Uhilosophical Gas



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17th May: Scythrop not only completed but ready to mail: will wonders never cease. We accidentally had a collating, stapling and enveloping party here yesterday, and the bulk of the work was done by Leigh Edmonds, Michael Cameron, Alex Robb, John Sandler and Valma Brown. But just to allow me to keep a proper perspective on things, today an inspector from Sales Tax called, and informed me that by running Mervyn's ad on the back cover I most likely left myself open to paying sales tax on the whole job. I wish they would tell you the whole story once and for all. I scrupulously avoided advertising my other activities in Scythrop, under the impression that this made the thing liable to tax, but apparently they can get you if you run any ad at all! When you are doing your own production, as I am, the sales tax works out to roughly 35% of cost of materials. Since the materials in Scythrop 22 cost about \$60, that means a tax of \$22.50 (and, since that's not 35%, I should be more accurate: the formula is 15% of cost of materials plus 150%). I told the inspector I would await his ruling (in writing) and if it went against me I would destroy the back page on each copy. That's the sort of thing that happens to you when you mix fanning with business. People who produce con handbooks, booklists and so on, should take note that they are liable for sales tax.

Of course, this tax business works the other way. The paper I used in 22 cost about the same as the paper I used in 21, sixteen months ago. The former is Roneo Impression Paper (known earlier as 750 paper); it is imported from Canada, and is about the best duplicating paper you can get in Australia. Regular price is \$3.00 per ream. quarto; I get it for \$2.08. The Gestetner 485 I used in 21 cost about \$2.15 per ream in December 1969, and has probably gone up since.

I wish I could report the same savings on postage. Having \$45 in my pocket this moming, I went out and blew all but three dollars of it on postage stamps. I normally bulk-mail things, but this time the combined weight of the magazine plus envelope was a teeny shade over 4 ounces. Correct postage on this weight is 18c, but I just couldn't come at that, so I put 12c on each one and have crossed my fingers. Would you believe there is no 12c stamp? I had to put two 6c stamps on each envelope. This is very cynical of the post office; they apparently aren't printing 12c stamps, since the rate is likely to

go up at any moment. Incredible. When I posted ASFR 1 out, back in June 1966, each one cost me 4c. That was the rate then for printed matter under 4 ounces. In five years the rate has increased 300%.

Some more technical notes while I'm at it. The stencils I am using for this Philosophical Gas (but not for Scythrop: they were 16c Roneo R660s) are Roneo RV20 Klarotypes. With discount and so on they cost me 7.5c each, which is what I call a reasonable price for stencils. How they look is another matter. The cover for this issue was done because I felt like experimenting with a coloured background to that portrait of Ursula. At the moment of writing it is on paper $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ ", but I might trim it down for Anzapa. The green background to the picture in Scythrop was done as a last-minute, desperate measure since the first run had show-through all through the white areas of the picture. I outlined the figure in Chinagraph on the stencil (Chinagraph is about the only medium you can use on stencil which won't make holes and won't destroy the implement: ballpoint tends to cut, felt pens tend to glum up with the wax from the stencil), then typed onto the stencil after putting it into the typewriter on an angle.

All illustrations and headings for Scythrop were run separately. I finished up using about 80 stencils on the issue: about 30 of them simply for the illustrations and headings. It nearly breaks your heart to spend ten minutes, all that ink and a separate stencil merely to put a single heading on a Page, but that's what I have done in everything since Scythrop 21, and I'm convinced it's the only way to do it effectively. The density of typing, linework, halftones and headings varies. If you cut illos and so on into your typed stencil you tend to finish up with either the text too dark or the other matter too light. Bruce Gillespie doesn't know the fun he's missing by not having illos. Even so, you can strike incredible problems. The green illos, for example, took much more work than the rest, probably because the drum wasn't inking properly. The spaceship on page 7 took nearly 45 minutes to print. Each copy was slowly run off by hand. The sister ship on page 8 ran through automatically at 40 per minute, like all the other illos and headings, and finished up looking better.

I started off (at the back of the issue, wisely) with the idea of doing all the headings in green. Two like this changed my mind. Ends technical waffle. 8th June: And why isn't this stuff in Brisbane at this late hour? Why indeed. No way to treat a new OE, and I do apologize, Dennis.

Observant readers will observe that the previous page was typed before, and this one after, producing Lodbrog 2. After Organization Man #1, too, but since not everyone in ANZAPA is on the Australia in '75 Committee (not yet, anyway), not everyone in ANZAPA will be seeing that little opus. I think I am mentioning this to indicate that my fanzine production is not exactly falling off. Also, since today is Tuesday, and Leigh wants the first issue of the Australia in Seventy-Five Bulletin published in time for the Nova Mob meeting on Thursday - and since Allan Tompkins is threatening to come round with the stencils for the first issue of something called Kittle to run off at the weekend - this insane production rate shows no sign of falling off in the immediate future. (And just to keep me out of mischief, Valma is trying to get me some duplicating work from Prahran Technical College.)

Further observations: The Sunday Review is apparently in the process of changing its name to The Review. When I quoted the subscription rate in Lodbrog. I had overseas readers in mind. The rate for Australian subscribers is \$3.90 for six months. In view of the fact that the Jagger article was written by Richard Neville it seems likely that it has also appeared, or will appear, in London Oz. ::: The whole of Lodbrog was typed up on those Klarotype stencils I mentioned overleaf, but now I've run out of them and this page is typed on an R660 Executive. The question: can you see 8.5 cents' worth of difference between this side of the sheet and the other? Further question: Can you see 8.5 cents' worth of difference between this page and page 7 of Lodbrog? If you can't, this only means you accidentally have one of the good copies of page 7 of Lodbrog. (But I said I had ended the technical waffle. Sorry.)

Unemployed-at-last: -or-the-continuing-saga-of-aninveterate-square-peg-in-search-of-a-crust: Part 93. I didn't do anything about the 12-20 000-dollar job mentioned in Lodbrog. Instead I answered a similar vague you-can-earn-a-fortune-virtually-in-yourspare-time-and-without-any-work kind of advertisement that morning, and got the job. I'll tell you about that one in a moment. Then in the afternoon I was interviewed for an editorial-cum-personnel job at the Ford Motor Company, which I don't think I want anyway, since Campbellfield is a hell of a way from St Kilda and I don't feel like moving; and, since the interview was with an agency, and since the agency (like all bloody agencies) made me sit around filling in rotten forms for half an hour, the interview cost me \$10.10. The odd ten cents was for the parking meter in King Street. The ten dollars was for getting back to the car at 4.50pm. At 4.45 pm, you see, King Street becomes a clearway. Since I copped a \$20 fine ten days or so ago for doing 48 mph along Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park - where you are liable to get smashed into or at least honked at if you slow down to 50 normally - and since a week or so previous to that I collected a \$4 fine for parking too close to the comer of Degraves St and Flinders Lane, I am seriously thinking of flogging the car and travelling in future by taxi.

But about this other job... Selling advertising space on the phone. Not the kind of thing I would normally think of taking on, but beggars can't be choosers &c, and there seemed pretty good reasons besides for having a go at this. The space for sale was in United Nations News, official journal of the United Nations Association of Australia (Victoria Branch). I reasoned that although the job was basically a dirty con (or at least a little on the grubby side), in fact no-one involved stood to lose anything, and I stood to gain maybe \$100-\$200 per week. The UNAA must get something out of it, even if only a small percentage. The advertisers, mostly big business firms, could for a fairly small outlay get the nice feeling that they were doing something for the starving kids of Asia or something, and advertising is tax-deductible anyway.

So yesterday morning at 10 am I started work for this outfit. I quit at 11.15.

Imagine, if you will, sitting in a room about 12 by 15. There are eight desks, each with a telephone, and at each desk is a bloke selling advertising space. Each of these men is presumably working for the man who gave me the job - though the exact nature of our business relationship is still unclear to me. He doesn't actually employ me. If I sell something I get 25% commission. So do they. So there we sit, ringing up businesses all over Melboume. Most of the others are working on other publications. But each one of us is claiming to be something he most definitely is not. "Good morning." I'm Jack Bloggs from the United Nations Association (or the Melbourne Fire Brigade, or the Transport Workers' Union, or - you name it) and..." And into the script. My selling script wouldn't sell you anything in a million years, unless you were an absolute moron. So I re-wrote it. This is frowned on, but I thought, bugger them, if I do it at all I do it my way. Twenty phone calls later, no sales, two promises to call me back, and I decided I couldn't go on pretending to be "John Gordon" from the UNAA. I left. I phoned, and then visited, the secretary of the UNAA. He was horrified. The case is proceeding: I'll tell you about it next mailing.