

**THE MICK 51**  
**December**  
**2009**



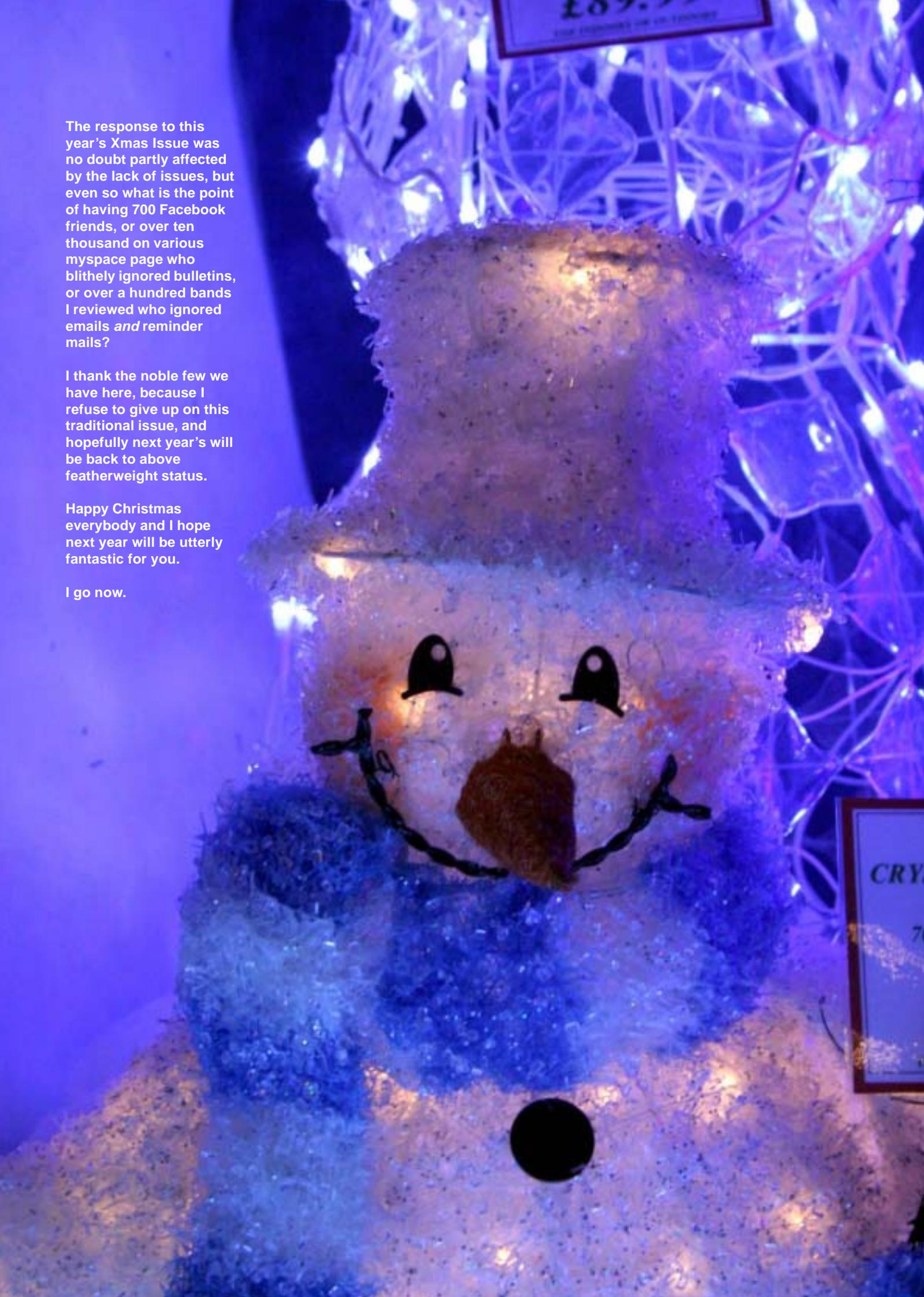
Happy  
Christmas

The response to this year's Xmas Issue was no doubt partly affected by the lack of issues, but even so what is the point of having 700 Facebook friends, or over ten thousand on various Myspace page who blithely ignored bulletins, or over a hundred bands I reviewed who ignored emails *and* reminder mails?

I thank the noble few we have here, because I refuse to give up on this traditional issue, and hopefully next year's will be back to above featherweight status.

Happy Christmas everybody and I hope next year will be utterly fantastic for you.

I go now.





# XMAS PAST

**What are your favourite, or least pleasant memories of Christmas past – what do you love best about the period, what do you shy away from?**

**((S)):** I shy away from the silence at the childhood Christmas dinners, while everybody's trying to stay focused on their food and dreaming of leaving the place for good. Silent night indeed!

**Abbo (UK Decay):** I just had an awful flashback to buying Aqualung by Jethro Tull with a record token an auntie gave me on Christmas Eve. No excuse I know, but they were from Luton?!

**Angelica (Waves Under Water):** The first image that pops into mind is me as a kid, maybe 4 or 5 years old wearing skis, a helmet and goggles inside our apartment pretending to be skiing. But then that might just have been an everyday thing seeing as we lived in Switzerland at the time. I have to agree with Johan that the last few Christmases have been the best when we have decided how we want to celebrate. Being a vegan for many years I have made my own Christmas dinner while my parents ate the traditional meat. Cooking just for yourself isn't that much fun but these days Johan and I cook together and we invite our loved ones to join us.

**Bex (Zeitgeist Zero):** Christmas fights are the worst. but the food is always great- we had sushi last year just for fun! I love spending time in Brussels seeing the lights and decorations around the town centre.

**Clifford (Razorfade):** The most pleasant Christmases for me were those spent in Liverpool up to about the age of 13 and I suppose the absolute very best were the ones up to the age of 8 when I thought that Father Christmas was real. None of that Santa Claus nonsense, it was Father Christmas in our house.

Waking up really early Christmas morning with presents at the end of my bed is one memory that sticks. I'm sure my parents weren't too impressed with me running into their room interrupting their sleep every 2 minutes to show them what "Father Christmas" had brought me.

Boxing day stands out too as there was always a big family get together at my Uncle Harry's house in Bootle. My Dad and My Uncle Alex would end up playing guitar and a drunken sing along of some strange old knees up type songs would commence and go on into the small hours of the morning.





Worst were probably the first few in Australia after coming here from England. Christmas in summer just didn't seem right (and still doesn't to this day).

I'm a bit of a grinch nowadays, I don't "love" that much about Christmas and don't care too much for presents either. My wife is the only one that gets Christmas presents from me (oh, and the cats of course).

**David Rivera (Tenebrarum):** I really love the true essence of the Christmas time. Love to share with my relatives and loved ones. In Colombia we celebrate Christmas Eve on December 24th. A lot of food, presents and joy that nite 4 everybody. Is really cool to have fun with my brothers and parents. Laughing till explode!!!!



**Dean Garcia:** Fave times were as a kid under 6 when everything was so real and exciting past 8/9 it slowly gets worse n worse up to the age of 16 where it becomes unbearably tense being with your parents who hate each other and your mum is sweeping the entire contents of food spread onto the floor in a hormone 'change' fueled rage of hate and loathing. Not so great especially as you've been waiting for what seems like 10 years to get a bit of dried up turkey that's been cooking for the previous 24 hours, all gone in one spectacular moment of mania. Then things move on as you move out from home (16 for me) and have your own more alternative enhanced Xmas days where the least important thing is the Turkey. These times go on for years until you have kids of your own and the whole thing changes as you regress into Santa mode once again and tell your children lies about him coming down the non existent chimney. It's a love hate thing isn't it, you love the giving hype of it all yet you know it's a fleeting day or two that passes very quickly especially if you've got a bottle of gin inside you. Can't blank it though, just doesn't seem right. Shy away from people you don't wanna see but feel you ought, big fucking mistake, just surround yourself with those you love and everything will be fine, a nice goodie bag is always useful too.

**Emma (Will Dance For Chocolate):** I dislike all the plastic wrapping and tat that people get. So many plastic santas in landfill. The best part is ordering Baileys at a bar and not feeling silly.

**J. Common (The Common Men):** I remember playing a show as The Common Men for birthday a few years back at my friend Sharrissa's house in Greenhaven (Sacramento area) it was cold, but the booze flowed. The music and the good times ensued, complete with a freaking pinata filled with condoms, sample bottles of various assortments of booze and other things of the random nature! We even had a Tequila fountain. Best memory of Christmas week/weekend ever.

**Jan (Grimm):** I won't tell you my least pleasant memory of Christmas past, because that is a very unpleasant memory indeed. The best about the Christmas period are the free days, when I don't have to work. In recent years I have pretty much ignored Christmas time, because I'm not interested. Neither am I religious nor do I think there has to be a special time for giving presents. Christmas is all about making money anyway. The money you don't have buys you the stuff you don't need. Peace & love everybody!







**Joel (Action Directe):** We always had great Xmas when I was a kid – as we weren't well off throughout the year my parents used to create these totally Dickensian days of indulgence at Xmas, and in adulthood I've become used to a pleasant supply of Guinness at this time of year. I do shy away from anything too formal or commercial nowadays, though.

**Joey (SPC ECO):** I live in Asia, and have for the past ten years or so, so instead of a Christmas tale, I'll give you a Y2K New Year's tale. As a whole, Asians tend to be more Buddhist than Christian, so when I lived in Japan, Christmas isn't really celebrated, but New Years (called O-SHOU-GAH-TSU) is very big. It was also the year 2000 and some people were worried about the Y2K scare. So, like every year, everyone gathered in the street, but instead of a 3-2-1 countdown like we have in the west, midnight just marks the time for people to start going up to the temple to get the new year's blessing from their local Shinto priest. So, I stood in the middle of the old traditional section of my town, Fukuyama (near Hiroshima), with a beer in hand. The hundred-year old wood-walled shops on both sides, people bustling all around, handing out alcohol merrily and fussing about their business. I watched by myself the clock's second hand count down, "3! 2! 1!" and then, silence! No-one was watching with me, they were gathering the kids and the grandparents to go up the street to the local temple. At that moment, I thought even if the world was falling apart somewhere at that time, it wasn't where I was. It was quiet as a mouse, very nice. I rang in the new century in a place made in the last century, and even the century before that! That feeling put me at peace and the memory still comforts me to this day. To me, the holidays are just another reminder that we are alive and we should enjoy them and all our time here to the fullest, with no reservations.

So then, Nohsoh Sensei, my Japanese teacher, came out of his shop and we went (with his family in tow) up to the temple, where we received our blessing, which a fully-robed Buddhist priest shook from some big plant leaf over our heads and chanted. I guess technology still hasn't changed some things.

**Johan (Waves Under Water):** I don't have any horrible Christmas memories, perhaps I have repressed the memories. In Sweden we have a horrible tradition to watch Donald Duck's Christmas that is shown on TV every year. The same thing over and over. But the last few years I have managed to avoid it. The last few Christmases have been the best when I have been able to decide for myself how to celebrate.

**Jon Mori (Momento Mori UK):** I never really bothered much about xmas until recently, I was always working and thought more about the double-pay etc, but since I've acquired a family I enjoy playing with the kids toys and giving them a day to remember.





**kaRIN (Collide):** My favorite Christmas memory was when my Mom and I went to Key West Florida which is an odd interesting place. We would go there sometimes so I could sell things by the sunset with the other artists. We ended up drinking too much and staying up all night and hanging out with the street performers that were there. I think because it was so untraditional that it was my favorite. I love untraditions. Another year my Mom and I made banana muffins and put them in baggies and took them to the homeless. We drove around LA looking for homeless people to give them to and then gave the rest to a shelter. My Mom was soooo cool.

**Kim Common (The Common Men):** I don't know what it is about Christmas, but Christmas is a little depressing for me. I have the feeling it has to do with the weather. Don't get me wrong, I love the holiday and I love spending time with my family but there's this loneliness I feel during the time. I love Christmas morning though. I enjoy waking up early for my morning cigarette and enjoying the silence. The calm before the storm, I guess.

**Laura (Will Dance For Chocolate):** My favourite part of Xmas day is nodding off in front of the TV in the afternoon full of Xmas dinner! Classy!

**Mark Sinnis:** My least pleasant memory was when I was 10 my Grandmother who I really loved died on Christmas Eve. It was the first time a family member or someone I really loved died. So sadly this is always associated with the holiday.

As cheesy as it sounds I do love that Christmas is the one time of the year where "most" people, countries, friends and foes, might find a little love and hope in themselves. Even if it is fake for some. There is something about Christmas that does bring out good in people. I do dislike the debt people seem to put themselves in for this holiday. So I shy away from that.

**Neal Unreal (SBA):** My favourite times were going home and hanging out with the old Scunthorpe alternative scene. We all used to go down to the Christmas Eve rock disco at the Baths Hall and sit on the carpet in the foyer, but now that's gone it's likely to be revived at the Lincoln Imp or at the old Bridge House Hotel. Possibly Steve Birds Alternative Disco. Then some of us would wander up to the old Dragonby mines to the north of the town and hang around with bottles of Mad Dog....no matter how cold it got. Maybe we'd even go see if the Dragonby Dragon was still there as it got more and more overgrown each year. I do hope someone reading this will know what I'm on about.

**Philip Butler:** I've had some pretty miserable Christmases in recent years. In 2005 I had just ended a long term relationship and had lost a cat (Zebedee RIP) to the perils of a speeding menace. In 2006 someone crashed into me on the way to do my Christmas shopping, piercing my lung, fracturing my knee cap, breaking my collar bone and semi deafening me in my left ear (the culprit was on the phone while behind the wheel of a bloody huge truck)! I was discharged from hospital just in time for the big day and my present was a large bag of painkillers. In contrast last year I was preparing to propose, so it's not all bad.

**Tash:** Yes, I concur, the lead up to the '06 christmas was a bit crummy, especially seeing Phil everyday in hospital looking sorry for himself, (a delivery of his i=pod soon lifted his spirits). The day they discharged him was a joyous one, the only trouble was, I had a teeny tiny car which he struggled to climb into with his crutches and gammy leg!

**Ray (UK Decay):** When I was a young punk in Luton, prior to babies, commitments and hair loss, the best part about Christmas would be the Christmas Day afternoon piss-up in someone's house or flat, and then the attempt at trying to cook something.

**Ricardo Santos (In Auroram):** The only thing worth of remember is being drunk with a lot of punks and headbangers and fighting for the last beers in my neighbourhood while our families curse us all.

**Rob (Live Not On Evil):** A couple years ago my mom had a really strange and mysterious major health scare. She snapped out of it just before Christmas, we thought we were loosing her and we got her back. It was a very re-prioritizing event. Everything was very crystal clear that year, all the fluff faded into the background, and it was awesome. I actually dig the holidays so I tend to shy away from people who claim to hate them while they are happening, I can always reconnect in the new year.

**Rose Garcia (SPC ECO):** I'm all about Christmas, but I guess that's because I'm trying as hard as I can to stay safe in the childhood I knew so well... My favorite Christmas memory was, when I was about 5 or six, waking up at the crack of dawn and running into my brothers room to eat out sweets from our stockings and discuss whether 5am was too early to wake mum and dad...it was still pitch black after all..."5 more minutes" I'd say.

**Sin (Imprint):** "I am a bit bah humbug with the whole Christmas thing. I find it ludicrous that everyone runs around spending too much money for one day of the year, especially when it is about some guy that may or may not have existed and was supposedly born around that time of year?!?! Very strange....Instead I celebrate winter solstice with people I love...and yes we might give each other little gifts but it's not to excess. The time of year reminds me that human beings really do have the ability to be kind to one another, to stop and think, to be charitable, to act with compassion and empathy...I just wish it could last throughout the year you know?"

"I guess this time of year fills me with a great sadness....and this year the climate change summit is happening, all around me are lights that don't really need to be on...so much will be wasted, we act as if nothing is wrong and we can just carry on, hoping that somehow everything will be ok? Whilst we act like locusts...earth and those less fortunate...die."

**Spon (UK Decay):** They say Xmas is for kids but there is a kind of sound logical sense for having a festival at this time of the year given the long dark cold winters of the northern hemisphere. I have visions of drinking ginger beer and cracking walnuts amidst a warm cosy crackling fire. Complete with family and friends gathered round a disembodied and decorated tree, crowned with an effigy of a faery. Waiting for weird guys on reindeers, dressed in silly red gnome suits, to break and enter via the chimney, in order to stuff grandad's old stocking with dubious gifts for the kids...that's weird...if not pagan In a strange way it's comforting!

I could do without the consumerist bit though!

**Statik (Collide):** I think my favorite memories, is just having our family all together, and having time off from school. I guess now I see it as being a bit more commercial, so that turns me off, but I still appreciate the hanging out with family and friends aspect.

**Teresa Dead (Zeitgeist Zero):** I love Christmas, I've been lucky that nearly all of them have been good, however there have been a few trying times: Last year I got a family member a DVD and they stormed off in a huff because the DVD had English, French and Flemish written on the back, instead of just in English! Then there was the time when I turned up as arranged at my parents' house on Xmas day looking forward to a nice traditional family meal and they said, "Your dinner's in the microwave."

**The Shend:** 'Just what I didn't want' I yelled, at getting a plastic copy of Meccano when a lad. Loved all those annuals - Tiger, Valiant, Lion. Proper lads fare, full of fighting and footy. Love seeing the excitement in my kiddie's face and love the fact that people light up their normally drab houses and sprouts. Hate Christmas pudding!

# XMAS PRESENT

## What do you remember as your best ever present, and the weirdest or most unwanted?

**((S)):** I must have received plenty of big and lovable presents over the years, but I can't remember any...So where does that leave me?

**Abbo (UK Decay):** Oraange Chopper bike, no contest on that one . Not sure how the old fella got the £32 together to buy it, he was an honest chap, so must have worked his nuts off.

**Angelica (Waves Under Water):** I wasn't very old when I overheard my parents talking to my grandmother and they were thinking of giving me red boots for Christmas at which point I stormed in very furious because obviously at that age boots aren't a very exciting present when you're a child.

**Bex (Zeitgeist Zero):** Best present was Beauty And The Beast on video I had been waiting for it for so long! The weirdest was a lace doily from my father and a few assorted earrings.

**Clifford (Razorfade):** The first xmas gift I remember is a purple bike I got when 5 years old so that stands out as one of the best. I remember waking up, seeing the bike and getting way too over excited about the fact that Father Christmas had been.

Other presents that are up there would be the first record player I got and I was also very fond of my eagle-eye action man when I got that at about 9 years of age. I'm sure I've had more than a few unwanted gifts but I have buried them deep and can't remember most. The Mother-in-law did get me a Gift Voucher for a record shop a few years back, not a bad present you might think except for the fact that I happened to work in a record shop.

**David Rivera (Tenebrarum):** I usually gave to my family a wish-list prior Christmas Eve. I don't like surprises coz is possible that I get very surprised...ON THE WRONG WAY!!!!!!  
Most unwanted present? well...I decided about the wish-list after I got a really ugly and unwanted bike when I was a kid as Christmas present. I learn my lesson...

**Dean Garcia:** Best would be a Scaletrix racing game until you discover how shit it is especially when the fucking cars keep spinning off the track (when you eventually get it to work) anytime you go fast, yeah I know you have to slow down on the bends but at 8 years old who the fuck wants to slow down on the bends. Worst thing..er..some dodgy knitted jumper or something, not sure I can remember any weird presents, must have been some. My friend and I once made suicide kits as presents for people but we were told we were sick and that we shouldn't give them out. Probably good advice, but we were

very enhanced at the time so we just thought it was hysterically funny...

**Emma (Will Dance For Chocolate):** Chocolate never goes amiss! I can't think of any unwanted presents, my family and friends are clearly very thoughtful in their gift buying! Oh, maybe pyjamas that doubled in size after the first time you wear them. No elastic. Cool.

**Gerrie B (Life In Sodom):** Growing up I was very poor my Christmas presents usually consisted of 2 Hotwheels cars taped face to face together as not to reveal the obvious package as simple as that was I loved them so much I still collect them today. My worst is my mother in law's artwork - we seem to get one every year then are forced to find a place to hang them when she stops in to visit. As a child the anticipation was wonderful the lights the gifts Christmas programs on TV and time off from school were all key. As an adult it became unpleasant the stress of gift giving socializing with relatives you don't want to see.

**Jan (Grimm):** The best present ever must have been a BMX bike when I was ten or so. I'd watched that bike for weeks through the bike shop's window but didn't tell anyone about it. And then I got it! Now that I'm older I have stopped to define myself through possession. I do not remember weird or really unwanted presents.

**Joel (Action Directe):** Best ever – my first guitar, with a close second being my ZX Spectrum 128. Weirdest and most unwanted – I can remember receiving a can of Stones bitter one year, and even a wrapped Mars bar on another occasion...

**Joey (SPC ECO):** When I was a kid, it was all the coolest toys and some sweaters and ties, esp STAR WARS stuff, which mom and dad always made sure was around. I had it all. Thanks mom and dad!"

**Johan (Waves Under Water):** When I was 5 years old a relative who thought he was being funny gave me a bottle of wine which he then drank. Everybody thought it was funny but it was a terrible disappointment to open the package.

**Jon Mori (Momento Mori UK):** A couple of years ago I didn't bother going to the off-licence on the way home from work on xmas eve as there was a bottle underneath the tree with my name on it. Once we'd got the kids to bed I opened it thinking I'd have a nice relaxing drink to prepare me for Christmas day. It was a bloody bottle of salt!!! 3 small bottles, mixed with chilli, rosemary and thyme stacked into the shape of a wine bottle. And by then the off-licence was shut. GUTTED!!!!

**kaRIN (Collide):** For me, I like home made things... so the best presents are just love, or thoughtful things like heartfelt cards.

**Kevin Ian Common (The Common Men):** I've had so many memorable gifts, but the one that started it all was the guitar I got nearly 14 years ago.

**Kim Common (The Common Men):** The best present I've ever received was from my brother Kevin and it was a VHS of Sleater-Kinney playing live at CBGBs in 1997. Even though I've been to plenty of Sleater-Kinney concerts I didn't see them during their "Dig Me Out" tour. Watching the tape is so much fun because I feel like I'm there watching them. Their energy was caught perfectly on tape and



even though I know I won't see them live again, I can always pop in the tape and it brings me back to all their live shows.

**Laura (Will Dance For Chocolate):** I can't even remember what I got last year! I got a bass guitar for Xmas when I was 15 - that was pretty cool! And a pink Raleigh fleur bike when I was 5!

**Mark (Resist):** Best present - A really average guitar and amp that got me back into playing music, most grateful for that! More recently some stage lighting and lasers!! Worst present - probably a stand for my stereo! A very nice stand, but still just a stand. A piece of furniture for xmas, hmm! Had a mate who bought his wife a back door for xmas!

**Mark Sinnis:** Best: Last year my (now) wife got me a 90 gallon fish tank for my 12 year old fish "Marty". His old tank was 30 gallons. Marty is about 14 inches long. Most unwanted: About 20 years ago a friend got me Dee Dee Ramone's LP "Dee Dee King" the rap album. It was horrendous.

**Misha (Resist) -** My 01v desk that my parents bought more than 10 years ago, still used on all our recordings to this day.

**Neal Unreal (SBA):** My best ever present was a DJ unit my dad built me when I was ten, with sound to light and everything. It was wicked.

**Philip Butler:** I got given my first electric guitar and amp in '93, that was a pretty cool present. I quickly learnt the Pantera riff in the December edition of Guitarist magazine.

A few years back my auntie gave me a small pair of rubber National Trust welly boots, big enough to hold pens and the like. I don't know what was harder, pretending to be eternally grateful or trying not to burst out laughing.

**Ray (UK Decay):** When I was a kid I convinced my parents to buy me a ratty old Premier drum kit. The most unwanted present was a bathrobe from my mother-in-law that looked as though it was designed by and made for Liberace!

**Ricardo Santos (In Auroram):** The most unusual: my father gave me some money to travel and meet him in another state. I've got the money and bought a cheap keyboard. And he got pissed for LOOOONG time hehe. The best ever: a classic guitar (the same I still using to compose) from my Mother

**Rob (Live Not On Evil):** The best present I ever got was my nephew made me a beautiful guitar with his own two hands, it was an amazing surprise. I felt like a jerk ... I got him a scarf. The weirdest thing I ever got was a coffee mug with a photo on it of a dog that bit me dressed as Santa.



**Rose Garcia (SPC ECO):** Best Present ever was my dolls house OH MY GOD I freaked out...fucking loved that thing...my brother got a desert island made by the same make and we played ALL day...next morning I found the little girl I got with the dolls house, that I decided was me, hanging from a tree by a make-shift noose tied round its neck on his desert island...didn't play much after that.

**Sin (Imprint):** My best ever present...would have to be anything that my kids have made me. The cards that they make me are little works of art and I love them!!! The weirdest... pink... and I mean day glo pink leg warmers... Most Unwanted... Perfume...from some knock off suitcase guy on the street that smelt of cat piss!!!

**Spon (UK Decay):** Two double headed moulded plastic dinosaur's, two plastic-lit up 'Star War's' sabre's and a second hand foot washing machine - All bought for me on recent xmas's by my dear brother, bless him! Maybe he is making a hint there somewhere!

**Statik (Collide):** I think one of my favorite things was when I got my first computer, a Vic-20. (See ancient history). I just loved writing computer programs.

**Teresa Dead (Zeitgeist Zero):** The best I think was when I got my first Sindy doll when I was 8 years old. She had roller skates and had felt tips that dyed her hair.

**The Shend:** Best present, a proper well-made magnifying glass that I got when I was 11. It is on my desk right now in perfect condition. Weirdest present, a neck-brace from a mate at the time Morrissey was flirting with hearing aids.



# XMAS FUTURE

What are your plans this year?



**((S)):** Barton Natural Springs Pool, Zilker Park, Austin, Texas, USA. A cosmic swim in 68 degrees Fahrenheit hot/cold water under the moon. Alone and miles away from those I love.....

**Abbo (UK Decay):** Make an album in 2010 , gigging in Luton in Feb 27th and Berlin April 24th , Hamburg April 25th . Keep 'em few and far between to keep them a little bit special.

**Angelica & Johan (Waves Under Water):** We have just moved to a new apartment and are busy painting and putting up wallpaper. We hope to have it ready and everything in order by Christmas so that we can celebrate in our new home with our closest family eating good food, taking it easy and enjoying our selves.

**Bex (Zeitgeist Zero):** I am going back to Brussels for two weeks to spend time with my mother and my friends, I will also visit my father in Luxembourg.

**Clifford (Razorfade):** This Christmas I'll be exchanging presents with my better half in the morning then we desert the cats (after giving them some turkey based canned pussy delight) and go to my in-laws for the day which will no doubt involve lots of food. It's a vegetarian Christmas dinner for me which equates an unhealthy amount of roast potatoes (and no, I don't miss turkey and especially not the dry as a bone turkey sandwiches that used to follow for days on end). After stuffing

my face with food I will probably complain that I ate too much and a Christmas day nap is highly probable. At some point the dreaded Trivial Pursuit may come out at the mother in laws insistence, which she will undoubtedly lose at yet again.

**David Rivera (Tenebrarum):** My plans for 2010 are 2 play a show with Tenebrarum with the Medellin's Philharmonic Orchestra at Altavoz (big festival in my city for 40,000 people) in October, get that on film and release a live dvd + cd plus some rare tracks to celebrate our 20th anniversary. Besides, working on a new video and in our 9th album and touring as much as possible...good plans, aren't they???

**Dean Garcia:** No major plans, that way there is always the possibility of things getting exciting.

**Emma (Will Dance For Chocolate):** Have a big dinner with my family, eat a whole box of Quality Street. Mmm!

**Gerrie B (Life In Sodom):** A 5 or 6 song EP that will include a Beatles cover.

**J. Common (The Common Men):** My plans are just to get established, get school ready and on the way, and to spend as much time with cherished ones as possible.. Perhaps get a new music video out for our song "Engines of intervention" and possibly start talking about new album concepts.



**Jan (Grimm):** I have no special plans. Maybe meeting some friends and eating tasty dead animals.

**Joel (Action Directe):** Back to the olds' for Xmas day, and then home to her, hearth and cat for some sustained relaxation.

**Joey (SPC ECO):** I'll go home to the U.S. in February, so nothing big until then, low-key. Some food, some exercise, call my dear mother. Can't complain, really. Health, family, and good eats!

**Jon Mori (Momento Mori UK):** My redundancy money will last until after Christmas so I'm not going to worry about having no job, instead I'm going to see it as an opportunity to spend more time with friends and family. and our final gig for the foreseeable future (due to our singer emigrating to Florida) is at the charnel house xmas party in Newcastle on 19th Dec so I'm hoping that's going to be one to remember, and we just got our album out in time for me not to have to think too hard about what to give everyone for xmas!!!

**kaRIN (Collide):** To make more art!!

**Kevin Ian Common (The Common Men):** I know I plan to spend Christmas quietly. My job always needs people to work during the holidays, and since we provide for our community, I don't mind working the holidays. It's been a wild time since we've acquired Kim on the drums, and I hope to increase our name and standing in the music community.

**Laura (Will Dance For Chocolate):** This year I will be having a quiet Xmas with family and friends. Hopefully it will snow! (Emma – "SNOW!!!")

**Mark (Resist):** a few gigs in the run up to xmas, then a few days off with family, then back out gigging on the 2nd Jan!

**Mark Sinnis:** I was married in October and am looking forward to spending Christmas with my wife and family.

**Neal Unreal (SBA):** Personally, I'm going to be working with Chris Carter, the Music Research Institute in Amsterdam, contacting a number of artists for possible future collaborations and hopefully getting Arts Council funding for my PhD. With SBA, I'll be writing and gigging my arse off and trying to get a new album out before the year is done. Some gigs abroad for the band would be nice. Maybe I'll save up for a hair transplant and I'll certainly be drinking too much and staying up far too late.

**Philip Butler:** The usual large family Christmas with the usual questions and answers. Yes I'm still 'wasting my time' on playing music, no I've not made a million at it yet, no I don't like the new Robbie Williams song.

**RAY (UK Decay):** I will undoubtedly be having the piss taken out of me by all my teenage nephews and nieces.

**Ricardo Santos (In Auroram):** Sleep a lot!! My wife's already calling me "The Grinch" 'cause I've frustrated her plans to put a tree in our living room... :p

**Rob (Live Not On Evil):** Recording a new full length Live Not On Evil album for our new record label Creep Records. That is a Christmas gift and a New Years resolution all at once for me.

**Rose Garcia (SPC ECO):** To Get settled in my degree, make stuff... crazy stuff.

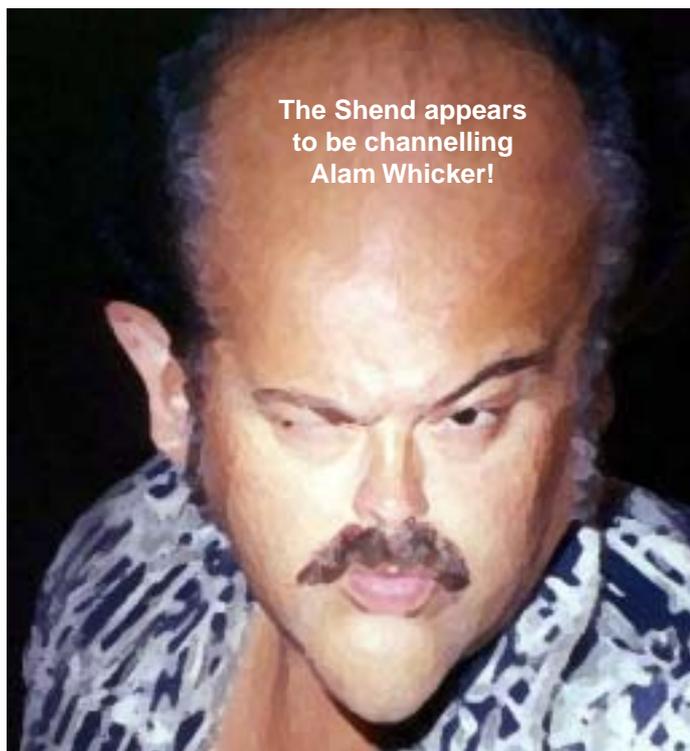
**Sin (Imprint):** To be with my babies and let them know how much I love them. We'll make dinner together along with cakes...have friends round, and as long as I promise to be good I might be allowed to have a fire ;)

**Spon (UK Decay):** These days xmas is a festival of consumerism, we are sold a story of supernatural magic and to make sacrifice in order to pay dues to the 'holy' alter of the buck. I am skint, like most I know, therefore my partner and I will be having a 'communist' Xmas and use the time hopefully to put down some new ideas!

**Statik (Collide):** To be nicer to people, and to get maybe just a little more speedy in making an album.

**Teresa Dead (Zeitgeist Zero):** This xmas will be very sad and tragic for me because my dad died very suddenly and unexpectedly 2 months ago.

**The Shend:** Hopefully being alive at the end of it.



# GHOST STORY

What is the spookiest thing ever to have happened to you?



**((S)):** Real life - (sorry, my best offer.) Merry Christmas everybody!!

**Abbo (UK Decay):** Well, there was that time at Clophill Church where we shot the Black Cat EP cover and it still sends a chill.

**Angelica (Waves Under Water):** Rarely anything spooky happens at Christmas for me, the spooky stuff seems to be taking a holiday as well. It all happens during the rest of the year. Two years ago we watched the first Alien movie and Delicatessen after Christmas dinner, that's about as spooky as it gets.

**Bex (Zeitgeist Zero):** I once dreamt that I was in a labyrinth with one of my friends, we were facing tests to get to the exit, one test was to face your biggest fear. Mine was a killer whale which chased me round a super market! My friend then faced a mad red eyed cow. I woke up and told my friend. She said that she was completely terrified of cows but had never told anyone before except her family!

**Clifford (Razorfade):** I got chased by ghosts many times one Christmas in about 1981 but every now and then the tables were turned and I was able to chase down the aforementioned Ghosts, oh hang on, I think that may have been PAC-MAN.

**David Rivera (Tenebrarum):** I was visiting a cemetery with a friend and we saw a ghost (It wasn't my imagination because we saw the same thing at the same time). It had the size of a 8 years old child and it was floating some inches above the ground. The figure was covered by a kind of veil and passed fast, like giving some sort of little jump, right in front of us. That was so unnatural and I felt no fear but a very unpleasant sensation...so odd.

**Dean Garcia:** I once woke up to find my dead cousin standing in the doorway of my room in his bloody old pyjamas I remember seeing him in at the hospital shortly before he died. I sat up in bed looked at him as he said "Don't worry about me Dean, I'm fine and everything is going to be alright" I stood and walked towards him and actually through him and into my Mums bedroom and noticed she was sitting bolt upright in her bed saying "I know, go back to bed, he's fine".

There are lots of stories like that from my Mums side, I grew up in a very spooky council house in Gaisford Street Kentish Town North London where there were always weird shit spooky comings and goings, I was never really that scared of it at the time, but



now if I see shit like that I get very fucking freaked. Like the time I saw one of the children from the 'baby graves incident' in the window of my sister in laws mega spooky house in the Midlands, but that is another story. Cue windy noises and very chilling tone...

**Emma (Will Dance For Chocolate):** I can't think of a spooky Christmas! When I worked at the MARRS Bar spooky things happened at ten past two in the morning. Chairs falling, footsteps. So let's say that was at Xmas.

One time I had to take a cymbal up to the green room in the MARRS Bar. This was the top floor, no one was up there. I balanced the cymbal on the stand, it wasn't screwed on but it was resting on the pad on the stand (I don't know the technical terms!) I got over to the door and it went smash! as if someone had hit it really hard, with a stick - it hadn't slipped, and made a sound, it was a proper smash. I ran pretty quickly back down the stairs.

**Gerrie B (Life In Sodom):** As a teenager back in the 80s my best friend had just received his drivers permit he dropped me off at home after a night of drinking at a Christmas party after I fell asleep a loud pounding noise on my window woke me up I remember even going outside to see what it was. There was nothing there. I looked at my clock radio time was 3:11 am. The next morning I got a call from his sister informing me he had driven into a canal car was face down in the mud where he drowned, estimated time of his death was 3:am I always wondered if that pounding on my window was a call for help or perhaps him saying farewell.

**Jan (Grimm):** I rather spook people myself then being spooked. I was still a pupil when I used to play nearby a graveyard. That graveyard had a dump too, were they mostly put the old gravestones, that weren't used anymore. I took one that wasn't so heavy with me and placed it in our garden when nobody was watching. That did spook my parents quite well! Hehehe. They didn't like me for a few days after that.

**Joel (Action Directe):** My Grandad passed away having only recently moved into his new council bungalow, and was in the process of getting the vents and central heating fixed when he died. The following week I started a new placement working for Wakefield council, and moved into a new office. The guy next to me was talking about a visit he was going to make to a tenant in South Elmsall, and after I heard the name I said - "no need to, that was my Grandad. He died last week..."

**Joey (SPC ECO):** No ghost tales, but my friends all call me a Scrooge, is that close enough?!

**Johan (Waves Under Water):** Last year I saw Santa on the subway. Sure, it might just have been a regular man in a costume but I choose to believe it was the real thing.

**Jon Mori (Momento Mori UK):** Spookiest thing that ever happened to me was when I'd been pumped full of morphine after being knocked off my bike. I started to regain consciousness whilst having a CAT scan, it was like the beginning of the six million dollar man, I hadn't a clue what was going on, just heard whirring etc and my arms & legs were restrained. Looking back, I'd quite happily do it again for the compensation I got!!!



**kaRIN (Collide):** I am trying to drum up spooky...hmmmm. We used to have a ghost in one of our houses, but it was a peaceful ghost. I remember one time when I was at cEvin Key's (Skinny Puppy). I was by myself singing in the drum room on cEvin's side project Plateau and I could feel a ghost presence in there.



We all knew he had a ghost in his house. When you sing you typically have a pop screen which is something that prevents the mic from getting unwanted sounds.... p's and s's and stuff. He did not have a pop screen, so he tied some fabric in front of the mic instead and while I was singing it started to swirl around. It was haunted cool, but not scary evil. I just kept singing and let the feeling come into the song.

**Kevin Ian Common (The Common Men):** A few years ago, at my old place in Dixon, I woke up to what sounded like a rustling of clothing in my closet. My eyes had finally gotten used to the dark, and I could not make anything out in the closet but I could clearly see movement. I tried to get up, but then I saw a framed picture fly off my dresser towards me. I stayed in bed and within a few minutes, the activity stopped.

**Laura (Will Dance For Chocolate):** Nothing spooky has ever happened at Xmas, but I have done Ouija boards in the past with friends which was really frightening. I'm still not quite sure if I believe in them - it's just the kind of thing that gives you the creeps!

**Mark Sinnis:** Ok, I honestly had a few ghost encounters. One to be brief was in my house growing up as a teenager on Long Island. To make a long story short my parents and sister all were seeing it, but none of us told each other at first. I would be alone in a room and just feel like something was behind me I would look and see a dark image fly bye. This would happen to my parents too, but again we all never said anything. We all thought we were seeing things. But seeing could not explain feeling its presence. Until my sister who was 6 at the time screamed because it was in her room. Then we all talked about it. The ghost eventually left our house, because we stopped seeing it.

I have to tell this story about my ex girlfriend Bruna (who experienced a ghost with me in the story below in Woodstock N.Y.) Sadly at only 25 she is now deceased, so I think she would like me to tell her story. She also grew up on Long island. Bruna told me when she was real young around 6 or 7 she would always love running up to her room after school and talk to an old man who used to appear in her window. She was never afraid, in fact could not wait to see him. When he would appear he used to turn into a clown and make her laugh. When Bruna's parents heard her in her room they asked her "who are you talking to?" She eventually told them. When they heard this at first



they disregarded it, but after hearing her over and over talking to this imaginary friend they got nervous that she had emotional problems. Especially when she told them about the clown.

One day Bruna's father had his friends over for a backyard BBQ and one of the friends was the realtor who sold him the house. Over a beer he told his friend that he was worried about Bruna, and told him about the old man in the window and the clown. He said he was worried she was having psychological problems. At this point his realtor friend told him "I don't want to alarm you, but the people who you bought the house from had an elderly parent who lived in that room, he also died there. When he was young he used to dress up as a clown."

Need I say more about this story! Bruna told me as she got older she eventually stopped seeing the clown. Her parents didn't think she was crazy.

So here is my last story, which happened in around 2003 or so. Me and Bruna, my girlfriend at the time, decided to take an over night trip for Valentines Day to Woodstock N.Y. This is the real town Woodstock, the concert happened nowhere near it. Woodstock is a small little artist town, Bob Dylan lived there for a short while and other 60's artists. Now it is mostly a tourist trap, but it served as a get away from the NYC rat race. It is 2 hours north from NYC.

We got there in the day checked out some of the shops, ate and had a few drinks then found a cheap motel on the outskirts of the town. I do remember there being nothing near the motel; probably why it was cheap!

We had our Valentines fun and then it was lights out. Around 3am I woke up having to relieve my bladder so walked in the dark to the bathroom and as I stood at the toilet taking care of business I felt that same feeling from back when I was a teenager over come me. And for a split second I could feel something standing right next to me. It was an intense energy, that same energy I felt as a teenager. I did not make a peep and just went back to bed as if nothing happened.

1 minute after I got into bed my girlfriend Bruna got up to also go to the bathroom. She knew nothing of my bathroom encounter. She went to the bathroom then came back and got into bed. At that second she screamed and shook me and said "Mark wake up! There is a Ghost in the room! And he is standing next to the bed! Next to you!" She quickly turned on the light and said she was not going back to sleep. I honestly just wanted to sleep! lol. I told her, well what are we gonna do at 3am in the morning? He's not bothering us so let's just go to sleep! I also said how about the clown! I thought you liked ghosts! lol.

Needless to say an argument ensued and our romantic Valentines day spoiled by a country hippie ghost! So there ya go!

**Misha (Resist):** No ghosts, but I'm very telepathic, so much so it's scary!

**Neal Unreal (SBA):** No such thing as ghosts, paranormal, afterlife and suchlike..... however the tricks the human mind can play on an individual can be astounding and fascinating. A house that I was sharing once ended up being exorcised by the Jesus Army because everyone thought it was haunted, including me, at the time....such a fool I was. Apparently hi-fi's turned themselves on and the floorboards creaked. A thumbprint of blood appear on the wall in my room and the blind let itself down occasionally. All explainable by faulty electrics, central heating and beer accidents but you just can't dissuade some people.

**Philip Butler:** The editor can choose from:

- a) If I told you I believed in ghosts I'd be liar.
- b) I grew up in a big farm house several hundred years old. The wine cellar had a second staircase which was bricked up after the first few steps. One year I was collecting a couple of bottles in time for Christmas lunch when I heard a knocking coming from the other side of the wall.. it startled me so much that I dropped one of the vintage vinos. I kept the reason for the spillage to myself at risk of looking like a pansy.

**Tash:** Yikes! Phil's never told me the story about the creepy wall knocking, he knows that I'm a total wuss when it comes to ghost stories, I'm having flash backs of The Orphanage.

Mine isn't a ghost story, but one Christmas when I was in the Philippines we were in a run down shanty town area (don't ask me why, we just were), it was pretty much deserted apart from some ancient old ladies walking around, as soon as my mum and aunty spotted these women they shouted 'don't look into their eyes, they're witches!' This totally freaked me out as my mum is usually of sane mind and I didn't even know she believed in such things! There was no explanation of what would have happened if I did look into their eyes....

**Ray (UK Decay):** I live in a town in Oxfordshire that goes back to the dark ages. Me and a mate were sitting in the courtyard of a 16th Century pub when his glass shatters for no reason. A year later the town holds a heritage day that includes details of all its ghosts. Apparently a young serving wench through herself from a third-story window in a fit of lovelorn pique and splattered herself across the flagstones; directly under where we sat drinking hundreds of years later ....duh duh duh!

**Ricardo Santos (In Auroram):** Fake medieval Satanist rituals to scare the neighbour counts? hehe

**Rob (Live Not On Evil):** Oddly enough I spend every Christmas night at a party in the house I lived in when I was little. The house is terribly haunted and the hauntings became so intense that my dad the non-believer finally sold it to my cousin. We could not even keep a dog in that house, they always figured out a way out. It is a creepy joint. Merry Christmas!

**Rose Garcia (SPC ECO):**

I'm THE biggest wimp, I've only just started sleeping with all the lights off...so if something truly spooky did happen I'd probably throw myself off a bridge. but when I was about 10 or 11 i went on a school trip to Wales, on an kind of outward bounds type thing. I decided it would be funny to make up a story about a young girl who whilst out canoeing got trapped upside-down in the water and drowned! I know, right, WTF? I managed to convince everyone and freaked the shit out of all the girls in our dorm. but 1 night we were all fast asleep and the window swung open after being locked shut... there was no wind and nothing to be seen but footsteps where heard across





the floor the door was opened and closed and then silence. no one was there but the window stayed open all night with yours truly in tears quivering under her duvet...lovely.

**Sin (Imprint):** Funny you should ask...I don't know how many of you read my journal on myspace? But my dear friend Lexy died a couple of years ago from cancer...she fought long and hard and I miss her painfully still.

My son and I caught a lift to her wake from her cremation. In the car just as we were pulling out of the place my phone rang...I was frantically trying to find it and when I did I went cold. Lex was trying to call me...I showed my phone to everyone else in the car as I was totally freaked out...and I didn't answer it. When I got to the wake I asked Lexy's mum where Lex's phone was and she said back at the house...I asked had it been left there the whole day and she said yes.

I often think about that...since then I have also asked if the phone had been switched off...yes...was anyone left at the house...no. I wonder what I would have heard, if anything, if I would have answered. Lex is always trying to freak me out ;) Always will

**Spon (UK Decay):** Earlier in the year I had a spooky experience, although maybe not a straightforward ghost story but here it is..

I love living in ancient landscapes, the feeling of looking across a terrain and visualising how it may have once looked. Where there are now roads and cities, there was once just fields and forest and earlier human communities. I get out sometimes on my bike and scan the local area. I live in the Chilterns and the oldest road in the UK passes through. The 5000 year old Icknield Way used to be one of the four most important roads in England during Saxon and Norman times, now it's importance has dwindled in some stretches to merely a green lane.

The route passes from Wiltshire to Norfolk and is peppered with ancient monuments all along the route. Earlier this year we had a rehearsal booked in a small village just outside Swindon. I thought as the rehearsal was booked in the evening, that I might bung my bicycle in the car as well and spend the afternoon discovering the Ridgeway path, which is a continuation of the Icknield way. I pulled into the car park at Uffington White Horse hill and got my bike out of the car, I was looking forward to a couple hours of cycling along the Ridgeway.

First I cycled up to the White Horse chalk cutting and marvelled at the view across the Vale of the White Horse. My mind wandered back in time to the ancient Britain's and the legends of King Arthur and St. George slaying the Dragon, supposedly on the weird looking hill below- in fact it is often said that the White Horse of Uffington is really a Dragon. Up to then it was a pleasant sunny day and as I am usually in my element discovering 'new' territories, had no qualms about visiting my next point on my journey; Waylands Smithy a Neolithic burial chamber. I set off from the Uffington White Horse up the hill to the Iron Age hill fort, which was on the highest part of the downs, some 800 foot in altitude. I cycled round the massive stone ramparts and down onto the Ridgeway track as a micro light plane flew above me.

It was then I noticed that there was nobody else about, there had been some other cars back in the car park, I assumed dog walkers, whatever. I had been here before on a sunny day and the area was thronging with visitors. I looked across the landscape to the south of the scarp and it suddenly occurred to me that it seemed unusually bleak and foreboding.

I could see the Ridgeway path rolling through a slight dip toward the distant hilltop where Wayland Smithy was located by a grove of trees. The sun had now disappeared behind some gloomy looking clouds and at once, I felt a deep sense of loneliness and grief welling up inside me . I looked across the plateau at the top of the ridge with it's echoes of



marching feet across time and history and it was totally devoid. It was as if all of humanity had ceased to exist and that I was the last human left on Earth. I felt a deep sense of what it must be like to be the only human alive on an alien planet, a very strange experience. It occurred to me that this 5000 plus year old road with it's memories of millions travelling along it through the ages, might one day become an empty, baron place once again.

This feeling numbed me and as I looked across the terrain, my dread feelings turned to terror which threatened to engulf my sense of well-being. I thought about a quick return to the safety of my car but for a moment, I couldn't move.

It was hard to explain that feeling, I thought about the astronaut they had to pull in on a space walk because he was 'frozen', 'awestruck' with the magnitude of floating above planet Earth. I thought about being alone with lightening on the summit of the hill, it was not good, I became extremely anxious and began trembling.. but.....then; suddenly I was aware once again of the tearing sound of the micro light's engine as it was making a returning flight. This brought me out of the dark trance I was in and back to my normal senses at once..

For a minute, I weighed up in my mind whether or not to continue my planned journey. In the end, after convincing myself that it was a very 'silly' experience, I made my way uneventfully to Wayland Smithy and called out "for my shoe to be shod"!.

I am not normally prone to this kind of experience but for a moment, I felt I had entered the land of the Faeries. Maybe Wayland, the Smithy was trying to show me something.....

**Statik (Collide):** We had an old player piano when I was a kid, and I swear that sometimes when I was sleeping, I'd hear a big "bang" as if a bunch of keys would get banged down at once. I'd wake up and all would be quiet, so I'm sure it was all in my head, but it would still freak me out sometime.

**Teresa Dead (Zeitgeist Zero):** I wish I had a story about nuns with no faces and priests with blood coming out of their eyes after praying to baby Jesus at the manger. Santa coming down the chimney with a corpse in his sack and gingerbread men that came to life to try and eat your legs off. However, I don't so I hope somebody else has a good story.

**The Shend:** Finding out what 'Shend' actually meant in old English when someone sent me a video of it being used on 'Call My Bluff'. You'll have to look it up!  
(AS. scendan to disgrace, bring to shame, from sceand, sceond, disgrace, dishonor, shame; akin to G. schande, **Goth.** skanda. See Shame, n. 1. To injure, mar, spoil, or harm. [Obs.] «Loss of time shendeth us.» Chaucer. The famous name of knighthood foully shend. - Spenser. [1913 Webster])



**HAPPY**

**NEW**

**YEAR**