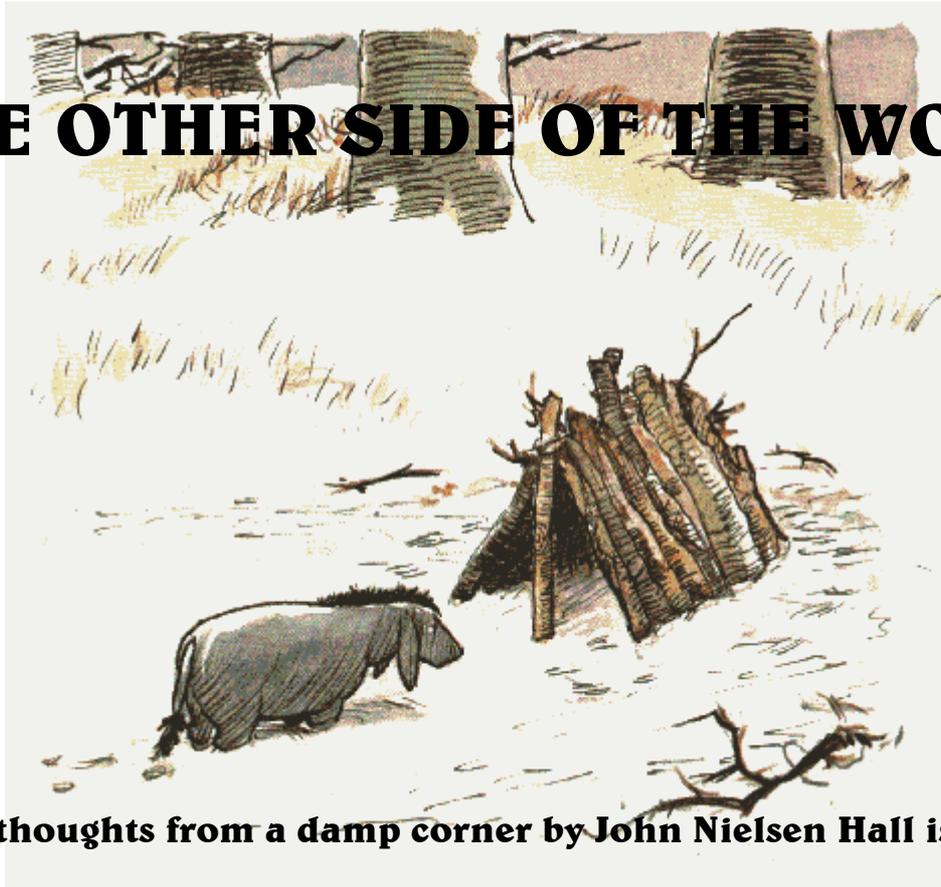


THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WOOD



being thoughts from a damp corner by John Nielsen Hall issue #1

What's brought all this on then, eh? Could it be that all the leaves are brown and the sky is grey, and I went for a walk on a winters day? I'd be safe and warm (and having fun)if I was in Sunnyvale CA? Well, it is Corflu weekend, and I'm not there, so there is definitely an element of that. But also I thought it might benefit my creativity, presently at a very low ebb, if I just wrote something, anything and stuck it out there.

So what's new at Coachmans Cottage then? Lets take matters , issue by issue:

Early in 2010, my biggest accountancy client, which was also Audrey's employer, went bust. Although that initially generated a fair amount of work, and the liquidation is not over yet, still I am running low on work in front of me. Before Xmas, I was very gloomy about this, but so far, it has not been that bad, even though I have seldom more than a week or ten days of work ahead of me at any one time. I have taken on some new clients, and things are stable. I'm also jumping through bureaucratic hoops to try and get work on the forthcoming census- but given my grumpy disposition and lack of skill in dealing with modern recruitment procedures in the public sector, I don't have that much hope there.

2010 was a very bad year - I found out I had a recurrence of the kidney cancer that left me as a single in kidney terms back in 1990, and although I have very successfully been operated on and am now functioning on one reduced kidney perfectly okay, medication side effects and continuing blood pressure problems leave me a point under optimum nearly every day. If this were not bad enough, Audrey, depressed and fed up at being a pensioner at last, and being home all day, has increased mobility problems, with her back and her knee. It seems likely that she may need a replacement knee at some stage in the near-ish future.

As those who came out here for ITB day in 2006 will know, Audrey and I are the unofficial custodians

of a huge Edwardian " Winter Garden", a kind of dual purpose ballroom and conservatory that is attached to our cottage. This edifice is listed as being one of the last survivors of this type of building, but due to the deep snow that lay on its fragile iron and glass roof during last winter, serious cracks have appeared in two of the structural cross members holding it together. Paul, our neighbour and landlord, applied for planning permission to demolish it, something he has tried to do before but was always prevented by officialdom. On this occasion he thought he had done a deal with English Heritage and that the local council would approve the application, but when the planning meeting came around, English Heritage opposed the application on the grounds that it would be better if the building was " made safe". This would cost various thousands of pounds and no one has yet come up with a plan as to how this building can be made viable , or to put it another way, to say what the building would be made safe and so preserved for.



It has been derelict now since at least the 1960's and the main reason for that is that it has no purpose, Ideas have been floated about converting it into one or more dwellings, or some sort of performance space, but even if money was spent on restoration for those purposes, there are too many other problems like water (we are not on the mains up here) the surrounding roads (very narrow muddy lanes) and the distance we are from anywhere. Sadly, there's no practical use for it.



Damaged cross-beam . interior Winter Garden Feb 2011

So now, as you see , the whole thing is fenced off and covered with fatuous warning notices and we wait for it to fall down. Hopefully this will not endanger Audrey and I , but it does concern me.

We have been re-decorating a bit, and our landlords have partitioned off the section of the outside passage that led to the Winter Garden to make it into more of a proper room - we have always called it our utility room. Presently the glazed roof isn't, if you see what I mean, so we have a piece of blue plastic instead, while we await the attention of carpenters et al. When the wind blows, the plastic makes a row, the Winter Garden groans and creaks, and I lie awake wondering if tonight will be the night when it all comes crashing down- if not on our heads, then through the bedroom wall.



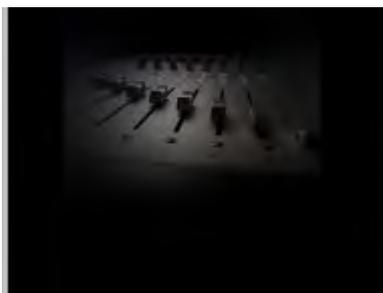
Coachmans Cottage, Utility Room looking to back door, February 2011

Well that's enough about night time anxieties.

I have been listening mostly to classical music for a long time now. That's nothing that new. I was brought up in a house where seldom a day went by without hearing some from my parents extensive collection. I think I fell so hard for Rock'n'Roll partly in rebellion. I've had listening binges on various genres for years ,but in between I've always loved much of the classical repertoire, mostly the Romantics and early 20th century stuff, and I'm back there again right now , with the minimalists and so on also very much present. I listen to Radio 3 while I'm working in the mornings, and Chill at night before I go to sleep. Chill plays a lot of very different stuff, (Chill is a digital radio station available on free to air digital radio in some parts of the country, on Sky and over the internet. Mostly its an iPod on shuffle, but after 10 o'clock at night it has proper programming until 2 in the morning. It carries no advertising- its a serious sort of music station, but the music can be very very varied- anything from pop to ambient electronics) but on one show(The Hut, Tuesdays 10 pm.) Audrey and I first heard work by Max Richter. I doubt that Richter's music is really suited to the concert hall; it relies heavily on an atmosphere induced by dubbed speech and sound effects, but it is none the less

beautiful in its simple phrases and soft expectant pauses. The best CD to get by way of introduction is "Memory House". Terry Riley seems to be just a little more in vogue these days. I have a lovely CD of piano pieces by him and John Adams. Adams' *China Gates*, a piece on that CD, was played one morning on Radio 3 before Xmas, and I had to drop everything and surrender myself to epiphanic bliss, it grabbed me so hard.

So if I were putting out any more Moonhead CD's, that's the sort of stuff you might expect to be on it, but, as you may have heard, there will be no more Moonhead CD's. There will instead be podcasts. Like the CD's these will be all music, but each will be accompanied by a little PDF of notes and comments about the music. A beautiful website is under construction with a lot of invaluable help from my old mate Ian Maule, and it hopefully won't be long now before the first couple of podcasts are available. One of these will be an all new Techno compilation, and the other a new edition of a classical music mix I put out on CD in 2003. <http://www.moonhead.org> is the place to watch for these.



Given the uncertainties and anxieties around work, as rehearsed earlier, I hope it won't come as too much of a surprise for me to note that the next issue of MOTORWAY DREAMER is a fairly distant prospect. I started out hoping to publish every six months or so, then it became once a year, and now in 2011, there may well be no issue at all. I feel very inadequate whenever another BANANA WINGS or RELAPSE arrives. Publishing fanzines like MD is an expensive sort of hobby. (Well, I know I could find more expensive recreational activities. I've

even partook of a few of them in the past.) I think that when I do feel able to commit to it, I shall look into new printers for it. I would like to keep up the expensive look and feel of it, but, typically, I would actually like it to be cheaper. Of course, beyond poetic contributions from certain folk, I don't have very much to put in it anyway, at present. If you feel able to remedy this defect, please let me know.

For some reason, JOURNEY PLANET 7 took a long while to reach me. It was out in August, but it was December before a copy got to me. All James Bacon's fault, I'm told, which was kind of a relief because I had feared that the remarks I made about James' proposal about safety at Cons in #6 might have made me unpopular. But I see he has printed them, and no doubt I shall be the recipient of much contempt and vitriol in #8. Well, I have only myself to blame, I suppose. If I could find a way of expressing myself less insensitively it would help, but basically, stuff gets in my head, and they then come boiling out, via my typing fingers or my bloody great mouth. There's not much mediation between the two, which you would think there might be after all these years, but it's all about old dogs and new tricks with me, I'm afraid.

So here we are, and there we are and twice on Thurs-days. This is essentially a personal zine, of uncertain appearance, but if you want to LoC by all means do to Coachmans Cottage, Marring Hill, Ramsbury, Wilts SN8 2HG or rrr5646@yahoo.co.uk. It might encourage me to do another one. Bye for now.



© John Nielsen Hall February 2011

*Snowdrops in the back garden
February 2011*