

## Part 74

### Prologue 2020

*So there you are gang.*

*That really has been Holly's 2019.*

*Best described as a Roller-coaster of a year....*

*Now, let's see if we can get it into the water-splash in 2020.....*

Must I always start these things off with that kiss of death???

As per normal to get into the flow to knock off this year's update I've just re-read last years entries.

The phrase 'if I knew then what I know now' somewhat seems inadequate to cover what's happened this year.

Been struggling a bit as to how I'm gonna structure it this time.

Probs best if start with what I had planned & let it fall off the end of a log (bit like the year did)....

So, as I left Y'all last time, I was a lost & confused.

I'd had what was probably the best year ever when it comes to Holly advancement, finishing with the devastating blow of being dumped....

The intention was to jump back into the LGBT scene in Worcester & pick up on some of the threads I'd lost in my quest for Holly-fame.

I was planning to do just the significant prides and not repeat the manic schedule that 2019 had been.

Work-wise, there was the 2 Stars gigs with Sky-High anything else I could appropriate on the back of them.

Radio had acquired a new direction. As you've read throughout 2019, I had numerous goes at expanding my portfolio of shows, only to have to wind it all back in through lack of time/energy.

The main problem is that with internet stations you're never going to get a huge listenership. If you've got 15 or 20 people 'tuned in' to your show you're doing really well.

A few of the other long term presenters I knew had started going down the Simulcast route. This is basically means streaming the same show (either live or recorded) out to numerous stations at the same time.

Now station managers aren't particularly fond of this, as they want their presenters to be just that, theirs.

I decided to look into the tech side of achieving Simulcast & found out that the software I already used could achieve this. Now just a matter of getting it past the manager. One option is just simply not tell them. They have no real way of checking it out. But on the back of last years successes, I was confident enough in both myself & my show just come out with it. Very much along the lines of 'if you want to keep me, this is how it is'.

The trade off is that you have to make the show completely generic, that means no station ID's jingles or ads.

So a quick bit of sourcing landed me with a small collection of Holly-based links & we were good to go. The only branding was the show's identity 'Holly's Walk on the Wild Side'. Now to find some other stations.

As with a lot of businesses, Radio (as well as other branches of the entertainment biz) is 'contact-driven'.

It's all down to who you know.

A few messages sent out across the platforms soon had some replies & I was good to go.

Now, the downside of all this is that Graham used to be my QC. He would be listening to the Off-Air feed to check levels & quality.

No Graham meant I had to find a way of doing this myself. With just one station I was just running the tablet I had used as a video-link to Gloucester to monitor, but with more stations this was going to be more difficult.

Ah, the Lappy.....

I found that I could open the station sites & have them all just sat on the desktop & click on each in turn to hear what was going on... Simple.... OK

I now got 4 computers running, But hey-Ho.....It was getting to look a bit like NASA in my little Hollyville, but needs must.

Events.....

Early Jan had seen me book a hotel for Brighton (didn't want to miss out on that now did we)...

I chose not to go with the little 'Pixie' hotel this time as I just fancied a little bit more luxury (& space in the room)....

In 2019 there was pictures of my unpacked 'Tardis' suitcase & the dresses & skirts covering all the walls...

So I blagged a double room (on the off-chance of 'Pulling) with a cancellable fee (yes I know why now)...

But what else? I was pretty well down in the dumps over the breakup, so was in the mood for a bit more getting 'out & about'...

The girls I'd spent a lot of time with at the previous Brighton had formed a bit of a 'club', probs to re-live the highs of the event.

The plan was to do a girls-night-out every couple of months at a different location. They'd already done one at Blackpool the previous October that I'd had to duck out of due to the manic level of rehearsal I was putting in for Jenny's party gig. But February was on the cards to hit Manchester.

The plan was to just simply hit the town for 1 night & seriously give the 'Village' a good going over.

If you remember, I'd only done a one-off visit to Sparkle a few years back & was looking forward to seeing what Manky could provide in the way of a good time.

Along the same line, another Twitter friend who I've known since the very early days was coming up to a significant birthday & was looking to amalgamate this with LFF.

Now Leeds First Friday is (was) a seriously significant event. Like a lot of the set events in the calendar, it had grown up from just some local girls choosing to meet up to a 'hundreds of Trans girls travelling across the country to get there' kind of event.

I'd not managed to get to one, so it was a deffo to experience. Latterly it had expanded into LFS as well.

As I've mentioned before, with a lot people (especially part time CD's), the reticence to 'come back down' off an occasion bites hard. I booked for the complete set & was looking forward to ticking another off the list.

So all in all, the year was already stating to look OK.

I had a few events booked.

I was meeting up with the Worcs Pride committee.

My radio was expanding.

What could possibly go wrong.....

## Part 75

January 2020

So as mentioned, this month started off with a load of confusion.

Nothing (or so it seemed) was ever going to top last year and initially I was faced with a huge ant-climax....

I started to introduce some extra stations to my radio feed & by the end of Jan, with 3 on the go, was getting to feel good about things generally.

Obviously some further rehashing of the studio was required, but I achieved quite easily & relatively cheaply.

As well as needing to monitor the output from the stations (to make sure I was actually playing out) I needed to be in touch with the chat rooms. As I've already outlined, part of the buzz with internet radio is the spontaneity. You can be playing a track & your listeners are commenting in real time. It's the closest you're gonna get to playing live on stage.

This meant for every new station I needed a tablet to link to the chat.

Ah, NASA was now starting to resemble AWACS....

As I type this in late December, I've just done another re-build on the studio.

We're now up to 5 PC's & 5 tabs.....More on this later...

Events, With the Manchester trip scheduled for early Feb, stuff needed dealing with....

OK, shopping needed to happen....

By now I have my signature style, but wanted to expand the actual number of outfits.

As the emphasis was veering away from Prides at this point, & because this was Winter, bonkers, outrageous stuff was sidelined in favour of clothes that could be re-used into mix & match looks.

As it was only a 1 nighter, this just meant 2 outfits, afternoon & evening. Found what I wanted & also some extra accessories (Like Alice hair band & 4inch 'Clincher belts).

Shoes were obviously an extension of the 4inch blocks that had been the main-stay of last year's events. By the time we were half way through the month I was getting into the swing of things. A new-found optimism was creeping in. I felt that I could really do this Post Graham thing. There was a real me that could move on.

Worcestershire Pride committee had taken to meeting at the town's one & only LGBT orientated pub, The Flag.

The organisers at this point had changed from when I was involved in 2017, but was determined to 'do my bit'. As part of the discussions I floated the idea of adding an extra 'Family' or 'Acoustic' stage to the event. I'd seen this at other events I'd been to & thought it would work well in Worcs.

I put myself up to manage this as the kind of acts required were the kind of people I knew I could get.

1<sup>st</sup> was going to be a rather large & loud Trans girl with a collection of Pink Guitars that she desperately wanted to see on a stage....

Obviously after my gig last year, I was looking to engineer any opportunity I could to progress this. What had been hurriedly thrown together then would be much better planned for future events, so that the bonkers stress levels could be avoided.

Along the same line, I'd been chatting Jady Shaw (remember, BTP last year?), & we'd come up with the idea of putting a scratch-band together for this year's event.

Now any reasonably competent Muso can knock out some rock & blues classics so we could just show up & go. I was going on Bass for this one as it being my default instrument, would enable just that.

Just hire (or borrow) a PA & backline locally so as to minimise the need to lug huge amounts of heavy kit around.

We decided that Friday at the Marly would be the best time & emailed the venue to start organising.

So, we're still in Jan & already the events & gigs are happening. Perhaps 2020 wasn't going to be such a bad year after all.

Part 76

February 2020

The 'Witches Coven' (our gang's adopted name) were scheduled to hit Manchester 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of this month. For once I'd had plenty of time to get stuff together and on the Saturday morning had my suitcase & Dolly-Trolley (my work-bag) packed & ready to go.

The idea of using Dollz was an easy one. Due to the nature of my work, I tend to have to take a fair amount of things around with me. Spare make-up, spare stockings, spares for my nails & even a First aid kit & fold-up brolly. So instead of attempting to add this lot to a suitcase, just drag Dolly alone as a second bag. Well, it makes sense to me....

The weather wasn't too special (after all, it was early Feb) so Big Coat was added to the mix. I'd done a lot of research on things like parking around by our chosen hotel all in the name of stress reduction, hence increased enjoyment. All went well & arrived & parked hassle free....

Slight hitch at the hotel, as there was a strange rule about not being allowed access to the rooms until 4pm & this was about midday, but they had a secure room to store cases so after a couple of quick phone calls located the gang & we all met up.

It was a pleasant afternoon wandering around the quirkier side of the city centre, but I was not completely comfortable & wasn't sure why.

Some other Trans girls met up with us as we went on & at one point, we had quite a crowd.

I slipped away about 4.30 as I wanted to get booked into the room & start getting ready for the evening.

I can remember the outfit I'd chosen was quite demure black skirt, white top, red belt & accessories. As mentioned, this wasn't an out & out pride event & was more like when Graham & I went to dinner at Ruislip.

I was 1<sup>st</sup> down to the bar, so grabbed the opportunity to get a bite to eat. The rest of the gang eventually appeared & we hit the town. Now, my only experience of Canal Street at this point was that short little wander at Sparkle. You really have to see it at night to get the full meaning. OK, so this was early Feb but it was still full enough for the atmosphere to be apparent. BUT, & it was a big But, about half way through the evening when we sat in a small disco/bar where the music was so loud you couldn't talk, the smoke machine was so heavy that there were times you couldn't see who you were sat next to that the realisation that at 62 years old, perhaps this wasn't my direction after all. I think we were trying to re-create Brighton, but this wasn't quite getting there. Just goes to show just how special Brighton is as an event.... I parted from the gang around 11.30 (just after I'd knocked a glass of beer over, signifying I'd probs had enough to drink), & went back to the hotel. I slept sporadically partly due to the heating in the room being non-existent (In Feb) & my not wanting to face the upheaval of changing rooms at 1 in the morning.

This was the weekend that storm Dennis was due to bite so I made an early exit & hit the M6. Safe to say that although poor little Hollybug was partially Dennised we got back in one piece. A good weekend, but one that set me to thinking a bit.

As an aside, also around Feb, an interesting occurrence cropped up in the sporting world.

Wigan Warriors (Big Ruffy Tuffy Rugby Players) hit the news. That's the Pink News.

They were in protest against having to play against a staunchly anti LGBT player from Australia. They announced that the particular match would be an impromptu Pride Day.

Well as you can imagine, The whole of the Pink movement got behind them on this & even I vowed to attend a Rugby match for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 50 years. As it happens the lovely Georgina Picket (who I work with) & her daughter Lotte (who's on the pride committee) are already Warriors fans so we set up a girly Rugby trip.

So as we can see, already 2020 is turning out to be a far more diverse year than the previous....

What can possibly go wrong????

Part 77

March 2020

As it's turning out this year is throwing up some strange little quirks. Just after Christmas I dropped into re-visiting 50's Musical films as part of my immersion into all things from this (my chosen) period in time. The line of thinking is as I'm adopting the look, may as well adopt the lifestyle.

As part of these, I acquired a copy of a lesser known film (actually from the early 60's but we'll gloss over that) called Music Man. I remember the film when it 1<sup>st</sup> came out even though as it turns out I was only 5 at the time, but my Dad loved the tunes from it, so it was prevalent around the house.

What I hadn't bargained for was, as I'm now a very different person, the effect the music would have on me. 1<sup>st</sup> time I played it I got about 45 minutes in & burst into floods of tears. Not sad tears, but those tears that very poignant music can have on you if you're sensitive (which obviously I am these days).

OK, we're in March. I've still yet to get right through this damn film without sobbing my eyes out & it's become a bit of a talking point on my socials. I get into work on a Monday & the 1<sup>st</sup> question is 'Yes? Did you manage it?' To which up to this point the answer is always 'No' .....

Decided to get back onto the Dating scene. As much as I'm pretty self sufficient & can manage quite well on my own, my time with Graham showed me that it can really be quite pleasant just to have someone to do the normal things in life with.

I chose a Trans specific site even though it was a 'Pay' site (I decided to go this route as opposed to the likes of POF etc., just to circumvent the need to explain what a Trans woman was).



Don't know why I bothered, still spent most of the time explaining who & what I was. Don't get me wrong, there were some nice guys answering my ads, obviously Men being Men their primary reason for being on the site was to pick up sex contacts, but I half expected that. What floored me (& pissed me off) was how un-knowledgeable they were about what a Trans Woman is & wants.

We'd start off with 'Oh I think you're beautiful,  
Or 'I love your smile'.

We even sometimes got to 'You look stunning in that outfit'.

All well & good but it was never long before we got to the 'Have you still got a dick?'

The ad was headed with 'Pre-Op Trans Woman, & the very reason for using that site was to be in contact with guys who should understand what that is.

I was totally truthful about things like my age & build as I didn't want to be faced with any 'Huge Surprise scenario' if & when we met up.

Obviously the pictures I used were some of my better ones, but they were current & really me.

I was determined to go down the 'If you want to meet me, we'll do the chatting & getting to know each other a bit 1<sup>st</sup>'.

Some of the nicer guys bought into this and there were a couple that I was almost ready to meet up with and then it happened.....

Yup we were all there that night Boris made the announcement.

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 will go down in history as the day that changed history.

I remember watching BBC completely bewildered as to what was going on. It was like a feature film, except it was happening for real.

It reminded me somewhat of the Iranian Embassy siege in the 80's. We watched thinking it was a film, but it was really happening.

Once the PM had finished I just sat in silence trying to take in what had just happened.

Let's face it, he wasn't that clear on what was to happen.

It wasn't like in the past where PM's had stood up & said in plain words 'We are now at war with Germany'.....

I had to think & think fast.

I live on my own.  
I'm self-employed.  
There's only me to pay the bills.  
If work stops, how do I manage.

I made the decision to show up at work the next day.  
I didn't really have any choice.  
Some of my work colleagues had hit the socials asking what everyone else was doing.  
I just had to show up & see.

I was at the yard normal time the next day (05.00).  
There were a few of the usual crew but not many.  
I fully expected to be sent home, after all even if my work providers decided to stay open, their customers (Car Dealerships Etc.) were all closing.

The office crew sorted some runs out that could be done but some drivers went sent home.  
I worked that day.  
I was grateful.  
The same the next day & the next.  
By the time we'd got to the end of that week a sort of 'Formula' had been established.  
It looked like, possibly we'd just get through.

Part 78

Spring 2020

Ah, you've noticed.  
I've changed the Titling Format.

Once we'd got past March it all got a bit blurry.  
As I tend to do, I've been using my 2020 tweets back-catalogue to remind myself on dates & chronology.

After the announcement, it just dropped into piccies of my weekly nail colour changes & the links to my show uploads.

I know work-wise we carried on.

We were actually running vehicles out to Front line & Key workers. Numerous companies (especially healthcare providers) had to take on extra staff (Mostly on temporary contracts). But these people had to have vehicles.

Vehicle hire companies were going bonkers trying to keep up with demand which was good for us.

But, as far as Holly advancement (which is primarily what this missive is all about) it really was a case of Holly meet brick wall.

It was in this period that all the events started getting cancelled.

Stars of Time was one of the 1<sup>st</sup>.

Then Brighton.

All the rest of the Pride events were falling down like 9 pins (Including eventually Worcestershire).

So the very year that I was going to launch my newly discovered music career onto the world, the world closed down.....

I can now see why Fate had steered me into booking 'cancellable' hotel bookings although for a while, all hotels had to accept cancellations as they had been forced to close down.

This situation was having a knock on effect on other things too.

SkyHigh radio (who had pulled me out of a serious depression in 2018) closed their doors as did a number of others. It seemed that nothing was impervious.

It was certainly like nothing any of us had seen before.

Just to add injury to insult, I got a speeding ticket.

One of the downsides to the roads suddenly becoming like your own personal Motorway was that average speeds had crept up.

With no traffic to cause hold-ups, we could get around much quicker.

Obviously I'd always had the idea in the back of my mind that even though I held a 'Clean' driving license, if ever I got caught I would probably be allowed to do a 'Speed Awareness' course as I'd not done one before.

Unless, that is, if you get caught when there's lockdown on.

You know the sort of thing.  
No gatherings of any kind (especially in classrooms)....  
Bugger...

Even worse, I got officially mis-gendered.  
When the letter came through about the speeding, it had a part that I had to send back saying that I was the driver.  
Now the very day it happened I knew I wasn't going to get away with it. The problem was I driving a car with a bang-on accurate speedo.  
When you've spent a life-time (as I have) being used to a speedo saying 80 but the Sat-nav saying 73, you sort of build this into your 'tolerance. But this day the speedo said 84 & 84 it was. Hence the ticket...  
I sent the form back but within a couple of days got another letter saying "Thank you for your reply saying you were the driver, but we've reviewed the evidence (picture) & we think this is not the case".  
I can only assume that I'd had a bad day & looked rougher than usual. They saw a driving licence that said Holly & a very un-Holly like figure in the picture.

Once I called & eventually explained what a Trans woman was, I used the opportunity to ask how they were dealing with courses now. It transpires that I got offered one of the 1<sup>st</sup> Online Speed awareness courses in the country.

A bizarre event where I was sat on my comfy Sofa in Worcester with the rest of the 'Room' was in Grimsby.  
But hey, it did the job, & I still got a clean license.....

Captain Tom Moore....

Now there aren't many people who don't know this hero.  
Sir Captain Tom Moore, as he now is, cropped up in an industry news feed I was using for the show.

At the time he'd raised around 1 million pounds for the NHS by walking around his garden on a walking frame.

I kept my eye on him & within just a few weeks this had grown to around £17 Million.

Now Wild Side isn't the kind of show that does a lot of current affairs. We do more light-hearted entertainment & leave the more meaningful stuff to those who do it better, but this guy had piqued my interest, & a Capt. Tom special got planned.

I did all the research (just like a proper journo)

I laid out the script (just like a proper journo).  
I selected some suitable tracks to complete the feature (just like.....)  
Then got ready to deliver his to the gathered gangs...

Ah, well in a year of firsts, this was the first time I ever cried on air.  
Yup, proper Music Man style sobby cries.  
At one point I had to just close the mic & put another track on....  
The emotion of what this super, humble guy had done, just got to me.  
The gangs forgave me (through their own damp eyes)...  
It's what live broadcasting is made for....

## Part 79

Spring/Summer 2020

### Pride Outfits

At this point (late April gong into May) Worcestershire Pride still planned to go ahead.

As their event was in the middle of September, everyone hoped that all this nonsense would be over.

I had always aimed to attempt to top last year's outfits & I had been planning something a bit special.

The idea had been to just take my time over assembling one spectacular outfit, but use it for as many events as I was going to do. That now fitted into place as it looked like there was only going to be the one.

The costume was (And still is as it languishes on my Pride wall) a fairy dress, with wand & wings.....

Yup wings.

I spent quite a while getting a set of wings big enough n so that it didn't just look like a cheap fancy dress. Worcs committee assured me that were definitely planning to go ahead so I finalised the whole thing with gold strappy sandals.

As I was appearing on stage, they asked if I'd put a video promo together. This was going to be added to others to form an online advert for the event.

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in May saw me lashing my clone Go-Pro to the curtain rail (so that I faced the best light source, the window) and clouting out 3 songs that were going to be part of my set.

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in May saw me fixing my Tablet to the curtain rail to re-take the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2 songs as the Go-Pro had developed a fault in filming that I didn't spot until I was mixing it all down....

I duly glued all this together & sent it over to the Pride gang.

At this point I was still rehearsing as I intended to widen the scope of the songs I was going to do.

I intended chucking in a bit of Janis Joplin, 4 non Blondes, etc. to attempt to add some extra interest.

Obs doing all this guitar work involved a lengthy time sans left hand nails. I did miss them, but there was a good reason for doing it.

29<sup>th</sup> May Worcs Pride announced the cancellation of their event. Bugger, Bollux & Damn.

Ah well, all the music kit got packed away for the foreseeable future & I dug out the nail kit...

I vaguely remember a set of Bright red Stilettoes going on.

As work nails.

Look, I needed cheering up.....

We're into June.

Life consists of work & home, Ain't complaining too much as work continues (not as prolific as at the beginning, but reasonable).

We've learned about the Government's financial scheme to assist Self-Employed which takes some of the pressure off.

In all honesty a lot has changed with the procedures with the job & I'm quite enjoying the 'part-time' work ethic.

It's sort of brought it home that I am getting older & I now know why 2019 was so goddam manic.

I'll not see another one that hectic.

I'm good with it, sort of embracing things as they are.

It's almost like a future vision of Holly.  
Old Holly.  
Nothing wrong with that as I will still be Holly when I'm old so may as well get used to it.

10<sup>th</sup> June sort of highlighted it in a very real way.  
Had a lorry to collect from an industrial estate in Southampton.  
Not forgetting that I'm still in my Summer short skirt & heels I made the decision to enter the cab rather swiftly to try & keep some modesty.  
As I threw myself upwards I knew I'd made a mistake.  
I both heard & felt my left knee go twang.  
OK Sit-Rep....  
I'm in the cab of a lorry with only one working leg, in Southampton.

It's strange what goes through your mind in these times of adversity....

"Oh good" I think. "It's automatic, at least I'll be able to drive it back as I only need one leg".....  
WHAT??????

I had to ring my work colleague (who by now was only just over the other side of the road but I couldn't attract his attention.  
"Er Alex... Could you come back over to the truck, I'm crippled"...

Yes I did drive it back to our Gloucester depot.  
Yes, Alex did have to reverse the car he was in right up the parking lanes as I couldn't get out of the cab.  
Yes he had to carry me to Hollybug once we got back to our depot.  
It was only then that I started to get a bit scarred.

Hollyville is on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. How the hell am I going to get from the car to the flat.  
I could have cheerfully kissed Alex when he appeared from the back of his own car with a walking stick.

It'll be OK. It'll all be fine in the morning..

Just like any other aspect of my life, you just knew it wasn't.

I'll freely admit to a bit of panicking that night.

This was the 1<sup>st</sup> serious health issue I'd had since I'd lived alone & it brings it home a bit.

I had visions of the Plod finding a de-composed body in Hollyville having had to use their 'Big Red Key' following complains of 'funny smells.....

The next morning the reality of the situation was apparent.

I needed help...

Now , the last place I wanted to be in a global pandemic was in A&E.

If you're gonna catch it anywhere, it's gonna be there. So I rang the doctor for an appointment.

"What do mean you're only doing phone appointments" .....

She eventually rang me back and when I got to the bit about knee-twanging she immediately interrupted with "Get yourself to A&E right now for an X-Ray"

"Oh OK" I says, "I'll get in the car now".

"You damn well won't" came the answer, "Get a taxi" .....

I chose to gloss over the bit about driving a lorry with just 1 leg.....

And that, lovely gang is how I got to be the owner of 2 pairs of crutches (1 now lives permanently in Hollybug) & a fold up walking stick.

Ain't gonna be caught out next time I make a tart of myself.

It took about 2 weeks before I could go back to work & 6 months down the line I still can't kneel on that knee.

*Hahaha, just seen a tweet from the time.*

*3 weeks ago I was on crutches.*

*2 weeks ago I was on a stick.*

*Last week I was limping.*

*This week .....(Picture of my 4 inch Blocks)....*

She don't change....

Something again highlighted while I was being booked in at the hospital.

"Oh, you've got no next of kin listed"

No Hunni, coz I ain't got none.....

Being Trans isn't always fun, frivolity & fluffy dresses....

Around early July a call went out to anyone who had a Twitch channel.



Brighton Trans Pride were going to put a 'Virtual' event together and were looking to stream it out on as many channels as poss.  
Thinking that this would be the nearest I was going to get to the event this year, I put my hand up.

The plan was to just repeat their incoming stream & bounce it back out again to all my followers. Now, always being up for a bit of a techie challenge I decided to take it one step further & go out to Facebook Live & YouTube live as well.

Yet again (memories of last year's gig) why do I insist on opening my mouth, then working out how I'm gonna do this stuff?  
It took days to re-configure the studio but I was there, on time beaming Brighton to the world. Made me feel all BBC Pioneer....  
But, as with lots of other stuff, at least I'm now geared up if ever I gotta do anything similar in the future.

Part 80

Summer/Autumn 2020

We're now as far as August Bank Holiday.  
In Holly terms, this date is & always will be probs the most significant in the calender.

2017, last bit of coming out (Work)

2018, 1<sup>st</sup> time back in front of any kind of camera

2019, Look at those nails.....

2020, ..... I vaguely remember doing an extra show for one of my stations.

I did sit back & watch Facebook flashing up all the 'Memories' from previous years (Bastard).....  
I finished off a 3 month project to upgrade my main computer....Aaaaand there it was, gone.  
Sort of sums this year up.  
Everything that was once important..... er now ain't...

September....

So the majority of the year has been really just work – home – work – home....  
Just long for some break in the routine....  
But not this.

Got home from work to find an empty box just outside the back door to the flats. With my name & address on. Bring it upstairs to find the receipt still in it for 2 bottles of perfume I'd ordered.  
Couldn't work out what had happened. If it had been damaged in the post, postie would have left it in the usual place outside the flat (probs with an explanation letter).

Mid evening it hit me. Some bastard's nicked the parcel from outside the flat & taken it downstairs to open it.  
Now I've lived in Hollyville for over 8 years.  
Housing Association  
Pensioners Only flats.  
Completely safe.  
Completely secure.  
Postie always knew it was OK to leave parcels & in all that time, never had 1 problem.

If I think back over it, there had been some issues recently with some stuff Hermes had left, but I hadn't put 2 & 2 together.  
It was a real kick in the teeth, not just for the perfume going missing but the trust that had now gone.

Tried to work out who & why.  
No one new has moved in in nearly 4 years.  
Couldn't get to the bottom of it.  
All I knew is I gotta do something about.

Like now.

Put a note on the door asking postie not to leave parcels anymore & even worded it to say 'some low-life scum-bag around here is nicking stuff' in the hope that someone would complain.

Next to resurrect elements of my past.

There was a time I worked in the high-end security alarm biz.

We're talking Square Mile Financial institutions. I once had an engineers code that would allow me access to 70% of the banks in the City.

I sure as hell wasn't gonna let a bunch of Carrot Cruncher low-lifes spoil my living conditions.

I acquired a set of proximity triggered cameras that were internet linked to my phone. The premise being, wherever was in the country if these things were triggered I would see the perp.

What made me laugh was when I used to install these before they were in excess of £2k a piece.

Ebay, £32.00

I'll have me some of them....

Since they've been up, no problems.

Postie's back to leaving parcels (He even knows where to position them for maximum visibility on the cams).

Just a shame I had to take that path.

Yet again welcome to 2020

Mid September....

Worcestershire Pride went down the path of a virtual event on the date we should have all been out there doing it for real. The irony of this being that the promo I recorded back in May, became my set in their video.

Just as well I took the time to re-record it to get it right. Even if it was a compete pain in the arse at the time.

Just as with BTP, 10 mins & it was gone....

Sort of sums things up....

25<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

I'll type this just as it is on my Twitter.

You know when you've had a completely shit day at work?  
You get home, throw the post on the desk knock the top off a bottle of  
bubbles & chill for an hour?????  
Then you think "Oooh wonder what those letters were"?

OMG.....

OMFG

OMFFG

(picture of letter from Nottingham GIC offering me a 1<sup>st</sup> appointment)

I collapsed into the chair.

I re-read the letter In case my mind was messing with my head

I re-read the letter again In case my mind was messing with my head

I re-read the letter again & again In case my mind was messing with my  
head

I re-read the letter again & again & again In case my mind was messing  
with my head.....

3 ½ years since that infamous day I took myself to the surgery fully dressed  
and listened while they called out my dead name.

3 ½ years since I came out wit that infamous quip about the genital  
problem.

Now there isn't many times I'm lost for words.

I cried & I sobbed, I laughed & I cheered.

It transpired that, like a lot of other medical departments they're now doing  
consultations online & mine was set up for early November.

Now tell me 2020's been a shit year.

Part 81

Autumn/Winter 2020

A week or so after the GIC letter I had a bit of a 'Health Scare'.  
I couldn't get to sleep properly on the Sunday night & by the time morning had arrived, yet again, I was getting a bit panicky.

It seemed like Heart palpitations & shortness of breath.  
At my age my mind instantly ran to scenarios of heart attacks (cue visions of Plod with Big Red Key). I even rang work & called in sick. Told then I was resting & if it didn't improve I was ringing for an ambulance.

After a few hours things did settle down , but I did take a few days off to try & get things back on an even keel.  
Put that together with snapping a tooth the same week I really was starting to feel a bit sorry for myself.

OK, so I've had no repeat of the incident, but it really does bring home just how vulnerable you can be.

In better news, while I was off work I decided to cheer myself up by doing what any girl would do in this situation.

Retail therapy...

It's late in the season (for me) but I still needed to sort winter boots. My hopes for the vast expenditure on last year's example being justified by a few seasons wear were dashed by a visit to Timpson Guy who basically 'wrote them off as unfixable'....

Poo....

£150.00 down the drain.

Now flashing back to 2017 you can level with my mistrust for on-line suppliers of large ladies shoes.

Yes the success with the 4 inch blocks was good, but it probs can't be repeated.

I gave Amazon a go.

Huge choice, big sizes, nice cute styling and averaging £20 to £30 a pair.

At least with Amazon if they're not what they say, they can go back.

So I bought a pair.....

And another.....

Ooooh look, Knee high for virtually the same money.....

Oooooooooohhh Black Patent, with real chunky soles.....

So with 4 pairs of boots heading my way (incidentally, all 4 costing less than the 1 pair from last year), we gotta score something out of it.

OK, they took a while longer than expected to arrive (Dear Amazon, if you're shipping direct from abroad, at least have the decency to say so), but one by one they arrived.

One by one they were tried on. They fit & are comfy. Straight out of the box....

Result, 4 pairs of lovely, posh cute boots.  
Should last all winter.

Passport....

One of the 'Big Hitter' issues I had to deal with when I was changing my name everywhere, was the Passport.

I'd heard that you could have your gender changed (even Pre-op), but wasn't sure how or what was required, so just did the name.

Move on a few years & it's about the only thing I've got left to sort. I'd realised quite quickly that the thing was completely useless in this format ((effectively a male Holly Myami) as all I needed was a transphobic Immigration operative & I'm getting 'Sir'ed in front of a packed airport.

I'd learned that I had to re-apply for a new passport with my updated gender & corresponding documentation to cover this.

You may remember the disastrous foray into the private health world. What I had ended up with was a comprehensive report on my Gender dysphoria (all £250 worth of it). My line of thought was 'well at least I may as well use this & get some practical use out of it.

The whole report got copied (I learned long ago not to trust people with one-off important documents), bundled up & sent recorded to the passport office along with another £80 fee....Bah there was still 8 years left on the other one too....

I realised that this all may take some time, but as we were all effectively on a travel ban, was probs a good time to be doing it.

After 3 or 4 weeks I'd heard nothing. I took this as a good sign as I was sure that if they require any further info, I'd have heard. Then got home to a brown envelope on the mat.

Passport office.

Didn't feel like there was anything small & book-like inside, nope just a letter.

'We require you to provide a different photograph from your existing passport' ...

Poo.

Have you just tried re-creating a photo-booth in you living room?

Plain background, certain height, certain direction of light, certain intensity of light, No smiling, No headwear, No glasses.....FFS.

It took hours, but eventually I got one past the rather clever 'Automatic Online Photo checker' & we were good to go.

After 3 or 4 weeks I'd heard nothing. I took this as a good sign as I was sure that if they require any further info, I'd have heard. Then I got home to a brown envelope on the mat.

Passport office.

Didn't feel like there was anything small & book-like inside, nope just a letter.

'We require you to provide a different covering letter. It has to have certain wording.

I rang the office, to be told it has to have the wording "These changes are permanent".

I appealed the decision, with the logic that the 15 page report they had outlined every aspect of my transition right down to my shoe size.

They turned down the appeal.

It has to have the wording "These changes are permanent".

Now my good friend Jess, has already gone through this particular nightmare & successfully got hers changed. I rang & casually asked if she still had the letter from her doctor as I needed to know how this "Magic Phrase" was worded.

She sent the PDF over.

I'm not sure what happened next but an altered version of the letter was suddenly winging it's way over to the Passport morons.

Must have been "The Hand Of God" or something...

After 3 or 4 weeks I'd heard nothing. I took this as a good sign as I was sure that if they require any further info, I'd have heard. Then I got home to a brown envelope on the mat.

Passport office.

Didn't feel like there was anything small & book-like inside, nope just a letter.

It appears that the signatory on the letter hasn't got the required qualifications & is not on our list of recognised professionals.....

Now whether this was the case, or whether they'd spotted my manipulation I don't know.

All I did know is yet again.

Seemingly no more options...

Holly Myami meet brick wall.

Although on this occasion & this is where 2020 has been a rather useful year to me, I'd by now had my 'virtual' 1<sup>st</sup> appointment with Notts GIC.

I'd made sure to mention that I was dealing with Passport, to which Laura my lovely consultant immediately came I with " Oh do you need a letter?"

A quick bit of chivvy-ing up & it was with me in days.

It too was sent, recorded, to the passport office.

4 days later I had a phone call, "Er it's the Passport Office. We've decided to approve your application"...

Don't know if you've heard the phrase 'voice like a slapped ass', probs not, as I just invented it.

She couldn't have sounded more disappointed if she tried.

Less than a week later, a special courier buzzed my bell (!!!!!!!), with an envelope.

It contained something small, book-like, in New Blue & inside....

My £80 F.....

I went to the socials with something I'd been storing in the back of my mind for some time...

"Got my new passport today after 3 ½ months.

No thanks at all to Newport Passport Office that put up every obstacle that they could.

Ah, that'll be Newport, where I originate from.

Ah, that'll be the Passport Office where members of my estranged family have worked.



Welcome to Wales.  
You're damn welcome to it".....

Part 82

Winter 2020

Notts GIC

As I mentioned earlier the most important step in any Trans person's life. The start of the journey with GIC (Gender Identity Clinic). I knew from the outset that this wasn't going to be quick, or easy. I've followed enough Trans girl on my socials & learned by their experiences. As no-one's yet written the manual on this, it's the only way any of us learn.

My appointment was fixed for 4<sup>th</sup> November early afternoon, to be done by computer link.

As I didn't know what to expect I had no way of pre-planning for this. I just came up with the plan of 'just be me'.

Due to my background in 'Customer - Facing' work roles & a lifetime in entertainment, facing up to 'unknown' social situations' is luckily not an issue.

OK I did have my now signature lappy set-up rigged & running by 10 In the morning (Look, just making sure), but I kept calm & when the time came, put on my Camera-Face, & off we went.

Laura is a lovely girl, instantly putting me at ease (remembering the complete Train-Wreck that the private appt was). She assured me that although it had taken so long to effectively 'Get on the ladder' I was there now & things were going to start happening.

We discussed many different aspects of how it was for me including where I needed to be going.

It hadn't occurred to me that some people don't actually want to go 'All the way', but thinking back to my early days, even I was unsure....

OK, halfway through, the picture froze, but I was assured that on the hospital's system, this was a regular occurrence.

We must have been online for over an hour & at the end Laura re-assured me that this was definitely now going ahead & she would be in touch with details of what happens next.

As we go through life in a global pandemic (bearing in mind that no-one in our generation has ever had to face anything like this before) it never ceases to amaze me how cool, calm & collected Health professionals can be. Never having had a lot to do with the health system generally in my life, it's only now that I'm getting to see how things really are. Result...

Along similar lines of thinking, I'd always said that due to my financial situation I could never really consider going for full GRS. On average the OP & the recovery period is anything from 4 to 6 months. As you may remember, being self-employed, even 1 day off work means I take a hit on my income....

I'm generally happy with the way things are, I chose my life to be the way it is & so I make the best of it.

Even come retirement, I won't be able to fully retire. I've got no pensions (other than the State Pension – If that's still gonna be there come the time). Again, not a problem as I chose my life-style. Back in my 20's & 30's when people around me were telling me to deal with it, I was more interested in living the Yuppie/Rock n Roll lifestyle.

About this time work was quite thin, we're down to 2 or 3 days a week. Not an immediate issue as the government help scheme for the Self-Employed was quite good to me & for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in a long time I've actually got a few pennies in the bank.

What it does allow is

A/ thinking time &

B/ time to sort out all those niggly little domestic things like passport

&.....

In my very 1<sup>st</sup> job back in the 70's I worked in a factory making central heating radiators.

The company was a part of Metal Box & I vaguely remember paying in to a works pension. Along similar lines, in the late 80's when I needed to get a mortgage I half-remember starting one of those 'private' pensions that were popular at the time.

I'd never paid more than a year or so into either, so had basically written them off in my mind.

I decided to see if there was any worth in either & more importantly make sure they were both closed down before my retirement age so's not to mess up any chances of benefits.

Due to the multiple life moves that I've indulged in (remember the 7 failed marriages) I've got no paperwork or references of any kind, other than a National insurance number and what addresses I lived at when they were active.

The 80's one had been taken out with Norwich Union. Goggle informs me that this is now Aviva. So armed with a fully charged phone I went for it.

"Oh hello. I used to be (Dead Name)(winces)....

I once had a pension with Norwich Union.

I don't suppose there's any way we can track this down is there?"..

"Let me see" came the answer "Ah yes, I've found you, would you like to know how much it's worth now"

"Yeah, go on then" thinks, I may be able to buy a bottle of bubbles tonight with it...

OMG....

OMFG.....

OMFFG.....

(You see why 2020 seems to be my year)

I've got a pension.

Like a pension that's useful.

Like a pension that if wanted to I could take a few months off work to recover from GRS.....

Fuck, fuck, fuck.....

It turns out that even tho I'd only paid for a short while into this thing, I'd opted out of SERPS (sounds like an STD), & they'd been paying in for 30 odd years.

I sat down that night actually saying out loud.

“Shit, I got a pension”....

It brought all sorts of things into my mind like (& the very few people I’ve told about this laughed at) I can now afford a funeral....

Shit I’d better make a will...

Safe to say, my head’s been spinning around like that damn Exorcist girl for weeks.

Obviously now I got the bit between my teeth, Metal Box...

Went down the same route.

Google told me that this was now run by a private pension company, rang up & within in a few days had a very pleasant letter informing me of pension No. 2.

Again, quite useful.

Added together, they really do take the financial pressure off for when this girl becomes an old Lady.

1<sup>st</sup> plans into the New Year is to track down a decent independent financial advisor & work out what I can do with this.

Part 83

End of 2020

At the beginning of December, I was thinking prezzies.

Yes, prezzies from me to me.

Remember last year’s Chrissy prez was a collection of pink guitars, but what for this year?

Earlier in the year when my little Go-Pro had gone wrong I got a small cheap video camera. Nothing special, but if I was faced with having to film myself singing again it would do nicely.

One of the issues that had cropped up when I made the Pride Promo was background.

Now I know 2020’s turned into a ‘how many bookcases can you get into shot while doing on-line videos’ competition but in order to veer away from

the 'plant sticking out of the top of your head scenario' I decided to buy a green screen.

Now I used this technology when I did CWTV so had a handle on how it worked.

The plan was that I get a full width screen, set it up across the Dining Room & be able to mix a relevant backdrop to the song I was singing.

For example I do a version of Loretta Lynn's 'Coalminer's Daughter'. For this I'd use shots across the Smokey Mountains etc.

The screen arrived & I fitted it on a tube across the Dining Room ceiling. The plan was to leave it in place, but rolled up when not in use. That way I'd be more likely to get on with my little hobby if it didn't involve loads of 'Setting Up'.

A try-out showed me that although the camera was OK, it needed more light to make the screen work properly.

When the 2 LED array floodlights arrived (with the clips & fittings to attach them to the cupboard doors) I then did a try-out. Nope still wasn't quite right....

(Hang on, where have I seen this before, Oh yes. It's OK, I already got a guitar.....)....

Now Ebay after a couple of glasses of bubbles can be a dangerous place....

"Remember that camera I used for the TV show?

I know it cost a fortune back then, but that was a few years ago.

Maybe they've come down in price.

And it would be your Christmas present.

And you know just how to use them at their best.

So it arrived 3 days later.....

A very low-hours Sony HDV A1E....

I fitted it to the little cheapie tripod I've got.....

That almost bent under the weight.

The new Tripod only took a few days to arrive..

And after all, it is your.....

Get the thread here?

I posted a picture of this brilliant looking setup & quickly got a msg from the delightful Daniel Somerville.

Dan's a Drama lecturer & Performance Artist.

He'd managed to arrange a Theatre performance of his latest work, Pavarotti & Me 2020, & would I like to go down & video it for him....

Would I?

Just a bit...

So that, Lovely Gangs is how I end the year.

Myami Media is born.

I feel it's probably going to be a better direction for me than even parading around in front of a camera. Being behind it.

Just goes to show, you just never know what's going to crop up as a year progresses.

So it seems that we've gone from 'What am I going to do with my life' as we came into the year, to 'Right now let's sort out what I'm gonna do with my life.

No, No-one had any kind of a clue in Jan 2020 what was about to happen (Well no-one in the real world), but as with a lot of things, it was a case of OK, this is the problem how do I deal with it.

A lot of my working life I've had to do problem solving all the way from my early career as a Television Engineer all the way through to my last career as a Contract Manager.

It's left me with an ability to see through problems & shake an answer out. I'm grateful for this ability & it's served me well.

We're now looking at the end of 2020, obviously like everyone else, we don't know where the world is quite going next, but I know what ever crops up I'll be able to deal with it.

Luckily for me, this year, no Cliff-Hanger endings....

I go into 2021 with a lot more direction than I did for 2020.

Goodness knows where I'll be this time next year (Hopefully no scenarios of Plod with Red Key), but wherever it is I'll have got there down a completely different direction than I 1<sup>st</sup> planned.

See Y'all then....