

The FINGER

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Gone, missing by VAL HENNESSY

AFTER A TWELVE-year love affair with Totnes, my circumstances changed, retirement loomed and I decided to do the down-shift thing and return to my south-east roots. Goodbye Dartmoor, hello the mudflats and marshes of coastal Kent. Gazing at a sunset – pink, purple and crimson – across the nearby estuary I realise that there are three things that I am missing with an ache in my chest that surprises me.

The first is my apple tree. It stands in the glorious, south-facing garden that is no longer mine, a lichen-covered, gnarled and ancient ruin of an apple tree that my wise old gardener, Denis Despard from Berry Pomeroy and long gone, informed me was over a hundred years old. Two of its main branches were lopped before my time but the tree, still flourishing, decks itself out like a bride with copious cream and pink blossom each spring, its pale leaves turning several shades greener as the year progresses, and offering a dappled canopy for me and my dog as we snoozed on the shady grass beneath when the sky through the leaves turned a Mediterranean blue. I once spotted an escaped parrot in its branches, several wrens and rather too many raucous magpies who snipped at twigs and picked holes in the huge, juicy Bramleys, which my wonderful tree provided in abundance for the neighbour's apple crumbles. At dusk, when the squeaking swallows had departed and the little bats began flitting through the shadows, I sometimes stood where the grass was scattered with mushy windfalls until a fragment of a mysterious poem would start running through my head. These lines always give me goose bumps and a spooky tingle:

My love appeared to me / Under the apple tree / He placed his hand upon my shoulder / He did not find me strange or older / Nor I he...

I've no idea who wrote it, or where I learnt it, so if anyone can tell me, please do.

The second thing I miss is the best shop in Totnes, The Happy Apple. Where else in the world will you find a small, independent High Street shop where you can buy a mouse-trap, clotted cream, organic carrots, corn plasters, dog biscuits, candles, gluten-free spaghetti, a gadget to unblock the drains, and rent a video all under the same roof? The Happy Apple sells extra large tins of Scrumpy Jack (chilled) for half the price charged by the giant supermarkets, and the sort of exotic sauces, spices and pastas that make celebrity chefs gleefully rattle their pepper-grinders. Open all hours, all human life passes along The Happy Apple's narrow, often blocked, aisles – from travellers with face-metal and hair like Flokati rugs queuing up for their Rizzlas and baked beans, to Senior Fabian types in corduroys and horn-rimmed bifocals popping in for their bran muffins and pumpkin seeds. What other shop lets you buy one carrot? Or one spud? One tiny sprig of coriander? One plum tomato? Where else will you overhear simultaneous conversations about compost heaps, Shostokovitch, potty training, organic chocolate, the theory of relativity, Bob Dylan, grief counselling and the Labour Party manifesto taking place in front of the freshly baked bread shelves? The Happy Apple, I miss you, with your gubby tills and chaotic queuing system, my nearby Tesco is not a patch....

The third thing I miss is the community choir, Global

Harmony, with which I sang for ten years. Choir leader Roz Walker is an inspiration and a minor musical marvel. Before joining her choir the only recent singing I'd done was in the bath. Back in the Sixties I'd enjoyed chorusing 'We Shall Not Be Moved' and so forth, at various peace protests, and further back still I enjoyed, I remember, aged seven, toadstool powwows with the Brownie pack and singing 'ging-gang-goolie-goolie' until my tonsils smarted. I had to pluck up considerable nerve to join Roz's group as with knees knocking, vocal chords in spasm and fortified by a Valium, I went along to my first session.

It was fun! It was brilliant! It was a revelation! My rusty, reedy warble was no worse than anyone else's, and the vibrant, energetic Roz had us all singing a *cappella* folk songs and Latin chants before we'd taken off our hats and coats. One session, and I was hooked. Singing night became the high spot of my week. We learnt four-part songs from Georgia, Israel, Spain and France. We sang throbbing African hymns, with undulating hips and jiggling chests – and that was just the men. We swayed and waved our hands in the air to Gospel songs from America's deep south, and learnt long-forgotten English carols with feisty rhythms and unexpected harmonies.

Most of the songs we learnt by heart, as Roz says that people sing best if their noses are not buried in sheet music. Thanks to Roz I've learnt to sight read, have acquired a small measure of self-confidence when singing and had the satisfaction of performing in concerts that raised cash for good causes. To see Global Harmony hallelujah-ing at full throttle or chorusing the foot-stomping gypsy version of 'The Holly and the Ivy' has become a Totnes Christmas concert tradition, and I shall miss it terribly this first Christmas away. Our really big show-stopping number, a fabulous, four-part harmonisation of the South African national anthem 'N Kosi Sikelele' always has the audience up on its feet shouting 'encore!'

But Global Harmony was – and still is, I hope – much more than a choir. Its core consists of the best bunch of people you could ever hope to sing with, and on choir-practice night they would arrive with their free-range eggs, home-grown veg and hand-baked bread to swap and barter. The night I joined them for the last time, they sang, especially for me, a magical, spine-tingling Maori chant 'Te-Whakapono' with synchronised movements, which had me blubbing all the way home. My home, that is, that is no more. And so life moves on, and I will take hold of it and go singing into the sunset.

Travellers: what's wrong with them? by Mari Garcia

IT WAS DURING the class on homelessness, in my training as a community adviser at the South Hams Citizen Advice Bureau, that the thorny issue of travellers was raised. By that time, the travellers' settlement at Staverton Railway was an unavoidable issue. Our tutor, who had remained impartial in all the subjects we studied, finished further discussion by stating: 'Yes, we received many complaints from Staverton's residents, who couldn't walk their dogs in peace and quiet. But fortunately, the travellers are gone.' Because I was living in a caravan, I felt uneasy and replied: 'How is it possible that, in the UK, the right to walk one's dogs in peace and quiet is more important than the right of other human beings to have a place to live?' There

was then an embarrassed silence among the other trainees. This is an example of the kind of response that travellers raise in society. Travellers, gypsies, New Age drifters, alternative nomads, et cetera, are certainly considered a stigma. But why?

Over the centuries, there have appeared at the very heart of human civilisations alternative movements in defiance of socio-economic convention, adopting different ways of life, which have often been seen as 'illicit' or 'sinful.' Surprisingly, the UK, one of the few countries in the world that, having had a rigid

Mari Garcia is a telecommunications engineer, writer and traveller

class system over the centuries, has never hosted a socio-political revolt of the same scale as the French Revolution or the Spanish Civil War, but has become a nation of 'citizens with no fixed abode.' I can't speak for the travellers in the whole of the UK, but I can explain a situation I know very well as a traveller and community adviser: the travellers in the South Hams.

If you wish to know why someone wants to adopt a nomadic lifestyle here in the South Hams, first have a look at soaring property prices. According to estate agents, the average price of a two-bedroom property is hovering at about £200,000, excluding additional costs. At the same time, according to the National Statistics official website Nomis (www.nomisweb.co.uk), the average gross weekly salary in the South Hams for full-time workers is £373.40, which is equivalent to an annual gross income of £19,417. Luckily, for someone with this income, his or her bank will grant a mortgage, lending 3.5 times £19,417, or £70,000, to be repaid over the next twenty to twenty-five years. Let's be optimistic. Let's assume that the full-time worker has a partner who earns the same money. By this assumption, the total both partners will be granted rises to £140,000, a figure still not enough to buy a property here.

As a result of this, wannabe South Hams residents can only choose between paying a rent until their dying day, or living with other people. This last option may appear more exciting to people in their teens, but not to mature persons.

Travellers are often ostracised, not due to the real troubles they are causing, but because of the wall of prejudice and moral judgement built around them. One of the most common myths, that travellers are always lazy, promiscuous and drug addicts, is not true for a significant proportion dwelling around the South Hams' hills. Most of them make an honest living as builders or carers, and peacefully practise different forms of insight meditation in places such as Sharpham College or Gaia House. Like me, they have chosen this lifestyle because they cannot afford to buy or rent a property here, and they need a quiet environment, free of alcohol, smoke and drugs. The second common myth, that travellers do not contribute to the national gross product, and are parasites on the active working population, turns out to be likewise false. Most travellers do not claim the benefits they are eligible for, because of the illegality of their situation. They are frightened of being forced to move their caravans. Most of them are white British, demolishing, therefore, the myth that many travellers are outsiders or gypsies who take advantage of lax British legislation. Travellers hidden in the green hills of Devon perform low-paid jobs. In a dispute with their employers, they are sometimes afraid of asserting their statutory rights. They cannot open a bank account, and have to lie to be attended by a GP.

Although now back in 'respectable society,' I once lived in a caravan near Totnes, and retain great memories of those days. Even with the inconvenience of having to go to the loo between the bushes!

inside story

Acting, confidence training, and NLP! by JO LARSEN

WHEN I STARTED teaching, my aim was to work with students who wanted to act professionally, or qualify for a recognised theatre academy. However, I soon found myself training non-actors too, people cursed with low self-esteem, no self-confidence, and disillusionment generally – the sort of afflictions apt to improve through learning how to ‘act.’ I worked in the Eastern Bloc, just after the Berlin Wall came down. There the people had been taught, from their earliest childhood, *not* to express themselves in an individual way, yet many were now only too keen to explore a world of imagination and personal creativity, given the scope my classes offered.

Over the past thirty years, I have developed my own system of teaching. I call it ART14, partly because of my parallel interest in alchemy (the marriage of opposites, paradoxical shifts), but also because its courses last for fourteen weeks! I can now call on a large repertoire of techniques, ranging from soft-beginner drama games (for reducing fears and blocks), to highly demanding and advanced mental, emotional and physical acting exercises (to bring each participant to a point of self-belief, and broach his or her unique identity and purpose in life).

More recently I have discovered a close connection between these techniques and those of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), a discipline that offers some of the most powerful communication tools available today. I aim to amalgamate some of my acting concepts with NLP, and to do further research into their relationship with dream analysis, hypnosis, gestalt and shamanism, in the form of a workbook for practitioners.

Jo Larsen trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (1971–74) and has thirty years’ experience as a professional actress, dancer and teacher. She is now also a fully trained INLPTA NLP practitioner, and a qualified teacher. She runs groups in Totnes, Plymouth and Torbay. For further information call 01364 649429 or email jolarsen@beartstongue.co.uk.

Westminster goss by JACK DEGREE

ANDREW MAYBEE, TORY member for West Mursh East, took a further step towards political oblivion a few days after the party conference in Blackpool. There all the talk in the hotel bars was of the prospect of a young and dynamic new leader, whose message to the faithful was: ‘Go back to your constituencies and re-connect with the electorate.’

Maybe took that exhortation very much to heart, and once home immediately called together all his foot soldiers to thrash out precisely how that re-connection should be done. New territory to Maybee, who did all his deals and socialising at either the golf or the yacht club, was Mursh’s two main pubs, The King’s Head and The Queen’s Arms. The latter he was assured was working-class Tory.

Yet somehow, in his own mind, the hapless Maybee conflated these two names. On a flying visit one Saturday night he descended on what he assumed was good home turf, a place he could have sworn was called The Queen’s Head. There for an hour or so he quaffed his Bombay Sapphires garrulously. After a good half-dozen this re-connection business seemed like a lot of fun, and he even declared to the landlord – one of those weary-eyed mechanicals who’d seen it all before – that all these good folk (the roofers, and the house-painters, and people with market stalls) were the true lifeblood of the party – though he wished they wouldn’t smoke so much.

Which party that was Maybee still hadn’t guessed when he strayed – so to speak all toggled up in his lederhosen – into perilous talk on the state of the European Union. He admitted candidly that before becoming an MP he had seriously considered transferring his vote to UKIP, he like all those around him a courageous individual trying to run a business in the face of all that red tape and bureaucracy.

I’m told that at this point a confused Andrew Maybee was fortunate not to be lynched. It was only some clever thinking, and some pretty adroit manoeuvres on his part, that allowed him to lock himself in one of the lavatory cubicles, making hasty calls from his cell phone. Only a leap through an open window, when eventually his taxi drew up, ensured his escape – a first and last brush with The King’s Head.

Apparently he quizzed his driver all the way home as to exactly *what was* the mood of the people.

Garbage, garbage, garbage...and all the rest is silence, by POILLY

THE FIRST STIRRINGS of garbage-related stress became evident in the hot weather when the local press reported complaints in the South Hams about maggots breeding in the organic waste of our new industrial-sized wheelie bins, recently issued by the council. The implication was the bins were too big and the collection dates too infrequent.

Yet even those with a strong social conscience have experienced some disquiet about municipal directives that appear to place responsibility and culpability for waste-disposal squarely on the shoulders of local residents, many of whom are elderly, or busy working families in no mood to sift through the intricacies of binning household rubbish.

Just how effective the council’s new green waste-disposal policy is going to be, well intentioned as it is, is open to question

In an age of spin it’s hard not to be sceptical about any municipal waste programme that dresses itself in green without engaging the wider issues of product packaging and the multinational role in waste creation in general.

Waste accumulation is an urgent social and ecological problem and it’s connected to a global market based on mass consumption.

As early as 1988, the North Sea was identified as a dumping ground for both domestic and industrial waste. Thousands of seals were found dead along Sweden’s shorelines and autopsy reports revealed dead-seal tissue samples exceeded a thousand toxins. It was estimated that 145,000,000 tons of ordinary garbage were dumped in the sea by ships, annually. That was without taking into account industrial wastage, which ran at 13,500 tons of lead, 5,600 tons of copper together with arsenic, cadmium, mercury and radioactive effluent, and the 30,000 tons of hydrocarbons from wells and drilling platforms in the same year. The sea, as a food resource, exacerbated by over-fishing, has been seriously diminished and those fish that have survived often suffer from skin infections, skeletal deformity and tumours. (All statistics derived from Petra Kelly’s *Thinking Green*, Parrallax Press, 1994.)

Richard Girling’s book, *Rubbish*, estimates that each individual in the UK generates at least four to five times their body weight in garbage, and if the packaging infrastructure of foreign imports is included then the statistic rockets to twenty tonnes per person.



Girling claims one policy that goes some way to limiting environmental damage by consumerism is the Zero Waste policy. This programme, piloted in Bath, and recently adopted by New Zealand (but not by the major Western powers), has the virtue of recognising the joint responsibility of both producer and consumer in the process of waste disposal. In particular it focuses on preventive measures by attempting to make multinational companies responsible for the design, packaging and materials of their products, with a view to their ‘future life.’

The producer should be accountable for the packaging and toxic waste of their products by international law and subject to hefty fines should they transgress.

How effective the Zero Waste policy will be, even if adopted by the industrialised countries, remains to be seen. Unless a supranational global environmental organisation is equipped with powerful enforcement mechanisms that promote ecological and economic security for all peoples, rather than serve only the needs of international trade, then waste disposal and countless other green issues will be neglected.

In this sense ‘green growth’ is a chimera because any company trying to operate a genuinely ethical programme would be unable to survive in the existing competitive free market.

The problem lies in a deregulated market economy. Global corporations are accountable only to a rogue financial system whose primary objective is to keep stock prices as high as possible by maximising short-term gains.

Significantly, the way to achieve the goal of short-term gain is to shift as much of the corporations’ operating costs onto the community, e.g. the taxpayer.

Between 1979 and 2000 corporate tax rates fell from fifty-two per cent to thirty per cent in Britain and Tony Blair has boasted that British business is subject to fewer strictures than the US. Increasingly Western governments have relied on personal income tax and sales taxes for their revenue and drained the public purse to attract foreign investment in the form of tax holidays, interest-free loans, grants, training schemes, unhindered profit remittances, publicly funded sewers and roads, which are a few among the mix of ‘incentives’ that companies now expect in return for opening up a new factory or office. Nor is this investment a stable one in view of the fact that multinational companies can relocate to another country at the drop of a hat, if labour costs are cheaper.

In reality, multinational companies, in exchange for reasonable investment returns, should be prepared to acknowledge their social obligations and pay taxes on their vast capital gains.

To build more landfill sites or develop an incineration programme is not an attractive option – the public do not want toxic waste-disposal units on their doorstep and therefore planning permission would be a contentious issue. Nor is ‘garbage imperialism’ morally tenable or ecologically sound, whereby millions of tons of waste are shipped from industrialised to developing countries in exchange for cash payments. Do we really want the poor to sacrifice their health for the rich?

Meanwhile in the South Hams we will continue to dream of giant maggots in wheelie bins, consult our What Goes Where chart and suffer the summer stench of garbage.

The first blockbuster?

by ALLEN SADDLER

THERE WAS SOMETHING else that started in 1939. The career of British thriller writer James Hadley Chase exploded into orbit with the publication of his first novel, *No Orchids For Miss Blandish*. The gaudy imitation of the American private-eye genre made Raymond Chandler seem wordy and Dashiell Hammet verbose. Reading *No Orchids* was like being battered about the head by a scientific boxer and dodging machine-gun fire at the same time. The style was breathless, the narrative headlong into the depths of depravity. Or that was how it seemed to the British public at the time. The paperback edition ran out as soon as printed. They went out in bales of fifty to newspaper shops that only ever sold books in ones or twos. The book became so notorious that Variety comics only had to call out page numbers and leer to get a roar from their audience.

Chase went on to write nearly 100 such novels, but none of them had the staying power of his first runaway success. Inevitably it was filmed. It was also put on the stage. My father went, thinking it was a musical, after all, and it was on at the Prince of Wales, the home of musical revues. He came out in disgust at the interval, as the first act had a character knifed in the stomach, followed by the harassment of Miss Blandish by a psychopathic impotent gangster, after she had been softened up by the gangster's mother with a rubber truncheon.

The plot of *No Orchids* is very similar to William Faulkner's novel *Sanctuary*, published in Britain in 1931. The 1949 Nobel Prize winner's story told of a kidnapped heiress, Temple Drake, subjected to indignities by a violent impotent gangster called Popeye. Chase's version had Miss Blandish and a villain called Slim Grisson. The kidnapping and the humiliation was the same. Despite the parallel plotlines Chase insisted that he had never read *Sanctuary* and never even

heard of it at the time of writing *No Orchids*.

No Orchids was condemned from pulpit and platform. It had no redeeming features. It was vile, shocking and ought to be banned; shunned at least. But here it was rolling off the presses into the hands of eager readers.

Sanctuary was Faulkner's sixth novel and was written as a pot boiler, but it made the writer famous, though the difference between the two books today is that *Sanctuary* was last reprinted in 1966, and the last reprint of *No Orchids*, in a handsome hardback edition, was in 1998. By that time 4,000,000 copies had been sold worldwide.

The Hadley Chase output was so prodigious that at one time it was rumoured that he employed ghostwriters. Four of his thrillers were adapted for the stage and thirty-six were filmed. Some cheaply made. Probably the best is Losey's atmospheric *Eve*, with Jeanne Moreau as the *femme fatale* that makes a young artist her slave.

No Orchids was filmed twice. The first, a British film, had veteran Hollywood gangster heavy Jack La Rue, brought over to play Slim Grisson. Later there was an American version called *The Grisson Gang*. Linden Travers, a British film regular from Hitchcock's popular *The Lady Vanishes* played Miss Blandish in the British version. She made only one more film after *No Orchids* before she retired from the business. Linden Travers also played the role in the stage adaptation where her partner was Robert Newton, who was the chief hellraiser before Oliver Reed. His reading of the role made Jack La Rue seem gentlemanly. Travers turned up in Plymouth, when the local rep decided to trawl the depths of popular theatre and revive the old nasty. She told me that she had only a hazy recollection of the West End experience, as Newton in his wild period was so fearsome that she was terrified every night when he came on stage.

A chorus of vituperation, greeted the film:

The 'most sickening exhibition of brutality, perversion, sex and sadism ever to be shown on a cinema screen.'

'A most vicious display of sadism, brutality and suggestiveness.'

'All the morals of an alley cat and all the sweetness of a sewer.'

Jack La Rue came over again to play another gangster in another Hadley Chase stage show *Get A Load Of This*, which ran the Hippodrome, with a split set, which allowed cabaret on the stage level and gangster melodrama on an office at the higher level. Viennese violinist turned Variety comic Vic Oliver compered the cabaret and then went upstairs to be threatened by the gangsters.

All this followed the popularity of American gangster films with the British filmgoer. Cagney, Raft, even Paul Muni, pulled in the crowds and informed the British public of the violence brought about in America by the prohibition. James Hadley Chase, an Englishman, must have had a disturbed boyhood watching these films.

At the same time Chase, for all his lurid style, is a good story-teller. *The Paw In The Bottle* is hard to put down.

What Good are the Arts? by John Carey, reviewed by BOB MANN

IN *THE INTELLECTUALS and the Masses* (1992), John Carey offered a much-needed critique of the tendency among nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists and writers to dehumanise their fellow beings while constantly asserting their own superiority.

In his new book he goes a lot further. Looking at the history of aesthetic theory and the pronouncements of philosophers and scientists on the nature of art, he concludes that it is all so contradictory and solipsistic as to be meaningless. In the end, everything is personal preference. If I think something is a work of art, it's a work of art for me. If you don't, it isn't for you. Nothing more can ever be said. As soon as I start claiming that the artworks I like are better, more profound or more universal than the artworks you like, because I am more sensitive, perceptive and intelligent than you are, we are on the slippery slope that leads to the death camps.

Carey's respect for so-called 'ordinary' people, and his scorn for the precious and pretentious, is admirable, like his fury at the guy from Covent Garden who claims that 'opera is difficult'. What is hard, he raves, about sitting in plush seats for three hours and listening to singing? Although I love opera, I agree: in most people's experience of life, it is well down on the list of

Edmund Cranich: a Life in Art, after a presentation by Harold Kreyne, reviewed by Jack Degree

WHEN, RECENTLY, I attended a presentation by Harold Kreyne, who was going to talk about his new biography of Edmund Cranich, I overheard two other writers in conversation during the preceding hush. The first said that she had reinvigorated her career as an editor. The other, a poet, smiled remotely and wasn't at all surprised. 'In a sense,' he said, 'the act of writing is already an act of editing' – meaning that, before the world has a chance to besmear their texts, all writers' texts come as it were pre-sanified. Since then I have learnt that distant smile myself, and think I might even apply it in what I have to say about Kreyne and his Cranich biography – for that in itself was a huge editorial task. The talk took place at the annual congress of the UK Biographers' Association, at the University College School Theatre.

His whole undertaking was done in triplicate. First (or last) was the hour or so that Kreyne, who also writes for the *Sunday Times*, had been allotted to tell us about Edmund Cranich. Of course, he had gone this way before (the second or middle edit), with his book *Edmund Cranich: a Life in Art*. It's a tome that touches the scales at well over 500pp, so to what extent did he massage his voluminous material into a brief, one-hour talk?

With apparent ease, is the answer, conveying in one truncated noon the direction, character and ethos of his book, tracing the charmed life of the charming Edmund Cranich, from the panache and magnetism of his youth, to the irascibility and slightly jaded view of human affairs in his middle and later years.

For Cranich, the essence of his life and career – as a kind of indivisible whole – was the women or Muses in his life, his early rejection of civic norms (he was a troubadour, seven or eight hundred years after that heyday), and the sheer good fortune in the social connections he made (he a humble rural lad). He loved intensely. He crossed the Pyrenees and slept beneath the stars. He sang – or rather caressed his violin – for his supper. He saw Spain in the 1930s, and like so many disinterested Englishmen aligned himself with the Republican cause. He also wrote poetry – and books, and plays, and turned out hackwork – his emphasis a crafted lyricism in an era of otherwise modish verism. He also suffered from epilepsy, a physiological syntax he never quite edited out, though he did take steps to conceal it from those he most cared about. All this has been honestly rendered.

Yet there is, isn't there, something unearthly, something supernatural about the whole business of biography, a life like an established work of art as finished, objectified, sooner or later summarised. Anthony Burgess, somewhere at the outset of his own memoirs (vol. 1, *Little Wilson and Big God*), mused aloud that he had better write the account himself before somebody else did, so subjecting his life to his own choice of filters and interdict – all, as that poet from my opening paragraph might say, a question of editing himself. It raises the question, how does a biographer distil from that unstable and multifarious text – a person's life – the novel-size edition? In Kreyne's case, in dealing with Cranich, there was a heap of correspondence, and the views of people who knew him, importantly an autobiographical *oeuvre*, and, more decisive perhaps than these (those filters and interdicts) the diaries of Cranich himself – he the prime editor. Spawned, incidentally, is another set of choices, made by me in writing this, and the way I have sharpened my nib – the pressures and external weights scribing it to one final thought on this whole tricky area of authorial immortality: Is it not all just a fiction anyway?

Harold Kreyne's *Edmund Cranich: a Life in Art* is published by McGraw-Hill.

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to 500 words, to
PJCowlam@centrehousepress.co.uk

'difficult' things: however convoluted the plot, there's a synopsis in the programme; the language may be foreign, but as you can't make out the words anyway, it hardly matters; the emotions are so simple and blatant – love, hate, anger, grief, joy – that a seven-year-old can follow them.

And yet...much as I admire this book, I have problems. Carey quotes the appalling Bill Buford to suggest that there is no difference between the rapture experienced by Manchester United hooligans rampaging and pillaging in Europe, and the joy I experience from Beethoven's Ninth. I have to believe that there is a difference, and that my experience is ultimately better and more valuable.

Carey does admit that studying literature can be beneficial, and any parent may agree that if bored sixteen-year-olds were to sit down and read a book occasionally, they wouldn't need to drink themselves stupid with vodka every night (but not being a parent I won't go there). A stimulating and humane book, anyway.

What Good Are The Arts is published by Faber, 260pp, £12.99.

STRANGE LISTINGS

Music in and around Totnes, November 2005

Listings appeal

STRANGE LISTINGS THIS month is still largely restricted to Totnes and the surrounding area, and still covers only music (with a few extras). It remains my wish, however, to cover all the arts for the whole South Hams, and maybe beyond. The name 'South Devon Scene' along the side of the page is both a statement of intent and a tribute to the old *South Devon Scene* that Nic Cottis created in the 1970s out of the *Dartington Hall News*, and which was continued by Keith Craggs (where is he now?) until its sad demise in the early 1980s, when so much that was civilised and valuable was being ruthlessly swept away by men with calculators (yes, even at Dartington). But I have not the time to wander through the towns and villages of South Devon copying down information from posters, so please, if you want to help it become the comprehensive listings magazine that the area needs, get in touch. Thanks to all those who have taken the trouble to give me their information. Remember, all listing is absolutely free: just get the stuff to me!

**Bob Mann, 8 The Carrions,
Totnes TQ9 5XX
01803 849344, bobmann@supanet.com**

Stuff universes are made of

THE TOTNES JAZZ Collective gig at the Seven Stars on November the 10th features another ground-breaking new band from the mind of Sam Richards. Cosmic Slop features Sam on keyboards, with DJ XL (Tall Paul Turner) on decks, Kristian Sharp on drums, MC Illiterate the Rapper and Stacey the Beat Boxer, and guest Mick Green on saxes.

Sam writes: 'This is hip hop jazz dance, smacking the idioms of jazz and hip hop together in one almighty cosmic slop – the stuff of which universes are made. Can you imagine the hip hop boom BAP boom boom BAP underpinning jazz grooves and freeform turntabling, keyboard improvisation, rapping and beat boxing? If you can't you either ought to stay away or make sure you're there early. To boldly go...'

The gig starts at eight p.m.

Teeing off in two places

SINGER AND GUITARIST Tee Marcheur is developing a following in Totnes, appearing regularly as he does at the Kingsbridge Inn and the Albert Inn, Bridgetown. You can catch him three times in November, and will be pleased if you do. There's an album on its way, as well.

Born in London fifty-five years ago, Tee has played with top UK artistes like The Four Pennies, Tony Ashton, Robin Sarstedt and Peters and Lee, not to mention blues legend Long John Baldry. He has worked in the US, created his own recording studio, written scripts with actor Nicholas Gecks and run a radio station. He moved to Devon in 1997 to work with the renowned guitar-maker Chris Eccleshall.

His music, he says, 'for those who like these things,' is 'evolved from blues and jazz and folk and Cajun and rock and soul and Latin.' Tee is at the Kingsbridge on the 11th, and the Albert on the 12th and 26th.

Parnassian Ensemble at the Totnes Early Music Society

THE NOVEMBER CONCERT for the Totnes Early Music Society features The Parnassian Ensemble, comprising Sophie Middleditch (recorders/baroque flute), Helen Hooker (recorders), Joseph Crouch (baroque cello) and David Pollock (harpsichord).

Since its formation in 1998, the ensemble has gained a reputation for its virtuosic performances and innovative programming. Their TEMS performance is at St Mary's Church, High Street, at 7.30 p.m., and includes works by the Purcells (Henry and Daniel), Couperin, Bach, Telemann and Vivaldi. TEMS members free; tickets on the door £12, students/juniors £5.

Tuesday 1st Traditional folk session, 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Wednesday 2nd Open mic night, Kingsbridge Inn.

Thursday 3rd Seth Lakeman, folk/roots, 7.30 p.m. £10, con £8.50. Flavel Centre, Dartmouth.

Friday 4th Becky Brine (singer), 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Contemporary jazz with Sam Richards (piano), Mick Green (sax) and David Barrow (bass), 8 p.m., Maltsters Arms, Tuckenhay.

Saturday 5th Totnes Jazz Collective presents the Lewis Riley Big Band, Ariel Centre, KEVICC, Totnes, 8 p.m.

Sunday 6th Libor Novacek (piano), in works by Mozart, Brahms, Schubert and Liszt, 7.00 p.m. £16, con £15. Flavel Centre, Dartmouth.

Bluegrass in the bar, 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Kungsbacka Piano Trio in works by Beethoven, Ives and Rachmaninov, 7.30 p.m., Great Hall, Dartington (box office 01803 847070).

Tuesday 8th Traditional folk, 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Wednesday 9th Open mic night, Kingsbridge Inn.

Thursday 10th Totnes Jazz Collective presents Cosmic Slop: jazz/hiphop/dance, Royal Seven Stars Hotel, 8 p.m.

Glorious Chorus gospel and blues, 7.30 p.m. £7.50, con £5. Flavel Centre, Dartmouth.

Friday 11th Tee Marcheur (blues/rock/folk etc.), 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Vision Earth, audio-visual spectacular by Steve Jolliffe, 7.30 p.m., £8, con £6. Flavel Centre, Dartmouth.

Saturday 12th Tee Marcheur, Albert Inn, Bridgetown. Totnes Early Music Society presents: The Parnassian Ensemble, St Mary's Church, 7.30 p.m.

Lewis Riley Big Band, 7.00 p.m., Flavel Centre, Dartmouth. Harberton Folk presents Blazin' Fiddles, £12.50, Ariel Centre, KEVICC, Totnes.

Sunday 13th Greg (singer/guitarist) in the bar, 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Tuesday 15th Traditional folk, Kingsbridge Inn.

Wednesday 16th Open mic night, Kingsbridge Inn.

Thursday 17th Connie Lush, blues shouter, £6 advance, £8 on door. Royal Seven Stars Hotel, 8 p.m.

Friday 18th Reece and Smudger (folk/rock), 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

John Etheridge with Kit Holmes, 8 p.m., £10, con £8, Ariel Centre, KEVICC, Totnes.

Saturday 19th Ten Tors Orchestra. Programme includes a new commission, 'Whispering, Clamoring' by Jonathan Pitkin, plus works by Schnittke, Bach and Vivaldi. 7.30 p.m., £15, con £14. Great Hall, Dartington.

Sunday 20th Bluegrass in the bar, 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Tuesday 22nd Traditional folk, Kingsbridge Inn.

Wednesday 23rd Open mic night, Kingsbridge Inn.

Friday 25th Behind the Sun, Nicky Swan (vocals), Nick Bayes (guitar/bass), 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Saturday 26th Tee Marcheur (folk/rock), Albert Inn, Bridgetown.

Sunday 27th Greg (singer/guitarist) in the bar, 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Hearing Things – six musical interludes for large and small ensembles by Sam Richards, performed by students from Dartington, plus special guests Lona Kozik (piano), David Stanley (guitar), Harry S. Fulcher and Mick Green (reeds). Directed by Frank Denyer. 7.30 p.m., £8, con £5. Flavel Centre, Dartmouth.

Harberton Folk presents Fairport Convention (acoustic line-up), £15, Ariel Centre, KEVICC, Totnes.

Tuesday 29th Traditional folk, 8 p.m., Kingsbridge Inn.

Wednesday 30th Open mic night, Kingsbridge Inn.

Editor's note

Unfortunately we had to go to press before the November programme for the Barrel House, Totnes, was published, so we cannot provide listings for them. But we're impressed at the amount going on there, and hope to cover their events in the future. And they sell *The Finger* there!

email your listings to bobmann@supanet.com

Get your December listings to me by November 19th