



14 GOOD OLD WORLD

*clutter on the table and just look at the floor
spiders on the ceiling
close the door
it's a mean mean mean mean mean
but it's a good old world
it's a good old world
it's a good old world*

Despite our earlier 'words', or perhaps because of them, we three musketeers shot out of the motorway services in garrulous mood. If conceptual artists could spin a load of bullshit, so could singer-songwriters - maybe we had more in common than I'd first thought. Jim was actually a decent bloke, just trying to scratch along like the rest of us. Though I was sceptical of his theories, no one could doubt the guy's sincerity as he handed round some publicity shots and waffled on. His exhibition may have resembled a scrap heap with Triffid-like plants emanating from unlikely cracks and crevices and covered in slogans such as, NUKE THE GAY WHALES, BALD PEOPLE FOR GLOBAL WARMING, END WORLD PEACE NOW, THE EARTH IS MY ASHTRAY, GREY IS GREAT, DOLPHINS TASTE NICE, TREES WASTE SPACE, MY CARBON FOOTPRINT IS BIGGER THAN YOURS, etc, but it was at least something of an eye-catcher, if a pretentious one.

As an eco-warrior he went a little too far for my taste but I had to admire the touch of sarcasm, especially when it transpired his first love was music - well, 'musique concrete'⁽¹⁾ actually, which he'd experimented with at college before getting into art. He'd needed, so his flyers said, an 'evidential yet conceptually challenging platform' to launch his admittedly obscure compositions, or sound-scapes, which might otherwise have been considered too 'abstractedly disconnected' - or, in other words, loopy (recorded sound loops being just one of his many techniques). With discordant noises blaring out intermittently from hidden speakers he would, if asked, say these were the 'death throes of our Earth' or 'cries of extinction'. Anyway, once he and Arthur started comparing the finer points of analogue verses digital and other technicalities, I'm afraid they lost me - but it kept them happy for miles.

Jim's mate's studio was in Teddington, not far from an old stamping ground of mine at Hampton Court. I told them how I'd nearly drowned in the river there as a teenager - then, inspired by this near-death experience, had knocked up a twelve bar number to impress my latest flame. Hardly the Mississippi Delta blues but no one could deny the juvenile ambition. It was just a stones throw from where Henry VIII purportedly wooed his future wife, Anne Boleyn, with 'Greensleeves' and other soulful ditties. Not just a king but a talented singer-songwriter too, though it seems his real aim wasn't any more elevated than many a young muso today. As Bob Geldoff famously once remarked, 'Most people get into bands for three very simple rock and roll reasons; to get laid, to get fame, and to get rich.' Henry may have had two of these in abundance but the other remained a sticking point all his life. Whether he actually composed the big hit often attributed to him is also in doubt.

*alas my love you do me wrong
to cast me off discourteously
for I have loved you well and long
delighted in your company⁽²⁾*

I was a tad disappointed to discover Jim's 'shed at the end of a mate's garden' was a stable block in the spacious grounds of an ancient hunting lodge backing onto Bushy Park. The listed house might even have been used as a rendezvous by the great monarch himself, he grinned, for trysts with mistresses such as Bessie Blount when supposedly out chasing deer. However, I was more interested in pragmatic matters like the size and weight of arty jumble to be collected, as agreed, in a couple of day's time. Now back on familiar soil he seemed more comfortable and, like the overgrown student he really was, led us around the spacious studio pointing out his gaudy masterpieces with great enthusiasm.

After ten minutes or so we heard a syrupy upper-crust voice call out, 'James – is that you dear?'

At the door appeared an elegantly attired woman of about fifty, but you could have knocked off ten or fifteen years and no one would have argued. 'Ah, boys,' she said warmly. 'Drinks? A spot of luncheon maybe?'

Introducing herself as Miranda and leading us into a grand entrance hall which might have comfortably accommodated an average sized house, it was obvious this was no peasant's lodge and she absolutely no peasant. It was also clear she felt very supportive of her stable guest - perhaps the man of the house, if one existed, was away on business? And maybe, despite earlier pleas of near destitution, Jim wasn't so badly off after all? If the lavish but relaxed hospitality shown us weary strangers was anything to go by, he had little to worry about here - though whether Miranda was his 'mate' or, more probably, her absent son's mother, I never discovered. Nevertheless, his idea of the struggling artist hardly came close to the dedicated life of shameless poverty redolent of early 20th Century Paris or even many an unwashed art student I'd known in the Sixties. Hadn't bohemians today any principles, a la Modigliani who, it is said, 'In his brief life (he died at 36 of tubercular meningitis, aggravated by a diet of drugs, absinthe and cheap brandy) played to perfection the role of artist as manic visionary, deranged addict and skirt chasing degenerate'? ⁽³⁾

The short answer, of course, is 'no', despite the fact that such crazed behaviour is bound to pile on the millions at auction, to say nothing of boosting media circulation. As with dead rock stars, the seedier and more mysterious the demise, so the greater the potential for posthumous sales. So why wasn't Jim taking his own suffering more seriously? Didn't he care about his future reputation? Hadn't he realised that gloom today meant glamour tomorrow? Like so many others, I guessed, wired from birth to a cacophonous global village promising untold goodies which, credit cards abounding, they need never be without, he just couldn't see the point. Such is the disappointment of age, to see a future generation which not only can't be bothered to kick over the traces but doesn't even know what to kick anymore.



Back in 1964, I had no doubts – after a few beers, tired and bleary-eyed around three in the morning anyway. Arthur's offer, to transform my crude but honest cri-de-coeur into a slick production number, was tempting but never seriously considered. By refusing him I

wasn't just being too precious about my little creation, cradling it safely to my acoustic bosom away from all that nasty high voltage. Sure, I could do with some cash; I was an unemployed teenager with a newly acquired criminal record, few qualifications or marketable skills, no assets save a cheap guitar and debts rising. Though I'd had as many different jobs as girlfriends (a dozen or so, excluding one night stands) none had meant enough to hang on to and little likelihood of that changing. Sure, I was down - I might even be out before the day was done - but I wasn't defeated. There was still a spark of defiance amidst the confusion, despite the dark and dismal hour.

Even if Arthur's proposal was serious and could be made to work I knew it wasn't for me. My reasons were vague and ill formed but, after an hour or so strumming aimlessly, the few words I laid down, though rubbish lyrics maybe, summed up my feelings.

*by this time tomorrow I may be back on the street
no money in my pocket and no more food to eat
don't tell me to make the most of what I haven't got
I'd rather be a nobody than pretending to be what I'm not
coz I'm just a beggar boy baby - easily led astray
but when I leave here tomorrow you won't see me back this way*

What I've discovered is that the process of song writing can often tap into the subconscious and, almost like Jungian therapy, reveal things you can't readily call to mind. As with dreams, the symbolism isn't always apparent and may need others to help interpret - or simply time and distance. Looking back at old notebooks recently has enabled me that luxury, hence one reason for launching into this book writing project in the first place. Back then, at nearly five in the morning, there was no difficulty reading the signs.

Quickly packing some essentials into a bag I crept out of my room, guitar in hand, pausing only to swipe a bottle of milk from the fridge and, almost as an after thought, leave a 'sorry' note for Phil on the table. In fact, dumping him in it was my only regret - he'd been a good mate. As I stole out of the silent bungalow and down the lane I pulled out my wallet to see what was there; nearly thirty quid, which I'd been saving for the rent due soon - but who knew how long it might have to last? And that wasn't my only worry; the first and most important being - where the hell was I going?

Without much thought, my new philosophy now just to keep moving and trust in fate - on the song trail you might say - I found myself setting off for Reading and the nearest person I knew around these parts. Though we'd only kept up a sporadic contact since meeting in Paris just over two years ago Nicky, a fellow musician and wanderer would, I thought, understand my plight. I didn't expect any action or material support, just a sympathetic ear. After a mug of sweet tea and big greasy breakfast at a trucker's pit-stop just outside Maidenhead, I hit the same A4 road Arthur and I had sped down not long ago on our one way appointment with the Welsh plod. Strangely enough, once I got onto that early morning highway, my spirits began to soar, as if I was not leaving behind lost opportunities but rather only dead weights which, unbeknownst to me, had just been dragging me back. After a while, as the sky cleared, I wouldn't have cared if I'd had to walk all the way to Nicky's, or anywhere else for that matter. For the first time in months, if not years, I felt completely free and unfettered - going my own way, in my own time and at my own pace.

Dropped off a mile or so from my friend's house I found a telephone box and rang him up. After the initial surprised reactions, he agreed to meet me in a city coffee bar during his lunch break. At first I didn't recognise him as he'd not only put on weight but had shorter hair and was wearing a suit and tie. Though he was glad to see me and showed interest in my adventures, he seemed to lack the bravado of previous meetings - the last one being about a

year ago, just back from Istanbul with a head buzzing full of new sounds and stories. Eventually it came out; his father, who'd up till then been reluctantly forgiving of Nicky's waywardness, had given him an ultimatum - straighten up or get out. This change of attitude wasn't just belated parental concern but due to fears over his mother's failing health. The old guilt trip trap, I thought. To compensate, when let loose, Nicky had thrown himself into music and was now a regular member of the Swamp Valley Stompers, a kind of trad-come-jug band outfit who, when the occasion arose, weren't averse to knocking out some good old Chicago style R&B. Nicky still played both banjo and clarinet, not at the same time of course, though he was a clever lad and could now handle rhythm guitar and bass if pushed, so he said.

After filling him in on recent exploits, and just before he went back to his desk job, I let drop Arthur's proposal. Much to my surprise Nicky was enthusiastic and offered to back me up as a session player - no fees except expenses required - should anything come of it. Though I dismissed the idea, reminding my friend of Arthur's reputation, I must admit it did plant the germ of niggling doubt into my newly acquired determination to be free forever of Grimsby and all his nefarious works. Later, back on the road, I wondered if Nicky's offer wasn't just a vain grab at any chance to get away from what sounded like a heavy duty home situation.

Instinct, maybe, found me heading towards Kingston, though I didn't know why. Sure, it was my home town, but I had no intention of going to see the family. The walls of my old dungeon would be papered over with cheery floral designs, and all the dark rebel fixtures and fittings dumped outside for the rag and bone man. A new baby was due, so I'd heard, which was all very fine - but no place for me to linger. Though maybe this wasn't so bad if I was honest. The last thing I wanted was a noose like Nicky's where, however secure and comfortable his home might be, he was unable to be himself. I may have ballsed things up, but at least I still had my own balls - just.

That evening found me supping a solitary pint in the old Dog and Duck, somewhat baffled by its lack of buzz and bustle, being a Friday night. I was relieved when Easy entered and, not having seen him for months, spent a pleasant hour or so catching up. He was doing well, now an assistant account manager at another agency, and growing more elegant on his success by the day. It was also nice to discover he'd lost none of his irreverent humour, having a right laugh on hearing of my recent misadventures. Much to my surprise, however, since I knew him to be shrewd with money, he was very supportive of the 'Geronimo' project despite Arthur's part in my recent downfall. He could, he said, arrange some high profile publicity and had contacts at Radio Luxemburg and even the recently launched pirate Radio Caroline. Mind you, he wasn't just being generous; the alternative or 'counter culture' scene was emerging with many new entrepreneurs setting up new clubs, publications, shops, music and fashion labels and many other related ventures. Maybe Easy saw Arthur's proposal as a possible way for him to grab a slice of the action. Youth, which had previously little to offer but cheap labour, were becoming a huge and influential market - those who saw its potential could become very wealthy indeed.

Around ten the door burst open and a strangled voice cried out, 'Where is he? Where's that bloody swine Bloodnok?'

Though we ignored the blatantly drunk youth clinging on to a bottle of vino, he eventually stumbled in singing:

*I'm walking backwards for Christmas across the Irish Sea
I'm walking backwards for Christmas it's the only thing for me*

Staggering across the bar room, warbling as he went, he finally called out 'Abandon ship you maggots! We're going down!' Then, sinking to his knees, said softly, 'Shut up Eccles!' and collapsed flat out.

It was hard to ignore this idiotic display and bar room chatter ceased for at least ten seconds before the clown lifted his head, looked around and asked, 'Well? Have you seen him? Where's that swine Bloodnok?'

'Hey Jack!' called Easy. 'Over here.'

Almost immediately the prostrate Jack seemed to recover, at least well enough to stagger over and slump onto a chair. After a few moments he looked around and said, 'By heck mates - quiet, eh, what?'

This was the first time I'd met Jack Minerson - though I'd heard mixed tales of his exploits as a wild ex-merchant marine - and despite (or maybe because of) his daft Goon-inspired antics felt an immediate rapport. Although the 'Goon Show' ⁽³⁾ radio series ended in 1960, their influence, especially of Milligan and Sellers, continued to reverberate and their catch phrases were still frequently heard. But Jack absorbed more than their words and, especially after a few drinks, took Spike's absurdist humour out of all contexts and onto the street. Most people saw him as just an exhibitionist idiot but, as I came to realise over subsequent years, there was a lot more to him than that.

After a while, and much to my surprise, we were joined by Jack's young girlfriend; an exotic dark-eyed beauty who, despite her amused reserve, seemed to have the measure of her loony but loyal partner (they were later married and remain so to this day). In fact, the only reason the pair were still here in Kingston was due to some family commitments of Jenny's. Next week, she said, they were due to join the exodus for Swanage where there was abundant casual work in the hotels, bars and restaurants. Why didn't I go too, they asked? It was a great scene to hang out for the summer. Free accommodation, loads of parties, booze, sea and sun - what else could you want? An Eddie Cochran dream eh?

After closing time I went off alone as usual but was unsure where to spend the night and too embarrassed to ask for help. I wandered aimlessly around the streets, then headed towards the Thames and crossed the old stone bridge. It wasn't a plan as such, I just felt more comfortable out of town where I might avoid being recognised or hassled by cops. On the other side of the river I began trudging along the towpath southwards, idly scanning the tree lined bank for a place of shelter or, at the very least, somewhere to hide from other nocturnal ramblers. I considered climbing the wall over into Hampton Court Park, but it was very high and without any obvious footholds. Eventually I lay down in my bedroll behind a huge old oak tree, pulling the hood tight over my head and tried to sleep.

Emerging around dawn, freezing and barely rested, I retraced my steps to the bridge and, after a coffee and sausage sarnie at a mobile takeaway, headed for the North Circular Road and the M1 motorway. Again, there was no clear plan, just a woolly idea of experiencing the North of England where, if folk music buffs were to be believed, one might find the true tradition amongst the downtrodden inhabitants of our industrial heartland. Like most Southerners, and despite previous trips, I still had the mistaken idea that any place north of Watford was all cobbled streets interspersed with coal mines, cotton mills and steel works belching black smoke. The folk themselves would be grimy and poverty stricken, wearing flat caps or bonnets, clattering along in clogs or even going barefoot. At the same time I knew many Northern cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle had produced leading rock musicians, writers and other artists, not to mention many scientific and engineering pioneers. How come I was so deluded I don't know, especially having lived in Lancashire myself as a child? Maybe, in the intervening years, I'd fallen prey to the same idiotic prejudices many other Londoners had. I was also told, by various beats I'd met on my travels,

there were 'way out scenes' in places like Nottingham, Sheffield and Leeds. What was true? Only one way to find out.

I had an address for my brother Pete who'd recently started as a student in Birmingham, so why not head there? It took me a long weary day's hitching till I arrived, late that evening, in England's second city; a huge dump so far as I could see in the throes of major reconstruction and not the place to contradict any Southern prejudices. I tramped for miles around rubble strewn demolition sites, interspersed by long rows of anonymous terraces and abandoned commercial buildings, all awaiting the hammer - or so it appeared. Pete's flat, above a row of run-down little shops and shared with four other guys, was a cramped and typically unkempt student tip, but welcome all the same. After mugs of sugary instant brown liquid, a bag of fish and chips smothered in ketchup, and some light hearted banter I was more than ready to crash out on the dilapidated sofa and get my first decent kip for two days.

The following afternoon, around three o'clock since most of the students didn't arise till well gone midday; I accompanied Pete across town to the campus. I must admit feeling a little intimidated at first knowing all these people had passed loads of exams, whereas I'd dropped out of the system with barely a mention. However, once they opened their mouths I began wondering where most kept their brains, even though Pete had warned me that, being just a bog standard technology college ⁽⁴⁾, one shouldn't expect much in the way of social niceties.

That may sound prejudiced but he was reading Economics and felt, perhaps unjustifiably, somewhat superior to those on more practical courses - the old social class divide, in other words, even within these not-so-hallowed halls of learning. My own impression, after just a couple of days, was that most students were a bunch of free-loading wankers. Although Pete's flat mates were generally a decent bunch, many others I came across seemed to talk a load of pretentious crap, do as little work as possible and spend most of their grants (those were the days) on booze, fags and having a good time. Maybe I was jealous but, since leaving school at sixteen and always having had to get up early and work long hours for low pay, I'd vaguely assumed those with better qualifications in 'higher' education worked even harder and were deserving of their elevated status. Certainly, many students saw themselves as better than plebs like me, judging by the arrogant attitudes I came across, though in retrospect I was just as smug as them in my own way.

I did get a slightly less one-sided view of Birmingham on visiting a club and saw the Ian Campbell Folk Group with a brilliant young fiddler named Dave Swarbrick, though I suspected most of his material was lifted from books and records just like many performers from down south or elsewhere. Although good, he wasn't any more musically authentic than others, tradition-wise - though what I was hoping to find exactly I could've said.

After a couple more days I moved on up the A42 to Nottingham - no good reason except that's where the monosyllabic lorry driver was going and it was hard to stop him. My pathetically limited notions of the area went no further than tales of Robin Hood and so, logically, I asked for directions to the castle. Sadly, I've no idea what was inside because a chubby teenage girl accosted me and, following a brief introduction, suggested a cheap and cheerful snack bar. After insisting on paying for the meal the girl, Hazel, very helpfully led me to a derelict house not far away to meet a collection of other road bums. It seemed she already knew most of them. They were a mixed bunch including teen runaways, rebels with and without a cause, middle class artists, working class activists and musically inclined nomads like myself in search of something and nothing.

The place to find 'it', I guessed, wasn't going to be Nottingham, though Hazel did her best to convince me it could be and, for days or maybe it was weeks, we hung around the streets and parks, or visited pubs and clubs looking for the real deal or whatever - do you

need logical reasons at that age? She seemed happy, but disappeared most nights to some mysterious suburban home I was never allowed to see, reappearing with cheery inevitability every morning, often with bags of doughnuts, bacon butties, sweets or other goodies.

As time drifted past I thought myself lucky not to get done over, robbed or conned out of the little cash I had left. Hazel was consistently optimistic but my accommodation, a damp and dingy attic adorned with peeling pink paper and shared with scurrying creatures, never felt safe especially after dark. There were no working utilities, the back yard serving as a toilet for those who could be bothered, and any washing was done in public facilities. Nothing was secure, of course, so belongings had to be kept close at all times. The only good thing to come out of my stay was a song called 'Good Old World' which originated from a throw-away line some pasty-faced drifter muttered one night as we huddled around a makeshift fire. It was the crux of his philosophy, offered up when he heard I was leaving and somewhat bemused by my admission that, apart from a few snacks, hadn't accepted any handouts from Hazel. Chicks, he said, liked to help out - so why refuse? And what about leaving them? I asked. The broken hearts and promises? 'That's just tough,' he said dispassionately. 'It's a mean, mean, world.' I guess it just struck me as poignant when, after a pause, he added, 'But it's a good old world.'

*clutter on the table
and just look at the floor
spiders on the ceiling
close the door
it's a mean mean mean mean mean mean
but it's a good old world
yes it's a good old world*

There are more lines involving tears, money, coffee and lethargy, ending with; 'Why don't we leave now?' I got the message after a week or two of this desultory existence and knew it was time to go. Hazel was upset, but there was nothing I could do. I said I'd keep in touch, but...

Back on the road, continuing northwards, and after more endless rows of bleak terraces, warehouses, mills, collieries, factories interspersed by windy moorland and other anonymous industrial complexes, I'd had enough, crossed over the road and doubled back heading towards the sun. When asked for a destination I simply replied 'south' and so, by chance, found myself on a long winding journey through the Midlands, into Somerset, then Devon to Cornwall. Having heard interesting reports of this westerly outpost it seemed as good a place as any to hang out the remains of summer; busking on the beaches or finding another Hazel to cultivate and, maybe, even follow up on my fellow beat's advice.

It took nearly three days to get to Penzance and, though I knew St Ives was more arty and picturesque, this just happened to be where I was dropped off. In any case, I was dog tired not having slept or eaten properly for what felt like weeks, and didn't feel like going on. Walking through the narrow streets with a big ice-cream I was jostled off the pavement by a group of lads, losing the top off my cornet which plopped onto the hot tarmac. The boys all laughed but I just got angry and told them to piss off - which was a big mistake. Within seconds they were shoving me around, shouting they'd had enough of 'dirty long haired fuckers' invading their town every summer. I wasn't welcome, they said, and proceeded to evict me by the shortest route. Somewhere along the quayside I was heaved over the harbour wall onto wet shingle and left sprawling amidst the seaweed. Thank God the tide was out.

I walked along the beach a few hundred yards and, after checking to see if my tormentors had gone, climbed up some slippery steps and continued till I found a little park

garden. After half an hour or so licking my wounds and checking my gear, I was about to move on when a couple of fellow travellers strolled up and sat down. One guy called Don, curly haired, about my age, also had a guitar and before long we were swopping tunes. He did the usual American folk and blues stuff, along with a nice but unremarkable flat picking accompaniment, his mate tapping lightly on bongos. His voice was gently lilting and he used it to good effect, especially on his own songs which were poetic and dreamy. Strangely, he was quite self-effacing about this material and would have liked, he said, to sound more like Dylan or Phil Ochs who wrote harder hitting, more socially aware, songs. I was surprised and told him not to worry - he had his own groove and to stick with that. Unfortunately, a year or so later as Donovan, he suddenly found himself pushed into the limelight as Britain's answer to the Great Bob, but it wasn't long before critics were dragging him back down as a presumptuous copyist. Without Dylan he'd probably never have made it, but with Dylan he was always doomed to be cast as a pale imitation (which he never was, poor sod).

After a couple of hours we parted and I moved out along the bay with some lines from one of Don's songs running round my head:

*freedom is a word I rarely use without thinking
without thinking
of the time when I've been loved*⁽⁵⁾

It got me thinking about my own ideas of freedom. Up till then, had anyone asked, I'd have said they were about getting away from things like home, school, work and, more idealistically, authority, injustice, persecution, and all that repressive political stuff. But 'freedom', like 'love' or 'peace', etc, are just meaningless, abstract, words unless related to something solid. I'd been looking for freedom, I guessed, in my own rather desultory way, but found that it was just another form of bondage. It was, in fact, a hard, uncomfortable, lonely, dirty, often dangerous and always uncertain business trying to be free - this kind of road freedom anyway. Maybe, I wondered, true freedom wasn't so much about getting away from something you didn't like but, rather, getting into something you did. It was a nice profound thought, but didn't lift my prevailing melancholy and sense of aimlessness - not helped by realising Cornwall was the end of the line and almost another country. Soon the highway would run out amongst a picturesque but cruel rocky headland into the restless Atlantic surf. Where to then?

That night, having spent the remains of the day washing up in a public lavatory and eating a fish supper looking over towards St Michael's Mount, I strolled out of town and crossed onto some waste ground by a railway. Even before the rain began I'd started searching for shelter but soon, as the sky turned dark and my spirits plummeted to an all time low, it became ever more urgent. Eventually I found a rusty little hut and pushed open the door. 'Harr!' a rough voice barked out from inside and I recoiled in horror. Further down the track in an overgrown siding I discovered some ancient carriages and, after checking for signs of recent use, climbed up and heaved open the heavy door. The bench seats, their faded upholstery dusty and worn, might normally have seemed uncomfortable but to me, on that stormy far-fetched night, they were pretty close to heaven.

Despite some anxiety at being found out I slept quiet well, dreaming of swimming in clear blue water beneath majestic white cliffs thronged with smiling people. I've no idea how long I slumbered, but was awoken by an insistent scratching noise nearby. Opening my eyes and blinking in the half light I thought at first it must be a dream, seeing a small rodent, a mouse or vole, perched inches away on the seat washing its whiskers. Continuing for several seconds it suddenly stopped and, as our eyes met, froze. I think we were both amazed and

didn't know what to do but, though I expected the little creature to leap away any second, instead it seemed to wink at me and then opened its mouth. 'Go home,' it said. 'Go home.'

FOOTNOTES - Chapter 14

(1) 'Musique concrète', or concrete music, is a form of electro-acoustic music that utilises raw sound as a compositional resource. Although musical instruments and voices may be used, traditional elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, etc, are not necessary. The theoretical underpinnings were developed by composer Pierre Schaeffer, beginning in the late 1940s. In 1951 Schaeffer, along with the engineer Jaques Poullin and percussionist Pierre Henry, established Groupe de Reserche de Musique Concrete at RTF in Paris, the ancestor of the ORTF. At RTF was established the first purpose-built electro-acoustic music studio. It quickly attracted many who were, or would later become, notable composers including; Oliver Messiaen, Pierre Boulez, Jean Barraque, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Edgar Varese, Iannis Xenakis, Michael Philippot and Arthur Honegger. Over the years these and other composers developed many pieces including work for film and theatre. Techniques using magnetic tape often involved speeding up or slowing down recording speeds, tape loops, delay and feedback, and later synthesizers or other electronic devices.
Jason Ankeny <http://allmusic.com/explore/style/d11002>

(2) According to www.the-tudors.org.uk there is no doubt that King Henry VIII was an accomplished musician and composer. He also had an obsession with Anne Boleyn starting in 1526, as this excerpt from a love letter addressed to her makes clear. "...having been for more than a year now struck by the dart of love, and being uncertain either of failure or of finding a place in your heart and affection..." Other references in the lyrics might also seem to make a connection between Henry and Anne, Sally Fletcher, however, of San Rafael, CA 94903, sally@heavenlyharpist.com is of the opinion that: 'There is a legend that King Henry VIII (1491-1547) wrote Greensleeves about Anne Boleyn. This is not likely, however, because the song is written in a style which was not known in England until after Henry VIII died. The earliest known mention of Greensleeves occurred in September 1580, when a printer named Richard Jones had licensed to him "A new Northern Ditty of the Lady Greene Sleeves". On that same day, printer Edward White also had a license for "A ballad being the 'Ladie Greene Sleeves Answere to Donkyn his Frende'. Thus began a back and forth struggle between the printers for the rights to this beautiful melody, with various versions being published. It was not until 1584 that Jones printed his final version, which is the one known today.'

(3) John Walsh – The Independent, 17.6.2010

(3) The Goon Show was immensely influential from the Fifties onwards, and not only for comics though, as Eddie Izzard said, 'Spike was the godfather of alternative comedy.' (www.thegoonshow.net) John Lennon, reviewing Spike Milligan's book 'The Goon Show Scripts' in The New York Times (1973) said, 'I was 12 when the Goon Shows first hit me... Their humour was the only proof that the world was insane... Hipper than the hippest and madder than "Mad", a conspiracy against reality. A coup d'etat of the mind.' Their most obvious offspring was Monty Python, whose members have all mentioned the great debt they owe to the programme and especially Milligan, but you can see Goon surrealistic humour everywhere today in all the arts, advertising and culture.

(4) Now Aston University (from 1966) it was then called Birmingham College of Advanced Technology (1964).

(5) 'Colours' was written and recorded by Scottish singer-songwriter Donovan (Donovan Philips Leitch, born 10 May 1946, in Maryhill, Glasgow). The "Colours" single was released in the United Kingdom on May 28, 1965 through Pye Records (Pye 7N 15866) and a few months later in the United States through Hickory Records (Hickory 45-1324).