christmas, Tesco sold around half a million bottles – A 70% increase on the same period a year before.

Demand for ale seems to be at a high, and to coincide with this, we popped along to the festival to sample some of the beers.

The 18 day event run by J D Wetherspoons, in which 50 different ales from around the world were sampled by the public, attracted a lot of attention. On approaching the bar during a sunny weekday afternoon, a gentleman was quick to point us in the direction of the "tastiest ales in the land".

After taking this advice, we sat down with a selection of ales and proceeded to drink in the hope of finding a selection of the finest. The 'Holt Two Hoots' ale which the man at the bar, or Keith as we later found out, recommended to

us was refreshing, with a sweet lingering aftertaste, but certainly enjoyable.

"The thing is with ales, you almost become immune to the different tastes when you drink them for so long, but you can still tell a nice one out from a bad one," Keith tells us.

He's not wrong, our second ale of the afternoon, 'Skinners Riggins' Ale', tastes as though a range of random ingredients have been mixed together, leaving us with a 'hoppy' and sour taste.

But this isn't at all surprising; ale was initially used to describe a drink brewed with hops, unlike beer. Ale is typically fermented at temperatures between 15°C and 24°C, meaning the yeast can produce significant amounts of secondary flavour and aroma. To balance this out, fruit compounds can often be added, such as apples, pears, pineapples, bananas, plums, cherries and even prunes.

It's this huge range of tastes that David Wakes, 45, believes

“That is what makes ales stand out, they are unpredictable in a way.”



The first pints arrive



One of many empty pints

this is the reason why ales are so enjoyable. "There can be a wide range in tastes, you will often get a sour taste, but that is not a bad thing.

"If you try the 'Nøgne ø Bitter' for example, you will get this amazing blend of fruits – that is what makes ales stand-out, they are unpredictable in a way."

Event organiser Mike Peters, 45, believes that the quality of ales has now improved and that they will continue to grow in popularity in the coming years.

"I think people are bored with some of the big named

brands now when it comes to alcohol.

"You are almost being forced these different beers that are competing with each other, but in fact, customers want change. This range of ales that we offer them is certainly different, and it is this desire for change as well as improved quality that has led to the increase of demand."

The Wetherspoons festival and its ranges of 50 different ales, has so far been a big success. In total, five international brewers have travelled from all corners of the globe including America, Belgium, Norway and

Russia as well as the return of the popular 'Zululand Zulu Blonde', from South Africa, which offered a strong after-taste in the mouth.

As usual, the festival offered a good range of ales, which differed in colours, styles, strength and most notably of all – taste (See page 15). With us now in the summer months, you will not find a beer garden without a dedicated ale drinker. Whether it is the element of surprise that tempts you, or the eloquent blend of flavours, the sale of the fermented drink is on the up. Our round, what you having?

THE ALES



Nøgne ø Bitter – 4.5%
This Norwegian brewed ale is amber in colour, with a unique aroma which leads to a delicate, yet bitter flavour resulting in a balanced character with a creamy, buttery finish.
Rating – 5/5



Wolf Brewery Whistle – 4.7%
This lightly hopped beer is reddish in colour and has a delightful citrus aroma, followed by a flavour which allows the characteristics of the locally produced malt to shine through.
Rating – 4/5



Bee-Zone – 4%
This delicate pale beer is brewed using the best quality honey, with a distinctive aroma of citrus fruits and honey. The golden ale is sweet, smooth and delicious blend of grape, fruit, malt and honey.
Rating 3.5/5



Hydes Old Oak – 3.5%
Old Oak is a dark, rich and satisfying beer. Despite its mild style it's packed with flavour, with hints of malt, malt, throughout.
Rating – 3.5/5



Springhead Willy's Wheatbeer – 5.0%
Brewed in the style of a German wheat beer, this ale has a delicate, floral aroma and initial fruity flavour, leading to a long, dry, banana-like finish.
Rating – 2.5/5



Two Hoots – 4.2%
This golden coloured ale has a light and refreshing character, with hints of citrus in the aroma and flavour, leading to a light, slightly sweet aftertaste.
Rating – 4.5/5



Otter Pilgrim – 4.8%
This Danish brewed beer is mid brown in colour and has a classic English character with fruity undertones. With a smooth texture and sweet flavour, Otter Pilgrim certainly packs a punch.
Rating 2/5



Skinner's Riggins' Ale – 4.5%
This rich, golden-brown coloured ale is made with 100% Cornish malt and whole hops flowers, resulting in a character where malt, fruit and floral aromas combine with a hoppy, slightly bitter taste.
Rating 3.5/5



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From fighting fire to fighting waves

When saving lives and fighting fire wasn't enough, one man went that step further to do his bit. Meet John Haskell, the man who rowed the Atlantic Ocean.



Some would say, John Haskell isn't your average fireman. He drives the big red truck, he puts out the blaze and he saves lives just like any other firefighter, but what most don't do, is row across the Atlantic Ocean. For charity.

Just weeks ago, 43-year-old John completed the Talisker Whiskey Challenge. Successfully, with his team-mate Jamie, he rowed nearly 3000 miles from La Gomera in Tenerife to Port St Charles in Barbados in 45 days, to raise nearly £25,000 for a number of charities.

After surviving fifty foot waves, oncoming ships and all the forces of nature, you would expect John would be happy to be at home and put his feet up, but the adventurer inside him is uncontrollable and John is only too eager to reminisce about the experience.

"It was amazing. Absolutely fantastic experience and I'd definitely do it again" says John with a smile on his face. John's enthusiasm for his achievement is clear for us to see, from day one he believed he could do this.

"We did have a bit of trouble about three weeks before we set off. We got told we didn't have the proper qualifications to do the row, so we had to race away down to Southampton and do a week-long course. Not ideal when we had so much to prepare!"

But John and his team mate Jamie did get going. The months

of hard work were finally going to be put to use, as Team Atlantic Dash took to the water to begin their aquatic adventure.

But once the adventure was underway, it wasn't long before the team were in trouble again. With unpredictable weather and strong currents to compete with, it was never going to be easy, but as they set off, they never expected it to be quite as rough as the first week was.

"The weather was so bad. The seas got rough, it was really stormy. Fifty foot waves were just battering us from all sides, at one point the boat was at a 90 degree angle, we just got chucked about. I smashed my leg up and an oar snapped, but luckily we didn't capsize."

Thankfully, winds were behind them and before they knew it the team were already at the halfway point, much quicker than they had expected. But the early storms they faced were only a sign of things to come.

Not only does the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge require incredible physical endurance but it also requires emotional endurance and nerves of steel. With no support crews nearby, the row is completely unsupported and the pair took a big risk.

"We took the decision to take no life jackets. When you're in the water, you can be there for days and days, there is no easy way of getting back into the boat, so we felt we were better off



just taking no lifejackets."

'The darkness, the waves, it was terrifying'

John is a strong guy. He is athletic and his upper body is muscular, as you would expect after an endurance row like he has completed, but despite this he is not afraid to admit how terrified he was. As he talks to us, you can quickly see that every moment of his journey will live with him.

"You know when you step off a kerb and there is a car coming and you get that 'sh*t that was close' feeling? I felt like that for weeks on end." John tells us.

"When we first set off we were in a full moon cycle but as the days went by the light we had waned. We had no moon, no stars and we were left in darkness. It was blacker than the blackest black you could ever imagine, you couldn't even see the ends of your oars."

"It was terrifying, knowing that during the day, the night shift was still to come. The darkness, the waves, it was just terrifying."

The night, or 'graveyard' shift, as John calls it, was one of many terrifying experiences they encountered, and John recalls more for us.

"There were some very frightening times. I especially remem

Words by Ben James



Pictures by Team Atlantic Dash

ber one encounter. We had a radar that would alert us when other ship's were near and the alarm. Once we heard it, we ignored it because we were happy that once it'd gone off for us, it had gone off in there cabin as well. But then the next thing you know a ships coming over the horizon coming straight for us and this thing was big, like a cliff coming at us. We were screaming down the radio at them, trying to warn them. Jamie grabbed the oars and tried to row away from it but then luckily they heard the radio. They immediately apologised and said they'd seen us appear on the radar but couldn't see the boat, so just carried on."

"From then on we were vigilante. Whenever it went off we'd be on the radio saying look were a small rowing vessel have you seen us? Some of them were chatty, saying 'good luck, what you doing, where you from?'"

I had huge boils on my arse; they were like they had been lined up by an architect!

"We also put a hole in a catamaran." John tells us as he laughs. "He came to have a look at us, he thought we were joking when we said we were rowing! He thought we were crazy. Then as he sailed off, we got caught in a swell and crashed right into him. Luckily we didn't hit him too low; else the catamaran would've flooded."

The damage to the catamaran wasn't the only damage encountered on the journey either. A partial break to their own boats rudder was sustained, in what proved to be one of the low points of John's adventure.

"Our rudder broke. Me and Jamie had to get in the water and

try to fix it. We'd been warned not to make noise in the water or splash too much because of sharks, but even though they were swimming about, we had to get it done before we got dragged off course. We managed to fix it, but I felt guilty. I admitted to Jamie afterwards, that a part of me wanted us to not be able to fix it so we could call for rescue and it would all be over. But he said to me 'a part of me wants a shark to bite a quarter of my foot off,' I asked him why only a quarter and he told me 'so I can still go mountain biking.'

John admitted there were times when it was a struggle, times when he felt he couldn't go any more, when the exhaustion got too much and times where he feared for his life.

"There were times when I thought to myself 'what have I done?' At times we didn't phone home because it was a bit like saying goodbye, we thought that was it, we thought the boat was going to go over and we were terrified. So there were certainly low points, where I went to some dark, dark places, both me and Jamie would just not speak, we were like robots – do our shift, go to sleep, wake up, do our shift."

"When it came to writing in my journal I would say 'got nothing left to give, I'm exhausted,' then a week later I would put again 'got nothing left to give, really



exhausted,' It was really tough."

"Separation from my family and people in general was hard. There was a lot of being solo due to our shifts, so the lack of contact was hard. But also the terror of it, the absolute sheer terror of thinking you are going to get washed overboard, scared you're going to capsize, it was real fear."

There were even times when the physical pain became unbearable, reducing a grown man to tears.

"I lost all the skin on my goolies, the salt just rotted away the skin where it was rubbing. I had huge boils on my arse; they were like they had been lined up by an architect! I was in real agony, with big open sores on my arse, legs, armpits, anything that rubbed and there was nothing I could do about it, we just had to go through it. I couldn't help but cry. It was that painful."

Despite all of the terror John faced, the trip also provided him with many great moments. He tells us of one encounter which he considers one of his defining moments.



"We had a wicked encounter with whales. That'll stay with me forever. It was spiritual, weird, magic. I was rowing and we were in 50ft waves and this big green shape came up and I shouted 'Jimbo, I think there's a whale!' He stuck his head out of the cabin while I rowed and the whale was in the wave looking at me through it. It was a 30ft Minky Whale and it was actually higher than sea level because it was caught in the wave. It was unbelievable."

The enduring row also meant John was separated from his family over the festive period. John's wife and two young children had remained in contact via a satellite phone, but Christmas day proved tough. Pre-prepared Christmas boxes were opened on-board and included amongst other things a Santa hat, a musical Christmas tie and letters from the kids.

"It was really tough being away from them. When I read the letters, I just cried. We didn't really get to talk on Christmas because the phone was playing up, which made it harder. The kids loved most of it though; my daughter was giving progress reports to all her classmates in school each week. They are really proud and they coped well."

But despite this, John and Jamie tried to celebrate Christmas as best as they could.

"We had to carry on rowing to keep the boat straight, because the weather was rough, but we



had some whiskey and chocolate for breakfast, and we had some parcels wrapped up for us, so we opened those and there was a lot of booze in there. We also had a lot of cards from the family, so we opened those and drank some of the beer."

Since returning home, John has re-watched some of the footage and one of his highlights from what he has seen was filmed on Christmas day. Even seeing for the first time a tough moment in the row, John is able to laugh about it now.

"I saw some footage the other day. It was Christmas and I had opened my Christmas box, had a musical tie on, a Santa hat and was stark bollock naked singing 'f*cking jingle, f*cking bells' grumpy as hell as I rowed! I was chuckling to myself watching it again."

The challenge the team took on was all for charity. They successfully raised over £25,000 for the Firefighters Benevolence Fund, Breast Cancer Care and Help For Heroes, three charities very close to John's heart. And the team are still raising money now, after receiving invitations to be guest-speakers at a number of events.

The voyage itself had been testing - physically and emotionally - and diet played a huge part in that. The team had loaded the boat up with expedition meals and freeze dried ready meals. After getting through most days on just a small snack bag containing items like Mars Bars and Flapjacks, the team were not well fed. Prior to setting off, they had planned to make hot meals, but that plan went awry, when the first three weeks were so rough that cooking was not an option. And once the sea calmed, the cooker only lasted two days before breaking, leaving the team



trying to make the ready meals with cold water. But the high energy, high fat meals ended up congealing in the mouth and being nothing more than lumpy mush.

LAND AHOY!

Despite the challenges John faced - the food, the injuries, the dangers - as the adventure drew to a close, he began to come to terms with just how much he had achieved.

"I feel like I earned every single mile. Fifty miles from Barbados I was saying 'I don't care if the boat sinks now; I've fought for every single one of these miles. I've gone this far and I'm happy and content with that'. I was quite naive to it really, rowing the Atlantic. It's only now I think 'Sh*t man, that's bonkers!' If I see a map somewhere, I'll look and go 'Ah sh*t I can't believe I've done it'."

As they first saw Barbados, John explains the overload of emotion he experienced.

"When it finally appeared I screamed 'land ahoy!' It was just amazing. The emotions were crazy at this time. We'd spoken to our families and they'd landed and the villa was sorted and the kinds were excited. The emotions were just bonkers, that last period, when were like 'yeah

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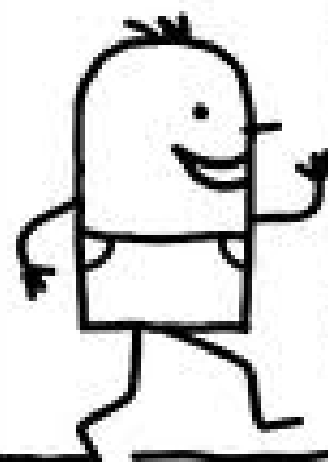
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we're almost there', that was hard, because we sort of finished in our heads too early."

But despite a hairy finish as they rowed in over the ferocious currents of the coral reef, they crossed the finish line in a time of 45 days and 19 hours. After crossing the official finish line, the team had a four hour row before docking and being able to step foot on land once again and the smile lights up on John's face as he re-tells us of the moment. The pair had dressed up for the occasion – they'd put on clean underwear to greet their families once again.

"It was absolutely amazing, stepping ashore grabbing the kids, the emotions were just bonkers, an overload. A total perceptual overload. It was amazing. As we came ashore, with all the emotions going on, I was like all floaty. I had sea legs for three days and could barely stand up! We had to fill out customs forms and I was nearly having a panic attack, I was fending one off, it was just so surreal".

Also waiting to greet the team was the local Barbadian fire service, who John had contacted 18 months before the row. The local branch drove down with two fire engines to greet the rowers at the dock.

"They were our best mates for two weeks! They brought food to our villa, they took us scuba diving, showed us around the island, and we went on the town a few times as well. They were great."

Next stop, South Pole.

John's achievement is nothing short of remarkable, but he still remains extremely humble about it. As a 43-year-old man, he is used to his day to day family life, the routine of work and hav-

The pair celebrate on land



ing a family and caring for them, but he is very open in admitting that the Atlantic Challenge has changed his life.

"I've come back now and my motivation for everyday life is just gone. All I'm interested in is expeditions. It's changed my outlook on life completely. We rush through life especially with family and a job and you never really sit and think to yourself. You've always got music on or you're driving or distracted but out there while you're rowing, you think about everything. How mean you were to ex-girlfriend's and the rights and wrongs in your life. It definitely changes you, without a doubt. It makes you a better person and I felt so privileged to be out there with the horizon around you for weeks at a time."

And the change of mindset John has encountered has inspired him to keep the adventure in his life going, as he is already setting plans for his next expedition. In 2014, John aims to venture to the South Pole. He is set to follow the in the footsteps of Captain James Scott and walk the same route. John acknowledges the Welsh connection and intends to follow further in Scott's footsteps by planting a Welsh flag at the South Pole.

It's not often in life you meet people who are an inspiration, but though he may not acknowledge himself to be one, he is. The

An emotional reunion as John embraces his kids



Atlantic Challenge he has completed is remarkable and something that should be held in high regard. But despite everything he battled through, he doesn't regret it for a second.

"I'd do it all again, as bad as it was. Definitely. More boats than ever before got rescued this year, but we made it. I'd do it again and hopefully be able to enjoy it more, in better weather! We planned to go fishing and snorkling, we had the gear but instead we thought 'let's just get this done and get out of here and we rowed and we rowed like hell'".

"It was the best and worst times of my life out on that ocean. You can go from utter elation, from being stood up doing naked air guitar to Metallica, bouncing in your seat from elation and then twenty minutes later a big storm - that was almost like a comedy cloud with rain underneath - was coming towards you and you'd be gutted and crying again."

"When they say a rollercoaster of emotions, it really was."

Reviews

Gent Mag brings you reviews of all the latest releases in the worlds of entertainment, music and literature.

Film

The Cold Light of Day

In a film that boasts stars like Bruce Willis and Sigourney Weaver, you'd expect *The Cold Light of Day* to offer a high standard, but sadly it fails to do so in this amateurish thriller.

Willis stars as a CIA agent that endangers his family after a holiday in Spain goes wrong, and leaves it up to his son (Henry Cavill) to save his kidnapped family from the hands of intelligence operatives demanding the return of a briefcase.

We're then introduced to Weaver as a shady agent type being chased

by Cavill in Madrid, while he tries to learn more about his Spanish half-sister.

The story line is poor and the acting even more so. Just when you think something big will happen, you are left clutching at straws.

Cavill's debut lead performance is wooden and nervy with Weaver and Willis contributing little more than names in a second rate film. *The Cold Light of Day* is not an Oscar winner by any stretch of the imagination.

Rating: ★★ (out of five)

The Wrath of the Titans

The Clash of the Titans sequel provides exactly what audiences expected, an action pact roller-coaster ride which sees Greek gods Zeus (Liam Neeson) and Hades (Ralph Fiennes) collide.

When the latter imprisons the 'Taken' star in the Underworld with the help of Zeus's disgruntled son Ares (Edgar Ramirez), It is up to demi-god Perseus (Sam Worthington) the favoured son of Zeus, to rescue his father and save the world from oblivion.

However, where it impresses with stunning vis-

ual effects, the dialogue lacks any real substance or storyline, seeming as if it were an afterthought with the focus purely on the clashes between the monsters and legends of Greek mythology.

The appearance of Bill Nighy as a comic relief, and lack of the beautiful Gemma Arterton as Io, cap off a film that disappoints in terms of its content but amazes with its full on start to end scenes of glorious fighting and horrifying creatures, in the battle between good and evil.

Rating: ★★★★★

Books

Cop To Corpse - Peter Lovesey

In Lovesey's superlative 12th novel, it is up to Chief Superintendent Peter Diamond to unravel the identity of the so called 'Somerset Sniper', who has executed three Police Constables in three months with no clear motive of why he is targeting officers of the law.

Lovesey's book thrills and intrigues with Diamond and his colleagues coming ever so close in a number of nail-biting encounters to closing in on the insane killer, only to see him escape and threaten to extend his

cold blooded reign of terror.

Lovesey keeps you on the edge of your seat in this fast paced thrill ride that could only be the brainchild of this brilliant, intellectual crime author.

In a book that boasts a magnificent plot and identifiable main protagonist; any reader interested in the thriller genre would be foolish to miss this cat and mouse tale of uncertainty, suspense and murder that could be the final investigation of Chief Superintendent Peter Diamond.

Rating: ★★★★★

Calico Joe - John Grisham

Set in the summer of 1973, *Calico Joe* tells the story of rookie baseball star Joe Castle. Castle is a young man called upon in a time of need and he steps up to the plate and shatters every rookie record in the book.

But the real story in this book is about the relationship between one young man and his father. It is a tale of forgiveness.

Castle becomes the idol of every baseball fan in America, including Paul Tracey, the son of rival player, Warren Tracey.

Paul was in the stands

on the day his father faced his idol, but what happened that day would change their whole relationship.

With *Calico Joe*, John Grisham returns with another story of sports and hope and from the moment the book begins, it's impossible to put down.

Grisham once again gets the balance right and captures how a simple sport can have such emotional consequences. For all Grisham fans, this is simply a must read book.

Rating: ★★★★★

Paul McCartney: Kisses on the bottom



Paul McCartney's new album 'Kisses on the Bottom' is one of the more ambitious efforts by the ex-Beatle. This should be good news to those who have criticised him for being too 'middle of the road'.

Paul has created an album consisting of a number of covers of legendary jazz songs that Paul heard through his childhood, as well as his own compositions. Attempting such classics is a brave move that only Paul would dare to cover, especially with guests such as Eric Clapton and Stevie Wonder adding their own touches of genius.

The album has undeniable quality in terms of music, and Paul sings well, but the problem with 'Kisses on the Bottom' is that it's not likely to appeal to a wide audience. I'd like to think I have quite an eclectic taste in music, but the few songs I have heard of were through my grandmother. The fact that a lot of the songs were made in the 1930's is inevitably going to put a lot of fans off, and personally, I can't see it being an album I put on too often.

'Kisses on the Bottom' is a beautifully created album, further showing his passion for music of all variety, and for any "Macca" fan, it's good to see Paul still having the same enthusiasm after all these years, and although I may not be a big fan of this album, long may this enthusiasm continue.

Rating: ★★★★★

Bruce Springsteen: Wrecking Ball



On the surface, it may seem that Bruce Springsteen's finest records are all about escape. As much as this may be true, all these themes are tackled head on – there is escape but there is no running away. Half of *Wrecking Ball*, his 17th studio record – aims to escape the banker.

We Take Care Of Our Own, the album's leadoff single, opens the record. It's everything a casual listener would expect. The soul of The E Street Band, Clarence Clemons, passed away last year - he's physically there on two songs – but spiritually – his presence is all over it.

Jack Of All Trades is Springsteen pleading for America to provide jobs for the everyman and he sings about his country's injustices. This Depression see's him sounding more like Tom Waits than ever before.

Land Of Hope And Dreams is over ten years old, first appearing on the Live In New York City release. It shares a euphoric saxophone break, as that of the live recording: at three minutes forty five seconds – up steps 'the big man' for the first of his solos. Clarence Clemons dies when The E Street Band dies.

When you listen to *Wrecking Ball*, you never get the sense – this man is 62 years old! Bruce Springsteen was born with a fire inside him, that fire burns throughout this record.

Rating: ★★★★★

Norah Jones: Little Broken Hearts



Norah Jones arrived on the scene in 2002 with *Come Away With Me* and quickly became the darling of adult orientated radio stations. She was a record companies dream: attractive, but not so that women would turn against her; lyrics that didn't offend and were non-political and a sound which accompanied life rather than interfering with it.

It's been ten years and three albums since that debut but the evolution of Jones's sound continues.

Little Broken Hearts is produced by Danger Mouse, one half of Gnarls Barkley, He combines the modern with the old.

The first single, *Happy Pills*, starts off sounding like Queen's *I Want To Break Free*. It's very minimal - but polished for the radio.

Travellin' On will be more familiar to the millions who fell in love with her music. Her voice is backed by strummed guitar and cello. All very homely? It would have been, if left in the hands of a Nashville producer and not an experimental one. Her pure, unhampered voice is now processed to take away the warmth - but it works here.

Say Goodbye, the album's second song, has a repetitive piano figure running throughout. When it fades, Jones takes over, singing about lost love with the same melody.

As much as Norah Jones tries to get away from what made her successful – the best parts of *Little Broken Hearts* revisit it.

Rating: ★★★★★

THE B£AUTIFUL GAME?

Jock Stein once said: "Football is nothing without it's fans." But in the modern day, football is becoming more of a business. **Gent Mag** left the glitz and glamour of the Premier League behind and took to the terraces to experience football as we all know and love it.

As we arrive at Edgar Street for the bank holiday showdown, the gap between Premier League and Football League couldn't be any wider.

Whilst the likes of Manchester City splash out billions of pounds on players and playing facilities, Hereford United rely on income from gate receipts and match-day sales. The derelict ground stands alone in the town centre, attracting an average attendance of 2,300 fans – It's certainly not glamorous, but with around 1,200 Plymouth fans making the trek north to this classic old football ground, a relegation six pointer is expected. And it's not going to be pretty...

Hereford fans know all too well about how the attendances in these parts have fallen, along

with the club. The days of averaging 8,000 back in the 70s has fallen to just a couple of thousand as the club looms dangerously inside the relegation zone, with non-league football awaiting them should they fail to overturn a four point deficit.

Bulls' fan of 53 years Tony Lamb, 67, believes that as steep pricing strategies drive fans away, the passion for the game will slowly drift away. "The thing is..." Tony tells us "Fans at top sides like Arsenal, Chelsea and both Manchester clubs will pay anything, and I mean anything to watch their side play.

"Football fans are passionate, but it will be a matter of time before supporters will just stop – the prices will just carry on increasing and fan numbers will drop. It's as simple as that."

These are views shared by

Alan James, 52, who believes that you only have to look at a recent Premier League match in which away fans were charged a whopping £67 for match-day tickets. "Man City fans went to Stamford Bridge and paid a fortune, just before Christmas.

"For me fans are treated dreadfully, gone are the days when a few quid would last you the day, now I spend all-in-all about £25 per game when you take it all into account."

"My garden shed. Is bigger than this!"

As Edgar Road begins to fill up for what is expected to be close to a sell-out clash between two sides at the bottom of the Football League, we speak to Plymouth Argyle fan Rob Rayne, 33, who tells us a little more about the standard



of football we can expect to see.

"It's never been pretty, mainly long ball stuff from us, but to be fair it is effective in the lower leagues so I can't see it ending soon.

"It's not going to be a thriller, but what you will see is a lot of passion"

And Rob is certainly not wrong. This may not be a top of the table Premier League clash, but for the winner it offers a priceless three points to climb away from that dreaded relegation zone.

As he tucks into his overpriced pie, Rob tells us: "What I've noticed from our time in League 2 is that fans in these lower leagues are a very loyal and passionate bunch - fans will travel miles across the land to watch football, it's what we love." "You wouldn't see this happen in the Premier League, the prices for a footie match could and should be a lot cheaper given the economy.

"No more than £20 a ticket maximum - more fans would attend which would make up for the losses, a little common sense is needed for the good of



Words & pictures by Dan Lewis

the game"

With Rob's rant over and chants of "My garden shed is bigger than this" slowly beginning to echo around the arena, the players enter the field to a roar of applause from all four corners of the derelict ground. It is clear to see just how the gap between the big money spenders at the top of the English pyramid at a side like Her-

Fans will travel miles across the land to watch football. It's what's what we love."

ford rooted to the bottom of the Football League differs so greatly.

The stadium has been at the centre of the club's financial troubles for the last decade, with any proposed redevelopment of the 88-year-old stadium being halted. With the ground being located in central Hereford, it was originally suggested by club directors that they should move in order to repay a £1.3million debt. With the Blackfriars Street stand that we are situated in slowly decaying over the last 20 years, temporary seating has been brought in after finally closing the original stand in the sum-

mer of 2009. This new 650 capacity stand will hold the Plymouth fans today, as well as the Len Weston stand which is sea of green as the Pilgrims sense that today could be the day they pull clear of trouble.

"Sort it out you bunch of bottlers!"


The match takes a while to take off, with Plymouth having the better of the early chances. Though in a moment that in many ways encapsulates both the standard of football and sheer passion, Hereford captain



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Stefan Stam puts the ball into the back of his own net after kneeing it over his own keepers head. The Plymouth fans run to the front of the makeshift seating area, being met by their players who come to celebrate with those who made the four hour journey.

In many ways, this is what it is all about. Though the joy soon turns to despair as influential Argyle midfielder and Captain, Simon Walton rattles the post with a penalty, moments after Nick Chadwick missed what was essentially an open goal in front of his own fans.

Hereford began the second-half like a different side, spurred on by Plymouth's lack of a cutting-edge. Just before the hour mark the home side get their reward as on-loan English striker Tom Barkhuizen finishes calmly past Jake Cole to make it all square.

As the match peters out and the standard lowers, the fans in all four corners of the ground vent their frustration towards their players. "Do we want to stay in this division or what? Sort it out you bunch of bottlers!" Roars one fan as Robbie Williams appears to pull out of



Team spirit personified

a tackle.

The fans may appear to be frustrated, but as the full time whistle blows and the fans empty into the streets of Hereford, there are smiles all around, despite the result not doing any good to either side.

It's at times like this, as the surrounding pubs begin to fill with a mixture of both sets of fans hand-in-hand, that you must remind yourself: Football is still the same game as it was 50 years ago and inflated prices won't stop that. Football really is the beautiful game, and these fans wouldn't have it any other way.



Hereford's lucky escape

Bottom to top in under a decade - How a Swan sees:

A recent Virgin Money survey revealed that across the four divisions, from the Premiership summit through to the League Two basement, the average price of a match ticket has now gone through the £25 barrier for the first time.

Swansea City fan Matt Philips has seen his side move through the divisions, from bottom of the Football League in 2004 to top flight status in 2011 – The Swans have certainly experienced it all.

How does the standard of football differ through the divisions from what you have seen?

I didn't notice the difference so much before until this season, but there definitely is a difference in standard. I wouldn't say there was too much difference from League 1 & 2 though.

This season, even poor teams like Wigan have caused problems, they play at a quicker tempo than a lot of Championship teams, but then the likes of Blackburn and Stoke do just hoof the ball and are more direct.

You have to play at 100% with 100% concentration for the whole game to get anything, but the games are played at a quicker tempo which is more noticeable the higher up you go.

How do ticket prices from the Premier League to the lower divisions differ?

It depends, I paid £50 to watch Chelsea away, but Bolton is only £15, Arsenal was £35, but the average is £25 for an away game. I paid over £30 for Norwich & Ipswich in the Championship last

season and there were hardly any games under £25 either from what I remember.

Swansea charge £35 for a matchday ticket this season, which is significantly higher, but worth it for the league we're in.

Do you think it is fair that fans are expected to spend such a large amount to watch their side?

Football's a business and clubs have to make profit, especially Swansea as our capacity is only 20,000. It also has to be affordable for fans, this season we have sold out every home game, but maybe in a few seasons (should we still be in the PL), the novelty may wear off a little and the prices may have to be lowered.

I don't think it's fair, but I can understand it. You pay for quality.

SOUNDS OF THE SUMMER

Festival season is looking bright for the United Kingdom this summer, with some major headline acts being announced along with a plethora of other musical talent, both old and new. No Glastonbury this year has been a benefit to other festivals. With so many of these getting great headline acts, how do we decide which is going to be the best festival for you? We've looked at some of this year's best festival lineups in order to discover which one is right for you.

Bestival is the Isle of Wight's smaller festival, but that hasn't stopped them from getting some big headline acts for the year. They've managed to get American, Motown icon, Stevie Wonder this year, a big name that alone will pull a big number of people. Manchester pioneers, New Order are also headlining the festival, though this year they are without bassist, Peter Hook, which is going to be a big gap to try and fill. Bestival is known for getting alternative acts into the lineup and this year's is particularly good. Folk singer Ben Howard is definitely a talent worth seeing as well as this year's big discovery Michael Kiwanuka. Female art-pop group, Warpaint is also one to watch, with their retro sound and perfect harmonies. Gary Numan, Earth, Wind and Fire and rockney geezers Chas and Dave are just a few names on the massive line up. Bestival takes place 6th-9th September.



The Isle of Wight festival has hit the jackpot this year, managing to secure 'The Boss', Bruce Springsteen, as one of their headline acts. His recently released album, Wrecking Ball, along with an impressive performance at the Grammy Awards has shown critics that he hasn't lost it. This is an impressive string to the festival's bow and if you're still not convinced, there's plenty more that will win you over. The 90's alternative rock band, Primal Scream, will also be headlining along with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. Noel Gallagher adds to the big names of the festival with his new band, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds. Madness along with Elbow, Noah and the Whale, Big Country, The Charlatans and Terry Reid will also be at this year's Isle of Wight festival. The Isle of Wight festival will take place between the 21st and 24th of June 2012.

You might not have heard of **Green Man Festival**, but it's becoming bigger and more impressive every year. Taking place in Glanusk Park near Crickhowell, Green Man is an independent festival, covering genres like Indie, Psychedelic, Electronica and a heavy emphasis on Folk. The line up has become more and more impressive with the Fleet Foxes headlining last year. This year is just as impressive with legendary singer/songwriter, Van Morrison, Indie-Folk supreme, Feist, Modern Lovers' front man Jonathan Richman and upcoming Soul sensation Michael Kiwanuka. Known for being a festival with a relaxed vibe, with real ale tents and quirky stalls, Green Man's definitely one to consider.



The news that The Stone Roses were reforming sent ripples through the world of music in late 2011. The legendary four piece has recently been announced to be the headline act at this year's **V festival**, a massive name on the festival line up which will no doubt be a huge attraction to any festival fan.

The Killers are to be the other headline act, less exciting perhaps, but still a big name for the festival. Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds and Snow Patrol also light up the line up. Some of the more mature acts are also making an appearance at V festival with Tom Jones, Madness, The Stranglers, The Proclaimers and The Human League all making an appearance. There are a number of young and exciting musicians also set to play the festival like Folk singer Ben Howard and multi-award winner Ed Sheeran.

V Festival takes place 21st – 22nd August.



Hop Farm Festival is one of the less known British festivals, yet they've managed to get some big names since their beginning in 2008, where they managed to secure Neil Young as their headline act. They have continued to get iconic headline acts this year with the legendary Bob Dylan set to hit the stage. Ex-Genesis front man, Peter Gabriel, and britpop band, Suede, are also listed as headliners. There are more big names in this year's line up with Patti Smith and her band making a rare appearance at the festival. American folk rock band My Morning Jacket, Billy Ocean, The Stranglers and Primal Scream are among a long list of names showing how Hop Farm is establishing itself as a big festival this year.

Hop Farm festival takes place 29th June to the 1st July.



Latitude festival has been getting better and better, with more impressive headline acts being announced each year.

This year is no different with The Modfather and Paul Weller being announced recently, along with Mercury prizewinners, Elbow and the great Bon Iver.

It's not just the headline acts that are likely to persuade you to go to Latitude, they have got some of the best new artists around with appearances from soul singer, and BBC Sound of 2012 winner, Michael Kiwanuka. His recent album, Home Again, has been

one of the more impressive albums of 2012. The Brit Awards Best Solo Singer 2011, Laura Marling, has wowed the folk scene over the last few years and will also be performing. The list goes on with even more big names like ex-Pulp member, Richard Hawley, as well as soul singer, Janelle Monae gracing the lineup.

Latitude is also known for offering great comedy. Jack Dee, Al Murray, Tim Minchin, Reginald D. Hunter and Rich Hall are just a few the acts that will be performing.

Latitude festival will take place between the 12th and 15th of July 2012.

Welcome to Plymouth

Wonderful walks, stunning scenery and lavish local cuisine. Just some of the reasons why the perfect weekend break may not be as far away as you thought...

Don't you just get sick of going to places that are so stereotypically touristy? The kind of place where everyone stops to pull out their cameras and crowd around the most mundane historical landmark ever?

Sometimes, you need a genuine break. You need an escape from work, from stress, from all your troubles. You need to get away for a couple of days just to relax and treat yourself. You see adverts on the TV, offering you cheap trips to spectacular cities across Europe, but sometimes you find that what you need most, is right on your doorstep. If you want a weekend away from home, that will relax and refresh you, then look no further than Plymouth.

Plymouth, is the hidden gem of the Southern Coastline. It is a city of history, beauty and pleasure combining the old with the new. Now, Plymouth is a modern city of 275,000 people, offering a wide range of shops, pubs, restaurants, theatres and sports facilities amongst other things. The surrounding countryside of Dartmoor and Cornwall is some of the most spectacular and naturally beautiful scenery in Britain.

One of the 'must' visits on your trip to Plymouth is the Barbican. The historic harbor is packed with an eclectic mix of Victorian style shops and brand new sights, including the National Marine Aquarium, the UK's largest aquarium. The seafront is packed with cafés and restaurants, so hang around and enjoy a traditional Devon cream tea, some fresh local seafood or a quick bite to eat in one of the many harbour side restaurants whilst taking in the waterfront views.

Just up the hill from the Barbican, is Plymouth Hoe. The hoe offers breath-taking scenery and is great for photography and an even better place to just relax. Climb Smeaton's Tower, the famous lighthouse and walk along the waterfront, taking in the beautiful surroundings.

If you fancy a bit of shopping, then only five minutes away is the high street, packed with all your big brands. There is also the newly developed Drake Circus, the shopping centre at the top of the high street, which caters for all your shopping desires.

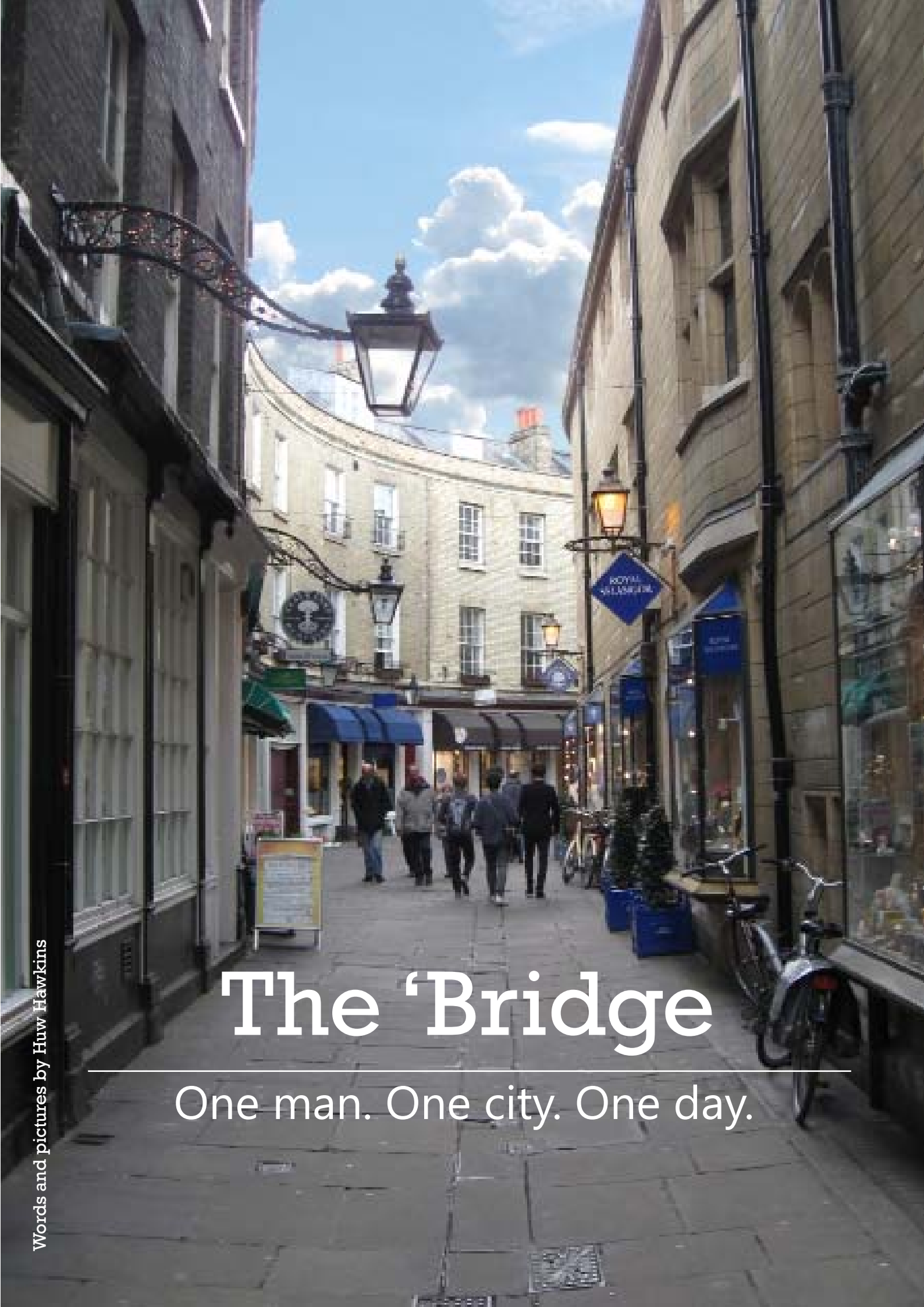
Even in the nighttime, Plymouth is packed with entertainment. Not only does the Barbican offer a number of fantastic restaurants, but the Theatre Royal in the city centre can provide you with your daily dose of culture. The nearby Plymouth Pavilions is also a great venue that attracts a range of big name bands, comedians and performers, both old and new. So be sure to plan ahead when you book your trip to see what's going on while you're in the city.

Plymouth is also right on the cusp of Dartmoor, one of the biggest national parks in the country. If walking takes your fancy, Dartmoor is the place to be. With scenery that is hard to rival, Dartmoor is a great place to stretch the legs and take in the views.

Also nearby, just over the Saltash bridge as you edge into Cornwall, is Mount Edgcumbe. Mount Edgcumbe House is the former home of the Earls of Mount Edgcumbe, and with 865 acres of country parks on the Rame Peninsula, it is a great place to stroll around. The views of Plymouth sea front are particularly stunning.

Plymouth has everything you need to make it your perfect weekend get-away. It's only an hour from the Cornish beaches, and with incredible views and lots to do right on your doorstep, you'd be silly not to take advantage and trek on down to one of the UK's most breath-taking cities.





The 'Bridge

One man. One city. One day.

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Cambridge boasts diverse and intriguing attractions that will keep anyone happy. I spent a day in the historic city to enjoy some of it for myself.

Cambridge is well suited to an April Spring morning. I hired a bike from one of the many bicycle hire shops and cycled towards the city centre. The River Cam meanders through the city, splitting it in half, and I soon came across the beautiful greens and commons which follow the river. I cycled along the riverside and onto the largest and most popular park in the city, Jesus Green. Jesus Green is situ-

*"You have the option to enjoy your experience with an alcoholic beverage, so I watched *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* with a nice mid-afternoon bottle of Australia's finest lager."*

ated just outside the grounds of Jesus College, part of Cambridge University. On a summers day the park attracts thousands of people who come to bask in the sun, surrounded by huge oak trees and only a five minute walk from the city centre. The park is also home to the one of the largest outdoor swimming pools in Europe, at 91 metres long.

As I followed the river towards the city centre, the quirky house boats that line the River Cam quickly turned to 'punts'. 'Punting' is Cambridge's equivalent to travelling through Venice on a gondola. The punts are wide and shallow and, almost in a lying down position, you are taken on a gentle tour down the river getting a unique view and history of the famous Cambridge University colleges whilst seeing the parks and gardens that surround you.



It will cost you between five and ten pounds each, depending on the size of the group. It can take up to an hour so my tip is to bring some food and beverages to enjoy along the way.

The river runs right through the city centre so I locked up my bike and walked in. The centre is a mixture of University buildings and shops. Cambridge has a fantastic balance of independent side-street shops, like the famous Fudge Kitchen, and big brand stores. A new central shopping centre, The Grand Arcade, has a huge choice of men's fashion, home, gadget, jewellery and food retailers, toy shops and places besides that, to keep the wife/girlfriend/kids happy. There's also the famous Cambridge market outside the town hall where you can pick up anything from a souvenir to a decent meal.

The busy shopping centre perfectly prepared me for a sit down so I walked a little further through town, for 3 to 4 minutes, to the Arts Picturehouse. It's a cinema, but not one of the huge cineplexesaurus monstrosities. Once the Regal Opera House, the three screened cinema shows a mixture of blockbuster and lesser known European films. The Arts Picturehouse is also well known in Cambridge for the pleasure of film festivals it hosts throughout the year. Brilliantly, you have the option to enjoy your experience with an alcoholic beverage, so I watched *The Best Exotic*



Marigold Hotel with a nice mid-afternoon bottle of Australia's finest lager.

Feeling rejuvenated, but hungry, I continued the circle I had been making around the city centre and found a restaurant opposite the majestic Fitzwilliam Museum. 'Browns', converted from a wing of the old central Cambridge hospital, balances quality with quantity. I had a great burger while sitting outside in the dying sun.

I strolled back to my bike through the University grounds, finding the river and following it. It was almost dark as I got back to my hotel. The Arundel Hotel, has arguably the best access to the city centre, just across the river from Jesus Green.

when you've
got the sound



you don't have to talk about it so much.

Ten at Fifty

The finest work by musicians is, more often than not, released before they hit thirty. But why is this? Surely as an artist matures in age, so should their art. They have mastered their instruments and have more life experiences to influence the writing. There is a snobbery amongst certain music journalists; Rock 'n' Roll, a young man's game, it is all about aggression, passion and a certain amount of naivety. Whereas this maybe true, music created in middle age can also bring glorious results. Below, we bring you ten great songs released by their creators after turning half a century old.

BLONDIE – Maria

Who expected this from a band that had been apart for so many years? The cynics thought the reformation was all about performing greatest hits to a crowd with a thirst for reliving their youth. How wrong! Maria was fantastic, sitting comfortably with their best songs. It went straight in at number one and Blondie now had a new set of young fans.

JOHNNY CASH – Hurt

"I hurt myself today/To see if I still feel." Such a powerful line, but add Johnny Cash's delivery and you have the opening of a mini masterpiece. Cash is, not so much singing, but speaking the song's lyric, making it all the more poignant. Johnny Cash did not write Hurt, but it will forever be his.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN – You're Missing: The Rising

Springsteen's 12th studio record had the tragedy of 9/11 running right through it with none more so than You're Missing. The subtlety of 'The Boss' vocal brings a tear to the eye. If you can write about life from the heart, then the chances are others will feel it. Herein lays his genius.

TERRY CALLIER – Brother To Brother

Callier made many records in the '70s which were adored. In 1983 he decided to retire from music and found work in the IT Department of Chicago University. When he returned to music, he picked up where he left off. A class act, as this wonderful song of solidarity proves.

VAN MORRISON - Ancient Highway

For nearly nine minutes you are lost in this song. It shares the same meandering beauty as the magical material on Astral Weeks. The Belfast singer/songwriter was born with a gift for painting pictures with his songs. That gift is firmly evident here.

B.B. KING - Hold On (I Feel Our Love Is Changing)

The great bluesman teams up with The Crusaders and creates this lovely soul ballad. His guitar licks, as you'd expect, are perfection but the surprise is his voice. At 53 he had never sounded better.

ROY ORBISON – She's a Mystery To Me

With a heartbroken voice, Orbison was one of the first singers to make vulnerability acceptable in male pop. At 51, he recorded one of the greatest songs of his career. Sadly he wasn't around to see the glowing reaction to it. He died of a heart attack aged only 52, just before it was released.

NEIL YOUNG – The Great Divide

A young man could never write this song; it has too much knowing in it. Young sings of a lost time and place: "In the great divide/You won't fit in too well." Without this man the musical landscape that was grunge and alternative country may not have existed.

PAUL WELLER – Starlite

Like throughout much of his career, Weller's output divides opinion. He has never stuck to one style and is at his best once he's out of his comfort zone. Here he re-visits the soul and groove of The Style Council and sounded more euphoric than he has in over twenty years.

BOB DYLAN – Things Have Changed

Dylan has come a long way since his days as a folk singer in Greenwich Village and this suitably titled single shows us why. Unlike his early music, this song is dark and gloomy and his voice matches the pessimistic lyrics. The song is still very catchy and has a foot tapping beat that shows that things may have changed, but ultimately proves Dylan is still one of the great songwriters around.



Five to watch

Imagine choosing your five favourite cars and your five favourite films – and combine the two. Choosing five films out of all the car films out there isn't an easy task, but I've still given it a shot, and though you may disagree with some (or all?) of the choices, I can guarantee you a good experience while watching any of these films. Excluding the one with Nicholas Cage, obviously.

The Italian Job (1969)

Michael Caine stars in the "one with the Mini chase scene", definitely one of the best car chases ever to appear on the silver screen. Mix in a solid bit of London-esque humour, a heap of Fiat 500s, well-tailored suits (just pay attention to Tony Beckley, playing Camp Freddie, and his reluctance to dress up in the boiler suit in Turin, just so he can show off the fact that he's the only one that has ever pulled off wearing a pink suit) and a cunning plan to steal four million dollars worth of gold, and you have a winner. The opening scene alone is enough to make this film worth watching, with the most stunning shots of an orange Lamborghini Miura driving through Col du Petit St Bernard, outside the town of La Thuile in Italy. The ending scene is a true cliff-hanger – literally.

Taxi Driver (1976)

'Taxi Driver' isn't just one of the best car films there is – it is also one of the best films there is. With cinematography so beautiful you could watch this film without sound, and it would still be spectacular. The story revolves around a returned Vietnam War soldier in New York, played by Robert De Niro, who takes a job as a taxi driver to help him cope with the sleepless nights he is suffering from. After failing a relationship with a woman he's admired for a long while, he goes on a mission to rescue a teenage hooker, from her pimp. The car scenes in this film aren't car chases, but are wonderful shots of De Niro driving around in downtown New York, picking up passengers and enjoying the nocturnal buzz of the Big Apple.

Gran Torino (2008)

A film with no real driving in it? How could this make it to the list? Well, this is Gran Torino, named after Walt Kowalski's (played by Clint Eastwood) Ford Gran Torino – a car he has in his garage as a memory of when he worked in the Ford factory. When one of his neighbour teenagers tries to steal his beloved car as a gang initiation, he sets out to reform the teenager. The way his kindness is appreciated in the teenager's Hmong family wasn't something Kowalski expected, but maybe it was what Kowalski always needed?

Senna (2011)

Interested in F1? It doesn't matter. This documentary is more about the complex man that Ayrton Senna was than about actual racing. Unlike most documentaries, 'Senna' doesn't use talking heads to tell the story, but is rather relying on the various people who were around Senna drive the story forward – with video clips from Bernie Ecclestone's own private collection. From the feuds with Alain Prost, to the playboy lifestyle of one of the all-time greatest racing drivers the world has ever seen. An even though we all know how the film ends, it is still so sentimental that it could make the beefiest of men shed a tear, and still be proud of it. A masterpiece of a film.

Drive (2011)

Take a dash of 'Taxi Driver' and a dash of 'A History of Violence'. Shake it up with a sprinkle of 1980s style and music, and you have 'Drive'. Ryan Gosling stars as a man of few words – he doesn't even have a name – and it still tells a wonderful story of a professional stunt driver who moonlights as a getaway driver for criminals. But when his neighbour is in trouble, he risks everything to set the record straight. A film with no silly drag races, no clichéd love story (the love story in the film is subtle, but still so strong you can almost feel it grab you around the neck) and few special effects. This film is just filled with spectacular shots, an intense soundtrack and a story of wanting to escape a dark past.

One NOT to watch: Gone in Sixty Seconds (2000)

There are many terrible car films out there, but this Nicholas Cage flick deserves a dishonourable mention. Over an hour of driving various fast cars leads up to the unveiling of the film's real star: Eleanor. The Shelby GT500 – itself a mutant Ford Mustang – quickly rose to fame after the film was released, but nowadays it only enjoys popularity amongst teenagers who have two posters on their bedroom walls: Eleanor and Pamela Anderson.

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LEEDS LIVERPOOL LONDON

Words By Erik Skavold

Culinary Corner



Gent mags restaurant reviewer visits Ruby Tuesday. Will the American franchise which takes its name from a Rolling Stones song prove a hit?

Going through the door, you are met by the maître d who shows you to your table. The design of the restaurant is slick and uncrowded with the layout of tables organised well.

The restaurant itself can be found worldwide, with 800 different locations.

The American chain pride themselves on their quality of food, and the casual dining conditions that can be found in each of their restaurant.

Food comes served on rectangular plates, which echo the straight lines of the décor. The lighting is quite dark which adds a romantic feel – it makes for a nice environment for a date.

I choose the Triple Prime Bacon Cheddar Burger, which came with a side order of fries. Pleasant enough – I feel chunky chips would have been better. The presentation was clean and classic, everything you'd expect from a classic burger. The flavours were completed

with aged New York cheddar and applewood smoked bacon. It was slightly over garnished and crowded, making it messy to eat.

To drink, I was persuaded to try one of the cocktails. After looking at the drinks menu, I chose a Ruby Relaxer from the Premium section. The drink is Absolut Vodka with Cruzan Coconut, DeKuyper Peachtree Schnapps, pineapple and cranberry juices, and fresh orange. At nearly seven pound the drink isn't cheap, but not too many of these are needed. They are both very strong and very sweet.

The Parmesan Chicken Pasta wasn't bad either. Al dente Penne in a parmesan creamy sauce topped off with strips of breaded chicken breast and finished with marinara and Swiss. The presentation was top notch and it looked appetising and there was plenty of it. It was very tasty; the crispy chicken was particularly a high point of the meal.

The problem was, it was

nothing special, with a high price to go with it. This is the problem with establishments such as this, the food is decent enough, but the price leaves you feeling a bit disappointed.

"At nearly seven pound the drink isn't cheap, but not too many of these are needed."

Another high point was the Blue Moon American Wheat Beer that accompanied my meal. The restaurant was pushing it and I'm glad they did. It was a refreshing taste that went well with the meal. It was very similar to the wheat beers that are popular in Belgium. Surprisingly it's made by Coors but was rather unique and full in flavour.

Overall, it was a pleasant dining experience with tasty food and a relaxing environment. The staff were smiley and accommodating.

Rating:



“The presentation was clean and classic, everything you'd expect from a classic burger”





At the allotment

Our Gardener **Nick McGaughey** gives top tips for growing your vegetables this Spring!



For the keen allotment keeper, May is a very busy month. After the vagaries of April weather the gardener should be able to look forward to some well needed sun to spur all his plants into growth. But don't be fooled by long sunny days, the temperatures at night can drop significantly, and frosts

are still common at night. If you have planted out tender grown in trays under glass such as lettuce, chillies, courgettes, cucumbers, sweetcorn, runner beans etc, make sure that you give them some form of protection such as a cold frame, a cloche or a fleece covering. More hardy seedlings such as

beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, French beans, kale, parsnips, peas, radishes, rocket, sweeties and turnips can be sown direct into the soil and should flourish there, as long as the soil is well drained and in good condition. (i.e a good amount of compost, well rotted manure has been incorporated into the soil over

the previous months). Both plants and seedlings need to be properly watered, especially if the dry spell continues. Make sure that you use enough water to soak right down to the roots, if you just moisten the surface this encourages the spread of weeds.

Now is also the time to harvest, asparagus, broad beans, cabbage, celeriac, Jerusalem artichokes, rhubarb, rocket, spinach, spring onions, Swiss chard, turnips etc. (with rhubarb after picking it's a good idea to water with liquid feed afterwards, so that the plant isn't too traumatised).

May is also unfortunately the month when perennial weeds can be a problem, as all your vegetables grow and prosper, so do these little blighters and remedial action must be taken constantly. Run a sharp hoe in between the rows of seedlings thinning them out so that each has a chance to grow. This is also a good time to place beer traps near seedlings and young plants to catch slugs. You can also use grapefruit skins or black polythene. Check these daily disposing of any in a jar of salt water.

As your potato plants grow, it is a good idea to draw earth up around the stems to protect them from frost and to stop the developing tubers from being exposed to the light.

Soft fruit trees and bushes need to be covered with netting to protect the berries and fruits from the attentions

of birds and mice. Straw should be placed around the base of strawberry plants to provide a dry bed for the forthcoming crop to rest on, away from the attentions of slugs and the like. Make sure your peas are well supported, with sticks or netting to stop them lurching over. May is also the month that we need to prepare for climbing beans, by digging in lots of compost into the plot where they will be planted out in June. Put a support framework over the site such as bamboo wig-wams, beans seeds should be sown now and kept under glass until next month. I use paper pots made from old newspapers. These are easy to make, cost nothing and can be placed straight into



“ I use paper pots made from old newspapers. These are easy to make, cost nothing and can be placed straight into the ground. ”

the ground.

In many ways May is the busiest month, the sun is warm but it's not quite summer. All our hard work has to be protected from weather and pests, so that we can enjoy the fruits of our labours over the summer months. The Anglo-Saxons used to call May 'Tri-Milchi', because you could milk cows three times a day instead of two, in gardening terms it means busy, busy, busy or weed, water, protect. Have fun with your gardening and don't 'lose the plot'!

Happy Digging!

- Nick.



Pictures by Henry McGaughey

It could be said that a lot was expected of Ian Fleming. Born in London on the 28th May 1908 into a wealthy family connected to the merchant bank Robert Fleming and Co, no one could ever have expected the impact he would eventually make on the book and film industry during his lifetime.

He was brought up in the busy London location of Mayfair, a fitting location for one who would come across such fame for his awe inspiring publications.

He, as we all know, was the creator of the fictional spy franchise, James Bond. This included a series of 12 novels and nine short stories about the character, Agent 007; and his deadly exploits of suavity, dangerous women and odd concoctions of dry martinis. Shaken not stirred, of course.

He attended many prestigious educational institutions during his lifetime, including Eton College, the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and the Universities of Munich and Geneva.

Fleming moved through a number of jobs throughout his youth before discovering his talent for writing. One of which involved working in British Naval Intelligence during the Second World War where he was involved in the planning stages of Operation Mincemeat and Operation Goldeneye, which was later used as the title for the Bond film Golden Eye, released in 1995 as homage to Fleming.

His James Bond books are amongst the biggest selling series of fictional books of all time, selling over 100 million copies worldwide.

These were not his only works to come to fruition and fame. He was also responsible for writing the classic childrens story, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, and two other works of non-fiction, The Diamond Smugglers (1957) and Thrilling Cities in (1963). After his death, two Bond books written by Fleming, The Man With The Golden Gun and Octopussy And The Living Daylights were published, proving that his legacy and works of fiction would live on after his death. His creations would also influence many other writers, with five independent authors producing further novels. This included the renowned thriller novelist Jeffery Deaver, who



was chosen to write in the style of Fleming for the latest Bond book, Carte Blanche, that was released last May

Fleming's creation has also been adapted into motion picture 24 times with seven actors playing the role of Bond. The most notable is Scottish-born actor Sean Connery who appeared in seven bond films including Dr. No (1962), From Russia With Love (1963), Goldfinger (1964), Thunderball (1965) and You Only Live Twice (1967). The films have also featured film stars such as Roger Moore, Pierce Brosnan and most recently, Daniel Craig.

Fleming was a heavy smoker and drinker and suffered from heart disease in his later years.

The iconic author died in the early morning of the 12th August 1964 from a heart attack. Fleming was married to Anne Charteris and the couple had one son; Caspar Fleming, who committed suicide from a drug overdose, aged just 23. Fleming's widow Anne, died six years later, and was buried next to Fleming in the churchyard of Sevenhampton village, near Swindon.

To this day, Ian Fleming remains one of the greatest fictional writers to have lived and his series of James Bond novels remain as popular now as they have ever been, entertaining millions across the world and divulging into the realms of espionage and the exploits of Agent 007, something even Fleming himself could never have imagined.

Words by Tom Griffiths

Columnist

A View from Across the Pond

American blogger Levi Osborn gives his views on President Obama's controversial health plans

"The problem is that Obama's opposition no longer care about being the mature ones"

One of the powers granted to Congress in the US Constitution is the power to regulate interstate commerce (per the aptly named 'Commerce Clause'). Large scale economic activity that passes between the states or between the US and a foreign land or some combination of the two is fair game for being regulated by Congress. This straightforward power is the constitutional basis for the Affordable Care Act (ACA), per the Obama Administration anyhow.

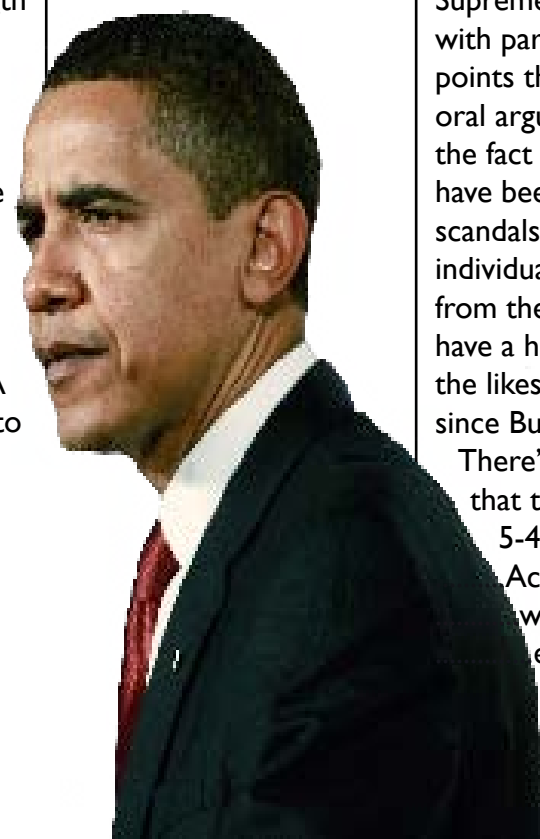
When President Obama's health care law came before the Supreme Court, anyone who spent any length of time following the case (myself included) couldn't see any reason for the justices to strike it down, seeing as they would have to do an end run around the Commerce Clause in order to do so. By day two of the marathon of oral arguments, we were all eating our words. What seemed an easy win for President Obama and the ACA at the start of the week turned into a hyperpartisan tossup that could very well decide the legacy of his Presidency as much as the health care law he helped pass.

Part of this has to do with the nature of the opposition to the President and his policies. It's one

thing to air grievances and settle disputes in relatively mature manner. The problem is that Obama's opposition no longer care about being the mature ones. Instead, they would rather be the obsessively obstructionist cult that lives to throw a monkey wrench into anything and everything he attempts to do. The more conservative justices, such as Antonin Scalia or Clarence Thomas, aren't immune from this either.

Despite the fact that exceedingly conservative judges on lower courts argued in no uncertain terms the the Affordable Care Act was constitutional, several conservative Supreme Court justices felt content with parroting right wing talking points that had little merit during oral arguments. Couple that with the fact that those same justices have been accused of 'pay to play' scandals with the very groups and individuals that stand to profit most from the ACA's downfall, and you have a huge, highly politicized mess the likes of which hasn't been seen since Bush v. Gore in 2000.

There's no question in my mind that the Supreme Court will rule 5-4 on the Affordable Care Act. Which way that 5-4 vote will lean is another story entirely.



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