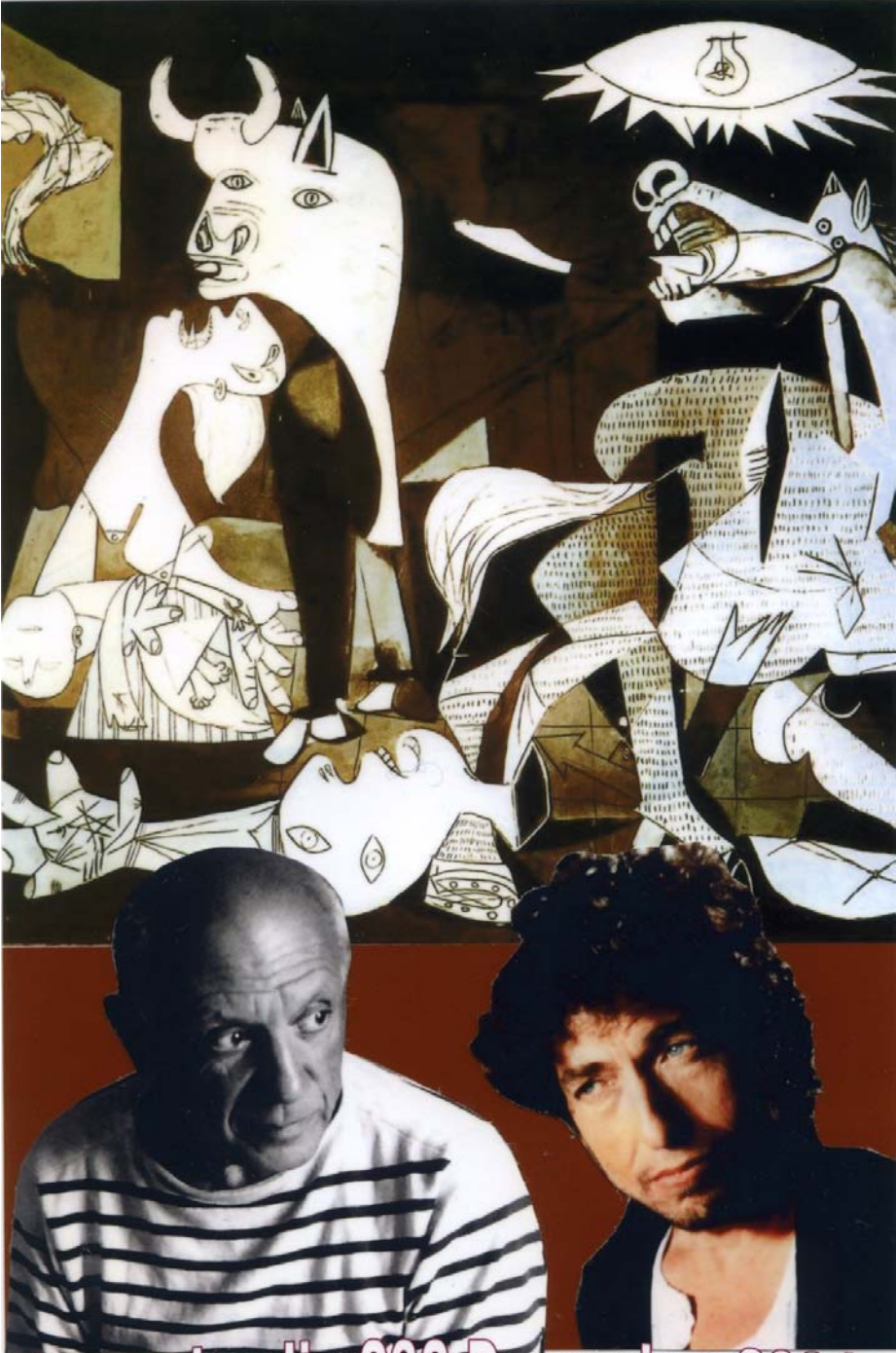


Freewheelin-on-line

Take Thirtyfour



Freewheelin 232 December 2004

Coverdown

Freewheelin 232

For anyone who might have struggled through my epic saga on 'Visions of Johanna', you may recall that I often endeavoured to interpret the song as a painting with many forms and features making up the canvass. A little preposterous you may have thought but Dylan does a similar thing in Chronicles Volume 1 where he writes about 'A Ship the Black Freighter', a song that he heard in 1962 when he visited his then girlfriend Suze Rotolo whilst she was working on a musical production at a theatre in Christopher Street, New York. Dylan absolutely raves about this song and, in part of that rave, he says the following 'It was like the Picasso painting *Guernica*.'

What made Dylan think of 'A Ship the Black Freighter' in conjunction with Picasso's *Guernica* was probably the immensity, in Dylan's eyes, of the song... 'you couldn't see what the sum total of all the parts were, not unless you stood way back and waited 'till the end.' he writes.

Picasso's *Guernica*, part of which is reproduced on this months cover, is indeed an immense painting for it measures 12 feet deep and 26 feet wide! It was painted in 1937 as an immediate reaction to Germany's devastating casual bombing practice on the Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War and the work displays horrifying images of mutilation, death and destruction. It was of course a short time after he first heard the song that was like Picaaso's war painting that Dylan wrote his own songs that included lines representing the horrifying images of death and destruction, in particular 'A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall'.

My section of *Guernica* is here as a backdrop to bring the two artists together. The lines on Piccasso's Breton t-shirt form arrows heading towards Dylan and Picasso stares intently at him. Dylan, a little older and wiser, gazes off into the distance, wondering what all the fuss is about, feeling like an imposter and knowing that he is not the person who people think he is. It must be painful for him but maybe someday he can reconcile himself with his art so that the war between Dylan and his enemy within will be over! Oh happy day!

Freewheelin-on-line take four (freewheelin 232)



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	Distance	Audio	Steadiness	Heads	Focus	Image
1	1/2 screen	1	Not in pic	80%	No pic !	L=left
2	3/4 screen	2	In pic 25 %	70%	Out of focus	C= Center
3	Full length	3	in pic 50 %	60%	Mostly blurred	R=Right
4	Knees	4	In pic 75 %	50%	Bit Blurry	1-9 10% angle
5	Thighs	5	In pic 100%	40%	Goes in and out	B=balcony
6	Waist	6	In pic moves	30%	Soft Focus	S=Stalls
7	Mid Chest	7	steady hand	20%	Mostly In Focus	PRO=TV
8	Head/Shoulders	8	monopod steady	10%	Near Perfect	D = Dark
9	Head	9	perfect	Never	Perfect	



Magnetic Movements-On-Line by Chris Cooper

Issue 232

Hello again

At the end of the year and we are playing catch up again. Only this time we seem to have located a few quite old ones that have escaped the net. I am also going to make mention of the new compilations that seem to be flying around. So take a seat and look at these babies. (Makes your eyes go red just thinking about them!)



29-04-1994

D3 A87 S7 H8 F7 IBC6

CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

99.00

Jokerman/y lady Lay/All Along The Watchtower/ Disease Of Conceit/ Tangled Up In Blue/
Watching The River Flow/ Mama You Bin On My Mind/ Masters Of War/ Don't Think Twice
Its Alright / God Knows / I And I / Maggies Farm/
Ballad Of A Thin Man/ It Ain't Me Babe

This is mostly steady and clear view, but unfortunately as you can see too dark. Add to that this is one of those experimental gigs he refers to in "Chronicles" this night Bob has decided he would extend and raise the notes at the end of each song. Shame it does not work! Best avoid all in all.



05-07-1998

D5 A8 S7 H8 F8 IBC4

ROME, ITALY

93.00

Gotta Serve Somebody/ Man In The Long Black Coat/ Cold Irons Bound/ Born In Time/
Can't Wait/ Silvio/ Rank Strangers To Me/ Desolation Row/ One Too Many Mornings/
Tangled Up In Blue / Make You Feel My Love/ Til I Fell In Love With You/
It Ain't Me Babe/ Love Sick/ Rainy Day Women / Blowin In The Wind

Four years have gone by, we're in '98 and a much better film this. Bob's in good form and quite relaxed, As you can see this one gets close enough to be interesting and has a few unusual live songs for flavour also. A bit of a mystery as to why this has not surfaced sooner, but its here now, so go find it.



02-07-04

D4 A8 S7 H7 F8 I SR2

STRA, ITALY

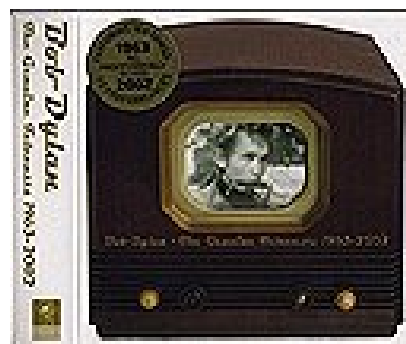
87.00

Cold Irons Bound/ If Dogs Run Free / Most Likely You'll Go Your Way/ Make You Feel My Love/ Just Like Tom Thumbs Blues/ Seeing The Real You At Last/ Standing In The Doorway/ Honest With Me/ I Believe In You / Forever Young/ Summer Days Like A Rolling Stone / All Along The Watchtower

The last film is from but a few months ago. This ones a bit unsteady and part of the screen is usually blocked by the dreaded heads. Fortunately, whilst they are often on the screen they are not usually in front of our man but either side of him. It makes a curiously pleasant framing. There aren't so many films these days so I would recommend this, though of course I cannot claim it's a great film.

Now really that should be it.

But two other things are with mentioning and they are pretty opposite, Little and Large, Good and bad etcetera etcetera. Lets Go large first



Those watchdog people have placed all the better known tv footage together on 6, yes SIX DVD set called (here) Telecasts. It was a good idea, the packaging is pleasing to the eye an all that, (though the price is harder on the purse) The claims made of this (on the packaging) and by those that have not seen it that it's the best source for all this stuff So lets put the record straight here.

The bulk of this material I snot new to dvd, and in many cases is available in better quality elsewhere. The menu system is a nightmare. It has simply been adapted from the Sony D300 standalone dvd recorder menu. So what's wrong with it? (1) The index sheets list the songs but the videos list the dates. Whats more each song has separate listing making very long menu's up to 7-8 pages each dvd. If you select a song it plays it and then returns you to the menu. You cannot simply start playing partway thru. So if you watched Sat Nite Live 79 this way you would have to go thru the menu 3 times, once for each song. If you use the play all option there are sizeable disruptions between songs of the same session. That's if the session fits on a disc, in several cases things are split over 2 dvds.

So with all the moaning why mention this here?? Because the set does feature some entirely new material, and pretty essential it is two.

DISC ONE

Has two rather grainy outtakes from Don't Look Back: Its All Over Now Baby Blue and All I Really Wanna Do and both are great, complete performances the last track on this disc and the first two on

DISC TWO give us the complete World Of John Hammond in great quality (only 2 tracks circulated as good as this before)The recordings of Nashville 78 and Sat Nite Live 79 are the best I have ever seen. You can say the same about all of the '84 footage on **DISC THREE** also.

DISC FOUR has the best Letterman Rehersal footage you can get as is the Tokyo 86 Raw footage, some of which is also new to circulate. Though sadly **DISCS FIVE & SIX** offer nothing new, or improved. There is certainly enough to warrant attention here, but what a shame that it does not live up to the boast.



By contrast THRU THE YEARS LIVE is superb, ok its nothing new. A compilation of various tracks, most with redubbed stereo sound. All great audience films, with a terrific menu that not only gives the lineage of each song but also shows you a sample of the song selected in the menu. If you want a sample of the tours, look no further. Now this the way DVDs should be made.

Till Next Time



The **Whole Wide World** is watching

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

Of course in a column like this any oversight can be passed off as editorial discretion!

1. ***Dylan Rediscovered*** - Drive Thru Records is celebrating Bob Dylan's 64th birthday by releasing a tribute album from young pop-punk artists. No track listing is as yet available, but the CD will be titled *Listen To Bob Dylan (Because He's Cool)* and is slated for release in May 2005. The US punk label aims to introduce a new generation of fans to the legendary singer's songbook: "The goal of the CD is to introduce a newer, younger generation of listeners to Bob Dylan's music through artists that they love".
2. ***Chekhov Checkout*** - Could these short stories be the basis for a Dylan album? <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/c/chekhov/anton/c51wif/index.html>
3. ***Rare Bob Dylan Recording Finds Home at Minnesota History Centre.*** The Original 1960 Minneapolis recording donated to Minnesota Historical Society – see http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/050113/cgth041_1.html



Curator Bonnie Wilson holds a rare 1960 reel-to-reel recording, with Bob Dylan's name misspelled on the box, of Dylan playing guitar and singing folk songs that was donated to the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Minn. The tape was made in a Minneapolis apartment while Dylan was playing for friends.

4. ***Supplement Paula's pictures*** by viewing Bob Dylan sites in Minnesota via <http://www.music.indiana.edu/som/courses/rock/dylan.html>

5. ***Details on Martin Scorsese's forthcoming Dylan*** film can be found at <http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/story/271942p-232882c.html>. For the documentary, which will be televised July 13-14 and focus on Dylan's life up to 1966, Dylan's long-time manager and archivist Jeff Rosen has provided "American Masters" access to the singer-songwriter's private audio and video vault. This includes private film of Dylan's '65 and '66 tours (obvious rumours abound about Manchester Free Trade Hall footage but it may just be excerpts from Eat The Document), home movies and complete press conference footage. Also, Rosen interviewed Dylan on video last year for 10 hours - footage that, like other rare material, the producers hope to include as extras on the eventual DVD.

6. ***Dylan has been officially placed alongside*** such literary greats as Philip Roth and Adrienne Rich, not to mention biographies of Shakespeare and Willem de Kooning. All were among nominees announced for the National Book Critics Circle prizes. Dylan is among the finalists for biography/autobiography, his competition including two acclaimed best sellers: Ron Chernow's biography of Alexander Hamilton and Stephen Greenblatt's biography of Shakespeare. Also nominated were John Guy's Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart (Houghton Mifflin) and "De Kooning: An American Master," by Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan.

7. ***Some of Dylan's albums*** have been given academic-style ratings at http://www.robertchristgau.com/get_artist.php?id=169&name=Bob+Dylan I know John will be pleased with New Morning's score but A- for Under The Red Sky?

8. ***Come Senators, Congressmen*** – OK I know it's the UK Parliament but you can find who mentioned Bob Dylan and why at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/dialogserverTSO?DB=ukparl&FILE=searchJS&DATETYPE=ANY>



Top Ten of 2004

Masked & Anonymous DVD

Not the greatest film of all time but with the official release of the movie on DVD we gained some interesting additions with some cut scenes but the most rewarding addition was a wonderful and complete version of Standing In The Doorway. Why did this not make the final cut of the film?

The Bootleg Series volume 6 - Live 1964: Concert At Philharmonic Hall

This isn't much to be added about this show, it has always been a firm favourite. How the original soundboard tape missed part of Silver Dagger, especially as there is some Dylan involvement with two harmonica breaks, is a mystery. The only complete version was from an audience tape but now to have the complete show in this sound quality is fantastic.

TV Appearances

During 2004 there were a variety of TV appearances. Two of the memorable ones were the one broadcast on the 31st May (recorded on the 5th May) from The Wiltern Theater, Los Angeles which was dubbed, 'Willie Nelson and Friends: Outlaws and Angels'. There was an extensive guest list but somehow Dylan was not included but he appeared to give an excellent performance with Willie on Hank Williams' You Win Again. Another which was broadcast on 19th June (recorded on 28th March) from the Apollo Theater for the 'Apollo at 70: A Hot Night In Harlem' where Dylan performed a very powerful version of A Change Is Gonna Come. Both good performances and worth seeing, it is a pity that such things are rarely broadcast here!!

Soundboard

An ALD recording of the show at the United Center, Chicago on 25 October 1998 emerged in 2004 and is a welcome addition to the collection. Nothing unusual in the set list but a good show in very good sound quality.

Fantasy

During 2004 an acetate circulated for the first time and although for the most part it wasn't too exciting there were two gems which made it a major find. These were Mr. Tambourine Man (with slightly different lyrics) and Eternal Circle (the first ever live version to circulate) and they both came from the Royal Festival

Hall concert of May 17th 1964. What was also interesting was that the track listing of the acetate was exactly the same as that for the unreleased album list by Columbia as 'In Concert'!

Keys To The Rain – The Definitive Bob Dylan Encyclopedia

This book by Oliver Trager is a treat to read with loads information ranging from critical pieces to trivia. It is ideal to pick up and browse the put down to return later or as a reference work to answer queries. It is published by Billboard Books and well worth obtaining.

Chronicles – Volume 1

Something which few ever thought would appear. One friend commented after finishing Chronicles that he very much enjoyed reading a well written book and then said, "I wonder who wrote it"!! At time this seems a fair comment! It is a 'good read' and there is little to add other than to say read it if you haven't already!

Chronicles – Volume 1 - Sampler

Other unexpected gems emerged this year on this sampler, they included The Cuckoo released officially for the first time but the real find was the demo version of Dignity. Very nice to get especially as a 'freebie'!

US NPR Radio Interview

On 12th October US NPR radio broadcast a short interview with Dylan where he was talking to host Steve Inskeep about the publication of Chronicles Volume 1. The whole broadcast lasted approximately seven minutes with the Dylan content just over one minute!

60 Minutes

The final event of note in 2004 for Dylan fans was the first TV interview since 'Getting To Dylan' in 1986, broadcast on the BBC in 1987. As part of the 60 Minutes show the slot was less than 20 minutes and not much more revealing than the earlier radio interview. Considering that the filmed interview was over 90 minutes a little more was hoped for but maybe this time next year (or some time in the future!) we will be discussing the outtakes!!! Dream on!!!!

2004 wasn't the most outstanding or memorable year in the Dylan world but there were some very welcome additions to the collection. These aren't in any order, just highlights from the past year, what a shame the concerts didn't demand inclusion. There were many other books which could have been included not least 'Lyrics' if only the publishers could work out which version should be marketed throughout the world! As usual interviews reveal very little. Let us hope that the rumours of a new Dylan album in 2005 are true!

Restless Farewell

MARTIN'S 2004 TOP 10 –

IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER

BY MARTIN STEIN

CHRONICLES. No matter what the sceptics say I found this to be a thoroughly enjoyable and engaging read. Fact or Fiction? Yes to both.

FOOTBALL. 2004 ranks as the worst year ever. I'm still in denial over the spectacular collapse and implosion of my beloved Leeds United AFC. I look at the fixture list and think they must be Cup games! The whole sad sorry episode unwound in front of my eyes and ears each and every Saturday. At least Germany seem to have turned a corner after their piss-take of an appearance at Euro 2004.

SHOWS. It was a surprise to discover that I haven't obtained a single Dylan show from 2004. I've read the reviews and the comments but I have to admit I that I clearly can't be arsed. Mind you should see the dust covering my tape collection!

CLASH OF DATES. Not only was I unable to get on down to Cambridge for the second half of the year I couldn't make the John Green Day or the 25th Anniversary Bash. The reason? Simple – see 10 below.

A PIRATE LOOKS AT 40. What have 1964 and 1994 got in common? Me. Not only did I reach the big Four Oh this year but Ann and I chalked up 10 years not out together. Parties and celebrations ranged from large family gatherings to a break away alone together in Bruges. Also included was some quality time with my elder brother on a trip to Germany. Nostalgia may not be what it used to be, but remembering who you are and why is no bad thing.

LOTR. I love the books and the films but sadly 2004 will be the last Christmas with a cinema release or Extended DVD to look forward to. I'll certainly miss the anticipation and excitement. Sorry Paula!

ALL I SEE ARE DARK SKIES. Our summer holiday in France, to escape the English washout, began with a flood.

BUSH. By far the biggest disappointment and cause of deepest depression in 2004 was the re-election of the Texan Tossplot by the US masses. "Forgive them Lord, for they know not what they do".

FREEWHEELIN'. I've now passed my first year as a Freewheeler. I'm sure you all know about the 'news' bits but hopefully I raise a smile in the headline simile. Freewheelin' is my most enjoyable and thought-provoking Dylan read, thanks to you all!

MY YOUNG FAMILY. Fantastic, rewarding and highly recommended. "Have a bunch of kids who call me Pa. That must be what it's all about" – you're not wrong Bob!

ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE

by Michael Crimmins

2004 Revisited

2004 was a good year for me personally, I got myself around the country a little bit and got done the things that I like to get done.

It was around this time last year that John Stokes asked me if I might be interested in writing for Freewheelin'. I was interested, I still am interested, and most importantly I like it here. I need to play music. I love to listen to music. I always want to talk about music. These are the things that I got done, and being around this Dylan territory helped me tremendously with the last of those listed priorities. Having completed my first year with Freewheelin' I include my writing here, because I have enjoyed it so much, among my top ten. I will refrain, as last year, from using any chronological order in doing so, with no better excuse than it makes things easier.

LIVE AID. 4 DVD BOX SET. 'The Day The Music Changed The World' July 13 1985.

Eight weeks ago the E.E.C. spent 265 million pounds in destroying 2 million tons of vegetables and fruit. Bob Geldof July 1985

People starving and thirsting, grain elevators are bursting
Oh, you know it costs more to store the food than it do to give it

Bob Dylan "Slow Train Coming" 1979

Bob Dylan made a positive statement from the Philadelphia stage at the close of Live Aid on that very special day in 1985, and I'm not talking about his comments regarding possible aid for the American farmers!

He sang "The ballad of Hollis Brown" "When the ship comes in" and "Blowin' in the Wind". Only "Blowin' in the wind" is included in the box set.

Dylan's performance from the Philadelphia stage that day in 1985 has been well and truly lambasted by all. By all I include the Dylan faithful and The Dylan writers, oh! And the media press was non-too impressed either! A lot of artists truly enhanced their careers that day. That they managed to do this through raising money for one of the greatest causes ever was not a bad thing. Very few though, included material of an appropriate dimension. Dylan did! His first song "The ballad of Hollis Brown" given that the plight of the American farmer was not really the point, was, at least, actually about starvation.

"Your children are so hungry that they don't know how to smile"

"When the ship comes in" spoke of a time too late for contrition

“Oh the time will come up when the winds will stop.
And the breeze will cease to be a breathin’ “

“Blowin’ in the wind”

“How many ears must one man have before he can hear people cry”

‘ How many deaths will it take till he knows that too many people have died’

Bob Dylan clearly then, at least, vocalising in context with the cause! If we take Ron Wood and Keith Richards out of the equation, the sound people did that anyway! And pay attention to the songs Dylan sang, noting that he, under great pressure, managed to get nearly every word of all three songs right, his contribution that day is surely a far greater one than he has ever been given credit for. Oh and the DVD'S are bloody marvellous, even without most of Bob's contribution from that day.

Madonna: I have never really been a fan. I have liked the odd record. But here, I found her all that any performing artist could be. Absolutely stunning! Her command of the stage, her confidence and colour compare only to entertainers such as Elvis and Fred Astaire.

“For once in our bloody lives we won” Bob Geldof 1985

Bob Dylan Performing Artist 1986*1990 & beyond. Mind Out Of Time

Couldn't wait for this one! I actually was looking forward to this publication more than I was to Chronicles by the old git himself!

Paul Williams is easily my favourite Dylan writer. It's his enthusiasm and lack of towering invulnerability that attracts me to him. He comes across as such an obvious fan. Williams places so much respect on Dylan in the context of his public performances, rather than just his studio work, that he can, in his honesty, be a hard observer to please. A dedication such as the one he penned for the second of his 'Performing Artist' series 1974*1986 (UK1994edition) only serves to highlight his sincere appreciation of the performing artist in general.

this book is for the ones
who walk on stage
and open their mouths
and sing

His book is yet another great read as he provides us with an even greater excuse for collecting even more Dylan performances. I was very taken with Paul's breakdown of Dylan's 1989 album 'Oh Mercy'. He seems to have the uncanny ability, for instance, of almost placing himself next to Dylan, Lanois and company at the time of recording, such is his translation of felt mood/atmosphere that is apparent in his writing. Of course none of us, I'm sure, agree with everything we read, no matter how much we admire the writer. For example, I was very surprised to read Paul's reaction to Dylan's Travelling Wilburys

song “Congratulations” where he describes the song as “agreeable filler” and also sees it as a “remarkably spiritless performance”. My surprise stemmed not from his expressed lack of enthusiasm for this song in particular, after all, as I have said, one of the reasons I like his writing IS because of his honesty! No it is that he, this time, seems to miss the point, and by that I mean the overall Wilbury thing, which of course is Devil may care/tongue in cheek (very). Having said that, it is quite probable that it is I who miss the point, because I know that Williams is very aware of Dylan’s strengths within humour. From my humble point of view, I would find it hard to describe any Wilburys song as filler, without calling them all filler! It would be akin to calling another track, Art for arts sake. Every track on Volume one is a very definite article, in as much that it is “Sylvia’s Mother” rather than “Idiot Wind”/ The Goons rather than Leonard Cohen. In another environment “Congratulations” through Dylan’s mischievous pen, has the added ability to become a totally different song. According to Williams Dylan has performed this song a few times, although not having heard these renditions I am unable to comment. Paul says that Bob sounds like he is reading from a cue card as he delivered the words “I’m sorrow bound” on the recording. To my ears the words ring like those of a pouting spoilt child collecting sympathy from its parents. Dylan deliberately over plays the wronged lover, using exaggerated phrasing. I find the recording rich in vitality, with an acute awareness and love of the over the top pop ballads of the fifties and early sixties I particularly enjoyed Williams’ short essay on ‘Love & Theft’. Paul is so obviously bursting at the seams with enthusiasm for his project, that it amused me to consider that the word –vignette- used in any kind of connection to his hero, must act as anathema to him. Also an interesting thought occurred to me when reading his words from the same essay featured in chapter 15

“So supposing you were Bob Dylan and you read that”.

I don’t need to quote anymore than that, or to put those words in to any kind of context to tell you that I had to put the book down as I pondered on the very possible situation where Bob Dylan, who very possibly reads every word that Paul Williams writes, at the very moment of delivering a certain lyric in a concert situation, cannot help but bring another’s interpretative thoughts to mind-Time out of mind? That of course is only a possibility, but a possibility nonetheless, where two very different artists work can meet head on, without it being the intent of either. Accidental art if ever there was such a thing!

Dylan has admitted that his songs are open to the listener’s interpretation, and as such can mean very different things to very different people. We all, after all, as we interact with each other in our daily lives, influence one another to a certain degree. I am not trying to imply any sort of Dylan/Williams song writing partnership here –ha ha- it is just my mad mind on the rampage again. Consider though Williams’ own words below.

Chapter 14 from Performing Artist 3, “was written in September 1997. It first appeared in- Crowdaddy! Under the title of “Sparkly- Eyed Master of the Highlands.” When it was reprinted in -On The Tracks-soon after that, I included at the start a “note to the reader” which said: “This review was written in mid –September, listening to the advance tape weeks before the album came out. I swear, I wrote paragraph 4, where I say

the character who speaks in these songs who is like Dylan but 'is no more like him than Hamlet is Bill Shakespeare, 'two and a half weeks before the -Newsweek-interview came out, in which Bob says, 'I'm not the songs. It's like somebody expecting Shakespeare to be Hamlet.' "

Bob Dylan Chronicles Volume One

Brilliant! I love it. I think that it is part fictional, it is after all written by a man who says that he is only Bob Dylan when he has to be. The songs and the performance of them are what this artist is about and Chronicles is important because it's author is phenomenal as the singer and songwriter. Whatever or whoever Bob Dylan is, it is he the creator of Dylan and the songs who decides! So enjoy the tale.

The Fourth annual John Green day

UK Bob Dylan Convention.

They really are something these events. The programme subtitled 're-uniting Friends' just gets it in one! This was my third John Green Day and the atmosphere was definitely one of being among friends. It is such a nice feeling to know that even though we all have our own favourite Bob Dylan albums, and that our opinions on the man himself and our reactions to his art may differ greatly, we can come together like this under the name of one so well loved by family and friends, irrespective of the fact of whether we knew John Green or not, to acknowledge that art and its creation is important and as such, as much of a sustaining factor in our existence as anything else.

Dylan with the Dead 12 July 1987.

Nothing to do with this year I know, except 2004 was the year that I finally got around to paying attention to Dylan's first stint with The Grateful Dead. A good friend gave me a DVD copy of the third show from the six in question. It was the 12th of July 1987 at East Rutherford in New Jersey in Giants Stadium. Seeing how this period is generally regarded, it seems, by all and sundry as the absolute nadir of Dylan's career, perhaps you can understand why it took me so long to get to it.

Regarding the East Rutherford performance, one reviewer was moved to report thus "Dylan's performance was lame, tired, boring and full of as much enthusiasm as a post lobotomy victim". Olof Bjorner a well respected Dylan enthusiast at his website lists the recommended number of shows from this tour as none. So sitting down to watch my bootleg DVD "Dylan Plays Dead" I was not expecting too much **in the way of a great performance!** Why even our old friend Paul Williams in his 'Mind Out Of Time' who finds Dylan's genius in regions where others fail to look, such as the soundtrack from 'Hearts Of Fire'! Despairs for the Dylan and The Dead collaboration of 1987! Bloody Nora this is gonna be a right pile I'm a thinkin'

Well you have guessed it, haven't you? That I was, to say the least, pleasantly surprised. Sure there are ragged endings, and Bob gets a little tongue twisted here and there,

especially on “John Brown”, but these minor flaws have got nothing at all to do with Dylan’s generally reported disinterest. In fact I would say that the polar opposite of that, in this case, is what constitutes some great performances! If it is indeed a fact that Dylan, as first reported by Howard Sounes, actually wanted to join The Dead, then maybe I’m not too far off in thinking that with a little more leadership in both rehearsal room and on stage, Dylan and The Dead might have achieved a level of performance at least somewhere near to those 1966 performances with The Hawks. I would go even further to say that this line up had more of a grasp of a particular sound that Dylan was looking for, a sound that he had only really achieved in the studio, and in particular on ‘Highway 61 Revisited’.

The story of course goes that Dylan looked to Jerry Garcia to help him reconnect to his own material, at a time when he felt unable to sing his old songs anymore. Judging by the evidence of the period provided in the ‘Hard to Handle’ video, which catches Dylan and Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers in concert just months prior to the Dylan & The Dead shows, I find this very hard to believe. Having said that and not wishing to contradict myself, while watching/listening to ‘Dylan Plays Dead’ I found myself constantly having to remind myself that this was filmed in 1987, it has an almost spiritual link back to the time when these songs first appeared! Four songs in particular made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. They were “Queen Jane Approximately” “Chimes Of Freedom” “It’s all over now, baby blue” and “The Wicked Messenger”.

Anyway if I be mad, just to prove that I am not totally alone, and lest we forget that Paul Williams quite likes the “Queen Jane Approximately” Eugene 19/7 performance, from the dreaded album (yes I admit it) ‘Dylan & The Dead’, and also that he finds the whole of the concert it comes from as “a real pleasure to listen to from start to finish” can I finally point to Andrew Muir of ‘Razors Edge’ fame, who even though he views the collaboration as having “unfortunate results”, found more than one performed version of “Chimes of Freedom” “sublime”.

Cambridge Bob Dylan Society 20th Anniversary. Friday, 24 Sept, 2004

After 20 years of monthly meetings, The Cambridge Bob Dylan Society and its organisers, John Nye, Chris Cooper, John Stokes and Keith Agar, decided to mark the occasion with a rather special celebration.

That is what transpired, a very very special occasion. There was a cake, complete with Bob on top of course. I along with a few of my mates got to sing a few Bob type songs, people begged us not to, but they didn’t really have the heart to stop us! **There was loads** of beer around, Oh yeah! And that reminds me of the superb performance by the absolute king of sarcastic blather Mr Keith Agar. With Bob up there on the big screen, it really could only have been improved upon if the man himself had turned up. Oh and by the way Richard, thank you for your kind comments in Freewheelin’ in response to the Dylanesque performance. Also in answer to your query. “Billy” was dedicated to John in response to his “Cowboy Angel” article. “Jokerman” was for Karen Macdonough.

The turnout, close on a hundred people?, was a lovely thank you to the perseverance of the people who make the Cambridge meetings and Freewheelin' possible.

60 Minutes.

I thought Bob was more relaxed as the interview progressed. I read as to how Dylan visibly winced when asked certain questions. I did not notice it if he did! I enjoyed the interview because the subject was Bob Dylan. I do not take much notice to what Bob says in these situations. He's a poet. Always appears to me to be floating. There does not seem to be much point in an interview with Dylan other than being able to observe him. Most people on film sets, in particular, have noted that this can be a very rewarding experience! His voice is great, so I like to hear him talk anyway.

Joni Mitchell BBC2 in concert 1970 "Joni Sings Joni"

"Some of these bootleggers, they make pretty good stuff"

I searched for years to get hold of video of this superb show. So I had to include it my top ten, because it really did help to make this year a special one. Bootleggers take a lot of stick, don't they? But in this day and age when we now have easy access to everything, it is worthwhile reflecting on this question. Where would we be if these 'illegal profiteering monsters' had not bothered risking their necks in the first place? Our Bob Dylan collections would be seriously depleted that is for sure!

Chelsea Morning
Cactus Tree
My Old Man
For Free
California
Big Yellow Tax
Both Sides Now.

Reviewing the Situation.

To conclude my list of happenings for 2004 I would just like to say that more recently I have been more than a little disillusioned with society! I had come to view it-- well to quote Bob's mate George as a very "I Me Mine" situation. However the lightening response we have seen from the British public in providing financial aid in response to the disaster of the Indian Ocean earthquake and it's terrible consequence, has restored my faith in my fellow man. Even though the disaster will be around about one month old when you read this, if you think it makes a difference, I do! And I'm sure Lucky does, Please pray for these departed souls and their grieving relatives.

Best wishes for 2005 Forecast: The year of Bob's solo acoustic tour.

I wish!

MEMORIES

(Of The Way We Were)

by Mark Carter

Well, a 2004 Top Ten shouldn't be too difficult, should it? Even for someone like me who couldn't bring himself to attend any of the shows and has, by and large, given up collecting current shows (the thought of listening to them - even for the perfunctory one play through before they get consigned to The Shelf to sit and gather dust forever more - does not excite me in the slightest. Am I saddened by this? Sort of, but I'm realistic to know that time - and shelf space - is too precious to waste on a bunch of CDs that I don't want to hear.

So, what to put in the Top Ten, then? Well, let's go for the usual; a bit of Bob and some other non-Bob items, which would, I guess, accurately reflect that (a) I'm writing this for a Bob Dylan magazine and (b) he still occupies a fair part of my life but not as much as he once did. Onwards, then.....

1) MY SECOND CHILDHOOD. Jamie has this year discovered, through the miracle of DVD, "Dr. Who", "Thunderbirds", "Captain Scarlet" (and "Stingray", not to mention "Shrek" 1 and 2 and various other treasures. This means that I get to watch them all over again and reflect that, almost 40 years later, the programmes that once delighted me as a six year-old are delighting a new generation (he's even converting his friends at school!). For Christmas, he's asked Santa to bring him a remote-controlled Dalek - guess who'll be playing with that on Christmas day!?? - and is probably looking forward to next year's revamped new series of "Dr. Who" as much as I am.

2) CHRONICLES. A wonderful surprise to someone who was either expecting "Tarantula part 2", a continuation of the sparsely punctuated "World Gone Wrong" liner notes or the ramblings of an old, tired, befuddled mind. Like 99% of the critics and the fans that I've spoken to, I have no problem at all with the fact that it jumps backwards and forwards through time and ignores (so far!) the bike crash, the divorce(s) and the Born Again period. What we do get reminds me of an old man relating his story to an

audience of adoring grandchildren, starting off on one subject before veering off onto another - maybe years or decades apart - because one memory has kick-started another one.

I found it immensely enjoyable and, if not as factually informative as most autobiographies (though who knew that he suffered a bad hand injury during late 1986/early 1987 or just how close he came to throwing in the towel later that same year?), it was informative in allowing me a little glimpse inside that amazing brain of his; to see how it works, what it thinks and feels and how it views history - its own as well as America's.

Put it beside Joan Baez's spiteful 1986 life story and see which author emerges with their dignity not only intact, but magnified a thousand times.

3) MASKED AND ANONYMOUS. I first watched it on b***leg DVD towards the end of last year, but it was lovely to be able to finally buy the official DVD, complete with extras (even if most of them featured a succession of talking heads telling us how wonderful Bob is) and a Director's Commentary that proved to be entertaining and interesting without actually reverting to "what we really meant here was....."

This is a criminally undervalued movie, both in America and Europe, where it was lazily written off as "Renaldo And Clara 2002". Thank goodness we now have the DVD to remind us that most great art - like most great artists - is ignored or ridiculed (or both) in the rush to find the latest "Pop Idol" winner.

Special mention for the soundtrack, which is one of those CDs that I never tire of listening to, and the Dylan tracks are only part of what keeps drawing me back to it.

4) EXPECTING RAIN. A wonderful website and one that has single-handedly allowed me to keep "20 Pounds" afloat. It's no lie to say that, if we hadn't finally succumbed to pressure and become part of the Computer Generation this year (God help us!), then "20 Pounds" would have folded around about February, when the last of my old contacts finally bit the dust. As I've said before, I think that "20 Pounds" (in its new incarnation, at least) and "Expecting Rain" are totally dissimilar, and can co-exist quite happily within the same collecting sphere. "20 Pounds" can't hope to be as complete and up-to-date as the website (it was once, briefly, between 1988-1990), but "Expecting Rain" misses out on the humour and personality of my column (at least, I hope it contains humour and personality!).

5) REDISCOVERING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. If the acquisition of a PC has done one thing, it's enabled me to connect with the English language in a way that I don't think I've managed for the best part of two decades. Suddenly, writing "20 Pounds" has ceased to be a chore and has become something of an enjoyable pastime - something I haven't been able to call it, in all honesty, since at least 1995 or thereabouts. The offshoot of this, as you've no doubt noticed, is that the column has tripled in length and become, hopefully, a more eloquent piece of work. It may still get voted into the "take it or leave it" section of the next "Isis" poll, but at least I can now continually tweak it and refine it every month until it says what I want to say, rather than the close approximation that the manually typewritten version always seemed to end up being. Now, at least, I finish every month thinking; "Yep; that's pretty good", rather than; "That is not really what I meant, but - oh, sod it! - I can't be arsed to retype it". However, merely writing a monthly article on the press reaction to Bob Dylan is not nearly enough to satisfy my reawakened creative urges, and, unfortunately, I can't always channel them into a "Freewheelin" piece simply because I can't always think of anything new or interesting to write about Bob (the most interesting article I wrote this year, if memory serves, was my zealous defence of Lowestoft rock deities The Darkness). So, I've finally started to get down some of the stories that I've been carrying around in my head for years and years. The first was a modest affair; a mere 19,000 words, give or take. The second, begun during August, is currently weighing in just shy of 150,000 words, and it's not finished yet. What I'll do with it when I've finished it, I don't know for sure. Presumably, I'll stick it away and move onto the next one, and return to it afresh after a few months to begin the revisions for the second draft. And then we'll see.....

6) HALLOWEEN PART 2. I finished this 110-page cartoon epic during the early summer, and it marks the end of my heavyweight cartoon projects, at least for the foreseeable future. Partly, this is because, as I've outlined above, my current enthusiasm for the written word has overshadowed my former enthusiasm for the witty cartoon, but also because I seem to be suffering from that good ol' Writer's Block. For proof, check how many 2004 issues of this magazine have not carried a single cartoon - more than during the past ten or fifteen years put together, I'll wager. It may be that all the decent ideas, scenarios and punchlines have been used (17 years of

almost non-stop cartooning is apt to exhaust whatever warehouse all my best ideas come from, however large it might be), and part of it, I guess, is that Bob Dylan, with his cracked voice now sounding older than time itself, and his current preference for appearing in advertisements next to young girls wearing nothing but their skivvies, does not so much lend himself to my lampooning as to embrace it himself. The irony, then, is this; he has now become the character I've been drawing ever since 1987. So "Halloween 2", whilst no masterpiece, allowed me to bow out with a decent sized project in which I collected up my few remaining jokes and dumped them all into that. If you've read it and not found it particularly amusing, then you'll realise just how close to the bottom of the barrel I've been scraping. If, on the other hand, you enjoyed it or, at least, found that it passed away an hour or so in reasonable comfort, then that's good, 'cos it may be the last. And yet The Sad Dylan Fans lay uneasy in their graves. Sometimes I can hear them calling to me, insisting that their time was not up, that there was still so much they wanted to do. Of course, they're dead, and, like Conan Doyle after he killed Sherlock Holmes or Terry Nation after he wiped out the Daleks at the end of their very first TV appearance, how do you bring something back when it's dead? Well, if you're Stephen King, you simply bury them in the Pet Cemetery, of course. But I don't want to do that - bury them in the Pet Cemetery, that is. And yet.....

And yet, like in that old song, some nights when the cold wind moans, in a long black veil, I stand o'er their bones.

7) "ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST" FINALLY RELEASES ON DVD. There have been many fine DVD releases this year, allowing me to continue to stock my library with all of those classic movies that have been missing from my collection for years. "Once Upon A Time in the West" -quite possibly Sergio Leone's masterpiece - sits proudly alongside his other contender for "movie masterpiece", "Once Upon A Time in America" and is a timely reminder of the grandiose panoramic scope of his vision. From the opening 25 minutes, in which nothing happens except three gunmen sit and wait for a train to arrive and water drips and flies buzz and time slowly ticks by, through to the majestic camera sweep high over the little Western town where much of the three-hour movie will be set, and on to the final Biblical shootout between a surprisingly good Charles Bronson and a chillingly evil Henry Fonda (deliberately cast against type as the movie's black-garbed psychotic killer), this is a true epic painted on a huge canvas.

As good as it is, though, it would not be so artistically successful - so complete- if it didn't have the godlike Ennio Morrocone providing a wonderfully atmospheric and moving soundtrack.

This double-DVD pack features no less than three hours of sheer movie bliss and has a host of excellent extras, to boot.

8) THE VICTORIA'S SECRET ADVERT. I eventually got this on DVD, which means I can now Fast Forward through the Dylan shots and get straight to the good bits.

Seriously, though, it was a godsend for "20 Pounds" because it encapsulated what the column should be about nowadays. I could spend a whole issue concentrating on the media response to what is, at the end of the day, a fairly modest piece of advertising (you should refer back to the old Cadbury's Flake ads if you want to see real soft porn being used to sell something). Over here, if it was mentioned at all, it was in a kind of "Oh well, that's Bob for you. Never know what he's gonna do next" way. On the other side of the pond, however, where priorities seem to have gone badly askew since 9/11 - four more years of George W. Now, that's worth getting hot under the collar over - the reaction ranged from the "Oh, my God! He's let us all down so badly! My 1960s ideals have been raped and pillaged!" to the "Who cares? It's his life and it's up to him". I found the whole thing in equal parts hilarious and scary. If Michael Moore is looking for the follow-up to "Bowling For Columbine" and "Fahrenheit 9/11", then tell him I've got just the thing.

9) PETER KAY. A comic genius, no less. This year, I purchased on DVD both series of the so-funny-it-hurts "Phoenix Nights" plus his two officially released stand-up shows, which actually get funnier every time you watch 'em, and the series that started it all "That Peter Kay Thing" (so named because he knew everyone would say; "Did you see that Peter Kay thing on telly last night?"). And now, as the year rolls to a close, we've got the "Phoenix Nights" spin-off "Max And Paddy's Road To Nowhere" on Channel 4, which is currently proving that success hasn't dulled his talents yet.

Special mention, also, for "The Office" Christmas specials, which were - and still are - an object lesson in how to finish when you're at the top, and "Boa Selecta! Volume 3", which I find (mostly) hilarious, though I'm bugged if I could tell you exactly why.

So, all in all, a good year for comedy, then, and that's without taking into

consideration series four of "Teachers" and the sometimes hidden delights of "The Smoking Room", "Little Britain" and "Nighty Night". It's proper bo, I tell thee.

10) LIVE 1964. While not as historically important as "Live 1966" or as downright "it- doesn't-get-any-better-than-this" essential (says I) as "Live 1975", this is a welcome addition to the official canon. I doubt whether it will ever demand as much listening time as its 1966 and 1975 counterparts, but I, for one, would rather have it than not have it, and, however sonically impressive the bootlegs have been, it's gotta be a notch or two up on even the best of them, right?

DOWNERS OF THE YEAR

1) THE LIVE SHOWS. I don't want to dwell on this, but, from what I've heard; they really haven't been much cop, have they? Come on, be honest now.

2) NO NEW STUDIO ALBUM. A familiar complaint, but at least it looks as though we may get the follow-up to "Love And Theft" at some point in 2005. I certainly hope so, and I hope that, in twelve month's time, I'll be sitting here compiling my Top Ten and sticking it very firmly near the top position, if not the top position. Who knows; its eventual release may revitalise the live shows in 2005, also. Let's face it; a live version of "Tweedle bum And Tweedle Dee" was very exciting in 2001, now it's just tedious.

3) DYLAN NOT WINNING THE 1960s SECTION OF CHANNEL 4's "UK ROCK 'N' ROLL HALL OF FAME". 'Nuff said. He should have been made an honorary member, anyway.

And that's it for another year. See you in the funny papers.

HOPING FOR BETTER

by Richard Lewis

This year has been quite a difficult one for me. As I mentioned in my first Freewheelin' article of 2004 my mum died in January and I've been trying to adjust to it ever since. I seem to have spent most of the year dealing with solicitors, accountants, tax officers, estate agents, insurance companies and utility providers. Still it's nearly over now so, as John always tells us, things can only get better.

It was only a little thing but one of the hardest days for me was on my birthday last month when for the first time in over 50 years there was no card from my mum.

Chronicles

An absolute joy as I said last month. I've been re-reading sections again, especially when Dylan first arrives in New York, and keep finding new descriptions of people and places to wonder at. The highlight of the year for me without any doubt.

London Eye

For Jenny's birthday this year the four of us (Me, Jenny and our two sons Martin and Peter) got together in London and took a flight on the London Eye big wheel and then a cruise on the River Thames. It was absolutely fantastic and I thoroughly recommend it to everyone. As a Londoner I thought I knew quite a bit about the Thames and its buildings but our guide on the cruise kept us entertained with loads of new facts and anecdotes. We were lucky with the weather and the view from the top of the Eye was tremendous. We could see clear up to Ally Pally.

Trowbridge

At the beginning of the Summer Holidays we went to the 31st Annual Trowbridge Village Pump Folk Festival. The weather was fine and as we were camping this was important. We met up with a couple of friends from Oxford, which made everything more enjoyable. The site was well set out and the line up of artists was great. We saw Eliza Carthy, Richard Thompson, Eddie Reader, the Albion Dance Band and Show of Hands. A magical weekend.

Reflections on a Summer Sea

The summer before last we spent a fortnight in Ireland and while there visited the area around Skibereen in the South West. One of the places we visited was Lough Ine where Jenny had spent two summers on field trips while studying at UEA in Norwich in the early 1970s. The professor of Biology at UEA, Jack Kitching, owned some land around

Lough Ine and had been taking parties of students there to do marine biological and ecological research work there since the 1930s. So it was with real pleasure that I bought for Jenny a book all about the people and the work done at Lough Ine. After Jenny read it I did too and it was absolutely delightful. It is called "*Reflections On A Summer Sea*" by Trevor Norton and is available as an Arrow paperback. In some ways it is a bit like "*Swallows and Amazons*" for grown ups.

Apart from the usual crime fiction that I am addicted to I also found time to read a parody of Peter Mayle's "*A Year in Provence*" entitled "*A Year in Muswell Hill*" by Pierre La Poste. Not as funny as the original but still an entertaining read. My boys always enjoyed the stories about Mr Majeika when they were younger so I was intrigued to see a book by their author Humphrey Carpenter as I was browsing in the bookshop under the Hockney gallery in Saltaire. It was called "*The Angry Young Men*" and subtitled "*A Literary Comedy of the 1950s*". It is a fascinating glimpse into the world of Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis, John Osborne, Colin Wilson, John Braine and many others. Just as I am writing this I did an Internet search to check on his other books only to learn that he has just died. He also wrote biographies of Tolkien, WH Auden, Benjamin Britton and Ezra Pound.

Joan Baez Live

A number of good concerts this year and one of the best was seeing Joan Baez in Sheffield at the beginning of the year. The support act, Josh Ritter, was also very good. Baez did a couple of Gillian Welch songs, a great version of Steve Earle's "*Christmas In Washington*" and a fine version of "*Dink's Song*" as well as telling a very funny joke about George Bush. I was also lucky enough to see an acoustic Fairport Convention play a marvellous concert just a mile away from my house in Saltaire at the venue where I celebrated my 50th birthday a few years ago. Other good shows were Richard Thompson in York, Kris Kristofferson in Manchester, Jackson Browne in York and Show of Hands in Leeds. There was also here in Bradford at our own Love Apple the famous Demon Barber Sessions with Emily Druce, the amazing Black Swan Rappers (a punk dance group!) and the spellbinding Martin Simpson.

The Street Was Always There

This is the title of the new album by Eric Andersen who, as I'm sure you know by now, is one of my favourite artists. It is volume 1 in the "*Great American Song Series*" and put out by Appleseed records one of my favourite companies. As well as Eric they have put out three volumes of songs by Pete Seeger and the latest Donovan. They say, "*Appleseed Recordings is dedicated to sowing the seeds of social justice through music and exploring the roots and branches of folk and world music*". Eric's records features him singing new recordings of songs by Fred Neil, David Blue, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Peter La Farge, Paul Siebel, Tim Hardin, Phil Ochs, Bob Dylan and Patrick Sky as well as two of his own compositions. It ends with Phil Ochs speaking in an excerpt from an interview from Folkways records. It is well worth a listen. Other CDs I have enjoyed this year have been the three Richard and Linda Thompson reissues, the Paul Siebel reissue on Elektra, and

the new ones by Leonard Cohen and Donovan. The latter features Donovan playing with just Danny Thompson on double bass and Jim Keltner on drums plus on some tracks the producer John Chelew on keyboards. The version of “*The Cuckoo*” with just Thompson and Keltner is simply mesmerising. Another CD I just can’t stop playing is the Warren Zevon tribute “*Enjoy Every Sandwich*” featuring not only Dylan and Springsteen but a host of other great acts including a new Zevon composition “*Studebaker*” sung by his son Jordan.

The Motorcycle Diaries

Just a couple of really good films that I’ve seen this year both of them based on true events though both seemed to stretch the truth quite a bit. “*The Motorcycle Diaries*” was about the young Che Guevara and “*Grand Theft Parsons*” was about what happened to Gram Parson’s body after his untimely death. Both were well done featuring impressive scenery

Fly Jefferson Airplane

In September 1968 I saw Jefferson Airplane give a free concert on Primrose Hill near Parliament Hill Fields in Hampstead in North London. They were supported by a young Fairport Convention who still occasionally played “*Plastic Fantastic Lover*” in their sets. I have recently bought a DVD entitled “*Fly Jefferson Airplane*” which is chock full of goodies for those of you whose memories go back that far.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

When my boys were little they loved hearing these stories and they served us well as bedtime stories for many years. The BBC did some wonderful versions, which we all watched several times. This year for a Christmas treat we took my sons plus three young cousins and three younger nephews and a niece to see the theatrical production at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. It was tremendous with a technologically amazing set and even the few songs were bearable. Also at the theatre this year we saw a wonderful stage adaptation of “*The Life of Pi*” whose tiger was easily the rival of the lion in the previous play.

Christmas

A strange, quiet but very enjoyable Christmas this year as it was just the four of us. A nice meal, a game or two and Harry Potter on the telly followed by an invigorating walk on Boxing Day.

PS Not forgetting all things Freewheelin’ including special events in Northampton (John Green Day 4) and Cambridge (20th Anniversary).

Last Thoughts on Bob Dylan

No one can protect you from it once you turn it on

by Bob FletcheR

Lord Buckley once commented, “Now I know why they call television a medium – because it’s very rarely well done”. He and Dad would have enjoyed each other’s company. By the same token, a meeting between Albert Grossman and the aforementioned curmudgeon (Dad, not Buckley) based on the fact that, according to D A Pennebaker, “Grossman refused to let Dylan go on any rinky – dink TV shows” would have been, at the very least, interesting.

As will become obvious, all is not well with the old git. The advent of seasonal excess and instant gratification has prompted Dad to make it known (in the form of an unsolicited letter) that he is displeased with the world in general, and his newly acquired television in particular (in order to operate the last one he owned Dad was required to employ a little man who peddled a steam assisted bicycle which powered a turbine). “My eyes have developed a tendency to become unfocused. I have watched Hinckley versus Brentford (very funny), Barbarians versus All Blacks (terrible), rhinos and hammerhead sharks, The Simpsons, old aeroplanes and three films. Please advise”. If you read between the lines you will note that, indirectly, I am in some way responsible. As indeed I am for failing to include at least one of his observations in my last piece. He kindly suggested a festive offering; I kindly informed him that there is enough heartache at this time of year.

However, this one (written to compliment my top ten of all things obliquely Dylan) has a certain something. Mind you, Abe Lincoln felt the same about the theatre.

“Though now legendary, Dylan’s obsession with Buff Orpingtons began quietly enough. It was, I remember, on a triste autumn afternoon that I heard the secretive closing of the scullery door followed by a puzzled cluck. Rising from the chaise longue under the stairs, I prepared to challenge the intruders. Imagine my surprise upon seeing Dylan slink into the hall bearing beneath one arm a domestic fowl and beneath the other a sack of corn! I coughed in a marked manner. He refused to meet my gaze. I sighed before resuming my musing. Over the days that followed I became resigned to the sight of him darting in frantic pursuit of the unfortunate bird. I noticed that, whereas his cries were at first both importunate and affectionate, they grew gradually into imprecation, now bitter command. Distressed, I composed an adjuration; it was never delivered for – and it is with sorrow that I now relate it – I suddenly, on, as I recollect, a Tuesday morning came upon Dylan kneeling before a coop wielding a machete and screaming Lay, lady, lay!”

It's okay to come out from behind the sofa now.....

According to Paul Williams, “had ‘A Hard Rain’s A Gonna Fall’ been published as a poem and never sung, it would have attracted little attention”. Dylan maintained that “every line in it is actually the start of a whole song”. Therefore, according to the published lyrics, there are 57 songs contained within (if you include the refrain). Researching the ones that actually exist as complete songs ought, I think you will agree, to make a fascinating article, containing as it would, a list of sorts. Thankfully, John Stokes, whilst undoubtedly one to embrace Romanticism, is also a calming influence. He offered the following advice:

You only got ten...

Which is probably just as well. Dylan has been a part of me for a significant number of years, making the task of compiling any sort of list an onerous one (equally as onerous is my decision to include subjects which bear little or no relation to Dylan). Therefore, with the realisation that each of the following could lead to a separate article I offer, in no particular order of merit, the following:

The TV and Film Appearances of Bob Dylan

Or more precisely, the lack of them. During the 1970s, the promise of live football, albeit televised, was all it took to keep me satisfied. Saturdays were spent at my grandparents, both of whom believed their lives were about to change courtesy of Littlewoods. At 4.40, coupons were checked and at 4.50, with an air of inevitability, life returned to normal and we were required to eat something vaguely resembling dinner (years later I presented Gran with a cauliflower and asked if she would boil it to within an inch of its life, mash it using lard, and serve it with hot dripping. “Of course” she replied. “I thought so” I responded). Cup Final day was different. The logic applied to identifying eight score draws had no place. Hope was all and everything. Tony Hill (‘If the Kids are United’ – a memoir of a Manchester United fan growing up in East Midlands pit village) speaks for many as he recalls, “settling into an armchair in our front room to watch BBC TV’s coverage of the game. We had watched the previous year’s Cup Final on ITV, but United lost, so ITV was bad luck now. Dad and our pet dog Jackie sat on the settee. I’d sat there a year ago, but United lost, so sitting on the settee watching United was added to my bad luck list”. Prior to 1976 things were grim (as was the final that year). Despite Hill’s assertion that the FA Cup is “the oldest, greatest, most magical football competition in the universe”, the reality was somewhat humbling. Manchester United had last appeared at Wembley the year before I was born (discounting, of course, the European Cup Final). I wouldn’t experience unconfined joy until 1977 when a combination of Macari and

Greenhoff managed to bamboozle Ray Clemence. I had to make do with championing the underdog. As with many peculiarly English eccentricities, it didn't always work. But when it did, it was worth the investment. For every Fulham (gallant losers against West Ham) or Newcastle (humiliated by Liverpool), there was a Sunderland.

Things have changed. Now it is possible to watch football on a daily basis and, in truth, it has lost much of the allure. I no longer watch the build up to the Cup Final and struggle to actually watch the entire match. Technology has undoubtedly played a major role and will do so with Dylan (visit most of the websites and you will find a link to the '60 Minutes' interview, likewise the recent radio show which, ominously, is brought to you by the good people at BobDylan.com). It wasn't always so. A vast majority of Dylan's early television performances were arranged in collaboration with Albert Grossman (hence the reference at the beginning of the article). Most proved to be advantageous, even allowing for over zealous producers and set designers. Unfortunately some were erased (performances rather than set designers) by television companies keen to reuse tape (the BBC appear to have particularly foolhardy). Overexposure is something that cannot be levelled at Dylan and his management. To this day (with the exception of interviews given to publicise a product) Dylan chooses wisely, based, I would imagine, on the principle that less is more. Recent compilations of television performances focus on award ceremonies, guest appearances, and the occasional musical interlude on high profile chat shows (the latter, admittedly, took place mainly during the 1980s). Whilst the means to disseminate information (DVD, VHS, CD, VCD) continue to evolve, the mystique surrounding Dylan remains. Well, at least with me it does...

Country Music

To paraphrase Stephen Walsh, I realise that "the wailing note of pain and heartache" has always been visible; I've just lacked the ability to see. Until now that is. Now I understand that the music, and by association the singers, can invoke twisted bitterness, vulnerability, reconciliation, savagery, deceitfulness, and honesty. Dylan was performing Country tunes long before 'Nashville Skyline' (but just in case we needed reminding of his affinity he included 'Nashville Skyline Rag', a song structure as old as history itself). His thoughts are also well documented: "Traditional music is too unreal to die....it doesn't need to be protected....nobody's going to hurt it". Should further evidence of Dylan's fidelity be needed I would point to Brian Hinton's summation of the 'Basement Tapes'. The author argues that it is possible to find contained within "Flatt and Scruggs, Hank Williams, Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins, Roscoe Holcomb, Ian and Sylvia, The Skillet Lickers, Hank Snow, and The Carter Family". Listen, if you can, to all or any and then *really* listen to 'Self Portrait'. It will all suddenly make sense

Country music's earliest roots are to be found in the ballads of the Appalachian Mountains (according to CP Lee, the "narrative style dealing with mythological concepts

of good and evil, damnation and redemption, treachery and friendship were already well known to Dylan”). The very term ‘country music’ encompasses at least 80 years of popular music and thousands of musicians. The songs themselves are firmly rooted in the Calvinist tradition and often reflect sexual repression (which, in all seriousness, is reflected in the vocal style) combined with a sense of stark realism. However, as Tad Richards notes, “contrary to the popular stereotype, country music has not always been associated with political conservatism. One of the Opry’s first stars, Uncle Dave Macon, was a fiery radical leftist”. Whilst rampant commercialism became a bedfellow many years ago, country music manages to re-invent, and indeed reinvigorate, itself with each passing generation (I offer as evidence Gillian Welch, The Handsome Family, Willard Grant Conspiracy, and Damien Jurado). As Richards observes “the music has as many faces as American society itself”. Intriguingly, someone once suggested that Dylan has so many faces he’s round. He is also no stranger to Nashville. Which, fortuitously, brings me to:

Blonde On Blonde

I have nothing further to add Your Honour...

Borrowing a Tune

If you take the time to compare Irving and Webster’s ‘I’ll Twine mid the Ringlets’ (written in 1860) with The Carter Family’s ‘Wildwood Flower’ (recorded sixty-seven years later) you will notice more than a passing similarity. As Colin Escott notes “For many years, it was thought that the Carter Family’s music was Anglo-Celtic ballads preserved in the isolation of Appalachia, but it was much more. It was Victorian parlour music, gospel songs, blues, topical ballads, and vaudeville numbers. Their theme song, ‘Keep on the Sunny Side’ was a gospel song from 1899; ‘Wabash Cannonball’ was a pop tune published in 1905; ‘Worried Man Blues’ was a prison song probably acquired from an itinerant blues singer; ‘Black Jack David’ was an English ballad dating back centuries; and ‘Will the Circle be Unbroken’ was a gospel song published around 1907” (of further interest is the fact that three artists had recorded the song before The Carter Family). Escott adds that “The Carter Family made all this music one, and made it all their own. More questionably, they copyrighted it as their own”.

In some ways Chronicles contains more revelations than surprises. We already know that the young Dylan was more than happy to discuss his musical influences when the mood took him. During a WBAI – FM radio broadcast (Broadside, May 1962) he credits others as direct sources. When discussing, in particular, ‘The Ballad Of Donald White’ (the melody of which, as if to prove that Dylan didn’t just borrow from other songwriters for

single performances, later became I Pity the Poor Immigrant) Dylan states that “I took this from Bonnie Dobson’s tune, ‘Peter Emberly’, I think the name of it is”. ‘Peter Emberly’ appears as Number 27 in the late Edith Fowke’s ‘Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs’ and concerns, in the words of Fowke, “the tale of the young man from Prince Edward Island who was fatally injured when a log rolled on him”. Oral tradition has it that Emberly was taken to his employers home by, amongst others, John Calhoun who later described the fate of Emberly in written verse. The words were then set to music by Abraham Munn using an old Irish tune that had served for many songs both in Ireland and North America.

Dylan is on record as saying “I’d seen Donald White’s name in a Seattle paper in about 1959. It said he was a killer. The next time I saw him was on a television set”. Manfred Helfert suggests that “the television show which inspired Dylan to write ‘The Ballad of Donald White’ (rather than his somewhat doubtful claim of having read about him as early as 1959) is identified in Scaduto’s biography” (February 12th 1962 according to Sue Zuckerman). As noted earlier, ‘Chronicles’ reveals many hitherto unknown aspects of Dylan, however we also get the more familiar version (‘smoke and mirrors’ is the phrase used by several reviewers). Hence the lack of surprises. Whilst the sheer enormity of Dylan’s published output prevents the listener from unearthing every single borrowed melody and reworked line or lyric, some of which have yet to be acknowledged by Dylan himself, it is good to hear the obvious ones. So with the requisite amount of humble pie, as fresh as the day it was baked, I offer congratulations to Uncut magazine for the CDs that accompanied the most recent editions (in truth, the Isis/Chrome Dreams compilation is much nearer to being the finished article and I suspect I am not alone in already having a copy of, amongst many other overlooked blueprints, ‘1913 Massacre’ from Carnegie Chapter Hall, 1961, but to castigate would seem churlish).

The Continuing Saga of Lessons in Lola

It’s eight thirty five at night and, as I write, Lola is falling asleep on the sofa. Postman Pat has replaced Noddy (“He’s annoying me Daddy”), proved a more popular option than Masked and Anonymous (“That’s not a very good idea Daddy, I don’t like Bob Dylan”), and brought tranquillity to bear. A viral infection has meant that, for the last two days, Lola has alternated between extreme lethargy and hyper mania. Despite her illness she has remained a source of wonderment, unlike Postman Pat. I struggle to remember my ‘pre-fatherhood’ years with anything remotely approaching clarity. The arrival of Lola changed me almost beyond recognition and, as a result, previous events ceased to matter. My thoughts and feelings are, of course, subjective. However, such self-awareness fails to diminish the sense of unconditional love that accompanies every moment I spend with my daughter. Even at nine thirty five when the little bugger still hasn’t gone to bed (“I’m a bit nervous about sleeping on my own and my bedroom is messy and stressy”). According to Freud, Lola’s personality is currently controlled by the id. Therefore she demands instant gratification (at this point Sigmund would be a welcome dinner guest as I’m open to suggestions regarding the future). Prior to the id arriving, Lola’s very existence was measured only by bowel movements, lots of them. Sigmund would no

doubt explain this as the development of the ego. He would then take the time to discuss the superego, at which juncture Lola would ask, “When is he going home?” Next in line is the bit about Oedipus and Electra. Finally, according to Freud, Lola will covet my ox. In the meantime she will continue to address me as “silly billy”, instruct me to “shut up Dad”, and generally run circles around me. But, in truth, I wouldn’t change a thing. Despite the fact that I’m wrapped around her little finger and notwithstanding the reality that she plays me, with experience beyond her three years, so effortlessly against Diane, I have nothing but admiration for her free spirit.

Marlon Brando

As a young actor he was everything I wanted to be. Perversely, the tutor responsible for the following school report “Fletcher continues to set himself low standards and fails miserably when attempting to achieve them” got it right. I no longer work as an actor.

The Basement Tapes

The fact that Dylan, and various members of The Band, chose to live in Woodstock at the same time was no ‘act of god’ (then again, depending on which side of the great divide you live, it may well be viewed as such). Available evidence would seem to suggest that the recording sessions were no accident. Dylan knew precisely where it was he wanted to be and how he intended to get there. The exact same ethos runs through the performance at the Woody Guthrie Memorial Show, and the three songs (‘I Ain’t Got No Home’ ‘Dear Mrs. Roosevelt’ and ‘Grand Coulee Dam’), could easily have been recorded during the Big Pink sessions. Beginning in May of 1967, Dylan was, in the words of Richard Williams, “turning what had once been a gallery of nightmarish grotesques into the characters from a neighbourhood bar, only slightly distorted”. With the subsequent releases of ‘John Wesley Harding’ and ‘Music from Big Pink’, Dylan and The Band were, as Williams notes, “very publicly opting for low volume, no distortion, an interest in the natural sounds of the instruments, a respect for history, and a fondness for verbal formulations borrowed from the seventeenth – century King James Bible”. The Basement Tapes weren’t entirely spontaneous: some of the songs must have already been written and therefore rehearsed by Dylan alone or, most likely, in the company of another. Clinton Heylin proffers the following: “Spring 1967. Al Aronowitz, an old friend of Dylan’s, visits him in Woodstock and witnesses him working on some songs with Robbie Robertson. Aronowitz writes ‘Dylan is writing ten new songs, rehearsing them in his living room’. May to June: Dylan begins daily sessions....easing himself back into music making again”. We already know that Grossman offered acetates of the sessions to other bands, therefore there must have been a purpose, however vague, to the sessions beyond having fun. Certainly, as Andy Gill notes, some of the songs “turned out to be works of considerable sophistication...(and)...crystallised the musicians’ sense of estrangement from the hippy movement’s anti-family platform”.

Marriage, a teenage daughter, and a son who speaks a language I don't recognise

Bob Dylan is father to a number of children and husband to at least two wives. I, a trifle more conservatively, content myself with Diane, Rosie, Francis, and Lola. Regarding marriage, Ruth Rudner (whose mother “buried three husbands and two of them were just napping”) stated, “I love being married. It’s so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life”. At best, I imagine myself to be living the life of the character featured in the final verse of ‘Sign on the Window’ (without, for obvious reasons, the cabin in Utah or, because I don’t enjoy fishing, the rainbow trout). However, self-indulgent fantasy is limited due to the reality that is Rosie (my only consolation is the hope that, one day, she will accept responsibility for her behaviour. Failing that, I intend, in my dotage, to visit her with unnerving regularity and eat her out of house and home. I also propose to invite several friends, insist on sleepovers, and run up huge telephone bills). This will be a little more difficult with Francis as he is likely to be living in his bedroom aged 32 (there are times when I forget what he looks like). Conversations, at times a strange concept as they involve communication, are usually short and sweet. More often than not they include complicated hand gestures and several variations of the term motherfucker. As P J O’Rourke helpfully observes, “Humans are the only animals that have children on purpose with the exception of guppies, who like to eat theirs”.

The festive holiday period has been a difficult time for Diane. A visit to relatives in Cumbria had to be postponed due to Lola’s illness (this removed a little of the emotional pain but the reality may well have been that the delay only served to increase Diane’s anxiety). Recently, I have felt a heightened sense of alienation and Diane has, at times, appeared a stranger. Memories of happier times have been difficult to cherish and, to borrow from Stephen Walsh, “ in these times of desolation they seem far away as you lurch between one idea and another of what you are, one uncertainty to another about what you should do to work out a way of making things worthwhile”. Audrey’s death cast an extremely dark shadow. As a result, Diane has spent time reflecting upon the fragility of life. Prior to the visit we had not found the time to talk. Foolishly, I concentrated on my own feelings, which, as the days passed, approached mild paranoia. It was, as is usually the case, a chance remark that allowed the arrow of truth to pass through the narrow gate. In another life, Diane lived in both Ghana and France, travelling extensively. In some ways, her heart remains and she wishes to return in order to reclaim all that she left behind (in the words of Johnny Cash who, needless to say, is somewhere in my top ten, in spirit if not body, “every so often everybody’s baby gets the urge to roam, everybody’s baby but mine is coming home”). I now know that I will not be able to give Diane everything she wants; she cannot be Angelina. But, with or without God’s truth, I will try my best to love her. And, in time, Diane will make peace with her memories and, as Jim Dodge suggests, “with the sweet weariness of constant marvel” our

days together will be spent watching the sunset. Because as Johnny Seven Moons once observed, “I’ve seen 30,000 sunsets, and no two have ever been the same. What more can we possibly want?”

Writing for Freewheelin

My thoughts have to have somewhere they can call home. Besides, where else would I be able to discuss the merits, or otherwise, of ‘Drop Kick Me Jesus, Through The Goalposts Of Life’ and ‘I’m Gonna Hire a Wino to Decorate Our Home’?

Dylanic Bulimia

“Once upon a time there was a writer who woke every morning and asked his magic mirror a question. ‘Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the biggest Dylan fan of them all?’ And each morning the mirror replied, ‘For what it’s worth, dork, you are’...” As much as I would like to take credit for both the title and the quip, neither is of my own making. The title is actually taken from a letter to The Telegraph (the magazine overseen by, as Andrew Collins succinctly puts it, “Bob’s earthly representative” not the broadsheet of Middle England). The witticism belongs to Richard Abowitz.

Back in the day, Dylanology was confined to a few choice individuals. As Dave Henderson points out, “It’s beyond model aircraft building, it covers all media and, when housed in a suitable fashion it has a collectors’ tag... People smitten by Bob in the ‘60s still walk this earth quoting from his lyrics and naming their shops after him”. A combination of primitive technology and underwhelming interest meant that, mercifully, distribution was limited to those who, on a need to know basis, needed to know. Henderson suggests that “the church of Dylanology is based two blocks away from Desolation Row”. Should the existence of serendipity be in any doubt, irrefutable evidence is unwittingly provided by John Roberts and AJ Weberman who attempted deconstruction of ‘Desolation Row’ with the express purpose of proving that Dylan enjoys stardom. The following is an extract:

“Yes, I received your letter yesterday”

Dylan confirms the arrival of their fan mail

“About the time the doorknob broke”

And puts down its trivial content

“When you asked me how I was doing, was that some kind of joke?”

If his fans had been digging his pessimistic lyrics they wouldn't have to ask if he was
happy

“All these people that you mention, yes I know them, they're quite lame”

He goes on to explain that he sees the inhabitants of Desolation Row as greedy, revolting
squares....

“I had to rearrange their faces, and give them all another name”

And because of this he had to represent them all symbolically in his poetry

**“Right now, I can't read so good, don't send me no more letters no, not unless you
mail them from Desolation Row”**

Dylan ends by telling his fans that they ought to cool the letters until they see America
the way he sees it

Most distressingly, it appears that Mr Weberman intends to return via the Internet. He will be in good company. A search provides me with 1,050 sites relating to 'Dylanology'. It is worth remembering that out there in space, no one can hear you scream.

Freewheelin has sometimes sailed perilously close to the wind (numbers 227 “Once again connotations of the reliability of binary qualities in heterosexuality are concocted in relation to absurdist notions within the oppositions of night and day” and 231 “In the song the concept of feminist passivity and masculine violence is thus linked with the worship of a ‘pagan’ goddess, arguably opposing what could be seen as a retreat into a Christian ideology”). Other magazines have reproduced dissertations (‘Conclusions On The Wall’ reprinted in Dignity 16, “Ballad Of A Thin Man is not the only song that could be interpreted as having a homosexual undercurrent. One only has to look at the amount of his songs that mention the word ‘Queens’....”). Understanding the lengths people go to in order to illustrate an awareness of Dylan's ‘meaning’ takes a leap of faith and, in truth, it has taken me a while to appreciate that each of the above has its place (Dylan related magazines, since you ask). My own use of outrageous conjecture, albeit restrained, has eased the journey. However, even my libertarian sentiments are unable to accommodate Sean Casteel. It was my original intention to reproduce his article in its entirety but having lost the will to live halfway through reading it I will, as a parting gift of goodwill and peace, present you with edited lowlights. As I suggested in a previous article, everything is open to interpretation. It is, therefore, with magnificent irony, that I subject Casteel's piece to the same level of scrutiny. Editorial remarks will appear in brackets.

“There have been innumerable attempts in the past to see past the artistic guise of Bob Dylan, I am here to suggest an explanation that has, to my knowledge, never been previously offered – UFO contact. I base this on a fairly rigorous study of UFO interaction with humans and a listeners fascination with Bob Dylan that I began as a 12 – year – old in 1970.” (Experience has taught me that most 12 year olds spend endless hours confined to their bedrooms, studying anything that might alienate their parents. Either that or wanking). “When I first heard the song ‘1,000 Men’ (it is, in fact, 10,000) from the ‘Under The Red Sky’ album, I was struck by the appropriateness of the line ‘1,000 women (he’s at it again) in my room, Spilling my buttermilk, Sweeping it up with a broom’. Using ‘Buttermilk’ as a euphemism, Dylan gives us a straightforward account of a sperm sample being taken” (What did I tell you). Towards the end of the article Casteel, who by now, I assume, resembles a near blind Werewolf, informs us that ‘Sad Eyed lady Of The Lowlands’ was written subconsciously, under the direction of aliens, and was “a neat little summary” of the Roswell Incident.

No doubt Dylan will make reference to it in Volume Two.....

Right, I’m off to play my Dobro.

Go in Peace



Hipsters, Flipsters And Finger Poppin' Daddies!

by C.P. Lee

TEN – *Kill Bill 1&2* (Film)

Quentin Tarantino is the Pope of Post-Modernism and in this double billed, blood drenched, kung fu fest he loots the cultural supermarket with gay abandon. The resultant flick is an homage to Japanese TV, Hong Kong martial arts movies, Kwai Chang Caine, French nouvelle vague and Spaghetti Westerns, via late sixties LA Pop Art, plus a soundtrack of thundering riffs, rips, samples and ballads featuring artists such as *Chingon*, film director Robert Rodriguez's Mexicali street band, and the 5 6 7 8's, Japanese housewife Psychobilly Power trio.

In Po-Mo terms it's the perfect *pastiche*, that is to say, the perfect blend of styles and influences. In strict Po-Mo terms it's the perfect *simulacrum* – a copy without an original. Whether Tarantino is conscious of this when he works who can say – He isn't afraid to acknowledge the films he steals from even down to the framing of particular shots. His insistence in paying homage to the world of cinema also extends to the casting of his movies. Pairing up Uma Thurman with David Carradine works a treat. Carradine's languid BoHo snuffmeister Bill reprises his Shao Lin half breed 1970s TV persona and lopes his way through a deadly love affair with Tarantino's current muse, Uma Thurman.

NINE – *popbitch.com* (Internet Site)

Gossip, rumour, innuendo, filth, jokes old and new, tips for other sites to visit (usually of a disgusting nature), Popbitch is 21st Century phenomenon. Regularly used by gossip columnists throughout the media for source material – read it on popbitch first! There even used to be a subscriber who regularly sent in pop gossip under the name 'Bob Dylan's Moustache'!

EIGHT – *The Streets – A Grand Don't Come For Free* (CD)

This solo project by The Streets (a young guy called Mike Skinner) has led to him being given the nickname 'the Shakespeare of Chav'. and it truly is a remarkable effort. A lucid, logical, evocation of urban working class youth. It has given me repeated pleasure every time I've played the cd – epic in its scope this can only be described as a concept album, detailing the minutiae of returning a dvd to Blockbuster, losing a thousand quid down the back of a tv, finding a cashcard won't work, winning and losing the love of your life. The big hit taken from the album is 'Dry Your Eyes Mate' – if you know it you'll love it.

SEVEN – *Smile - Brian Wilson, Liverpool Empire* (Concert)

Grown men wept, me included. And I distinctly remember the earth moving. This is one of the best gigs I have ever been to in my life, certainly worth the 35 year wait. Wilson

appeared on stage to be a fragile figure who suddenly became the leader of the band again – he conducted his backing group with energy and enthusiasm. I lost count of the encores.

SIX – The Complete Earl Scruggs Story (DVD)

Sent to me by Tricia Jungwirth, this disc is my favourite music dvd – possibly of all time, certainly of the moment. Ninety minutes of the man who revolutionised bluegrass banjo picking in the company of Dylan, Doc Watson, The Byrds with Roger McGwinn (sic from the cover!), Joan Baez, Bill Monroe, the list goes on ... Fantastic playing makes this 19th documentary a treasure and worth it alone for the look on Dylan's face when Earl and his sons are jamming with him on Nashville Skyline rag.

FIVE – Escaping The Delta – Elijah Wald (Book)

I've already mentioned in Freewheelin' what an invaluable contribution I feel this book has made to the study of music. No need to go through it all again then!

FOUR – John Green Memorial Event

Our Third John Green Day and another unmissable chance to be with fellow aficionados and true friends. From any perspective, the JGD fan can expect a smooth operation, packed with events, personalities and fervour – and once again all this was part and parcel of the event. Fewer stalls this year, but I still managed to spend a small fortune. You know you're a real Dylan fan when you buy a bootleg cd that you've already got but the listing/title are in a different order. Here's looking to the next one!

THREE – Arthur Goulding (Person ... and 2005 book project)



Scene from Somewhere in England
Mancunian Films Company, 1940

L:R – Arthur/Ted/Ron Goulding (The
Wilton Bros) and Frank Randle

Over the course of 2004 I became deeply involved in researching the Mancunian Film Company, a film studio that used to produce feature-length comedies in Manchester. It

brought to the world George Formby, Norman Evans, Frank Randle and others. Through the grandson of the studios' founder, one Mike Blakeley, I have gained access to most of the films and a list of sadly diminishing living artistes and technicians who worked at the Company. Arthur Goulding should be a national treasure – aged 85, he's the last surviving member of the Wilton Bros, a novelty musical trio trained from infancy by their mother Madame Wilton (always 'Madame' Wilton) to tread the boards. In 1939 the Wiltons joined Randle's Scandals Revue and performed with him in Blackpool and around the country for the next four years – they also appeared in three films with him. It was a pleasure to be not only in Arthur Goulding's house but in his world, surrounded by his paintings, listening to his music and gaining access to all his memorabilia.



TWO – Early Doors (DVD)

In a way a logical follow-up to Three (above) it's Northern comedy only now. Rather than a Peter Kay driven sitcom, this is an ensemble almost rep-company production. Every one of the characters has developed over the two series that this has been on BBC and I find I actually want to know more about them. Not gag led, this comedy is brilliant observation of human life and its foibles all from the inside of a backstreet Manchester pub.

ONE – Chronicles (Book)

People I know who are less avid fans than your Freewheeler have been phoning me up with their observations, questions and points about Chronicles. I've been surprised they've bought it and delighted by their reaction to Dylan's entry into autobiography. Personally it takes me historically, geographically and musically all over the place – Dylan's writing style is so good when applied to fiction (or biography in this case?) – he's blown us away with his songs and now with this. Fantastic.



TOP
TEN
TIME

by **Chris Cooper**

Hi

Another year flies by. Pretty strange one for me but we won't go there this time.

It would be nice to keep this to an all-Dylan Top Ten this year if I can. After all this is a Dylan mag last time I checked. Yeah I know, I'm as, if not more guilty of straying from the fold than most. But this year looks good

The Book

"Chronicles" what else? Honestly if this isn't your number one than have to question what you are doing here. This is amazing stuff. We knew Bob could write, but was he a author? Could he keep the public interested? Well now we know he can, better than that even, he's got a best seller on his hands. His memories are freakily detailed, maybe too much so. But his insights into his reasons for doing what he does are far more revealing than certainly I hoped for. I'm not a fast reader, but I've done this one twice already an that makes it not just in the top ten, TOP of the top ten.

The TV Interview

In December Dylan appeared on "Sixty Minutes" depends what you read as to whether you think this is good or not. If you only read my transcript (FW 231) then you must get to see it too. Because his body language easily says as much as he speaks. An anyway the old bugger still holds you fascinated at the screen. Only real criticism must be that they did 90 mins of film but only screen about 15..

The Tour

I feel this is a hard choice. To be honest Bob was not in good form for most of the shows. That's not to say I don't enjoy the going, meeting old mates etc etc. Of course Barrowlands was extra-ordinary. But I suspect this will be the last time I do every show. (well at least for this year)

The Album (Bootleg Series Vol 6)

This is an easy thing to forget. The famous Halloween '64 Concert. We've all had it a a bootleg for so long. But the packaging is first class and the sound pristine. And if I had to chose one early how to play well it would probably be this one. It's always seemed to me that if he enjoys it so do I. and he clealy enjoyed himself here.

The DVD (Masked & Anonymous)

Not only did we ge a cracking book. We got an equally cracking film. Cheating a bit but this was officially released on DVD this year. Little aside, you may not be aware but the UK and US versions have different extra footage !

The Convention (Ours)

John Green Day. Hope you were there. Not sure if they get easier, or we just get toughened, but they are still a blast to do. (Well when we sit in the bar afterwards it feels good to me) It's a great meeting place. We really should incorporate a FW get together there somehow also.

The Cambridge Anniversary

A special one this 20 years !! I cannot believe it. We went out on a limb a bit for this. But the turnout was amazing. I cannot believe so many people showed. An Dylanesque were the best I had seen them. Well done chaps. Especially, Keith, & the two Johns.

The Second Book (Lyrics)

Now this is also compulsory I guess, though I struggled a little with including it as most of course was in the last version. But, if you believe (as I do) that

Bob has written the best songs ever then you just have to have a copy right?
(Please tell Dizzy that's so.)

The Third Book (Mind Out Of Time)

Earlier I said 'm not a fast reader, then include 3 books in my top ten! I have al three of Paul's books but this one really stands out as it covers a period that is not often written about, the Nineties. An I really enjoy the way he writes. Yes I know it's a bit trainspotterish. Well so am I !

An One Meander

Nine out of Ten isn't bad is it? Well?? One non Bob thing has crept in I fear. My love for jazz got a huge boost this year. I went to the London Jazz Festival to see Ravi Coltrane, son of John Coltrane. He isn't his dad, no one could be, but he is very good. And to my surprise accessible. I got to not only meet him afterwards but we had a short chat and after he signed a cd, he shook my hand. (told you I was a trainspotter) It's the nearest I will ever get to the single biggest influence on my listening habits other than Bob. An that's gotta figure here.

I also considered the release of the original Star Trek series on DVD (yeah I bought am all) And stumbling across all 60 issues of that landmark sci-fi mag "Metal Men" (what? I hear you saying!)

Hope your year was better

Till Next Time

2004 Top Ten

by Paula Radice



1. Hibbing

Being in Hibbing in August, and seeing first-hand all the things I'd read so much about: Dylan's boyhood home, Hibbing High School, the cafes the teenaged Robert Zimmerman had hung out in after school, the mine where the town's money came from, the ghost town of North Hibbing, the fabulous open spaces, lakes and deep forests of Northern Minnesota - all magical, but matched by the fantastically warm welcome we received from everyone we met, from Linda and Bob Hocking at Jimmy's to Leroy Hoikkala and B. J. Rolfzen (Dylan's High School English teacher) and his lovely wife Leona. A very, very special few days last Summer, and it's been great to find that Hibbing people have wanted to stay in touch since, and have even put me in touch with other friends. Can't wait to go back.

2. Chronicles

A complete joy, mesmerising to read and jaw-droppingly beautiful. The revelations were all between the lines and not in them - that Dylan has a hugely more efficient memory than we have ever given him credit for, and a grasp of the rhythms of prose writing that comes up even to his own high standards of verse writing. I still don't feel competent to comment on it further than that. I think we all need to give it at least twelve months, and twenty readings, before we dare to come to any more concrete judgements on it.

3. Soul Music, Radio 4 (and the World Service)

Just another media appearance for C.P. (who's always brilliant) but a first for me, and a real hoot. I actually woke up in the middle of the night a few weeks back, hearing myself speaking: it was a minute or two before I realised that no, I wasn't going completely mad, I had fallen asleep with the radio on, and the Soul Music interview was on the World Service, complete with my one and only interesting Dylan-related anecdote. An entertaining spin-off from it has been being contacted by Greil Marcus, whose book about Like a Rolling Stone is due out later this year, and being able to put him on to reading Freewheelm'-on-Line.

4. The 60 Minutes Interview

Easy to spot here the effect on Dylan of the positive critical reviews for Chronicles. Although it might not seem so to a non-Dylan-fan, Dylan is to our experienced eyes both more relaxed and more sure of his own responses than he has seemed before, and even -

shock, horror -willing to speak about his childhood and family with a degree of openness. He comes across as wise and calm, looking both forward and back in a collected, articulate, honest way. And that gorgeous speaking voice...(and the leather trousers....) oh, boy.

5. Joint 5th. The Cambridge Group's Anniversary Bash and John Green Day

Real highlights of the year, as I've said elsewhere. Great company and conversation, great music, great laughs from Keith - and cake as well at Cambridge! My only hope is that more books turn up for sale at Northampton this year. Returning home with a suitcase full of DVDs just isn't the same as taking home a nice haul of books... Any one got any rare ones they're wanting rid of? Any Croatian Chronicles or Tibetan Tarantulas?

7. Hitting the Big Four-Oh

Had a lot of fun on my birthday in May this year, with all my colleagues at school making sure that the occasion was marked in style. I can't say that numerical age has ever meant much to me, so I'm not going to grieve for any lost youth (I'm happier now than I've ever been, so what would be the point?) but it did add a poignancy to the Summer adventures in Minnesota. Carpe Diem is my motto now - I'm going to make sure I get to do all the things, and see all the places, I want to (finances somewhat permitting, of course).

8. House and Cats

Since I moved to my present house (my first owned one), five and a half years ago, there have been so many projects to see through - walls knocked down, new kitchen and bathroom, carpets, painting, garden, etc. etc. etc. This year, with the purchase of one last piece of carpet and some new sofas, the work was completed! (The bookcase problem, I have concluded will never be solved: there will never be enough shelves for my books, even if I covered every wall). I love my little house, and coming home to Silvio and Minnie every evening is great; they are endlessly entertaining.

9. Revival of Career Aspirations

After several years of happily coasting along at school, the chance to be Acting Deputy Head has given my ambitions a bit of a kick up the backside and, since I've enjoyed the extra responsibilities, who knows - perhaps 2005 will bring some new challenges and job opportunities?

In Search of the Missing Number 10...

Didn't get to see Bob in concert this year at all - a very strange feeling. My New Year's Resolution is to make a greater effort this year, and remember not to take shows for granted.

Wishing all Freewheelers, and all Freeheelin's readers, everything you desire for yourselves in 2005, and the chances to grab every opportunity for happiness that comes your way!

THE MISSIONARY TIMES

by J.R.Stokes

2004

(The Final Countdown)

Not a brilliant year by a long chalk on the home front. Hospitals are not my favourite places and we certainly saw enough of those this year to (hopefully) keep us going for many moons to come. I do not however intend to dwell on the matter of physical deterioration, which is inevitably happening to me as I type this and to you as you read this, but I'd rather take my cue from The Pythons with their philosophy of always looking on the bright side of life. Te dum, te dum, te dum, te dum. Before Marilyn's first spell of hospitalization, we had a fantastic holiday in Italy and this is where I start my top ten, which comes in no particular order of preference or occurrence.

1. 'Visions of J' in Numana.

Summer fun, something's begun but oh! oh! those summer vines! Set in an ideal location in the rolling countryside about a mile from the sea, the vineyard that produces the Montepulciano 'Visions of J' and the Merlot 'Planet Waves': the latter having Dylan's signature on the label. On the day we visited we had wall to wall sunshine and a nice chat with Antonio, an ardent Dylan fan and now in partnership with Mr. D. What a wonderful day that was, something that was made even more special when I found a bottle of 'Planet Waves' under the tree at Christmas. With many thanks to my daughter Jess and Antonio himself for bringing the vines back home.

2. Burying the Hatchet with Michael Gray

Being an A grade Cancerian, when The Mighty Michael had a real go at me in his Song & Dance Man 3 I scurried into my shell with his book and found no favour with most of it. I always thought that as he had got it so disastrously wrong with me he had probably done the same with others. Then, in September I heard someone tap, tapping on my shell with an olive branch. It was Mr. Gray himself:

'Dear John

I write to ask if you and I might bury the hatchet, after all these years? I should welcome it, if you're willing. If it would help, I'm happy to admit that it was probably my fault in the first place.

*All best~
Michael'*

Following a subsequent exchange of emails, in which I informed Michael that it wasn't 'probably' but almost certainly his fault in the first place, we rode off into the sunset like The Lone Ranger and Tonto. It was a very generous gesture from Michael – it just goes to show that you can't judge a book by its author. And talking of books:

3. Chronicles Volume 1

Oh what a delight. It is rich beyond our wildest dreams. There have been so many good reviews about this book but a stance that I particularly like is that taken by Hans Peter Bushoff from Germany. This followed an exchange of emails to the Eli group of Dylan people when someone questioned a factual moment recorded in Chronicles. It prompted me to respond:

'Probably best not to get too hung up on what is real and what is not in Chronicles. Seems to me that Dylan takes a giant leap from the way things actually were to how he imagines they could have been! Which is what makes the book so wonderfully unique. Like with most of his work, Dylan milks the abstract in order to churn out the best cheese board on the planet.

Problem is, some people don't like cheese...

JRS'

Hanns then replied:

'I totally agree. I'm currently reading Chronicles for the second time, first in English back in November, now in German (the German translation is excellent this time!). I see the book not like a matter-of-fact biography, but more like a movie or like a song. Some parts I'm sure are invented (who believes the extra lyrics to the Oh Mercy songs?), but all in all everything comes together beautifully. On many pages I can actually hear Dylan read the lines, it's so authentic. I don't care whether some parts might be invented. I never understood Desolation Row word-by-word, but I sure know (or I feel like I know, and that's enough) what he means when he sings it.'

I really do like that idea of Chronicles being like a movie or a song, I can relate to that. Apparently there are another two volumes in the pipeline, so perhaps like the Lord Of The Rings movie trilogy, we will get one every year at Christmas for the next two years. Roll on the next one!

4. Dylan On Sixty Minutes

Well never mind the width (it certainly wasn't 60 minutes -more like 10), but there was some quality to Dylan's first interview on screen for 20 years or so. Looking fit with a new shortened hairstyle and fidgeting uncomfortably throughout with a pen, Dylan did everything to avert the interviewers main aim: to get Dylan to smile occasionally. It was

like Dylan was in the final of Mastermind and every question was a ten pointer. There were some great answers though, including about the ‘penetrating magic’ that surrounded Dylan when he wrote his early songs and also concerning his destiny. Although he was at pains (seeming literally on occasions) to distance himself from the art and achievements of his enemy within - the creative one of the twins – we did get a smile at the end which was worth the wait. It was a knowing smile and came as he confessed that where he is today is a direct result of the bargain he made with the Chief Commander ‘of this earth and in the world we cannot see’. Whatever the deal was I think it is us who have got the best of that particular bargain! So to Dylan’s official output, of which there was not a great deal, but:

5. Masked and Anonymous – the official DVD release and Live 1964 (The Bootleg Series Volume 6 – Halloween at the Philharmonic)

The former worth it for ‘Dixie’ and Penelope Cruz and the latter worth it for the jokes, the jibes and the giggles ... and of course the words. Now, on other matters closer to home.

6. The Rope and Twine

We found a super new venue for our Cambridge meetings this year in a back room at a Cambridge City Centre pub. The meeting room has a lot of atmosphere and is reached by crossing a courtyard and going into a barn! The problem was that as soon as we had found this place and had our first meeting there, the pub closed down only to reopen later in the year under the name of The Sino Tap: combining the pub with a Thai eaterie of sorts. Fortunately the courtyard and the barn were still in existence and the pub had a friendly new manager who plays a lot of Dylan in the bar area. So, in November we were back at the pub. I can’t mention anything to do with Cambridge however without bringing the team into the limelight namely Chris Cooper, John Nye and Keith Agar. You are a pleasure to work with my friends. Which brings me on to:

7. The 20th Anniversary of the Cambridge Bob Dylan Society

We sure went to town with this one and hired out The Holiday Inn in Cambridge for an evening of celebration to mark 20 years of our Cambridge meetings. There were cakes, live music (thank you Michael and Dylanesque), films and an after hours soiree with Keith and the gang. It was great to see Paula, Richard and Mark C in Cambridge and the gathering set us up nicely for the next 20 years. In fact we have now got to go on that

long because we have purchased our own video projector and it will take us that long to pay for it! Whilst we are on the subject of meetings how about

8. The Fourth Annual John Green Day

Once more us Dylan folk descended on The Moathouse at Northampton for a do in memory of our late Freewheeler and to have a rare old time with his blessing. And this time there were no fire alarms! The day was very successful from all aspects but what was really nice was the gathering of Freewheelers and that secret handshake. With the change of staff at The Moathouse and the incoming manager having just graduated from the Herman Goering School of Charm and Excellence I am not certain that the annual do will reach its 5th year. We will keep you informed.

9. Freewheelin

One Freewheeler who wasn't part of the handshake but who was actually in attendance as part of the audience at the 4th John Green Day was Bob Fletcher. As fate would have it, Bob and I got talking later in the evening and, upon learning that he had some things to say about Dylan, I cajoled him into joining the group. Bob has since written some inspired and thought provoking articles for Freewheelin and is now a well established member of the group. Thank you sweet fate! Trevor Gibb also joined momentarily but, in view of his heavy workload as a Student and musician, his member ship is, 'ow you say....on hold. This December 2004 issue is Freewheelin number 232 which represents over 19 years of scribblings on, about, and relating to the man who says he was born to be Bob Dylan, and not Robert Zimmerman. Many thanks to all who have taken part in the project throughout the year: your words have been a delight to me and to others. Keep on thinking your thoughts and doing your things in whatever way you want to, for that is your part of the bargain.

10. Freewheelin-on-line

It seems that the internet magazine has really caught on this year as more people have joined the ever increasing population of surfers. Our web counters show that, since the mag was made freely available in May 2003, there have been almost 14,000 visitors to the library at Freewheelin House (the main site has received almost 40,000 visits) where the mags have been viewed or downloaded. We all owe John Nye, who is our Webmaster, a great debt of thanks for all his hard work which has been carried out despite the continuing ill health of his wife, Phil. Let's hope 2005 is a better year for John and Phil and also that this coming year will find us all in good health, no matter what changes or challenges face us.