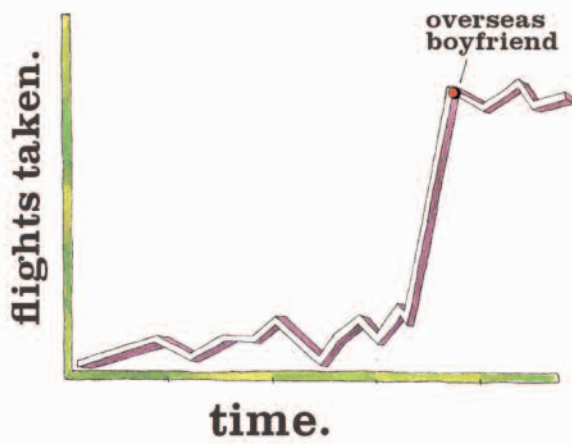




THE
**SHRIEKING
VIOLET**
ISSUE 6

Busking Music Churches 'Miss' or 'Ms'? Illustration Creative Writing Shortbread



Fuchsia
MacAREE

cities
lived in.





1



WELCOME TO issue 6 of **The Shrieking Violet**. It's hard to believe that it's 6 months since I first started making my mini-celebration of Manchester life.

Issue 6 is something of a music special. Music has been conspicuously absent from previous issues - aside from in the listings. But, of course, it's hard to ignore the fact that Manchester is, and is historically seen as being, a musical city. You've probably seen 24 Hour Party People and Control, and are familiar with the names Madchester, Factory Records, Oasis etc..

For me, however, some of the most interesting sounds of the city are those that surround us every day, on street level, the music that is literally all-around us, even if it's sometimes overlooked; busking.

Busking has a personal importance to me, as I spent most Saturdays of my University years, when I often wanted to be in bed, standing outside Marks and Spencer contributing to a colossal noise that shocked shoppers out of their chain-store stupour. In sun, rain or snow (or, most often just sort of a depressing greyness), pair of a-gogo bells in hand, I helped entertain the city centre crowds as part of Manchester School of Samba, during their long-established busking sessions.

I think it's the best thing I did when I moved to Manchester, and the way in which I got to know the city and its inhabitants best. Not only did I meet all sorts of people in the band - from fellow students to 70 year olds, people passing by from all over the world to people who'd lived their whole lives in Salford and had plenty of tales to tell about it, even a few ex-cons - I got to watch the people of Manchester.

It's the single biggest confidence booster I found when moving to the big city. I felt like I was a vital part of city life when people would come up and dance, join in, pose for photos - or even just stop and smile (although sometimes I was so distracted by people watching I'd completely forget to play or miss my cue.) Busking is the perfect way to learn the samba rhythms, though - if you get it wrong, it's in front of a crowd, so there's always an incentive to learn and improve.

Samba school busking was truly a Manchester institution, famous (and almost audible!) city-wide, and even led us to appear on Britain's Got Talent, when our noisiness caught the attention of the producers.

Unfortunately, we haven't busked for nearly two years now due to disagreements with shops over noise (that's another story, though). But you never know, maybe this year we will become a familiar sound and sight again.

Editor: Natalie Bradbury

Cover Design: Alessandra Mostyn (www.missam.tumblr.com/ www.amphotographic.webs.com/)

Writers: Natalie Bradbury (www.theshriekingvioletsb.blogspot.com), Tom Whyman (www.cathedralsequelsrad.wordpress.com/ www.compulsorymeatraffle.wordpress.com), Matthew Britton (www.thepigeonpost.wordpress.com), Brewster Pius Craven, Richard Barrett (www.abandonyourtimidnotion.blogspot.com), Rebecca Willmott (www.dollwithbigeyes.blogspot.com), Rachel Cranshaw (www.rachelcranshaw.blogspot.com)

Illustrators: Fuchsia Macaree, Flights, Cities (www.thisispop.wordpress.com), Alex Boswell, A Guide to Gigging. Alone, Andrew Beswick, Placade, Parc (www.andrewbeswick.blogspot.com)

To tell me what I've got wrong/contribute/tell me off for leaving The Shrieking Violet in your cafe/bar/shop/cinema/gallery/library without permission/request back copies, email: Natalie.Rose.Bradbury@googlegmail.com





3



The City as a Stage by Natalie Bradbury

A LATE afternoon in January. At this time of day, the city would normally be packed with shoppers and workers, rushing about. But the city centre is all but silent. The pavements have been taken over by blocks of snow, which, refusing to shift for over a week, have worn smooth into ice. Workers have been sent home early, the city centre has ground to a halt. Those few people braving the treacherous streets do so through a wet fog of snow showers. The city's still, the atmosphere oppressive. But one thing is going on as normal. The dreadlocked busker is still installed in a shop doorway on Market Street. The notes of a thumb-piano-esque African instrument follow you, clinging like the powdery snow that's sticking to your face and eyelashes. Plip plogging, rising and falling in repetitive pitter-pattering sequences, his notes fight their way through the muffled air. It's not weather to be tarried in, hence the deserted streets, and his fingers must be freezing, but still he's playing on. It's eerie and beautiful.

Manchester is known as a musical city. You can go and see bands any night of the week. But what about the city's other musical culture, the one that's on the streets, open to everyone? These are the bands you stumble across during your lunch hour, that stop you in your tracks and leave you with a smile on your face for the rest of the day.

Street performance may raise associations of earnest buskers with acoustic guitars playing predictable covers, and we often walk straight past them, but there's variety and skill in Manchester street performers. Some greats of twentieth century music like Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell started their careers on the streets, and in Manchester one performer who's gone on to find fame is the former Britain's Got Talent winner, teenager George Sampson from Warrington, who used to draw big crowds on Market Street with his dancing.

Yes, there are guitarists churning out Dire Straits, an in-your-face Christian rap group and the slightly naff people dressed as Native Americans who play panpipes along to a backing track, but Manchester's other performers range from African drummers to a trumpet and accordion jazz band and a man playing the intricate West African music of the Kora. One of the most unusual is the saxophonist who seems to only come out at night, often outside Kendal's department store on Deansgate or, most strangely, amongst the damp and pigeon poo in a railway arch by round the back of Piccadilly train station. Add that to painters, human statues and even just people protesting or trying to raise awareness of a cause, and there's a lot to grab your attention on the streets of Manchester.

It also changes from season to season. At certain times of year, like Christmas, there's an explosion in music students - string quartets, violinists and brass players practicing their classical repertoire. Many street performers move around, alternating between towns and cities like Stockport, Liverpool, Bolton and Blackpool. Others spend a block of the year in Manchester and the rest back at home in Africa.

Manchester's city scape lends itself to street performance, from the fact that much of the city centre is pedestrianised to the backdrops formed by the concrete architecture of Piccadilly Gardens, the sound tunnel of the covered walkway at the end of Market Street and the steps that make an almost-stage outside Marks and Spencer.

A familiar face on Manchester's streets is Buddy the One Man Band, who plays at various locations up and down Market Street as well as spots like outside Marks and Spencer with his home made foot operated drum kit. He's a distinctive sight, often wearing a waistcoat and hat adorned with badges.

Salford musician David Budvar has been busking for thirty years including, for the past four or five years, three or four days a week on the streets of Manchester. His trade has also taken him from Japan to Australia and New Zealand, where the money is good.

When the snow's thawing and the rest of the buskers have started to come back out, Buddy explains: "It just happened. I busked a lot as a kid. I became friends with a one man band and he inspired me." He's a busker of the traditional kind, who plays the type of songs you can stop and sing along to, and



4



also plays gigs inside if asked. He said: "Everyone has different ideas of what they like. It's very hard to play your own songs unless you're very talented. I sometimes do if I get bored, but you have to be fairly good. People are so used to listening to songs they know. I always start with Stand by Me. I've been playing it a long time."

At the moment, though, he says people have less money in their pockets because of the recession. Buddy, who works as a support worker by day, is only really coming out at the weekend: "I can't make enough money to survive. If everyday was sunny then maybe, but it's down to the weather. You come out and you never know."

Today, he's having equipment troubles and everything's going wrong. Spencer, a balloon seller, comes over and tries to help. He suggests Buddy ask Sally from the potato stall for a piece of foil from one of the potatoes. As another regular on the streets, Spencer's quite positively inclined towards buskers. He said: "There are some good buskers and some bad, but they definitely liven the street up."

Another busking veteran is freelance dancer and dance teacher Danny Henry from Salford, who has been performing on the streets for decades, first with percussion group Inner Sense, then Manchester School of Samba, and now most often with Jali the Kora player in the Piccadilly area. He smiles: "Many people know me and know my face."

"I learned street samba from a Brazilian girl. It's a mixture of samba moves and creativity - what you can put in. Samba and carnival was made for the street because it comes from the street. It's a celebration of freedom. I come up with routines very naturally and quickly. I express myself through the music and incorporate handstands etc. as a show if the music moves me. People like to see what you can do," Danny explained.

Being on the street offers a unique challenge, Danny added: "You meet all sorts of people, positive and negative. It's a natural element of my work. It's organic - people are passing all the time. People smile more, start dancing, groups of kids follow me. Everything's possible...although you get the odd person who's a bit drunk and starts pulling me or something. It's a great feeling when people join in. The more the better. It's my job to get people dancing."

Whilst busking with Manchester School of Samba, dance and Capoeira (a Brazilian martial art) students would sometimes join in, and members of the crowd of all ages, from toddlers to middle aged shoppers, would often come up and start a dance-off with Danny. "I can come up with a hip-hop routine on the spot. I like that challenge. Sometimes we'd get people who would do something interesting or different, like break dancers, and I would stand back and let them show off."

He continued: "People want to be out there performing. It's natural to want to be able to show off what you've learned in front of people, and have pride in it. The self-expression of a person is so important. It's about community spirit and liberating people. With this country, though, sometimes it's hard to get up and just do it."

Danny would like to see the council support street performers more by promoting them and creating defined busking spots so buskers could know when and where it's safe and acceptable to perform. Busking often relies on negotiation and flexible arrangements over times and pitches, though recently there's been tension with newcomers coming and 'stealing' spots. Other people would like to see more spaces opened up to public performance, for example Exchange Square, which was originally intended as a performance space before the Big Wheel took it over.

Jali and Danny were invited to perform on a float in Jeremy Deller's Procession in July. Part of Manchester International Festival, Procession was a celebration of the diverse groups of people that contribute to the life of the city. Buskers have also performed at events at Band on the Wall, such as Exodus Jam.

Jali moved to Manchester from the Gambia about seven years ago, and has been busking for about five years, admitting: "It's not easy to get a job here." He returns to the Gambia regularly, where he



5

plays concerts. He explained: "I've been playing Kora all my life, and I play at all different types of places and occasions." In Manchester, he's sometimes accompanied by drummers. Today he's with Bob who's also from the Gambia, and is learning to play the djembe by playing along to Jali's music as well as busking with friends at night time. It's still too cold though, and they stop after a couple of hours.

Danny just started dancing with Jali one day and they formed a 'relaxed partnership'. Danny said: "Jali's music is all about feeling, handed down from generation to generation. He sings in his language and I don't speak it, but the music of the Kora speaks for itself. I speak through my body. I can hear and feel the percussion."

He admitted: "If I make some money, that's great, but it's more about the spirit."

However, not everyone has positive views on busking. Manchester School of Samba, a regular Saturday fixture outside Marks and Spencer, stopped busking nearly two years ago after complaints to the council and City Co, the public-private consortium that manages the City Centre, about noise from nearby shops.

One vociferous protester was David, from jewelers Arthur Kay and Brothers, a small, neat shop which directly faces the raised steps where MSS used to busk.

"They were too noisy. We couldn't hear our customers and they couldn't hear themselves speak. It was even worse for shops like Accessorize who have their doors open with a warm wall of air. They couldn't hear the telephone. Zara and FCUK didn't like it either. It would be okay if it was only for an hour or so, but of course it's not because they need to make money," he complained.

He continued: "There's a safety issue too. If people are watching and step backwards they could get hit by a car. We kept expecting that to happen. Or people can't hear the warning noises of the bollards."

He's not anti-busking per se, though: "It's the drums. Other buskers are just background noise, for example the official buskers at the Christmas markets." As I leave, a saxophone rises sweetly through the damp end of day gloom, its riffs on The Girl From Ipanema twisting round the buildings of St Ann's Square, while a lone saxophonist bobs up and down ("a lot of saxophonists just stand there apologetically - that's why I try to move around a bit."). Buddy comes and over and they exchange business cards, promising to 'stick together'. Buddy offers to lend some equipment and suggests the saxophonist gets something to 'entertain the kids during the day'.

Manchester School of Samba, although one of a few samba bands that used to busk outside Marks and Spencer, was the first and biggest, with around 15 drummers performing each week as well as a group of dancers. The band's leader, Anthony Watt, explained: "As well as a core of buskers who'd turn up, we'd get other players who would wander in and out. Busking is a way of advertising what we do, but it's also useful as a means of rehearsal and helps draw the band together. The band itself got better and tighter, and we got quite a bit more work."

He counters accusations of excessive noise pollution by arguing that when his group busked, it was a tourist attraction that encouraged people down towards that part of town, with up to a thousand people stopping to watch over the course of a typical Saturday. He also claims the band had the support of shops such as Marks and Spencer: "We helped increase trade. It's a natural performance space and we drew people down to the shops there."

"Street performance animates the whole city. It raises questions about what is the city space and what is Manchester? The more exciting cities like New York, Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin tend to have the more unusual, individual street acts. People have said to me that it's one of the things that makes Manchester what it is," Tony elaborated.

"Busking gives people a reminder that there's more to life than money and shopping. We can be too obsessed with the pursuit of money. Samba's about human contact and human relations, which is



valuable - even if the rest of society doesn't think so. You'd see fractious kids and arguing parents, they obviously never did anything together, but then when they started listening to the band whatever they were thinking about before would just disappear."

He continued: "We set an exciting background to people's Saturday afternoons. Every week was exciting. The things I enjoyed most were the little things. You might see someone at the back of the crowd and then they walk in time to the music, then they stop and listen and walk away smiling. That happened very often.

"Busking is a philosophy of life. A way of looking at the world. Being a street performer brings together odd groups of people. It's a focus of the community. It allows connections to be made that

wouldn't have been otherwise. Samba bands in particular are social organisations."

Single Cell, an art and music collective, share concerns about public space, saying their aim is 'to open up the city, to liberate space and use it for creative purposes'. They organised a Guerilla Busking event in the centre of Manchester last year, inviting both regular buskers and people who had never busked before to take part. Jonathan from Single Cell Collective explained: "In Manchester, in common with many other cities in the UK, public space is becoming increasingly managed, policed and privatised. Many 'undesirable' elements such as the homeless, graffiti writers and skaters are being excluded for spurious reasons."

He said: "We chose to do Guerilla Busking as a way of testing the boundaries of public and private space. We wanted to stage public performances in public space to demonstrate there is a role for creativity and performance in the city."

It seems a shame that the commercial and creative sides of the city can't coexist better or come to some sort of agreement - after all, with shops the same in high streets across the country, often blaring out the same chart music, surely busking offers something different to the city experience.

Perhaps Danny summed it up best when he said: "When the music stops there's something missing. Music is the heartbeat of Manchester."





7

A guide to gigging. Alone.

By Matthew Britton



YOU LIKE music. I like music. We all like music. Your friends definitely like music. But sometimes, they like pretty awful stuff. I know people who actually enjoy Hard-Fi, for instance. That isn't good, but usually these people have other perks, like being able to make an awesome cup of tea or having a car, so you ignore the fact that they're seriously excited by the idea of a new Coldplay record and let the hate boil inside of you whilst they talk about Chris Martin.

On the flip side, they might think you've got pretty awful taste. I mean, compared to 'Yellow', what have Herman Dune ever done, right? And just as you'd never step foot into an arena where U2 were playing, your friends might not want to go and see some New York band that's only put out a 7" on woodsiest. So what do you do? You can't stay home, so you've got to go alone. To a gig. Where there will be other people, all likely to be watching you, making a note of your every move and laughing to their friends about how much of a loner you are. What do you do?

First of all, calm down. Going to a gig by yourself isn't the painfest that you imagine on the bus there. It can be, if you want, but as long as you follow a few rules, it's a pretty easy thing to get through. The best thing to do is to minimise your time there. A few years ago, I really wanted to see Be Your Own Pet, but everyone else was going to see The Sunshine Underground. I agreed to get the bus with them - at about half past 6, which meant I was at an empty venue for doors. Unless you really want to see the support bands, try not to get there until you think the main act is going to be on. Good Shoes were supporting that night, but no amount of 'Photos on my wall' is worth standing about on a deserted dance floor with a rapidly warming pint of cider for three hours.

Once you're there, you need a plan to waste your own time. This is one of the only ways in which smoking is a bonus, as it gives you something to do in-between acts, and makes you look like you're actively involved with something (i.e. killing yourself) whilst the bands set up. If you're one of the many people who fear lung, throat and mouth cancer, then fear not. There are lots of other things you can do to make the time drip away. One important thing to note is that taking your own props might seem like a good idea, but reading a newspaper at a gig only makes you look self-important and whilst scanning a book in a quiet corner may have its advantages, it's a brave move, and this is ultimately a guide for the cowardly.

The most obvious one is to use your phone. The beauty of this is that it can make you look like you're texting or speaking to friends who are on their way to the venue, which allays the imaginary criticism that the fictional characters in your mind level at you that you may have no friends whatsoever. However, try not to be too dependent upon this, as it can make you look desperate and feel isolated. The fact is that many venues being underground and whatnot can pretty much destroy a phones signal, meaning your plans to live-blog through your blackberry may be doomed from the start. Also, there's nothing more em-



barrassing than having to hide your phone when someone's walking past because you're trying to beat your high score on 'Snake'.

It might be advisable to drink - preferably whilst the bands are on. If you're not one for alcoholic beverages, simply get yourself a water or, as I prefer, a cordial. This gives your hands something to do whilst the bands themselves are on, but more importantly, can waste time when they're not. You'd be surprised how long can be wasted in a venues toilets, both queuing and actually, you know, using them. They're destined to be grotty, granted, but it can be a lot better than standing at the back, looking edgily over at groups of lads to see if they're pointing and laughing.

Of course, you can almost use the fact that there are other people at the venue to your advantage. If you can, sidle up to a group of people, and position yourself in a manner that means that, too outsiders, it might look like you're joining in with the conversion. It is crucial to note that at no point should you ever join in with them. This will only lead to humiliation and the group slowly inching away from you, leaving you without cover, the cold winds of society free to blow you down.

In some circumstances, there's no other option than to go nuclear. Though you're sad to be at a gig by yourself, it's better than being there with someone you hate. In these situations, fate always conspires to work against you and, lo and behold, over a crowded room you see... well, someone like an old school friend or a colleague or someone from Facebook that you don't really know or ANYONE who you hate. Panic sets in.

But in the face of adversity comes triumph, innovation and complete and utter shame. Venues are usually quite small, languid affairs, made up of a black box room and some speakers. This means that you will likely need to GET OUT OF THERE, QUICKLY. If you've got money, this is the perfect time to nip to a corner shop and spend twenty minutes looking around before buying yourself a Wham bar. There's also the increasingly ridiculous tracing your route home method, which can be anything from walking to the bus-stop and back to seeing how far you dare get back to your flat. It's pointless, mind-numbing and likely to make you cold, but at least it's not awkward conversation, right?

My personal favourite is an old classic. If you've not got a bank card, you can mark this one off, but it still might come in useful. Cash machines in city centres and notorious for their lengthy queues inhabited by tipsy students getting ready to go out and waste money in boring clubs. Use this to your advantage by taking this time to check your bank balance, possibly even twice if there are a variety of cash machines within walking distance of the venue.

Above all, make sure that you return in time to see the band that you've paid money and taken the time and effort to see. Aimlessly wondering the streets, going to the bathroom and scouring corner shops might be fun, but it's nothing compared to a gig. Whilst the band are on is when you don't really have to care about anything other than yourself - but make sure not to dance like a dick, okay? And don't throw your hands in the air or sing along - but these are rules that should be obeyed whether you're by yourself or in a group of forty.

Of course, you could always go to a venue and try and make new friends. But I would much rather be stood alone on street corners outside venues, slowly checking my money on an ATM machine, shivering than risking the chance of appearing creepy to a bunch of strangers.



Madame, Mademoiselle, Ms

by Rachel Cranshaw

SOMETHING I wondered about before I started my seven-month teaching post as an English language assistant with the British Council in Lille, northern France (where I currently reside), was what my charges, aged between seven and eleven, would call me.

Since roughly the age of 18, I have been a 'Ms' in the UK, due to feeling increasingly irritated that, once into adulthood, men can happily exist as 'Mr' for the rest of their lives without having to publicise any details about their personal lives; whereas women are generally expected to disclose their marital status in the use of the titles 'Miss'/'Mrs'.

Despite the use of 'Ms' by women as an abstention from this disparity being reasonably common since the 1970s, I still frequently encounter problems with it. Just recently upon telephoning my UK bank to inform them that when my debit card expires in a couple of months I would like the title to be changed from 'Miss' (the card was issued before I was 18) to 'Ms', I was told that as 'Ms' is a title used only after marriage and divorce, I would need to provide evidence of both these events. I assured the man I was speaking to that it is perfectly possible for a woman to use 'Ms' whenever she should want to, and he eventually conceded that oh yes, I do actually know my own title. In another UK bank upon issuing the same request I was patronisingly asked by the (male) bank clerk whether I knew what the title 'Ms' was for.

But nonetheless, 'Ms' does at least exist in the UK, unlike in France where there is to my knowledge no real option of abstention from the 'Mademoiselle' ('Miss')/'Madame' ('Mrs') system. Single women who do not wish to be patronised by 'Mademoiselle' (why it is patronising, in my opinion more so than 'Miss', I shall come to shortly) can obviously call themselves 'Madame' but this is not a true rejection of the binary dividing married and unmarried women in French society as it merely suggests that a woman is married even if she actually is not. At the bank in France I was registered as 'Mademoiselle' without even being asked, and places like banks are really where the problems start.

I find 'Mademoiselle' to be problematic because the difference between it and 'Madame' aren't quite as clear cut as the difference between 'Miss' and 'Mrs'. As I said, women can use 'Madame' without being married if they want, and with women marrying later it has become a signifier as much of age, status, wealth and property ownership as whether or not a woman is married.

In the UK one is not greeted in a shop, restaurant, or bank by their title (perhaps



'Sir'/'Madam' but 'Madam' is used for women of all ages) in the same way as they are in France – 'bonjour Monsieur/Madame/Mademoiselle'. In the use of titles in this way, as a woman someone is sizing you up, taking in your appearance and using it to judge your age and the likelihood of you being married, working (as opposed to studying) and/or owning property. I am sometimes greeted as 'Madame' and sometimes 'Mademoiselle' and when it is the latter I find it difficult not to feel patronised, particularly in financial or bureaucratic environments.

Age does, as I have said, come into the distinction between the two titles, and part of what I dislike is what I sense to be a certain lack of respect, for want of a better phrase, towards not just young women, but young adults in general. My experiences in renting property have thus far been fairly poor and I have found that in overcrowded cities where rented accommodation is difficult to come by, young adults end up hard done-by with few rights in these matters.

The problem may perhaps stem from a situation where high unemployment renders it far more difficult than in the UK for young adults to move out of the family home upon going to university – it is far more common here than in the UK to go to university in the town or city where one was born – and so when people do move out of home, it is often as a newlywed; as was the case in the UK in the past.

Although young adults are increasingly bucking this trend and living alone or with friends in rented accommodation, when doing so one seems to be much less recognised as an independent adult with rights just like any other. My bank for example, after a four month battle to change my address (French bureaucracy; we'll save that one for another time) which required a form filled out by my landlady in addition to a letter written by her to prove that I live here, still could not quite bring themselves to afford me the address as truly my own – on bank statements it appears as 'Chez Madame...'; the equivalent of 'C/O'. She does, of course, own the house, but does not live there – and I'm paying the rent.

I teach at two schools, and the first immediately introduced me simply as 'Rachel', which I had no problems with. At the second, however, the English teacher calls herself 'Mrs XXXXXX', and suggested we introduce me as 'Miss Rachel', and explain to the children that I am called this because I am not married. A precise example of why I have a problem with these distinctions in the first place – teaching small children to recognise and judge women according to their marital status; great idea? I explained that I am a 'Ms' in the UK and would thus be happy to be 'Ms Rachel' – the teachers had not heard of the title, and were very interested by it, stating even before I suggested it that it were high time that France got itself an equivalent! The children have actually ended up, like at the other school, calling me Rachel, which I have no problem with. In a way I quite enjoy the total abstention from the complications of titles, and being able to exist, like the children, innocently by my first name.



St Oswald's Church, Winwick

by Tom Whyman

ME, JIM and Tristan decided to go on a road trip. Our first port of call was Cuckooland in Knutsford, but when we got there we found that we had to book ahead. It was a guided, one and a half hour tour that required them to wind up all the clocks beforehand so they'd all sound at the right time. Fascinating, but it was not to be. Outside there was a rather threatening-looking man stalking the grounds, so we decided to make a swift exit.

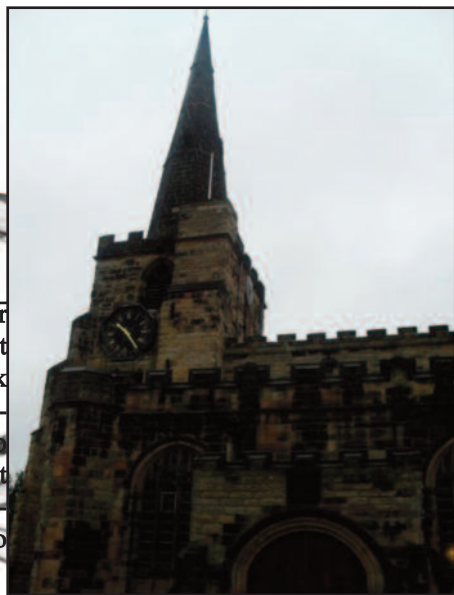
So we were left unsure as to where to go. Then suddenly by the side of the road a beautiful sight: a large parish church with a strange, lopsided tower with all sorts of clock faces on it at all different levels. I am immediately spellbound. We stop and get out, only to be swamped by a horde of primary school children marching out of the church. A circumnavigation of the church suggests to us that the clock faces can't all be powered by the same mechanism. Each door we find seems closed. The last one we try, we hear a voice coming from inside yelling that it'll open it for us.

We are greeted by a friendly and enthusiastic headmaster. He is the head of the school whose pupils we have just seen filing out of the church- they'd just been having their harvest festival service. Also present are the vicar and a simple village man they have recruited to help around the church. The vicar discusses his recent holiday to Croatia with the headmaster as we look around the building. The headmaster asks us where we all study and we dutifully reply. He tells us that his daughter studies at Sheffield Hallam, and his son was at university "in Oxford," and now works for the OUP.

We ask about the clocks, and the vicar tells us that actually, all the clocks are on a single mechanism- in fact they get all sorts of horologists in to look at it because the mechanism is quite unique. He then offers to show us the mechanism, which naturally sounds delightful, and the headmaster follows us too because he's never seen it in all his years headmastering the school. He takes us up the tower and shows us the mechanism, and then he takes us further up and shows us the bells, and then takes us even further up and out on to the tower and we can see the village all around, and the headmaster points out his school, but it is an overcast day so we can't see all that far, really.

On the way back down, Jim asks the headmaster which college his son was at in Oxford. He replies, "Brookes." We suppress our nervous laughter until we've said our goodbyes.

Winwick is associated with a particular carving of a pig on the West wall of the tower, and we are told to look for it by the vicar before we leave, so we do. All in all I would fully recommend a visit to Winwick church, if you're going to be in the business of visiting parish churches, which I think probably you ought to be. More like EPIC Winwick, amright fellows?





Just a t-shirt

by Brewster Pius Craven

IT IS a perilous time of year right now. The dark enveloping our manmade horizons traps road users in their cars, searching in vain for a parking space just 10 seconds walking distance closer to the door. Furrow-browed pedestrians facing the crisis of "is that just a dark patch of pavement or the precipice of a puddle/lake? – I think I'll just cross the road" and cyclists unconscious in the gutter as that light that was supposed to make them more visible was stolen mere moments after it was fitted, thus giving another BMW driver license and opportunity to carve another notch into his steering wheel.

It doesn't have to be all like that though. There is a way of enjoying winter by taking a step away from all its curious rituals and farces. Wear just a T-shirt. It's incredible how the world is transformed from a damp grey land where the only attitude is apathy into somewhere you can actually say you are happy. Forget having to carry your coat, hat and umbrella the second you arrive at your destination. Use your arms for something useful like wildly gesticulating and that second glass of pinot. Maybe there is a law of inverse scale in regards to amount of clothing and outward mood. Sensible shoes and scarf = "don't come near me I have pepper spray and a rape whistle in my bag-for-life". Pants and light shirt = "I hear they have turned the upstairs of PureSpace bar into a chocolate factory!"

Look at the faces of the people who walk past you. Some call it incredulity; I however am going to stick my neck out. I'm going to call it awe. They can't believe the risks you are taking. Hyperthermia, Pneumonia, Mama Mia – these are all terrible afflictions but they won't actually kill you. There is nothing better than standing out from the general mishmash of furniture and characters how look like they have ripped out from a Lowry Painting inhabiting Market Street and Piccadilly Gardens. Walking around in just a T-shirt isn't just an admittance that you didn't look outside before you left the house but that you can appreciate all facets of the year.

Feel the wind playfully teasing your hair, relax all your tensed up muscles and experience the secret thrill of the cooled blood in your hands running back to be warmed up by your body again (hell just do it to lose weight, your body will spend thousands of calories just keeping you above 30°C). Wearing just a T-Shirt pulls you out of the weariness and drudgery that this season can unequivocally inflict. So take a load off. Leave the coat at home.



13 The Hard Shoulder

by Richard Barrett

*
Distract us! Please
This week is over
whir + hum. Clatter
and the neon - it doesn't blink
not here
Yet (((while you queue I
read Baudelaire.
Looking crisp and white
Catheterized - erm - e - eh
Just what are you trying to say?!
we are here now,
// while echoes out
(((the sound of))) revolutionary shot.
Please-----but
your eyes.
Your eyes, they look so empty.

*
Antihistamines taken
of necessity / This isn't seasonal
She has a thick, luscious pelt and
things live in it. Look, it catches the light
Out-foxed, again
by geography / My teeth bared
Yeah, sure, they may as well phone in sick
Your customer feedback system -
implemented last year - is what I think is to blame
Makes me sneeze / A child
sat on the shoulders of another wearing
a long coat. Be punctual
with, whatever, the visit or call
Once we've missed the train, we shall have a drink
This line seems out of context
My nose is running.

*
Slide past shop fronts (like
snow melting / down a sloped roof
I didn't shower yesterday
Bill, just hurried / Those kids
out. Their thumbprints In HMV
And the tallest will always be
looked up to / Them changes over time

numbered - stick em behind glass +
charge an entrance fee
Lists mean a dead poetix / with no one
at all to buy them booze
Begun in October. Not quite forgettable
Write something about cats
is the text that came through thirteen lines in
So there it is Christine / And
we can live in England.

*
Drum-skin stretch
Taut, shout
Surface area
Looping
back on ourselves
At Piccadilly
Twitch
wait / missed a
beneath ground advance
reverberate
long, and narrowly
The chiselled
parameters
A fine point
Dear, not necessarily
Have courage!

*
How precarious this shit is
I mean: the door swings closed and
it's that way
the car park / you could
wear the weather. Hanging like
a tailors shop window
That's some sort of edifice
Keep your fingers crossed and
overcoats: they 'swish'
as what I say forms stalactites
up there / Before the carriage moves
How slow the inspectors are /
And if you want reassurance - time
has stopped...

Keep replaying each moment and then
Goodbye. I will see you tomorrow.



VEGAN SHORTBREAD by Rebecca Willmott

AMONGST OTHER Christmas themed desserts I made this Christmas, shortbread was the most delicious and successful of my culinary experiments of the festive season. Few ingredients are needed to make this delicious and simply effective British biscuit.

Shortbread is an ideal biscuit to make as it is so simple to make and makes an ideal present as it has a long shelf life. (I put some in a mug, wrapped in cellophane and tied with a ribbon and gave to my mother, she was delighted). Shortbread originates and is most commonly associated with Scotland. Not surprising that the most notable shortbread manufacturer is the Scottish company, Walkers, specialising in providing shortbread and fine Scottish specialities. With this being my first attempt at vegan shortbread, the question was would it taste too dry without the essential ingredient of butter? Shortbread is named thus because of its reaction with the butter creating a crumbly (shortening) texture. Thankfully my experiment was a delicious success.



Ingredients:

8 oz Plain flour
4oz Icing Sugar
8 oz Vegan margarine
4oz Corn flour or rice flour
Preheat an oven to 200C

Sieve both flours into a large bowl and mix in margarine.

I like the next bit, use your fingers to make the mixture crumble like breadcrumbs. Then knead into dough. If your dough is too crumbly add a little water or Soya milk to bind the

mixture or add more margarine. Don't add too much water as the shortbread is supposed to be quite dry. Grease a cake tin and press the dough into the tin. Make sure the dough is quite thick to make chunky biscuits and to prevent breaking. You can press down the sides to create the petticoat tail effect and cut into triangles or cut into stripes for the classic shortbread fingers. You could even use a rolling pin and use cookie cutters to make adorable shortbread shapes! Use a fork to mark holes in the dough and pop in an oven at no more than 200 C. Shortbread needs to be cooked slowly so that it does not brown to maintain the classic smooth white colour. Keep checking on your biscuits to make sure they do not brown this should take about 30 minutes. When your biscuits feel slightly hard take out of oven. Don't worry if they are quite soft they will continue to harden on a cooling rack. Dust with caster sugar and share with friends, or if you are greedy or have no friends eat all yourself hoorah!



15



Good things happening soon

Monday February 1, *University of Manchester* vs. *St. John's College, Oxford*, University Challenge, BBC2, 8PM. Reigning champions Manchester take part in the quarter finals (best of three).

Thursday February 4, *ARTIST ROOMS Ron Mueck*, Manchester Art Gallery. New exhibition of Mueck's life-sized sculptures (exhibition continues until April 11).

Saturday February 6, *Walls are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture*, Whitworth Art Gallery. New exhibition of artists' wallpaper, exploring designs ranging from the commercial, mass produced to the politically subversive (exhibition continues until May 3).

Sunday January 7, *Loiters Resistance Movement* psychogeographic walk around Manchester, 2pm (see www.nowhere-fest.blogspot.com). (monthly)

Wednesday February 10, *Reclaim the Parks*, Sackville Gardens, 6.30pm. The Riveters (University of Manchester women's rights group) and LGBT protest against homophobic attacks.

Thursday February 11, *Beach House*, Islington Mill. Dreamy pop from Baltimore.

Friday February 12, *MV&EE*, Islington Mill. Slow

prog-space-country with support from Manchester's Irma Vep plus the Doozer and A Wake.

Your Mama's Cookin', Ruby Lounge. Rock 'n' roll night with tea, cake and knitting and Charleston lessons moves to its new home. (monthly)

Saturday February 13, *People's History Museum*, Spinningfields reopens after a long refurbishment.

Brass Art: The Non-existence of the Unnamed, International 3. New exhibition of watercolours exploring the artists' psyche at Fairfield Street's tiny gallery (exhibition continues until March 20).

tUnE-YaRdS, Ruby Lounge. Upbeat pop and exuberant live show from New England Africa enthusiast Merrill Garbus.

Doris and the Jumpers, Night & Day. Manchester's loveliest new indie pop, plus Dire Wolf.

Saturdays February 13 and 27, *Underachievers Please Try Harder*, Saki Bar, Rusholme. Classic indie disco featuring live bands on the first Saturday of the month. (twice monthly)

Sunday February 14, *Watery Wastelands of Eastlands*, New Manchester Walks. Guided walk exploring the canal from the city

centre to Manchester City's Stadium. Other February highlights include *Reds, Revolutionaries and Real Ale* (February 5), *Town Hall Tours* (February 5 and 29) and *Bohemian Literary Manchester* (February 12). (see www.newmanchesterwalks.com).

Jamboree, Fuel, Withington. Lo-fi night featuring poetry from Rebecca Wilmott plus bands. (monthly)

Valentine's Prom with Hot-pants Romance and Maria and the Gay, Islington Mill. Noisy girl groups.

Wednesday February 17, *Victoria Baths Swimming Club*, 7pm, Levenshulme Baths. Friends of Victoria Baths swim in another old pool. (monthly)

Thursday February 18, *Manchester Modernist Society*, 142 Chapel Street, Salford, 6pm. Social with wine, plus films from the North West Film Archive.

Golden Ghost, Art of Tea, Didsbury. Unique New York folk singer in cosy cafe.

Young Adult Friction, Saki Bar, Rusholme. New live music night with Dead Kids and Monsters Build Mean Robots from London and Brighton, plus Manchester favourites Young British Artists and Deaf to Van Gogh's Ear. (monthly)

Furthur, Star and Garter. Golden Lab's alternative

disco. (monthly)

Friday February 19, *Internet Forever*, Kro Bar. Fun electro pop from London. Also featuring Of Mice and Mental Arithmetic from the Midlands, Norwich keyboard favourite Mat Riviere and Judy and the Blumes.

Asparagus Next Left, Star and Garter. DIY indie disco. (monthly)

Saturday February 20, *Liam Fitzmaurice and Kim Rugg*, Castlefield Gallery. New exhibition based around rearranging mass produced material such as newspapers, comics and packaging (exhibition continues until April 3).

Eff Tee Ell, Fuel, Withington. Party night featuring MRBLEKRSHRRRR Djs and live music from Manchester bands Mazes, Young British Artists and Hyacinth Girl. (monthly)

Tuesday February 23, *Xiu Xiu*, Islington Mill. Californian post-punk with support from Deaf to Van Gogh's Ear.

Wednesday February 24 (until Saturday March 27), *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Royal Exchange. New adaptation of Orwell's classic novel. The first 50 under 26 year olds can get free tickets for Friday nights by applying at 12pm on the day (warning, go in person - don't try to phone!). Cheap tickets for under 26s on Monday nights too.

Things that might be in the next issue: Feminism, recipes, photographs, creative writing, illustration, music, things to make and do and more.