



ISSUE 2

SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2020

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



At times the silence has been deafening, save for the occasional ring of the doorbell as a delivery driver undertakes a most generous version of Knock Knock Ginger. Birdsong has amplified, kids have run out of steam and a season of languid days is upon us, flattening us down like a duvet. If the pub were open, we'd be in the garden hoping it was someone else's round. Welcome to week two of **The Social Gathering** – a collection of transmissions from the heart of the long haul.

Over the last week we learnt a few things. We learnt about Andrew Weatherall's Thursday afternoon perambulations and Sophie Green's Isolation Observations. We saw a print out of the inside of David Keenan's mind and we went poaching with a man called Rambo. We saw the view from Bondi Beach and we stalked the corridors of a regional Co-op store with a keen ear on the solid musical selections. We found ourselves living in a land of homemade haircuts; a place where people will happily deliver mad crap to your front door. Are we witnessing the birth of a kind of anti-Amazon? An artisan Deliveroo to meet our ponce society's most unnecessary needs? Who knows. We end another week none the wiser, feeling all the better for it.

This week's Social Gathering was put together by Lee Brackstone, Carl Gosling, Tom Noble and Robin Turner. A huge thanks to all of our contributors. We raise this glass for you.

THE VIEW FROM HERE

One of the first things we wanted to do when we started The Social Gathering was ask how our friends were doing around the rest of the world. How does isolation feel outside of our media bubble? Are there signs of hope that we can read?

The first view is from a great friend of The Social, **Andy Kelly**. Andy lives in Sydney and is a partner in Winterman and Goldstein management and Ivy League Records. He manages rock'n'roll bands including The Avalanches, Jet, Something for Kate and The Living End.

WAVES ANDY KELLY

Just over a week ago I stood at the north end of Bondi Beach and tried to make sense of a vista so utterly surreal it was difficult to process. On a brilliant late afternoon bathed in sunshine, Australia's most popular stretch of sand was completely empty. Only days earlier it had been mobbed by locals, tourists and blow-ins, all drawn in by the usual hedonistic urges that bring the masses to the water. In the early stages of social distancing, the general consensus was that such a measure couldn't possibly apply to the beach, "She'll be right mate" being our national default setting. Unfortunately, she wasn't right and that setting had to be adjusted in record time. The beach was closed.

IN THIS ISSUE

- ***Ferreting with Rambo*: a short film from Maxy Bianco**
- **Sophie Green's isolation observations**
- **The 'Godmother of Freak Folk'**
- **Missing Andrew Weatherall: Catherine Eccles on the great man**
- **The view from here: our correspondent in Sydney**
- **David Keenan's Pandemic Dream Journal**
- **Shabby Magic with Michael Smith**

+ *more*

I looked out over the blank beachside canvas. No sunbathers sprawled on their towels. No surfers bobbed gently on the swell waiting for the next wave. Seagulls made up the numbers. It was a desolate scene. Stripped of all human movement and occupation, the empty sands of Bondi issued an open invitation to think about something we all know, but rarely have the time or inclination to admit: we're not the centre of the universe. Waves roll in regardless.

Just before the beach closed down, my friend Pete passed away from cancer. Being friends with Pete was like being caught in a rip. You got swept up before you even noticed what was happening, and the next thing you knew you were travelling at speed from your original location not sure how it had happened. Trying to swim against Pete's rip was useless. To do so would waste valuable energy. The trick was to just go with him and trust that you'd soon be way out the back, past the breakers, paddling in calm water again, but having travelled further than you'd ever imagined and suddenly excited that you'd made it.

Pete was an enigma, a conspirator and a brother in arms. He viewed the world through slightly glassy, narrowed eyes that were set deep into an exotically handsome visage. He was smart, cunning even. Words snuck out of his mouth in a soft cadence. Along with our other friend, Andy, we formed a trio bound together by a love of rock and roll and wanting to do something, anything about it. We managed bands together, we started a record label, we made friends for life, we had fun. We all got married, we had kids, I went grey, they didn't (it's not a big deal, it's fine). For 25 years we had adventures together, so often caught in Pete's rip. We remained friends first, business partners second. We had such a good time, and Pete was at the centre of it. Nobody ever made ambition so hilariously deadpan, like it was a private joke. Andy quite perfectly described Pete as a puzzle to the unacquainted, an open book to those who knew him. He changed the course of so many lives in music, and now he's gone.



Huge thanks to WBYK for the illustration wbyk.com.au

After Pete died, waves started rolling in. Waves of grief. Waves of disbelief. But for every instance when all the air got sucked out of my lungs thinking about a world where our best friend and comrade was gone, there was comfort in how people fell over themselves to say how much Pete meant to them. Friends texted, called, messaged and emailed to talk about how he had changed the course of their life: how he had said something important to them that made them stop in their tracks or helped them look at a seemingly unsolvable problem differently. That people felt a compulsion to get in touch and talk about Pete in the middle of a time when everyone had their own worries as the world was shutting down was incredibly generous. For all of us bobbing out there in an ocean of grief, suddenly waves of kindness came rolling through in perfect sets, beautifully spaced.

Bondi Beach is still empty. None of us know how long this strange new world will continue. We're all caught in a rip. We've got no choice but to let it take us out the back of the breakers until we reach calmer waters. The waves are going to keep rolling in. We just have to have faith that we can all catch a big one back into shore, and thank our lucky stars we've got each other.

Pete Lusty's friends and colleagues created a killer playlist of songs that he was involved in over the years – [listen here](#)

DIVERS TO DIVE: A PANDEMIC DREAM JOURNAL #1

DAVID KEENAN, illustrated by ELENI AVRAAM

SUNDAY 22/3/20

Get a message from a friend in Colombia, a once-upon-a-time fellow world traveller, who worked with me at the Bogotá Book Fair and at other events in the country last summer. She recommends me *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. I've never read it. Also, *The Master and Margarita*, which I have. She tells me she is back from Colombia's Sierra Nevada where she felt "the new moon with the ocean's roar ripping through me". I send her a photograph of myself and the poet Lavinia Greenlaw at the grave of Tolstoy, in Yasnaya Polyana, where I captained a quiz team made up entirely of women from Siberia called the Polyana Pirates, because I looked like a pirate, they said, and there were questions about classical music that they knew all of the answers to, and the only answers I contributed was one about Albert Camus and one about the traffic jam at Woodstock. Later on I DJed in Tolstoy's garden and one of the Siberian women came up to me and asked me "David, can you play 'Work Bitch'?"

No clear dream last night, except for a memory of weeping after reading a beautiful line from a book that echoed aspects of Lawrence's "The Ship of Death", something about how as the light dies, just beyond it the green shoots are already rising. Cried so hard on waking.

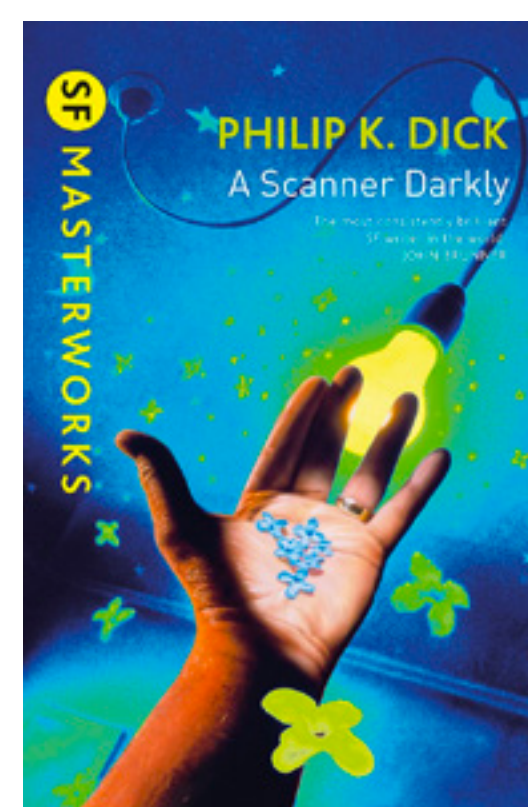
An extract from David Keenan's Pandemic Dream Journal, which is published every Sunday evening. Visit thesocial.com or click the cover image to read Issue #1 in full

For more of Eleni's artwork visit whattimeislove.bigcartel.com



MAKING LOCKDOWN BEARABLE...

Listening to Mogwai, cold beer in hand, sun high in the sky; **Robert Creeley's Collected Poems**; 'Last Night a DJ Saved My Life' by Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton; **pickled onions**; *Green Onions*; '**Sun Boiled Onions**'; missing life's actual Train Guys; *Cake and Sodomy*; Tim Hecker's *Ravedeath, 1972*; *Mas Amable* by DJ Python; Cosmic Blessings; A Rainbow in the Curved Air, Terry Riley; *A Scanner Darkly*, Philip K. Dick; **living room festivals**; Dr Alimantado, *Best Dressed Chicken in Town*; This Isn't Chicken fake bacon; The Orb Daze; **Trolls World Tour** five times in two days; *Arriving Somewhere But Not Here* by Porcupine Tree; **Limmy's Homemade Show**; Hacienda All Day Rave (Saturday); *The Rotating Institute* by **Justin Robertson**; Notes Towards Apocalypse by Mark O'Connell; **Manics gigs for the NHS**; those giant Asian hornets; **the mighty Thundercock 3D printing PPE equipment for local hospitals.**



Our friend Sophie Green (of DJ tag team C&S Strategies) has been keeping a daily diary on Instagram stories documenting the ups, downs and in the middles of life in the new abnormal.

Waved at people a lot.

Bathed less regularly than I'd imagined I would in the circumstances.

Thanked God this wasn't happening when my children were any younger, when every day started at 5am and I struggled to even get through some weekends. Thought about everyone who has young children and is holding it down. Thought about people with babies. Thought about people living on their own.

Gave thanks for the postal service every single day. Felt grateful to all my friends and family who sent packages and cards and letters because my heart lifted every time the postman walked up to the door. Thank you.

Had to smoke out a pigeon that had been stuck, flapping and slowly dying in my chimney for a week and then watch my ex husband wring its neck to put it out of its misery. Tried not to see it as too portentous.

Remembered that while things can feel hard, I'm very lucky and, being honest, I've had holidays that cost quite a lot of money that I enjoyed less.

SOPHIE GREEN

[Click here](#) to read all of this week's observations

*Follow her **@fishlill** on Instagram for daily Isolation Observations*

THESOCIAL



Every night during the lockdown, The Social is opened up online for drinks from 6pm. Different guest landlords will be on hand to start proceedings and to kick you out if you overstay your welcome. Our virtual Peggy Mitchells have included Nadine Shah, Happyness, Steve Mason, The Orielles and Annie Nightingale.

Until we can actually meet again, join us Monday to Saturday on Twitter @thesociallondon and Facebook @thesocialw1



BECAUSE NO
ONE SHOULD
DRINK ALONE.

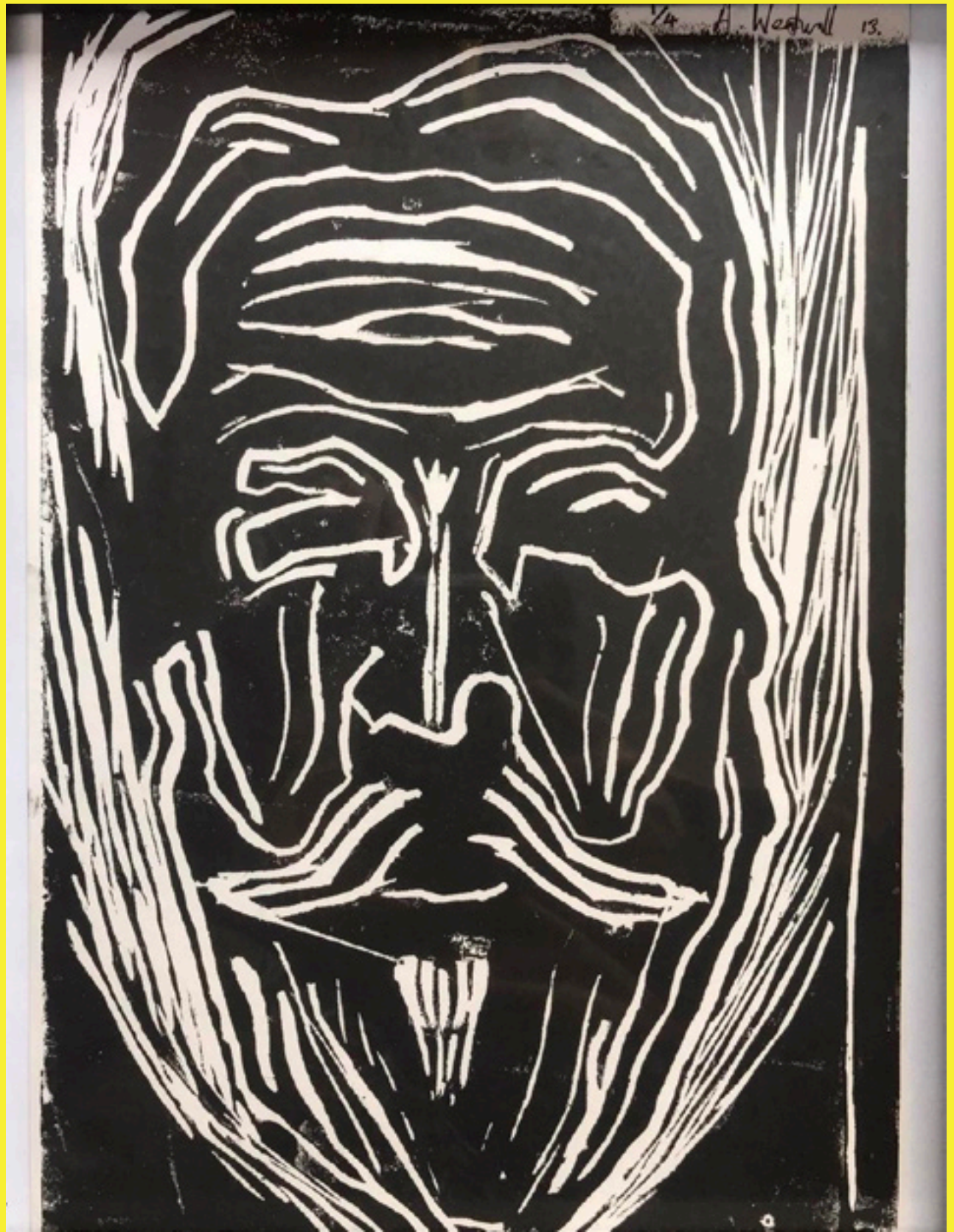
THE TEMPLE OF GNOSTIC SONICS

CATHERINE ECCLES

It's impossible to know how you're going to react when someone dies.

In early February, my good friend Lee Brackstone sent me the January 30th episode of Andrew Weatherall's *Music is Not for Everyone*. After listening, I sent back links to a couple of tracks with the message, "He's a genius. John Peel of our times". Ten days later news came through Andrew was dead. I immediately went back to that episode, and the ones surrounding it, searching on Spotify for some of the tunes Andrew played, and there started a project – one into which to channel the grief of losing someone I knew only a little, but whose company guaranteed incandescent laughter and who had shepherded us through many nights of ALFOS and the rest. A way to spend more time in the company of The Chairman, to hear his gently sardonic voice; a way to share the beautiful, obscure music Andrew played on MNFE.

Methodology was trial and much error before I landed on listening on Mixcloud (best for scrolling back and forth), identifying ones that caught my ear on NTS Radio (almost-reliable track lists) and transferring to a Spotify playlist called, simply, 'weatherall'. Finding the tracks on Spotify is not always easy, it would be wrong if it were otherwise: some are just not there, originally pulled for the show out of the depths of Andrew's immense vinyl collection to go no further – dub tracks in particular; some are elusive but can be unearthed with persistently calibrated searches; many are by artists who only have a couple of tracks up there; The Woodleigh Research Facility is largely evasive, as you'd imagine.



Ranging back through this soundtrack for the End Times, I listen in my kitchen, I listen getting dressed, mostly I listen tramping along the emptying streets of Coronatown, jettisoned into a psychedelic kaleidoscope of gnostic sonics, pausing on corners, scrolling forward and back to find the anchor of Andrew's voice. When I had travelled back to the beginning of 2019 – fifteen episodes, thirty hours of music – I revisited 'weatherall' playing everything again to select the final tracks for the first release of this playlist, now five hours twenty-seven minutes, show by show in the order Andrew played them on MNFE and uploaded to Spotify on March 9th. There was an instant response. Three days later, the day of Andrew's funeral, I started on 2018, journeying through eight hours as I walked around the local park in my daughter's maroon fake-fur coat – mad, sad and grateful, hanging on to the edge and not taking up too much room. It is the most sane thing I can think of doing at the moment.

And so project continues, to be uploaded as each year is completed, back to the beginning, July 2014. Sisters and brothers, please don your ceremonial robes and headgear, huddle round your devices and let invocation commence. If you listen to this, there's no way the grubby little opportunists can get you down.

Click to listen to Catherine's first [Music's Not For Everyone](#) compilation on Spotify. We'll link to future episodes as soon as they go online.

THE THURSDAY AFTERNOON PERAMBULATION

LEE BRACKSTONE

flaneur

noun

a man who saunters around observing society

Of all Andrew Weatherall’s many celebrated talents, the most under-appreciated might be his accomplishments in the itself under-appreciated pursuit of flaneuring.

Thursdays were Andrew’s day to flaneur, or as he sometimes put it, perambulate around the West End. And he saw this as a civilising activity. He would visit record shops, clothes shops with the scent of Japanese denim in his nostrils (Son of a Stag and the Vintage Showroom were particular favourite haunts), hat shops, and bookshops. Sometimes he would visit his hairdresser, ‘Itchy’ Chris. I have no doubt his retail (and grooming) interests were broader than this snapshot portrait, but I suspect these were his main destinations most Thursdays. And I know the respective barbers, tailors, booksellers and purveyors of fine vinyl feel the absence of his frequently irregular visits acutely.



He would often wander by the offices of Faber on Bloomsbury Square and sometimes we’d head out for cod, chips, peas (mushy), a slice and a cup of tea at the Fryer’s Delight on Theobalds Road. He’d tell me about his latest, often obscure, literary discoveries, pass me a CD of a recent deepdive mix into Youtube (most definitely not featuring the ‘umpty-bumpty’ music he played in clubs the world over) then be on his way into Shoreditch, Cambridge Circus, Mayfair (where I think he picked up his magnificent cologne) or Soho. He loved flaneuring and the tradition of the flaneur as represented by Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin and more recently writers like Iain Sinclair; writers who submit to the tides and currents of a city and the life force it creates. It was no surprise then, that Andrew found a kindred spirit in Michael Smith, a writer who captured the fin-de-siecle mood with this tradition in mind when he published his first book, Giro Playboy (2003).

Andrew was aware of this book and Michael before I introduced them and proposed the idea of a collaboration on Unreal City back in 2013; of course he was, and of course he would be. As Andrew was fond of saying, ‘If you’re not on the margins you’re taking up too much room’ and Michael had made the margins of the cultural life of the city his home since the late ‘90s when he moved down here from Hartlepool with romantic notions of what might constitute a ‘literary life’. First published in a limited edition pizza box run of 100 in the form of 8 separate pamphlets and a signed pebble, Giro Playboy is a memoir but very much of the unreliable kind. It survives as a curious document of the turn-of-the-millennium counter-culture in Hoxton and and Shoreditch, of which Andrew Weatherall was very much a part.

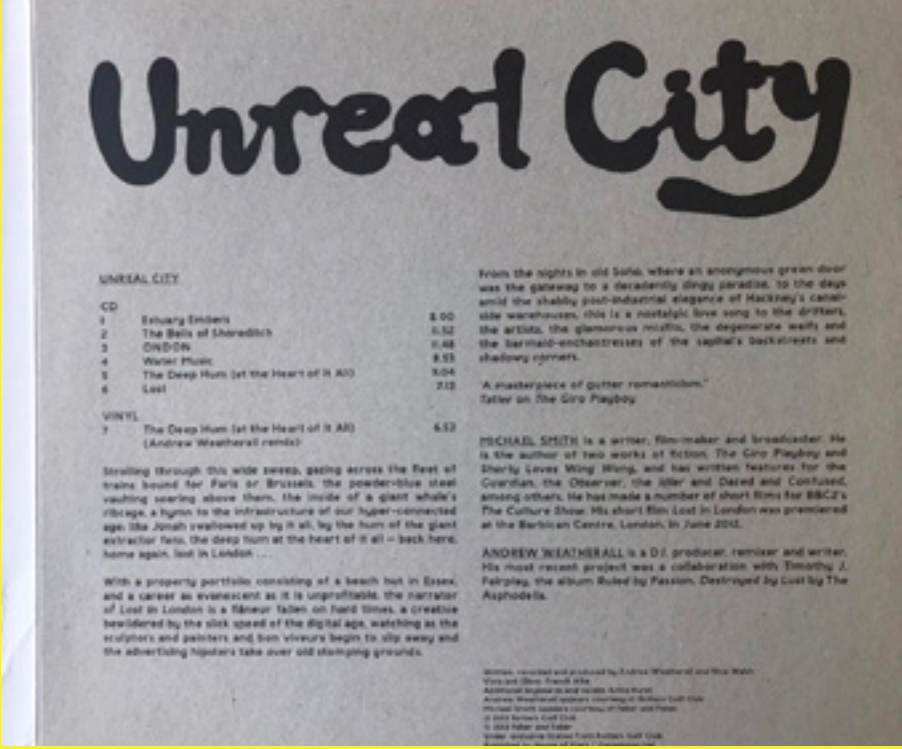
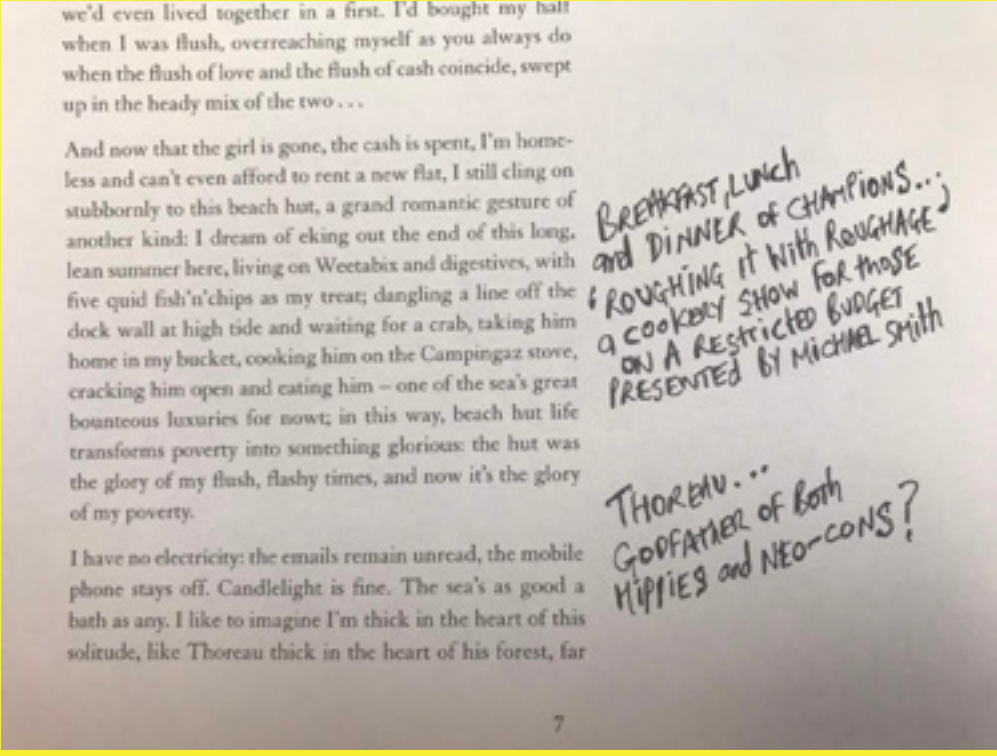
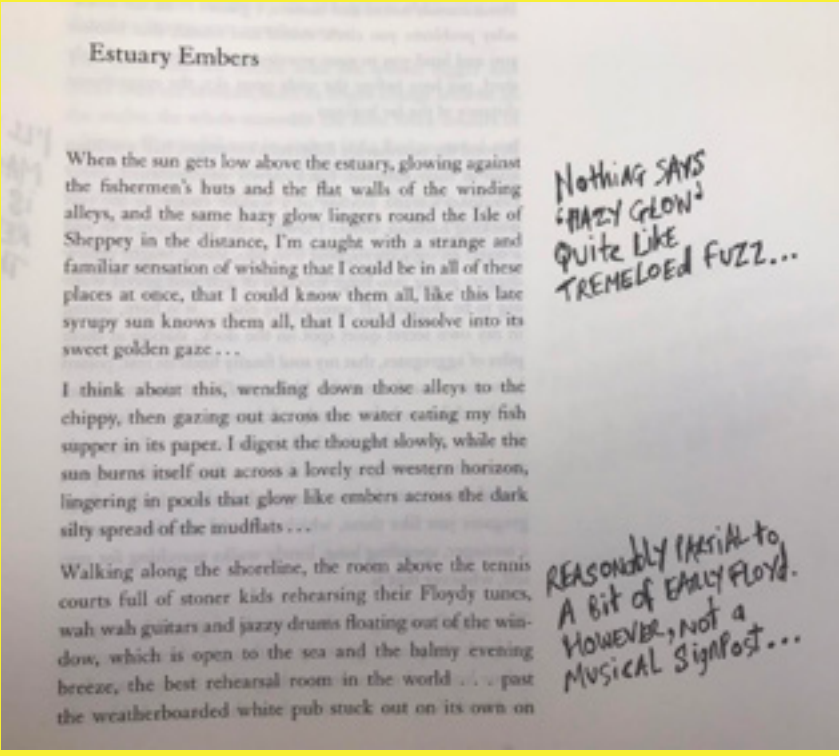
WE AT THE BRAT

Pubs like The Bricklayers Arms and The Griffin, where Michael ‘researched’ much of the book from behind the bar, were still largely off the map at this point, twenty years ago. But gentrification was marching that-a-way, and I know Andrew admired Michael’s portrait of a community shifting gear. Giro Playboy anticipated the nostalgia for a grubbier, less self-conscious East End, before it went mainstream and out-Nathan Barley’d its own satirical shadow. As Andrew himself puts it, in his characteristically effortless and elegant way in the Introduction to the book:

There are two ways to deal with the loss of a personal bohemia. The first, easiest and most soporific is nostalgia: a vision of a probably non-existent Arcadia with all hardship and regret expunged. In some this is fuelled by an envy of the young. Nostalgia is one of humanity’s default settings, and has been for countless generations. I would imagine the original denizens of sixteenth-century Soho (though it was admittedly not known by that name until some years later) complained that the sport (in their case hunting) was not what it had been, just as the denizens of sixties Soho bemoaned the fact that the sport (in their case carousing) was not what it had been. And so on, and so forth. Paradoxically, although nostalgia can be mentally debilitating for its practitioners, it is also part of what attracts the next generation of demi-monde to a particular locale. A demi-monde that brings an area to life and, more often than not, eventually brings property developers to the area.

The second way is the path of wistful resignation with a homeopathic droplet of cynicism. This is Michael Smith’s way.

Andrew also loved Michael’s voice: a lugubrious, softened Tees-valley drawl that never loses its lustre, even when he’s writing about the most compromising and debased of circumstances. They collaborated on a 10-inch and CD only 1,000 copy limited edition of UNREAL CITY; a search of which online only yields this single track, The Deep Hum (at the Heart of It All). Andrew also annotated the pages of the book in this edition with notes in the margins, some of which are reproduced here. A cheeky homage to T.S. Eliot’s ‘unreal city’ immortalised in The Waste Land, Andrew’s collaboration with Michael (‘when Giro met the Chairman’) is mercurial and melancholic, wistful and whimsical. It is a record of the past as we see it recorded before our very eyes as the present disappears in a fugue of incense.



“The following week, me and my mates tried to track down as many of the records that he played that night, all of us armed with the multiple cassettes I’d made up from a DAT recording of his set...”

Read about Andrew Weatherall’s classic 1994 set at the Heavenly Sunday Social [HERE](#)

THE LOCKDOWN DRIVE-IN

We miss going to the movies (let’s face it, we miss every damn thing). This week, we were blessed by three very different meditative films that helped make the days go by a bit less stressfully. They are all streaming online for free now.

FROM HERE TO BEFORE

A FILM BY **KIERAN EVANS**
WORDS BY **VASHTI BUNYAN, SUKHDEV SANDHU, GWENNO SAUNDERS & FIONA BRICE**

A few years back, our friend Kieran Evans made a beautiful and intimate film with legendary folk singer Vashti Bunyan – the “Godmother of Freak Folk” (New York Press). FROM HERE TO BEFORE retraces the steps of her late ’60s journey from London to the Outer Hebrides by horse and cart and spends time with her before her return to the stage in 2006. Never available digitally before, FROM HERE TO BEFORE is streaming for the first time (via the brilliant Welsh culture platform AM).

Vashti kindly gave us a few words about the film, which can be read here alongside appreciations from composer/arranger/violinist **Fiona Brice**, musician/composer **Gwenno Saunders** and author **Sukdhev Sandhu**. We can’t recommend this film enough – it’s proper, Social approved mellowed out Easter weekend viewing. Enjoy.

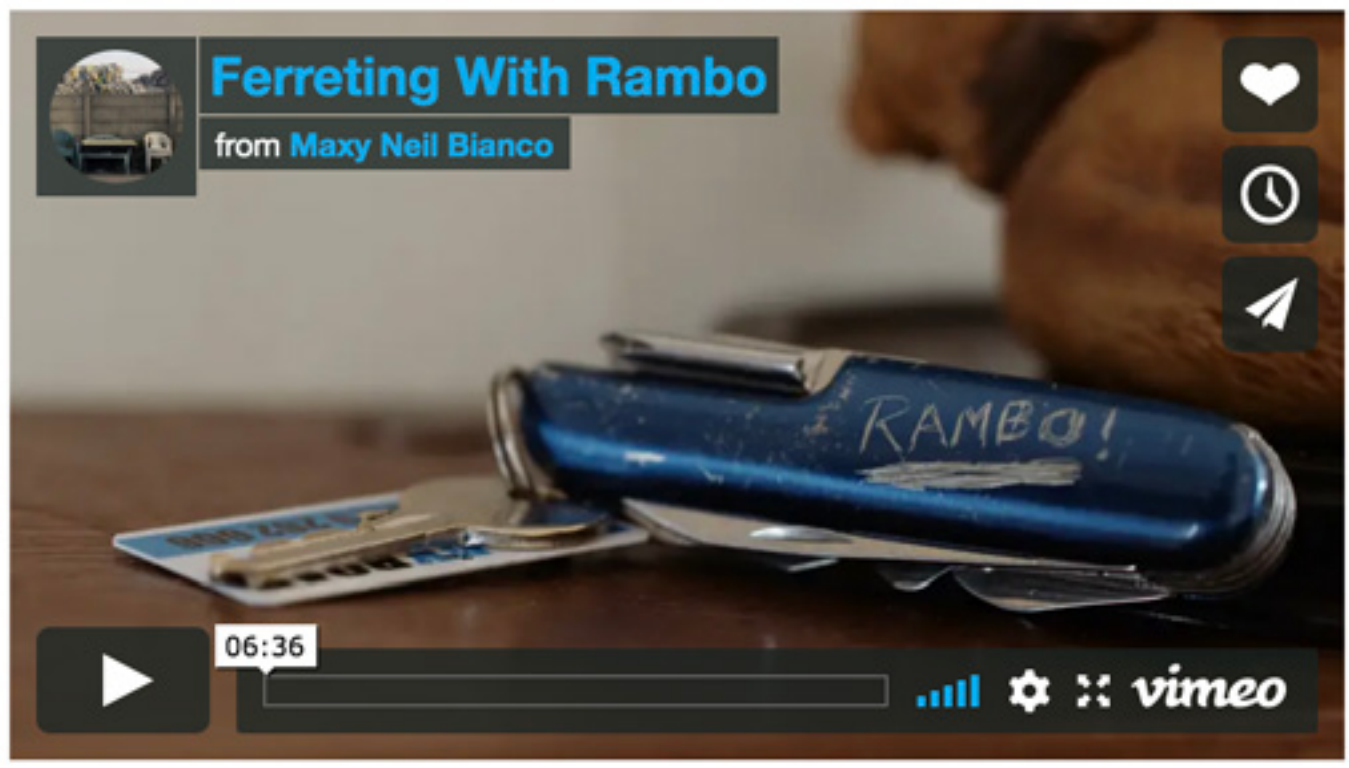
Click here to watch the film and read the pieces in full



FERRETING WITH RAMBO

A short film by **MAXY BIANCO**

“Ferretting with Rambo was the pilot for a preposed series of short films for Channel 4 called Hunters of the Hinterlands. I had already made a few things with a guy called Sucker. I’ve got hard drives full of footage of him up to no good, all forms of poaching, egging, mushroom picking, but Sucker doesn’t keep ferrets. One day Sucker said to me, when I go ferreting I go with me mate Rambo. After I picked myself off the floor and stopped laughing, the film more or less made itself.”



Read an interview with Maxy and watch the film here

SHABBY MAGIC

MICHAEL SMITH

“Sat in the Silchester Road laundrette, making sure the baby’s got clean clothes, watching the gnarly old hippy bloke’s tie-dye slowly floating round and round... the sign on the wall said SMILE, YOU’RE ON CCTV, and I was smiling, soaking up the shabby magic of the seaside town, while the sunset marinated the room in golden honey...”



Click to watch Michael Smith’s Shabby Magic

CO-OP RADIO ATE MY HEART

DAVID BAILEY



In the early noughties, Tesco Extra-esque supermarkets were hailed the new superclubs. A place of consumerist worship for the Nespresso generation. Star fade to 2020 and supermarkets are now legitimately THE ONLY public place to hear locally (and internationally) sourced (mostly) ethical BANGERS. Specifically Co-Op. At this point, I don’t know if other supermarkets even play music. It’s irrelevant. Co-Op shoots for the heart. Jesus saves but Co-Op Radio scores on the rebound <3

On my essential shop to Co-Op earlier, they played Tom Petty “I Won’t Back Down”, which felt more vital than ever. A pan-searing pandemic defying self-preservation anthem. Weeping into the pit of my elbow on the (absence of) baked bean aisle. I forget what I came in for because I’ve just been absolutely bodied by this unexpected item in the swaggage area. Big Tesco might be Extra but little Co-Op is peacocking, like a bad b oughta.

Co-Op Radio resonates and it resonates hard. The DJ (anonymous, like Banksy or The Stig) digs deep. Select cuts that could be deemed base in most other realms...but this is a realm unto itself; it’s Co-Op. It’s drudgery, pre-kitchen sink drama. It’s not my favourite supermarket, far from it, but I’ve been cursed / blessed with it being the perennial local supermarket wherever I’ve lived. I have issue with its contents but the music transcends. Does it matter that I’m uninspired by the quality of the produce on the shelves when the provenance of the soundtrack is second to none? I’m not even in Co-Op anymore, I’m everywhere. I’m on my last legs, I’m taking my first steps. I’m in a convertible I’ve never owned, driving off the edge of a cliff I’ve never seen. Oosh, this song bangs / Sploosh, I’m drowning.

Incapacitating anthems, always. For instance...

THE STREETS: *DRY YOUR EYES*

It was a Sunday, I was hungover beyond belief. Drifting through the aisles, rudderless. Picking things up and looking at them vacantly. FFS, Co-Op Radio. Why are you playing THIS song. Pinballing from un-inspiration station to un-inspiration station. THIS close to putting down my basket and walking out, I swear. Falling down and clutching at body bags of Pom-Bears, cushioning careening Dorito dips with the bridge of my foot. Feeling too many (Walkers) Sensations, the floodgates opened starkly and were never recovered. Mission impossible.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: *I'M ON FIRE*

Walking down the tinned aisle. Fucckkkk. I haven't heard this song in forever. Sombre thumbing through the reduced section. Man at the edge of the world.

*"Sometimes it's like someone took a knife, baby,
Edgy and dull,
And cut a six-inch valley,
Through the middle of my skull"*

Might wanna take a hot dog bun and run a something-inch valley through it but not me head, chick! Is this really Co-Op appropriate music? In almost all circumstances here, I'm what could be perceived (to an outsider!) as a sad lonely man "picking up bits" for his sad lonely tea. The way this song bangs vs the mundanity of what I'm doing is a contrast that I'll remember forever. I can and will listen to this song on my way home, however. It's cool.

R.E.M.: *LOSING MY RELIGION*

The songs seem to resonate the hardest when I'm on my ones in here. Solitary late evening shopping. This song reminds me that frozen pizza does not, and never did, mean anything. I thought it did, until I got in here and the DJ dropped the needle and I dropped my pot noodle. I thought my life's work led to this moment of sustenance, but it didn't. That's me near the Muller Corner, near the Bud Light, losing my will to shop. I'm putting down my basket and walking out.

AMERIE: *1 THING*

The urgency to the way this song starts and doesn't let up is, ON PAPER, an imperfect pairing to my heel-dragging basket-clacking dredge around my local community Co-Op. But, reader, it imparts a certain joyous abandon to my aimless voyage and lifts my spirits, and basket intake, considerably. It bangs. I came for 7 Things, but I stayed for 1 Thing.

QUEEN: *ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUSY*

No! Surely! Well...I'm in here for AT LEAST the next 3 minutes 44 seconds then. Because this song high-key rules. Feverishly seeking an empty aisle to flair down. Backhanding Super Noodles into my basket and bowling tins of chopped tomatoes down the promenade. A strut-forward face-caving banger that has never sounded better than it does on a Tuesday at 11am on Co-Op's system.

—

Too many more to mention. I fantasise that the final song on Co-Op Radio will be "Been Caught Stealing" by Jane's Addiction and the punters will tear down the empire in flash mob unison. At this point, with ravaged aisles and depleted stocks, it feels closer than ever.

Co-Op is now, bizarrely, the only place to get your essential mix alongside your government sanctioned essential shop. Didn't see that one coming but it makes all kind of sense that Co-Op Radio is the last DJ standing. The banal supermarket setting – now heightened to supernormal status – will continue to be soundtracked by songs from the past with intensified lasagne levels of gravitas. If you thought Co-Op Radio hit home before, now is its time to melt your face.

Miss Issue 1?
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