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Good things happening soon

Wednesday August 14, Joshua Burkett, Kraak. Josh Burkett, the man behind America's Mystra Records as well as bands like Tarp and Vermonster, with support from Manchester experimental musicians Jon Collin, Sam Schlicht and David Birchall.

Tao Lin and Ben Brooks, Deaf Institute. Canongate Books and #NPINBF present a free evening of readings from Lin and Brooks' new novels, plus more, with live music from Mat Riviere.

Friday August 16, TRU LUV takeover, Fuel. Gig at cosy veggie cafe-bar guest-curated by TRU LUV, featuring Go Native, LVLS and Veladrome plus Break Dance Make Bones DJs.

Dots & Loops, Kraak. Indie disco playing shoegaze, post-punk, electronica, alt-rock, lo-fi and pop.

Saturday August 17, David Mellor bus trip to steel city, various locations. Manchester Modernist Society invite fans of modernist architecture and design on a day trip with a difference, including a visit to renowned cutlery designer David Mellor's Peak District factory in Hathersage followed by a one-off chance to see inside the former home of the man himself in leafy suburban Sheffield.

Sunday and Monday August 18 and 19, Revolution: Pussy Riot Sentencing Commemoration Festival, Kraak. Festival of new music celebrating and highlighting the plight of imprisoned Russian protestors Pussy Riot.

Monday August 19, Playspace: Artists' Summer Camp and 8HRS + 2HRS, Unit 4B, Piccadilly Place. Temporary exhibition in Castlefield Gallery's new art space, a joint Heinrich Event/Verb Manchester project. (Exhibition continues until Saturday August 31.)

Wednesday August 21, Victoria Baths Swimming Club, Levenshulme Baths, 7pm. Friends of Victoria

Baths swim in another historic pool. Pay by donation. (monthly)

This Is Tru Luv, Dulcimer. Chorlton night for emerging music featuring live bands Blaume Blaume (Copenhagen) and Gymnast (Manchester) plus Break Dance Not Bones DJs.

Thursday August 22-Sunday August 25, Artwork, Vision, Workshop & History Community Exhibition for London Road Fire Station Campaign, Piccadilly Place. Exhibition historic photographs and of artwork by artists including Shrieking Violet favourite Oliver East, plus interactive workshops, aiming to draw attention to the campaign to save Manchester's magnificent municipal landmark.

Contact Compacts #1, Contact. Six short plays by some of the North's finest playwrights and emerging local talent.

Armenian Threads, 2022NQ, installation of artworks including sculptures and soundscapes responding to Sarah Greaves' residency in Armenia and research with the Armenian community in Manchester. (Exhibition continues until Saturday September 7.)

Friday August 23, Doe, Trof Fal-lowlfield. London punk with support from Glasgow's jangly Great Cop, Doctrines, and the cream of Manchester's punk bands Well Wisher and the Hipshakes, at soon-to-close venue.

Ducktails, Soup Kitchen. Dream pop.

Friday August 23-Monday August 26, Queer Art Show #4, The Penthouse. Fourth annual show of queer art, coinciding with Manchester pride, in sky-high Northern Quarter artists' led space.

Saturday August 24, Artifice, PS Mirabel. Group show in artists' studios complex (preview takes place on Thursday August 29).

Smile, Star and Garter. Manchester's

longest-running indie night, currently being phased out – go while you can!

Sunday August 25, Two White Cranes and Nervy Better's garden gig, Chorlton. Alt-folk musicians Two White Cranes and Nervy Better's are touring the nation's sitting rooms, gardens and small venues by public transport from their Bristol base, and will be touching down in Manchester for a high-summer garden party, with support from local weird-rock act Lion Swyd. Pay by donation.

Tuesday August 27, Eclectic, Contact. Spoken word and poetry night, part of Loungefest.

Wednesday August 28, Bad Language, Castle. Night celebrating the best spoken word in the North West, with open mic plus guest headliner author Sarah Dobbs. (monthly)

Thursday August 29, Cheetham Park Day Trip. A day trip with a difference, looking at how Cheetham Park on Elizabeth Street, north Manchester, could be revived as an important place for the community. The day will include trips to other parks in the area which have been transformed into community spaces by local residents and visit local archives to find out about the history of Cheetham Park and its historical bandstands. Organised by community arts commissioning agency Buddleia; email info@buddleia.co.uk for more information.

Eleanor Friedberger, Night & Day. Off-kilter pop from Fiery Furnaces singer, featuring members of Field Music.

Friday August 30, Typical Girls, Star and Garter. Live bands, zine/art stall and swap, followed by dancing to female-fronted music, with all proceeds going to a local women's/LGBT charity.

Clubsterben (Trouble At T'Mill), Islington Mill. Trash-O-Rama throw an all-night party.

SHRIEKING VIOLET

The End of memory
Art, nature and Ian
Hamilton Finlay
Maurice two guns' Cohen
Photography
DIY hero worship
Poetry

Androgyny and fashion
Collage
Mental health at the
movies
Deconstructing Harry
Spanish stuffed
cabbage leaves
Illustration





1 THE SHRIEKING VIOLET

doesn't really go to the effort of choosing or attempting to gather content based around themes, but barely perceptible in issue 21 is a preoccupation with time,

as manifested in memory, in fashion and style, in changing modes and methods of experiencing culture, in the stories and narratives accrued over a lifetime.

This lingering on the theme of time comes partly from reading an essay by Gertrude Stein called *Composition as Explanation* at an Islington Mill Art Academy reading group earlier this year. It is a complex, frustrating, head-muddling text, which circles around its theme and reiterates itself with an almost song-like refrain; I'm still trying to get my head around it. Stein ponders the creative act as a process, what it means to be contemporary, what it means to have contemporaries (and whether one can be or ahead of one's time) and the period in which works of art become 'classic', recounting her experiences of trying to write a story which stretched time out into a 'continuous present'. Each era in time, she says, is defined by its 'composition', which arises from each generation's different ways of living and resultant ways of seeing.

Time, as we know, can render cutting edge technology obsolete. In this issue Adrian Slatcher looks how our conception and use of memory is changing in the digital age, and makes reference to the way in which memories are often attached to cultural artefacts, from photographs and video cassettes to books and records, a link to the past which is growing ever more fragile as the will to adapt them to be seen through the channels of our time wanes. Although I've mainly opted out of the transfer to digital, continuing to listen to the majority of my music collection on cassette tape and vinyl records (and to read thick wedges of real, paper books), there will come a point at which I have no choice but to adapt: what happens when the old technology breaks down one final time (I've already taken my ten-year old hi-fi system to be fixed twice and the repair shop has now closed down) and I finally have no mode of listening to my music?

Which brings us back to 'zines. If you're reading this on paper you are in a minority – most readers will be looking at this on a screen, and the print copy exists as a backwards nod to tradition, to the way things were done in a different time. As Stein observes at the start of *Composition as Explanation*, "each generation has something different at which they are all looking", and there's no mistaking that for my generation this is the screen, which is increasingly the medium through which our lives are filtered. But I like to think that the Shrieking Violet is still a piece of its time. It's a piece of its past, too, in the long tradition of photocopying and stapling zines. And if a paper copy survives, I hope it can also find a place as an artefact in a future time.

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2



The end of memory

by Adrian Slatcher

IS IT true that we are outsourcing our memory to machine or rather that we are using technology to deal with the complex nature of the modern world? I still have Didsbury and Chorlton friends where their phone number has a recognisable prefix; 434 for Didsbury, 881 for Chorlton, yet the limitations of these helpful numbering systems are obvious: only able to cope with 999 numbers per area code. Yet our memory is helped by such "blocks". Is our world now so complex that it can only be a managed by a string of apparently random numbers? So it seems; even the way we identify internet-connected devices has been required to change. The protocol IPv4 was running out of numbers, to be replaced by IPv6 which will allow us a number for every grain of sand. Only machines and freak individuals can remember such strings.

Similarly, we now rely on Sat Nav and even location-based services on our phones as we walk. Maps, A-Z, and inevitably, memory are being relegated to obsolescence. It is via postcode and increasingly longitude and latitude co-ordinates that our electronic systems now find our destination. I regularly find letters in the post addressed to the same flat number, but in a different building, as both the electronic postcode sorting system and the human delivery man rely on the system, not the reality. Our supermarkets replace human staff with machines, which are programming us to buy goods in a certain way. We communicate with them not by asking questions of recognising the staff member from previous visits, but through a series of electronic prompts.

As a writer my memory is my most important asset but it's always been somewhat selective. I can remember a remarkable amount of detail about past scenes and events, yet can't recall more than a line or two of my favourite poem without getting it wrong, as if I've always made the decision to not clog up my memory with too many fixed blocks of information. It's the way my brain works, requiring context to understand the world, rather than learning protocols by rote or list. Yet give me the key to a system and I might unlock it; whether recalling the albums of Madonna in order, or some long forgotten incident from several years ago. Our memories are different, develop different skills, and some of those are going to more relevant than others as time goes on.

For memory is about both recall and retention. The Alzheimer sufferer who is able to recall chunks of poetry they were taught as a child has retained memories that have become mostly beyond recall. "I should know this," we say, aware dimly of something we were once told, whether a joke, a line of poetry or our cashpoint number. Is it that in a world which is overbrimming with information that we need only to "know where I can find this out?" In some ways this is the world that Google envisages. They cleverly identified that if they can store everything then their algorithms are cleverer than we are in terms of recall. Yet this isn't how humans see the world. Even the librarian understands that it is the card file system that is the key to unlocking the vast knowledge of the library – in other words, you can't find what has been catalogued incorrectly. Yet we all see the world differently. I might recognise a record from the colour of its spine as much as where its placed alphabetically in my collection, moreover I will remember when I first heard it or bought it. To someone coming to my books or records after I'm gone there will be no such key. A Google search will help us bring back something for which we have a particular "keyword" – an author's name or a description – yet the system has its own Year Zero. Before the mid-90s there was no World Wide Web; our photographs were held in shoeboxes, our music on vinyl or cassette tape. Old Dr. Who episodes are rediscovered from copies held by fans, or on reels sent to foreign TV stations; master tapes were never digitised and then lost, so that reissues of old mixes have to come from vinyl sources. In the future will we have the patience to go through old photographs on the deceased's hard drive, CD-R or USB stick or to unlock their Flickr or Facebook account? The likelihood is that the machines to read this data will be harder to find. Memory, even machine memory, atrophies.



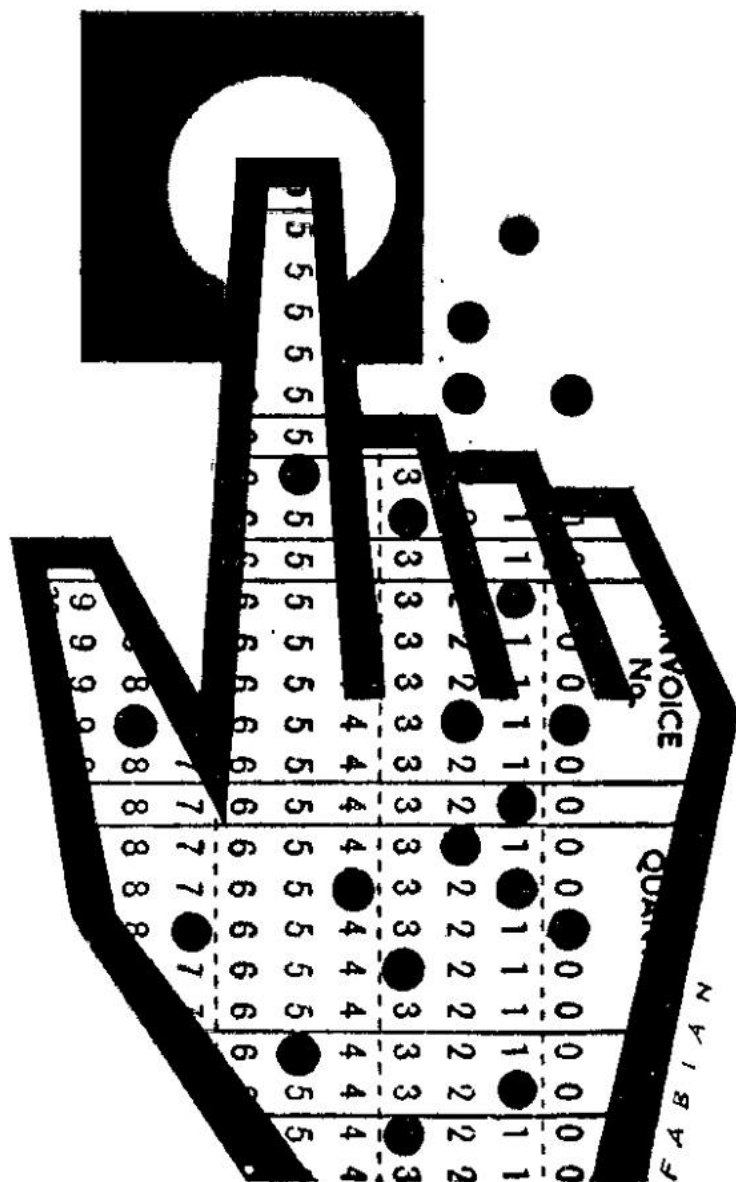
becomes an “object” that is retrieved when we need it; our universities train PhDs to be ultra-specialists in ever smaller areas of expertise. Yet if machine-culture is leading to islands of knowledge, then we clearly need bridges to join them up, or boats with which to reach them, and therefore we have a second type of knowledge worker, not the “expert”, but the navigator, who knows where to go to find the information necessary. The move to outsource our memory to machines means that our ability to understand these machine-systems is more vital than ever.

So the world requires curators as well as archivists. This surely has implications for how people learn in the 21st century. The fixed knowledge so beloved of right-wing politicians such as Michael Gove, is, we know, available easily and readily at a Google search near you. Gove’s worry, I think, is that without storing any of this in memory, we become idiots who know nothing; yet the machine-world that we are becoming part of requires us not to remember the complex information (a phone number, a person’s address) but the simple retrieval instructions of the system. Late capitalism wants us to be idiots; that way we will always pay for the upgrade to the system that we are now reliant on. The SF dystopian machine-futures of SkyNet or the Cylons in *Battlestar Galactica* rely on the idea that we are utterly dependent on the grid. The automated call centre aims to direct us away from understanding the pricing-plans of our phone or internet provider which are so complex that they create their own system paradoxes. It is the same machine-complexity that led to old-style bankers not understanding the complex financial instruments sold under their name which brought down the world’s financial systems in 2008.

Because of our new specialisms, society needs more highly-paid specialists who are able to maintain the structures and systems, and far less people to develop the innovative services that might lie on top. That the server-farms and robotised warehouses require many fewer staff is just one consequence of this new world. Yet, this indicates to me that we are at an interim point, where the machines are being designed to provide simple interfaces to complex systems and humans, unable to remember the long-string of numbers that constitutes a unique IP address, are reduced to operatives, merely turning the pump-arm. Surely, this isn’t an end-game in a world with eight billion brains in it? De-skilling seems to be the consequence, intended or otherwise, of producer interests as far back as the Spinning Jenny, yet new areas of skills and knowledge develop regardless.

In the creative arts, think of the amount of expertise that goes into a Pixar movie or “Avatar”, yet in itself this isn’t necessarily great art; it is the script of the “Toy Story” movies that sets them apart from equally impressive animations, yet most people employed on these productions will be highly-skilled well-trained specialists. The CGI and other digital techniques might make some processes far easier than in the past, but the films still take as long to make and cost as much – or more – than traditional animation.

Our everyday use of memory might no longer need to recall phone numbers, addresses or birthdays, but we have to remember passwords and processes – but often short term, for as systems upgrade so we need to upgrade what we remember. What I think we need to develop is the right kind of memory, that gives us the tools we need to navigate a world that would rather us forget. Our desktop computers, with greater memory and processing power than at any time before, lie redundant most of the time as we are encouraged to access everything from music to film from the “cloud”, pulling it down each time as if for the first time. That is the envisaged machine-future. It is not enough for us to lazily let our “memory saving devices” take over how we manage our lives; we need to do something with these freedoms. In this context, creativity seems more vital than ever, as both the mental exerciser that keeps us going – just as much as the gym or the jogging regime replaces the physical hard work of our grandparents’ generation – and as the outcrop of our original personalities. Faced with systems that are being designed without us, we have to become initiators of better systems, that reflect our intelligences and imaginations. Rather than the passive consumer of SF dystopias, we become our own memory sieves, auto-didacts making personalised, unique pictures from the overwhelming torrents of data.



Man and Automation by L. Landon Goodman (Pelican, 1957), image by Erwin Fabian

The end of memory should have freed up our information-saturated brains to do other things, but I don’t think it works in quite that way for memory is the cement we use to put together the building blocks of knowledge that we have acquired, and from this build our lives. It may well be quicker to find a phone number via our electronic address book than to type in the number manually, but our economic value, our experience, our expertise, is partly based upon our memory. We still require “experts” and may well be training them in ever more narrow fields as the amount of information required grows exponentially. Knowledge



5

Art, nature and Ian Hamilton Finlay

by Roxy Brennan

I WAS raised in the city, and art has always been more familiar to me than nature. Of course nature has always been all around. But the books and buildings of my city life have always been foremost in my mind. Consequently I am not a natural gardener, and though a lot of the poetry I love is about trees, this has never lead me to plant one. Nature has been a metaphor, a tool, a figment or fantasy. In its reality nature offers a sense of calm and beauty in its most absolute, uncomplicated sense, but this is so far away from the

nature I have found in art that there is a disconnect between reality and representation. The fantasy and the reality are so far apart that the relationship is hard to hold in your head at one time. But it is through art that I engage with the world, it is the language I use in my head. And it is in exploring the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay that I have found a way in to nature. He expresses the relationship between art and nature in a way I've never come across before.

Ian Hamilton Finlay started writing when he was a shepherd on Orkney. In 1958 he started his own printing press and from there became interested in formalism and concrete poetry (or thing-poems as he called them). The look of the poem on the page became as much part of the poem as the words or the "meaning". The format and production of his artistic progress informed his output making it increasingly more complex. Beyond this he kept pushing into further, stranger frontiers, taking his readers away from the page and into the world of objects, architecture. Leading them into nature.

What interests me, and what leads me to look at nature and art in a new way is the question of why the printed page is so obviously not the real world? Why does the leap from print to sculpture and garden emphasise this real/unreal binary. Is it because the printed page is flat? Or because there are poems on it? And therefore if the poems are instead carved and weaved into a garden does the garden become, like the printed page, a fantasy?

Little Sparta is Ian Hamilton Finlay's living legacy, a garden outside Edinburgh interspersed with his sculpture poems. The more I learn about Finlay, the more of his letters I read and the more prints I see, the more mythical and idyllic Little Sparta becomes in my mind. I imagine rain on leaves and winding pathways; physical, enterable, explorable poetry. In this sense it does become a fantasy. Just like a book, Finlay's 'avante-gardening' becomes a concept, physical but mythical none-the-less.

"A lot of my work is to do with straightforward affection (liking, appreciation) and it always amazes me how little affection for ANYTHING there is in art today." (1994)

Finlay shows a real and complex affection for nature, for the sea, for culture and art. In the piece 'Evening/Sail', typeface, colour and words balance each other to create a beautiful atmospheric artwork. The great success of the piece is simplicity, with only nine words in it – "evening will come they will sew the blue sail" – it is still generous with its ideas and complexity. The meta-



phor of a the sail being sewn, of two materials, the sea and sky, being joined is made more powerful by its singularity. There is so much happening in such a small space with so few aspects. The words represent culture, the mention of slow moving time (eve-ning) is the order of civilisation, the colour and the page represent the wilderness of nature, the sea and sky. Finlay's words have entered into the space cautiously. They enhance the 'nature' of the page, of the sea.

These nine words can also be found in Little Sparta, carved onto a wooden post. Here the wood both represents and is nature, just as the garden its in is both a representation and the reality of nature. The appearance is so different. The poster version is printed with clean lines and bold, decisive colour. The sculpture is covered in moss and fungi, obscured and ambiguous. Finlay wrote in a letter in 1965 that gardening gave him "a clear idea of impermanency and of the power of time". Preservation of this piece is impossible. It will be weathered by the Scottish climate as the power of time becomes part of the artwork.

"What I really want is for the words not to join into phrases but to be in space, each, as a sign, about a thing outside me." (1962)

This description of poetry expresses Finlay's adventurous approach to writing and his dedication to sparsity, but it also highlights the importance of space. It is here that we find the connecting thread, between his thingpoems and sculptures. He is so aware of the relationship between the word and space, its physical context. Whether its a white page, a blue page, a piece of wood, a garden or the Scottish landscape. He knows that this space react and reverberates with the word that he places there. That each word will have its own relationship with the space, and that the words relationships with each other are almost negligible in comparison to this growing symbiotic dialogue.

The blank page, the untamed land and the open ocean all represent, for Finlay a wilderness into which he interjects his words. This interjection is the culture, the civilisation that opposes nature. But in Finlay this opposition is referenced but not perpetuated. Rather Finlay's art draws you into nature, asks you to look at it anew, to question old binaries. I find myself drawn into these dialogues between space and word, viewing the garden not as the reality of art, but as half of a conversation.

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7

Two guns Cohen

by **Marcus Barnett**

FEW gravestones in Blackley Jewish Cemetery, north Manchester, contain the remains of those who lived lives as implausibly extraordinary as Morris Cohen, or many at all. Cohen, nicknamed 'Two Guns' in folklore and formally named 'Ma-Kun' by his Chinese comrades in the fight against the Japanese (being the closest in Mandarin to his English-language name) lived mightily and his true story veers often into the unbelievable.

It is claimed in an official biography that Cohen was born in 1889 to Orthodox Jewish parents who fled the pogroms and crushing poverty of Tsarist Poland, immigrating from Radzanow to London just before his birth. However, it was apparently an open secret within his family that he was in fact born in Radzanow and immigrated with his family to London as a baby – trimming years off his age during his first arrest to avoid more severe punishment and to allow him to go to a reform school.

His parents were pious Jews and proud of the solemnity associated with being 'people of the book'. But this could not keep Morris away from the allure of London's raucous East End in the late Victorian era. At an early age he worked both as a boxer in the small boxing arenas where he fought under the names of "Fat Moisha" and "Cockney Cohen," as well as a petty thief and pick-pocket under the tutelage of a master thief known as Harry the Ganef (meaning thief in Yiddish.)

At 12, he was sent to a Lord Rothschild-funded reform school for troublesome Jewish youngsters, and after his release aged 17, he was sent to Saskatchewan, Canada to work as a farm labourer, his deeply religious parents hoping that clean country air and the rigorous small-town work that they were used to in the shtetls of Eastern Europe would rehabilitate him. However, Cohen soon grew tired of this lifestyle and after a short time escaped the farm in order to make his way throughout Canada. Soon Morris was developing and constantly improving upon his newfound trade as a 'barker' – luring people into circus shows – as well as trying his hand (literally) at pick-pocketing, card tricks, pimping, and general con-artistry. During these years he was arrested over ten times and jailed twice.

During World War I, Morris fought with Canadian Railway Troops in Europe, where part of his job was to supervise Chinese labourers who had been sent over from China via Canada to the trenches of Western Europe to help build railroads. Following war's end, Cohen moved between city to city, frequenting Chinese gambling dens and drinking clubs in Canada, where he befriended many in the Chinese community. Cohen had become well-liked to many Chinese in Saskatoon when he came to the aid of a Chinese gambling-den owner who was being robbed. Cohen knocked out the perpetrator and threw him out in the street. Whilst this act was taken in a gung-ho biography of Cohen to be an unusual act of kindness from a thug with an erratic and fleeting sense of justice, it takes little foresight to understand that as the son of refugees, he found a natural affinity with the degraded and trampled-upon Chinese community.

As it happened, the man he helped was an active supporter of Sun Yat-Sen, the father of Chinese nationalism well-regarded for leading the revolt against the Qing Dynasty and becoming a functionary in 1911 of the first Chinese Republic. Shortly afterwards, he travelled to China after having learned about events, and with his trademark guile and charm came into being a member of Sun Yat-Sen's entourage as a bodyguard. At some point later, he was training Chinese nationalist volunteers in boxing and shooting, smuggled weapons for the leader's troops, and was promoted to Colonel in Yat-Sen's army.

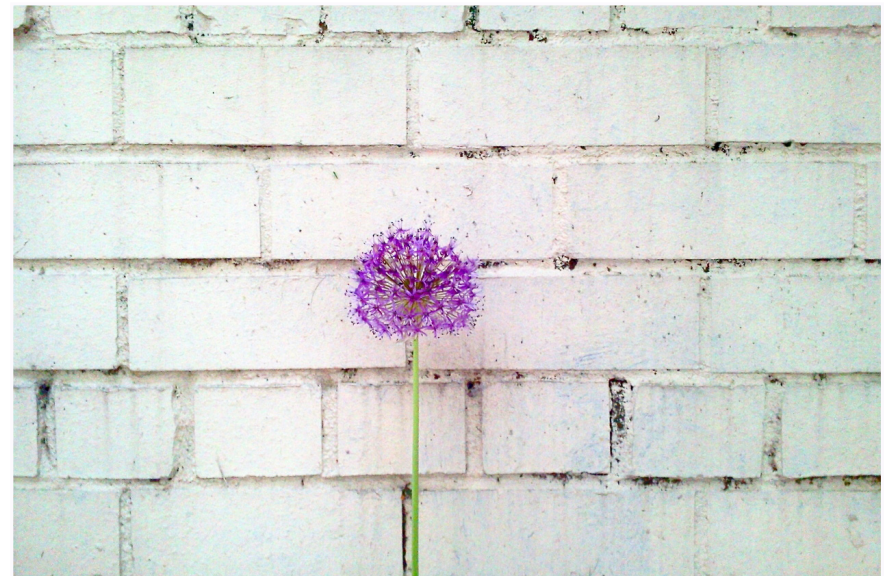
After Sun Yat-Sen died, Cohen was again promoted, this time to "General," and in 1930 he became the Chief of Chinese Intelligence with the two primary threats being the Chinese Communist Party and the Japanese, who had spies throughout coastal China. When the Japanese invaded China in 1937 Cohen acquired weapons for both the Chinese communists and nationalists for use against the invaders, establishing serious contact with the Special Operations Executive in Britain once World War Two began. He was captured by the Japanese in Hong Kong,

and was almost killed by prison guards on numerous occasions in Stanley Prison Camp. Luckily, he was released in 1943 as part of a rare prisoner exchange and sent back to Canada, where he acted as a medium-level liaison between the West and China. Cohen had maintained a solid relationship with both the Communists and the Nationalists fighting in the ensuing Civil War and he took no sides – with that being said, pictures allegedly exist of him enjoying himself with Mao Zedong.

In the 1950s, he settled in Salford with his much-loved nieces and nephews, working odd jobs as a consultant for the engineering and aircraft-manufacturing giants in Trafford Park when discussing their plans for deals with China. When he died, Sun-Yat Sen's partner organised for his gravestone to be made – one side of it is English and Hebrew and the other is in Chinese characters. Mme Sun was still the Vice-President of China during the sixties and seventies, and thought it a worthy tribute.

8







11 Seems like it's a rich man's world

by Nick Mitchell

I'M sitting here dripping wet through because I stopped by the post office collection centre on the way to work this morning in the middle of these sluicing summer storms to collect a couple of records I've been slobbering to hear again since they were first played to me earlier this year in Albany, NY. Namely, the 2010 Time-Lag/ Earmonger reissue of Stephen David Heitkotter's 1971 self-titled LP and the 2011 Companion/ Gloriette reissue of Stan Hubbs's 1982 Crystal LP. Each alone a slab of mentally-deranged outsider gorgeousness worth both the drenching I received and the grilling I got from one of my co-workers when she clapped eyes on the record-shaped packaging.

Now, bringing records into work is something I would hardly ever risk, which speaks volumes (subjectively, anyhow) for the monumental power of these two. And, while yr average 'straight' might not dig the metaphysical weight of these items, even a total novice could tell that they're collectibles just by looking at the way they've been packaged. Each double-PVC-bagged; each packed outside its respective sleeve; heavy card reinforcements inside an already heavy-duty corrugated cardboard box ... (Usual deal for yr discerning borderline autistic.) Still, as I semi-surreptitiously examined the booty, she proceeded to ask me, 'Who the heck still buys vinyls (sic) when everything is available on Spotify?' and, when I told her who the records were by in response to her asking, she proudly exclaimed, in that quasi-fascistic way that hates all but the most propagandistic of culture, that she'd never heard of either. Y'know, intimating that I'm an aloof snob who thinks he's better than everyone else and, therefore, to be despised and whatnot.

Ugh. (Maybe I could have waited four more days and collected them on Saturday, come to think of it.)

Anyway, it got me to thinking about the miasma of influencing factors in this confounding multiverse of visual, auditory, written, virtual and subliminal messaging, and just how grateful I am to understand the simple value of hero worship at the local level. Now, I hope you know I don't mean that I somehow politically defer to the 'relevancy' of that dude down the road who plays ukulele in the pub every Wednesday over that of, say, Azealia Banks. I'm not talking about some kind of 'back-to-basics' ideological offshoot in a concept of simplicity-meets-proximity (which would be, at root, antagonistic toward simple enjoyment should the object of enjoyment challenge the basic tenets of straightforwardness – the bloke down the road would feel the force of the landlord's boot if he were to, for instance, contact mic his balls and start bowing his arse pubes – this being the key problem with that insipid style of music that's commonly becoming known as 'advertising folk', but that's another article) ... I'm talking about eschewing the extraneous bullshit as completely as it's possible to do so and locating for yourself things to enjoy about things as you happen upon them, whether they're as simple as a lump of muck or as complicated as ... well hey, I'm a simple fella – trigonometry still baffles me.

'Hero worship' might even be a weird way to put it thirty years after we collectively 'Kill(ed) Yr Idols' but I guess that impulse pooped on its own doorstep back in '90 or so with the event of wholesale co-option of the underground, so maybe not. But then, yeah, it's not so much idolatry



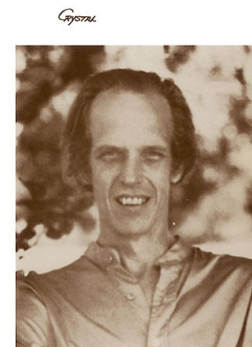
The basement of The Helderberg House in Albany, NY, as depicted on the cover of Burnt Hills' blistering 'To Your Head' LP.

as it's ... let's call it 'deep empathy' or 'mutual semantic mirroring' or something. You see, I'm not even really focusing here on the deep empathy I'm already developing with Heitkotter or Hubbs inasmuch as I'm talking about some mutual semantic mirroring action with the dude who recommended them to me and other folks like him. So, when I say heroism 'at the local level' with respect to my cultural benefactor (in this instance) Jackson Wingate, I mean just that – a kind of horizontal hierarchy of vibe that has been reached through direct, meaningful, two-way communication.

Jackson, for example, regularly hosts weirdo musical performers in the basement of his home (the Helderberg House), plays in a large free-rock ensemble (Burnt Hills) and runs his own label and online record store (Flipped Out Records). Whilst separated by more than ten years in age, over 3,000 miles of Atlantic and a cacophony of environmental-noise-influence in our respective histories, there is nevertheless a point of collision upon those on-going trajectories at which we meet – physically, spiritually, aesthetically, empathically. And it's at this point that an archetypal, monolithic truth of locality and simplicity asserts itself. Without getting all sappy and 'bromantic' about it, the great unifier in this particular affiliation is the will to please other people – there's nothing either of us likes better than to throw a party, have some fucked-up freakout musicians come jam, fill everyone's bellies with beautiful food and get everyone blazingly hoo-hooed. It's an almost too-perfect example of what I'm talking about and one that owes a debt of gratitude to communication means that belie 'back-to-basics' notions of proximity. Via mutual associations, the internet and other influencing factors that might not necessarily, themselves, have engendered absolute purity of will on our respective parts, we have found as a result of them, nevertheless, a point of connection on our individual life-routes at which all extraneous influence dies away, leaving only a sense of kinship, of which 'heroism' is really the epitome. A hero is only ever an exemplifier of behaviours and achievements with which we, ourselves, can identify.



Burnt Hills/Flipped Out Records founder, bongfather and party liaison supreme Jackson Wingate flipping his homemade peanut'n'beetburgers at the Helderberg annual BBQ, July 2013.



Stan Hubbs

Stan Hubbs' super limited and rare private press 1982 LP 'Crystal' which was reissued in 2011 by Companion/Gloriette (and which is, once again, out of print).

And, when respect is razed down to an axiomatic nub like that, all direct influence (either one way or the other) loses little in the way of purity and I know that I am going to feel the same sense of affinity with Stephen David Heitkotter and Stan Hubbs that I do with the Jackson Wingates, Stuart Arnots and Suzan Fitzpatricks (Acrid Lactations), Jon Collins (Winebox Press) or Eric Hardimans (Rambutan) of this world who recommend them to me; people I know on a one-to-one basis in various locations, mostly far from my back yard, who are doing things that envelope me in a warm sense of familiarity and visceral-aural joy.

The rain stopped about half an hour ago. Shit, I'm dry already.





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Lucky escape

by Nick Mitchell

I wheedled indulgently into the night and when I saw you downstairs early the next afternoon in the communal hallway, where all of us had congregated in a wash of pathetic panic, trying in vain, like a troop of lobotomised monkeys, to switch off the smoke alarm, which had been triggered by an absent culprit's burnt toast, unkempt and too freaked out by the abhorrence of blasting, layered alarm tones fucking with our hangovers to care, me in my shorts, socks and 18-year old, threadbare Sebadoh t-shirt, you with one purple slipper on (the other up there on the third stair) and what looked like a ketchup stain on your pyjama top, you smiled, touched my arm and told me that you and your little girl had lain there into the night, on your bed in the flat above, listening to me shred for hours, over a drum machine, and, surprisingly, that you had loved it.

It was the weirdest flirtation I ever experienced and, although I really wanted to capitalise on it and invite you in for some tea, your lack of contextual awareness made me realise that you were probably insane.





17 Wo(Man)

by Rachel Newsome

"IT IS fatal to be a man or a woman pure and simple; one must be a woman-manly or a man-womanly."

This was Virginia Woolf's damning verdict on the dangers of defining men and women as the intransigent black and white opposite of the other with no space for individual freedom of expression. Although she created her famous androgynous Orlando to challenge this fatality back when a woman in trousers still raised eyebrows, the existence of strict gender codes which dictate how men and women ought to think, act and dress are as prevalent now as ever before. See the widely-held expectation that women should dress to please men according to an incredibly narrow set of personality-denying criteria (hem-lines hitched up, flesh out, all signs of individuality and ageing surreptitiously erased). Or the very modern pressures on (particularly straight) men to be "men" – even as such traditional roles are irreversibly changing – which dictates (amongst other things) that menswear must strictly be referred to, not as fashion, but style – because the word fashion is too whimsical, too fleeting, too "female".

Seeking to constantly reinvent the past and explore new futures, the avant-garde in fashion has a long and colourful history of flirting with androgyny, which can be traced back to the Victorian dandies, via Marcel Duchamp's penchant for dressing as a woman, Marlene Dietrich and the French author Collette's preference for cigars and suits and of course the seminal game-changer of Coco Chanel's trouser suit. Not forgetting David Bowie, Mick Jagger, Grace Jones, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo's Comme des Garçons – to name but a few – who have all, at various points, tripped the gender-divide wire.

Meanwhile, the eighties took androgyny into an era of high camp as the cultural centrifuges of London club, Blitz and New York's vogue balls threw both genders into the pot and came out with the exaggerated trans-gender theatricality of men in frocks. Not just any frocks, but, ironically, frocks that expressed extreme stereotypes of doll-like femininity and which jettisoned their wearers – most notably Leigh Bowery – into the un-hinged and deliberately absurdist heights of the surreal.

No doubt in part a reaction to this pantomime exaggeration (which some feminists claim reinforces misogynist female stereotypes), the nineties saw androgyny adopt an understated ambiguity in the form of grunge, which had less to do with men and women swapping wardrobes as sharing them. Moving away from a statement about sexuality to a broader expression of freedom and individuality, this was the era of straight men (Kurt Cobain) in their girlfriend's (Courtney Love's) dresses and girls in their boyfriend's combat boots and checked flannel shirts, championed by photographers like Corinne Day. Meanwhile, it was not only clothes that were shared, but body shape. The (life-style-assisted) skinny hip, sunken bellied, flat-chested silhouette of grunge became an indeterminate genderless one that could be applied to either sex. Usurping the more pneumatic outline of the eighties' Supers, the atrophied grunge look was revolutionary in that it has stuck as fashion's preferred body shape ever since, despite various ongoing campaigns to broaden it.

More recently, androgyny has made a fashion comeback with the emergence of transgender models Lea T and Andrej Pejic – not as hyperbolic drag queens but seamlessly slotting into female line-ups, as if no different to their child-bearing counterparts. Meanwhile we have also witnessed the tongue-in-cheek gender play of Lady Gaga and the tomboy aesthetic of Agyness



Saskia de Brauw in the Yves Saint Laurent A/W menswear collection, shot by Hedi Slimane

Deyn (now returned to modelling after a sojourn into acting).

But in 2013, fashion's forever-love of androgyny has shifted gears once more. To begin with, menswear has taken the major revolution it's currently undergoing as an opportunity not just to sell more clothes but to re-configure just exactly what maleness is in a world where conventional ideas about the role of men – at work and at home – are rapidly unravelling. So dresses have appeared in Meadham Kirchhoff's A/W menswear collection. Not dresses for men. Simply dresses, which happen to be modelled by long-haired boys wearing headbands and pearls. Elsewhere, frills appeared on the bottoms of shorts and the tops of boots of JW Anderson's iconoclastic A/W menswear collection, which also featured boys in housewife's headscarves and coats cut to reveal thigh, while Christopher Shannon and Shaun Samson both mixed girls in with the brigade of boys showing their new season's menswear. It goes on; amidst the models showcasing Alexander Wang's final menswear collection was a very pale, very bleached Malgosia Bela. And, long enchanted by a certain neo-sylph-like silhouette on boys, Hedi Slimane upped his own ante by shooting his entire A/W menswear collection for Saint Laurent on the very gamine Saskia de Brauw – her body language, her poses, her facial expressions all exactly those of a beautifully awkward adolescent boy.

This elegant gender miscegenation has continued into womenswear, where social norms concerning ideas about female beauty, body shape and identity are also under fire in the form of the over-sized silhouettes championed by Comme and Phoebe Philo at Celine. Both Stella McCartney and Dries Van Noten have taken cues for their womenswear from men's clothing – McCartney adding curves to traditional male tailoring and Van Noten decorating masculine white shirts and grey flannel trousers with ostrich feathers, so deliberately channelling the

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Saskia de Brauw in the Yves Saint Laurent A/W menswear collection, shot by Hedi Slimane



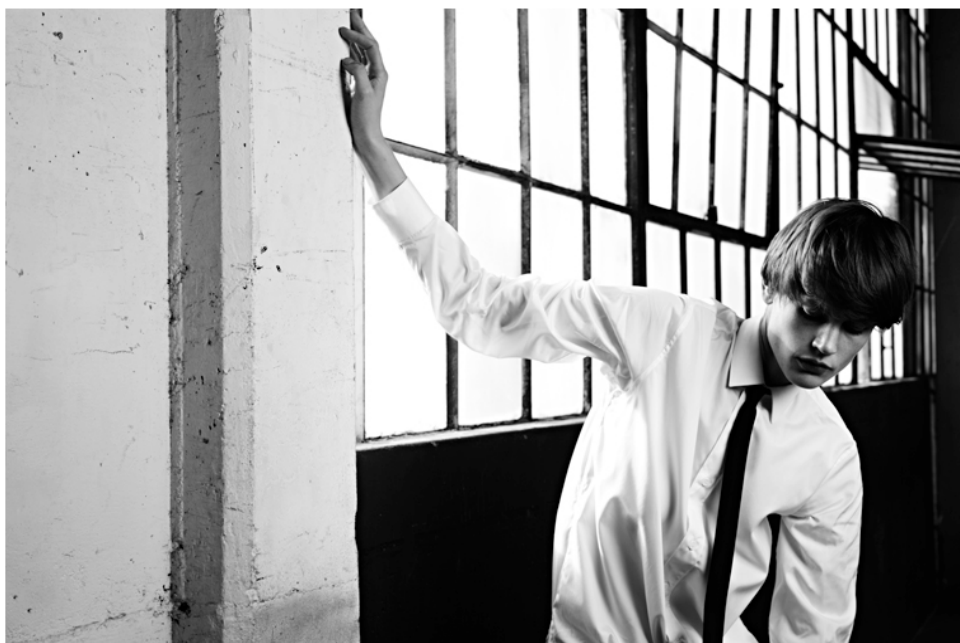
19 combined spirit of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. In the reverse of Slimane's recent menswear campaign, Prada's Maneula Pavesi has used Matthijs Meel for her new womenswear campaign.

Here, the mop-haired, chisel-boned Meel notably appears in a three-quarter length women's houndstooth coat wearing nothing beneath but a pair of nude pants through whose tight fabric bulges a very definite, unambiguous shadow, yet who in every other way appears entirely feminine and delicate.

Most closely mirroring the unisex aesthetic of nineties grunge, this current incarnation of androgyny is less about the reverse polarities of men in dresses and women in suits, as it is about a free-flowing, inter-gender fluidity that unifies aspects of the male and the female into a number of single, integrated aesthetics. So some of the looks in Slimane's A/W womenswear for Saint Laurent were exactly the same as those which had previously appeared on the catwalk for his menswear collection. That his chosen theme for his womenswear should be grunge, simply completes the circle. Similarly, the frill motif from his menswear collection, reappeared in JW Anderson's womenswear, as did the monastic gathered necklines, both of which do not so much subvert, as wilfully ignore, traditional ideas about what is beautiful or attractive, either on a woman or a man.

By its very nature, androgyny confers upon fashion an air of the different, the unusual and the other-worldly, separate from the banality of everyday life. In all these collections and campaigns, there is a playful mystique which takes the form of an intriguing double take – is he/she; isn't he/she etc?

But the current androgynous theme in fashion is not only about being a point of untouchable, freakish difference from the mainstream and the familiar. It is also reflective, conversely, of the underlining universality behind androgyny, which is that we are neither men nor women, pure and simple, but all, as Woolf put it, woman-manly or man-womanly. This is a concept which is also implied in the Greek root of androgyne, taken from andros, meaning male and gune, meaning female.



Saskia de Brauw in the Yves Saint Laurent A/W menswear collection, shot by Hedi Slimane

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The idea that we are all androgynous was famously pioneered by the psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung through his theory of anima (the female in every male) and animus (the male in every female). Jung stated that in the early stages of development, male and female children are most concerned with establishing their difference from the opposite sex. But he believed that the ideal state for both is to journey from these opposites into a symbiotic wholeness, in which the anima and animus become one – as expressed in the Tao symbol of yin and yang.

In this light, Pavesi's Prada campaign can be read less as a man in drag and more as a graceful visualisation of every woman's animus – her inner balls, while Slimane's menswear campaign might be understood not so much as challenging what a woman could be (as in Patti Smith in Robert Mapplethorpe's clothes) but what a man might be – alluring, dark and emotional. As Slimane – who grew up idolising Bowie – has previously said in *Vogue*, "Men are not supposed to be mysterious. That's what you say about women. But I think men have a little bit of it, too."

Taken together, this current yin/yang fluidity could be viewed as evidence of fashion's braver provocateurs entering a new phase of maturity in which, just like the Tao, men's and womenswear belong to a single integrated, whole. Imagine. How revolutionary.

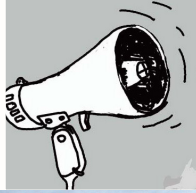
Away from the luxury brands of Paris and Milan and back on the high street, Casey Legler – now famously the first female model to be signed by a men's agency following a modelling debut for her friend, the LA photographer Cass Bird – will appear in both the menswear and the womenswear A/W campaigns for All Saints. Whether All Saints has entered a similar phase of maturity and will continue to use one model for both collections for future seasons is up for debate. But what is interesting to note is that Legler – and also de Brauw – are not only models but artists. As such, it seems that we are not merely being presented with blank canvases upon which the visions of others have been projected, but two women actively participating in an ongoing visual dialogue that ultimately transcends fashion about what identity means in 2013. Legler, in particular, has been very vocal and articulate on the subject. For her, it is not an issue of androgyny at all. Dressing either as a man or a woman or an indeterminate third sex in between, she has said, is ultimately about being free. She told *Time* magazine: "(A woman modelling as male) speaks to this notion of freedom ... there's something really bold about that. Look! There is another way."

This essay was originally featured in fashion magazine Ponystep in May 2013.

<https://twitter.com/RachelENewsome>
<http://rachelnewsome.co.uk>



Saskia de Brauw in the Yves Saint Laurent A/W menswear collection, shot by Hedi Slimane



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23 Distance Over Time

by Kenn Taylor

Look ahead
First
Hard
Push
Down on the right
Cheap metal
Once again
Creaks into life
Balance is achieved
And motion begins

Momentum builds
Long straight road
Muscles strain and tense
Legs pushing
Heat dragging
Chemicals shooting
To the brain
Fingers grip
And burn

The movement begins to take
The pull
Faster
All sinews strain
As the click, click, click of the
ratchet
Becomes one constant sound

Air is sliced
Sound trills
Metal and body
Shake and protest
Silenced though
By
Ever
Increasing
Speed

Lean into a corner
The frame groans
The wheels shake
The rhythm continues
Thighs aching now
Forward
Forward
As you reach
The crest of the hill

Sweat now coating
Head and back
Look down
Pressure is released
Relief
As all parts strain forward

Pause pedals
The wheels run free
Guided, fast
By forces
Now beyond your control

Another bend at speed
Lean ever closer to the ground
The wheels now a blur
Grinning ever more
As the hill pulls down

Feeling every crack of the road
Every twist of wind
Every grit in the air
Unbending rhythm with machine
Muscles stretched
Aching
Metal
And body
Slowly
Slowly
Disintegrating

Lean in again
Further, lower
The thrill
Free
Brake now released
Heart beats
Feeling only sound
Enveloped by wind
As the last corner
Approaches
Behind it
Only light

Mental health at the movies: *Deconstructing Harry* by Woody Allen

by Richard Howe

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WOODY'S best film of the nineties, Allen himself says, is a reaction to Tarantino – fast paced, with rapid-fire dialogue and bad language. But it's also a two fingers raised salute to everyone; journalists, gossip columnists, the public and all the other people who want to probe his personal life. In the past few years news has emerged of Allen's own separation from Mia Farrow, actor and mother of his child, and the child abuse allegations (unproven) against him in the American media.

Woody plays a successful writer who publishes popular short stories that are physical metaphors of his characters, delving into mental health, neurosis and personal relationships. Does that sound like anyone, Mr Allen? OR is that exactly his point?

Funniest of is these Robin Williams, an actor who is literally going out of focus. The cameraman says to rest. His family can't bear to look at him. He goes to the doctor and the doctor gives his family glasses to be able to look at him with out being sick. The subtext is that people have to adjust to the distortion he and his alter ego, Woody Allen's Harry, has become, rather than him adjusting to the world. Harry's ex-wife and mother of his son is a shrink and that's how he met her, as her patient. Now she won't let him see his son.

One of Woody's handful of 18 certificates, *Deconstructing Harry* is unrestrained and exciting with a superb ensemble cast – Julia Louis-Dreyfus (Elaine from *Seinfeld*), *Cheers*' Kirstie Alley, and Billy Crystal as the devil. Allen plays the hard-drinking, pill-popping, whore-using adulterer; is he being provocative to his critics or just being provocative?

This is a vibrant, energetic, clever, smart, dumb, outrageous, funny movie, Woody's most punk rock film and probably his most offensive to some. It's mature and sophisticated and immature and juvenile by turns – which is why I love it. If it was a mental health category it would be schizoid, multi-personality syndrome. There are two sides of Woody Allen – real, fictional, personal, creative and film-making.

Help Richard by voting for his surreal comedy film *Dream Bubble* at www.virginmediashorts.co.uk/film/4664/dream-bubble#.UfKdcWC1Zc9.





25 Spanish stuffed cabbage leaves

by Paul Barrett

Hi, MY name is Paul and I blog about the joys of vegetarian parenting and the path I am taking to get a vegetarian cafe up and running in the North West.

As a bit of background, opening my own business relating to the cooking and selling of vegetarian food is something that I have wanted to do for a very long time. By career I have been a Chartered Building Surveyor for 20 years, however on the birth of my second child I decided to have a career break to look after her until she went to school. During the course of this I decided that a complete career change is actually something that I wanted and have been progressing towards this.

Things have been going really well recently, and with a bit of luck I will be opening my new cafe in New Mills in Derbyshire in the autumn. Please check out my blog for updates (<http://pulsecafe.wordpress.com>) and I hope you enjoy the recipe!

SERVES 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 large Savoy cabbage
- 3 tbs olive oil
- 1 medium red pepper, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 large red onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 100g aduki beans, soaked and cooked as per instructions (ie 3 hours and 1 hr simmer)
- 100g chestnut mushrooms, finely diced
- Small handful parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tbs crunchy peanut butter
- 1 tbs tomato purée
- 1 tsp vegetable bouillon stock powder
- 1 tsp sweet smoked paprika
- 1 tbs soy sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste

For the tomato sauce:

- 1 400g tin good quality chopped plum tomatoes
- 2 cloves of garlic, sliced
- 1 tsp dried thyme

Method

1. Take approximately fourteen of the outer leaves from the cabbage, and carefully cut out the stalks



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in a 'V'. Place the leaves in a steamer and steam for five minutes until soft. Drain and cool.

2. Sauté the onion, pepper and garlic in the olive oil until soft, but not browned, then place in a bowl with all of the other filling ingredients and mix together well.

3. Carefully spoon one tablespoon of the mixture into the centre of each leaf and fold and roll to enclose before placing each roll back in the steamer.

4. Steam all of the cabbage rolls for approximately 15 minutes until cooked.

5. Meanwhile, gently fry the garlic slivers in one tablespoon of olive oil for one minute before adding the tinned tomatoes and thyme. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes to reduce.

6. To serve, place the warm cabbage leaves on a plate and pour over the sauce. Eat immediately with plenty of fresh crusty bread.

