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Good things happening soon

Wednesday August 1, 4th Floor Film Night, Hotspur House, 7pm. Manchester Municipal Design Corporation presents a varied programme of free film nights in their on the fourth floor. (weekly)

Thursday August 2, Ensemble Economique, Night & Day. Evening of trippy jams, with support from Michael Flower & Neil Campbell, New Zealand's Purple Pilgrims and new Manchester free-rock supergroup Desmadrados Soldados de Venture.

Friday August 3, Dots & Loops, Kraak. Clubnight moves to the Northern Quarter, playing indie, shoegaze, alternative, electronica, Kraut-rock, psych and more.

Saturday August 4, Blog North #2, Tate Liverpool. A day of art, networking and workshops on essentials such as Twitter for bloggers in the north, led by Manchester's premier creative guide, Creative Tourist, and Leeds' Culture Vulture, also featuring Liverpool's the Double Negative. £25

A Chester Walkabout, starts at Chester Station, 11am. A stroll around this historic city's 20th century architecture led by the North West branch of the 20th Century Society, including a chance to see the interior of the recently listed Cathedral Bell Tower. £5/4 concessions, email grahamfisher2004@yahoo.co.uk to book.

NSFW Hardcore Fest #1, Kraak, 4pm. US and UK hardcore, including Coke Bust, Sick Fix and more.

Sunday August 5, Victoria Baths open day, 12pm. Open day with tours, a craft workshop and screenings of Olympic highlights. (monthly)

Loiterers Resistance Movement psycho-geographic walk around Manchester. (see www.nowhere-fest.blogspot.com for meeting place and time.) (monthly)

Monday August 6, Twisted Tape Recordings launch night, The Castle. Outlet for new bespoke cassettes project, featuring Manchester's Base Ventura and Temple Songs live.

Wednesday August 8, A Page of Punk, Bay Horse. Japanese punk with support from Pure Graft, Pooch, Throwing Stuff and Huffin Paint.

A Conversazione with Karl Marx, Creative Corner, Whalley Range. A conversation with a jet-lagged Karl Marx. Part of Manchester's Cafe Historique's summer school, which is themed 'campaigns'.

Friday August 10, Babel Fiche, Castlefield Gallery. Castlefield Gallery reopens with a solo, film-oriented show by Manchester artist Dave Griffiths. (exhibition runs until Sunday September 16)

Al Weiwei: Never Sorry, Cornerhouse. New documentary about the avant-garde dissident Chinese artist. (see www.cornerhouse.org for dates and times)

Meat Night #0, Gullivers. New night featuring live bands Meat, the Niallist, Tranarchy and Spaceghost, plus a film screening and DJs.

Tuesday August 14, The Other Room #34, The Castle. Experimental poetry night. (bi-monthly)

Wednesday August 15, Victoria Baths Swimming Club, Levenshulme Baths, 7pm. Friends of Victoria Baths swim in another Edwardian pool. Pay by donation. (monthly)

Thursday August 16, Lance Romañice, Night & Day. No-fi experimental rockabilly surf.

Saturday August 18, Manchester Pride Party all-day, Night & Day. Featuring local favourites Sex Hands and Milk Maid, plus Halo Halo and Rapid Pig.

Saturday August 18-Sunday August 26, Rochdale Canal Festival, various locations. Activities along the length of the canal from Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, to Manchester city centre. See www.myrochdalecanal.org.uk/rochdale-canal-festival-2012 for more information.

Wednesday August 22, Birth

Control has a history, Creative Corner, Whalley Range. Part of Manchester's Cafe Historique's summer school. A reflection on maternal mortality and the history of birth control in Manchester, with a focus on the 1930s.

Thursday August 23, Hakai No Ku, Bay Horse. Night of noise with support from Space Victim, Divine Men of Choice and Queer'd Science.

Friday August 24, Idents, Cornerhouse. Cinema-inspired prints and sculptures in the cafe/bar areas by Manchester artist Daniel Fogarty. (exhibition runs until Tuesday October 9)

Saturday August 25-Sunday August 26, Fat Out Fest, Islington Mill. DIY festival offering two days of music, stalls, activities and more, featuring Lydia Lunch, Alexander Tucker, Charles Hayward, Talons and many others.

Sunday August 26, Palms, Night & Day. Jangle-grunge from Glasgow with support from fellow pop-Glaswegians Aggi Doom and more.

Wednesday August 29, Frank Fairfield, Night & Day. Californian folk with support from Manchester's Tom Settle.

Wednesday August 29-Sunday September 2, Abandon Normal Devices, various locations. Festival of new cinema, digital culture and art, including an apocalyptic drive-in movie theatre installation, an exhibition about the world's first bio-engineered football and more. To find out more visit www.andfestival.org.uk.

Friday August 31, The Berberian Sound Studio, Cornerhouse. Psychological horror about a sound engineer's descent into madness, soundtracked by sadly-missed experimental electronica band Broadcast. (see www.cornerhouse.org for dates and times)

Trouble at T'Mill, Islington Mill. Indie-sleaze DJs Trash 'o' Rama take over Islington Mill for a party.





1 THE SHRIEKING Violet is three!

I can't believe it's three years since the Shrieking Violet fanzine started, back in summer 2009.

The first issue, conceived as an alternative guide to Manchester, was published at the start of August in 2009, containing articles on canal boats, street names, the demise of B of the Bang and the regeneration of north Manchester among other topics – along with, all importantly, a recipe for blackberry crumble!

Over the course of the nineteen issues of the Shrieking Violet I've produced to date, certain preoccupations have emerged, and subjects such as public art, public transport, history, food and tea have all remained constants; fittingly, this issue contains an appreciation of post-war murals by Joe Austin, a tribute to tea by Anouska Smith, a lament on the fragmentation of our railway system by Kenn Taylor, a profile of Manchester-associated radical and eccentric Pierre Baume and a recipe for bread from the Northern Quarter's Bakerie, among much, much more.

In issue seven, I mourned the loss of Urbis from Manchester's cultural landscape, so when I was thinking of what to write about for this issue it seemed appropriate that I should visit the National Football Museum, which has opened in its place to see how its successor shapes up.

As I write this, it's looking worryingly likely that we may lose another Manchester institution: Library Walk, one of Manchester's best-loved streets and bits of public space. The council has plans to plan to cover it over with a glass roof, and lock it at nighttime, in a scheme designed by Ian Simpson (yes, him of Urbis fame). The proposals are being bitterly fought from several sides, by people worried not just about the architectural impact but the implications for rights of way, and a petition against the plans has already gathered well over 500 signatures. If you do one thing in the next couple of weeks, make sure you sign the petition at www.change.org/petitions/manchester-city-council-refuse-permission-for-the-plans-to-enclose-library-walk.

Keep up to date with the latest news on the campaign, and find out how you can help, at <http://friendsoflibrarywalk.wordpress.com>.

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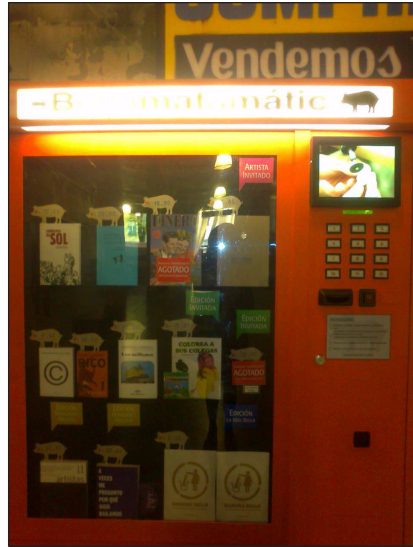
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Zine and artists' book vending machine, Madrid

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Mental health at the movies: *Jesus' Son* (directed by Alison Maclean) by Richard Howe

"I FELT about the hallway of the Beverly Home mental centre as about the place where, between our lives on this earth, we go back to mingle with other souls waiting to be born."

Jesus' Son is based on acclaimed biographical novel by Beat author Denis Johnson, who guest stars as a peeping tom with a knife in his eye socket. Set on the North West coast of America in the '70s and named after a Lou Reed lyric, it's gonna be a wild ride. *Jesus' Son* gets my vote as best ever female-directed film; not that gender matters, that's just to get your mind bubbling and percolating

We follow narrator, the journey of lovable antihero nicknamed 'Fuck Head' (Billy Crudup) from drug addiction to compassion. Love rocks along the way, hilariously funny at times and tragic.

The mental rehabilitation centre in which hope is wrought is brightly lit. As it is located in a Phoenix desert town, this makes for sterile surrealness and a situation of the strange. Here, Dennis Hopper is met: "People are just meat now." "Is that how it is?" "How would I know, I just got here." There are also encounters with a splendid Samantha Morton, mad Jack Black, seductive Holly Hunter, out-there Dennis Leary and scattered haired patients who grab him by the shirt and says things like: "There's a price to be paid for dreaming" and "They made God look like a senseless manic."

The film succeeds in not judging characters' problems directly for their circumstances and themselves, but for the consequence of their actions. A rocking and sensitive soundtrack from those years in the seventies ushers through this film, which has been an inspiration on my film, which I am currently editing – *Realtease*. Pray, beg, borrow a copy.



Richard is currently editing the film *Realtease*, which touches on mental health. Find out more at www.facebook.com/groups/264128182803.

Realtease teaser: <https://vimeo.com/45743438>

Tweet Richard about films @rikurichard.



3 National Football Museum: what's in it for a non-fan? by Natalie Bradbury



1966 World Cup ball

I AM not a football fan. I have no particular aversion to the game – beyond a general disillusionment with corporate sports culture – but football matches themselves encompass three of my biggest phobias: loud noises, crowds and surprises. I was however, a fan of Urbis, Manchester's museum of the city / popular culture, formerly housed in the building which now contains the National Football Museum, recently moved from Preston. A major criticism of Urbis was that it attempted to capture and display in a museum that which has to be experienced first hand – popular culture, something defined by its immediacy. I decided to enter the turnstiles of the new football museum to see how it would compare – after all, what could be more pop culture than football?

As a non-fan, who is not immersed in the culture, jargon or latest news on transfers and managerial changes, I was curious to see what the football museum would have to offer me. Though references to 'football' in literature go back through the centuries, the game as we know it was invented by an Englishman in 1863, and the museum really brings home the extent to which football is part of our national psyche. From the dominance of kickabouts at school, and as a way of keeping active and staving off boredom, to the phrases 'offside' and 'red and yellow card' (you don't have to be able to define either to know what they imply), football is firmly part of the mainstream.

The first floor of the museum is sympathetic to the casual observer, not lingering on any one team or city's footballing heritage. Instead, it takes a broader view of the development of the game that charts how football has become the multi-million pound industry we know today. Football is related to almost every sphere of life: from gender (women's teams provided entertainment when men were away fighting in the war, but were soon-after banned by the FA from playing at league grounds, a ban which lasted for fifty years) to sexuality; from changing jobs and pastimes (the first teams were started by members of churches and cricket clubs, and factory workers, who often couldn't afford to take time off for matches, resulting in its eventual professionalisation) to the role and influence of the media; from architecture (including a section on notable football stadium designer Archibald Leitch) to health and safety; from nutrition to international relations; and from ownership (and the increasing popularity of fan-owned



1896 FA Cup

clubs today) to Fairtrade. Profiles of individual players, such as the first black and openly gay players, add a poignancy and personality to the facts. Centre stage is a shining array of silverware, surrounded by cabinets of medals, kit, programmes, posters, ticket stubs, merchandise and other ephemera. While much of the memorabilia went over my head, I enjoyed being surprised by quirky facts nestled within the displays.



Maradona shirt



1966 World Cup trophy

seems to be accorded less prominence in the museum is the importance of the fans – although this is rectified in Stuart Roy Clarke's 'Homes of Football' series in the temporary third floor exhibition space. Clarke's vibrant and colourful photos show the experience of following your favourite team in all its anguish and glory, capturing moments ranging from the mundane to the extraordinary. Also on the third floor is 'Moving into Space', a display of art inspired by football in West Africa that is part of the 'We Face Forward' programme currently on across Manchester's galleries. More politically charged than much of the museum's content, it was a reminder of what's at stake in many parts of the world; to many people, football is far more than just a game.

Urbis's strength was that it hosted changing exhibitions on topics not generally covered by other museums, rather than tying itself to a permanent collection. The National Football Museum works for me because it balances history and facts with relevant and interesting temporary exhibitions. If it manages to maintain the quality of the changing exhibits, I'll visit again.

'Homes of Football' and 'Moving into Space' are at the National Football Museum until Monday December 31.

The top five things I learned at the museum:

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1. Bolton Wanderers once had a fanzine called Tripe & Trotters.
2. At one time, travelling to games by train was so popular that there was a 'Football league liner', complete with a cinema and disco.
3. Match scores used to be sent to newspapers by pigeon post at half and full time.
4. Strangeways prisoners were put to work painting diecast souvenir footballer figures.
5. Blind football is played in silence; the ball contains ball bearings so players can hear it approaching.

Aside from a short section on niche football teams (those grouped around the over 50s, gay men, etc), the second floor is markedly less engrossing, containing several interactive exhibits which have to be paid for – and a number of which were broken when I visited. Something that strangely





5 No more soggy teabags

by Anouska Smith

MEANDERING around town I come across a placard reading 'No More Soggy Teabags'. Mmmm, I thought all teabags were soggy or have I missed something? Maybe so, but we are as a culture a nation of tea drinkers. I confess, I didn't even used to like tea; I didn't drink it for years. It was only because I found myself in a situation where there was only tea on offer that I started to drink it again and now I have several cups each day. You could say it is a borderline addiction or just partly boredom but either way, I like a lot of tea.

It used to be that no one really cared for a 'special brew' in the city; at one time the best you could expect was a polystyrene cup from McDonald's. Soon though everyone was busy with continental style mocha choca skinny lattes or an ice cool, silent but stirred Frappuccino. Americanised coffee chains appeared from Starbucks to Costa Coffee and these by far are still dominating the high street but somewhere (underwhelmingly so at first) it seems a more familiar past time has started to prevail.



At first, I noticed a plethora of high spec dazzling cupcake cafes springing up a few years ago. Tea and a pretty cake ... so far, so good. 'Will this actually last, do you reckon?' a friend of mine asked me as we walked past, her reserved concern valid. Cupcakes are something many of us associate with Sundays in childhood, puerile attempts to put 'butterfly' wings into a seemingly overly sweet mixture. As much as I like cake, how many cupcakes do people eat generally from day to day, I wonder? Well a lot from the looks of things, as from the outside these little respites seem to have found a niche not only with tea and cake but in weddings, celebrations and

anything else you can think of that calls for cake... break ups, hangovers and thank-yous.

Head over to Tib Street and Thomas Street, where you experience the hub of classy tea time. My first experience of a nice tearoom in Manchester was at Teacup, Mr Scruff's well known venture, now well-established in the Northern Quarter. Now, I have had cream tea before but this felt like the start of a trend. After coming up with a genius idea of a brew on his club nights back in the day (the simplicity of it was lovely) I suppose maybe he saw a gap in the market or just went with his heart and created an extended tearoom to hang out in. Alongside the fun merchandising I have always liked Teacup and because of my fondness I can forgive the haphazard service as this makes it part of the expected experience.

In the rest of the Northern Quarter there are now other tearooms such as the perfectly sweet Sugar Junction, which has more of a serene retro vintage vibe, stunning décor and mismatched crockery. A dazzling array of delicious cakes are on offer for those that want a little treat to indulge in. Tea for two costs around £4.90, but you do get plenty so it works out well.



when meeting friends.

Closer to Stockport in Heaton Chapel, once a former pub, The Ash Tea Rooms; as well as tea and dining, offers a bespoke cake service by CC Cakes and the opportunity to browse around the delicious looking Belgian chocolates, preserves and other knick-knacks on display. It is very roomy inside so excellent for browsing and the plans are to extend the outside area, so in that case bring on the sunshine!

One of my favourites has got to be The Art Of Tea in Didsbury on Barlow Moor Road. Now I have heard a lot of funny rumours about this place in the past, but all of this was dispelled by the fact that inside it is, well to use a pun ... my cup of tea. You can't really see much when you pass by, but when you are sitting inside it feels like a home from home. The best bit about this place has got to be the fact there is a bookshop at the back which is stuffed to the brim with high brow literature. When I was there last, a gentleman asked if he could borrow something whilst he sat in the café and the shop owner gladly obliged. It has a really friendly vibe and doesn't try to be something its not. You can dine there and also get a beer and stay until the late hours if you want. It definitely ticks all the boxes for me.

So what has created such an upsurge of tearooms in what seems like a relatively short space of time? One could suggest there is something about tea that reflects the austerity of our times. People have felt the recession, the lack of money and the diminishing job opportunities. Most of us have been getting paid less, losing our jobs or have little or nothing to save at the end of the month. We still want to go out and have fun but are willing to have less in exchange for quality. We need to go out and connect with others, we need that for our moral. These vintage style tea rooms evidently hark back to war times, rationing and cutting back on luxuries which is something which many of us are doing now. You might think twice about eating out but you know you can stretch to a cup of tea to share. Maybe we are rejecting the idea of flashy consumption and we just want to be somewhere that is familiar, quintessential and a bit down to earth and I think tea rooms provide that. Whatever the reason, I hope I get the chance to visit a few more sometime soon. Anyway someone put the kettle on ... I'm ready for my third brew of the day.





7 Broken Connections

by Kenn Taylor

THERE have been many eulogies made over the years about the work of dockers, shipbuilders, miners, fishermen and others, about the times when work was more than a job, it was a way of life that helped define you. Much less has been created about railway workers though. This is despite the fact that the old LMS Railway alone once employed a staggering 263,000 people and that working on the railway was as much as a way of life, if not more so, than in any other industry.

This is perhaps due to the fact that any interest in railways is negatively associated with 'trainspotters', but that is to not acknowledge that working on the railways is very different to being a railway enthusiast, even if the two aren't mutually exclusive.

Geography also plays a key part. Although there were 'railway towns' – Derby, Crewe, Doncaster, Shildon and others, the railway, of course, branched out across the country and there was no definite geographical tie to the industry. There were railway people in every town, from the great workshops to the smallest village station and most felt part of that very big network. The Stationmaster in Kirkcaldy was connected to the Patternmaker in Crewe and the Clerk in Euston.

Railway workers were also generally less radical and militant than those in other industries, making them less noticeable to those in the arts and media. This was because, although railway work was often poorly paid, dirty and dangerous, it was also usually secure, a true 'job for life' where you could start as an engine cleaner and work your way up to foreman. It was also place where workers had, to a degree at least, autonomy, able to move around the yard or station rather than be tied to a production line.

Safety too was important. Deaths of railway workers were, and continue to be, high, due to the nature of the railway – heavy and fast, forces that tend to be negative towards human life.

While passenger safety, usually more of a priority for those running railways, was also always a concern uppermost in the minds of railway workers, even if customer service wasn't. Nothing works on the railway unless everyone works together, and this awareness of the important nature of even the smallest task further helped to bond those working on it together.

And that is perhaps the key to life on the railway. There was the feeling of being part of a great big thing, a service, and an essential network that connected everything in the country, taking the coal of Yorkshire to the steelworks of Teesside and the steel



on to the shipyards of Newcastle. And the ship-owner from London to Newcastle and the workers in each of these industries home for the day and to the seaside on high days and holidays. The railway connected things and people and to work on the railway was to be part of that vital connection.

Then came privatisation.

In the mid-1990s, the railway was broken up into different competing businesses. Train operators were separated from owning trains, owning trains was separated from maintaining trains, track owning was separated from track maintenance, and ultimately, track was separated from trains. In short, the network ceased to be a network in the real sense. This system was chosen not for its efficiency, but for its ability to make a quick profit for those involved. It has left a legacy which everyone else will have to pay the price for, for many decades to come.

And so the bus companies and others bought into the railway. The trains become a rainbow of different colours, often better to be fair than the drab hues of nationalised British Rail. The uniforms got better, and maybe even the staff smiled a bit more, training drummed into them by 'customer service' coaches.

Yet these 'improvements' on the railway mirrored the 'improvements' in Britain over the past 30 years. While on the surface things seemed to be getting better, Costa Coffee's luxuriant muffins replacing the grim curled sandwiches of the Travellers Fare Buffet, underneath, the real business of the railway, the business of fishplates and electrical switchgear and ton upon ton of lubricating grease, a world dirty, unglamorous and technical, was in decline.

Areas of the railway which would have once worked together for mutual benefits now fought each other to improve their own balance sheet. As branding and margins and customer service became the priority, underneath the decay continued. The net result was a more inefficient, more unreliable, more expensive railway that became the laughing stock of the world. Even allowing for inflation, the taxpayer now subsidises the private railway companies far more than it ever did British Rail. Much worse than that though, with safety given over to profit, with skilled staff replaced by cheaper inexperienced ones on short-term contracts, with corners cut and deadlines squeezed to save money, rail accidents and passenger deaths increased. That is the reality of the privatised railway.

The effect of privatisation on railway people was largely the same too. No longer part of a great unified network, something bigger than themselves individually, they are instead separated, now an employee of a global bus corporation, or a Canadian train manufacturer, a government quango or a national civil engineering PLC, companies all allegedly working together to make trains run but all vying ruthlessly for their own interests. Yet, despite all of this, as recent trade union action has seen, railway workers retain a little more unity than in many other industries. The necessary skills and inevitable interactions of railway workers have kept some sense of togetherness, despite the all the forces working against it.

The current government is mostly concerned with reducing the cost of the railway, not improving its success. That doesn't give much faith that the railway will improve in the UK anytime soon. Even if it does, it will never be as good as in the likes of Japan or France, countries where people realise the need of co-operation, long-term planning and investment now for benefits later, things that the UK seems incapable of. As long as the selfish, short-term, profit-obsessed culture continues in the UK, we will not only have a terrible railway, but we will have a terrible society and a weak economy. Only if we can re-establish our broken connections, realise the need to work for something bigger than ourselves as individuals, will things ever improve.

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9 Perros y gatos

by James Robinson

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11 Pierre Baume – eccentric and radical activist

by Simon Sheppard

TO MERIT being labelled an eccentric in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, you must surely be rather odd. That simple thought was perhaps the first one I had regarding Pierre Henri Joseph Baume. It was not be the last.

I chanced upon Baume whilst cataloguing the papers of social reformer Robert Owen as an archivist based at the National Co-operative Archive in Manchester, and I am very happy I did. Being drawn to anything with a whiff of eccentricity, and being naturally inquisitive, led me to spend time researching Baume, hoping to find out just why he merits being recorded in history as an eccentric. I wanted juicy details and I was not to be disappointed.

A native of Marseille, Baume was raised in Naples and educated in a military college in the city. Leaving France at such an early age may explain the lack of patriotism shown by Baume when, in his early 20s, he used his military nous to spy both for and against the French. Life working as a double-agent brought Baume handsome financial reward, but it also elicited great danger. Such danger, in fact, that Baume was forced to hastily flee France before, it is said, 'Madame La Guillotine' made acquaintance with his neck!

Baume found safety in London, and there quickly assimilated himself into the life of a radical social reformer, rubbing shoulders with many of the 'movers and shakers' of the times, Robert Owen amongst them. Baume was a conundrum; on the one hand fighting long and hard for movements he believed would make the world a better place for his fellow man, such as co-operation and temperance, whilst on the other hand seeming to distrust almost everyone he made close contact with. He offered large sums of money for anyone willing to build a 'school of co-operation', but when it came to handing the money over he would baulk, refuse to pay, and accuse whoever the individual may be of trying to swindle money out of him.

However, despite his rather odd business methods, it is Baume's personal life which truly merits the tag of eccentricity. At every turn there are mannerisms which, by any measure, are odd: hiding a trained monkey in his overcoat poised to bite anyone foolish enough to attempt to steal the bundle of pound notes he purposely left hanging; filling the other coat pocket with a supply of dried peas – the only sustenance he was ever seen to consume; choosing to live in the dankest, darkest railway arch he could find, despite clearly being wealthy – wealthy enough to cut in two the notes which he hung from his pocket, rendering them useless should some lucky rascal make off with them; being investigated, though not charged, for the murder of a love rival, with the said departed rival being the husband of the love interest! I could go on; the period Baume spent in London is littered with stories which provide evidence to the man's curious nature.

However, there is one incident in Baume's life stands out amongst the other 'eccentricities', and it would secure Baume's infamy and earn him the unenviable moniker 'The Islington Monster'. Following the agonising death in childbirth of his half-sister and her unborn child, Baume, being of a practical and scientific mind, chose to sell their bodies to medical science. Locals viewed this, at best, as 'heartless', and salacious rumours spreading like wildfire which named Baume as the father of the dead child proved the final straw; the 'Islington Monster' was born. Such was Baume's infamy a local folk song was penned recounting his evil nature in all its depraved detail. Vilified in all quarters Baume left London, first for Manchester and then onto the Isle of Man.

Baume purchased an isolated property on the island, becoming known to the locals as the 'French Miser'. His eccentricity continued unabated. A virtual recluse, he slept in a hammock in the only space available; his house filled with books and part-written, unsent letters. His diet of dried peas changed to one of garden snails, gathered for him by local children and collected from them via a tin cup hung by Baume from a string at his bedroom window. Reclusive and 'odd' as he may be on his death Baume left his entire estate, worth over £40,000, to be used for

good causes on the island.

Historian and journalist GJ Holyoake remarked that Baume's constant fear of being committed to an asylum was misplaced; there was 'not the slightest fear for him' as there was 'no asylum which would have undertaken to manage him'. Holyoake also offers a perfect summation of Baume, writing that 'some people are deemed eccentric because they have some peculiarity, or because they differ from others in some conspicuous way. Whereas Mr Baume seemed to have every peculiarity and to differ from everybody in every way'.

I love that quote, and I rather like Baume. In this short piece I have just scraped the surface of Baume's eccentricity – I never even got round to mentioning Baume graverobbing his friend's head!

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13 The plight of the post-war mural by Joe Austin

I AM pleased to be able to write that from where I sit, there currently seems to be a resurgence of interest in that once widely derided and most misunderstood of all outdoor spectacles ... the public mural. Sadly the interest is still limited to a relatively small group of like-minded people and the future for many of these fantastic works of art is worryingly uncertain.

One of the undoubted experts in this field, Lynne Pearson, suggests that there were more than 1,000 concrete, brick, metal, ceramic tile and mosaic murals produced between the late 1940s and the 1980s. Little known artists such as Alan Boyson, Charles Anderson and Fritz Steller all contributed hugely to the vitality of this country's public domain and deserve far greater recognition than they currently receive, especially when compared with their gallery-based contemporaries.

In this short piece I aim to highlight the plight of just three of these truly wonderful works; works whose future, I would contend, would be guaranteed 100% secure if they were but made from oil painted on a sheet of stretched canvas and hung in a gallery, or carved from Carrara marble and sat on a plinth in front of your local Town Hall.

In chronological order my choices are.

1. Gordon Cullen's *Coventry Mural* from 1958 (unlisted)
2. Dorothy Annan's *Farringdon Mural* from 1960 (Listed Grade II)
3. William Mitchell's *Three Tuns Mural* from 1966 (Listed Grade II)

I'll begin by stating that quite why Gordon Cullen's work is unlisted is beyond me although, as we shall see, listing can prove to be something of a double-edged sword, the irony being that Cullen's mural is probably the most secure of the three, protected as it is from both the voracious appetites of the developer and the ravages of the British weather to a far greater extent than either of the other two listed works.

To say that Coventry suffered during the war is an understatement that I hope you'll forgive me. Suffice to say it fell to one of the City's greatest (adopted) sons, Donald Gibson, to redevelop the ravaged city, allowing him to create the world's first large scale pedestrianised shopping area.

In line with the new, socially progressive approaches to post-war Town Planning and Urban Design, the redevelopment of Coventry, like the New Towns that were beginning to spring up around the country, included a significant number of art works whose aim was to raise the communal spirit and help maintain the feel good factor kick started by the Festival of Britain a few

Dorothy Annan, *Farringdon Mural* (1960)



Gordon Cullen, *Coventry Mural* (1958)

years previous.

Gordon Cullen was an architect by training, but was also a very gifted artist. Along with his contributions to the Festival of Britain, he is perhaps best remembered as one of the pioneers of Urban Design through his seminal 1961 book *The Concise Townscape*, in which he set out and illustrated his thoughts on how the urban environment might be visually organised to achieve a better overall coherence.

Cullen's beautiful mural used to sit in a prominent position in the centre of Coventry's main shopping precinct, however so called improvements in 2002 (i.e. squeezing in more shops) resulted in the mural being relocated to a rather austere corridor out of view to the majority of pedestrians.

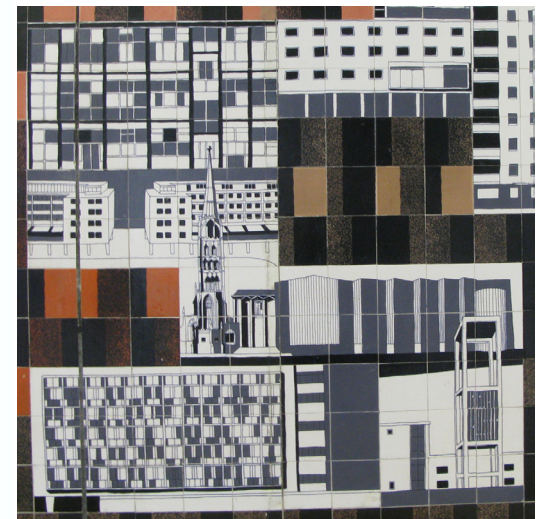
The mural was originally designed by Cullen in 1958 to illustrate the history and spirit of Coventry and its citizens and was much larger than is shown in these accompanying photos, however a sign nearby informs us that "careless workmanship in the 1970s" (one can only imagine) led to the destruction of panels that included medieval maps of the old city.

The panels that remain give a good idea of Cullen's style, with their bold shapes and bright colours, referencing the new city centre buildings (including Basil Spence's wonderful cathedral), bicycles and ribbons (which the city was famous for manufacturing) and dinosaurs (although I'm not quite sure exactly where they fit in ...).

This large work is made of a regular grid of ceramic tiles, upon which the design was painted prior to firing. Despite its history of loss and relocation, the work is actually in excellent condition. As such, it is a fine advert not only for the city's authorities, who carried out the conservation of the work and its subsequent move with care and sensitivity, ensuring the mural's long term future, but also for the suitability of the ceramic tile as a medium for civic art.

Surprisingly considering its location, the same can also be said for the condition of my second mural. Located on a

Gordon Cullen, *derail*, *Coventry Mural* (1958)



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busy road in central London, Dorothy

Annan's exquisite multi-panelled work is easily a contender for one of the best pieces of public art in the country.

There is precious little about Dorothy Annan on the net, but from Lynne Pearson's work it would seem that she produced a very limited number of murals around the 1960s, almost all of which have now gone. So it's hopefully just in the nick of time (November of last year) that this work was granted Grade II Listed status, thanks in no small part to the tireless work of the Twentieth Century Society ensuring our recent and often overlooked and misunderstood cultural heritage has at least a fighting chance of survival. (A quick aside here to point you in the direction of the Twentieth Century Society's Murals Campaign website at www.c20society.org.uk/casework-campaigns/campaigns/murals). Launched a number of years ago now, and stating unequivocally that "Post-war murals are an endangered species", it is definitely worth 10 minutes of your time.

Annan's mural dates from around 1960 and is to be found on the main front wall of the old telephone exchange building on Farringdon Road. It comprises nine hand painted ceramic panels that depict various aspects of the communications and telephone industry. Relating the work very much to the idea of Harold Wilson's "white heat of technology", the wonderfully stylised and abstract compositions suggest aerials, pylons and relay switches etc. and, although rather weather-worn and grubby, are still amazingly sharp in appearance.

The building upon which they were permanently fixed has been empty for many years and forms part of a much larger development project that is currently in for planning. The building itself was designed by Eric Bedford, the Chief Architect of that icon of 1960s architecture the Post Office Tower, and like so many telephone exchanges across the country is facing almost certain demolition, as unlike the mural, it was not thought worthy of listing.

As I understand it, although the listing of Annan's Mural saves it from destruction, the relocation of the panels is still under debate. Although City of London Planners are keen that they stay within the public domain, it seems that partly due to the overall length of the panels, they cannot insist on a final location. As such it may be that they end up in private offices somewhere up on the 12th floor or, even worse, separated out across the development, thereby diluting and destroying their overall effect.

Let's hope the developers honour not just the Listed status of Annan's fabulous work, but also the importance of keeping the nine panels together as single piece and create a suitable new home that is both appropriate and publicly accessible.

And so back to Coventry for the third of my case studies, which is the truly impressive mural by William Mitchell on the outside of what used to be the Three Tuns pub. Whereas it's the combined length of Annan's work, that gives cause for concern as to its future, the sheer scale of Mitchell's wall is likely to work in its favour...

Mitchell is without doubt one of the unsung heroes of British Public Art. Described as the "Doyen of Muralists" by Dr Alan Swale of the Tiles & Architectural Ceramics Society, his work has a consistency, variety and craftsmanship that I would argue matches any of his more famous



Dorothy Annan, detail, *Farringdon Mural* (1960)



William Mitchell, *Three Tuns Mural* (1966)

made the formwork out of polystyrene blocks, all carved and melted into shape with various heated tools and appliances, with the different sections then being carefully placed as liners inside a timber shuttered formwork. Bill's extraordinary skill is his ability to visualise these complex three dimensional shapes and textures effectively in a negative, inverted form, enabling him to create what the Listed Buildings website describes as his "distinctive Aztec style".

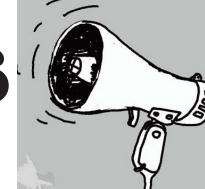
Like the Annan mural in London, the future of this wonderful work is also currently in some doubt, as Coventry Council recently announced plans to redevelop the Bull Yard area of the precinct in which the mural can be found. My understanding is that Bill's mural will definitely be incorporated into the new proposals but, as the website for this huge project offers disappointingly derivative images of a bland and non-location specific environment, we can only hope that this hugely powerful and idiosyncratic work will provide at least one corner of Coventry's future with a sense of originality and individuality... even if it will be the oldest thing there.

So there we are, three excellent murals that I would recommend you make the effort to see if you're in the area, and three depressingly familiar stories of neglect, misunderstanding and uncertainty.

But I'll finish as I started, on a positive note. I do believe that opinion is changing and that as a consequence both Annan's and Mitchell's murals will survive. The context will change and the proportions may have to be altered to fit them in, but at least there's now a will to see our recent artistic heritage saved, and I for one applaud that.

con-
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The Three Tuns mural is an incredible thing. It dates from 1966, is about 11m long by 4m high and is full of amazingly rich textures and a truly astonishing depth of surface. The whole thing was cast in concrete with a pebble aggregate and is two sided, offering a less modelled, but equally impressive, face on the inside. The work is in very good condition, as it has been protected from the elements by the overhanging structures above.

I am very honoured to be able to call William Mitchell a friend and he recently explained to me how he



William Mitchell, detail, *Three Tuns Mural* (1966)



17 Review: Stanya Kahn, 'It's Cool, I'm Good', Cornerhouse

by Liz Buckley



Installation shot: Stanya Kahn, *It's Cool, I'm, Good* (2010), image by TAPE

often despite traumatic experiences or a feeling of isolation in society. Kahn's work seems to call for a higher consciousness of lives different to our own, and by taking her 'characters' out of a distressing context we become more aware of their shocking anecdotes. Focusing on social alienation, interior and exterior struggles, and a feeling of geopolitical anxiety, this LA-based artist questions the problematic nature of our ignorance towards certain ways of life.

'It's Cool, I'm Good', one of the video pieces on show here and the namesake of the exhibition itself, depicts an oddly upbeat and well-humoured 'patient' (Kahn herself) flitting around over twenty locations, injured yet still fighting. This film, like many of Kahn's, explores the theme of resilience, and the vulnerability of drifting through life. Her bandaged head and limbs seem representative of the pain we all befall in trying to get by in a judgemental society, or the dangerous and more literal lives of certain individuals. The 'patient' has a relaxed and comical reaction to her current condition, cleverly embodying the banality of shocking images in our modern society.

Kahn's documentary approach to her videos is literal yet unbelievable at times, and seems to represent the double-sided tussle between fragility and bravery that many of her 'characters' are experiencing. The language and stories of the 'interviewees' become an armour, protecting both them and the viewer from their damaging tales of trauma. 'Kathy' and 'Sandra,' two of Kahn's films depicting her best friend and her mother, create a sense of unease in relaxingly recalling difficult or troubling times in their lives. Kathy in particular talks calmly



Installation shot: Stanya Kahn, *Kathy* (2009), image by TAPE

EMBODYING tales of power, destruction and resilience, Stanya Kahn's work questions our contemporary vulnerability, and the struggles we face as we soldier through life. 'It's Cool, I'm Good' is Kahn's first UK solo show, and offers viewers a poignant selection of her video works alongside satirical yet thought-provoking drawings. Often realist yet surreally fictional, Kahn's film pieces especially are absurd, bewildering and darkly comical. Many of the videos on show for this exhibition especially concentrate on the personal lives of different individuals as they struggle for survival,

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about her personal struggles, stress, and working life in a home for mental patients. Like Sandra, she questions how contemporary society handles things, specifically our dealing with abused children once they've grown up, and the broken adults which emerge from such damaging and under-nurtured lives. A judgemental or even hypocritical attitude often comes from a lack of knowledge and understanding, as Kahn's mother points out in 'Sandra'; much suffering goes on that isn't necessarily on the news, and we have all succumbed to a state where violence is mundane, as it is shown to us so frequently through the media. Sandra feels the internet and modern technology have abolished our once communicative body language, and the need for any kind of physical expression. Through this interview, Kahn explores a social feeling of anxiety, and her mother's worries surrounding how evolution can possibly move forward; do we need to reconsider how we live?



Installation shot: Stanya Kahn, *Sandra* (2009), image by TAPE

Alongside the variety of Kahn's video works for this exhibition, the artist has also contributed a number of childlike, whimsical drawings of animals and zombies, which seem to comically but truthfully represent us as humans. An octopus proclaiming "don't worry" to its fellow sea creature, who is missing a limb, playfully represents our passive approach to life and its tragic events. Despite this, Kahn's sketches also show our resilience as a race, as well as our ability to adapt to any obstacles that befall us. Similarly in 'Hey Ho, Nobody's Home,' plastic toys meet varying dangers and are relentlessly manipulated by the barren landscape. Depicting a familiar state of unease, the vulnerable animals and robots keep moving forward, and meet change head on.



Installation shot: Stanya Kahn, *Hey Ho, Nobody's Home* (2012), image by TAPE

Insightful and thought-provoking, Kahn's work centres on the contradiction between our true feelings and the person we let others see. Comical but always with a sense of uncertainty, she has redefined realism and documentary, giving viewers a fascinating insight into perhaps 'hidden' lives, in areas that usually remain unexplored. Through her various characters and personal performances as vulnerable and damaged individuals, Kahn opens our eyes to social anxiety and struggle, and to how much is going on behind the faces that bravely say 'it's cool, I'm good'.

'It's Cool, I'm Good' is at Cornerhouse until Sunday September 16.



19 Godfrey

by Matthew Duncan Taylor

SO IT was, that after leaving Manchester Cathedral on our way to celebrate my exam results, Padre Godfrey paused beneath a towering Madonna and supposed in his ponderous Texan drawl that my journalism career would be defined by what I did, or did not do, with the privileged information likely to come my way.

He waved his walking stick toward each grave-stone, indicating where the cross wind had driven snow against the larger tombs on a shallow angle, so that the outline of their adorning iconography recurred – stretched according to wind strength – in the bare grass beyond their leeward edges. Like a low sun's long shadows, could you just about make out the stenciled shape of cherubs, saints and crucifixes, where else the gale sharpened curved headstones to a series of green spikes.

The wind worsened, and I hurried to Godfrey's right, beneath Mary's assumption. The snow shelved off the feathers of her attendant angels, and we looked out through the cascade as if stood in the undercut of a waterfall – or an atrocious garden feature, said Godfrey.

He unpinned a dog-eared poppy from the breast of his large, green overcoat, backhand hooking either lapel shut with the curved ebony nuzzle of his horse-handled walking stick, which he swore to replace each time he straightened up to show me an open left palm, and two small indents imparted by the colt carving's ear detail, after little more than ten minutes use. Looks like a spider has had me. Big ones in the desert where he was from, he said. And if he'd the chance to choose again he might have overlooked its allegory and plumped for the smooth, featureless nape of a serpent, rather than this damned waste of money, whose use was limited to a prop with which to embellish the most demonstrative parts of his story, whirling it in slow circles or prodding the air when he said things like 'in the whole wide world', or 'somewhere around here'.

Godfrey ran through the drill of securing his coat; battening down the flaps and hatches of the caped old thing, whose original shade and function could be discerned by the unsewn outline of chevron and shield-shaped insignia along his chest and arms. It was always enough to suggest his coat was a castle that he could mobilise at short notice; its many well worn folds the great doors and drawbridges of a mighty keep that he was angry at himself for having left ajar and vulnerable again – trusting too well this damned maritime climate. A straight-faced routine he performed often, usually accompanied by whooped goddamns that drew a laugh from anyone in earshot.

But today there was nothing. He turned his poppy in his hand.

I set off into the snow before Godfrey motioned me back beneath Mary to explain, suddenly angry, that since the law of our respective homelands had seen fit to dismiss the Seal of the Confessional, he could see no damned reason not to inform me of what he'd gleaned from many a good man all those years ago.

I nodded, despite not understanding, and to cover his suddenly breaking voice said something loud and unconvincing about today's afternoon kick off, and how it might be cancelled if this weather kept up. He stepped forward and looked at the grey sky. I noticed he was allowing the snowfall to dilute his tears.



We'd left the Remembrance Day service early, during the first stanza of Our God, Our Help in Ages Past; Godfrey ushering me along the back pew and into the graveyard, our hymn sheets still in hand, under whispered insistence of his suddenly needing a beer. And taking, he said, the words of the always-omitted sixth and best stanza as his cue, he'd decided to forget this same old blasted commemoration in favour of something inaugural.

Godfrey pointed between two verses on his hymn sheet. Here, he said, should be sung about those busy tribes of flesh and blood, with all their lives and cares, being carried downwards by the flood, and lost in following years. They always miss that bit, he said.

Several short gusts were enough to part the heavy knave doors behind us; the hymn within spilled out in intermittent bursts like a skipping record, before two vergers hauled the way shut with a clunk. Now only a muffle within.

Godfrey smiled at me gratefully. My impression of ignorance was gallant, he said, but the keen perception that served me well as a reporter also made of me a woeful actor.

As such, he would be thankful if I might tolerate the potential of such melancholy for the next few days, and accept a role as the unspecified person to whom – for the sake of his health – he'd been advised, by some damned shrink, to recount his troubling memories.

Fat lot of good that sad story might do for either of us, he said, but I know you're always asking about it, so you're as good as the next hack. None of this is for the newspaper, mind.

I shivered with the cold, and Godfrey straightened up to remove his glasses, wiping away his tears with one end of a scarf that he urged me take; attempting to uncoil long swathes of multi-coloured wool from within his coat, before bidding I take one end of it as he walked backwards.

Between us – like a clown's unending handkerchief, he laughed – emerged a great train: testimony to make do and mend, he explained, and incorporating every few inches or so a different shade of whatever yarn he'd been able to come by that week. Its erratic weave of dropped stitches had been pieced together as a kind of practical sampler from his first wartime forays into knitting, which without a wife he'd learned for himself during rationing, along with budget cookery and all manner of other skills that saw him right through those dark days.

I quickly gathered in the scarf as we moved further apart, coiling it about my shoulders as if I were the harbour bollard or clothes horse to some errant ship or disrobing actor, who was now unraveled alone, gone to sea without his audience, laughing nearly half the length of the graveyard away, and suddenly looking very frail without the scarf's dunnage filling the pockets of air between his coat and slight frame.

Godfrey walked back over, grinning, to advise me he wouldn't need it, for he'd endured harsher winters than we – or even my football team – were currently enduring. And I should use its non-specific spectrum to obscure the red, black and white of my own, thus ensuring our choice of pubs wouldn't be limited on this match day.

Should the winds not change on my club's form today, then I too might be driven to tears before this evening; and if not by football then perhaps by his story, which had no happy ending that he was aware of, beyond his part in the matter.

He hoped to relay the tale either side of my attendance at Old Trafford. And he'd fill me in on the background after we'd drunk to my exam results at a pub down beside the Irwell. From here on in, I should think of the river's long course to Liverpool as sort of time line, along whose length he'd demark,

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21 as chronologically as possible, the events of sixty years ago. Not far from here, out beyond Salford, it had all begun, within the sprawling boundary walls of a long-forgotten country estate. There, amid landscaped gardens, oriental ponds, follies, topiaries and hunting lodges, sat what remained of Foxdon Hall – decayed since its last days during the Second World War, when it was the requisitioned home to a thousand members of the US Air Force, stationed at a neighbouring airfield.

The bells chimed eleven, and we watched out across Manchester in silence, where the weight of traffic, not the second toll of St Mary's, conspired to create an accidental observation of the dead.

Godfrey returned his poppy to his lapel. We stood waiting for what seemed like a long time, before two vergers forced open the knave doors against the wind; parishioners spilling out into the gale, offering the vicar whichever hand wasn't battling to contain inverting umbrellas and billowing skirts.

We set off toward the Irwell, mingling with the congregation as we attempted en masse to cross Deansgate, walking with the flow of traffic until it slowed to offer narrowing passage between the bumpers of closing cars.

In the opposite direction, heading for town, came fully laden shoppers – their expert estimation of these narrow channels gained over 52 weekends a year of experience. They were unhampered even by their fully laden shoulders – saddled up with boutique bags; bags for life, bags within bags, bags lacquered to high gloss, with names and logos and minimalist typefaces, all tumbling into Godfrey and I as we hurried across the road.

When we finally made it onto the opposite pavement, I was surprised to hear Godfrey exclaim that these many made-up men and women, pouring out of Kendals in their refinery, were not all that different from those at church in their Sunday best. Marking my raised eyebrows, Godfrey explained that he'd concluded as much, ever since meeting the first character of his story.

He introduced Geraldine while my attention was taken by Kendals lingerie display. The time was right, for I appeared in the right frame of mind, he said. I laughed, and mentioned that I didn't feel capable of transcribing any love scenes – to which Godfrey let out a 'jeeeee', doubting that love had ever been a concern for this particular woman.

As Geraldine's strange ways were so inextricably bound with her agenda, he couldn't relay her tale without some detail of those frequent indulgences. And this, he said, would at least make his story unsuitable for a newspaper, unless I was aiming for a career in the red tops.

But yes, the Sunday best thing had first come to mind after meeting the always-impeccable Geraldine Hamermann. It was she who first provoked him to question whether it was nobler to beautify or beatify. Because, said Godfrey, having long been in the presence of unruly military men, he wondered whether the knowing glare of the almighty wasn't all that much of a better method of control than the threatened arrival of some beautiful woman.

See, the thing to remember, said Godfrey, was that Geraldine was omnipresent; forever emerging and disappearing again from within and without the many nooks and alcoves of Foxdon's ancient rooms and cavernous passageways. A great lady of the house, whose husband's conscription had been dodged in exchange for her home's use by the United States Air Force.

Foxdon itself was an architectural hotchpotch, said Godfrey, inhabited over a millennia by the Hamermanns, through the Angevin Empire, King John and the Reformation. The Hamermann bloodline survived each skirmish of the thousand-year interim by the uncanny ability of each eldest son to side with whichever royal house or dynasty was to prevail.

Over many generations the house had grown and diminished; been razed and rebuilt, extended and redesigned. Bolted-on Baroque had sat beside Romanesque, Gothic and Victorian until the house fell to ruin after the Second World War. It was a sort of proto-Notre Dame, and within its architecture was indeed a chapel – where Godfrey had been chaplain for the duration of the conflict.

We began downhill onto the embankment of the Irwell. Above us, the city's hotels and apartments overhung the water, so the snowfall seemed to abate on the towpath, and fall only as a

dusty fizz in the centre of the half-frozen river.

The pub was approaching, so Godfrey said he'd get into the story without any further ado. He bade me silent for the next few minutes, while he explained that Geraldine Hamermann – second wife of Baron Arthur Hamermann – always maintained the illusion of a five-denier beyond the hem of her silk skirt. She'd gravy-paste that concoction of hers up and all around, he said, so that her conquests on the neighbouring airbase could be discerned by lap stains on their service uniforms.

Godfrey raised a hand to silence my surprise.

Had the war continued any longer, she might have considered getting these temporary stockings tattooed on, joked Godfrey, who admitted to wondering all those years ago whether she brought the shading to a very definite stop, or let it streak into her natural shade, somewhere around her unmentionables.

The only unpainted flesh he was privy too was the nape of her neck; that long dark hair falling toward him as she bowed for the Eucharist. From this Godfrey deduced her shade was Italianate olive, which was altered elsewhere to a pallid pink using the only white powder available to her during rationing – self-raising mainly, he laughed.

Godfrey smiled, recalling now, as we approached the pub, how he'd wondered all those years ago whether there was a band of natural, untinted skin somewhere around the belly button. Or whether that white dusting, dabbed head to foot, abutted the north-bound application of beef stock in a claggy frontier of light and shade, which ranged back and forth according to how short her skirt needed to be to snare the evening's male.

Her obvious beauty meant she needn't have tried so hard in the first place. And that's before you consider how few women they'd seen since shipping out.

As her conquests mounted up, he'd begun to realise that her projected-self was not born from a need to be desired, but from a need to appear different to the night before.

Godfrey explained that he was among the few in those early days to know her paintings well enough: that God-given face on top of which she built herself another. And another. And another.

Beneath those layered strokes was Geraldine's original canvas: an up-tuned nose and close, prominent parallel lines of the philtrum, which pulled into a constant pout a swollen mouth, whose lower lip, less inflamed than the upper, gave the illusion of being bitten in nervousness: one of many ruses that suggested you might take charge of her.

Despite her different guises, she was, said Godfrey, a fairly constant example of the irresistible.

See, much of my time outside of leading worship was spent dealing with distraught, lovesick men. They'd come to see me in the chapel, having succumbed to that cruel trick of resignation that makes, against better judgment, one last grab at optimism. And given the young age of most conscripts, the source of that optimism would almost always be the bright future they'd imagined with their girl. But my superiors were scared it might derail the war effort if bomber crews were only concerned with staying out of harm's way, so they didn't like my sermons to stray too far from extolling the unfortunate need for sacrifice.

The young men would have convinced themselves on the troop ship over here that she'd have

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been their soul mate and wife. And sure, they were probably right in a lot of cases, but even I knew it wasn't helpful for them to always be hoping.

Godfrey paused to take the weight off his hand, gently marching his walking stick in mid-air, demonstrating that the more Geraldine could be seen about the place, strutting like so, up and down the corridors, then the more the

men's desperation abated.

She was the fixer of these romantics who would have read too much into whatever future might be written in the stars, if only they'd been able to see them beyond her shape, shrouding as it did old targets and faithful intentions at this late hour. It was like that German fog that often scuppered the planned mission, and left little else to do but to sit it out on base, awaiting pressure and prevailing wind to change.

For that was the routine back then, said Godfrey, as we recommenced along the towpath. It was all waiting around and twiddling thumbs most of the time, or attending another of the great soirees the Baron organised in such times of low morale. Those evening dances where one could always spy Geraldine, her bosom stuck fast to the medals of that same bloody sailor – whom we would come to discuss shortly. That great brute ever kept his white uniform and flushed face amidships of onlooker and quarry, as she waltzed this way and that, her fluttering eyelashes like epaulets on his broad, heaving shoulders.

And all the men would stare at her, hoping desperately that when she moved closer her looks would degrade with proximity; that she wouldn't match so closely the picture of the loved one they'd left back home.

And her function in our story, said Godfrey – the simplest way he could explain her effect – was to tell me that even now, 60 years later, when I try and recall my first sweetheart, I always see Geraldine, stood between us, straining the memory like some sieve or threshers.

She took ownership of any past, or any beyond, on which you were trying to focus. Even now, when I talk to my wife, I first see bits of Geraldine, not the other way around. Like she's somehow gone back in time and made herself the original article.

Godfrey suggested I conjure any feelings of love I harboured in my own life, and then try to imagine Geraldine – for the sake of my story – as a caricature able somehow to occlude that original.

She was, he said, like one of those postcards that condense a city's every landmark into an impossible view. And when the bombers went up, would – like a closed season tourist town – remain bereft, waiting for someone to enjoy her again.

One could best understand her success by remembering the destruction of those days. These were times of great obliteration – when anything left uncovered in the same place for long enough was likely to disappear. That went for whole cities, never mind individuals. Anything that spoke of permanence, of sheltering from effect, attained a heightened level of attraction. It spoke of survival; of a timelessness at odds with the transience of war.

Godfrey paused to study our fresh footprints in the snow behind us. Everything about her, he said, would be just as these airmen remembered of their old sweethearts. She was still life, a moment in time, or a living artifact. A relic of the preceding few seconds, immovable and already ingrained. And the more destruction these airmen saw elsewhere, the more she seemed never to change.

We began again along the towpath.

Her technique had been simple. Godfrey had seen her many times, late at night in Foxdon, her ear pressed to the bunkroom doors, waiting for these young men to share their standout moments in the traditional manner of one-upmanship. Their crude minutia aided Geraldine's facsimile, for which these boastful tales could supply a ridiculous level of detail – their old girlfriend's hair, pout, things she'd said and done and just how she'd done it.

From what Godfrey later understood of the whole story, it was during the wretched latter years of her marriage to the Baron that she'd learned to understand love and nostalgia as very malleable subjects. She knew memory only hearkened for highlights; a requisite accuracy of the reen-

actment: enough to loose the tongue with a few well-chosen props.

The right lipstick or hair or whatever. All the rest was background

– memory itself, after all, being only replication.

Her reproductions were not sweeping vistas, but stabs of light; the white dot that glints the eyeball; the broad brush stroke that somehow hints at individual hairs. The old tricks that never fail. She could afford a great many discrepancies so long as the key details remained unchanged.

And all these young airmen would come and see me in confessional the next day. About how the previous night, after meeting this woman at the ball, they'd been distracted by the static crackle of their whipped-off uniforms.

They'd have broken, briefly, from the heat of the moment, glancing down to the crumpled pile of clothes on the floor. That crackling. How it evidenced their beaten will, and how it reminded them of the hiss and spit over Hamburg's sorry targets, down there below the aircraft.

But still, night after night, on someone's command, came the call for further ordnance. Open the doors boys and let it whistle into the firestorm, fix the heat-frequency to high Fahrenheits; that pitching end of the dial when the World Service falls out of range. That splinter of super-heated streets, homes and people, called to mind by a detuned radio or memory.

And how he'd felt like stopping as she took hold of him, her heavy eyelids (just like his old girlfriend's), ceasing to blink as she stammered over the finish line.

And how she'd managed to eek it out of him after all. That and the information. And should he tell his commanding officer? Should he tell the General, Padre? Tell him that he'd told this woman where they were headed tomorrow night? And how the first or second blip was always a decoy – tin foil jettisoned over the last way marker, so return fire poured into empty sky behind the last in formation.

We reached the pub just as the snow was stopping. Godfrey marking the sods law with a skyward jab of his walking stick. He paused before we entered, and moved closer, asking me whether I understood the import of all this.

See, even when Geraldine became herself the subject of those bunkroom boasts, it was already too late, said Godfrey. She was never found out.

Being so subjective a rebus, she only lent shape to existing fantasies, and thereafter became fused so strongly with the original that when the planes lined up for take off, no-one could tell the fuselage belles were all various incarnations of the same women – a sketch working slowly to bring them all down.

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25 Introducing Video Jam, Antwerp Mansion



VIDEO Jam is an independent, Manchester-based arts event at alternative arts venue Antwerp Mansion, Rusholme. It pairs short, silent films by local and national artists with local musicians. Inspired by the traditional use of live music in cinema, each musician, band or sound artist is required to compose an original score in response to the film they are given. Then, on the evening, the films are screened with a live accompaniment, and crowds of interesting and interested people turn up to watch. Manchester-based artist Sarah Hill, founder and creative director of Video Jam, explains:

Our experimental approach was influenced by a one-off mixed performance night called Skrap! which was held at Sandbar over a year ago, organised by my then-housemate, George Arnett. Skrap! worked to a cabaret format. It was very rough around the edges. There was a drag country and western band and an autobiographical performance about milk. I'd not seen anything like it in Manchester before, and I haven't since. I admired it for having guts and recognised the potential to start an event of my own; something in the same vein but with more of a focus. Fortuitously, this was also the night that I met Mike Seal with whom I run the event. He is a musician, I am a filmmaker: Video Jam was only a matter of time.

As the curator, it is my job to select from the submissions we receive, liaise with artists and assemble each programme. Throughout the entire process the filmmaker and musician remain anonymous to one another, leaving me to act as a go-between. The end result is a 'blind collaboration' of sorts, which is what I believe makes this event unique. All the creative decisions we make are informed by a willingness to take risks, to experiment and avoid the 'obvious'. The programme has no content restrictions, and will happily feature abstract, animation and narrative films back to back. This goes for the music, too. Past events have included spoken word, improvised jazz, live VJing and a drum solo (I am currently looking for an opera singer).

Video Jam is an experiment with unexpected outcomes. No one knows what will happen until the night. Our aim is to discover the potential of each medium beyond what we are accustomed to, to rethink the way we approach and experience film and to celebrate the qualities of live music. I want to encourage collaboration, stimulate conversation and create room for chance encounters between sound and images. More than anything I wish to continue providing an exciting opportunity for creative, like-minded people to interact.

With three past events in January, April and July, our next is set for the end of September, with a Manchester-Berlin exchange in the pipeline for November. We are always open for submissions or suggestions, so if this sounds like your thing, get in touch.

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Bakerie Apricot and poppy seed bread

BAKER David Cook takes nearly all the bread-making classes at Bakerie and has chosen a favourite recipe of his that has since been really popular in the tasting store with customers placing orders for it.

Ingredients:

500g strong organic bread flour
7g instant dried yeast OR, preferably, 14g of brewers' or natural yeast
5g salt
7g sugar (optional)
1 heaped table spoon of poppy seeds
1/2 cup of diced dried apricots
280ml tepid water



Mix water yeast and sugar together (wait 5 minutes for yeast to activate. Note: yeasty water should foam and pop).

Mix salt and flour, poppy seeds and apricots.

Now mix them both together and knead using your usual dough technique.

Cover and leave to rise somewhere warm.

When doubled in size, place dough on surface and push down gently to get the large bubbles out (not too much).

Cut in half and form into two small loaves or place into a kilo bread tin.

Allow to rise again.

Flour the tops and slash with a sharp knife.

Cook for 35-45 minutes at 210 degrees until brown.



43-45 Lever Street, Manchester
Tasting store: The Hive, 47-51
Lever Street, Manchester

<http://bakerie.co.uk>