

The WORD

Dear Much-Valued Subscriber,

This 91st edition of THE WORD comes with a warning. There's an article about the working life of Jonathan Agnew. Please don't read it. It'll just make you miserable.

I thought my *own* life was vaguely enviable – 30 mile view from the office window, showered with records and books in the hope I might write about them, a place in Chapel Market that does duck and noodles for three-seventy: all good. Then you look at Aggers and *Test Match Special*. His daily grind kicks off with a late breakfast and a casual stroll to the Lord's commentary box, which naturally commands a panoramic view of the play. He then draws a salary for what appears to be a cross between a low-stress podcast and an afternoon tea-party – Geoff Boycott, Ian Botham, Tim Rice, even Stephen Stills, they all drop by to offer fond analysis and put away a slice of Victoria Sponge. Look at the picture at the bottom of page 75. That's just the cakes they're required to eat. Honestly. I've started to *hate* the man.

The other picture you mustn't miss is on page 15, the self-portrait of the 24 year-old Jimi Hendrix. An inveterate doodler, he sat down one night in '67 with girlfriend Kathy Etchingham to record a commentary on his life at the time on a sheet of hotel notepaper, filling every inch of the background with fascinating in-jokes and observations. Kathy had many more, and a lot of his clothes and jewellery, but got rid of the lot when "having a clear-out". Never imagined they'd be worth anything, she told me. "With hindsight, we'd *all* be rich."

A few other extraordinary lives come under the microscope elsewhere – Peter Sellers, Judee Sill, Richard Thompson, Sarah Silverman, Lee Perry – all beautifully chiselled pieces of writing and well worth your time and attention. Just don't read the thing about Aggers.

All best,



MARK ELLEN, editor
mark@wordmagazine.co.uk