

Reading last week's KM, I really felt for Grace McMasters from Tonbridge. Grace lost all her vinyl records, including a lifetime's collection of Elvis LPs, in the severe flooding that affected her neighbourhood. As someone who has a pretty fine collection of 7 and 12 inches herself, I can understand why this will hurt. You can replace furniture, flooring, wallpaper and electrics but anything personal such as photographs and records are gone, never to be accumulated with the same love and devotion as before.

Collecting or, in my case accumulating, records is no longer a thing of the past. I inherited a large chunk of my collection, some good some embarrassing, but nevertheless the recent growth of vinyl sales brings me great joy and enables to add to it. I personally prefer to go into a shop, browse through LPs and decide whether to purchase. There is something far more pleasurable in coming home with a bit of C₂H₃Cl (aka polyvinyl), slowly removing it from its sleeve, blowing off any dust, place gently on the deck and listen out for the first few crackles clicking a mouse and downloading an album onto an electronic device.

Enthusiasts will tell you that the sound is deeper, stronger, more authentic sound. That's why it is beginning to increase in popularity again. The music has more soul than digital. Savvy record producers are distributing new releases in more formats catering for a wider audience. I like to treat myself to a new album now and then but since my music taste is stuck somewhere in my parents era, the charity and second hand shops provide for my needs.

So I understand Grace's loss and as part of the appeal, I have offered her an Elvis LP from my own collection. Now if only she had liked Cliff Richard...I long to relieve my creaking shelf of that chunk of polyvinyl!