

# normblog

The weblog of Norman Geras

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## The normblog profile 112: Chris Dillow

Chris Dillow was born in Leicester in 1963, at the same time as John F. Kennedy was being buried; someone had to make room. He went to Wyggeston Boys School (a grammar), Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and the University of Manchester. He then drifted into the City for a few years before joining the *Investors Chronicle*, though he strenuously denies accusations that he's a journalist. Chris lives alone in Belsize Park, and blogs at [Stumbling and Mumbling](#).

Why do you blog? > I'm arrogant enough to think I've got something worth saying, and stupid enough to think anyone cares.

What has been your best blogging experience? > The kind words of many good, intelligent people, which I have been too ungracious to properly acknowledge.

What has been your worst blogging experience? > Realizing that time and inspiration are negatively correlated.

What would be your main blogging advice to a novice blogger? > It's better to be wrong but interesting than right but dull.

What are your favourite blogs? > [Tim Worstall](#), [The Sharpener](#), [Owen Barder](#). And I've just pissed off a lot of great bloggers.

Who are your intellectual heroes? > John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo, Michal Kalecki, Alasdair MacIntyre, Jon Elster, John Roemer.

Who are your cultural heroes? > Hank Williams, Dar Williams, P.G. Wodehouse.

What is your favourite poem? > W.B Yeats's '[Song of the Wandering Angus](#)', as sung by Jolie Holland.

What is your favourite song? > 'After All' by Dar Williams – just ahead of Hank Williams's 'They'll Never Take Her Love From Me' and Iris DeMent's 'Childhood Memories'.

Who is your favourite composer? > [Agustin Barrios](#).

What philosophical thesis do you think it most important to disseminate? > 'The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.' - John Stuart Mill

What philosophical thesis do you think it most important to combat? > Managerialism.

Who are your political heroes? > Political hero is a contradiction in terms. The only heroes are some village Hampden (who's also a top blogger), some mute inglorious Milton, some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

What is your favourite piece of political wisdom? > 'The poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he.' – Colonel Rainsborough

If you could choose anyone, from any walk of life, to be Prime Minister, who would you choose? > Leave the job vacant, until we have a constitution confining the powers of the Prime Minister to their proper place – which is largely co-ordinating departments.

What do you consider to be the main threat to the future peace and security of the world? > The groupthink, deference to 'authority' and irrationality that produces, among other things, religious fanaticism.

Do you think the world (human civilization) has already passed its best point, or is that yet to come? > The best is yet to come. Just look how awful most of history has been. There are powerful forces which cause economic growth, richer societies tend to be more civilized than poorer ones, and there's some causal link there.

What would be your most important piece of advice about life? > Terry Allen gave the best advice for anyone wanting a successful career: 'Don't ever do the best you can do. It's better to be mediocre.'

In what circumstances would you be willing to lie? > Any time. The truth is a precious thing. Like all precious things, it shouldn't be wasted on idiots.

Do you have any prejudices you're willing to acknowledge? > I despise public schoolboys - and, to a lesser extent, the entire British middle class.

If you were to relive your life to this point, is there anything you'd do differently? > There's a few explicit offers of jobs and implicit offers of sex I'd have accepted, but otherwise not much. That's the power of adaptive preferences for you.

Who would play you in the movie about your life? > Mitch Pileggi looks the part. Can he do a Leicester accent?

Where would you most like to live (other than where you do)? > Leicestershire.

What do you like doing in your spare time? > Practising the guitar. Though I spend more time on Civ III, an addiction I'm failing to beat.

If you had to change your first name, what would you change it to? > Frank, my grandad's name.

What talent would you most like to have? > I'm wary of the notion of 'talent' - hard work will get most people a reasonable level of skill. I intend to become a reasonable guitarist. I would have liked the intellectual discipline to have been a better mathematician.

What would be your ideal choice of alternative profession or job? > I like doing what I'm doing. Ideally, I'd be able to do it from home, or outside London.

Who is your favourite comedian or humorist? > P.G. Wodehouse, Peter Kay.

Who are your sporting heroes? > In chronological order: Alan Ball, Tony Greig, Les Taylor, Tony Adams.

If you could have any three guests, past or present, to dinner who would they be? > Kathy Sykes, Shania Twain, Gillian Anderson. Hey, I'm a single bloke.

[The normblog profile is a weekly Friday morning feature. A list of all the profiles to date, and the links to them, can be found [here](#).]

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