

SCYTHROP

Edited, printed & published by John Bangsund: Parergon Books GPO Box 4946 Melbourne 3001 Australia, this fantasticonomy issue is produced primarily to maintain our bi-monthly schedule, and is distributed to subscribers and regular contributors in Australia, recipients of Scythrop: International overseas and members of the Off-trail Magazine Publishers Association. NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR AUGUST 1971 40 CENTS BWV102

THE MARCH OF MIND

John Bangsund

Scythrops 21 and 22 ran to about 46 pages each. With 23 we came down to 20, and now... 4! In case you feel no.25 will appear on one side of a postcard, I should mention that this issue is produced mainly to fulfil our promise that Scythrop would be bi-monthly. To make up, all subscribers and a few privileged non-subscribers will receive, free of charge, a copy of JOHN CAMPBELL: AN AUSTRALIAN TRIBUTE, which should appear about the same time as no.25. Overseas readers who are not subscribers, regular contributors or traders have just enough time to contact us or one of our agents before the Campbell book (price A\$1.00/US\$1.25) appears. Enough said?

No. 25, incidentally, looks like containing articles by Brian Aldiss, Robert Bloch, Vladimir Dmitrevsky, George Turner and Brian Richards, plus further reviews by Henry Couchman and (whot hath Ghod wrot?) more Keats & Chapman stories. Oh, and your letter of comment, of course. No. 26 has articles by Bruce Gillespie and others, and an interview with Stanislaw Lem, so far.

In future, incidentally, Scythrop will appear in two separate editions, Australian and International. The latter will contain, in addition to the material in the local edition, selections from current Australian fanzines, by arrangement with their editors.

As is evident from my remarks in no. 23, things are not the best, financially speaking. Scythrop needs subscribers to survive. Even with subscribers, it's difficult. Overseas readers in particular might find it hard to understand just how much money is involved in producing a large-run fanzine in Australia.

In the latest issue of Chao, John Alderson presents in a very entertaining fashion his balance sheet for production and sale of the previous issue. After allowing for \$15 for a new engine in his car (it's an elderly Borgward, you understand, and new elastic bands for that vile vehicle's motive innards do not come cheaply up the bush where John lives) and

sundry other expenses not usually associated with the production of sf fan magazines, he arrives at a figure of \$90.23. On the receipts side he lists "assorted fanzines" at 15 cents and "nice letter from David Grigg" at \$90.08, thus nicely balancing his accounts.

I know that John can't afford to keep on in this way, and without your encouragement possibly won't. Scythrop - not even counting new engines, sedatives, phone calls and so on - costs rather more. At the risk of boring, or worse, educating you, let me tell you what it costs to put out, say, 450 copies of a 44-page fanzine here. An issue of Scythrop, say, with nice white Canadian Paper covers and ordinary old-gold duplicating paper interior, with illustrations on both covers, and a few illustrations and headings inside.

Stencils: 41 @ 18c	7.38
Electrostencils: 3 @ \$2	6.00
Paper: 19 reams @ \$1.86	35.34
2 reams @ \$2.50	5.00
15% sales tax on paper	6.04
Ink: (approx)	4.00
Envelopes: 420 @ \$8.50 per 500	7.14
Postage: 420 @ 14c (from 1.10.71)	58.80
Extras:	1.00
Total:	\$130.70

Unit cost: 29 cents (of which production accounts for a little under half). To cover this cost you need 327 subscribers at 40 cents per copy. You won't get them. Even charging your American subscribers US\$0.50 per copy (= A\$0.42), you won't cover your costs.

Aren't you glad you're doing it mainly for the fun of it...?

To save John Foyster the trouble of setting out how he would do the same fanzine for a total cost of \$14.27, I explain that Scythrop does not cost \$130 to produce and post, because I've gone to some trouble and expense to cut costs. But that's what it would cost the average Australian fan on current prices.

JOHN RYAN
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Re: Scythrop 22 - April 1971
You will be hearing from my
solicitors (Mimeo, Ditto &
Crudd) regarding blatant
inaccuracies in the subject

publication. In your coverage of Q-Con 71 you credit Dennis Stocks with introducing the Guest of Honour, when in fact that honour fell to my humble self. And I'm not about to yield this meagre bit of reflected glory to some sky-diving yahoo, who spends his time doing all sorts of unmentionable things to toxic plants.

Further: In John Foyster's coverage of Syncon 70 he refers to "Bill" Jolliffe as attending the comics programme. Bill Jolliffe is the well-known belly-button lint collector... whereas Eric Jolliffe, who attended the convention, is known for his Australian cartoons and comic strips (eg Saltbush Bill, Witchetty's Tribe, Sandy Blight &c). Normally such inaccurate journalism would see me cancelling my subscription (as has happened with Time, Newsweek, The Bulletin and The Plain Truth - and I might add that both The Watchtower and Awake are in a very precarious position!) - but with my traditional Australian attitude of giving everyone (even sf fans) a fair go, I am prepared to give you another chance. Also, I don't want to miss out on future issues of Scythrop!

You told me that this issue of Scythrop was "different" from any of your previous publications, and you were not telling fibs. Layout and reproduction have always been your long suit but, even in this area, you excelled yourself. I realize that necessity is the mother of invention: even so, the Le Guin photo page was great - as were most of your other illustrations. Of course, you've made a rod for your own back, with so many illustrations and headings in another colour. Future issues will be expected to contain at least two and possibly three or four colours. I'm glad it's you and not me that has to face this prospect. My only quibble with the illustrations of Syncon is that you didn't use two or three of your own to supplement those of Gerald Carr. In particular, those of Foyster, Binns and Dillon would have been ideal - and would have presented a different attitude. Not only is Gerald Carr a very versatile artist; he is something of a mind-reader as well. How else could he have known I was doing a mental strip-tease of Elizabeth Foyster?

I enjoyed John Foyster's account of Syncon more than anything else he has written. As John himself indicates, he is a difficult writer to interpret at times, and his attempted humour often comes across as sarcasm or plain old-fashioned nastiness. I suppose there are times when he means it this way, but those times would be the exception rather than the rule. As most of us know, Foyster in person and Foyster in print are two different people. His Syncon report is very close to the Foyster I know - but I suspect that most of us

know a different Foyster? John underplayed his own contribution to the success of Syncon; he was here, there, everywhere, and without him Syncon would not have been the enjoyable experience most fans seem to agree it was.

Bert Chandler's piece was great. Obviously this is one article that will see a lot of reprints in the coming years. Unfortunately I don't know Bert as well as many other fans - which is my loss. I enjoyed our brief encounters at Syncon and this article was consistent with the impression I gained of the man. Like Foyster, I didn't see his "Get Me To The Church On Time" song and dance routine - but Jan was there and is willing to swear to it on a stack of bibles or Analogs. After meeting him, I read a few of Bert's stories (and enjoyed them) which speaks volumes for the impression he made on me. It takes a lot to get me to read sf. Not that I have anything against sf, mind you; it's just that I don't have enough time to keep up with my interest in comics and general fannish activities. I'm frightened I might become hooked - and I need an additional interest at this time like I need the proverbial hole in the head. I belong to that famous minority which hasn't read 2001 - although I am currently reading Clarke's books on skin-diving and treasure-hunting. Clarke's style appeals to me - but I must take care that I don't become so impressed that I run out and start buying all his other books. It would be nice, I grant you, if I had the time and the money.

Comics in Scythrop!! Well, I never. It makes one think that, perhaps, after all, we are entering the age of enlightenment. John Bangsund wandering around with the expression of a stunned mullet, still clasping his cigarette lighter and murmuring, "I just lit Stan Pitt's cigarette..." is a sight I will long remember.

If we ignore the as-expected reproduction (plus the extras such as colour and a generous supply of illustrations), I think the strength of Scythrop 22 lies in the level at which it attempts to communicate. Forgetting the let-me-bare-my-soul aspect of your editorial, this issue sets out to amuse and inform us. It does both jobs admirably. No smugness, no talking-down to the uninformed masses - just straight entertainment, beautifully packaged. You said it was different, and it is. It is the best thing you have done.

And if I'm not mistaken, this letter gives me a 100% record of comments on Scythrop - so I must be amongst that elite group of three or four who saw the signs and tried to stop you gaffiating. I also think I suggested some contrived derivation for the word, Scythrop, but it was so long ago my memory will not regurgitate it. I trust we will not have to wait so long to see Scythrop 23.

#JB: By now, John, you have seen 23, and now here is 24 - but they are different again from 22. Very different. Quite apart from the expense, I don't like using a lot of illustrations unless (as in 22) they actually illustrate. There's not a great deal in my kind of fanzine that can be illustrated. The loads of artwork in American fanzines I regard as "fillos" - space-fillers. My approach is different: Scythrop is for people who read. The mix-up over the two eminent Jolliffes was, I think, my fault, not John's - as was the other blatant inaccuracy you mention.

JOHN ALDERSON
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Scythrop 22 to hand and I am puzzled. What the hell would any Aussie in Gutten-gen want with a broad? Obviously he would be wanting

a bawd. You should know quite well that an Aussie is very careful about his "r"s.

Bert Chandler's autobiography is a fine piece of work. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Indeed I regard him as an author who is a better writer than usually considered. Possibly because he has practical experience ship-board, and most of writers seem to lack even the practical knowledge needed to drive a car.

#JB: Not to mention fixing one when its engine perishes or snaps, John?

DAVID PIPER
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The Old Country

Scythrop 22 is a superb, elegant, fancy-looking production which contains just about enough pure Bangsund to recompense fandom in general and me

in particular for the lack of it these past empty months. I dunno, John; your wit, erudition and writing ability creates a feeling of awe and near hero-worship in me to the extent that my Characteristic Veneer of English (& Piper) Superiority cracks a little under the strain. So I take a pill, go to bed and get up feeling a little better. John Foyster remains an enigma to me. In the majority of his writings he comes on as an Australian edition of good old Franss Rottenglass (and suffice to say he bores the hell outa me!) and then, now and again, a witty, erudite, intelligent, fannish fella shines through. This instils in me a feeling of awe and my Characteristic Veneer of English (& Piper) Superiority cracks a little more under the strain. So I take a pill, go to bed, and when I get up I still have the feeling.

You don't realize just how much of a worry this is to me, do you? Do you care?

I may appear a leetle condescending here (and the idea of Piper being condescending to Bangsund is mind-croggling) but:- man does not live by bread

alone: every cloud has a silver lining: reality is not everything: to dream is sublime: real people in real situations in the real world are sometimes just so fucking boring: every dog has his day: it never rains but it pulls: an apple a day gives ya the shits: an egg a day don't: for crissakes live in a world of words for a few brief moments in a day: you're a long time dead: if you enjoy it then enjoy it: do what you wanna do: have you ever considered that the vast response to Fan X's crudzine is mainly crud-response? like my letters to you: and... please use stronger envelopes.

#JB: I will, David - anything you say. And I don't agree at all that your letters fall into the crud category; that Piper Superiority isn't all Veneer. ::: And now, we seem to have some further

ANECDOTES OF KEATS AND CHAPMAN

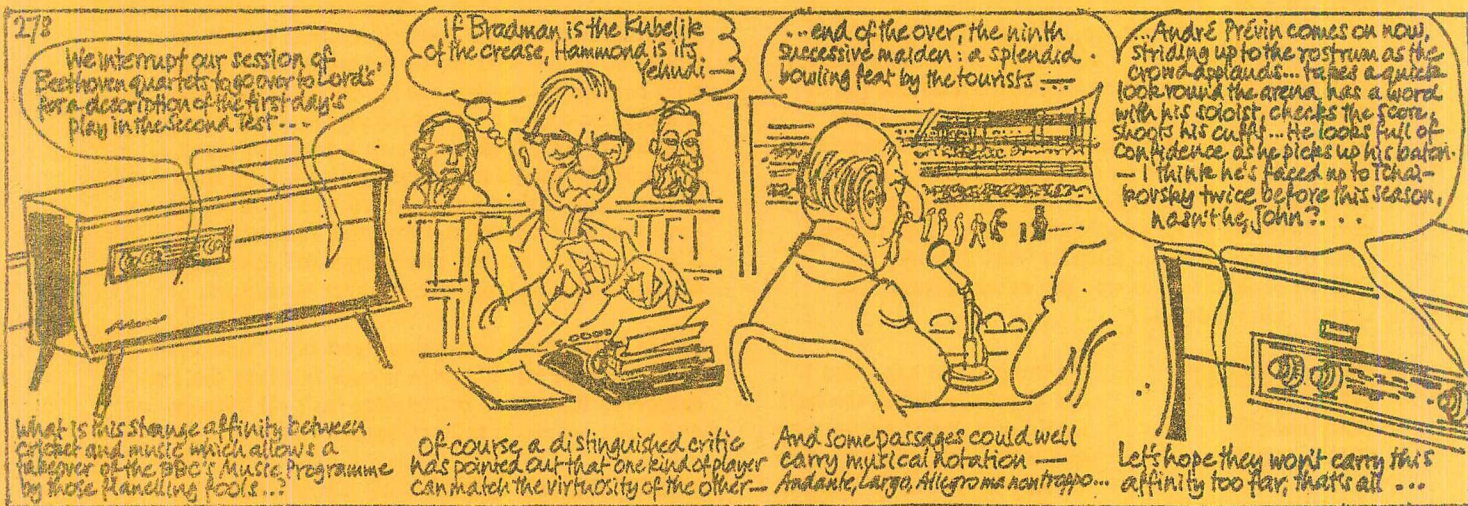
Keats and Chapman happened to be attending an international seminar on biblical engineering at the University of Ard-Knox in Melbourne, during a week of considerable public unrest in that city.

First there was the Moratorium demonstration. Keats and Chapman were amazed at the thousands of people standing about quietly in the vicinity of Parliament House, listening to Dr Spock and other eminent speakers. The friends mingled with the crowd, a little confused at the sobriety of the throng. Where were the heated tempers, the violent arguments, the throwing of blunt objects, the lashing out with boot and extemporized weapon, to which they were accustomed even in friendly little religious discussions in Dublin, Belfast and even more civilized cities they had lived in or visited? Keats felt uncomfortably aware of the smallish shillelagh he had thoughtfully secreted about his person. Chapman unobtrusively emptied his pockets of a few handfuls of pebbles while visiting a public convenience. Both returned to the university, thoughtful and a little embarrassed.

A few days later, when demonstrators gathered outside the American embassy to celebrate that country's national day with a few carefully-chosen sentiments, written and spoken, about its foreign policies, there was rather more action of the kind familiar to the friends; and, a bare forty-eight hours later again, there were scenes of considerable violence enacted in the vicinity of a football match being played by a local and a visiting South African team.

Now Keats and Chapman felt more or less at home. Bashings, bruising, breakings and bloodyings they were familiar with. This was political activity they understood, for all that it dismayed their essential humanistic feelings.

The reaction of their Melbourne hosts, however, was different. Such scenes were alien, disturbing. There



was much alarm and confusion expressed in newspapers and private conversation. Most of the confusion, Keats and Chapman decided after much observation and discussion with the citizenry, arose from the unfamiliarity of a comfortable and docile community with the facts of modern political life.

"It is a kind of cultural shock," Chapman explained to an intelligent but perplexed young university lecturer, "and it is all rather sad. The conscience of that growing part of the community which is dismayed by such evils as the Indochina war and apartheid, must find expression sooner or later in violent acts. Usually - and I think we have seen a good example of it these past few days - the violence starts when the police or other representatives of your rather conservative rulers (and are not all rulers conservative?) commit some repressive act, and the demonstrators, peaceful as they might wish to remain, react."

"I don't know," said the lecturer. "It's all so bewildering, really."

"And it always will be," said Keats quietly. "The hand that cradles the rock whirls the ruled."

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Well, I don't know how Brian O'Nolan would feel about that one. I wonder if there's room for one in somewhat lighter vein? Let's try...

Keats and Chapman were discussing with a friend one of their favourite literary figures: Dr Samuel Johnson. "Dr Johnson," said their friend - an elderly surgeon named Grimble - "once remarked, as you well know, that no-one but a fool ever wrote except for money."

Chapman exchanged a rueful glance with Keats. Both of them were in the habit of writing, copiously, for no reward but the joy of doing so.

"It is not so well known," continued Dr Grimble, "that old Sam was an extraordinarily generous fellow in many ways. Though he adopted this stance of the utterly commercial writer, he could be, and often was, exceedingly generous to his fellow writers down on their luck, as it were."

"And not only to them," said Chapman. "He supported so many people in his later years, often when he could ill afford it. There was that strange old chap, for example... bless me, I can never remember his name... and -"

"Quite so," agreed Grimble. "Sometimes, indeed, he got into difficulties through this generosity - such as the occasion when he lent dear old Noll Goldsmith, poor chap, some money, and next day found he could not pay his rent!"

"I can imagine," said Keats, "what Dr Johnson's explanation might have been to his landlord."

"Oh?" said Chapman and Grimble.

"Nolly me tangere," said Keats.

"Sir," said Dr Grimble, "though your witticism verges on the sacrilegious, I concede the Good Doctor himself might have approved!"

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Oh well, now I've written a K&C story with a Henry Lawson ending instead of an O. Henry ending as most of them have, and I suppose David Grigg will disapprove again. The only way to stop me, folks, is to write better anecdotes yourself and send 'em in.

End of Scythrop 24 coming right up, and at this point I'd better mention that the comic strip above is by Barry Horner, expatriate Australian. Ciao!