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# Coverdown

## Freewheelin 229

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In that wonderful kaleidoscope of people, places and things that goes under the somewhat biblical title of Chronicles Volume 1, Dylan has fingered many an artist who has caught his sight. One such artist is the Expressionist painter Chaime Soutine (1894 - 1944) who Dylan describes as 'the Jimmy Reed of the art world' (Chronicles page 175).

Chaime Soutine was something of an oddball. The 10<sup>th</sup> child of a Jewish family living in a Lithuanian ghetto, he eventually took to the brush and settled in Paris in 1911. Being blessed with the same feverish passion that haunted Van Gogh, Soutine produced distorted and violently coloured paintings and on reaching fame he said that if he had failed in his attempt to become a great artist he would probably have given up painting to become a boxer! This sense of a fighting spirit no doubt saw Soutine through some troubling times, including in particular when he was pursued and persecuted by the Gestapo after the invasion of France.

The gawky looking spires which make up the backdrop to this months cover are taken from Soutine's 1933 painting 'Chartes Cathedral' which, in 1961 was hanging in the New York's Museum of Modern Art just as a kid from out of town was bursting on to a nearby street.

Standing in front of the cathedral is Doctor Robert in his university robes. I wonder if this is the kind of stage attire that Dylan will be displaying during his up coming tour of the universities in the States? Up above, Oh Mercy Dylan shows us that his hand, which had been recently ungodly injured in a freak accident, was now in a state of complete regeneration. He looks skyward, perhaps for inspiration, or perhaps he is pondering the question of whether you can become dead and grateful and, if you can, then do you automatically join the grateful dead?

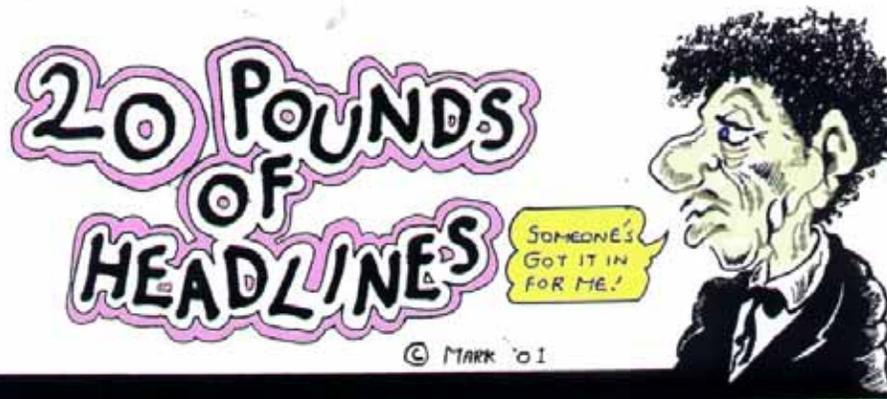
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## by Mark Carter

**May was a sort of "in between" month.** We were in between tours and we were in between any one topic that dominated the press (say what you like about the Victoria's Secret blitzkrieg - and I said plenty last month - it's good news for those of us who have to compile a monthly overview of Dylan press activity). Consequently, this time I shall be looking at the odds and sods that made the dailies and monthlies while Bob was relatively inactive. That said, for all I know he may have been recording a new album all through May (it's early June as I sit typing this), but somehow I doubt it.

Before we leave the aforementioned Victoria's Secret debacle behind - and let's hope that's exactly what we're doing - [USA TODAY](#) fired the final salvo, courtesy of *Theresa Howard*, with more quotes from creative director Ed Razek; "He (Dylan) is an icon and gets noticed. And we get noticed." He does admit, however, that it's pretty easy for his company to get noticed anyway, what with them using young women in tiny scraps of fabric in all of their advertising; "It's part of the strategy, but at least it's for a lingerie company. We don't sell potato chips." The backlash, Howard notes, included many "puns" in the press headlines ("Tangled Up In Boobs" - ouch!), as well as one particular Google search registering 7,760 hits for "Bob Dylan Victoria's Secret" (mind you, that could have been one fan who kept going back for more - possibly his next search was "Kleenex tissues Mansize"). Consumers polled by [USA Today's](#) Ad Track revealed that 21% liked the ad "a lot" and 18% disliked it. Quite what the other 61% thought is not revealed here, perhaps they were too busy writing articles and letters for newspapers and magazines.

Oh, and I cannot comfortably leave this topic without telling you that [Mojo's](#) *Richard Jobs* devoted a couple of pages to the ad (with special mentions of the release of the Chrome Dreams Weberman CD and Jack White sharing a Detroit stage for one song with Bob). His headline? "Nashville Pantyline". Supply your own comment.

Meanwhile, reviews of **Live 1964** were still coming through, most of them being nothing less than enthusiastically positive. However, there was one exception (isn't there always?). *Michaelangelo Matos* of [\*\*The Village Voice\*\*](#) didn't like it. Not one little bit. It is, he insists, a "useless piece of product" and "adds fuck-all to our knowledge of Dylan's artistry". Furthermore, the Bob Dylan presented here is a "pious folkie" and his songs are no better. *Gates Of Eden* suffers from "entropy", *It's Alright Ma* is "enunciated reeeeeeeally sloooooowly so we understand every word precisely, making it more meaningless than ever" and *Who Killed Davey Moore* is totally dismissed ("...a boxing indictment played to a folkie audience is as self-congratulatory as you'd imagine"). Matos' final warning is that Baez appears on four cuts and that all of the new material that Dylan played at this concert can be found as superior versions on the official albums. Oh yes, and it's audiences like the one Dylan played to that Halloween night that quickly made him turn towards polka-dot shirts and electric guitars. Yes, but other than that.....what have the Romans ever done for us?

*Franz Scholer*, writing for Germany's [\*\*Rolling Stone\*\*](#), had no such qualms and advised his readers to put away their bootlegs because this release has "more than passable mastering, beautiful liner notes and a great booklet". Similarly, *Brandon Niemeyer* of [\*\*The Daily Mississippian\*\*](#) reckons that this show should be on a "Most Famous Concerts" list, along with The Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, the Stones at Altamont and Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock. It is, he suggests, a great addition to any Dylan fan's collection.

[\*\*The Aspen Times\*\*](#)' *Stewart Oksenhorn* recognised the Halloween 1964 Dylan as an artist who was beginning to move away - and single himself out - from the general folkie pack and implies that the concert shows Dylan already beginning to transform into something special, though the transformation would not be so obvious until the middle of 1965. At that precise moment, of course - though Oksenhorn doesn't point this out - the folkie audience who would be booing less than a year later still loved him, and, transformation or not, he was still playing enough "finger-pointing" songs to keep them happy and make the transition from protest singer to singer/songwriter more palatable than the change into hip-suited electric rocker would be. If only those who were cosily laughing along to *If You Gotta Go, Go Now* knew what was around the corner, hey?

[\*\*Q's\*\*](#) *John Aizlewood* awarded it four stars and suggests that, for all that Dylan would go on to accomplish after 1964, there is a sense, while listening to this album, that something would soon be lost, and his more child-like (and less barbed and defensive) sense of humour is only part of what would soon be gone; "...Perhaps it's the sense of adventurous innocence that Dylan would never regain. Perhaps it's merely that there was no precedent for what this concert shows that he was ready to do. Perhaps it's that rare combination of genius (never a word to be used lightly, but unquestionably right here) and hindsight...Three months later, Dylan would enter Columbia Studio in Manhattan and nothing would ever be the same again."

*Rachel Khong* of [\*\*The Yale Herald\*\*](#) also recognised that this Bob Dylan would soon be buried under the weight of the post-1965 Bob Dylan but, "on this night at least, Dylan is still folk's darling and King, crooning all by his lonesome to a mesmerised crowd fixed on his every word and slip-up. Not a single soul at the Philharmonic dared cry "Judas!", and

rightly so. This is Dylan at his folk-saviour best."

From Germany, *Fritz Werner Haver* of the [Thuringer Allgemeine](#) called it a "historic concert" and a "turning point in Dylan's career" and speaks of him playing in front of a "spellbound audience" who were hearing, for the first time, songs containing "a flood of surrealistic images" that were a million miles from his earlier protest material.

There were several reviews in the Spanish press also, and all of them positive. Our old mate *Diego Manrique* praised it in [El Pais](#), though I am reliably informed that, as usual, he didn't quite know what he was talking about. A few days later, in the very same newspaper, he presented an even longer review, though, again, my correspondent warns me that it is "quite stupid". Also begging to be filed under "quite stupid" would be a lukewarm review in [Ruta 66](#) by *Ignacio Julia*, who admits that he dislikes Dylan's work and is therefore pretty unfamiliar with it. A nice unbiased opinion there, then. The Spanish edition of [Rolling Stone](#) was kind to it, as was [La Razin](#)'s *Alberto Braso*, who talks about Bob's "amphetamine folk". Finally, there was a positive response from *Francisco Garcia* in [Efe Eme](#) and, by the by, the same issue also carried an enthusiastic review of the **Unplugged** DVD, courtesy of *Juan Puchades*, complete with a 1993 photo. Well, you can't have everything.

Also supplying a brief review of **Unplugged** was the German edition of [Rolling Stone](#), awarding it three stars and concluding; "...the audience is happy, the DVD buyer is not: only twelve tracks, no extras." Yep, can't argue with that.

Meanwhile, the [One Hundred Magazine](#) (the weekly supplement of my local daily newspaper [The Eastern Daily Press](#)) thought it was still 2001, claiming that Bob celebrated his 60th birthday in May and reviewing the **Essential Bob Dylan** double CD set, advising us all to rush out and buy it because it is, indeed, essential and because, of all the many Dylan compilations, this one is "right up to date". Despite the fact it's now three years old, I guess they're right; the collection is still more or less up to date, unlike One Hundred Magazine.

[Record Collector](#) was more up to date, resurrecting the quiet-of-late *Patrick Humphries* to review Chrome Dreams' latest budget CD release "**The Weberman Tapes**". Though Humphries warns that "you may feel guilty for eavesdropping", he seems to be advising all Dylanologists to buy it (which, of course, we all did, even though we've got it two or three times already), if only to sample those heady days of the 70s when there was "a contest between Dylan and A.J. to see who can say "man" most often" and when fans foolishly "believed that idols like Dylan - and Lennon and Jagger - really could save the world. It was all a very long time ago." You're right there, Pat, and it was a more innocent age in some ways. Still, there ain't no going back.

April's edition of [Goldmine](#) belatedly reviewed some of the SACD releases, though they were not quite so behind the times as One Hundred Magazine. *Gillian G. Gaar* concentrated on *Freewheelin'*, *Highway 61*, *Blonde On Blonde*, *Blood On The Tracks*,

Slow Train Coming and Love And Theft, calling them the "six key releases" and obviously recommending them all "if you're a fan". By the time she reaches Love and Theft, she finds an artist who is "comfortable in his own skin" and concludes; "Vocally, Dylan's rough voice shows just what a long, strange trip it's been". Yep, and it's getting longer and stranger.

April and May also saw a couple of reviews of the DVD release of Mickey Jones' 1966 "home movies" footage, though Mr. Jones should perhaps not count on these particular ones earning him too many extra sales. [Uncut](#) awarded it a paltry one star, though did grudgingly concur that, despite there being very little Dylan footage, "Dylanologists will still be fascinated by Jones' eyewitness account as he talks us through the electrifying events all over again."

[Mojo](#)'s *Sylvie Simmons* could also only muster up a single star and concluded that 90 minutes of Jones mainly talking about himself and a few fleeting shots of Dylan ("barely more exciting") are not worth paying for.

Away from the world of shiny discs and ladies' undergarments, April and May brought forth a few decent book reviews. Michael Gilmour's **Tangled Up In The Bible** was pretty favourably received by *James T. Keane* in [America](#) (which is, so we are informed, "the National Catholic Weekly"). Keane especially appreciates the "valuable" 28-page index of biblical references and parallels, which, though not exhaustive, he finds very helpful; "...No listener misses the allusion when Dylan sings "she took my crown of thorns", but how many would recognise Mt 22; 1 - 14 in the gun-toting father of the groom in Stuck Inside Of Mobile?" For all that, Keane faults the book at length for its ignorance of how Dylan's biblical themes have evolved throughout the years; "...he approaches a huge body of work synchronically, and so sometimes treats these biblical themes as a static constant rather than as an evolving, dynamic artistic strategy...To read these allusions without reference to time pretends that there is no growth or alteration in the artist's perspective - a dangerous conceit indeed with so notorious a shape-shifter as Dylan."

Christopher Ricks' book **Visions Of Sin** received a delayed publication in the USA (some six months after Europe) and one of the first reviews to appear was by *Eric Orsmy* in [The New Criterion](#). He is pretty impressed with what he reads, though somewhat unconvinced by Ricks' stance that Dylan can do (hardly) no wrong; "...Ricks' fatal penchant for exaggeration in everything to do with Bob Dylan the artist and the man mars his book, for all its learning and ingenuity and occasionally superb explications of certain songs." Even so, he recommends it to all Dylan fans who come fresh from the songs and without any literary preconceptions ("he is incapable of writing a dull page") and concludes; "...If too often you hear the dim crunch of a butterfly being broken on a wheel, you forgive Ricks because of the deep, if immoderate, affection he holds for his subject."

*Ben Eyre* of the [Oxford Student](#) had no reservations about Ricks' book and claims that it serves Dylan and his music well; "...The book confirms Dylan's status as a master of the modern lyric, but it is Ricks' achievement that is most astounding"

Onto other odds and sods, beginning with [Mojo](#)'s rundown of the "100 Greatest Protest Songs". Surprisingly, Bob only appears once, but it is at number one so I guess that redresses the balance somewhat. Masters Of War proudly takes it's place as the most powerful protest song of all time ("Although recorded with just a solo guitar, the song's angry power foreshadowed all the rock 'n' roll and turbulence to come") and is rightly recognised as being as frighteningly relevant now as it was forty years ago; "...Masters Of War's venomous, mad-as-hell passion makes more sorry sense a full four decades after it was recorded - when JFK reigned over Camelot before his appointment in Dallas. It's now being sung to Donald Rumsfeld."

*David Ward* of [The Guardian](#) informed us that Manchester's (in)famous Free Trade Hall has now been turned into a five-star hotel called the Radisson Edwardian. This is Radisson's first five-star hotel outside of London and many of the suites acknowledge the venue's famous and illustrious history by being named after Ella Fitzgerald, Shirley Bassey, Rudolf Valentino and a host of other names from the worlds of music, politics and literature. There is, of course, a Bob Dylan suite and, if you fancy staying there the next time Bob plays in or around Manchester, then be warned; it's a penthouse suite and will set you back £1,400 per night. At those prices, I'd doubt whether even Bob could afford to stay there. Or would want to.

April's [Record Collector](#) carried an interview with Bob Johnston by *L.E. McCullough*, primarily to promote his new record label JAM Records, but also touching upon his time spent in the studio with Bob, especially when he was at the helm of the Dylan/Cash Nashville sessions. Unlike Cash, who was rumoured to be mortified when they were bootlegged, claiming that there were only two or three releasable numbers on the tape at best, Johnston would still like to see the session get an official release; "...Columbia would never release them. I've been trying to get them released and recently talked to Columbia and they said; "We've got ten of those tracks, but they aren't any good", That was the same reason they gave 35 years ago." According to Johnston, Columbia's reason for proclaiming them as no good is solely because Dylan and Cash don't sing together in harmony, but, he insists, that was intentional ("...that's the style...they deliberately weave in and out") and that the whole session was so off-the-cuff that Johnston had to set the whole studio up while Dylan and Cash went to dinner; "...when they came back, I had everything set up; mics, stands, lights, guitars. They just looked at each other and grinned and went out and four hours later they had about 30 sides cut." Interestingly, he reckons that he still has about 15 songs that no one has ever heard. Come on, then - if Columbia don't want to do anything with 'em, leak 'em to the bootleggers!

In the same issue, *Gavin Martin* looked more closely at the session and of the history between the two icons before they eventually recorded in Nashville. He reckons that Cash likened the session to the legendary 1955 Sun Studio recordings of Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Cash himself, but Martin fails to be convinced; "...the feisty charge and competitive energy that made The Million Dollar Quartet so riveting is replaced in the Cash/Dylan sessions by a deferential, relaxed air - two troubled souls seeking calm after the stormy decade." After Nashville, though the two men remained

friends, there is very little - bar the public appearances - to give any indication of this. One reason, Martin speculates, is that the pair held each other in so high regard that they guarded and protected their friendship closely. Alternatively, he speculates; "...it could indicate that Dylan, having failed to find his creative fire during the Johnston sessions, moved on to other pastures, remembering the old adage about meeting your idols being bound to end in disappointment." My vote is for the former, in case you're interested.

Of interest to anyone who is convinced that 1975 is one of the greatest years of the half dozen or so *really* great years of Dylan's career - possibly even *the* greatest (so that'll be me, then) - will be *Dave Conlin Read's* interview with an anonymous friend of Mama Frasca (whose Dream Away Lodge hosted The Rolling Thunder Revue for one wonderful afternoon during November, as featured heavily in both **Renaldo And Clara** and Larry Sloman's **On The Road With Bob Dylan**). The interview has already seen the light of day in truncated form in Q magazine's **Maximum Bob** special a few years ago - it was actually conducted in 1998 - but is presented in its entirety for the first time on the [newberkshire.com](http://newberkshire.com) website. Much of what went down we already know because of the book and the movie, of course, but he does add a few nice images, such as that of Ginsberg walking around reading from Moby Dick because he knew that Melville wrote his book in the area, and of Dylan hanging onto Mama's every word as she told him; "With love you're like the egg - without love, you're like the hollow egg, without yolk, all white." Also, they all had a bit of a sing-song and belted out a version of Be Bop A Lulla ("...I was right there beside him, singing - he was getting into that."). After a while, it all got a bit too intense and Dylan escaped for a breath of fresh air by climbing out of a window. The window frame had been freshly painted and he left a footprint behind and the next day a couple of the locals made a sign reading "Bob Dylan's footprint", which they left hanging up for quite a while. All in all, a nice bit of additional background to the greatest rock 'n' roll tour that ever was or ever will be.

A month or so before it would be mentioned the length and breadth of America and Europe for entirely different - and unexpected - reasons, Bob's 1970s Doctorate from Princeton University was in the press (albeit on a *much* smaller scale) in connection with what is, I suppose, one of Mother Nature's minor miracles. The periodical cicada only appears every 17 years, spending that amount of time beneath the soil as a nymph before finally burrowing to the surface. Trillions of them are expected this summer and will cover most of the eastern region of North America from late May onwards until their density reaches up to 40,000 per acre. *Melisa Gao* of the [Daily Princetonian](http://DailyPrincetonian.com) reports that their overwhelming singing will be in full force by the time of Princeton University's Reunions and Commencement ceremony this year, just as they were during 1987 and 1970. John Loose, a student in 1970, recalls; "You literally had to shout to talk to people, even if you were walking next to them." Their numbers were so great that another student, Gregg Lange, reveals how they "crawled all over everybody's mother in the senior class" and how Dylan was so disturbed by the noise that he wanted to leave the processional. "It was eerie," agrees Loose, "It was like the twilight zone." So, the next time you play **New Morning**, give a bit of thought to the locusts in **Day Of The Locusts** - they're not based on your common or garden annual cicadas; these ones only put in an appearance every 17 years. A year either side and Bob would never have written the song. Funny how things work out.

In [England On Sunday](#) - the Church Of England newspaper - the splendidly named *Le Roux Schoeman* put forward the theory that, using **Time Out Of Mind**, **Love And Theft** and especially **Masked And Anonymous** as examples, Dylan seems so lowdown and dispirited nowadays that he might well be suffering from "Messiah burnout". This is not a new theory, of course; Dylan as Christ figure has been a regular talking point throughout the ages and I believe it was no less a writer than Paul Williams who once put forward the suggestion that Dylan may have, during the 1970s, even begun to identify with Christ. This is a pleasantly readable article, though, because it draws so much on **Masked And Anonymous**; a movie so rife with images and possibilities that every theory tells a story. Schoeman may well be right, too - Dylan seems to have spent the past two decades trying to prove that, despite what people thought during the 1960s and 70s, he wasn't - to quote from **Monty Python's Life Of Brian** - the Messiah; he was a very naughty boy.

Finally, I must mention *Paul Winner's* article on [maisonneuve.org](#) which provides one of the most readable dissections of an April 2004 Dylan show that I have read (it's titled "**Bob Dylan, From The Latin**", if you're interested in finding it). Though it's not 100% enthusiastic, this is obviously written by a fan - one who admits to not knowing a world without Bob Dylan in it - and the sense of excitement tinged with sadness is more palpable here than in a dozen reviews penned by jaundiced hacks, even if they do proclaim to be real fans. There is sadness, of course, because for all of us who have never known a world without Bob Dylan, we all realise that, in his live shows nowadays, we are not witnessing the best of him or anything near it; "...High Water ends; the applause is warm and grateful. The next song sounds very much like the last one. People seem to appreciate it anyway. I wonder why. I wonder what they expected." Though Winner appreciates that Dylan still cuts a figure onstage - "Slim Whitmanesque" - in his cowboy duds, the appreciation is again tinged with sadness because - and this brings **20 Pounds** full circle to where we came in - "in a few weeks the moustache and gaunt figure will turn up on television for women's lingerie in this very outfit. He will never have looked older." I do urge you to seek this out if you are still interested in reading articles on Dylan that are not either superficial or fawning, but actually leave you thinking about their contents long after you've finished them.

That'll do it. See ya.

THANKS TO: EXPECTING RAIN, THE ISIS WEBSITE (where you can access the latest Dylan news with regular 15 minute updates), JENS WINTER, ANTONIO J. IRIATE, BRYAN GREY



The **Whole Wide World** is watching

## The Best of the Web by Martin Stein (With thanks to Expecting Rain)

### What a complete and utter surprise **Chronicles** has turned out to be!

Reviews have been universally positive (when did that last happen to Dylan?) and I'm now out and proud, reading a Dylan book on the train of a morning in full view of unsuspecting commuters!

1. ***No, not that election!*** – The plug to convince viewers of Channel 4 TV's Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame to vote for Dylan was affectionate though ineffective.
2. ***Golden Globes*** - In a story about Beckham (the Guardian 11/10/04), we get this little gem: "Fame," as the actor Tony Curtis once warned Bob Dylan, "is an occupation in itself."
3. **A signed manuscript** has gone up for auction: **BOB DYLAN**. Printed DS: "*Bob Dylan*" as The Author, 7p, 8½x14. No place, but likely *New York City*, no date, but circa 1973-1976. Contract between Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., publishers, and the singer/songwriter for Dylan to write a follow-up book to Writings and Drawings. In part: "*Whereas the parties wish respectively to publish and have published a work (referred to as the work) of non-fiction. Currently UNTITLED work which is an updated version of the previously published work entitled WRITINGS AND DRAWINGS by Bob Dylan which will consist of the original version of WRITINGS AND DRAWINGS plus 111 new songs....*" Dylan has also initialled the contract: "BD" five times. Noted at upper right margin of first page to be "Author's Copy".
4. ***You, You Changed My Life*** – Stephen Dine Young, a professor of psychology, wants to know what Bob has meant to you. He has posted a questionnaire in an attempt to gather information from Dylan fans about why and how Dylan's music has

been so important to them - [Dylan's Impact Questionnaire](#). If you have any questions about this research, contact: [youngst@hanover.edu](mailto:youngst@hanover.edu)

5. ***Eat The Document*** - "You've never known a refrigerator raider like Bob," writes pioneering rock journalist Al Aronowitz of Bob Dylan in his new book, "Bob Dylan and the Beatles: Volume One of the Best of the Blacklisted Journalist" (First Books Library). "He'd stand there for what seemed like an hour with the door open and pick a full-course meal off the shelves, running some kind of insane, hilarious, non-stop dinner conversation as he kept chomping away, maybe with a chicken leg in one hand and a glass of wine in the other. If nothing else about Bob ever dazzled me, I had to be awed by his metabolism."

The passage comes from a description of the night when Dylan, while staying at Aronowitz' home in Berkeley Heights, wrote "Mr. Tambourine Man."

The book is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) price \$25.95.





## by The Two Riders

**You will recall that Martin mentioned the newly-circulating acetate in the last issue.** The full track listing is as follows:

- 1) **Who Killed Davey Moore:** 26/10/63 Carnegie Hall
- 2) **Gates Of Eden:** 31/10/64 Philharmonic Hall
- 3) **Bob Dylan's New Orleans Rag:** 12/4/63 Town Hall
- 4) **Seven Curses:** 26/10/63 with a slightly longer intro than version on 'In Concert'
- 5) **Walls Of Red Wing:** 24/4/63 Outtake with applause added on the end
- 6) **If You Gotta Go, Go Now:** 31/10/64
- 7) **Mr. Tambourine Man:** 17/5/64 Has the line "hidden leaves" instead of "frozen"
- 8) **Hero Blues:** Times piano outtake with applause added on the end
- 9) **Percy's Song:** 26/10/63 this does not include an intro as on 'In Concert' version but there is a lot of audience coughing!
- 10) **Eternal Circle:** 17/5/64

You will readily deduce that we have dated the two 'new' songs as May 17<sup>th</sup> 1964 which means the Royal Festival Hall concert. This show was recorded for Columbia by Pye Records Ltd onto four 4 inch reels in 3-tracks. Therefore, this is the earliest circulating version of Mr. Tambourine Man and the only extant live version of Eternal Circle. The evidence comes from an article in 'On The Tracks' issue 8 by Michael Krogsgaard in

which he reveals that he was able to listen to parts of the Royal Festival Hall reels in addition to a special work reel which had two songs lifted from that show. The two Royal Festival Hall songs on the work reel were 'Eternal Circle' and 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. His investigations further revealed that it appears to have been decided that these two songs were good enough to be cut to a work reel for possible future use. On the master reel, 'Mr. Tambourine Man' featured a long harmonica intro that was apparently cut from the track on the work tape and the beginning of the acetate track has an abrupt start. For 'Eternal Circle', Michael said that Dylan's introduction was something like "Here is a song about what happens to singers ..." which is similar to the one on the acetate. He also went on to say that the above track listing was exactly the same as that for the unreleased album list by Columbia as "In Concert". The one which has circulated amongst collectors was to be called "Live at Carnegie Hall" by Columbia even though the tracks come from New York Town Hall as well as Carnegie Hall! Of course this means that they had slated for release as a live album a mixture of studio and live tracks!

Quite apart from this convincing evidence, if one listens to the tracks they have the feel of an English concert of the day - a very quiet audience, almost reverential. And for us there is an unproven but possible linkage between the introduction to Eternal Circle in which Dylan says something like 'this here's a song for anyone that plays an instrument - it's not so easy' and I Shall Be Free No. 10 where he says of his guitar "It's nothing - that's something I learned over in England" It seems to us that the English experience really did fuel the latter comments and the RFH just might have been the genesis of that.

Restless Farewell,

# Last Thoughts on Bob Dylan

**What's the matter with me, I don't have much to say**

**by Bob Fletcher**

**Well, actually I do, as the following 3000 words will illustrate.** However, this article has been very difficult to complete. It was written both prior to, and following, the death of Diane's mother. Therefore, it is dedicated to Audrey Pattinson.

Yesterday was my fortieth birthday and...and, well, nothing. No sports car (although I did take a mini cooper for a drive the other night), no affair (some time ago I plucked up the courage to tell Nicole Kidman it was over) and, at the time of writing, no sharp pains as I get up from my chair or lean down to tie my laces. The troublesome thoughts that occupied me at 39 remain (the canonisation of Jim Morrison continues to baffle as does the prospect of Bush returning to the White House).

So, all is well with my world. At least at the moment. The shelf remains fixed to the wall, I happened on a copy of *The Last Waltz* (a collectors edition no less) for £6.99, and as a bonus I get to go to Paris with Diane and two very close friends. As you may have guessed I have no intention of visiting the grave of the one known as the Lizard King (I had the misfortune of doing so in 1998 and have remained psychologically scarred ever since).

Of equal significance, Bob Dylan made it to my birthday party. Elvis joined him/me, as did Neil Young and, though I say it myself, the evening was a success. Although not to begin with. I forgot Highway 61 and the sound system didn't work. Furthermore, none of the bar staff had the foggiest idea who I was. I later discovered that I frightened a couple of them (the white face paint, dark glasses, and beflowered hat adding a somewhat unhinged element to proceedings). A man at the bar genuinely believed I was the 'turn', (the owner of the bar told me later that all was not well with the man's cognitive functioning – I'd already decided he was as mad as a box of frogs), and the flowers kept falling off my hat. Finally everything was in its rightful place and the festivities began. Then Joan Baez turned up.

When I began planning this article I assumed (wrongly) that there would be many references to Bob Dylan's coming of age but all the major biographers have chosen to avoid the subject, focussing instead on events surrounding Dylan's on/off relationship with things divine.

Before discussing who said what about Bob and Christianity, a sense of perspective is required. As John Harris noted “Dylan made his recorded debut at 20, went electric at 24 and opted for family life at 25. When Oasis put out *Supersonic*, Noel Gallagher was 26. What exactly kept him?” (Harris also suggested that “Some of Dylan’s songs are as much a part of humanity’s progress as any politician’s speech, epochal novel, or era-defining play”). By the time Dylan turned forty he, along with his record company, had officially released a total of 26 albums (including two ‘greatest hits’ packages, three ‘live’ albums, and one ‘collection’). There were also numerous guest appearances and live performances, released as specific projects (*Broadside*, *Newport* etc). Adding to the total were the cameos Dylan provided for other artists. Two films *by* Bob Dylan had been screened publicly, a further two *about* him had been aired, he had appeared as an actor in one film and one television play, and three films included partial or complete live performances. Discounting anything previously credited, Dylan made at least 12 significant television appearances prior to his fortieth birthday.

The mistitled ‘Born Again’ trilogy (it is, in fact, Gospel music) continues to divide opinion. At the time devotees felt close to betraying him, indeed some did (even after 25 years I admit to having recently been tempted by thirty verses of ‘Silvio’). But this amounts to nothing when compared to the criticism Dylan endured. In another time and place crucifixion would not have been of the metaphorical kind. But those who sat in judgement would have done well to place the music in some kind of context: in the summer of 1962 Dylan attended a concert by Mahalia Jackson and featured ‘Gospel Plow’, a song that borrowed heavily from the traditional ‘Hold On’ on his first album. Jackson often performed the latter in concert. Furthermore, it is impossible not to conclude that *Sign on the Cross* (of which, more later) refers, in the words of John Herdman, “to the sign that Pontius Pilate had placed on the cross on which Jesus was crucified, as described in John 19:19. Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”.

Not surprisingly admirers became confused by it all. Michael Gray, writing in the 1981 introduction to *Song and Dance Man*, suggests that with ‘*Slow Train Coming*’ Dylan “produced an album destined to be profoundly unpopular amongst almost anyone with any sense who’d ever valued him as a writer” (mind you, he also argued that ‘*Hard Rain*’ was “a generally poor selection of tracks from a concert that was far from being one of Dylan’s best in the first place”). In the 2004 version Gray’s opinions have mellowed a little regarding the latter but he sticks with his original assessment of the former. He does go some way to redeeming himself when examining ‘*The Coming of the Slow Train*’, suggesting that “Bob Dylan has always given us songs that burn with a moral sense.....The Biblical quotations and allusions pour readily out of the early ‘protest’ songs”. And once again, this is where the critics fail to understand ‘what is real and what is not’. John Wesley Harding was hailed by many (including Michael Gray who described it as “this quiet, authoritative masterwork”) yet by 1981 Dylan was widely perceived as a fraud. Tim Riley (*Hard Rain – A Dylan Commentary*) maintains that Dylan’s “three born – again records suggest a musical chameleon who’s trying on styles the way he might try on personalities to get out of a slump”. Yet again it is Dylan’s voice that is scrutinised. Riley argues that “the measure of Dylan’s slide lies in his singing. Even if his writing had remained consistent, the way he begins to whine his songs,

nobody would want to sit through them”. But Riley can’t seem to decide whether to prosecute or defend Dylan (he stops short of washing his hands). Earlier in the book he mentions the following: “Bob Dylan’s voice can crook emotion the way a prism refracts light. His coyote yowl and scurry-to-catch-up phrasing scatter furious accusation, self-mocking glee, postromantic loathing, self-directed bile, lost chances, fleeting regrets, earned cynicism, false cynicism, and contempt for falsity with biting unsentimental candour.” Oh to be a critic.

Over time views have changed. The recent *Uncut Legends #1* (whose editor, Nigel Williams, argues that “Dylan was the only logical choice as the first subject in this series”) afforded ‘Slow Train’ five stars whilst ‘Saved’ and ‘Shot of Love’ were given three each. Likewise, the *Q Collector’s Edition* agrees that although ‘Slow Train Coming’ contains sentiments of a questionable nature, Dylan’s “fervour – along with the input of co-producer Jerry Wexler – makes for brilliant music indeed”. Returning to the questionable sentiments, Gavin Martin notices Dylan sounding “uncomfortably close to the jingoistic, right wing Born Again lobby that would pull the levers of American power in the years ahead”. Folks, George W Bush was, is, and will continue to be, a *very* dangerous man.

Yet Dylan’s choice of ‘Christianity’ doesn’t shock or surprise me (when first listening to the music I confess that it confused me). To paraphrase Chris Wadden, Dylan embraced an all encompassing black and white, for or against, sin and redemption model. As the Dylan himself said “you’ve either got faith or unbelief and there ain’t no neutral ground”. But he needed to because prior to this, his songwriting relied, to great effect, on the grey areas. Dylan’s quest has taken him to many places. As he himself has said “I’ve been to London and I’ve been to gay Paris”.

Sadly, the latter will never be the same. Diane’s pain will return with her and I will never forget her sadness. But we will go again because there will always be beauty too. As you can imagine I have struggled to find the motivation to continue with an article so closely linked to faith. We did all agree, however, that we were in a very spiritual place when we received the telephone call. Indeed, during the afternoon we had, by chance, visited a fine example of Catholic extravagance.

I have long believed that I ought to have been a Catholic. The reason is simple: guilt. I don’t really know where it comes from but I suppose, like many children, I learned early in life to believe that my parent’s separation was somehow my fault. So that could have something to do with it. I am not able to have affairs (I don’t want to anyway) because the guilt would be my undoing. I cannot lie very well, for obvious reasons. So I will tell the truth. At the moment, however romantic the notion of faith, I can find no religion that will sooth Diane. Or her family, who are finding things very difficult (even Bob and his view of things Godly is, for the moment, unable to persuade me). At present, I am feeling guilty because I enthused on the subject of Camus to Diane whilst in Paris (for those unfamiliar with his work I would suggest you read the first sentence of the *Outsider*).

The fact that Dylan's acceptance of all things spiritual began much earlier than his conversion is well documented. Scott M Marshall and Marcia Ford note that "there were numerous indications that he was familiar with the teachings of the New Testament.....Before his twentieth birthday, he had sung Woody Guthrie's 'Jesus Christ' and the traditional song 'Jesus met the Woman at the Well'. In 1962, Dylan himself wrote 'Long Ago, Far Away' a song that opened and concluded with references to the crucifixion". Dylan's acceptance of a Higher Power continues to this day. During 2001 he was interviewed by Rolling Stone and observed that "you hear a lot about God these days: God, the beneficent; God, the Almighty; God, the most powerful; God, the giver of life; God, the creator of death. I mean, we're hearing about God all the time, so we better learn how to deal with it. But if we know anything about God, God is arbitrary. So people better be able to deal with that, too".

The works of Bob Dylan (amongst others) have, over time, allowed me to view spirituality in a different light (Dylan in particular because, as Marshall and Ford note, "two decades ago, he walked away from the particular brand of evangelicalism that initially captured his attention...he simply moved on, quietly taking the next step on his spiritual journey"). I profess no faith but attempt to understand that which makes sense to me (something I struggle with in a world where nothing makes very much sense at all anymore). Indeed at times I openly confess to being a fish out of water or, when embracing certain philosophical theories, a non fish out of non water.

Dylan discussed his thoughts during a series of interviews in the mid 1970's (a fact conveniently overlooked by critics). According to Marshall and Ford, Dylan talked to People magazine (1975) about "the mythical stature he had attained, denying that he had consciously pursued it and indicating that it was God who had given it to him" (he went on to state that "I'm doing God's work. That's all I know). A year later Dylan, when asked by Neil Hickey how he imagined God, stated "I can see God in a daisy. I can see God at night in the wind and the rain" (by 1977 Dylan was, apparently, placing at least some of his faith in a palm-reader. Should you want to read into this that Dylan was intending, through the adoption of Christianity, to offend the Jewish prophets of old, then Marshall and Ford offer the following: "Those prophets were believed to have had a direct line from Yahweh, the God of Israel, and would have denounced the activities and observations of a palm-reader. Their God would have nothing to do with soothsaying"). In an interview with Ron Rosenbaum (Playboy 1977) Dylan was asked whether Jesus Christ is an answer. He responded, as quoted in Restless Pilgrim, with the following: "What is it that attracts people to Christ? The fact that it was such a tragedy, is what.....What would Christ be in this day and age if He came back? What would he be? What would He be to fulfil His function and purpose? He would have to be a leader, I suppose". As Marshall and Ford suggest, the "fact that Rosenbaum's single question elicited so many questions from Dylan certainly indicates he was genuinely seeking spiritual truth".

As noted earlier, Dylan's quest is as old as he is. Examples are numerous; John Wesley Harding contains at least 60 biblical references. Prior to the release of the album Dylan recorded one of his most revealing songs. However, 'Sign on the Cross' remains

unreleased. In 'Voice Without Restraint' author John Herdman, when discussing the song, suggests that "The underlying motif is obviously worry, a nagging and disquieting worry about the cross and what it represents". Dylan, of course, may beg to differ. Herdman continues, "Something is now becoming clearer. Behind Dylan's prophetic utterances of doom directed toward society lies fear, personal fear, fear about his own salvation" (Greil Marcus describes a man, alone in a church "singing, trying to explain, worried, sick at heart, loving god and doubting god is real").

As I've already mentioned, I too have my doubts. But it was hard not to listen to the words as we sang 'Old Rugged Cross' for Diane's mum. Audrey had a faith of sorts so the thought of spiritual guidance must have comforted her in some way. Coincidentally, Paul Williams, when commenting on 'Sign on the Cross', notes that the song has "roots....in classic folk/country spirituals like Old Rugged Cross". He goes on to suggest that "this is one of Dylan's strangest and most moving performances....it's a kind of confession of attraction; Dylan solves the problem of how to talk about his unfashionable and ambivalent feelings by assuming an identity that is at once the recognizable voice of madness and the undeniable voice of truth and wisdom" (Whilst alluding to 'madness' I would highly recommend, again, Petter Higginson's 'The Psychosis of Dreams' (Isis #88) dealing, as it does, with Dylan's ongoing struggle with 'insanity'. It is pure conjecture but worth reading nonetheless).

To some extent Dylan's embracing of a Christian ethos was a logical progression. As Gary Herman suggests "If Dylan's Christianity means anything, it is that all the conflicts and struggles that emerged in the sixties and were embodied in rock'n'roll have not been resolved". The same author argues that Dylan, in effect, stripped his music of any feeling. Cliff Warnken disagrees, noting that "Dylan's gospel show....was one of the best I've seen/heard him do, it was an all – out rockin', bluesy, gospel show with much of the feel and sound of black gospel groups of the '50s".

Mystics remain misunderstood. Steven Goldberg argues that "the mystic has always seen what science is now beginning to see: all distinction is illusory". Dylan pointed that out with 'Gotta Serve Somebody' – it doesn't matter who you are or what you enjoy – in the end there is no distinction: you will be required to make a simple choice "it may be the Devil, it may be the Lord". Goldberg contends that "this is why Dylan merits our most serious attention. For he stands at the vortex: when the philosophical, psychological, and scientific lines of thought are followed to the point where each becomes a cul-de-sac, as logic without faith eventually must".

Even today, in what he refers to as 'the end times', Dylan continues his quest. Throughout his career he has advised others, ('You will search, babe, at any cost. But how long, babe, can you search for what's not lost?'), whilst recognising that the search may never yield the prize ('You fight for the throne and you travel alone, unknown as you slowly sink'). Goldberg, in what was a highly contentious article at the time, argues that Dylan has always been "searching for the courage to release his grasp on all the layers of distinctions that give us meaning, but, by virtue of their inevitably setting us apart from the life-flow, preclude our salvation. All such distinctions, from petty

jealousies and arbitrary cultural values to the massive, but ultimately irrelevant, confusions engendered by psychological problems, all the endless repetitions that those without faith grasp in order to avoid their own existence – all of these had to be released”. Remarkably, Goldberg was referring not to Dylan’s embracing of ‘faith’, rather to his use of LSD.

Recently I had been discussing, with a self-appointed ‘passing sage’ (alright, my Dad), all things Dylan. A few days later he asked for his 25 words to be included retrospectively. I agreed, mainly because the alternative (Dylan is on a beach with Dad, bird watching. Dylan notices a species that seems unfamiliar and makes a comment to that effect. Dad informs him that the visitor is from America and is indeed, a rare sighting. Dylan seems pleased that he has seen a Gull From the North Country) will only encourage him. Whether Dad realised or not, there is a sense of Dylan’s struggle with all things divine: **“Bob Dylan finds a terrible beauty in truth. He shows the terrible beauty of truth. Of all truths. I therefore shun him and his works”**. (For the poets amongst you there are, apparently, references to WB Yeats and the Easter Uprising in there).

Easter, of course, has a special place in the hearts of many and, to conclude, I felt it necessary to discuss the notion of resurrection. Audrey’s death and, more importantly her life, will not be forgotten. There will be times when memories are misplaced, but they will return. And for that moment, all will be as it was. Which brings me to Barrowlands.

I don’t really know why I didn’t go. I love Glasgow, I could have got a ticket, and, as in 2003, I was planning several trips. But it didn’t work out. So I decided to make do with a CD. Yes I know it’s subjective, I am also aware that some may dislike it, but to the doubters I say this: He is the man Thomas. In that place, and at that time, Dylan appeared capable of making a meal from the most modest of ingredients. Although likely to drown if he tried it himself, I suspect every member of the audience would have willingly crossed the river had Dylan asked them to. Richard Williams has long held that ‘Queen Jane Approximately’, as recorded by Dylan and The Grateful Dead, contains a “wrecked majesty”. So does ‘Ballad of a Thin Man’ from Barrowlands (in both cases we must never doubt Dylan’s ability to phrase a song).

And should I need further evidence that Dylan is capable of returning following a metaphorical crucifixion, then I need only listen, with a glad heart, to ‘Just Like a Woman’, ‘Girl From the North Country’, ‘It Ain’t Me Babe’, and ‘Don’t Think Twice’ from the aforementioned performance. Once again, Communion beckons. And with Dylan shining the light, I’m ready to go anywhere.....

Go in peace, and for today only folks, may your god go with you.

P.S. Jesus, I don’t mean to offend but, hey, you know where I am so give me a call sometime because there are a few things I need to sort out. You see, there’s this bloke called Dylan.....

# ***WHAT Was It You Wanted?***

by Jim Gillan

**Time, as a Bob once observed, is an ocean.** Quite what he meant by this when he wrote it can at best be only an intelligent guess. Which rules me out of the contest to come up with an explanation. I did briefly wonder if he was trying to draw a parallel between every tick and every drop, but decided that I was interested more in how the song *feels* than what it might signify. Of course, now that a(nother) Bob is in the bath, I have an opportunity to ask him about it, though whether he can remember, or choose to remember, is another matter. So how would I know it was the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? I guess I'd have to decide that for myself. Or ask an expert. O bugger! The bloody post has arrived. Best see what's in the pile.

Hi Jim. I'm really impressed by your ability to present Bob, his life, his music and his impact in such an accessible and often hugely funny way. It's made me reconsider his art and what it means for me. This has saved me a small fortune in books by learned men who use the pen to narrow things down to their sad understanding. What bigger fools we are to defer to them.

Love, Mum.

Blimey! It's not often any child can ever claim to please a parent, so even though I think she has me confused with someone else, it's a letter I'll treasure. What's next?

*Dear Mr Stokes,*

*I write to cancel my subscription to Freewheelin' as I can no longer put up with the idiot ramblings of the WWIYW columnist. He does very occasionally make a telling point, but his tendency to treat everything Bob does as a joke - or at least as much less important than things like pollution, exploitation, tyranny and GM crops, undermines his arguments. I'm not saying that preventing genocide in the Sudan is less important than tracking the sources of material on the Fantasy acetate, but as the entirely admirable (even when he tried to disconnect those cables) Pete Seeger observed, "to every thing there is a season..." Personally I think that WWIYW stands for Why Waste Ink, You Wally!!!.*

I couldn't agree more. Next.

LAUGH! I nearly drown in my tears. It's nice to weep for something other than humanity's failings and the idea of Bob in the bath is FANTASTIC. I bubbled with laughter at the load of old flannel you came up with. There's enough material for it to make in to a soap opera, so PLEASE don't pull the plug on it. There's so much more to tap in to and the only ones who won't be amused are that utterly humourless shower who devours every line for influence, meaning and argument. Mind you, it deflects some of 'em from bible study. And thanks for your recent hospitality. I'd like to call again. God

H'mm This may be a spoof, not that I mind, as it's well intentioned. Now what's this?

*>Hello mate! Have you seen Bob's interview in the Sunday Telegraph? What a wind-up! The only thing funnier than the idea of Bob going to West Point is Bob laying that load of old hokum on us. Here's the enigma himself, explaining why he wrote the book : "In part, I guess I wanted to set the record straight. "I knew there had been other books about me and I'd even read a couple of them - although frankly you can't spend time reading books about yourself, no matter who you are. Some of the books were more accurate than others but no one knew the full story, apart from me. So I sat down and started tapping away on my old manual typewriter. Initially the book was going to be about the background to some of my albums but then it took on a life of its own."*

*What's really funny is that when you go off on one of your tangents, it's at best received a mostly tolerant smile, though most folks probably do the same as me and ignore most of it. Yet when Dylan suddenly comes out all frank and open about Dylan Thomas, granny's lost leg, family life in the backwoods, his time as the two-gun kid, being a club turn and whatever, it will sell in droves. Tell that John Stokes to pay you whatever you ask, as the only way of coping with Bob's flights of fancy, is to plunge in to something even more surreal. PLEASE don't let Bob out of the bath – you can shower at my place. Ok, Clarence is tootin' his horn, so I gotta go – Patti says HI! And that she'll call from Laredo. Catch you soon, Brooce.*

Now there's a true pal. A real blue-collar guy whose genuine modesty is exceeded only by his generosity. Why, he's happily helped out any number of good causes – and some lost ones, which is where Bob and I probably come in. One more.

YOU'RE GOING TO BURN YOU SPAWN OF BEELZEBUB YOU. SATAN HAS COME AMONGST US IN THE GUISE OF A MOTLEY FOOL, SOME SCRIBBLER WITH A SUCCUBUS FOR A SOUL. THAT SHOULD OF COURSE BE 'SOLE', YOU HEEL YOU. IT'S NOT ENOUGH THAT YOU RIDICULE THE SUPREME CREATOR, BUT YOU ALSO DO THE LORD GOD A DISSERVICE. ONLY THAT ANTICHRIST FROM FREEHOLD THAT YOU SUMMON TO YOUR PUTRID

PAGES DESERVES ALL HE GETS. PS Can I have your autograph, as it makes the chances of a successful exorcism that much greater. Jesus teaches us to be merciful, so take comfort sinner. For verily, merrily, I will pray for your salvation, then come and cast ye screaming in to the pit.

WOW! These are the kinds of letters I like. He certainly says what he means, whoever the hell he is. Oh well, best to be prudent and not book for anything too far ahead.

STOP! This sketch is far too silly. Time for a reality check, impossible though that may seem. Whatever I try to do to with the absurdity of it all, be it some of Dylan's own actions, or those amongst us who feel compelled, either for monetary gain, ego, applause, or therapeutic need, to explain, interpret, construct, deconstruct, reorder, repackage, remember conveniently, or whatever, Bob outdoes it effortlessly. I really don't have a clue why he wants to unleash *Chronicles*, tour so relentlessly (and to me, largely unrewardingly), participate in terrible underwear commercials (the clothes, as well as the video) and allow his name to be stuck on the side of some toxic brew, though maximising revenue is a suspiciously common factor. But Bob, you really can't take it with you. Death, like the ocean, ends at the sure. I think I'll nip up and stick his head under the water for a bit. And mine.



## ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE



by Michael Crimmins  
**The Freewheelin' William Brown !**

**He's small scruffy, rebellious and wears a continual frown upon his face!** Sound like anyone you know? This particular ragged clown is not the creation of Robert Zimmerman, not then Bob Dylan. He is of course Richmal Crompton's William Brown. William never combs his hair. His shirt is invariably hanging out, and he fancies himself as a bit of a poet, the comparisons are endless really.

It all started when JRS our collator requested from all that contribute here, an update of likes and dislikes for the Freewheelers Stars and likes page. In my reply to him where I informed him of my penchant for the song writing of, perhaps unsurprisingly, Bob Dylan, I conveyed to him also of my, continuing from boyhood, passion for the adventures of William Brown. This reminded me that in my first Freewheelin' article some ten months back I had promised that I would introduce myself to the Freewheelin' readership at some point in the future. The above comparison between my two heroes seemed like as good a way as any to get this underway because it was, among other things, the rebellious nature of the fictional William and, the only part fictional, Bob Dylan that drew me close to both in the first place.

I was born in Coventry in Warwickshire and had a thoroughly unhappy childhood. No other way of putting that I'm afraid! I had good parents and was given everything that I needed. My school life was from whence my unhappiness stemmed. Being quite good with some subjects i.e. Religion, and absolutely hopeless with others i.e. maths, especially Algebra, was totally unacceptable, and only one of the gripes of the Gestapo minded thugs (Colin Jordan taught at this school) who passed themselves off as my teachers at the all boys school that I attended. Thank God then for people who really reach out and touch our lives, real teachers who can provoke thoughts and smiles

Richmal Crompton rescued me, and I suspect many other children, from a completely miserable existence! 'William the Rebel' was the title of just one in the William series. The character of William Brown was one that a lot of children, although predominantly boys, could relate to. A little later, enter Bob Dylan. I was fourteen and I was relieved that there was somebody else who viewed the world as a complete madhouse!

My first Dylan album was 'The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan. 'Blowin' In The Wind' came at me, fresh breathed, not a chronological second version. I had not heard of Peter, Paul and Mary! One line from that song got to me on a personal and therefore comforting level, perhaps a little while before I realised what its global implication was

"How many ears must one man have before he can hear people cry?"

It is of course a very powerful observation, as is the whole of the song. It made a deep imprint on my young mind and 'Blowin' was only one song more away from "Masters Of War" and two songs more from "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall". This song starts in with a question

"Where have you been my blue eyed son?"

If Dylan, as has been suggested, had the audacity many years later to equate, align or whatever, himself with Jesus Christ with lines such as "She walked up to me so gracefully and took my crown of thorns" and "In a little hilltop village they gambled for my clothes" from "Shelter from the storm" I can honestly say that this question and answer exercise from "A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall" had me thinking that this was, at least, no ordinary song. I did not know that Dylan had blue eyes back then, and though I rather suspected that Jesus Christ did not, the possible nuclear holocaust predicted in the songs title, and talk of reflecting from mountains so all souls can see it, along with the standing upon water did not so much make me think that Dylan had grand images of his own being, more that he in some way could relate to us certain material dangers. Could this Bob Dylan be a real teacher? Was his perception of things, and perhaps to understate a little, shall we say- a little above average! So concise and to the point did I find certain lines in 'Hard Rain', such as "I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it" that I did at least, one day finally conclude that Dylan is, at least, no ordinary song writer. If messages come through him, as he has said, like it is as if the songs were already written, then a strong message came to me. I found empathy and comfort within the bands of 'Freewheelin'.

In "Bob Dylan's blues" Dylan relates to childhood heroes with the Lone Ranger and Tonto, although unlike William Brown the dynamic two fail to lift Dylan's blues. I suppose someone musta tol' em that he was doin' fine.

"Lord I ain't goin' down to no racetrack see no sports car run,  
I don't have no sports car and I don't even care to have one, I can walk anytime around the block"

These words, and indeed those of the whole record, along with the cover image of a dusty looking couple, actually walking around the block and looking all the happier for it, freed me from a continuance of the misery I experienced in school and set me on a completely different path to the one that my parents would have liked me to have taken. "I shall be free" was the thirteenth and last track. I never have been superstitious, but I have been free. The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan was an education! Not of the academic kind, but of the

real kind-it was street wise! It invited me to have my own opinion. It invited me to read. It invited me into romance and every connotation that the word evokes.

I am a musician. That is what I do. I like to think that I do it well. If I sound a little proud-well maybe I am, after all I have spent my life doing what I have wanted to do and that in itself is an achievement. Hopefully my pride does not lead me in to the easy disease of conceit. I have never written a really good song! So the next best thing is to sing the best songs. Bob Dylan says that the songs are his lexicon! He doesn't mean his songs, but I do! His songs are my reference.

Song is a funny commodity when you think about it. The emotion of happiness and sorrow expressed, being sung out, is very spiritual thing. When a musician speaks of 'just going through the motions' being on automatic pilot, as it were, that is in my eyes the time when he severely abuses his gift.

People are often amazed at the freshness and intensity of Dylan's shows these days. With the exception of perhaps only one period it can be argued at least that this has always been the case. In my opinion Dylan does not rearrange his material and write new, to avoid falling into the trap of going through the motions! He does what he does because he loves to do it, can't help but do any other. It is a mission!

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September at The Holiday Inn in Cambridge, the Cambridge Bob Dylan society celebrated 20 years of meetings with an anniversary party. It was a grand affair and very well attended. I, along with a few friends, was asked along to perform a few Bob songs. It was an honour that I really enjoyed. Thank you to everybody involved.

Just a thought! If Bob Dylan is only Bob Dylan when he has to be! What of 'Chronicles' by Bob Dylan?



William trudged off to the fancy dress ball "why does everyone want you do what they want to do" he thought "Why does everyone want you to be just like them!"

# Can't Wait

by Paula Radice



Am writing this in a torture of anticipation, awaiting the arrival of *Chronicles*. The snippets and extracts that have been published so far - *Newsweek*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, and a few lucky early readers' thoughts on the internet today - all bode really well. Certainly the extracts in the *Telegraph* this morning read beautifully: who could have guessed that after all these years Dylan would be willing to write so expansively and expressively about things he's never previously spoken about in public? I have informed my Headteacher that I will require a day off school when the postman brings the book; she laughed (can't think why). I guess I'll just have to take *Chronicles* into school, tell the children to occupy themselves quietly all day (as eight-year-olds are so good at doing, in my experience), and curl up in a corner of the classroom to read it...

My new class are already getting the importance of Dylan. I informed them last week that every time the boys started talking about football (which is the most boring thing in the entire world, with the possible exception of *Lord of the Rings*), I would put some Dylan in the CD player. Now every time one of the boys forgets and starts talking about football, the others all look really concerned and tell him quickly to hush up "otherwise Miss Radice will put that awful music on again". (It isn't the first time I've found Bob useful in shutting people up. A few years ago, when I was living in Durham, I was receiving frequent indecent phone calls: after playing *The Times They Are A-Changin'* down the phone line loudly every time the idiot rang, the calls ceased. Thanks, Bob. )

I had a great time in Cambridge and Peterborough last weekend. It was great to see so many friends, and especially the *Freewheelers* who were there. Richard had travelled even further than I had to see the Cambridge crowd! It was a really good evening (and into the morning), with Mr Agar excelling himself in the entertaining. Thank you, Chris (and Brenda, of course) for putting me up - and putting up with me - so hospitably, and letting me meet the cats! Congratulations again to the Cambridge group for reaching your 20th anniversary.

I came back to Hastings to good news: my Acting Deputy Headship is being extended to Easter (it was initially only for one term, up to Christmas), and so I will be getting some excellent experience in case I feel like applying for a full Deputy Headship sometime. We shall see. I've been at the same school for ten years exactly (as of this week) and feel like a permanent feature.

There was good news, too, of the Dylan sort. Do you remember me writing, in my piece on the Hibbing holiday, that B.J. Rolfzen, Bob's High School English teacher, was desperate to meet Bob again before it got too late? Well, amazingly, he did last weekend - after a gap of 35 years - meet Dylan again, at the funeral in Hibbing of David Zimmerman's mother-in-law, Myrtle Jurenes. Not only that, but Dylan was apparently very gracious to the elderly man, and B.J. was left delighted with the conversation they had. David and two of his sons were pallbearers at the funeral, and Bob's two nephews also spent the evening in Jimmy's and bought lots of souvenirs to take home and show their uncle! You can imagine how delighted Bob and Linda Hocking at Jimmy's were about that, too!

I think what I'm most hoping for from *Chronicles* is some addition to my growing understanding of what life was like for the young Bob in Hibbing. I don't expect there will be pages of it, but I hope there is some mention of the place and what it was like to grow up there: there's been a taster of that already in the *Telegraph* today. I don't think I've ever waited for a book so impatiently...Hope, when it comes, we all enjoy it. I'm sure we will.





# Time Passes Quickly

by **Chris Cooper**

I fear that you may not be getting a great deal of sense from me over the next few months, as I make sense of the current mess that is my Hospital, I'm deep in campaigns and demos for the future of the place and frankly there isn't a helluva lot of time for other things. Bobwise or otherwise really.

It would be easy enough to say that this current drought on my part is also explained by a similar drought with our man, but really that isn't too true I fear. It's fair to say that Dylan's recent shows, for me at least, leave a lot to be desired. The voice badly needs a break, as does the rest of him methinks.

However on October the 4<sup>th</sup> we got Volume One of "Chronicles" the first part of Mr. Dylan's autobiography. I am not going to write any sort of detailed review, have no fear. I leave that to the more skilled members of our group who are doubtless at work on such things as I speak. I got the book on Monday and finished it on Wednesday. That's very fast for me; I am now re-reading it, because I cannot believe our luck.

For me at least it surpasses all hopes and expectations of what I expected, I have said before that I always felt Dylan was singing to me and me alone when I hear his albums. It is a talent no other artist has ever exhibited for me, and it has bound me to him all these long, long years. It still does. I guess like most I was worried that he would remember little, and reveal less. Nothing could be further from the truth. The detail is panoramic. The truth is as sharp as a razors edge. If his songs got into my head then this book goes even further. You can feel like you are there, like it is happening now. I knew he was a talented artist, and a superb poet. Now he shows us he is a writer, and for a man over 60 to reveal yet another facet of his talent to us is an astounding achievement. If you don't have one yet, get it. It is unquestionably the most important book so far released about Bob Dylan. I love it.





The Cambridge Gang of Four  
John Nye, Keith Agar, John Stokes, Chris Cooper



Richard Lewis & Paula Radice



Bob's Birthday Cake

Till Next Time

# IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO

by Richard Lewis

**Last Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup> 2004, after finishing work** I drove down the A1 to Cambridge to attend the “20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bash” of the Cambridge Bob Dylan Society. I had been to just one meeting before about ten years ago in the company of Mel Gamble, one of that select band who can call themselves ex-Freewheelers. We had a great time and I’d always meant to go back but somehow never managed it so hearing about their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary plans galvanised me into action.

As I hit the traffic around Leeds and Sheffield I remembered why trying to go anywhere long distance on a Friday night is not easy but I persevered and it was well worth it. As I went in John Stokes, who had kindly said I could stay at his place that night, greeted me and promptly went off to get us a pint. Playing in the lobby courtesy of a fine little CD set provided by Chris Cooper was some vintage Bob that I recognised as being from around 1965. In fact two of the tracks including a very early version of *Mr Tambourine Man* were from a recently emerged tape from The Royal Festival Hall in May 1964.

Soon the place started to fill up and I was delighted to see Paula Radice who had been travelling north by train from Hastings while I had been travelling south from Bradford. So with John, Chris, Paula and myself there were four current Freewheelers and then with the arrival of Michael Crimmins for a sound check with his band Dylanesque and Mark Carter from Norwich we were up to six. It was also a pleasure to meet an old friend and ex-Freewheeler, Jeff Stevens up from Crouch End.

Those of you have attended our John Green days in Northampton will have some idea of how the evening started when I tell you that the introduction was by the one and only Keith Agar. As usual he was in fine form with his slides and repartee most of which would be libellous if I put it into print. The evening kicked off with a themed video/dvd presentation lovingly put together by Chris. As this was their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Chris had two videos from 1984 and then moved up the decades to 1994 and 2004.

First off was a video that they had shown at the very first Cambridge meeting, Dylan’s wild performance on the Letterman show from March 1984. Tremendous and always a pleasure to see on the big screen. The opening *Don’t Start Me Talking* is always a treat to see and hear. Next we came right up to date with Dylan with Willie Nelson doing Hank Williams’ *You Win Again* from May of this year. Not so sure about this. Each would have been fine on their own but together, at least on this track, it doesn’t work. What a contrast to the next video from the Apollo Theatre tribute in March – a sublime rendition of Sam Cooke’s *A Change Is Going To Come* which of course was written as a response to Dylan’s “Blowin’ In The Wind”.

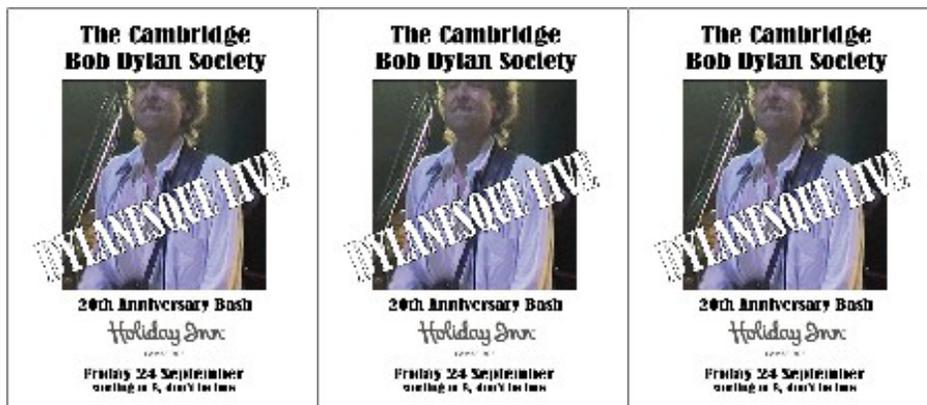
Then came the first of two live sets from Dylanesque a trio with Michael on guitars, harmonica and vocals backed up by Stevie on drums and Alan on bass. In the first set I especially enjoyed their most recent song a fine version of *Sugar Baby* off *Love and Theft*. During the following interval there was the chance to chat, get a drink and look at a few CDs and books that were on sale. I managed to resist all but the beer but only had a half as I was driving John home later.

Up on the video screen we now saw Dylan backed up by a huge orchestra at Nara in Japan now ten years ago. Another film that looks especially good on the big screen. This was followed by another film that had been shown at the first Cambridge meeting and this was the three songs from Barcelona in June 1984. Then onto a quick clip of Dylan, the sound of *Lovesick* and a scantily clad model. We finished with the fine ensemble version of *My Back Pages* and *Knockin On Heavens Door* from Bob's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Then came the highlight of the evening for me and that was the second live set from Dylanesque. A great opener with *Billy* (especially for John?) and a lovely solo from Michael of *To Ramona* followed by a romping stomping *Rainy Day Women*. This led to a fantastic closer and with a departure from Dylan they played a superb version of Howling Wolf's *Killing Floor* featuring a blistering harp solo from Michael.

The evening ended as all the Cambridge meeting do with a showing of *Series of Dreams* but not before Chris slipped in a beautiful new copy of Dylan on the Earl Scruggs show doing *East Virginia Blues* and *Nashville Skyline Rag*.

But the evening was not over as Keith, who had of course been introducing each of the above parts of the evening in his own inimitable way, insisted on John, Chris, Dizzy, Paula and me joining him for a drink. So after filling up my car with various bits of sound equipment we joined him in the reception area only to find the bar was closed and having to make do with coffee. A really enjoyable evening but I was glad to get back to John's house and finally put my head on a pillow around 3am!



# THE MISSIONARY TIMES

## **A MATTER OF PASSION (And time for a double celebration)**

### **Time for celebration (a)**

Anyone who has attended the regular meetings of the Cambridge Bob Dylan Society, or perhaps the Freewheelin annual John Green Day Convention in Northampton, will have witnessed, no doubt starry eyed and laughing, the wit and delivery of our wonderful Master of Ceremonies, Keith Agar. Keith is the unslung (the 'l' is there on purpose) hero of these occasions and his performance at the meeting of the Cambridge group, held at the Holiday Inn in Cambridge on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2004 was no exception. Before I go any further, let me say how nice it was to meet up with some Freewheelers and others at this event which included two great sets by Freewheeler Michael Crimmins and his band 'Dylan-esque'.

It probably goes largely un noticed but Keith spends a lot of time preparing for his presentation at these Dylan events and now he can handle a laptop and video projector with some dexterity, we have some superb sound and vision to augment Keith's Northern brogue. The event at the Holiday Inn on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2004 was special because it was a celebration held to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Cambridge meetings: the first being held in September 1984, and as part of his presentation Keith took us back to 1984 and recalled some events of our inaugural year.

As Keith reminded us, 1984 was a troubled year for the people of the north of England and in particular for one section of the Country's working community who make their living underground. Illustrated by projected images of bands of miners with faces blackened by the dust of their toil, the point Keith was making in this section of his presentation related to the destruction of these working communities during this troubled year. This destruction, according to Keith, should be laid firmly at the door of the "scumbag Scargill", i.e. the leader of the Miners' Union Arthur Scargill who, in Keith's view, was motivated by power so that he could retire to a plot of land in Tenerife.

Keith and I come from different ends of the political spectrum and my take on these particular troubled events of 1984 is that the miners were placed in the public stock as an example to any working man who thought about crossing swords with a right wing Government that had come to power on a promise of dealing with the Workers' Unions and who had consequently passed new anti-Union laws. My view is that, if you wanted to lay any blame for these industrial troubles on one particular person, then the culprit

would be the Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher who, two years before, had accidentally achieved Churchillian status by successfully swinging her handbag at a couple of small and remote islands off the coast of Argentina. After winning a war in a foreign land, the battle with some workers with dirty hands back home would be as simple as applying a blue rinse to her hair and some perfumed rouge to her face.

Which ever way you want to look at it, what is not in question is that, with the extensive closure of the coal mines in the Midlands and the North of England, large sections of the workforce found themselves without work and consequently the humiliation of unemployment destroyed the lives, the livelihoods, the families and the communities of these erstwhile working men.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation, those mining communities were sacrificed for a supposed greater good, and they have never risen again. When Keith's presentation was focusing on this particular aspect of 1984, and in order to support those images of miners with faces blackened by the dust of their toil, our M.C. played a song about working men. It was not a Dylan song but a song recorded by the Canadian singer/songwriter Rita MacNeil with a chorus of men, who are held out to be coal miners from North America, and who go by the name of 'The Men of the Deeps'. The song was quite anthemic and Keith urged us to join in with the chorus. With respect to all the working men in Keith's audience, I doubt that any of them have had ever had their faces or hands dirtied by coal dust and this, together with mild embarrassment, was probably the reason why the playing of the song didn't achieve sing-a-long status. Be that as it may, it was a poignant, and relatively serious, moment of the evening. The song, written by MacNeil in 2000, is called 'Working Man' and the lyrics are as follows.

Chorus:

*It's a working man I am  
And I've been down under ground  
And I swear to God if I ever see the sun  
Or for any length of time  
I can hold it in my mind  
I never again will go down under ground.*

*At the age of sixteen years  
Oh he quarrels with his peers  
Who vowed they'd never see another one  
In the dark recess of the mines  
Where you age before your time  
And the coal dust has heavy on your lungs.*

*It's a working man I am  
And I've been down under ground  
And I swear to God if I ever see the sun  
Or for any length of time*

*I can hold it in my mind  
I never again will go down under ground.*

*At the age of sixty-four  
Oh hell greet you at the door  
And hell gently lead you by the arm  
Through the dark recess of the mines  
Oh hell take you back in time  
And hell tell you of the hardships that were had.'*

When the song ended, Keith declared that if Dylan were to do a cover version of the song, it would blow us away. Admittedly the song related rather to the plight of working in the mines but it was played for the purpose of bringing home the story of the miners strikes of 1984.

Now the reason I am harking on about Keith's presentation (wonderful though it was although as the evening wore on and the headed nectar took its toll, the distance between right and wrong was being constantly being broken down) (sorry – I had a Paul Williams moment there!), is that the purpose of playing the MacNeil song crossed over into a conversation that we had later in the evening. And this conversation underlines the point I intend to make in this article concerning Bob Dylan. In this respect, I am not talking here about Bob Dylan the man, but Bob Dylan the artist who has the gift of creativity unequalled in the genre of popular culture in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The conversation to which I am alluding occurred in the early hours following our 20 year anniversary at the Holiday Inn on the 24<sup>th</sup> September and involved, amongst others Keith and Freewheeler Paula Raddice. Paula was talking about her trip to Hibbing in the summer of 2004, a trip that Paula has written about at length in Freewheelin 227 and she referred to some of the places that she saw as being deserted and desolate. It was another mining tragedy but this time in the North of Hibbing in North America rather than in the North of England. This is what Paula wrote about what she saw on her visit:

'The Hull-Rust-Mahoning mine is huge. It is said that the open-cast pit can be seen from space, a dark red gash in the countryside. It's what, of course, paid for the beautiful High School, and the other impressive public buildings in Hibbing. And its topography is ever-changing, as it is still being mined for iron ore. Unusually for such a man-made phenomenon, it seems to sit naturally in the landscape, with pools of bright blue water making lakes in its depths. It seems just another natural wonder of this part of the world. There is a small visitors' centre (the bigger mining museums are in Chisholm, a few miles to the north) which sells t-shirts and gives out free samples of the iron-bearing taconite. On the drive back into Hibbing, we passed through the remaining streets of the ghost town of North Hibbing, complete with lampposts and road signs, and the concrete bases showing where the houses were uprooted to be rolled down the road to the new Hibbing, "the town that moved". These deserted streets are where the young Beatty Stone grew up.'

It seemed a strange coincidence that we had focussed on the plights of two mining communities so far apart; two communities that, for different reasons, had been destroyed and left without hope. During the course of this conversation, I thought to compare not only these communities but the songs that had been written about their plight. Rita MacNeil's 'Working Man' had been played fucking loud during the evening but it was the words of a song written by Bob Dylan that conquered my mind. The song was four square with me that night: it was released on an album in 1964; the only time that it has ever been performed live was in 1974; here we were in 2004 talking about events that had occurred in 1984. Somehow it just seemed right. The song is 'North Country Blues' and the lyrics read like poetry. I doubt that many people reading this will have listened to the song for some time so here it is, in all it's woeful beauty:

*Come gather 'round friends  
And I'll tell you a tale  
Of when the red iron pits ran plenty.  
But the cardboard filled windows  
And old men on the benches  
Tell you now that the whole town is empty.*

*In the north end of town,  
My own children are grown  
But I was raised on the other.  
In the wee hours of youth,  
My mother took sick  
And I was brought up by my brother.*

*The iron ore poured  
As the years passed the door,  
The drag lines an' the shovels they was a-humming.  
'Til one day my brother  
Failed to come home  
The same as my father before him.*

*Well a long winter's wait,  
From the window I watched.  
My friends they couldn't have been kinder.  
And my schooling was cut  
As I quit in the spring  
To marry John Thomas, a miner.*

*Oh the years passed again  
And the givin' was good,  
With the lunch bucket filled every season.  
What with three babies born,  
The work was cut down  
To a half a day's shift with no reason.*

*Then the shaft was soon shut  
And more work was cut,  
And the fire in the air, it felt frozen.  
'Til a man come to speak  
And he said in one week  
That number eleven was closin'.*

*They complained in the East,  
They are paying too high.  
They say that your ore ain't worth digging.  
That it's much cheaper down  
In the South American towns  
Where the miners work almost for nothing.*

*So the mining gates locked  
And the red iron rotted  
And the room smelled heavy from drinking.  
Where the sad, silent song  
Made the hour twice as long  
As I waited for the sun to go sinking.*

*I lived by the window  
As he talked to himself,  
This silence of tongues it was building.  
Then one morning's wake,  
The bed it was bare,  
And I's left alone with three children.*

*The summer is gone,  
The ground's turning cold,  
The stores one by one they're a-foldin'.  
My children will go  
As soon as they grow.  
Well, there ain't nothing here now to hold them.*

I ask myself, and I ask anyone, anywhere and anytime: has there ever been a song written that so desperately; so accurately and so emotionally captures the destruction of lives and livelihoods through unemployment? And in this poetry he makes something out of nothing: he forms a building from the silence of tongues. This is Bob Dylan the poet at his finest and, in my view Bob Dylan the poet at his finest should never be forgot. Whatever Bob Dylan himself has to say about it!

## **Time for celebration (b)**

This issue of Freewheelin- number 229, marks another milestone in our history as it means we have survived 30 issues of our internet fanzine Freewheelin-on-line. They say that 30 is a dangerous age so I suppose we had better watch out! Paula recently had an exchange of words with the great Greil Marcus who apparently views Freewheelin-on-line regularly and this got me to thinking about our otherwise unnamed and unknown electronic public. I know a lot of people download our pages, print them off and collate them into their own version of Freewheelin which is fantastic. But do they actually read them? Well put your mind at rest for we are read thoroughly as this recently received email from one of our readers namely Jeff Gitter of North London shows. What Jeff has to say is mainly directed at something that I wrote but it raises some very interesting points about our general interest in the work of Bob Dylan. What is also interesting from Jeff's email is how he took this particular issue of the magazine i.e. 8 miles high:

*Dear John*

*As I knew I would be having to endure an Easyjet flight last Sunday, I decided to save my F-O-L 28 for that so, together with my iPod, I would have enough to occupy me for shortish the journey.*

*As I always do with F-O-L, I started at the beginning, read my way carefully through every page and when I'd read the last article, yours – I was moved to write to you. By way of background, I too, have had a long and healthy relationship with Dylan. The first contemporaneous album I became aware of was Blonde on Blonde and since that time, now almost forty years ago, I've remained hooked. I've been to countless shows, I've met and spoken to him, I've read everything I could get my hands on, I have a lovely collection of memorabilia including a gold disc and a harmonica but most of all, I listen to Bob almost every day.*

*So the first thing I want to pick you up on is the word "obsession" which seems to recur throughout many of the writers' pieces, time and time again. Ours, and forgive the familiarity if I include you and me together here, is not an obsession, it's a passion, a passion founded out of a deep and longstanding love of the words, the music and the performance. By my definition, an obsession is something which prevents people from leading a normal life (whatever a normal life is), whereas a passion is something which supports us as we travel down life's pathway and helps us to plough our way through the difficulties we all encounter from time to time. So I have this passion and it's added to my life in so many ways, but it's not an obsession because I'm also enjoying a happy and successful life – most of the time.*

*Now to the meat of what I want to say, dog meat, I suppose. Here's one of the great things about Dylan, (and here's where we part company) your enduring song is "Dogs" whereas, until hearing it live over the past four years or so, it was my worst. I suppose it was mainly the dreadfully irritating female voice trying to scat in such a very*

*unjazzlike and unmusical way which dominates the song, but mainly my feeling that although Bob is most everything, he is not really a jazz singer although he can and does, improvise amazingly.*

*Back to my flight. Having read your piece, it was time for me to remind myself of the song, so out came my beloved iPod containing thousands of Bob songs and a few significant others. To my chagrin, I found that I had only three versions: the original, Wembley 5 October 2000 and Winston-Salem 8 February 2002. I was at Cardiff this year and loved that performance but as yet, I don't have a CD so I haven't heard it since. So here's what I think, for what it's worth. I've mentioned the original so I need say no more and as to Winston-Salem, well that was the year Bob could remember the words of his songs but had forgotten the tunes. It has a wonderful opening harmonica solo (for which he was rightly applauded) but together with most every one of the "quiet" numbers he sang that year, it had the same annoying, rising sort of falsetto note at the end of each line, be it Blowin' In The Wind, If Dogs Run Free, or countless others.*

*Wembley 2000 however, was wonderful, and a revelation to me given what I thought of the original so thanks for your article and for making me revisit that song – it's now a new friend!*

*My kind regards*

*Jeff Gitter'*

I subsequently exchanged emails with Jeff and he added a rider to his first communication as follows:

*'Oh yes, I forgot to say. I love the new on-line format and I'm afraid I'm one of those who print and bind them - for posterity! Congratulations to you all.'*

Of course Jeff is right in the third paragraph of his first communication: this appreciation of Dylan's work is something that is enormously beneficial to us. And in this we are very lucky for, as life goes on all around us, we can see things that have never otherwise been done and that others just cannot see. With the publication of Chronicles Volume 1 a lot of attention is going to be given to Bob Dylan the man but we must not lose sight of the notion that what, in Jeff's words: *supports us as we travel down life's pathway and helps us to plough our way through the difficulties we all encounter from time to time* is Bob Dylan's creativity. His art. God bless yer Bob!