

Bonn to

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THE JACKDAW BIT

Having recently published the first issue of Scythrop since December 1969, it seemed a not entirely inappropriate idea to publish a second issue of Lodbrog. (The first appeared in April 1970.) For the first issue I designed two covers, the first of which is reproduced as the back cover of this issue - and thereby is seen for the third time by some members of ANZAPA, since I also used it (on some pretext or another) in Philosophical Gas 4.

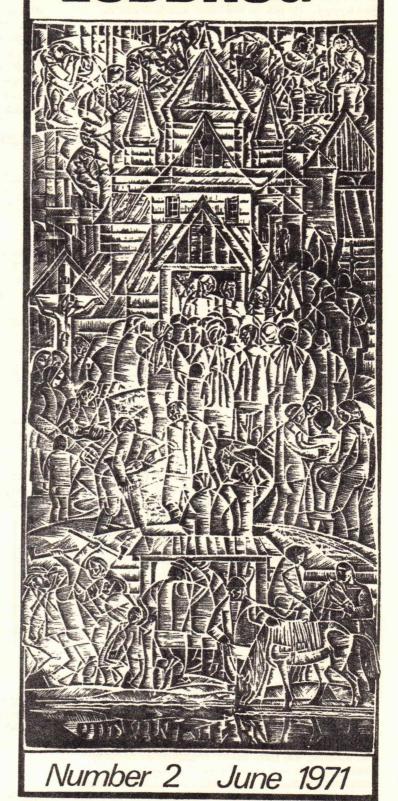
The second cover design sort of surfaced when I was doing a bit of cleaning-up in the back room last weekend, and on sighting it I exclaimed (in tones so well-rounded, dignified, yet vigorous and manly that - had you but heard them - your heart would have swelled within you (or without you, depending on the control you exercise over your internal organs) and you would have understood instantly why, in certain quarters, I am nicknamed Chrysostom) (though once or twice I have had the feeling, when addressing those certain quarters, that they were saying "Christ: 'im again:" - a fleeting and obviously erroneous impression on my part, I'm sure): "Gawd struth. Thort I'd lorst this'n! Cor lumme, eh? Jeez, then, I reckon I'll bung out anuvver Lodbrog!"

(A small sample, entirely free of charge or obligation, of the "cheerful Dickensian cockney" spoken by Australians, according to that learned journal, Time (24.5.71).)

Robin Johnson and Leigh Edmonds have just had an electricity bill so large they reckon they've been charged for the heat death of the universe.

In this issue, instead of boring you to tears with my usual load of crap, I am "reprinting" an article which is scheduled to appear sometime in The Sunday Review - when, exactly, I don't know at the moment. You have possibly seen a remark in Locus to the effect that the Review is Australia's best newspaper. And it is. For six weeks or so I have worked for the firm which publishes it, and one day I will write something about

LODBROG



my happy association with the paper and with the people who put it together. A six-month subscription to the Review costs \$7.00. Do yourself a favour and subscribe: the money goes to Sunday Review, 822 Lorimer Street, Fishermen's Bend, Victoria 3207. Or send me a dollar (£0.50 in Britain) and I'll airmail you a copy. (If you do the latter and feel you've been conned, I'll send you a couple of Scythrops to make up. Okay? Okay.)

The quotes around "reprinting" were deliberate. The article hasn't appeared at the moment of writing. But also a few passages from the typescript will not appear in the Review. I am not implying censorship:

the editor has simply cut it a bit in the interests of the smooth-flowing style and approach of the paper as a whole. But some of the bits missing I thought were rather interesting. So (subject this time to my sub-editing) here is the complete article. I have no permission to print it. I don't even know who wrote it. But since Lodbrog is a private communication between myself and the seventy or so people who belong to these three private and amateur associations, and since Lodbrog is definitely not for sale. I think I have some legal case for using the material. Anyway, here it is. Not knowing the author's title for it, nor the Review's, I here present it as....

BETTER WED THAN NED

Or: HOW MICK STOPPED ROLLING & LEARNT TO LOVE THE MOSS

A FEW WEEKS ago Mick Jagger gave his first performance in public since his January "Farewell England" tour. He married Bianca Moreno de Macias. This spectacular invoked most of the features common to Jagger's previous appearances: it was violent, sexy, expensive. Some of the atmosphere of a Rolling Stone concert must have been captured by the "strongarm men who prowled in bush shirts and denim trousers" (Daily Express). Despite such historic echoes, however, in terms of the packaged Jagger persona, the wedding struck many odd notes - none odder than the medley of themes from the film "Love Story", which, at the request of the bride, provided the wedding march.

Perhaps this was a coded message to the hippie gate-crashers who pressed against the fleets of Rolls Royces. Was the whole ceremony a yippie hoax? Jagger himself dismissed the affair as "a load of old balls", half an hour before mounting the altar. There were other minor ambivalences. On the one hand, the uncannily dutiful tuition in Catholic dogma; on the other, those bared Bianca tits which nearly poked out the hopefully averted eyes of Abbe Lucien Baud.

Alas, the lingering tragedy of what has been dubbed "the day the stone stopped rolling" is that it was not satirical. No iconoclastic sting in the tail. No Magic Christian finale of churchyard smoke-in or public fuck-for-all. This is not to imply that Jagger was prompted into matrimony by a lightning conversion to respectability - swapping his Sympathy For The Devil with the Holy Ghost; but, to state a truth, that day in St Tropez marked the end of any further pretence of Jagger as a radical figurehead.

The wedding was stark public confirmation of many gloomy private suspicions: that Mick Jagger has firmly repudiated the possibilities of a counter culture of which his music is part.

At the church of St Anne, Jagger put pen to a chilling declaration of allegiance to the system. spreading his velvet arse for the ruling class, wedding himself to the lethal values of property, personal power and the perpetuation of an oppressive mythology. It was not the act of marriage itself (civil contracts being a justifiable compromise in an age of confusion) but - as with his music the style of its performance. Street Fighting Man found Satisfaction in every pitiable cliche of la dolce capitalismo, from snacks in the Cafe des Arts ("favourite haunt of Brigitte Bardot, Sacha Distel, Noel Coward...") to the 75-foot yacht hired for £3000, the £400's worth of caviare washed down with champagne, two gold wedding rings from an exclusive Parisian jeweller, a charter flight laden with celebrities and sycophants (price £2500), all immortalized on film by good friend and cousin of Her Majesty, Patrick Litchfield.

Bianca herself - the perfect foil. Coined in his image, related to the corrupt Nicaraguan establishment, ex-"Parisian hostess", a clothes peg for Yves St Laurent. Jumping Jack Cash meets the Third World, in unconscious parody of neocolonialism, especially as both squabble aloud over the division of worldly goods. Jagger wins, naturally, severing French custom by retaining separate property rights; not trusting all he owns to this merchant Bianca.

"After trying out the drug and permissive scene," commented Jimmy Saville on the wedding, "there's a lot to be said for a nice normal life after all."

Plato's idiot behaviour when drunk had no relevance

to the philosophy he preached. Likewise, Jagger's music is logically impervious to the South of France. But the personality of Mick Jagger has always been crucial to the music of the Rolling Stones and, more importantly, to the audience's interpretation of it. Neither Cliff Richard nor even Elvis Presley could have conceived Get Off My Cloud or Satisfaction, and if by some freak quirk they had, then the message would never have crossed the credibility gap. The Rolling Stones have studiously associated their behaviour and their music with the forces against law and order.

The Blue Book opens with the signing of the Stones' management deal with Andrew Oldham (28.4.63). Equal prominence is given to the hugging of Castro by Krushchev in Moscow, which occurred on the same day. Within weeks the Book records boys being expelled from school for looking like Jagger - "but they can return", offered one headmaster, "if they cut their hair neatly, like the Beatles". And so the myth evolved. A strident jumble of delinquent images. Flag desecrations (their first US tour), a flurry of paternity suits, riots, brawls, rejections from hotels, and, most of all... the music. The sound that shook the sleep out of our eyes. A liberating storm which blew across the world, and still I recall the strength of its impact on Sydney.

Throughout the Sixties both their behaviour and music jostled for our attention. each in mutual reinforcement of the Stones' image. The animosity exerted by authority seemed in direct proportion to the fans' affection. So unpopular was Jagger with the decision-makers of the community that he was sentenced to six months gaol for possessing four pep pills prescribed by his doctor and legally purchased in Italy. Such was the outcry from fans and sympathizers that The Times lumbered to his defence, conceding that the real crime was "the anarchic quality of the Rolling Stones' performances".

In the wake of the Paris events of May '68, the Rolling Stones released Street

Fighting Man, which was banned from airplay in America and warmed up par-

ticipants in the Yippie Festival of Life in Chicago. A measure of the bizarre breadth of its influence among radicals was its enthusiastic reprinting in both Black Dwarf and Oz.

Yes I think the time is ripe for violent revolution. From where I live the game they play is compromise solution.

A year later Mick Jagger was cast as Ned Kelly, the outlaw who robbed banks, never the poor, shot policemen and was finally hung. To those of us born in Australia the choice of Jagger for the part was divinely ingenious, if sentimental. "To the dispossessed in both town and country, Ned was a hero," writes Professor Manning Clark in his HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA. "In an age in which the gods of the old religions were toppling to their ruins, Ned, or the idea of Ned, was an image in which men could believe, because his life and death symbolized the experience of the native bom, their unwillingness to accept the morality of the English, and their groping for a new morality and a new way of life."

Then came Performance - that confused, remarkable, psychedelic radicalizer. One can interpret the film as a vicious assault on capitalism - symbolized so felicitously by the bloody East End gangsterism - as





well as a sermon on the potentialities of the drug culture for defusing its terror.

And so it snowballed - the Jagger myth - with him epitomizing multi-level protest for nearly a decade - the myth which a few weeks ago exploded with the champagne corks.

. . .

The great mistake was the assumption that Jagger's anti-authoritarianism was based on the semblance of an Idea. For, in truth, he is motivated not by any inkling of the world's ills, but only by his super-id. Mick Jagger is a rebel of convenience. If he was ever an anarchist - a point on which at least he and The Times concur - then it was the anarchy of the child's tantrum, the misbehaviour of a spoilt brat. On 23rd July 1966, the Blue Book reported...

ROLLING STONES FINED FOR "PUBLIC INSULT"

The court heard of the night a Daimler car pulled into a petrol station... Eight or nine boys and girls got out and Wyman asked if he could go to the lavatory, but was refused. A mechanic, Mr Charles Keely, asked Jagger to get the group off the forecourt of the garage. He brushed him aside, saying, "We will piss anywhere, man". This was taken up by the group in a chant as one of them danced. Wyman, Jagger and Jones were seen to urinate on a wall outside the garage. The car drove off with people inside sticking their hands through the windows in a well-known gesture.

This incident conveys vividly the exact pedigree of Mick's style of protest. It is the beginning, middle and end of his manifesto, the sum total of his revolutionary programme. Power to the people, in Mick's terms, is nothing more than the power to piss anywhere, man.

When not splashing the forecourt, Jagger's commitment to radical activity (as distinct from enhancing his radical image) is solely verbal. "I'd do anything political I thought would work," says Mick in a typical quote from a typical interview. With friends, much time is spent juxtaposing personal behaviour with political belief, but with people like Jagger this critical curiosity is suspended; part of a pop poet's licence. If rock music is to have any future relevance in the context of underground/left politics, then its practitioners had better start putting their money where their mouths are.

Meanwhile Jagger has fed more into the system than Edward Heath. (Note the shared fascination with yachts.) In other directions there have been impulsive token gestures of such half-heartedness that they have barely made contact. Last year the London drug-bust organization, Release, was depending on Jagger's personal appearance at the premiere of Performance. He not only failed to appear, but was also infuriated by Release boss Caroline Coon's disappointment.

"Fuck her," he said, "I couldn't get a plane out of Paris - and, anyway, the Orly Hilton isn't the most comfortable place on earth." Once he donated about £200 to Release, for which he claimed a onenight stand with Caroline.

"Could you lend us money for our trial?" asked Abbie Hoffman when he met Jagger in Chicago. "We've got our own trials," drawled Mick, walking away.

Not that one expects Jagger to subsidize every tinpot revolutionary, but simply to try to comprehend what is happening in his own cultural constituency: to extend a little help where he can, like John Lennon. For all his wearying idiosyncrasies, false trails and gushing naivety, John Lennon has survived the gauntlet of success with his humanity intact. With time, energy and money, Lennon has conducted many a rescue operation. There is a breath-taking integration between his words and deeds which has enriched his art, making him the only Beatle left worth seriously listening to. Appropriately, it was Lennon himself who recently fingered Jagger with such merciless accuracy:

- --- "What do you think of the Stones today?"
- "I think it's a lot of hype... I think Mick's a joke... I would just like to list what we did and what the Stones did two months after on every fucking album... He imitates us. I would like one of you underground people to point out, you know, Satanic Majesty's Request is Pepper. We Love You it's the most fucking bullshit - that's All You Need Is Love. I resent the implication that the Stones are like revolutionaries and the Beatles weren't. If the Stones were or are, the Beatles were too. But they are not in the same class music-wise or power-wise, never were... Mick said "Peace made money". We didn't make any money from peace."

No, Mick, peace doesn't make money, as I'm sure your Mafia friends (said to now control your finances) would agree.

At exactly the same time as Jagger was gilding his marriage bed in St Tropez, 50 000 people marched on Washington in desperate determination to block, if only for a few hours, the arteries of military aggression. They were united not only by this objective, but also by music of the kind the Rolling Stones pioneered. 13 400 of them, bolstered by free rock groups, went on to be arrested, many of them confined in makeshift concentration camps. I wonder if Mick spared a thought for such people, people who have almost certainly spared dreams and pocket money for him, people at that time in a situation which received less attention in this country than his wedding. They couldn't even piss anywhere, Mick.

31st May: What's new? you ask. I reply: I'm out of work. Again you say, What's new? I don't know that I've ever met a sarcasticker bunch than you lot. But let me tell you a tale...

The ad in the paper was one of those typically mysterious ones which promises you you'll earn a good week's pay for just a few hours evening work, and I really should know bette than to even ring the bastards. They never tell you anything on the phone anyway. But I rang them and they arranged an interview for me and I sat around tonight after work (yes, I have a day or two to go yet) waiting to be interviewed and at last this clean-cut-looking bloke in a suit comes out and ushers me courteously but briskly into his office. Bangsund? Yes, I think I remember the name - ninety million phone calls today - lost track - yes, here we are. Right, Mr Bangsund that's an unusual name, isn't it? - German? - oh, no offence - well, we sell paint - we paint houses and so on - and your job is to ring people and get our salesmen into their houses - have them ready and willing and eager for the salesman - coffee and cakes out for him, you know, just itching to be sold the job because you've prepared them. Now, why should I give you this job? Most people just sit there with closed mouths and can't think what to say, but the bloke before you - he was brilliant - sold me right off - he'll be okay.

And he sat back with a smile on his clean-cut face and waited for me to convince him I wanted the job.

You mean, if I can convince you you should give me the job. I should be able to convince people they need their houses painted?

That's right.

Okay. First, what's in it for me?

Four dollars a night. Fifty cents if you get a salesman into the place. Five dollars if he sells them the job. You should be able to make thirty or forty dollars a week without too much trouble. But they'll tell you anything, you know. Just had the house painted, no money, all kinds of excuses. It's not easy.

Fair enough. Now, if I'm going to sell myself to you I want more than forty dollars a week. Make it twenty dollars flat a night, and I'll get you as many leads as you want.

Mm. I, ah, don't think we're talking the same language, Mr Bangsund. I...

Okay. I'm sorry I wasted our time.

And I shook hands with him and drove off into the sunset. In a manner of speaking.

To morrow - I never leam - I will be answering a similar advertisement, but this one says you can eam between twelve and twenty thousand dollars a year. IF I'M GOING TO PROSTITUTE MYSELF I MIGHT AS WELL GO TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, I always say. What do you always say?

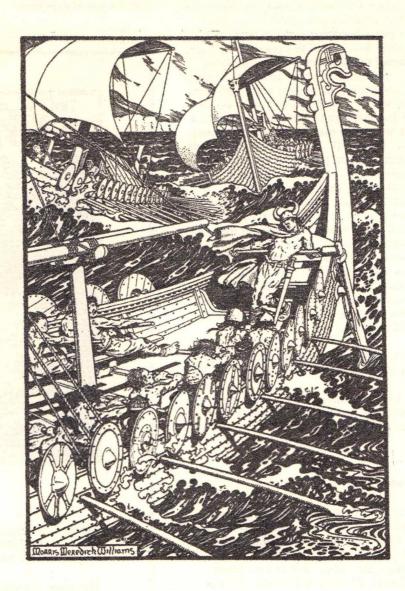


LODBROG is edited by John Bangsund and printed and published by Parergon Books, GPO Box 4946, Melbourne 3001, Australia.

This issue is published exclusively for members of the Australia & New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association, the Offtrail Magazine Publishing Association (UK) and APA-45 (USA).

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