

# Homer, *the slut*



*Special Subscribers' Issue 3*

*...the final end*

# Contents:

**Sweet Gift Of Gab** - as your letters poured in on the announcement of **Homer's** demise,

&

**Odds & Ends** - to finish off with a few items from the **Bits & Bobs** folder.

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*It has become something of a tradition that I start the letters with an apology for losing some, so if yours isn't here - I'm sorry. One I know that is missing is from Ronnie from Crouch End who took me to task for "dismissing" the 30th anniversary CD set; saying a number of the performances were fine - topped off by the man himself. Well, I'm afraid I stand by my opinion, Ronnie. I do not care if I never hear anything from it ever again, Neil Young and Lou Reed may be quite good at their songs, but, so what? We've got Dylan doing those songs infinitely better. As for Bob's own performance - it was so bad he had to redo his vocals for the video single release of **My Back Pages**. (Which is quite good now.)*

*I lent the official video to John Hume after one (half) viewing and am determinedly resisting his attempts to return it to me. I don't mean to put Dylan down too much here - it just isn't his kind of scene, compare the mundanity of those cds to the breathtaking achievement of **World Gone Wrong** and surely you'll agree with me.*

*As usual more letters arrived saying "please don't publish" than you have before you here but this is still a pretty impressive response! The "farewell" letters evoked such a flood of good feeling and wishes from you that my hard old heart was quite moved. (The non-UK readers never received their "farewell" letters as I couldn't afford the postage at the time - doubtless there would have been a fair number from them also.) Thanks to all. I have "topped and tailed" many of the letters as they opened with personal offerings of best wishes etc. - all gratefully accepted and very much reciprocated.*

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## LUCAS STENSLAND

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**Homer 9** was excellent. The front and back cover photos are beautiful. What was Bob doing on the back cover? Walking out on stage, playing air guitar most likely (great photos, though.) Look at Dylan's face on the cover of issue nine. Now look at the cover of **Blood On The Tracks**. It's almost the same. From those pictures he now seems to have aged well.

I saw Dylan with the god-damned Santana on August 27th, at the Minnesota State Fair. I got to see Dylan perform **You're Gonna Quit Me** for the second time ever on stage. I was hoping it was the first, but then I got **Series of Dreams (On the Tracks supplement)**. The crowd was loud and drunk, and Santana gave speeches that went to this affect, "Try to imagine a world of no violence, where we all are brothers." Wow! Let me write that down! Wrong cup of tea for me.

This was the first time I ever heard **Memphis Blues**, **Under the Red Sky** and **God Knows** in concert. All three were fabulous. **Memphis Blues** was my favourite of the concert. The weakest performances were **Just Like A Woman** and **Boots of Spanish Leather**. The best surprise was **God Knows**; Dylan seemed really into it, and very energetic. He performed songs from eleven different albums, and a grand total of thirteen songs. Last time I saw him was last summer and he performed for almost twice as long. The songs on my wish list were **Silvio** (unperformed), **Tangled** (performed) and **Long Black Coat** (performed). I thought I'd also put in a strong mention for **Little Moses** (performed) and **Heartland** (unperformed).

Dylan and Neil Young are friends, why don't they tour together? Or how about Dylan and Willie Nelson, or maybe even Robbie Robertson? Why Santana?

I think you should have Mark Carter do the review of **World Gone Wrong**, since you don't seem so pleased with Dylan's trad songs. I liked your review of **Good As I Been To You** in issue seven, but times have changed along with your opinion. I like Mark Carter's writing, he's got a real forward approach. He doesn't try to prove a lot of his opinions - he hands it out like fact. Or J.R.S. might be good on current writing, too, instead of looking back most always - they're both great, though.

After reading issue nine I went and bought **Street Legal** and **New Morning** on compact disc. The latter didn't have very good sound quality on disc, but still was nice to program it to go from track two to four to seven and then eight. And then there is **Street Legal**, which was terrible to listen to on cassette. But on compact disc it was a miracle. I just listen to those last three tracks over and over. I don't mean to split hairs with either Bob Forryan or Paul Williams; I like both **Journey Through Dark Heat** and **Angelina**, but **Dark Heat** is better. I could imagine **Angelina** being better in concert, though. Speaking of Paul Williams, I was a little disappointed with the latest **Crawdaddy!** #3. It was awful generous of Williams to donate an entire issue to The Beach Boys. I was hoping for a Zooropa review or the MSG concert review. Or, maybe even Van Morrison, PJ Harvey or a concert review.

Would you recommend a subscription to **Isis**, **Look Back** or **The Telegraph**? I only subscribe to **Homer**, *the slut*, **On the Tracks** and **Series of Dreams**. What next? I have every Dylan album on compact disc now, except **Loaded**, and I have them all pretty much memorized. I have never listened to or seen a bootleg. So, I

was wondering if you could guide me into the world of boots. Maybe, you could tell who to write to, how much money or even what's good. I just renewed my **Homer** subscription, oops! Was I making you feel as if you owe me? No, I didn't mean to. Actually, I do feel as if I owe you something. Your magazine is very engrossing. If you find time to answer my letter, I would appreciate if you would help steer me into the boot world. Sometimes, I want more than what's just on the album.

Your football mentions do not bother me. In fact I don't understand them. And as always your **Coming Straight From the Heart** was very good. Getting back to Williams, I thought he was writing the liner notes for the MSG concert. What happened? And why did they exclude George Thorogood from the concert? He was the best! I'm joking. I was very glad Dylan redid the vocal to **My Back Pages**. So interesting he did. Remember that one letter I sent you, telling you to get in touch with Columbia for a bootleg Never Ending Tour album? Yah, do that now. Dylan would love you for it. At the moment I'm listening to mostly Robbie Robertson's **Storyville** and the two above mentioned; **Morning** and **Street Legal**.

Your other Minnesota boy,

*My other Minnesota boy, indeed - thanks for the concert review. But what a difference time makes, huh? You wrote this after reading issue 9, I got it just after sending out issue 10, here it is in issue 11 and you've written a handful of times and been over to London since then.*

*There's lots to answer here - firstly on the back of issue 9 Bob is about to take a bow.*

*Next, hey, I love Dylan doing trad songs, they've been the highlight of many shows in the last few years. You got it wrong with **World Gone Wrong** - I loved it from the off and it took Mark Carter at least two listens to catch up - so there! (JRS is equally good on current stuff, incidentally.)*

*I liked **Crawdaddy** #3, I bought the Beach Boys set on the day of its release - surely it was an important enough event to warrant a whole issue being devoted to it?*

*I would recommend a subscription to almost any Dylan fanzine, but I think **Look Back** must've ceased as I haven't received one for aeons. (Mind you I've not heard anything, either.) The main thing, though, is to get **On The Tracks** from issue 4 onwards. !*

*"Your football mentions do not bother me. In fact I don't understand them." Yeah, well that was the problem, actually...*

*Stop listening to Robbie Robertson! I've never forgiven the sod for last year's comments. (OK, he's great in '66 and at the Last Waltz, I know.)*

## ALEX HILL

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It's a cold, misty Friday morning, the kids are at school, Olive is off to work and I await the paper boy (he would be late today). I need my fix of **Guardian** X-word to waken the sleep-befuddled brain. The coffee is a-percolatin', time is punctuated by its plop-plop bubbling.

A strangled grunt slashes through the pregnant moment, no it ain't me, babe. It's the last village postman west of the Chilterns. The clattering of the letter box intimates missives await. Oh god, not another gas bill, red rimmed and dangerous. **Private Eye**, baleful as ever, **New Statesman**, still red not dead. But hold fast! What is this? **LE Homer** est arrivee!!!!!! With a sigh, percolation complete, the coffee is ready. Such is the nature of happy co-incidence.

I settle in my chair, mug on the right, politically incorrect fags on the left, and dive into the depths of issue ten.

Long Pause while I devour the contents so lovingly prepared.

What an issue, surely the best yet! **Homer** is alive and well and living in Fulham, but oh chagrin, I did promise my impressions of that Day in Camden. What am I to do? Resolve stiffens my ageing sinews and two-fingered typing begins.

A normal day in the office, morning tasks complete, sandwich in hand I contemplate the afternoon. An irritating brrrrp-brrrrp breaks the spell - bloody phone ringing, it is the receptionist, "Alex, you're a Bob Dylan fan aren't you?", "I am" says I, the master of understatement, "Well, somebody has just come back from

lunch and says he is wandering around Camden with Dave Stewart", "Come on" I reply, " you must be joking", " Nope, it's true, he is having a coffee in Huffs round the corner". I think my leg is being well and truly yanked out of its socket.

I consider the possibilities, either I am, not for the first time, the butt of someone's joke and if I go a-wandering I will be the object of much hilarity, or, he really is there and if I don't go I will again be ridiculed for having missed a golden opportunity. So, with nothing to lose I decide to go and buy a paper, any excuse will do.

As I descend the stairs I am stopped by a friend who says, " Hey Alex did you know Dylan's in Camden" - how big is this conspiracy? Surely this is too elaborate, am I becoming paranoid?

Huffs proves to be deserted, not unusual on a Wednesday, I am increasingly aware that a custard pie could be on its way. I listen intently for stifled giggles. Drawing breath I venture on to Chalk Farm Road, trying my best to look nonchalant while eagerly scanning the faces around.

I am so intent on what is around that I miss the obvious. Walking backwards towards me is a figure in black wearing a tall hat, I nearly walk right into him I am so astonished. Legs turn to jelly, brain ceases to function, the world stands still, heart stops. I always thought those phrases were at best clichéd hyperbole but they are true, that is what it felt like. Even writing about it brings back the moment. I wonder if Dylan understands the effect he can have on people? I could have reached out and knocked his hat off.

It came to me that I was standing in the middle of the pavement gawping like an idiot. There he was walking backwards towards me, there was a video camera in front of him and music playing from a huge ghetto-blaster. His voice, a song I didn't recognise. MOVE LEGS I ordered and stumbled to the left as he strolled backwards past me.

All of a quiver I continued down into Camden High Street, stopping and talking to him was impossible. For some unknown reason I did go into the newsagents and buy a paper.

So there I was in the middle of Camden, newspaper under my arm, suddenly desperate to 'phone Andrew and yell *get your ass up to Camden NOW*.

I half ran half walked back towards the office, Dylan is still there, video camera rolling, he is chatting quite amiably with the technicians. Here's my chance - I could go up to him, but what would I say? Nothing comes to mind, in an agony of indecision the chance is lost. I race back to the office determined to get a hold of Andrew, whatever else he must come to Camden.

The rest is history.

Except perhaps for one abiding image. Later that afternoon a dishevelled sweating figure appears in the office. Breathless and incoherent, an almost hysterical Andrew arrives to relate his tale and a legend is born.

Well there it is, Andrew.

**Homer 10** is a superb issue, without doubt the best yet, "keep on keepin' on".

*Ah well, Alex the only two problems with this are the ever-popular Dylan fan letter sign-off - "keep on keepin' on"- ('cos I ain't) and the antepenultimate paragraph! Other than that it was nice to read you account - doesn't it all seem like a long, long time ago now? We'll all still be watching the weather forecasts for cryptic allusions, y'know.*

## ROBERT ROBERTSON

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I received your communication yesterday. Drew had warned me that it was on its way but had not elaborated on the content. I think it was a bit rich to send me what must be the most O.T.T. piece of writing just when I had got the previous issues of **Homer** out of my system. As I only received the first two or three issues, this has taken a considerable period of time. I assumed that since I had not subscribed for you "bible" that I had been mercifully deleted from the posting list. Having spent the best part of Monday night reading **Homer** I am now considering suing you for invasion of privacy. I didn't think it was possible but, unless issue ten was a "special" it's about three or four times bigger than any of the issues I'd read. Unfortunately the "quality" has not improved, in fact I think that you have ghosted most of the articles. I refuse to believe that the world contains so many Dylan numpties.

I am glad that you at last managed to meet your hero. It obviously made your day, but reading about your "knees buckling, head spinning and heart attempting to smash through ribs" I thought for one dreadful moment *Good Grief, he's going to have sex with him.*<sup>1</sup> The rest of your narrative calmed my fears in that respect. The aura or whatever that Bob emits is easily explained. It's quite common on the streets of any town or city. The people who possess it usually have only a passing acquaintance with soap and water, carry a can of super lager and mumble and burst into song for no apparent reason. No-one can understand a word they say and thus they have two things in common with Bob, an aura and pathetic singing voices.

The next article related quite well to the closing paragraphs of the first. I take it that if you had been hit by the "traffic" that you would have sat up and said: *It's Alright Ma, (I'm only Bleeding)*. I note that Paula - is she any relation to that appalling lettuce that everyone leaves on their plate - listens with her eyes. "Blink and you might miss something" - I suggest that if she listened with her ears she might really hear Dylan and publish a disclaimer.

....(some days later)...as you can see from the date, I took a breather. I thought 'I'll be fair, I'll not be prejudiced - a break and then back to **Homer!** Well it didn't work. I don't know if you know this, but I really like potato fritters but unfortunately they have a nasty side effect - they give me migraines. So does reading **Homer** but unlike the fritters I don't get any joy from it. I am sure that if Dylan had not existed you would have invented him. I mean take Carol Bedford for example, a **Froggie Went A-Courtin'** fanatic. She can remember an album her dad bought for her when she was ten, describes the cover and the singer, but cannot remember the name - only **Froggie Went A-Courtin'** - I ask you! I note that because of her age she doesn't like America. I wonder if she likes it less now than when she was 21 or does she find that she dislikes it more as she gets older. I know you will deny it, but you obviously only printed her letter because she thought **Homer**, *the slut* is the best fanzine on Dylan. I could go on but I don't want to malign all your chums but suffice to say Simon Barrass - does his family own the Barras in Glasgow famous for selling tat and trash? -is crazy and should be certified.

I didn't read all the **Bits & Bobs** but did notice a serious omission. You may not know this but I read it in the preview for some hideous television show, (meant to keep the newspaper but forgot), Bob wrote a song for Nana Maskouri, don't know if that's the correct spelling, it's all Greek to me. I suppose the next thing will be that they will record a duet. Frank Sinatra has done his duet album and now it is Bob's turn. I mean who could resist it? The names of the people who have recorded his songs are legendary - i.e. Lulu, Nana Whatever, Barbara Dickson, Tiny Tim, Cilla Black ...the list is endless. I can just imagine your wee face when/if you found such a delight in your Christmas stocking.

Talking of Christmas, has Bob ever recorded a Christmas album? Almost everyone else has. In fact his good friend and born again, and again, and again etc. Christian, Cliff Richard could give him some tips. They have a lot in common apart from their Christianity. They should both have chucked it years ago, they both have as much dress sense as Stevie Wonder without his dresser,<sup>2</sup> and, yes, you've guessed it, neither of them can sing. Not that they have done too badly as they both seem to attract obsessive fans. I strongly suspect that once, in your cups, I heard you singing *The Young Ones*. You denied all knowledge and said you had, in fact, been singing **John Wesley Harding** in the style of Cliff Richard. Perhaps the numptie who droned on forever comparing Dylan the singer (hah!) with Dylan the poet could pick up on the Bob/Cliff thing.<sup>3</sup> In fact, since they have never been seen together, he might find that they are one and the same person. A sort of pop version of *The Portrait Of Dorian Gray* (excuse spelling it was never my strong point).<sup>3</sup> If his research does in fact prove this point I would expect some form of recognition.

Just to digress, I am listening to some real music as I write - Kate and Anna McGarrigle **Heartbeats Accelerating** - it is excellent. I got a new c.d. a while back and have been buying a lot of music. I may even buy a Bob Dylan c.d. It won't be played but he will fill the "D" in the alphabet.<sup>4</sup> I know this is a daft question but do you ever listen to anyone other than Bob? I know Pia likes Van Morrison, I thought she would have had more sense, but the thought of two people existing on a diet of Bob and Van the Man depresses me. Maybe they will release the **Wild Rover** as a Christmas disc. I can see by the way that Bob was dressed that he was obviously in London to audition for a part in **A Christmas Carol** or something equally dire. I suppose that since you saw him you have obtained a similar hat. I know that you are vertically challenged but please don't buy a hat like that, you will not grow in stature you will only look ridiculous.

PS I hate the expression fanzine please don't use it and please ask your contributors to loosen up a bit.

<sup>1</sup>Ah, if only...incidentally you should've read the original version before Pia edited out the hard core thoughts.

<sup>2</sup>Ach, I suppose it had to happen - for once, I agree!

<sup>3</sup>Hey, you went to the wrong school, don't feel guilty about it. (Or at least don't carry that guilt with you, let someone unburden your as yet undiscovered soul.)

<sup>4</sup>Don't your Darts albums count then?

*Dear Robert, how nauseating to hear from you again. I listen to many people other than Dylan and I am in fact very fond of Kate & Anna McGarrigle too, you know. Unlike you, however, I don't just listen to female singers - maybe that's because I get on with them in day-to-day life and don't only meet them in songs? If someone from Glasgow ever praises the city to inhabitants of an English town they are almost always asked: "If you love it so much why did you leave?" (I find it illuminating that I was never asked the question in Rome or Helsinki but always am in London - but that is by the by.) I long ago gave up the sensible answers to this question and usually restrict myself to some remark about employment or lack thereof. Now I'll always add: "...and to get away from Robert Robertson."*

## BILL LAING

Congratulations on tracking Bob Dylan down and getting his autograph. It's easy to say but you should have asked him to sign all the pictures. He could only have said "no".

Still, after driving off with **Homer 9** in tow, perhaps you can expect a call from Bob! Or better still he might read my comments and ask to get in touch with me. (You can always dream.)

I meant to drop you a line before to mention something from your replies to my letters in **Homer 9**. The first night in 1978 I bought a ticket outside from a tout and was pleasantly surprised to be seated just to the right of the stage. The only thing I couldn't see was half of one of the girls if you see what I mean.

Anyway the point I was going to make was that I too 'phoned home from Earl's Court. I phoned my wife. I'm sure it was halfway through the show. Was there an interval or is my memory going? It was definitely sometime midway as I remember being so excited I had to tell her.

Could you ask the person, "She knows who she is" who asked me for tapes of Aosta, Juan Les Pins etc. which I sent 6 months ago if she is ever going to do the decent thing and send some tapes in return.

I walked out of Earl's Court that night thinking what a wonderful world it was to be sure and the next day (June 16th) my first son was born. But I was back at Earl's Court the next night after seeing Robert. My wife picked it not me!

*Great story, Bill. Your memory is OK, there was an interval after **Going, Going Gone**. Nowadays we'd be ecstatic with either half of these as a full show would we not? I certainly would be, I recently acquired **Border Beneath The Sun** (Paris 6th, July '78) - I know, I know, it's been out for ages but it's new to me - and was struck by the power and sheer length of the shows then.*

*I don't really think asking Dylan to sign all the pictures would've been the correct approach! As to the tapes - am I supposed to know who you mean, because I'll never remember. Tapes come & go, you know, and usually balance out in the end.*

## LUCAS STENSLAND (2)

I purchased **World Gone Wrong** earlier this week. Wow! It is as if Daniel Lanois had produced this at the **Oh Mercy** sessions. The album's art work is great, the liner notes are wondrous and the songs are brilliant. There's one problem though, the album was recorded with too much static sound. I forget about it pretty quick, but it's going to bother casual listeners. I love everything on the album with the exception of **Jack-A-Roe**, but it may grow on me like **Jim Jones** did last year. It would be a hoot if Dylan lands up with more acoustic albums in the 1990s than in the 1960s. I predict that Dylan's next album will be a lot like **Bringing It All Back Home**; part rock 'n' roll and part solo folk/blues. That would be nice, huh?

I enjoyed your letter very much, your letters always cheer me up...what do you feel was the better representation of the tour - **Before The Flood** or **Hard Rain**?

It's Halloween tonight so I'm hiding in my room from evil things. Whenever I close my eyes I see Santana!

*And you can't get much more evil than that. I told you earlier that you'd written more letters! I wonder if you mention Santana in all of them - have you got over them yet? I don't suppose so, I still have nightmares about 1984.*

*As to the **Before The Flood** or **Hard Rain** question - the former was much more representative though I hardly need tell you I think the latter is much the superior album.*

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**R. BAILEY**

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I read somewhere that there are many studio takes/roughs of the beautiful **Sweetheart Like You**. Evidence that there are more than one must be shown in the paperback **Lyrics '62-'85** in which the slight change is in the first verse where: *he gone north, he ain't around* has replaced *he gone north, for a while* and *but he sure left here after sundown* replaces *but he sure left here in style*, as on the **Infidels** version.

How might have these changes been picked out by the book's compiler (whoever that person is) when the remainder of the song is written identical to the album take? From the distinct differences between the two lines it cannot be attributed to a publishing error. The question of other takes existing is intriguing because (again I read this somewhere) Dylan remains unhappy about the lyrics in some way. Certainly, though, the song vocally is sweet enough, not only for the Mark Knopfler-esque tonation in the very first two lines of the song, but also the superb, trademark Knopfler guitar outro, cushioned on the purring Alan Clark organ, he being another Dire Straits (former?) member. Many is the time that that guitar passage alone has been on my daily "mental airwaves". In spite of **Sweetheart's** completeness, though, perhaps Bob has come up with an alternative for *dump like this?*

After **Sweetheart**, **Infidels** remains a project that might have been, had Knopfler not gone on that world tour with Dire Straits. There must be many fans like myself who are plagued with the 'love to hate' view that they have with the record. What if Knopfler could twist Dylan's elbow to allow his roughs "at home, I think" to be released, if not reworked? What with such known gems as the four **Bootleg Series** outtakes we could not only restructure the whole caboodle (spitting out the ghastly **Neighbourhood Bully** and **Union Sundown**; **Man of Peace** accepted on Knopfler's trade rhythm guitar<sup>5</sup>) but we could possibly put together the right takes of the songs that made it and give Knopfler a 'job fully done'. Not to mention **Julius and Ethel**. **Blind Willie McTell** would be our album closer, of course.

In issue 33 and 34 of **Isis**, I came across two opinions that the drumming on **Infidels** "mars certain tracks"; one saying that it is "too distracting to cope with" and that there is a one drum, one stick approach on, for example **Licence To Kill**. I guess that whether one likes the classic reggae rhythm section of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare is only a matter of opinion. I feel that the effect is a strong characteristic of the album as a whole and never gets out of hand at all. More to the point, the heavy beat enhances that stark sense of uncertainty, even slight desolation, that some of the tracks have.

The presence of a dense rhythm enhances the outtake **Foot of Pride** and matches the lyrical mood of this great song. The two players are an inseparable unit, the bass line on **Jokerman**, for example is a vehicle for Knopfler's/Taylor's quavering guitar passage. **Tell Me** is my second favourite **Infidels** outtake and the concrete yet fluid bass rising and falling does well to keep Dylan's personal question time running in the song, along with the sensitive, whining guitar providing a pitching "Yes?", "No?" portraying his limited success in finding out more about the person (girl) sitting on the other side of the table. **Infidels** remains a shell of what it might have been. Even the (superb) inner sleeve picture of Bob looking at the ground above Jerusalem for clues says it all.

But then without the album we wouldn't have the "Sweet Gift Of Gab"

*Richard, you wrote this over a year ago, I've been saving it because I was going to do an issue devoted mainly to **Infidels** later this year - but that is not now to be. I think **Infidels** could've been much better too, but, you know, they are Dylan's songs; this is his job - maybe he should have a say in what goes on his albums? Also you'd never get the agreement you imply early in your letter as to what should be included and what should not - even about versions that you feel are "a must". (Which **Blind Willie McTell** do you throw on to the scrapheap - there's an argument for a start.) As to **Sweetheart**, I really like both versions. I agree with much of what you'd change, I have little time for **Neighbourhood Bully** or **Union Sundown** - but some people really like them. Me? I'd have a double album including both **Blind Willie McTells** - opener & closer - get Don Was to produce it, leave only Dylan's guitar audible :-)) ..etc. I don't know - it would have made one heck of an issue, though!*

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**JAMES KELLY**

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Sometime in 1965, just as I was leaving school, the gym teacher took us for music. (It was that kinda school.) He introduced the class to Bob Dylan (not on the curriculum!) He could play the guitar and went through some of the songs in discussion with the class. After playing **Mr. Tambourine Man** he explained he had

<sup>5</sup>Ed - Second hardest thing I can remember having to type - you accept a Dylan song because of Knopfler!! Steady on!



dropped a line from each verse, (i.e. *It's just a ragged clown behind*) because he didn't think it was musically correct. (Remember this was the gym teacher.) I accepted this at the time but now I realize he was a prat!

What reminded me of this was reading 12 pages of 'Burning Bush' in issue 10 - the footnote informed me, that after listening to **Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands** for 20-odd years, I should have been fast-forwarding the 3rd verse. This is not only the author's opinion, he quoted Richard Goldstein in the *Poetry Of Rock* as leaving out this verse because Dylan denied him the right, inferring some artistic decision had been taken. But I would like to point out that the same book had verses missing from **Subterranean Homesick Blues** and **Desolation Row**. Maybe Bob was being mysterious about his lyrics or maybe your JRS would make a bloody good gym teacher.

*Yes, I'm sure he would, I wish he'd been my gym teacher - in fact I'd even have preferred your aesthetically challenged gym teacher to either of the two psychopaths I had. (Is it a prerequisite for the job? My two ended up in court on brutality charges - mind you one of them, Frank Coulston, played in the Scottish League Cup Final when Partick Thistle beat Celtic 4-1 so he had some excuse for being demented; the other was born that way.)*

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## MIKE GERFIN

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I didn't listen to a lot of Dylan in the last couple of months, I was at the Garden Festival (Switzerland), though, and loved it. What I like most about it was to see how much Dylan is enjoying himself on stage. This feature does not come across on tape, and I have some reservations about the tapes. But the show was great despite the terrible press it got in Switzerland.

I'm listening to other kinds of music at the moment, most of all the Velvet Underground who gave a terrific concert in Basle as support for U2 (should be the other way round, shouldn't it?) And what I hear on the bootleg from Paris is just fantastic. Other great bands I "discovered" include Dinosaurs Jr. The Lemonheads and the Boo Radleys.

Hope I didn't lose you on this excursion into other territories.

*No you didn't lose me, Mike, but you came close - confirming my worries that I've never got the time to listen to enough people anymore. VU supporting U2 is hysterical - did the same people watch both acts? Bizarre. I hear that the VU are performing the Dylan trick of releasing a sub-standard live album from a tour that yields great bootlegs. You'd almost think that they (such artists) are out to encourage bootleggers, wouldn't you?*

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## GILLY LITTLE

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Finally one week before leaving London for India, Australia and New Zealand I'm getting it together to send money for **Homer, the slut**.<sup>6</sup> I have included extra for back issues, if you don't have any please treat the balance as a donation to the oh so worthy cause. Seriously I think it's a great magazine.

I loved your description of meeting his excellency and palpitated with you throughout the article. I'm sure I would never have said a word & I've been obsessed for 31 years (sh..)

And to think I once slept next to you!

*Ah, now I see why you are fleeing to the other side of the world! So how are you gonna queue up for the next Hammersmith shows?*

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# London Bob Dylan Club

The Lamb, Lamb's Conduit St WC1

Last Sunday In The Month; From 7:00PM Onwards

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<sup>6</sup>A doctor writes - there is no need to order this magazine and then go all the way around the world to avoid reading it. Simply do not order it in the first place.

JOHN DENLEY



Thanks for the first **Homer** to reach double figures and I look forward to the fiftieth! I realize that you put an awful lot of work into the magazine and I for one am grateful. Your meeting Dylan must have been fate's reward for all your endeavours. I know how you must have felt meeting your old hero. I similarly have liquidized upon meeting several others of mine. Basically you feel a bit of a prat for getting into the situation, but at the same time you want to keep your nerve so as not to reveal that fact! You want to appear cool, but there's a fire under your collar! *Shall I stay or shall I go?* as The Clash would say.

**Homer 10** is the best yet in my experience, bulky but with little excess fat, intelligent entertainment in true Homeric fashion. There were some fine original contributions from Bob Forryan, Mark Carter et al; plus great reprints, the list is almost infinite. So keep on keepin' on Andrew, I'm sure there's a great deal of support out there, as evidenced by those marvellous letters in the mag.

I'm still working away at my **Chimes Of Freedom** article and just pray that it will ultimately prove worthy of your brilliant *Slut*. I wonder what Mr. Zee made of it? Can you imagine a magazine based on yourself {yes - ed.} being placed before your eyes! - A. Muir, *the slut*, say (with utmost respect to yourself.) Still we can't all be Bob Dylan, I suppose!

In an ideal world you would reprint all the back issues for all us late-comers to the **Homer** fold, but that's being churlish of me, as your work-rate must be prodigious in putting the current mega-issues of **Homer** to bed! Peace & Love to you, Pia and yourself both.

*You realize that all of this kind of encouragement made it damn hard for me to stop, John - the number of people who wrote - unknowing I was about to stop - keep on keepin' on - was remarkable. Thanks very much for all the kind words, I can take all the praise in the world. I'll catch up with you in your next letter - the first in the "After The Crash" section of these letters!*

## JOHN DENLEY (2)

A belated response to your pre-Christmas letter announcing the impending demise of venerable **Homer**. Perhaps I am far from alone in bewailing the future loss of such an important contribution to the world of Dylan orientated literature.

I appreciate that the strain of producing the magazine must have taken its toll on your resources, both mental and physical. It is just a shame that I had no forewarning of this announcement. I am sure that you would have found willing assistance from within your readership. I for one would have asked: "What can I do for you? Having made that statement I must set down the words: "Mea Culpa" - a rather pretentious way of apologising for the non- appearance of any **Chimes Of Freedom** article from yours truly. You have not even seen a scrap of writing, but I possess a series of fragmentary writings concerning the great song's genesis, antecedents, internal structure and how it exists in Dylan's canon and so on ad nauseam. The truth is I was not happy with the patchwork, unstructured nature of some of my work - and as for putting it altogether, forget it!

A late candidate for the title was: "From **Chimes Of Freedom** to **Ring Them Bells**, the changing times and perceptions of Bob Dylan." Basically my latest tack was to portray the sea change in Dylan's world-view as reflected in those two eponymous songs of the title. But then again that sounds a bit like an old **Telegraph** article! (in terms of pseudory) A miss is as good as a mile to test out an old cliché, and an unseen article is as good as none at all.

Anyway this is just to thank you for all your fine efforts in the past and I hope to subscribe to OTT soon, and await your contributions keenly. If you do reprieve **Homer**, I, for one, will breathe a sigh of relief and promise to submit contributions. We live in hope, but, if you gotta go: - "you're gonna make me lonesome when you go!"

*Thanks, John, and I know you'd have liked to have helped keep **Homer** going - as would many others. However I don't think most people understand either the complexities of setting up administrative help or the level of commitment required. I have been promised many times more articles than I've been sent since **Homer** began - and I mean promised - not the many more that have been mentioned. This is not because people are deliberately "letting me down" - it is just because they are not able to do what they promise for one reason or another. I, too, made fragmentary notes about **Chimes Of Freedom** looking at many of the same areas as yourself. I soon realized, however, that I wouldn't have time to do this as well as all the other things I had to do for the magazine/in life; so I narrowed it down to what you see in **Focus On** and wrote it on Christmas Day/Boxing Day. With the best wishes you couldn't send in your article - imagine if I was counting on it? Imagine if it was some boring administration thing you weren't even interested in and I needed it completed tomorrow? Would it be worth it? Wouldn't you get to resent it? I would, in any case, spend as much time worrying about it as it'd take me to do it.*

*A classic case is (was) the subscription side of things. This always took up a lot of time and was something quite a few people offered to take over. However, the time it would take me to separate the letters for me from the letters solely for subscription plus the tracking of those that were both (the majority) always seemed just as complicated as doing it myself. Unless, of course, I stopped answering the letters - but the whole point of **Homer** was that it was supposed to be friendly and approachable.*

*Anyway I know you, along with many others, genuinely wanted to - and would have - helped **Homer**, the slut out, and it makes me feel good to know that. However it was always a very personal fanzine (or 'personalzine' as I suggested way back in **Issue One**) and I would have found it difficult to change this and to organize others into helping.*

## GUY BORG

I'm really sorry to hear that you've decided to call it a day with **Homer**, but I understand how difficult it must've been just keeping it going this long. Thanks for a terrific fanzine - it's been great for me to be introduced to the writings of people like Bob Forryan and your good self, and has brought me much pleasure + a lot of fun since I subscribed at issue 6. I'll miss it greatly. I'll also miss the Warmline (of which the highlight for me was your mildly coherent and undeniably ecstatic appraisal of the Monday Hammersmith - "Och he's just a lovely man..." - couldn't agree more.), and the trading of football "banter" (by the way I am so glad that Liverpool have finally got rid of Souness - but they'd better keep away from Dave Webb...)

I'm sure you realize this, but you've done a great job and pleased a lot of people - the warmth you put into **Homer** really did (and still does!) pour off of every page. Thanks once again and the very best of luck with your future Dylan plans.

*Thanks, Guy - I have a highlight from our conversations which also pertains to the Hammersmith 1993 gigs. Specifically from the first show when you asked me as I walked down the aisle - "How soon after the start do you think they'll allow the crowd to surge to the front?" The chances of a "surge" at any point seemed very remote and impossibly so before the encores but I didn't have the heart to tell you.*

## STEPHEN ROWNTREE

I was sorry to hear of the death of **Homer**. I wish you the best of luck, we all have to keep on keepin' on - turning of a new page; the starting of a new age etc. As far as I understand I am due two issues, please send me issues 1 & 3. I really enjoyed your back issue 2, especially your existentialist essay **Modes Of Nonsense Verse**. I hope you create some new meaning in this absurd world and continue to escape the 'nausea'. Keep on keepin' on.

*Thanks, Stephen - it seems a long time to me since I wrote that essay. I really should revisit it and do it properly by including **The Basement Tapes** - especially since the unearthing of some really classic "nonsense verses".*

## MEL PRUSSACK

My name is Mel Prussack and I have been a follower of Bob Dylan for over 25 years. I have a Dylan "shrine" in my home which is a small museum which celebrates the work of Mr. Dylan. I have been actively collecting the LPs, CDs, video films, magazines and what have you! I have been a subscriber of *Homer, the slut* since its inception - as a matter of fact when I first subscribed through you - you even sent me your personal reviews of Dylan concerts you were at in France. For that I never thanked you but I will now as I loved them! I have been subscribing to *Homer* more recently through Rolling Tomes as I want to give them as much support as possible so that they can grow and prosper.



At any rate I am writing to you now for two important reasons: the first is that I had to tell you how your meeting with Dylan was written with such feeling that it was like I myself was living the experience with you. It was just an incredible thing and I want to thank you for it. The second thing is to tell you that I am very upset that you have decided you are not going to continue with your magazine.

*Homer, the slut* serves an extremely important function in Dylan circles. All the other Dylan Fanzines are very important - but when an issue comes out I have it read the same day I receive it - But with *Homer* it takes weeks to get through it. The idea of picking a song and reprinting what ever anyone has written about it is a great service. While I have most of the publications you use, it is a great difference when it is done for me. It saves hours and hours of time and you do find articles and publications that I do not have.

This service is worth more than the price of subscribing to *Homer*. Then of course no other fanzine actually reprints reviews and articles in their entirety as you do - I cannot underestimate the importance of this. It is impossible for an individual to even try to come close to doing this. Again, we may get the information from other mags - but to search out the actual articles can take too much time and life is much too short. An example of the importance of this feature is an article I am enclosing (which you probably already have)<sup>7</sup> concerning "Hurricane" Carter. You may not be aware of it but even "literate" people as "Kinky" Friedman believe that Bob Dylan was wrong when he went to the defence of Hurricane. I myself read the original book *The Sixteenth Round* and the book *Lazarus and the Hurricane* so I was totally convinced that Bob was right in everything he did to try and free this man. I think this article in the *New York Daily News* should be read by all Dylan followers - and where will it be read if without *Homer, the slut*?

I certainly can understand that it takes time and money to do the job you do but this endeavour is not something that is just for today - the work of Dylan will be studied by future generations and your publication could eventually be used as a textbook in the future. Think about that. I hope that you can get whatever help you require to continue the fabulous *Homer, the slut*. I am sure that the subscribers would also be willing to pay more for it, as it is well worth it. If this cannot be worked out then I just want to say that the ten issues that you put together will be a bright beacon of light in the ever expanding study of Dylan's work and for that thank you very much!

I am in the process of getting on the internet service, so I might possibly be able to have a dialogue with you on Dylan matters in the future....

<sup>7</sup> No, I didn't have it - it is amazing to think that nearly every time somebody sent a cutting prefaced with these words, it turned out to be something new! Thanks, Mel.

*Thanks for all the kind words, Mel. Your letter went on to once again exhort me to continue with Homer - but I am afraid I'll have to disappoint you there.*

*In fact you argue a pretty convincing case as to why I shall be disappointing you. From your own letter we hear that:*

- ..when it is done for me. It saves hours and hours of time and you do find articles and publications that I do not have....
- ..All the other Dylan Fanzines are very important - but when an issue comes out I have it read the same day I receive it - But with Homer it takes weeks to get through it...
- ..but to search out the actual articles can take too much time and life is much too short...
- ..I certainly can understand that it takes time and money to do the job you do ...

*It is just too much, I no longer can find the time, believe me - I've tried.*

*It has been great having you on board the good ship Homer, Mel, I well remember the pleasure of receiving your first letter.*

*And, hey, it'll be 14 issues when I have finished, not ten!*

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## JIM DEVLIN

Thanks for your letter and "farewell" letter...I am extremely sorry to read about your decision to call a halt to your wonderful publication. I'm in full sympathy with you to be honest; in the words of somebody else: "seemed to have created a monster" - y'know it's all gotten too big! So, I can feel for you, but offer my warmest thanks for all the time, effort and stamp-licking you put into it. In the meantime: Take it easy, but take it!

*Yes, indeed, a many-headed monster at that! I was going to publicize your fanzine which is now heading for the 35th edition but, I am too annoyed that Pia has written something for yours & not for mine! Oh, OK, I'll give it a plug anyway; Jim runs the Leonard Cohen Information Service: details from Jim Devlin, 25 Whirlow Court Road, Whirlow, Sheffield, South Yorks, S11 9NS, UK. He will also be at the Dylan bash in Manchester this May so you could always subscribe to his service & meet him at the same time! (He'll be wearing a name badge.)*

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## CHRIS RAMSDEN

It is with deep regret that I enclose £7:50 for my last two copies of Homer, *the slut!* Many, many thanks for all your work over the last few years. I hope you reconsider and at the same time in the future give us Homer, *the sequel.*

*Chris, you are not the first to mention "the sequel" or "son of the slut" and I suppose that stranger things have happened - when Mo Johnston left Partick Thistle who would have predicted that his travels would take him to Celtic, Rangers, Hearts and a couple of foreign teams?*

*I do not see it myself so I hope my plans for future writings go at least some way towards fulfilling your wish.*

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## PAUL FLETCHER

Well sad tidings it was. Since discovering Homer via Ray Keats and buying back copies at the Isis do I've really enjoyed the mag in so many ways. The cuttings service was brilliant and many of the features were really excellent. And rather than becoming stale I thought Homer was just developing. Hopefully it is a personal blip and you'll rethink, although having run a private mag (underground OZ style thing in the late 60s and early 70s) I understand the fatigue it causes. As for the interest in Bob being unhealthy I can only point you to the words of Mr. Was in a recent Telegraph. Anyway you will be sorely missed.

I enclose a cheque for the last two issues for £7:50 and also a cutting about Kinky Friedman and Bob from *Country Music People* you might not have seen. I also include a Bob Neuwirth tape which is tremendous - if you have it just pass it on to someone who'll appreciate it.

Thanks again - and, will *On The Tracks* be worth it?

*Thanks for the compliments, Paul. I obviously expressed myself badly when I talked about "becoming stale". What I meant was that as I had started to feel running the magazine was a chore (primarily because of time pressures) so I was worried that it would become stale in the future.*

*Don Was's words were quite comforting to a lot of us, I'm sure! However, I think you know what I was getting at - I believe it is detrimental to one's appreciation of Dylan apart from anything else. Other stimulation/experiences etc. are surely helpful contrasts/comparisons/adjuncts/enhancers to Dylan listening.*

*Thanks very much too for the cuttings & the Neuwirth tape which I'd never heard before.*

*I can't answer your last question for you, except to say that my column will be!*

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## JOHN KAPPES

I am sorry to hear that you are discontinuing **Homer, the slut** - a most enjoyable read! I certainly don't envy anybody undertaking tasks like these - deadlines, finances - it becomes a chore in the end (having done similar things in the past, I can appreciate the difficulties).

I think you have made a very worthwhile contribution to the History of a person who will be remembered many years after we have all gone! (Well done! Not forgetting Pia as well).

*Thanks, John, and good luck to you and Adrian Richardson with your book. (It Used To Be Like That: Bob Dylan 1965-66 British Isles Tour)*

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## D. A. BELL

First of all may I say how sorry I am to hear of your decision to cease the magnificent work that you have put into **Homer**, but you obviously know your own mind and at the end of the day you have also to consider those other little matters in life - especially your health!

I shall miss **Homer** - it has been a superb reading experience - different to anything else I've come across, but I'm sure that you will put the same effort into **On The Tracks** and **Series Of Dreams**.

I, as a serving member of the RAF, am well aware of the hassle that deadlines cause and also how much pressure stress can cause, I've been involved in two wars in the last ten years - having done my bit in the Falklands conflict and also the Gulf war, only to be now told that I am off to Bosnia for four months in a couple of months time - still it's the life I chose so I'll take the rough with the many good world-wide tours I've had.

*Erm, can I now take back everything I've ever said about "pressure" and crawl away and hide somewhere? ("Yes" - Joe McShame)*

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## MEL GAMBLE

Thanks for the information regarding **Homer**. Very sorry to see it go. It was a brave decision to start it, and a brave one to finish it. I'm sure you'll be active in the future, you strike me as the type. For myself, I enjoyed the spirit of **Homer**, I'll miss it. There was nothing else quite like it. Hopefully catch you in May in Manchester.

*Indeed I hope you do, Mel, along with many others I've long wanted to chat to but always been too busy! I should have more time this year as I can't get the Getty Foundation to lend me the money for a stand.*

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## JOHN MACLEOD

Many thanks for the Christmas letter - I'm very sorry to hear that you've decided to call it a day with **Homer** - particularly as the last two or three issues have been superb. Anyway I shan't moan - you're doing the sensible thing - you'll have more time to listen to Bob!

As regards subscription, could you send me back issues nos. 1 & 3 - any money left over, use it to go towards postal costs, or better still have a drink on me. If you do any Dylan books or booklets in the future, please let me know, as I'd be interested to read any further work you do.

*Thanks, John, I'm going to be well stocked with shandies if I take everyone up on their kind offers! I'll be sure to let you know when I do produce anything in the future. Realistically we are talking about next year. I intend to lay some foundation for future publications later this year. In the meantime I've the back issues and my OTT column to keep me busy - along with SOD and Highway 61!!*

### JANICE (AND JOE) HARRISON

Thanks for your letter, sorry to read that you have decided to call it a day with the slut. I must say your decision came as a surprise, although when I read of your reasons - an unhealthy and unreasonable interest in Dylan - I can appreciate them, in fact I can apply them to myself! According to your letter we have subscribed up to issue 13 but if we are due a refund forget it - its water under the bridge.

We both look forward to meeting you at future concerts/Conventions.

*Now you are being just too generous as you've just subscribed - so expect a make-weight for those missing issues! See you at Manchester for a celebration of "unhealthiness".*

### ALLAN HOUTBY



Firstly can I say how sorry I was to receive your letter detailing the end of **Homer**. I have enjoyed each and every issue and always looked forward to the next dropping through the letterbox.

I don't suppose there is anything I, or anyone else, can say to make you change your mind but if there was I would be one of the first to offer you both words or my service in any way I could.

I understand the stresses and strains that such a publication can put upon you and I hope that it has not taken too much of a toll.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been a subscriber from **Homer's** first issue and seen it steadily grow into the great magazine it is today, it will be sorely missed.

I hope you keep in touch, I enjoyed meeting you at Leicester and hope to see you again at other conventions and through other publications.

*I am confident we'll meet again Allan; I'm delighted you've enjoyed the trip through all the **Homers** and hope I can come up with more to please you in the future.*

### DONNA MCBRIDE

I'm sorry to hear that **Homer** is ceasing, but, as you say, it's better to quit while you are ahead! The stress you were under showed in (but did not in any way impair!) your editorials.

Good luck and best wishes for your future plans. I will look out for the book/booklets that you intend to write on Bob.

Thanks for the magazines. I always knew Bob had "fans" but didn't realize there were ones as fanatical as me!

P.S. Do you know the address for **The Telegraph** magazine.

*No, never heard of it Donna, but I can give you the one for **On The Tracks** if you want.*

*(Only kidding, **The Telegraph's** subscription address is: PO Box 22, Romford, Essex, RM1 2RF.)*

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**JOE MCSHAME**

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What a year, eh? Some excellent live performances (The Fleadh, against all expectations, Wolftrap, The Jones Beaches etc.). A great new album (nobody sings the blues like Bob singing Blind Willie McTell), the liner notes, you getting to gawp and squeak at the man himself, the Supper Club (My Back Pages and Queen Jane) and then to cap it all we hear that Homer is finishing next issue!

Please give my regards and sympathy to Pia...I suppose you'll have more time to spend with her in '94.

The literary world's in mourning, here's to a Homerless New Year.

*In the years since issue three Joe "I've-got-through-one-Dostoyevsky-book-so-I'm-obviously-cultured" McShame has often promised to write something for Homer. This is it folks - less than ten lines, one long drawn out joke. Praise where praise is due, however, it was (just) legible so he must've written it before breakfast one day.*

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**NEIL BERRY**

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Having received the Homer Xmas message, I would just like to say how sorry I am that you have considered to call it a day. Homer, I believe, had carved a niche for itself amongst the Dylanzines being informative, analytical and witty - and unusually unique in the lack of sarcasm directed at other like-minded mags (something which unfortunately seems to be becoming the norm). I shall also miss, of course, the warmline (almost as much as the mag). Is there no way the warmline could be continued as a sort of sister line to ON THE TRACKS?"

*Ah the warmline - now I never knew this was quite as popular as it seems to be until I said I was closing it down. I can assure you it ain't so popular in our house/families or to our colleagues or friends! I have grown to enjoy doing it but I feel there are people in a better position to provide the service than me. The only way it could possibly continue would be in a self funding way - sufficient to cover the installation and quarterly rental of another line in our flat. I'll have checked out the various possibilities by the time you read this and will report on them elsewhere.*

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**MIKE JACKSON**

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**World Gone Wrong**

Strange, isn't it, that in this world of hi-tech, CD presses from a new album should contain different versions. Certainly John Bauldie (see Q's November review) received a different version from mine.

John's had takes where Dylan sounded 'tired and monotone'. Mine contained no takes like this. Instead, I managed to purchase a CD containing wonderfully creative interpretations of Dylan's distant musical roots. Even recently performed songs, **Delia** and **Two Soldiers**, are given enlightening treatments. I suppose that if you were listening to them from an adjacent room - as I know many critics prefer to do - you could mistake the soft, caressing, poignantly sad style and phrasing for being 'tired', though not, I believe, monotone. **Love Henry** is delicately delivered, quite belying its sinister tale.

My pressing has Dylan singing the **Ragged and Dirty** lyrics sympathetically - but not tired, and not monotone. The rendition of **Broke Down Engine** is heart-torn and appealing (both senses), and has Dylan's voice ranging up and down the scale.

**Blood In My Eyes** is wistful and saucy, delivered with a perceptible (on my CD) glint (or is it a leer), as well as blood, in the eye. But there's no tiredness behind these eyes. Not yet. Not ever.

**Delia**, my personal favourite - such tender, reflective feelings portrayed by a soft voice with the slightest breaks in it showing regret, sadness - no, not 'tiredness'. The voice is beautifully underscored with warm, resonant guitar-picking.

(There is an alternative explanation, of course, which in some way is more plausible: that John Bauldie is being impersonated at Q. After all, can this really be the same person who complained after Dunkerque, 1992, that Dylan's band was 'noisy'. I don't think so.)

Further evidence that an impersonator is abroad is the editorial published in **The Telegraph** (no 46) in which a John Bauldie reportedly went to Marseilles 1993 and yet did not mention one of the most remarkable performances of **Desolation Row** since 1966. Then again, neither **Homer, the slut** nor **Isis**, nor **On the**



**Tracks** have included it in their set lists. Why is that? (Am I, I wonder, receiving by some mysterious process CD's and tapes which have been peculiarly tampered with?)

Perhaps the album is epitomised by the final, beautifully sung, **Lone Pilgrim** - reminiscent of **Dark Eyes**. That is a song which usually features either as a pet hate or the song you most want him to perform. Perhaps the whole album's going to be like that. I think this album will stand the test of time. No, it isn't Bob Dylan who sounds tired and monotone ... not on my CD anyway --- how about yours?

*He sounds quite wonderful on mine, Mike, as other remarks in issue 11 will have made clear. I'm worried about referring to Mr. Bauldie since the last time I did he reacted so wildly, however, here goes. I can't see why so many people got so annoyed about his review in Q, it is just his opinion - I wouldn't mind betting it was a bit of a rush job, too. Oh, Ok I was a bit miffed when I read it as well but, hey, I could annoy you just as much by (honestly) saying I wish Dylan hadn't done **Desolation Row** since 1966! (And I don't care about set lists in **Homer**, the slut - that kinda stuff is for the warmline)*

*Forget all this, put the headphones on and play **Delia** again and again and again. I never tire of it.*

## JOHN SIVERNS

I was sad to receive your letter announcing the end of **Homer, the Slut**, I'm sure that I'm not the first to tell you that the magazine will be sorely missed. You created an important niche in the Dylan market, providing a wealth of information in a "user-friendly" fashion and without the feeling of exclusivity that sometimes creeps into other Dylan publications. The articles were consistently interesting and varied and covered areas left largely untouched elsewhere. Who else would have published my piece on Bob Neuwirth? (and thanks again for doing it).

Having said all the above, I do appreciate your reasons for calling it a day. I have marvelled at the amount of time and effort that you must have put into producing "**Homer**." Spare time must be an alien concept to you! If, as your letter implies, your health is suffering, then you are right to stop. Also, if, as you say, "the moment has passed", then that, too, indicates that the time is right for you.

I imagine that you must have lived and breathed Dylan for the last few years. I sometimes feel that my far less time-consuming devotion/obsession borders on the unhealthy, so I'm sure that you must feel the need to take a step back and look at things again. As the man said after the accident, "something's gotta change." I may be totally wide of the mark here, but did your meeting with Dylan have something to do with your decision? I've never met him but it's something I've always feared as much as looked forward to. It must be weird for him to meet people who'll remember the few minutes with him for a lifetime while for him it's just one more person you see for a short time. The imbalance of expectation there has always troubled me and I sometimes think it puts a slightly worrying perspective on the whole thing. Anyhow, as I say, I'm probably putting my own anxieties and doubts onto you. No doubt you have plenty of those of your own!

In any case, while I'm very sorry to see the end of "**Homer**", at least you leave the legacy of 11 fine magazines (not to mention 3 subscribers' issues) which are, in my view, a major addition to the body of research and commentary on Dylan. It's quite some achievement.

I'm sorry that this letter is so long but I did want to tell you how much I've enjoyed, and will continue to enjoy when re-reading, the magazine. As I also subscribe to **On The Tracks** and **Series Of Dreams** (as I imagine most "**Homer**" subscribers do) it'll be nice to see your thoughts and influence there. Anyway, enough now.

Thanks again for all your work. I'm sorry you're stopping but I understand why and I'm sure that, for you if not your readers, it's the right thing to do.

I look forward to receiving issue 11 and the subscriber issue 3, and also the reprints of issues 1 and 3 in due course and, of course, wish you all the best in the future.

*More and more kind words but I can take it, don't worry! I think your insight into the "meeting Dylan - quitting **Homer**" is far from "wide of the mark". In fact it was one of the things Pia first said and she knows me better than anyone. I think it is probably true that it had an effect though I wasn't conscious of it until she suggested it. It may be no more than that made me realize that I didn't know where else to go with **Homer**. It was successful in the shops, I had as large a mailing list as I could possibly hope for and Bob Dylan had signed one copy and taken another away. What else was left? Time for a new challenge, turning of a new page...*

## GRAHAM COLE

The last two *Homer, the slut* missives to arrive on my doormat have left me in two completely different states of thinking. The first, issue 10, and in particular your piece *Coming Straight From the Heart*, left me stunned with excitement at such an evocative piece of writing, whilst the second left me stunned with dismay that issue 11 plus the third subscribers' special will be the last from the *Homer, the slut* word processor. I felt had to write to say something about both sets of emotion. So, in reverse order then ...

I shall really miss *Homer, the slut* as I think it has gone from strength to strength with each issue, and has absolutely not been "getting stale". The mixture of articles 'n' letters 'n' things and the widely varying styles of writing have brought a great freshness to Dylan-related material. This is not to say that such freshness is missing from either *The Telegraph* or *Isis*, but all three magazines are very different in approach and style and all work brilliantly (for me at any rate). I'd have to add that I can understand your more personal reasons for stopping running *Homer, the slut*, having tried to write a very small circulation weekly pamphlet at work and finding that it was taking over too much of my own and my family's time (and it had nothing to do with Him!!). Nevertheless, you will be missed.

So to issue 10 which I read avidly from cover to cover on the trains from Southampton up to my Mum's in Frinton-on-sea, Essex, where I first heard Dylan on the pirates just offshore back in the early 60s. Since then, as is my custom, I've been back to the mag to re-read bits, but none has been read as much as the riveting account of your meeting with the Man, and I wanted to thank you for it. It was so good, I felt I was there with you (and Him, of course). I suppose we all have moments in our lives when, in the presence of someone famous, our hearts race, our bodies quiver, our tongues dry up, and we feel like (and possibly look like) some gibbering fool, and so your conveying of all these absurd notions that afternoon in Camden struck a chord within. From the start, I could picture the panic already setting in in the taxi - I remember once when I was working near Centre Point (is it still called that?) and I had to dash by taxi to Euston, only to get stuck, panic-stricken, in a jam in Great Portland Street.

Once there, in Flukes Cradle, I felt like your shadow as you moved nervously from table to table, from bar to restaurant to bar, to get the best positions on the Man. And then, well, it happened, you met, you shared conversation, and (gasp) he touched your shoulder - I just want to say thanks for conveying so vividly, so evocatively, what it's like to someone who has only ever seen him at best from row 9 in concert, and who knows he will never live the real experience of such closeness with a Man who has meant so much over such a long time. Your article certainly leaves me with more than "pleasant memories", and I am grateful.

Whilst I am at the word processor, I will also forward to you something I wrote back in September 1992.

It concerns Bob's 60s connection with French singer and Dylan-fan Hugues Aufray. Whilst on holiday in France in the summer of 1992 (sadly not at the time when his Bobness was there!) I picked up a copy of *Jukebox Magazine*, the (much more expensive) French version of *Record Collector*. It had a number of typically excellent articles, but the main reason for my buying it was to get the details outlined on the page photocopied and enclosed with this letter. The good guys at *Jukebox Magazine* had put together the advertised seedy for personal callers/mail order sale to the general public and it seemed like a good idea that maybe Bobfans this side of the Manche might want to buy a copy if, like me, they had long failed to get even a tape of the original album. I called in on their Paris office for my copy and they said they would be delighted for Bobcats over here to know about it so they are more than happy for you to mention it.

I'll enclose a photocopy of the c.d. sleeve notes, as well as the magazine advert, and my translation of the c.d. sleeve-notes, as well as of those on the original album release. *Jukebox Magazine* is still going strong I think, so I guess the c.d. may still be available from their Paris office.

Translation of Jacques Leblanc's liner note to the c.d. re-issue of *Aufray Chante Dylan* (*Jukebox 900 221-2*) 1992

From the time of his debut in 1959 appearing in the series of concert shows "Les Numeros 1 de Demain" ("Stars of Tomorrow"), and his version of Serge Gainsbourg's "Poinconneur des Lilas" ("The Ticket Collector at Les Lilas"), Hugues Aufray travelled a lengthy road before finally succeeding in achieving acclaim for his own folk-rock style. He already had to his credit the introduction to France of "**J'entends Siffler Le Train**" (**500 Miles**) from the U.S., a song with which Richard Anthony had a massive hit; then he adapted **House Of The Rising Sun** for Johnny Hallyday, under the title

"Le Penitencier", also a huge success; then, in the autumn of 1965, he demonstrated his musical flair once again introducing the public to Bob Dylan's repertoire, sung in French. Hugues had met Dylan in the U.S.A. at the beginning of the 60s through Peter, Paul and Mary and Joan Baez. When Bob came to Paris, at the end of the summer of 1964, he stayed with Hugues Aufray. Meanwhile, Hugues had adapted "**Don't Think Twice It's Alright**" as "**N'y Pense Plus, Tout Est Bien**", and he had triumphed at the Olympia concert hall supporting Johnny Hallyday, before returning with equal star billing alongside Alain Barriere in December 1964. From that point on, Hugues Aufray's style became a part of the French music scene, particularly early in 1965 when he toured alongside Francoise Hardy and Ronnie Bird. Moreover, when the Byrds appeared as the new trail-blazing American rock group with their version of **Mr. Tambourine Man**, thereby heralding the world-wide success of folk-rock, Hugues did not hesitate to adapt the Dylan classic, under the title of "**L'Homme Orchestre**". Then came the project of putting together an album based entirely on Dylan songs, rewritten with French lyrics. With the help of Pierre Delanoe, Hugues set about this task, and in December 1965 the superb LP, "**Aufray Chante Dylan**" was released, comprising 11 of his songs, translated into French: "**La Fille Du Nord**" (**Girl From The North Country**), "**Ce Que Je Veux Surtout**" (**All I Really Want To Do**), "**Ce N'etait Pas Moi**" (**It Ain't Me Babe**), **Oxford Town**, **Corinna, Corinna**, "**Cauchemar Psychomoteur**" (**Motorpsycho Nitemare**), **Les Temps Changent** - **The Times They Are A-Changin'**), "**La Ballade De Hollis Brown**" - **The Ballad Of Hollis Brown**), "**La Mort Solitaire De Hattie Carrol**" - **The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carrol**), **Dieu Est A Nos Cotes** (**With God On Our Side**) and "**Le Jour Ou Le Bateau Viendra**" - (**When The Ship Comes In**), taken from the May 1963 **Freewheelin'** - ("**En roue libre**") album, **The Times They Are A-Changin'** - (**Mister Bob Dylan**) in January 1964, and **Another Side Of Bob Dylan** from August 1964. Now, this re-issue on c.d. not only compiles all the Dylan songs Aufray recorded, thirteen in the studio (the eleven from the l.p. plus two from a superb single release), but also five songs recorded live at the Olympia in 1964 and 1966. A rare treat.

Jacques Leblanc  
(**Jukebox Magazine**)

Translation of Pierre Delanoe's sleeve note to the original issue of "Aufray chante Dylan"  
(Barclay ???)

### Birth of an international folkstyle

Well before the first lyrics by Bob Dylan had reached our shores, Hugues Aufray, who had known them since visiting the U.S.A., was telling anybody who would listen: *Dylan is fantastic; one of these days I will record an album devoted entirely to his work, and you will see how important it is.*"

Here is that album, and I believe it really is an important one in terms of songwriting.

To realise this project, there were several difficulties to sort out: firstly, to get from English, a precise language, into French, a more wordy one; next, to cope with the abundance in the lyrics of English and American idioms, and also "Dylanisms"; finally, changing from a Dylanesque sound to that of Hugues Aufray.

These problems have been overcome, and I believe you will hear a sound that has not been heard before.

Some listeners might be a little disconcerted on first hearing the record, but they are eventually likely to be won over by the sincerity of the creator, and that of the singer.

We are really talking about a major musical event, for in singing the songs of this American writer, Hugues Aufray is reviving in a modern form a style of French music that has been forgotten for half a century, the "lament", full of simple truths, poetic freshness, and musical purity.

That is why I have no hesitation in suggesting that in this record are born the first songs of an international folk-style for our times.

If the above sounds a bit strained, we're sorry. Loraine and I have spent a lot of time trying to capture some of the typical 60s-style sleeve-note feeling without sounding too, well, would "groovy" be the right word?! Even Jacques Leblanc's 1992 notes sound a bit strange when I reread them in translation. Anyway, there they are; hope they are of interest.

All the very best to you in this new year Andrew, and in all future ventures, Dylan-related or otherwise. Once again, many thanks for some great reading. Take good care.

And many thanks to you Graham (and to Loraine for her help!) both for your enthusiastic response to my **Coming Straight From The Heart** from issue 10 and for sending in the Hugues Aufray material.

**AUFRAY chante DYLAN**

Direction musicale : Christian Chevalli  
 ou arrangements : Jean Pierre Sabar  
 Prise de son : Claude Achalle  
 Photos : Tony Frank (S.L.C)  
 Direction artistique : Norbert Saada

1. L'HOMME ORCHESTRE "Mister Tambourine Man"	3'04	14. J'NY PENSE PLUS, TOUT EST "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright"	(2'51)
2. LA FILLE DU NORD "Girl From The North Country"	3'04	15. LES TEMPS CHANGENT "The Time They Are A Changin'"	(2'33)
3. CE QUE JE VEUX SURTOUT "All I Really Want To Do"	(2'41)	16. LA FILLE DU NORD "Girl From The North Country"	(2'33)
4. CE N'ETAIT PAS MOI "It Ain't Me Babe"	(1'55)	17. L'HOMME ORCHESTRE "Mister Tambourine Man"	(3'02)
5. OXFORD TOWN "Oxford Town"	(2'16)	18. CAUCHEMAR PSYCHOMOTEUR "Motorpsycho Nightmare"	(3'10)
6. CORRINA CORRINA "Corrina Corrina"	(4'30)		
7. CAUCHEMAR PSYCHOMOTEUR "Motorpsycho Nightmare"	(2'52)		
8. LES TEMPS CHANGENT "The Time They Are A Changin'"	(3'33)		
9. LA BALLADE DE HOLLIS BROWN "Ballad Of Hollis Brown"	(2'23)		
10. LA MORT SOLITAIRE DE HATTIE CARROL "The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll"			

Avec l'amable autorisation des disques BARCLAY  
 Compilation conçue et réalisée pour DIAL par  
 Marcell MARTINAY et Jacques LEBLANC  
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**DAVID POLLOCK**

I was sorry to read about the demise of **Homer** in the letter sent with the recent edition, but I fully understand the pressures it must have placed upon you. I find it difficult enough just trying to keep track of the more important aspects of Dylan's career, recording, performances, etc., and there is a constant battle with my conscience between family and parental duties and interests, work, general interests and this one extra interest which threatens from time to time to get out of hand.

I was particularly delighted to see the honourable way in which you intend to treat subscribers, and the careful explanation you have provided to myself and all other subscribers who have supported your worthwhile venture. I wish you all the best in your continuing ventures and interests Dylan-related or otherwise.

By the way, perhaps in one of the remaining issues you will be able to advise subscribers whether this also means the demise of the Warmline?

*It is now very near publication date and still I cannot decide what to do with the warmline! I'll probably let it go through the US dates and then call a halt. The only alternative is to set it up as an 0891-type number and that involves a lot of expense in advance and, you guessed it, I don't have the money.*

**COLIN WARREN**

I was very disappointed to read that **Homer** is to cease and would like to thank you for the issues you have produced of a really interesting and informative magazine.

Your publication made a very valuable contribution in improving the flow of information regarding Dylan and it will be particularly missed because it gave coverage to matters not within the present scope of *The Telegraph* or *ISIS*. I particularly liked to see the reproduction of articles and reports, especially those from other countries.



Dylan receives little informed press coverage and your magazine was a valuable source of information and opinion. Since some copies were sold to the general public I am sure that it could have gained new recruits to the Dylan following as well as rekindling the interest of lapsed followers.

I think that you might have been too ambitious with **Homer**. The size of the last issue was such that its production could well have been a full time occupation. You mentioned time deadlines. I had difficulty in finding the time just to read everything in the last issue!

At work I am involved in an accountancy office and at one time I was writing and sending out a quarterly newsletter to clients and contacts. This comprised only around 2,500 words printed on four sides of A4 paper but the effort in getting this written, correctly printed, updating the mailing list, licking address labels on 1,500 envelopes and folding and inserting the newsletter into the envelopes was quite a chore. This venture was insignificant compared with what you have put into **Homer** but it ensures that you have my admiration for what you have achieved. At least you had the advantage of being able to write on a more interesting subject

You seem to have made a final decision but I wish that you could have asked in previous issue for some assistance on the admin. side. I know that you have often asked for written contributions but I do not recall any request for any other form of help. There may have been areas in which other persons including myself might have been able to help.

I shall be subscribing for *On The Tracks* and *Series Of Dreams* and hope that they fill at least part of the vacuum that will be left by the demise of **Homer**.

*Hello and thanks, Colin, if you read my answer to John Denley's second letter on page 9 you will see why I decided not to pursue the path of getting others involved. Whether that was the correct decision or not I'm no longer sure, but I think it was. It is noticeable too that those who have produced newsletters (or similar) at work are more understanding of the time demands that such activities entail. It seems quite straightforward until you start to get involved.*

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**DAVID L SOUTAR**

---

Thanks for your letter and seasonal wishes and may I wish you and your family an excellent 1994.

Loved your editorial on meeting the 'Big Yin' in Camden. One of the most vivid descriptions I have ever read. Lucky lad. Love the mag.

I subscribe to *The Telegraph*, *Isis* and *Homer, the slut*. *The Telegraph* is glossy and has some nice pictures and is put on my book shelf. *Isis* always has interesting articles and tit bits and stays by my bed for night time reading. *Homer* goes with me everywhere, in the car, in my jacket pocket, in the brief case, until it has been digested time & time again. It's the only one that gets dog-eared. Please take that as a compliment! I love the articles, editorials and the newsprint clips that gives me all the info without having to buy every paper. I am very busy and do not get a lot of spare 'reading' time. I had therefore decided to cut down my 'paper' intake this year and to only get the best mag on Dylan - *Homer*.

You will realise then my extreme disappointment at your decision to cease, however I can understand your decision fully - there is more to life than pounding a keyboard etc. Often it is turning an interest for something into work that drives you to hate the interest and I am glad you are getting out, hopefully in one piece.

Thanks for a wonderful mag and please send me next two editions. See you at 'Bringing it all back home' in May, or the next Hammersmith.

Strike another match, go start anew.

*Thanks to you, David. I did a double take when your first cheque arrived as it came from the first bank that I ever was thrown-out-of-er, I mean, banked with. Your letter is a fine testament to my fanzine. It never occurred to me that it meant so much to people until I closed it down. (Though the warmth of people's reactions when I was lucky enough to meet Dylan should've taught me.)*

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**ALFRED J. MASCIOCCHI**

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In the every cloud has a silver lining category, a sick three-year old daughter who wanted to sit quietly and cuddle all day afforded the opportunity to catch up on some reading and so today I got to read *Homer, the slut* #10 (as well as *The Telegraph* #47 and assorted other things in the ever-growing pile).

And in the coincidence category, the post brings a letter from John Green (a transatlantic pen-pal for what must be getting close to ten years now) informing me that you'll be discontinuing *Homer*.

So, in the better late than never category, I'm finally getting a letter of appreciation off to you.

By way of background, I'm a 38 year-old actuary, married, father of the afore-mentioned three year-old daughter as well as her five year-old sister (both of whom can instantly recognize Bob Dylan's voice and frequently request *This Old Man* and *Froggie Went A-Courtin'*). I've been a Bobcat since the late 1960s, have all the records and more tapes and boots than time to listen to them. I first saw Dylan in concert in 1974 in Philadelphia, then in New Haven for the alimony tour, Hartford during the Gospel (when I became a concert taper for the first time) and Petty tours, and several NET shows, including Toad's Place. The shelves are filled with countless books and magazines and fanzines.

Music in general is a passion. Over 27 years of collecting I've accumulated about 2,000 albums (the first of which was *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which I've always thought was a great way to start a collection). My tastes are pretty diverse. Favorites include Richard Thompson, Loudon Wainwright III (who formed the basis for my first contact with John Green), Captain Beefheart, XTC, Frank Sinatra (whom I view as Dylan's only peer as a singer), and others too numerous to mention. Dylan stands above them all.

(My other favorite waste of time is reading, mostly mysteries although my favorite author is P. G. Wodehouse.)

My four favorite Dylan albums are the same as your four as listed in *Sweet Gift of Gab* section in *Homer* #10. The Dylan album that many seem to rate highly that I'm not that fond of is *Desire* and the one that I have high on my list that others think less highly of is *Street Legal* (and to a lesser extent *Self-Portrait*). I don't think we'll ever see the heights of *Blood On The Tracks* and the '60s triumvirate again. Still, since 1974 I think there have been too many wonderful songs to bother listing, right up to *Blood In My Eyes* which

I think ranks with Dylan's greatest performances ever. And I don't think there will be tours like 1966 again but the last time I saw him live (Springfield, Massachusetts 1992), Dylan was transcendent.

My Dylan hopes for the future? Unending volumes of *The Bootleg Series*. That album of show tunes (Soon' from the Gershwin Tribute is Exhibit A for the defence that Dylan is a superb singer). That album of children's tunes (for my daughters, you understand). The home video release of *Eat The Document* and *Renaldo & Clara* (ah, what the heck, throw in the Supper Club shows as well). And for 1995...

As to why Dylan then and why Dylan now, I've never been able to adequately explain that to myself let alone others, at least not without resorting to the lamest of clichés ("he knows what I think and feel and expresses it to me in his songs"). I usually am not one to enjoy lyric interpretation (although many of the lyric interpretation pieces in *Homer* are highly enjoyable). To me, Dylan is about feeling and emotion which is why I realize more and more that his greatest talent is not his songwriting but his singing. Suffice to say that I feel as if I know what every one of Dylan's songs means, although I couldn't tell you what all the lyrics mean.

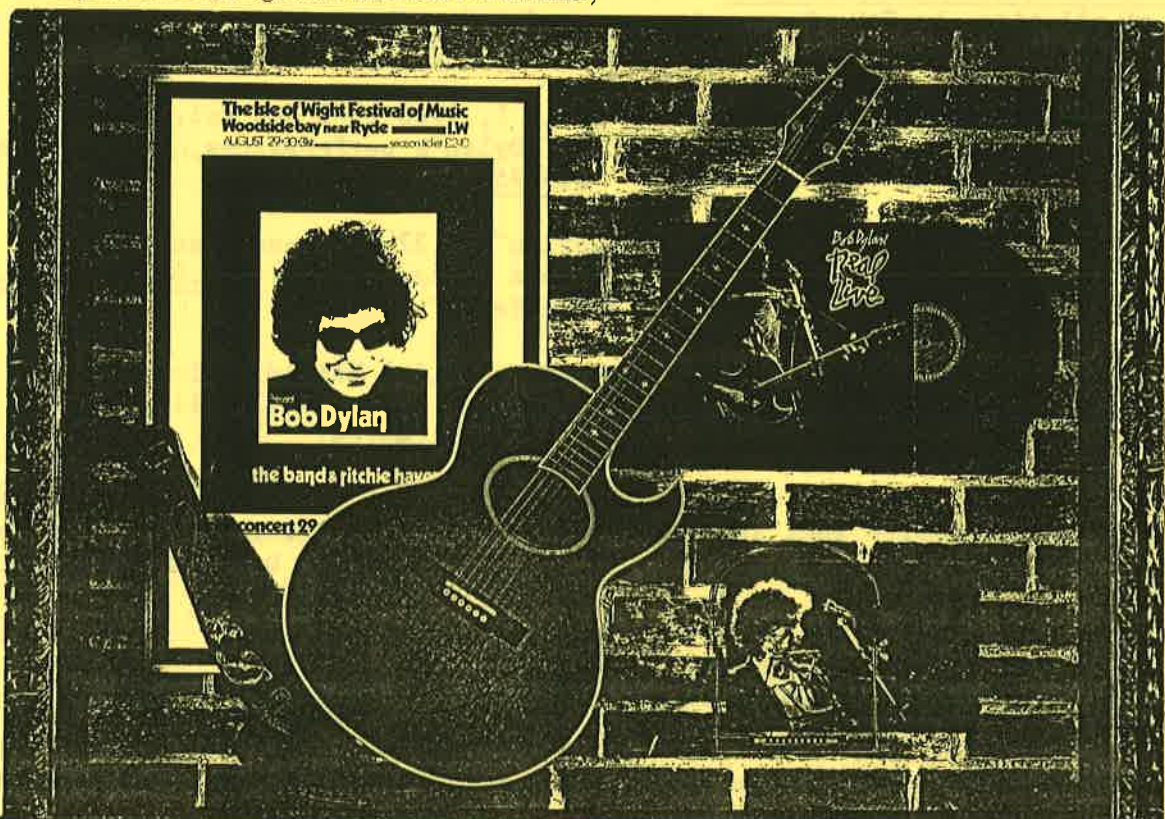
But enough of this; I'm not looking to write an article. I just want to thank you for all the effort that has gone into *Homer*. You've done a fantastic job and it has been much enjoyed and appreciated. I hope there will be some other forum for your musings on Bob that won't be so labor intensive for you. (And, while I'm hoping, I hope you'll get to re-printing the two issues -- 1 and 3 I believe -- that I've had back-ordered for a while from Rolling Tomes.)

*Many thanks for your letter, Alfred, we seem to agree on a lot: what should come out in 1994, the best ever albums, music and reading as the best hobbies and you can add to that an admiration of the phrasing of Frank Sinatra and the paramount importance of Dylan's singing. Your sentence:*

Suffice to say that I feel as if I know what every one of Dylan's songs means, although I couldn't tell you what all the lyrics mean.

*is perfectly understandable to me and, although I write about the lyrics a great deal, I agree with your sentiments. There is so much there in the voice and the music - sometimes that is, in fact, all of it but at other times the lyrics play an equal role. It is one of the strengths of Dylan's artistry that he can call on so many ways of conveying his feelings/message/thoughts/art to us. There is very little poetry that I know of that can convey it's meaning by sound alone.*

*One thing disturbs me about your letter, though, and that is that I've not personally responded. It is bad enough when I ignore regular correspondents (they know my idiosyncrasies by now!) but when as generous and open a letter as yours appears and I cannot find time to reply, I know something is wrong. I carried your letter around for two weeks without managing to reply. Please drop me a note when you read this and perhaps we can start a proper correspondence. (That goes for everyone else I've neglected these last two months.)*



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**PETER GUY**


---

Thank you for your letter and the personal note. I am very sorry to hear that you are giving up **Homer**, although I appreciate your reasons. I always had the utmost admiration for you producing the magazine and, presumably, earning a living too!

I shall probably now subscribe to **On The Tracks**, not just because of your involvement but also because I thought that 3 Dylan magazines was enough.

I have a full set of **Homers** so I don't really need a copy of a back issue, how about you buying a pint with my refund as a thank you for the pleasure you have given me with **Homer**.

May God bless and keep you always.

*And you too, Peter. Just imagine what Joe McShame could have done with all these pints I've been offered! (Actually if you've ever met him you won't need to imagine...)*

---

**MIKE SUTTON**


---

I was very sorry to receive **Homer's** obituary notice - I think you have done a magnificent job over the past couple of years, but even one man bands need a rest at some point & I'm sure that your energies will be put to good use in other Dylan magazines.

If there is any money owing to me then keep it, I have had my money's worth already - OK?

*It sure is fine by me. Mike. Thanks for the support throughout the years & see you at the next London Bob Dylan Club meeting. Oh, and before you go shopping in Camden's Sainsbury store make sure Bob Dylan isn't walking about a few hundred yards away.*

---

**ANDY REEVE**


---

Many thanks for your letter, even if it did contain the unwelcome news of the demise of **Homer**.

I have been listening to and reading about Bob Dylan for over 20 years now: reading **Homer** was one of the pleasures of this trip and I'm sure I'm not alone in expressing my thanks for its existence and for all the work involved. You deserve a medal. I only wish that I had subscribed earlier than I did - I'll be sending for back issues so that I can pretend it is not over and continue to enjoy **Homer** for a while longer.

Good luck with your involvement in new ventures. Thanks.

It may be a *goddamn impossible way of life* but *it sure has been one helluva ride*.

*Thanks to you, too, Andy. But, hey, I'm going to be reaching for the handkerchief soon - where has all the vitriol gone? (Not from you, Andy, I hasten to add - but I'm used to reading letters of complaint, not praise. If this continues too much longer I may experience a genuinely warm human emotion.<sup>8</sup>*

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**GARY ANDREWS**


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On a recent visit to London I came across a copy of your magazine, **Homer, the slut**, which I found to be particularly interesting and informative. I, therefore, enclose a subscription. I wonder what people think of **World Gone Wrong**? Great cover, great sleeve notes, a pretty good performance - despite what has been said by some reviewers. I think R. Williams went a bit far, though, in **The Independent on Sunday**<sup>9</sup> claiming that it may be his best since the sixties along with **Blood On The Tracks** and **Oh Mercy!** What about **Desire**, **Street Legal** or **Shot Of Love**?

*What about them indeed! All are marvellous albums but, for some odd reason, I play both **Street Legal** and **Shot Of Love** a great deal but I hardly ever play **Desire**. Maybe it is because that album is so well represented on the '75 & '76 dates).*

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<sup>8</sup> *Impossible* - Joe McShame    <sup>9</sup> Page 34 **Bits & Bobs**, issue 11 - ed.

*You'll certainly find a wealth of opinion re **World Gone Wrong** in these last two issues - & I am left to wonder what you think about me calling a halt to the 'zine just after you've signed up!*

## GARY ANDREWS (2)

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Thanks very much for your letter and copy of Issue Ten of **Homer**. I am really sorry that **Homer** is closing down. The two issues I have read are extremely good. I particularly like the reprints from press cuttings even if some of the press comments make my blood boil.

As regards the refund I am due, please pick the most interesting previous issue in your opinion and send me a copy.

*Well now I know! You have set me a very hard task with the back issues, though, the problem being that they are all so very, very interesting.*

## JOHN CHRISTENSEN

---

Sorry to hear that you are planning to cease publication of **Homer**, at the same time I understand you fully. Take care, huh?

You've been doing a great job and I'm sure you'll be contributing to this ongoing project in many other valuable ways for a long time to come. I enclose a cheque for the last two issues and as I missed out on the first few, I am looking forward to the reprints.

*Thanks, John, I will get those reprints done, honest. (OK, I've been saying that for ages now but, one day I'll get them done.)*

## KEN PARSONS

---

I was sad to read of your decision to cease **Homer**. Although it must be a disappointment for you to have to do this, I suspect it must also be a relief. Sometimes you can get too close to something and then the pressure gets too great. In the end it starts to take over your whole life, and other things and friends get neglected. So, I do understand your decision.

I can imagine keeping track of all the subscriptions was rather time consuming! What with various people coming in at different issues, and the **subscriber special** on top of all that! Well, I think I would have cracked up!!

However I must say that I don't think there was ever a problem with the magazine becoming 'stale'. I found **Homer** to have a great deal of variety within its pages.

Anyway, all the best for your future projects regarding booklets on Dylan and writing **On The Tracks**. As I am already a subscriber to this excellent magazine, I look forward to reading your articles in future issues. Thanks for all your efforts with **Homer**. I for one think you tried to do something away from the usual fanzine. Yes, **Homer** was different, a little rough around the edges, odd-ball even! But these things made it all the more enjoyable. It will be missed. Take care...

*"Odd-ball"!! "A little rough around the edges"!! Good Lord, what can you mean - when was **Homer** ever that up-market?!*

## PETER KYLE

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Thanks for the letter, I am sorry you feel unable to continue with **Homer** because it really is a fine piece of work and has given me a great amount of pleasure. Reading your account of your meeting with Dylan in Camden had me laughing out loud on the train home. I got some rather strange looks from the other passengers. I don't know what I would say if I met him.

*Hey, Peter, just ignore the other passengers - or try and sell them a few back issues!*

**ROGER JESSE**

Right, that's the business part of this letter out of the way. Now for the emotional part - hankies at the ready. And bear in mind that I'm not the best letter-writer around, but I genuinely mean all this :

Thank you very much indeed for all your hard work and effort in producing the best Dylan magazine I have seen. Like every other reader, I'm very disappointed that it's coming to an end, but I understand how you must feel there are other things to do with your life.

In particular, I'd like to thank you for the tapes and video you were good enough to furnish me with, and for your friendly chats over the 'phone. I had hoped to meet you at last at the next convention in Manchester, but I'm afraid I won't be able to go this year. So it'll have to wait for a while - maybe someday (as the man said).

Meanwhile, all the very best for the **future**, and go start anew,

*That is precisely what I intend to do, Roger, as you can see from the back of the last standard issue! Pity about Manchester but I'm sure there will be other conventions soon enough.*

**DAVID POWELL**

I'm sad to hear that **Homer** is ending, but at the same time I'm glad that it will finish at the top. I was wondering just where you could take it next, it had reached its peak. You did a fantastic job and have every right to feel very proud.

Many years ago I started an in-house journal where I was working and after a year decided that I had taken it as far as I could and handed it over to others. It folded soon after - not because I had left it but because it had gone as far as it could go. I understand your decision and admire you for knowing when to finish. Let's remember **Homer** for the great event it was. It must have been a tough decision but I believe the correct one.

Our obsession with all things Dylan can become unhealthy - there is life after him - a duller, less interesting one - but life just the same. *No matter what you think about him, You just won't be able to do without him - take a tip from one who's tried.*

You just need something fresh - a new arena - that's all. You've proved that you can do a damned good job and I look forward to reading your stuff for many years to come in whatever format.

**On The Tracks** seems to be the perfect vehicle for you and will give you access to the American market which we all know is really where it's at.

Take a break - enjoy family and loved ones - and come back refreshed. You've learn't a lot and come a long way very quickly. Build on it - to quote an old favourite band, Family, (**In Your Own Time**). All of us will miss **Homer** but we all owe you our thanks. I remember sitting on the train home from Hammersmith after one of last February's audiences with God and there was a couple sitting opposite, the guy wanted to talk about the gig but all the girl could do was read a copy of **Homer**!!! I think that says it all.

*Indeed it does and that seems a good place for me to call a halt to all this praise. Thanks for that David, though how someone as perceptive as yourself can come from Luton is beyond me! The rest of your letter, not quoted here, sent me on a roller coaster of emotions and deserved a lengthy reply - needless to say you didn't get one. Perhaps now these final issues are out I can find time to reply to people properly. (If anyone still writes and if I can't think of another excuse not to!!!!)*

A thought from *Peanuts* some 22 years ago



by Schulz

YOU'RE GONNA QUIT ME

MEMPHIS

WATCH TOWER

SIMPLE TWIST

BROKEN

4th STREET / TAKES A TRAIN / LAY  
LADY  
LAY

BLACK JACK DAVEY

DESOLATION

BOOTS

I + I

MAGGIES

RELEASED

AIN'T ME BARE

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## A REVIEW OF BOB DYLAN'S *TARANTULA*

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The *Toronto Globe and Mail*, Saturday March 26, 1994. (Thanks to Stephen Scobie)

It is almost an irony that Bob Dylan, the pre-eminent songwriter of the rock era, should have produced 25 years ago a work that continues to read almost like a pastiche.

In a near-apologetic foreword to the reissue of *Tarantula*, which had been out of print for a decade, the publisher claims the work is important for understanding Dylan's "artistic evolution." This non-stop stream-of-consciousness wordplay does have its moments -- how could it not when it represents Dylan in his 1966 near-peak? But it's such a relentlessly rolling stone and so laden with non-sequiturs that it leaves you feeling very much on your own. For those who grew up with Dylan, it will have the shock of recognition, of something they might once have written -- and since hidden.

To wit: *You are in the rainstorm now where your cousin seeks raw glory near the bridge and the lumberjacks tell you of exploring the red sea* and so on.

This is untamed, excessive, beatnik brilliance; the best advice for those who insist on reading it is to do so aloud, in small doses, while affecting a troubadourish whine.

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## NEIL YOUNG (INTERVIEW BY DAVID HEPWORTH)

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Greater London Radio 1st. November 1993

DH: What are the kinds of records you might like to make in the future that you haven't yet?

NY: Well, I really don't know. I don't have an idea. I completely draw a blank on the future. I don't have any plans, but then I never really have had any plans for the future. I wanna do... I wanna keep playing music. I hope that, er, I'm around for Bob Dylan's 40th celebration, 40 years of Bob Dylan music, and I'm around for years to come to do what I do. When I was younger I used to think there was no way I could do this when I was thirty, you know, when I'm forty, but, er, as Keith Richard says, *The older you get the older you wanna get!*

DH: Let's talk a little about Bob Dylan, who you mentioned there. You played last week at his 30th Anniversary concert. What did you play?

NY: I played, er, *Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues* and *All Along The Watchtower*.

DH: Did you choose those songs yourself?

NY: Yeah.

DH: What appealed to you about those songs?

NY: Well, I knew that I could play my electric guitar and play with Booker T and the MG's and that, er, if I choose the songs that I knew really well that I didn't have to work at it. That I could stretch out or dance as much as I wanted to on the spot, that were repetitive, easy to learn songs for the band and then I would have the best chance of having a free performance.

DH: What's special about Bob Dylan?

NY: ...er, there's really nothing special about him, he's just a great songwriter, a great, er, he's like Shakespeare of the Nineties instead of the century, I don't know. He's one of those people, you know, they've been here in the past and they'll be here in the future. He's here right now, you know. If you look at what he's doing there's really nothing different about it. It's just what he's saying and the way he does what he does.

It's incredible, so I wouldn't try to describe it to you.

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**ERIC CLAPTON (INTERVIEW BY ADRIAN DEEVOY)**


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**Q** March 1994

*Q: You said that when you recorded **If You Gotta Go, Go Now** with Bob Dylan in '65, he changed your entire perspective on music. What do you think of him now?*

The last time I saw him was at that tribute to him in New York. It was very crowded and there were a lot of people around him. Bob's a very sweet man. He's got a heart as big as a house and it's all he can do all the time, I think, to keep it under wraps. Which is why people don't really understand what he's up to a lot of the time. They suspect him and think he's cynical but he's a good, good man. He said some wonderful things to me that night in the moments we were able to talk to one another.

*Q: What did you make of his two recent acoustic albums?*

I love everything he does. It's the highest form of art because it's always changing. He will not let anything alone. Even if it's going really well he wants to upset the whole fucking thing and start again. I think those two albums are great, really lovely.

And he really can do that stuff. It's possible for him to come in here now with a guitar and just tune into himself and entertain himself and us for hours. There's no theatre in that, no stance, no profit, it's simply spending time on something magnificent for no reason other than that in itself. He's a brilliant guitarist you know, and it's not something he has a great deal of hardship in getting back to. He is extremely gifted.

*Q: Do you remember playing at **Blackbushe** with him?*

God I was drunk. So drunk. He called me on to play and I started walking from the back of the stage and I thought I was going to walk straight off the front. You know when you're really drunk and once the forward motion has started there isn't any stopping it? A real lurch. Funny night. I was sober when I played my own set, but in the interim I think I drank a bottle of vodka.

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**CHRIS DIFFORD**


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**Extract from a Squeeze interview by Michael Leonard**

The story stuff was just inspired by listening to people like Bob Dylan and Ray Davies: I've always been fascinated by people who tell a story in song. I think it's a bit like the village blacksmith - it's a dying art, but when you find one you won't lose his address. D'you know what I mean? You never know when you might want a horseshoe!

*Bob Dylan has said in the past that his lyrics would stand up to being read aloud as poetry. Is that important?*

Chris: Oh yeah, and I'm proud to say that some of mine will do that as well, inspired by people like him. Dylan writes very simply but writes great stories. **Lily, Rosemary And The Jack Of Hearts** is one of the best lyrical songs I've ever heard cause it's like a silent movie. You can close your eyes and see the pictures of the words in your mind. Which is what I think a good song should be about.

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**Q QUESTIONNAIRE**


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Every month the participants in **Q's** questionnaire get asked the question "What do you think of Bob Dylan?"

Here are the last 3 replies.

Pete Townshend: He is a very poor conversationalist. Give me Joanna Lumley or Mariella Frostrup any day.

Roland Orzabal He's no good in bed.

Jon Bon Jovi I think he's a god. He, Costello and Waits are the three greatest living lyricists and songwriters. And he's the most prolific.

FROM THE SUPPER CLUB 17/11/93 SHOW 2

RAGGED + DIRTY  
LAY LAY LAY / CUP O' COFFEE  
BLOOD IN MY EYES  
QUEEN JANE  
JACK A ROE  
DISEASE OF CONSCIENCE  
I WANT YOU / WEEPIN' WILLOW  
RING THEM BELLS  
BACK PAGES  
FOREVER YOUNG

RIVER FLOW  
SANDY TAVES



# Homer, *the slut*



*Headin' for another joint...*