

An overlong, unreliable, heavily biased history of Stockton Ferry (Nee 'Opus') University of Newcastle, 1970 ... including too much about myself.

By Bob Hill – Co-editor of Stockton Ferry with Jim Beiers, Bernie Kelly and Max Ryan

1969: ... You want to send me *WHERE?*

In 1970, the year we produced Stockton Ferry, 20-year-olds couldn't even vote! Huge antiwar demonstrations and public acts of defiance were appearing in the media daily and the anti-apartheid movement was also gathering wide support – which would erupt in a violent fury during a South African rugby tour in 1971. Instead of subduing a compliant 19/20 year old male population, compulsory registration for conscription and the very real prospect of being sent off to fight in a war had the side effect of turning most 19/20 year olds into politically aware radicals who began increasingly questioning any form of authority. The Liberal government with its "All the Way With LBJ" stance had put itself in a bind that they didn't know how to get out of... and to say that backing the Vietnam War and the return of the draft was less than popular would be the understatement of the century...



Anti-Vietnam war protests during President Johnson's visit, Sydney, October 1966 (I was there as a schoolboy – 100 metres up the road from where this photo was taken)



Anti-Apartheid demonstration Springbok Tour; SCG, 1971: smoke bombs & mass arrests. I was in Melbourne at this time - at an even wilder demonstration.

In 1969, (the year I turned 20), one guaranteed way to avoid call-up was to enlist in the "weekend warriors" (the CMF), sign on for 6 years (4 as a Reserve), cut your hair, pledge allegiance to the Queen of England, don a military uniform, turn up for some basic training (i.e. being yelled at) and run round the bush for a couple of weeks each year. Another method was to roll the dice and hope NOT to win the birthdate ballot – conducted using a lottery barrel filled with marbles representing birthdays.

This naturally led to the tactic of flooding the system with false registrations. Our version was to wander down to the University Post Office, pick up a sheaf of Registration forms then head across to the Student Union building and fill them in with (accurate) details of every male you knew - but just changing their birthdate to an eligible birth year: It seemed to work, since I managed to get my 11 year old brother called up and apparently the Deputy

Vice Chancellor, Prof Brin Newton-John (Olivia's Father!) got called up several times. The analogue era was an absolute gift to anonymous disruptors!

Other ways of dodging the draft involved securing a medical disqualification (a pinprick of blood in your urine test was recommended) ... or remaining at university forever on an education deferment. It wasn't hard to imagine which of these options seemed like the best idea to many an eligible target such as myself...

At the end of 1969, I failed to "win" the birthday ballot and could at last breathe easy... though it had been a trauma hanging over my head ever since I was in school and I remained mightily pissed off at "The Establishment" for decades – and I wasn't the only one! If the Liberal government had set out to alienate an entire generation and radicalising them, they couldn't have found a better way than this...

The Gang of 4:

Having squandered 1968 attending ANU on a Commonwealth Scholarship, then dropping out and going bush for 5 months, I had discovered that the real world wasn't for me, at least for now...

So, when 1969 came round, I said yes to a Teacher's College scholarship and moved to the only educational institution that would still have me – the University of Newcastle. What I thought would be a backwater as stagnant as the nearby Shortland swamps, turned out to be a lively campus with a much younger teaching staff than the traditional flagship universities. At some point after sampling every distraction university life seemed to offer, (sport, getting trashed, the university revue, new girlfriend, share house hell...), I soon came across another arts student who seemed to be on my rapidly evolving alternative wavelength - Jim Beiers:

Jim was a long-haired 18-year-old who dressed like a Californian alternate country artist (fringed jacket and boots, Indian cotton shirts, beaded headbands etc) ... with a soft, asthmatic voice and a passion for Californian music. He also did LSD from time to time and smoked a fair bit of weed. The fact that he had recently been busted for a tiny quantity of 'grass' only increased his street credentials as a representative of the bright new age that was surely on the horizon. He was academically bright, articulate and physically quite beautiful which made him popular with every tribe.

Jim lost both parents at an early age and was raised by his much older brother, a veterinarian, who lived with his young family in a cottage out back of his surgery in Charlestown. Jim and I immediately bonded over our mutual love of cinema, and we spent many a night watching and analysing vintage Hollywood classics on a 24" black and white TV in his brother's house. It was also the moment I discovered my future vocation in film, for which I'm forever grateful – both for Jim's encouragement... and his brother's TV.

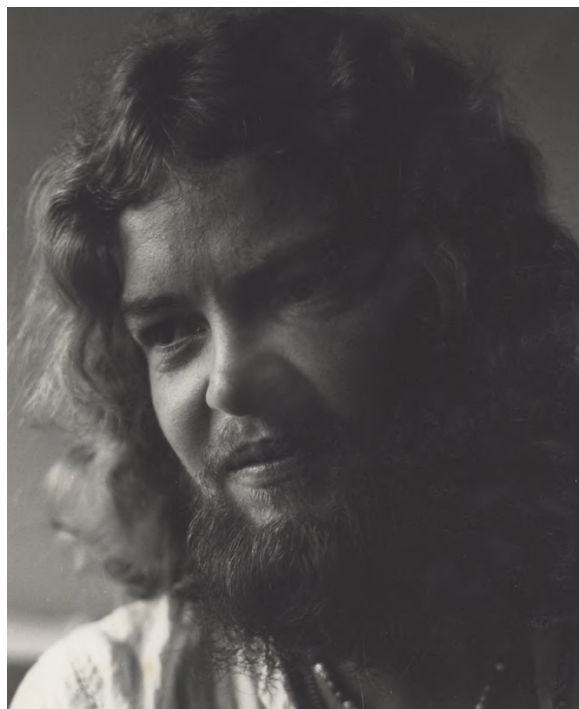
Jim also circulated within a wide orbit of other arts students – which is where I met his friend Max Ryan. Max had briefly been a journalist on the Newcastle Herald but suffered a life-changing accident when he was a passenger in a car rammed by another car speeding through a red light. After months in critical care and a long rehab, Max emerged with a droll outlook, a Zen aura and a permanent limp. He enrolled in a BA at Newcastle a year ahead of Jim and me and was the wise senior citizen in our circle since – especially since he could

vouch for The Tibetan Book of the Dead's veracity from having visited the other side whilst in a coma...



Bob & Max: 1971

At some point, a sharp little hippie also entered our group – Bernie Kelly. Bernie, nominally an arts student, was first and foremost a seasoned exponent of the dark art of keeping himself and others supplied with consciousness enhancing chemicals. At this point he had been logging all his acid trips, (which would eventually number over 120!) and keeping diaries of their revelations. Amazingly, he was also verbally coherent and startlingly well read on the philosophies of the pioneer explorers who inhabited his realm – R.D Laing, Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert (“Baba Ram Dass”), Alan Watts and a pile of academics who had changed their identities to reinvent themselves as Indian mystics.



Bernie Kelly- 1970 (University of Newcastle Living Histories archive)

At some point, probably in the second semester of 1970, amongst the turmoil of anti-Vietnam marches, compulsory tutorials, declining lecture attendances and a fair bit of

Hunter Valley homegrown, Stockton Ferry was launched with a ratbag crew of 4 Arts students and their assorted connections...



*"Up against the wall Muthafuggers"!
From left – Bernie, Max & Bob, 1970*

Goodbye OPUS, hello Stockton Ferry:

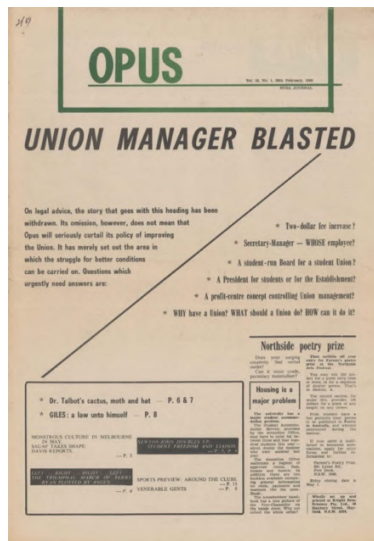
I'm not sure how we came to be the editors of "Opus", but most likely it was because no-one else showed any interest in taking it over after the previous editors resigned at the end of the first semester, apparently to do some actual study - a novel concept in itself!

To us, even the name "Opus" seemed to represent a 1950s world of engineering students, post graduate mathematicians, the Christian right... and that most dreaded of campus fixtures, student politicians. Though we'd barely noticed their previous issues, our closed loop regarded Opus as an official publication of a moribund branch of the public service – being visually dull, and filled with boring interviews, conservative cultural views daggy humour and too many articles on university politics, education and their like.¹

In an era of anti-conscription rage, rapidly evolving feminism, ('The Female Eunuch' was published in 1970), and exploding music and arts frontiers, these preceding Opus's seemed to exist in a controlled and neutered space that had little connection to the riotous mood of the late 60s/early 70s. Untouched issues lay in piles around the Union for weeks... a sure sign that it was a plot by "The Establishment", (whomever they were & whatever they represented), to lull us into Keats's "easeful Death"² syndrome.

¹*In hindsight, if we'd bothered to read it, Opus was far more subversive than we presumed. For example, even though one 1970 issue promoted joining the CMF "weekend warriors", it was in the noble cause of draft dodging. Several issues also boldly stated that marijuana was harmless and sex was good for you. It was mainly the fault of the layout that rendered it antediluvian in our jaundiced eyes.*

² "Ode to a Nightingale"- we were full-on pretentious literature students, after all...



1969 Opus editions before Stockton Ferry: Daggy layouts - but #3 showed promise since the cover had no context other than being a photo of a nude - a very Stockton Ferry concept

And thus we found ourselves, with the boundless energy of privileged white male students armed with the inexhaustible hubris of youth, coming to blow it all up...

What's in a Name?

Our first act was to change the name from Opus: "Stockton Ferry" was Max Ryan's idea – and it was brilliant! In our eyes, "Opus" was an archaic Latin noun from another age that either reeked of academic elitism or was a dumb nod to the Newcastle City Council motto, (*finis coronat opus* – 'the end crowns the work') and its BHP ethic of brutal labour for The Man, whereas "Stockton Ferry" was, well... a ferry to nowhere! As a brand it was uniquely evocative of a Newcastle icon and ... err ...nothing else!

It also aligned us to the symbolism of the hippest of rock music album covers – where a title often had no connection to anything within its cover... ref. "Surrealistic Pillow", "Ummagumma", "Aoxomoxoa", "Burnt Weeny Sandwich" etc.



A real Stockton Ferry – fittingly belching black smoke as it prepares to cross the Hunter River in 1971. It was still a car ferry at this time - Stockton Bridge wouldn't open until the following year. (University of Newcastle Living Histories archive).

As a magazine title “Stockton Ferry” was perfect, being both cryptic and meaningless - a gnomic label that loudly proclaimed, “you don’t get it – because we’re more switched on than you!”

As I said, our hubris was inexhaustible...

My Obsession is More Important than your Obsession...

As self-appointed editors, we were allocated a backroom behind the main desk in the Student Union Office. Our first task was to start collating material for the inaugural issue, which in lieu of a coherent agenda, consisted mainly of promoting our individual obsessions and sourcing content from far more rational sources – such as favoured academics, comic illustrators and new age mystics.

Like any rock and roll band that started in a suburban garage, despite the New Age appearances, we were all vastly different people with competing interests... and it didn’t take long for the cracks to appear as we fought and argued for the inclusion of our own material over each other’s:

Max had a particular interest in exotic poetic forms and a connoisseur’s deep knowledge of Eastern philosophies. Like the rest of our cohort, he was a venerable Dylanologist but with a far superior grasp of every preceding genre of music from blues and roots, Doo Wop, early R & B... through to Elvis, the Beatles, the Stones & beyond. He once cleaned out an unsuspecting local radio music quiz of its prizes (petrol station fill-ups!) until they mined their vaults for the most obscure artist question they could dredge up. His tale of attending the Wallsend RSL for an Ink Spots tour show (a black American vocal group from the 1930’s and 40’s with only 1 original member left), kept us in stitches for years...

Jim was a contemporary music and culture junkie who inhaled and understood the entire USA West Coast music scene better than anyone else in the room, if not the universe... whilst maintaining a fierce rage towards the local drug squad cops who busted him.

Bernie wanted to fill the magazine entirely with writings by the acid academics... on which he was a bona fide expert.

Bob ... wanted to create literary anarchy in the style of National Lampoon writers Doug Kenney, Henry Beard & Michael O’Donoghue... and visual mayhem as culturally biting as Oz Magazine’s Martin Sharp and Zap Comix artists Robert Crumb and Gilbert Sheldon.

Considering ourselves dilettantes who were above such rational actions, there was never any discussion about the magazine’s direction, its objectives, philosophy, politics, tone, tenor or what we wanted to say ... or even if there was a point to the whole thing! Though I suspect though we never even remotely considered ourselves to be counterculture revolutionaries, we intuitively knew we didn’t want Stockton Ferry to be like anything that had come before. It was, of course, exciting as hell... and a recipe for chaos!

With 4 completely different agendas and no-one in control, what could possibly go wrong?

Oh ... and there was one other major problem - **we had absolutely no idea how to put out a magazine!**

“Tharunka”:

By 1970, even the ‘old’ university student newspapers such as Honi Soit (Syd), Tharunka (UNSW), Farrago (Melb) and Lot’s Wife (Monash), were undergoing seismic changes and were being taken over by the new radical voices:

Somehow, (probably by calling their phone number - ref the bottom of the “Page 11” Stockton Ferry #1 Issue), we connected to our definitive mentor - the wonderfully controversial University of NSW student newspaper “Tharunka”. At this juncture in UNSW’s history, it was run by a preternaturally smart and fearless team led by the formidably intelligent Wendy Bacon, along with the equally formidable Val Hodgson, Jack Rozycki, Allan Rees and others - most of them sociology students. Instinctively libertarian and politically informed by exposure to the Sydney Push, they had faced down the State’s archaic pornography laws by publishing “obscene” articles that soon saw them prosecuted in the NSW courts³. In 1969, black rights, sexual freedoms, police corruption, abortion and even gay rights were on their radar. They also confronted the attempted shutdown of the Student Representative Council, (which would have finished off Tharunka), and in 1970, even goaded the Christian right and other conservative students into burning copies of their paper in protest – all fabulous achievements in the wastelands of the cultural torpor of late 60s/early 70s.



Wendy Bacon leaving Court 1972



Tharunka Volume 16 No. 11 (1970)

³ Wendy Bacon, the highly educated daughter of a former premier of Tasmania, would serve a week in jail following a 1970 Obscenity charge. In her career as an investigative journalist into (among many other things) archaic laws and police corruption, Wendy Bacon has been arrested 18 times. In 1979 she applied to join the [New South Wales Bar Association](#),^[4] but was rejected on character grounds as an ‘unsuitable person’. A Walkley Award winner, she ultimately became a professor of Journalism at UTS.

2, FERRIES, SOME BUSES AFFECTED

conference in Melbourne decide whether the five-day strike continues.

be held as Sydney increases of the strike.

roles in the metropolitan area by ferry, taxi and private bus affected and there is little petrol

ly list

the dispute have decided on a , ranging from ambulance services, which will get fuel supplies.

Metropolitan Superintendent of Police, E. Lynch, last night ordered cars at all stations to attend only urgent and police radio calls.

issue of petrol to vehicles has been reduced—no more than 10 litres for big vehicles for mini-sized and one for cyclists.

police will be required for foot patrols in zones.

SERVICES TO GET SUPPLIES

Unions involved in the oil industry dispute in Sydney yesterday decided they would supply oil only to the following "essential" services:

Babies' homes, fire brigades, ambulances, nursing services, assistance to the aged, schools, kindergartens and Government emergency services.

SINGING WHILE 'THARUNKA' BLAZES . . .



Students of the University of N.S.W. sing as copies of the university newspaper "Tharunka" burn on the university lawn.

STUDENTS BURN

"Book burning" Tharunka on the UNSW lawn, July 1970

reduced

Dairy Farmers Co-operative Ltd. has been forced to cut its milk supplies to Sydney by half because of a strike by 800 employees.

The company's general manager, Mr C. M. Barker, said yesterday the full effect of the strike would be felt today and tomorrow. Milk would have to be rationed in many suburbs.

The company supplies about 60 per cent of Sydney's milk.

Mr Barker said that if the men returned to work this afternoon, as proposed, the supply would be back to normal by Sunday. Staff men were working to maintain some supplies. Hospitals had received full milk deliveries but no deliveries had been made to schools.

New aid sought by Gunn

Sir William Gunn yesterday began talks with financiers in Sydney in an attempt to obtain aid from the private sector for the wool industry.

Sir William is known to believe that the industry needs large amounts of long-term, low-interest finance urgently.

Anthony said

S.C.E.G.G.S. e the 75th anniversary of the founding school last night the most possible v languished "ol Lady Cutler came ner, the girls p fashion parade years of school and an anonymous handed over \$20

THE telephone Directory A (Col. 8, July 1 referred to Mr. "our Prime A wasn't really too

The senior Mts the New South Government was as Prime Minister 1855 until Federation 1901. After the Minister of N.S.W. William Lyne, red to Federal p 1901 Sir John came N.S.W. P

IT was cold at 5 yesterday morn young film techni trouble starting and then made i prising discovery anti-freeze had fe

YESTERDAY a crowd gathered a VW in the W. Mait. Sitting inic golden labradier plastic bucket head. Two holes t

These people were proper grown-ups: Streets ahead of us in the counterculture & information wars, they published brilliant articles on serious subjects - including a literary supplement featuring contributions from luminaries such as Frank Moorhouse, Michael Wilding, AD Hope, Judith Wright, Thomas Keneally et al. From every angle, Tharunka were gamechangers... and I will forever wonder why they took pity on a group of rank amateurs from out of town. We called them ... and they said **come on down!**

Stockton Ferry hits the Road:

After weeks of passive aggressive bickering for own work to be included over the others, and as palpably underprepared as any explorers who ever got lost in the Australian inland, we gathered up our material, jumped into Max's Toyota Corolla (with its 4 track cartridge sound system) and headed down to Sydney with a lot of CSN&Y blasting in our ears: We didn't know a thing about the printing process that we needed to manage and simply had galley printouts of our copy... and had no plan for the Stockton Ferry's layout or article order.

Without rhyme nor reason, somewhere between the Pacific Highway and Tharunka's office, we fell into loosely defined roles in this hare-brained adventure: Jim was Music, Bernie was Acid, Max was the Spiritual Avatar, and I became, (as Jim labelled me), Key Grip. Though I wound up doing most of the production work, at least it gave me some leverage in production and editing decisions. Or so I thought...

The requirements of offset printing circa 1970 were an incomprehensible alchemy to us, but Tharunka saved our lives by letting us use their layout space and showing us how to prepare a magazine for the printers... especially the mathematical magic of reducing or expanding images. I recall they also enabled us to have further copy printed in their offices, which was an enormous help since we were making it up as we went along. In fact, they were so supportive we even crashed at one of their homes (on the leafy upper North Shore, of course) after one of our all-nighters.

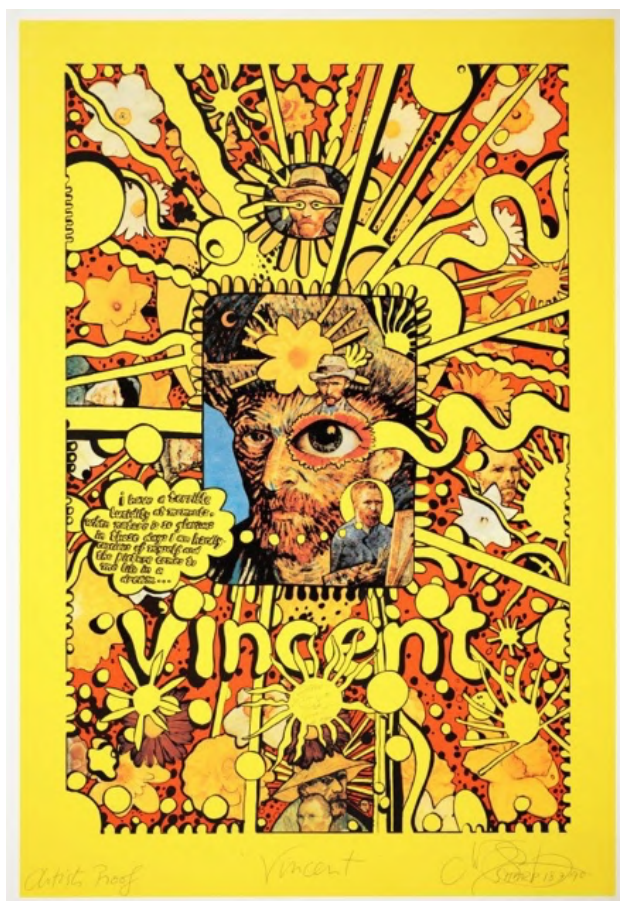
Without realising it, Stockton Ferry had set sail with an unspoken agenda that we weren't coming to you with the usual familiar, non-threatening mix of useless student news, outdated humour or self-interested student politics like previous Opus editions – our message was that **we were from a totally different planet and to get what we were selling, you had to come to us!**

Stockton Ferry No 1:

The Cover Pages –

Unlike most of the preceding Opus's, we wrapped our first issue in a full coloured cover page. The choice was dead easy – I simply purloined Martin Sharp's wonderful "Vincent" full page poster artwork and slapped it in, dyslexic wording included. Amazingly, I received no complaints from the other editors, probably since Van Gogh was a cultural hero for the ages... and the words and artwork made no secret that this art was mind expanding stuff!

The back page, (found by Jim), was the censored Rolling Stones toilet wall album cover artwork from "Begger's Banquet" which was unavailable in Australia. It was enough of an act of dissent to satisfy all our egos...



Page 2

At the top of this page, we introduced ourselves as the new editors by pasting in obscure and fuzzy images of ourselves. I have no idea why we did this, other than to present our

credentials as ... err ... arts students (i.e. not Engineering, Maths or Post Grads) with very BIG hair!



Back: Bernie & Max
Front: Jim & Bob

Max & friend

Bernie, Bob, Max, Jim

Max's editorial 'unexplaining' why we changed the magazine's name followed on...

It was a combination of the syntax of Martin Sharp's "Gas Lash" cartoon, a Dylan lyric, a plundering of Meher Baba's philosophy of bewilderment⁴ and some faux stoner ramblings. Critically, it was crafted to alienate and confuse pretty much everyone by imitating the incoherent musings of a bombed-out hippie, with just enough self-awareness to hint at a logical madness in its method...

Max's editorial –

Well, here it is – the STOCKTON FERRY edition of Opus! Our reasons for naming our edition STOCKTON FERRY are too obvious to mention here; actually, we were going to have a picture of us all riding on the Stockton Ferry, which would have been highly symbolic of us all riding on the Stockton Ferry.

's

Actually, we were going to do a whole lot of things, but existential anguish wore us down and couldn't even find the pump and someone busted us for being incredible. Even if too many are uptight and the stars are falling, nothing is left to you at this moment but to have a good laugh.

Since our inception people have been coming up to us and asking what are our ideas on Opus? A person said the other day after coming up to us -

"Me and my mates, who are really turned on and Cool, we really are – were getting pretty uptight about the scene, so we decided to tell it how it is. We grooved on over to the old Pad and blew a few joints. "MAN – AM I STONED!" groaned Ed, who is pretty incredible, and in a FLASH we knew WE were where it's at. It was all happening for us and although we felt pretty RATSHIT, we played it cool. We turned on to the Stockton Ferry groove and here we are, putting it down for "Stockton Ferry" and have found God."⁵

⁴ A self-proclaimed 'God in Human Form' Indian mystic who had maintained a vow of silence since 1925 & communicated through an alphabet board and hand gestures. Best remembered today for his "don't worry be happy" mantra that infected stoner philosophies throughout the 60s and 70s.

⁶ I have no way of confirming it, but Max may have been referencing the legend of Little Richard throwing his gaudy jewellery off the real Stockton Ferry on a 1957 Rock 'n Roll Tour to Newcastle after claiming to have "found God". Being a former journalist and incredibly informed on musical history, Max would have known the story details: <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2023/09/30/little-richard-timeline/>

—10 Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, Tuesday, October 1, 1957.

LEE GORDON Presents...

ROCK 'N ROLL

WITH AMERICAS TWO TOP ROCK 'N ROLL GROUPS

LITTLE RICHARD
HIS COMPLETE AMERICAN 8 PIECE ROCK 'N ROLL BAND. STARS OF THE FILM "THE GIRL CAN'T HELP IT."

GENE VINCENT
HIS 7 BLUECAPS. STARS OF THE FILM "THE GIRL CAN'T HELP IT."

EDDIE COCHRAN

ALIS LESLEY
THE FEMALE ELVIS PRESLEY

ALL AMERICAN SUPPORTING CAST OF ROCK 'N ROLL ARTISTS !!

YOU CAN DANCE! AT BOTH SHOWS

£25 each to best couple

BOOK NOW!!

BOOK AT:— PALINGS and RAYFORDS

TO-MORROW ONLY!! (Two Shows)

PRICES:
 8.45 p.m. 29/6
 39/6 29/6
 4 p.m. 19/6
 29/6 19/6

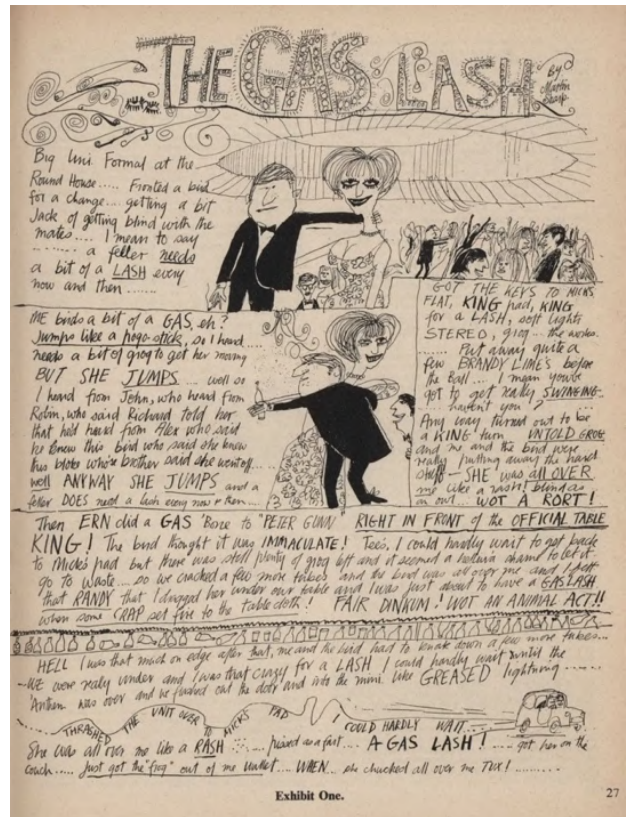
THE BIG SHOW
 STADIUM

Someone who did find God on the Stockton Ferry was Little Richard on his 1957 Australian Tour -

Our editorial touchstones -



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com
 Robert Crumb



Martin Sharp

The cartoon strip immediate below this editorial was filched wholesale from Evergreen Magazine (possibly) ... with the name of our favourite English lecturer Norman Talbot badly pasted in over a cheesy American author's name, (Edna Ferber), as agent provocateur.⁶

⁶ This cartoon was a favourite with many alternate magazines and student newspapers for years – and I even found it in a 1990s edition of Lot's Wife, Monash University's version of Opus, where they pasted in "Lot's Wife" over Edna Ferber!



Page 3 - Jim Maintains the Rage:

Page 3 was an unsubtle rant by Jim, (writing anonymously), detailing how his bust by 2 drug local squad cops went down – whom he characterised as “Blue Meanies”, the antagonists from the Beatles “Yellow Submarine” animation. Like I said, Jim was heavily into music and maintaining a fierce grudge against the cops who busted him...



Pages 4 & 5 – “The Kings”:

National Lampoon’s first issue came out in April 1970⁷ – just in time for an unknown arts student to consume it like the bible of extremely funny, bad taste comedy it was. In a Lampoon inspired effort to offend everyone, the pseudo anonymous “Tyrone T Tyrone”, (guess who?), delivered a story that was designed to be so offensive and outrageous that it couldn’t be taken seriously by any literate human... and probably wasn’t, since it received no direct hate mail - **which was incredibly disappointing!**

However, far from being an ‘unrestrained, boundary-pushing, kill-all, farcical and sometimes tasteless parody’, (as The Daily Beast described the Lampoon), it was a fucked-up, unforgivably racist, sexually indefensible shotgun blast of bad writing... and ultimately a total waste of space. Where Lampoon’s writers such as Doug Kenney⁸ (mostly) had an obvious satirical point of some sort, “The Kings”, though aiming for comedic mythos, plunges over the edge into pointless nihilism.

Oddly enough, though bizarre and ridiculous, “The Kings” was prescient of a style of writing and storytelling that was about to have its day: For example, though it was written shortly before the landmark “Wake in Fright” movie was released, it predates that film’s hallucinatory nightmare tone as characterised by the kangaroo shooting and the alcohol fog sodomy scenes. There’s also lurking within “The Kings” elements of Hunter S Thompson’s gonzo journalistic “Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas” which appeared later that year, serialised, in Rolling Stone – depicting a similar cocktail of drugs, firearms and alcohol, set against a desert landscape in a speeding car. (BTW, Mr Tyrone swears he hadn’t encountered “Fear & Loathing before writing “The Kings” ... but alludes to the fact that it might have had more to do with his own memories of spending 5 months in an alcohol haze in far western NSW in 1968 during his own “Wake in Fright” drop-out misadventure).

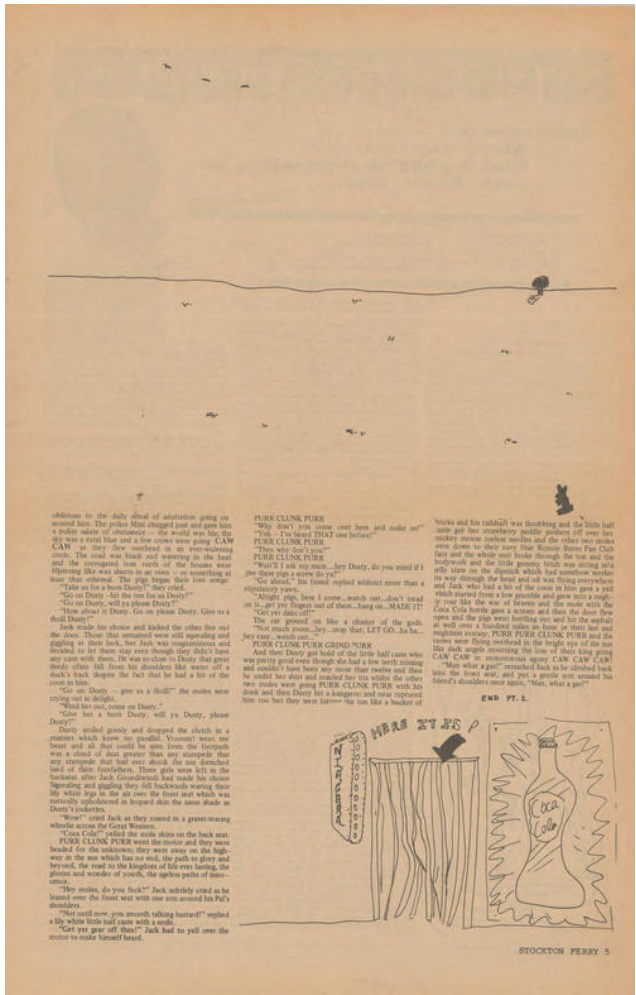
It was to everyone’s immeasurable relief that “The Kings Parts #2 and #3” were never published...

⁷ *National Lampoon grew out of the Harvard Lampoon – a student-run humour magazine at Harvard University. The original National Lampoon editors all had Harvard educations!*

⁸ *Doug Kenney’s story “Trespassers Will Be Violated” published in Lampoon’s 1975 edition is a perfect example of the tone “Tyrone T Tyrone” wished to achieve: Kenney’s story features a father who takes his flu-stricken 11 year old son camping in a game reserve, shoots hundreds of ducks, buggers his son using “Sterno” solid lamp fuel... and finally shoots the family dog and himself. An earlier Kenney Lampoon story (“Her First Blow Job”) describes a WASP girl’s first date with a preppie college student who whips her with a car aerial whilst proclaiming “I’ve wanted to try this ever since I heard negro music!”.*

The full “Trespassers Will Be Violated” story by Doug Kenney:
http://www.luckyfrogfarms.com/cook/NL/1970's/1975/1975_08.pdf

For another sample of Lampoon’s excellent bad taste, here’s a bonkers story by future screen directing legend John Hughes that predates the “Christmas Vacation” films he wrote that made both he and Chevy Chase multi-millionaires a decade or two later:
<https://realflashbytes.wordpress.com/2024/02/09/christmas-59-by-john-hughes-national-lampoon/>



Pages 6 & 7: Bernie Ascendant ... Part #1 - Alan Watts

Though I fought hard to exclude it, Bernie enlisted Max and Jim to his crusade... and now had the numbers to insist we print an article written by the pipe-smoking, Indian cotton clad, bead-encrusted academic dropout **Alan Watts**: Though I still managed to edit large chunks out of it, most of Watts' message got through. If you can wade through his convoluted and elliptical language, it's a well-structured academic meditation on human philosophy and the need for "ego-transcendence & the realisation of inter-connectedness"... albeit, through a stoner prism.

Christianity, Taoism, Zen Buddhism, Druidism and some very odd sexual practices were all part of the Alan Watts canon. In a shortish life, he had three wives, an endless number of affairs, fathered at least 7 children, travelled widely & destroyed a major academic career; he also produced 25 books, gave myriad lectures, hosted dozens of radio programs & appeared on multiple TV programs extolling the virtues of psychotropic adventure. Along with his raging alcoholism, he also consumed industrial quantities of mind-altering hallucinogens whilst promoting their spiritual effect with an academic lucidity that most would find impossible even when straight. This ability to navigate infinity naturally ensured his enormous popularity amongst the transcendental tourists of the 1960's...



Some notes on What's What, and What it might be reasonable to do about What's What....

- BOOKS BY ALAN WATTS
1. The Supreme Identity
 2. The Wisdom of Zen
 3. Myth and Ritual in Civilization
 4. Nature Man and Heaven
 5. The Way of Zen
 6. The Two Hands of God
 7. Beyond Freedom and Fate
 8. The Way of Zen
 9. The Way of Zen
 10. The Way of Zen

ALAN WILSON WATTS (1904-1957)

For more than thirty years Alan Watts has been helping Anglo-American students to understand the profound implications of the Buddhist religion. His work has been a major force in the development of the "New Religion" in America. He has been a major force in the development of the "New Religion" in America. He has been a major force in the development of the "New Religion" in America.



The individual then confronts the question of his own freedom, of his own ability to choose his own path. This is the central theme of his work. He explores the concept of the "self" and how it is constructed from social and cultural influences. He argues that the self is not a fixed entity but a fluid, ever-changing process.



STOCKTON FERRY 6



...in actual experience the self is not one with a world of things. It is a process, a becoming, a flux. It is a process of becoming, a flux of becoming. It is a process of becoming, a flux of becoming. It is a process of becoming, a flux of becoming.

The real reason the individual is not free is that he is not free. He is not free because he is not free. He is not free because he is not free. He is not free because he is not free. He is not free because he is not free. He is not free because he is not free.

The central core of the experience seems to be the experience of being. It is the experience of being. It is the experience of being. It is the experience of being. It is the experience of being. It is the experience of being. It is the experience of being. It is the experience of being.



By way of a token fightback against what I perceived was rampant hippie nonsense, I dropped Gilbert Sheldon's violent comic "Scenes from the Revolution 1 - The Motorcycle Outlaws versus the Rednecks at the Highway Beer Joint" into the bottom corner. It was a less than subtle suggestion that we were a fractious family –

Pages 8/9: Bernie Ascendant... Part #2 – "The Molecular Revolution"

Emboldened by his coup to enlist Jim and Max into his eager promotion of consciousness-altering molecules, Bernie came forth with an entire 1966 lecture by former Harvard clinical psychologist, Dr. Timothy Leary - who was still a respected spirit guide for the New Age at

each night I dream about disneyland scripted by sigmund freud
 everyone who wets the bed spends christmas in the void
 I have one hand up daisy ducks dress, the other in strawberry jelly
 when mickey mouse starts world war three
 it's time for morning telly...

I have no memory of where we found the collage that we plonked Alf's poem and biography into... though it seems to have OZ magazine underpinnings, especially with the Martin Sharp styled lettering and swirling graphics. Since I was always obsessed with collages (we were floating an idea for an all-collage, no words Stockton Ferry #3 at one time), I may have lifted the basic page from OZ... and added to it: The Phantom comic strip reference (the 2 old ladies) is definitely Sharp, along with the Muybridge, Munch and Prince Valiant images. Still, I can detect some of my handiwork in there, but I can't be sure which parts I defiled...



Page 11 – Who the Fuck is this “Bob Hill”?

Burning across the page with more chutzpah than even the most self-entitled, self-appointed student reviewer who ever came before him dared, an unknown “Bob Hill” (surely an alias) managed to both defame the Von Bertouch Gallery and simultaneously praise their current exhibition - by the remarkable Keith Looby. I still love Keith’s art... and I think I did a reasonably good job of identifying his technical achievement and thematic insights. Still, in characterising the Gallery itself as previously having shown “art tech graduate shit chewers” (what the fuck did I just say?), I was lucky not to have been sued, or have the University sued as the publishers of this ludicrous comment.

I suspect the reason I threw the “shit chewers” line in was simply because I couldn’t stand the owner – the very snooty Anne Von Bertouch who was dismissive of anyone that didn’t smell of money or could advance her gallery’s social standing. At openings was fascinating to watch Anne and her mousy little assistant winnow the attendees into potential buyers or just those who liked white wine from a cask and little cubes of cheese with toothpicks in them. Private galleries are businesses first and the Von Bertouch Galleries not only survived, but were a brave cultural outpost in the artistic wilderness that was 1970 Newcastle.

I should have been more grateful for their existence, but since we didn’t censor each other’s work, there wasn’t an adult in our room to shut me up...



*The Von Bertouch Galleries in Cooks Hill
were just over the road from me in Laman Street*



*Anne’s icy stare has now been
immortalised in a sandstone
sculpture near her former gallery*

My film review of Robert Altman’s “MASH” also seems reasonably on-topic for its time ... displaying at least some understanding of Pauline Kael’s strident view on this film as a metaphor for the Vietnam War, though missing its Bechdel Test misogyny. However, from the distance of 55 years (!!) I can only wonder what induced me to prefer Altman’s “brilliant” and “more controlled” studio-originated “That Cold Day in the Park”, over this unruly masterpiece... even with its (now) ‘unwoke’ & sexist male gaze viewpoint. It might have been that I’ve always been sympathetic for wrenching female monologues in films... or that I was just having a very bad day.

be declaiming some sort of existential parable and was therefore pretty impenetrable – which in our books, was all it needed to be. In it went... no questions asked, no editing considered...

A Timothy Leary spillover from page 9 completed the page:

YUK

It had taken Yuk such a long time to get into the group he hung around with that he could hardly recall his former self – sometimes he suspected that he had not previously existed. Even now he did things his friends disliked. A little while ago, when they all went to immerse themselves in the warm comforting darkness of a picture theatre, a womb with a view, he ate his ticket and was not allowed in after interval. There was an unpleasant scene with the usherette, during which he could not find a suitable facial expression. Also, secretly, he was atheist, and prayed infrequently to a vague, soft, good, pinkish-coloured (the tones of sunset) absolute. He effectively concealed this under an atheism which he generally believed and defended at length.

Yuk still spent many hours alone. However, since he had friends these were not painful. Afternoons he would wander city backstreets, following blue white anonymous faces of women into literary cafes – shadowy havens for genteel virginal melancholy. At times he took a sad delight in industrialized nature – a reddish evening sun fragmented by broken windows in a warehouse, a drain whose stinking sluggish reality the moonlight denied. He liked music too, and it

would be fair to say that all his yearning for love, romance, and sensitivity, was concentrated in the beautiful, almost surreal third movement of Beethoven's Ninth. Whenever he approached the rendezvous of his group, a small seedy bar in C street, he marshalled this to the array of defences erected in his brain.

By now Yuk thought he was safe. The right words, reactions and neuroses came easily, and enveloped him in their soft warm strong folds. Now and again, when one of the shades that surrounded him began to assume a personality, he would smile and disappear for a while. However, one day when he was conversing at a small table near the bar Yuk noticed an eccentric figure standing in the pool of yellow light near the billiard table at the far end of the room. His chief impression was of an enormous pair of black framed glasses whose polished uniform plane was slightly marred by an uneven glittering crack in the left lens. The glasses seemed to float above a long coat, and when Yuk moved to buy drinks he glimpsed under the coat two bulbous boots. Through the black cracked leather of one there was a mass of squinting whitish toes.

Yuk and his friends got to know the guy, whose name was Henry. A dreadful speech impediment permitted Henry only rich, inarticulate, but nevertheless continuous mumbles.

Yuk however, began to feel curiously attracted to Henry. He wondered about his independence, his loneliness; he speculated to his friends that he must epitomize absolute isolation – the true condition of

LEARY

... Contd. from P. 9

The characteristics of the psychedelic-spiritual quest are these: it's highly individual, highly personal. You will find no temples, you will find no organized dogmas; you will find instead small groups of people, usually centred on families, making these voyages together. We have discovered, as men have discovered for thousands of years, that the only temple is the human body and the place of worship is the shrine within your own home, prepared and lovingly designed for your spiritual procedure. The growth of LSD use in this country in the last few years is, if I dare say so, a minor miracle in itself. It has grown without any institutional backing or even recognition or approval. For the first three or four years it grew silently, person by person, cell by cell, husband and wife, you and your friends. My cells tell me that that's how everything durable grows. That's how it's always been.

My Nervous System and Yours Is the Hinge Of Evolution

From the genetic point of view, your nervous system and my nervous system is a hinge, a curious cellular hinge on which all of evolutionary history pivots. The cosmic Fox Movietone newsreel camera. Turn your nervous system on and focus it outside and you're tuning in on all sorts of messages and energy constellations that are out there, here and now. But if you focus your nervous system within, you will decode the cellular script and discover that the entire string of evolution on this planet is written in protein molecules inside the nucleus of every cell in your body.

When people talk about research on LSD, I have a little formula I go through in my mind. Talking about LSD is like talking about sex. Now I am not against research on LSD and I am not against research on sex. If some scientists want to hook people up and study the external manifestations of their internal experiences and if some people are willing to be hooked up and be studied by scientists during sexual or psychedelic moments, fine. But the psychedelic experience is an intimate, personal and sacred one. And you, and you, and you, the individual man and woman, are the only one to do this research. And we cannot wait around, dealing with energies which are so insistent and important, until scientists or government agencies tell us that we can take that risk.

STOCKTON FERRY 14

human existence. They nodded approvingly. Henry was not, moreover, without initiative. Yuk was horrified to feel his huge thick index finger scratching the back of his head. When Yuk turned round he saw Henry's eyes, not eyes, like cut up bits of grey jelly fish – were they? – behind grubby cracked glass. Henry moved closer and Yuk smelt a faint odour of molasses and roses.

Slowly Yuk began to be anxious. When he placed his thin body between gritty sheets in his room, and pressed his skin eruptions, a slight pain would ripple through the place where his intestines, glasses worried him most. Windows through which, on happier nights, he had watched the glittering constellations act out their ancient and harmonious patterns assumed the aspect of luminous squares, at times Yuk's solitary walks through the city were interrupted when the pure light at the end of a narrow windy street was momentarily filled by glassed coat and shoes.

Gradually Yuk avoided the bar and even his haunts in the city. Days he spent, huddled in his bed surrounded by bone-like walls – sometimes he thought it was dawn when it was noon for there was nothing outside his window but a white wall which caught the sun at these times – at night the windows stared like inverted eyeballs full of white desert and undifferentiated light. He thought sometimes the wall was moving towards him, carrying its fragments of lichen. Finally, when darkness had again interrupted day in a succession which he no longer bothered to count – (others, however, were calculating meticulously in the vast cancer of civilization – the windows disappeared, Yuk sighed. He must be dead. – Yes, – he was beginning to smell. The ecstasy was interrupted by a silent shattering. A heavy dark man smothered him, body and he could feel cold pressed glass – his eyes were full of glass. Fortunately, however God had made him collapsible, and next morning Henry, who had loved him, awoke with a dreadful drunken pain, and a little heap of sand. Carefully he collected the grains in a jar, which glitters at his thigh as he blindly floats around streets and bars.

O'SULLIVAN.



LEARY

... Contd. from P. 9

is doctor.) If you want to drop out of your non-love game and tune in to life and take some of these questions seriously, you do not have to go on welfare or go around with a begging bowl. The odd thing about our society today is that in the mad lemming-like rush to the urban, anti-love power centres and the mad rush towards mechanical conformity, our fellow citizens are leaving tremendous gaps and gulfs which make economic bartering very simple. For the first thing, consider moving out of the city. You'll find ghost towns empty and deserted three or four hours from San Francisco where people can live in harmony with nature, using their sense organs as 2 billion years of evolution had trained them to.

To make a living these days for a psychedelic person is really quite easy. How? There's one thing that our mechanized society cannot do and that is, delight the senses. Machines can make things go faster and move efficiently, but machine-made objects make no sense to your cells or your senses. Our countrymen are fed up with plastic and starved for direct, natural sensory stimulation. As you begin to drop out, you will find yourself much less reliant on artificial symbols. You will start throwing things out of your house. And you won't need as much mechanical money to buy as many mechanical objects. When you go home tonight, try a psychedelic exercise. Look around your living room and your study and dining room and ask yourself the question which might be asked by a man who lived 3,000 years ago, or a man from another planet: "What sort of a fellow is this who lives in a room like this?" Because the artifacts you surround yourself with are external representations of your state of consciousness.

It's All Going to Work Out All Right

And now, a final word of good cheer, directed especially to those who are concerned about the psychedelic revolution. This revolution has just begun. For every turned-on person today I predict that there will be two or three next year. And I'm not at all embarrassed about making this prophecy because for the last six years Dr Alpert and Dr Metzner and I have been making predictions about the growth of the new race, and we have always been too conservative. Let no one be concerned about the growth and the use of psychedelic chemicals. Trust your young people. You gotta trust your young people. You had better trust your young people. Trust your creative minority. The fact of the matter is that those of us who use LSD wish society well. In our way we are doing what seems best and right to make this a peaceful and happy planet. Be very careful how you treat your creative minority, because if we are crushed, you will end up with a robot society. Trust your smug organs and your nervous system. Your divine body has been around a long long time. Much longer than any of the social games you play. Trust the evolutionary process. It's all going to work out all right.

Timothy Leary

Drop Out into What?

Turn on, tune in, and drop out. I want to be very clear about the term 'drop out'. I don't mean external drop ping out. I certainly don't mean acts of rebellion or irresponsibility to any social situation you are involved in. But I urge any of you who are serious about life, who are serious about your nervous system or your spiritual future, to start right now planning how you can harmoniously, sequentially, lovingly, and gracefully detach yourself from the social commitments to which you are addicted.

Well, what do you do after you drop out? This question was asked. A young man in the audience said, "Well, it's all right for you older, middle-aged fellows to do around lecturing on LSD, what do we young people do?" There's so much you can do that it makes me dizzy to think about it. First of all, if you are serious about his business, you should find a spiritual teacher. Find someone that knows more about consciousness than you and study with him. And if he is a good teacher, he will teach you all he knows and tell you when he cannot teach you any more, and then maybe you can start teaching him or you will both go on your separate ways. But there's a tremendous amount of information which has been stored up for the last 3,000 or 4,000 years by men who have been making this voyage and who have left landmarks, guidebooks, footsteps in the sand, symbols, and rituals which can be learned from and used.

Another thing you can do is to be careful with whom you spend your time. Every human interaction is an incredible confrontation of several levels of consciousness. The average civilized human confrontation is, 'I bring my checkerboard to you, and you bring your checkerboard to me, and we start moving pieces around. If we are cultured and civilized, I will let you make a few moves on your board, and then you will watch me play for a while. If we get very, very intimate and have a deep relationship, we might get to the point where I'll put some of my symbols on your board and you will put some of your symbols on my board.'

Anyone you meet is automatically going to come on to you with a fleet symbol system. And tremendous neurological inertia takes over. There is a conditioned-reflex training which pulls you into the other person's game at the same time that you are pulling him into your game. The more I study the neurology of the psychedelic experience, the more awed and amazed I am at what we do with and to each other's nervous systems.

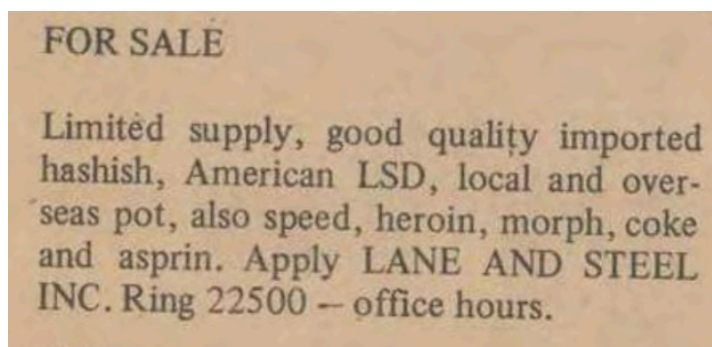
Only a Tiny Bit of You is Policeman

Well, what happens if you drop out and leave school and your jobs? (And by the way, I address here not just the young people, but the researchers and the doctors and the police investigators here in the audience. You know only a tiny bit of you is policeman, only a tiny bit of you

Page 15 – Ads ... and an open invitation to come and kick our heads in:

I suspect that we didn't ever ask the Union Office, or find out by other means if we had any advertising obligations – hence we must have carried over some blocks from previous issues: Only 5 legitimate advertisers appear to be represented, 2 of which we immediately defaced... of course...

But there was also something else: Tucked away in among the inside jokes and messages was a cryptic “ad” for some unusual products and their unusual suppliers:



Lane and Steel were the drug squad cops who shook Jim down during his bust and I believe the phone number we included was real! In those days of rumoured police spies on campus, verbal convictions and “physical policing” (i.e. beatings), we must have been lucky they didn't read the fine print in issue #1 and come looking for us...

**

A note on the 1st edition Artwork:

The little banners and fripperies that adorned (or defaced) the 1st edition pages were mostly the work of all of us – and scratched onto the draft layout pages in Tharunka's offices during the production phase. We knew we had to improve our act for the 2nd edition... and went looking for a proper artist ...

**

Stockton Ferry No 2:

Issue #2: Back to the Tharunka Office

No doubt delighted with ourselves after the 1st issue managed to bewilder the entire campus, we once again rounded up our individual obsessions and clambered back into Max's Corolla with its 4 track cassette system playing Pink Floyd and headed to Sydney and the Tharunka offices; It was still soft rock, but LOUD. I don't think Bernie came with us this time, but he certainly left his footprint on SF #2...

The Soft Machine Takes Over: Jim and Bernie Ascendant...

Record of phone conversation between Professor Godfrey Tanner and Gianni Di Gravio 15 December 1998 11:45am

GDG: Godfrey, what was the "Stockton Ferry"?

GT: It was the renamed OPUS circa 1972-1974. The brainchild of James Beiers (a.k.a. Jimmy)⁹ and his co-editors who were into drug reform. The idea being that readers would be encouraged to take short trips after reading the contents...

University of Newcastle, Living histories

<https://livinghistories.newcastle.edu.au/nodes/view/67703>

Looking out the spaceship window in 2025, even a cursory glance at Stockton Ferry #2 basically supports Godfrey Tanner's opinion that it was a proselytizing vehicle for turning our readers on to LSD ... and supporting drug law reforms. With an overdose of commitments due to my blind lurch into filmmaking and Max's general non-combatant status, Jim and Bernie had quietly taken over the high ground in the magazine's psychedelic direction; It wasn't a declared war or even an argument, more like a subtle swaying of long grass in a spring breeze... as Max and I looked away.

The Cover & Other Art - Enter Ross Kaland...

By the time of the 2nd edition, we had hooked up with a young graphic artist and illustrator named Ross Kaland. Ross was either a Newcastle Art School student¹⁰, or a self-taught freelancer who drifted around the Sydney and Newcastle art scene doing magazine and rock band art & gig posters. Though he has an ad for his services on Page 9 of this edition which gives his contact address as 64 Parry Street, Cooks Hill, I have no memory of how we found him... or how he found us. Still, it only meeting to instantly know he was definitely of our tribe - especially since we had no budget to pay him and he worked for free! Like Jim, Ross was heavily asthmatic and needed constant hits on his puffer – which hadn't prevented him fully embracing a heavy usage of the strongest ganga he could lay his hands on. He may also

⁹ Jim was never known as "Jimmy" in our circle - he was always just "Jim"

¹⁰ *The Gothic Art School building in Hunter Street was an offshoot of the Department of Education, but despite that handicap, it was a hotbed of imaginative and talented artists who either became influential teachers or successful practising artists in their own right - for example, Brad Levido, Garry Jones and David Van Nunen.*

have chain smoked regular cigarettes - which may or may not explain why I can find no trace of him today (my last contact was in the early 1990s).

For the cover of our second issue, probably at the urging of Jim & Bernie, Ross created a 2-page set of squiggles that encompassed both the swirling psychedelic aesthetic of 70s poster art and the clunkily obvious emblems of “the revolution” – namely, peace symbols and LSD motifs and images: Despite Ross’s skill in emulating a popular graphic aesthetic of the time, the less than spectacular result probably wasn’t entirely his fault, since he may have been working under less than lucid instructions. As a hippy styled mission statement, it was on-topic, but as artwork, it was facile - and I hated it!¹¹ Looking through the long end of the binoculars in 2025, it hasn’t improved with time...



Page 3 – the Drug Martyrs Memorial

This was all probably Jim’s work, but Bernie may have had a hand in it too: Janis Joplin (who died of a heroin overdose shortly before we started laying the issue out) was dropped into the top left-hand corner with a wreath of floral squiggles as a tribute to her recent (absurd) death. A peace symbol, (of all things) went onto the right-hand side – probably to balance out the graphics.

The scroll containing the late Brian Jones’s supposed epitaph is as dodgy as its attribution to Mick Jagger. The actual inscription seems to have been floating around as a twee memento mori since the early 1800s... before it was repurposed by the Rolling Stones on an inner sleeve of their 1969 “Through A Glass Darkly” album. The Stones, forever guilty over their cutting Brian loose prior to his apparent drug addled death in 1968¹², probably felt they had

¹¹ In Ross’s defence, he also embedded a sort of cryptic message into his cover artwork that taking LSD was... well, mindlessly dumb & confusing!

¹² Although Brian Jones was probably high as kite when he was discovered drowned in his swimming pool, recent investigation suggests he was murdered by a builder: <https://www.nme.com/news/music/fresh-evidence-rolling-stones-brian-jones-murder-new-netflix-documentary-2533208>

to publicly acknowledge his passing: The free 'Concert for Brian' the Stones staged in London's Hyde Park featured the release of a flock of white doves whilst Mick Jagger recited "a bit of Shelley..." is beyond cringeworthy – even for Mick Jagger!

The irony of memorialising two notorious drug affected deaths while actively promoting an alternative drug usage seems to have escaped our scrutiny. Critical self-awareness wasn't a KPI of the Stockton Ferry...

And, of course, we again stripped in our own images, simply to remind our readers of just **how important we were...** and how much we resembled a rock band:

Putting the Stockton Ferry back together -1970

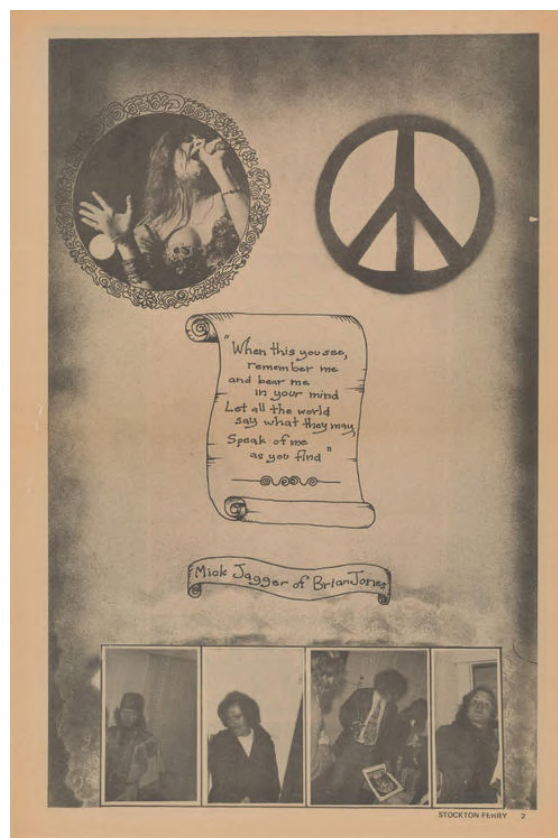


Bernie

Max

Bob (hiding)¹³

Jim



¹³ This is the probably the only cigarette I ever attempted to smoke... and I had to be photographed holding it with a glass of wine! A control freak, of all the Stockton Ferry crew, I was the least likely to imbibe mood-altering substances – especially tobacco. BTW, I still have that tie!

Page 3: "Blue Cheer" - Bernie Swallows the Universe

We were in Peak 1970 – and you really had to be there!

In this (anonymous) essay, Bernie performs the high-minded and selfless act of road testing a pharmaceutical product that had recently hit the market – the eponymously labelled "Blue Cheer" LSD. (The Illustrations are by Ross K.)



BLUE CHEER

If you don't know already (I hope you do), BLUE CHEER is a fairly current device used for turning on. Like its predecessors (Strawberry Fields, Lilac Mist, Golden Sunshine) it is an easy pill to swallow, achieving the aforesaid purpose in a rather admirable and efficient way. The following raw is a description of my first trip with this particular brand. It must be said that the ecstasy is one thing, my interpretation of it another, the latter being subject to my personal attitudes and ideas. The experience itself is wordless, indescribable. Any description tends to be a coat of gloss rather than the thing itself. To do the L.S.D. experience justice verbally is the task of the poet. I have done what I can to describe my trip and hope it will be of interest to somebody. I bothered to write this limited yet small way at least the misleading and one-sided bullshit propagated by the Establishment.

There is only one valid way to find out about acid. I would urge anyone who doesn't think he can handle it not to take it. Otherwise go ahead. It may be worth it.

Simon and I dropped the tiny five-sided pills about an hour after the sun had set. By the time we had shared a few hash joints with our friends we were really flying. The acid was very strong, very fast. The walls of my mind began to loosen and dissolve almost immediately. What seems to happen is a reduction or relaxation of the limitations normally imposed on perception by the cortex of the brain. A curtain was being drawn aside, allowing me the pleasant spectacular of religious visions, often misnamed "hallucinations".

The "outside physical world" started to lose its apparent solidity. Everything was melting, transparent. The walls of the room breathed a beautiful chameleon mosaic of intricate spinning mandalas and bursts of sunflower. The world, including me, was no longer composed of separate solidities. It was, until I'd an exquisite display of energy, light, consciousness, an endless tune with infinite variations. This joyous dance of energy assumed each pattern or definition only momentarily. My body, another pattern which the dancing life process assumes momentarily is vibrating, full of light. My spine is the centre or base of the universe. The super-awareness induced by L.S.D. is the highest state of yogic meditation, when the distinction between knower and known simply disappears. Self and the world are experienced as ONE. The sensation that the outside world is actually inside my brain, a function of my nervous system, is common for me behind acid. So called "inanimate" things are a part of my larger self, and share my life.

This feeling of oneness with the physical world accompanies a rather drastic reduction of ego-feeling. This relaxation or "death" of the ego can be quite a scare. The ecstasy and eye-delight are preceded by a moment of terror in which the ego tries desperately to hold itself together, to cling to itself. This moment is extended and intensified if one does not let go the ego sensation. Letting go the ego is like having a good shit, in more ways than one. It is not something one "does" but something that happens. The less resistance to ego-loss, the less of a grind. Clinging to the ego is an attempt (a strange one) to reduce the ecstasy potential of the brain. Since the acid often forces ego-loss anyway, it is better to "turn off your mind, relax and float downstream". Resistance = bad trip.

Simon and I had swallowed this time was really strong. My head seemed to contain all space. My mind was like a blank screen, not blank in a dead sense, but totally receptive and highly open to suggestion. When the mind is thus expanded, boundaries imposed by logic, selectivity and common-sense are often dissolved. This is why it is important to be in a good place (preferably nature) as well as to feel good before tripping out. Things around you can set off a series of suggestions extending into your personal past and beyond. Acid really broadens your view of the world. The music that you are listening to is a key to the past. Increased suggestibility behind acid can be dangerous as well as joyful. A tiny thought or object, may elicit latent paranoid ideas as well as ecstatic memories. The way music can bend the turned on mind is just incredible. The void inside my head received musical notes as if they had some physical shape, like a balloon being blown up under water. The music directs the flow of consciousness; the patterns which consciousness assumes change according to the sounds. In fact the distinction between you and the music largely disappears, and the feeling is rather that you are the music.

The sound we heard that night plunged me into a black mass. I had read some weird articles a few days before about acid freaks on the black magic scene in California. The way some people use L.S.D. scares me a bit. As I have already said, the drug is a sacrament. To use it without this in mind, without spiritual purpose or without some form of ritual, is to invite problems and confusion. Taking L.S.D. regularly is a discipline, requiring preparation (diet, exercise, meditation) as well as a certain amount of philosophical understanding. Eastern wisdom, crystallized in the philosophy of Yoga, provides very appropriate guidance for the L.S.D. user. As well as giving direct instructions regarding preparation, Yoga gives him a structure which he might find relevant in interpreting his trip. I myself find this approach, which is certainly not the only one, quite rewarding.

Anyway, the article I had read was one to be taken with a grain of salt, but is left a dark aftertaste. The moods of death and insanity on "Electric Music for Mind and Body" by Country Joe and the Fish set me off in a weird direction. The "Fire" album by the Crazy World of Arthur Brown further intensified my awareness of something sinister. I was really tripped out. The people around and myself were pillars of energy, and I seemed to perceive electrical auras around everything. The sinister feelings reached a peak during the Electric Prunes' "Mass in G minor" when I actually felt the prince of darkness himself enter the room. I suddenly realised that I had been brought unaware into a coven to be initiated into the left hand party by my friends, secret witches. Noel looked just like a male witch I had seen pictured in the magazine, but Anna was hard to see as a witch, eight months pregnant, her face childlike, innocent. At this state I could believe anything. It all added up somehow. At one stage I was quite terrified. I eventually let go this paranoia about my friends, but Satan's visit tinged my whole trip. When I went outside to have a piss, the trees were full of strange noises, bats and ravens ready to swoop. Like when I was young and frightened at night by a communist or an Indian behind the frangipani tree, ready to get me in the back. I hurried inside. A simple thought can go a long way when the brain cells are supercharged with energy. Yet in the back of my mind I was unafraid. This part of my trip was actually quite amusing, even at the time. I smiled at my paranoia. I knew it was the play of my inspired imagination upon cues in the music.

I don't know what sort of trip Simon was having. For hours he lay sprawled across the bed on his back, like a murdered Jew. He was really far out. The others were starting to go to bed. I went outside for a walk. The stars were exploding, floating in a web-like jelly of space. Stars glimmered which were usually too far away to even see. The sky was a breathing fireworks arabesque. The surface of the water was oily and black: I could see every ripple for miles. The world was still inside my head, its substance was mind. My eyes melted to nature's softness. She was so delicately beautiful, a subtle enchantress. I had to show the others. Simon was still lost in his head. My girlfriend came with me to the water's edge. It was so eternal, the water, a still source. Rooters crowded, I played a little tune to the universe on my flute. Peace. Then suddenly a flash of paranoia. Simon was going to push me over the cliff. Perhaps he was possessed. The paranoia disappeared when I looked at him. I felt full of love again. He was so mindless, so serene.

When I finally got to bed things were still happening visually. The carpet was all soft explosions and writhing landscapes. My girl was waiting. L.S.D. is the greatest aphrodisiac yet invented. (Not the sort to give the unwilling, but the sort lovers might use together to increase their pleasure.) Sensory awareness was intensified a thousandfold, making our embrace almost too wonderful to bear. There was lovely, uniquely herself, yet all woman seemed to flash through her cells. Her skin was so much soft and transparent I seemed to melt into her. Making love was not so much an act as it "happened". Ego-feeling was still pretty weak in my case and I didn't feel that I was an agent apart from the act but was rather the act itself. The orgasm as a destination was no longer relevant. Making love was a continuous orgasm, an exquisite molecular embrace, lasting centuries. As well as being a supreme personal communication, it was the cosmic fuck of Shiva and his Shakti. I was flying sky, she the rich moist earth: our union, a mutual sunburst, was too beautiful and meaningful to describe. We were both really happy as we drifted off to sleep.

Like any highly qualified motoring writer testing a hot new vehicle, Bernie identified rival models on the market, (Strawberry Fields, Lilac Mist, Golden Sunshine), then helpfully explains that his 'review' of this new sports model, Blue Cheer, is made from an entirely subjective viewpoint – i.e. his!

The following rave is a description of my first trip with this particular brand. It must be said that the ecstasy is one thing, my interpretation of it another, the latter being subject to my personal attitudes and ideas. The experience itself is wordless, indescribable. Any description tends to be a coat of gloss rather than the thing itself. To do the L.S.D, experience justice verbally is the task of the poet.

Naturally, he was just that poet...

Meanwhile, in a similar fashion to a Purdue Pharma marketing team drafting fine print warning on an Oxycontin packet, he also urges a newcomer on the acid highway to proceed with caution...

Increased suggestibility behind acid can be dangerous as we as joyful. A tiny thought or object, may elicit latent paranoidias as well as ecstatic memories.

The remainder of the article is a diary of his first-person experience of 'tripping out' on Blue Cheer... which takes him into ecstatic astral regions...

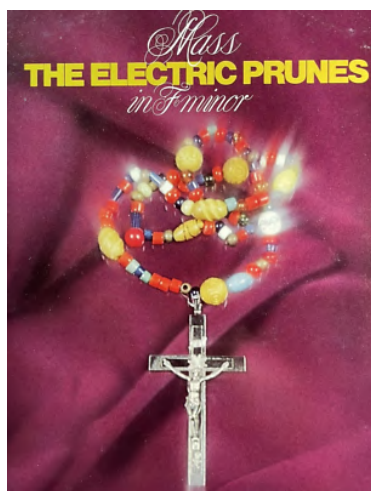
Back to the scene of the crime. For about an hour, normal time, my body bathed in the pure state of being - awareness - bliss

... and a few dark places... possibly due the mental laxative effect of listening to The Electric Prunes whilst tripping...

I was really tripped out. The people around and myself were pillars of energy and I seemed to perceive electrical auras around everything. Sinister feelings reached a peak during the Electric Prunes "Mass in G minor"¹⁴

And of course the Devil himself soon turns up...

...when I actually felt the prince of darkness himself enter the room!



... aural laxative

¹⁴ "Mass in G Minor" is a famous 1921 choral work by Ralph Vaughan Williams: The Prunes album is actually named "Mass in E Minor" and was reportedly created in a studio without any of the Prunes members playing - since none of them could play classical music.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_h5w9jjDtw ... think "Spinal Tap" when listening!

... at this state I could believe anything. It all added up somehow. At one stage I was quite terrified. I eventually let go this paranoia about my friends, but Satan's visit tinged my whole trip. When I went outside to have a piss, the trees were full of strange noises, bats and ravens ready to swoop...

However, it all ends happily with his **Earth Mother** waiting for him in pliant male fantasy mode to create astral congress – where just-plain-fucking-whilst-stoned becomes a mystical enlightenment equivalent to 7 chakra levels of merged spiritual consciousness - as defined by the Hindu Gods Shiva and Shakti, (of course)...

When I finally got to bed things were still happening visually. The carpet was all soft explosions and writhing landscapes. My girl was waiting. L.S.D. is the greatest aphrodisiac yet invented. (Not the sort to give the unwilling, but the sort lovers might use together to increase their pleasure). Sensory awareness was intensified a thousandfold, making our embrace almost too wonderful to bear. Therese was lovely, uniquely herself, yet all woman seemed to flash through her cells. Her skin was so much soft and transparent I seemed to melt into her. Making love was not so much an act as it "happened". Ego-feeling was still pretty weak in my case and I didn't feel that I was an agent apart from the act but was rather the act itself. The orgasm as a destination was no longer relevant. Making love was a continuous orgasm, an exquisite molecular embrace, lasting centuries. As well as being a supreme personal communication, it was the cosmic fuck of Shiva and his Shakti.¹⁵



Blue Cheer brought me here - Shiva & Shakti

As an astral tour guide's journal, this was all rather cornball but compared to similar 'investigations' into the acid experience written at this time¹⁶, Bernie's "Blue Cheer" diary was as informative as the Rosetta Stone and the Dead Sea Scrolls rolled into one. For example, 'Popular Science', a sort of layman's version of ... err, (non) peer-reviewed popular science ... produced this article in 1967, possibly when Sandoz acid tabs were still readily obtainable by legitimate laboratories that were populated by tripped out lab technicians revelling in the last glory days before their indulgences were more closely monitored by humourless authorities...

¹⁵ *"An exquisite molecular embrace, lasting centuries"! Wow – what more could you ask for from a drug?*

¹⁶ *Full article now helpfully laminated and available, in full, on eBay – <https://www.ebay.com/itm/365472647607>*

Hoping for the worst, we were again disappointed by a deafening silence from our intended audience! Either they didn't read it ... or saw nothing abnormal in its narrative. Either prospect was equally disturbing...

Page 6: Godfrey Confuses Us With His Eloquence...

GODFREY

- Another Life

RULE BY REFERENDUM
FOR AND AGAINST PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY
- by Godfrey Tanner

Plus a note about the possibility of consensus.

Since 1961 the notion of the "democracy of the streets" has become a fashionable interest. But the modern reaction against representative institutions is no novelty. It is a return, in one sense, to deeper ideals of democracy found in earlier, less politicized societies. In the past, the village community of modern India has been well described by a meeting of the old men, the most respectable figures in each household. Roman tradition tells that the Senate in earliest times was a similar group of the heads of the free household families, and the British settlement, like the American one, made up of all the most notable men of each district, who voted by show. As with modern electoral devices, the division made it possible for a minority of voters who joined a narrow "yes" group to dictate the policy of the whole. In the American case, the "yes" party who had landhold support in the other Southern States. Early States had few Kings or nobles and checks upon such officers. Like early Rome, the Greek state had a Senate (Gerousia) which acted as a body like the Councils which were called the Areopagus and simply voted "yes" or "no" on the issues. The assembly of wise men who were called by show or by referendum. The possibility of a referendum in the days of Alexander the Great still existed in Rome to choose a new King in the way. Participatory Democracy might mean any one of these things.

However, the problem of participation increases as nations grow larger and communities more populous. It is further complicated by the attachment of governmental activity into areas once left to the private citizen's discretion, and the consequent employment of a high proportion of citizens on the state payroll. One hundred years ago a General Election could be fought on a single issue like House Bills, the Reform Bill, or Welsh Disfranchisement, etc. In this century, however, Education, Secondary Education, and so on, are now areas in which they must take decisions that it is impossible to fight elections on particular issues. The election can do no more than choose between two party packages deal. Here the more radical the Liberal party's election policy and yet had found to support in rural policy, in Britain he may approve of the Conservative Government's Foreign policy but feel violent hostility to its plan for communal land-cutting; he may be glad to promote active schooling yet be alarmed at the Common Market plan. To vote against a government is a vote to usually a radical one, but at the price of implementing several unpopular policies to which one is usually instinctively hostile. This tends to take Governments to extreme policies, whose change will prove so inconvenient it is less asked to get up with the status quo.

What is intended democracy in modern times is really a party election system. Power is held fully primarily by a certain number of representatives of the capitalist system and a group of permanent heads of Public Service Departments. Also power is held some temporarily by a certain number of elected representatives and local associations. This representative government really means that each citizen may share in choosing the temporary officials, and that the permanent officials are appointed not necessarily primarily to the government. The issue complex the machinery of the given state, the law that becomes either the subordination or the choice. Temporary rules cannot control entrenched activities or institutional vested interests. Elections can do no more than make the best of candidates pre-selected by party organizations to whose package deals they have pledged themselves to support. Seldom can citizens either choose a government or choose a government to support a chosen issue by voting.

Then the demand for legislation by referendum represents an attempt to create a genuine democracy in place of the present representative oligarchy and by either to permit the citizens to share in state decisions. However, it should not be assumed that such a constitution would prove either liberal or laissez-faire. The British public, settled the issue of abolition of hanging and capital execution in whole by referendum by referendum we may feel confident, from Public Opinion, that all these would have been readily rejected - especially if Australian-style obligatory voting were also introduced for such subjects. Here in this country nearly all referendum proposals have been rejected. It seems all but certain that government by referendum would stabilize and perpetuate every ill-fated tradition and produce the opposite of the original and creative by the final, vital and innovative majority.

A further proposal is not democracy, whose drawbacks are as great as those of oligarchy, but rather anarchy. There is often a real conflict between the law or customs of society and the conscience of the individual, but eventually the society prevails. Liberty and enlightenment have gradually defined and established limited areas where the individual is held to be of greater value than society - often areas as Labour, respect, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, that support the conscience to be proved while more common. In that event we have an anarchy. Of course this anarchy would prove as objectionable as total control. Can the two states be reconciled? It is possible that a system of co-operative or confederate states might provide a stable and allow some to enjoy society and community at the same time.

One may venture to suggest that the legal community should be a combination of voluntary societies based on consensual contracts. One might imagine that most Associations would like to go on being in their particular consensual activities and relationships. By signing the appropriate consensual contract they can do so and be given legal force for the purpose. Similar action is possible in those who wish to form a society living by law, a social society, a post-membership society, a contractual society, and so on. Necessarily consensual decisions and confederate legislation would be done by referendum. Certain topics would require qualified propositions of the whole community in other areas of life each society would act like an old Roman clan and conduct its internal referendum. The past legislation would then need a majority of the registered societies within the Australian community to have given their consent. Such a system might blend nicely with the community and give a more democratic form to internal legislation while leaving much to the internal laws of the consensual groups. Though the possibility of such groups as had several members would be leading, persons could leave the particular society after paying them, or at any time when free of obligation within the particular contract, by the simple act of signing a declaration of consent to this contract and act of consent to another society's contract.

For the undergraduate this issue is an urgent one. To an increasing extent students come and conduct some studies criticism from outside taxpayers who bear almost all the cost of modern Universities. To some extent the University is such a consensual contract, voluntary society as we have described. Membership gives various rights by self-determination both for the staff and the students. Traditionally the police force and the psychological pressure of outside life are both kept off the campus as far as possible. Like other voluntary societies, universities always need self-criticism and reform, and a member of the assumed base for internal decisions may need changing now, but in a voluntary society it is vitally important that provision, review and opinion be the focus towards change. If the University is a consensual society, defence of the consensual contract is legislation to reorganize from the society. Violent dissent and violent obstruction has been aimed at closing the University as a first step to destroying the structure of the community.

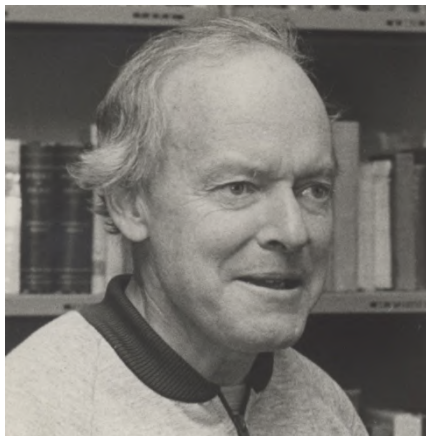
In fact this is a suitable policy. Universities are slaves of the overbearing capitalist society rather than members of it. A law community based on consensual contracts can be developed by planned state events. It cannot be established by state action, which will achieve no more than granting economic weakness. The abolition of student and objective dissent on Campus an abolition of outside life more daring resistance by hostile opinion that are abolished. One may doubt whether student protest action outside will ever produce desirable change, but even those who feel that it will, must remember that if they apply their intelligence on campus they will simply work, but be made available for the overall open society which they crave.

The re-organizing of national communities into consensual contract societies or communities would remove the largest element in political tension, the clash of socialist and capitalist aims. Executives and workers who like the security of capitalism and enjoy to accept its risks will lead in the majority society which will come on the present Australian way of life. Executives, technicians and skilled workers, who desire to join a socialist society can also do this after contracting out of the present system and signing a different contract. Land resources for such a socialist group and for other dissenting bodies can be provided by allocation of Crown Land and by expatriating some classes of foreign-owned industries and certain types of foreign investment in land. Some proportion of the debt incurred for payment of compensation might be accepted by the productive society to which the asset was to be sold, but it would be unwise to attribute it a debt of this kind whilst land was held by a non-profit society living by law, instead of fighting the control of state actions, every viable way of life would find its own fulfillment within every nation as a free consensual society.

Legal problems would make it difficult to launch such a social reform by private legislation. Admittedly each self-governing societies and economies might possibly be set up under the new voluntary Companies Act or under the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. However such bodies would lack any immunity from the general statute law and would be subject to the courts and police force in all matters provided by legislation which is now in force in the States and Commonwealth. Better provided perhaps it is to be found in the first use of Consensual Contract in this country - its use by Bishop Short of Adelaide to create a society of self-governance for his Diocese when he found that his Letters Patent as Bishop and the Royal Injunction over the Church of England were ruled by the Privy Council not to be applicable to the Colonies. In October 1855 a synodical compact was ratified by a diocesan assembly and the first synod met under the self-governed constitution of Consensual Contract on April 1856. It was, to quote Goodhue's History of the Church in

STOCKTON FERRY 6

Max, in his capacity as our Senior Oracle (and both a Classics and English Literature student), managed to commission two articles from our favourite campus academics - Godfrey Tanner and Norman Talbot.



Godfrey - Univ of Newcastle Living Histories

In this complex article, Godfrey, our colourful and flamboyant Professor of Classics, contrasts Greek democracy and its shouting mobs ... to our present-day democratic system, where, at the time of his writing it, not a single referendum had yet been passed by the Australian people¹⁹. In analysing this conundrum, he also manages to predict the onset of a Putin/Trump future where citizen electors vote for whom they think are temporary oligarchs ... in the misconception they are voting for renewable democratic representation:

What is miscalled democracy in modern times is really a partly elective oligarchy. Power is held fairly permanently by a certain number of key executives of the capitalist system and a group of permanent heads of the public service...

Overall, though it's difficult to determine Godfrey's point, the basic gist seems to be that a powerful elite generally prevail over a "patrilineal, monogamous acquisitive and nationalistic society"... and even if universities manage to enjoy a little more freedom from this societal pressure, they also act within a framework of external consent that can be easily suppressed or taken away by the oligarchs. By extension, if groups such as nudists, homosexuals, barter economies etc wished to live outside the approved zones in self-governing socialist societies, they would need to find legal ways to do so - and which the oligarchs are unlikely to allow.

Or something like that...

This was way over the heads of most of our readers, or just plain too much like the lectures they wished to forget when reading our exciting counter cultural manifesto - though we were grateful for his submission which lent us intellectual street cred, if nothing else.

From the vantagepoint of 55 years down the track, it's not hard to see how we totally missed a golden opportunity here: Instead of publishing Godfrey's convoluted discourse on comparative democracies, we should really have asked him to write an article on the far more immediate cause of the Gay Rights movement and his suggestions for legal reforms...

Since Godfrey was the most Out person any of us had ever encountered, we were fully aware that not only was he out and proud decades before it was safe to do so, he also used his position as a dignified High Church Anglican to publicly lobby the Anglican synod (very) loudly for a Church sanctified union for homosexuals - that is marriage! You can only imagine how this went down in the early 1970s, years before the street marches and legal challenges that came much later. As for Stockton Ferry, Gay Rights issues weren't on our radar, and far

¹⁹ *The original article may have been written before 1967 - when a referendum on giving the vote to aboriginal people was passed. It was the first time Australia had voted "Yes".*

from being in the vanguard of all major cultural and societal movements, we had a total blind spot regarding LGBTQ+ issues - and, to make it worse, we didn't even realise it!

Godfrey's obituary in the Sydney Morning Herald, 2002, recorded this momentous event:

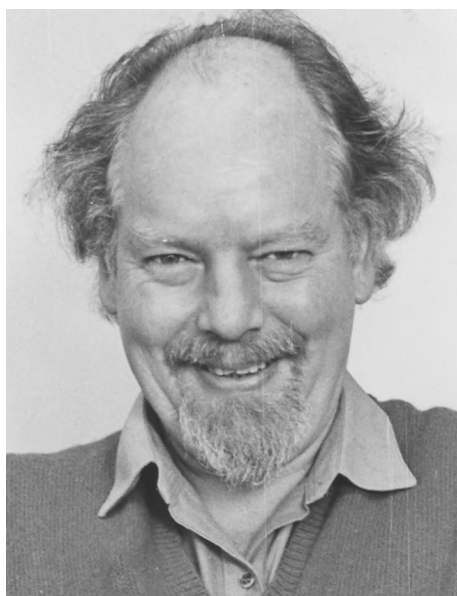
Godfrey was a Christian, a believer in salvation and religious tradition, and although his open homosexuality made him an unlikely lay official of the Anglican Church, he was a long-standing member of the synod. He made headlines as a synod member in 1970, when, concerned about the "alarming rate" at which young people of all persuasions were choosing to live together without the church's blessing, Godfrey suggested the church recognise unorthodox cohabitations, including homosexual unions, and consider giving its blessing to "trial marriages" for under-21s.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/charming-beast-taught-old-to-young-20020914-gdfmrq.html>

55 years later, I'm embarrassed at our LGBTQ+ ignorance... and how we missed this opportunity.

Page 7: Norman

Presenting a burly outline akin to Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII, topped off with a satyr's face and a clipped Yorkshire accent, Norman Talbot was both a poet and scholar ... who inspired many of us with his love of English poetry and an obvious bonvivant's lust for life²⁰:



In between regular bouts of getting plastered in the Bar of the newly opened University Staff Club and then giving insightful lectures on the Romantic Poets in the cavernous B101 theatre, Norman knocked up the most eloquent contribution to either issue of Stockton Ferry - "The Stranger Songs".

Writing from the perspective of his being "a good poet in a country not over endowed with them" (he was right), Norman boldly states that "most poetry published on the page is not

²⁰ *In my first Newcastle share house in (Laman Street), one of my flatmates was the woman who was the mother of two of Norman's children - who now lived with her ex-husband. Norman had a complicated private life, to put it mildly...*

very good, very important or even very interesting..." (He's right again) ... and that "the lyrics of many pop songs are considerably better, more important and more interesting." (Yes!)

He goes on to suggest that the lyrics of popular songs from the 40's and 50's are unmemorable and that save for a few folk songs, most (English language) song lyrics "before the Beatles" were just bad poetry.

Norman begins his argument for the best of contemporary music to be considered as poetry by quoting no less an authority than renowned poet Thom Gunn, ("Mr Plath" to his feminist critics), who in 1967, (i.e. even before the best of the Stones and Beatles songs had come out), had commented in *The Listener* that both the Stones and the Beatles...

*...were producing excellent poems - better in fact than
many that get printed in books and magazines*

This sort of discussion was exactly what Stockton Ferry was on about - being literary, analytical and wholeheartedly endorsing the music that we Boomers listened to and drew a inspiration from. In other words, Norman was declaring that he was one of us... and what was inspiring our generation had real value.

However, before we got too excited, Norman then proceeded to gently slap down any perception that even the most seemingly drug referenced songs, were actually not about drugs at all: For example, he claims "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds" was inspired by a painting by John Lennon's kindergarten classmate, Lucy... and that Donovan's "Sunshine Superman" reveals in its lyrics that Donovan decides to stay straight to woo his girlfriend:

*Could've tripped out easy
But I've changed my ways*

Norman then discusses the meanings of various music lyrics as he works his way across a range of songwriters such as Dylan, Leonard Cohen, the wonderful Joni Mitchell and even Judy Collins and Phil Ochs... to examine their lyric complexity as examples of highly sophisticated poetic texts. With rare insight for a middle-aged poet at a provincial university, he also identifies the great (underappreciated) Laura Nyro as "possibly the best black poet we have"; in doing so, Norman was flexing his cultural hipster rating way beyond whatever we had presumed it was... and we were delighted and grateful that he came to our party.

THE STRANGER SONGS

An article by our own Norman Talbot.

The Stranger Songs

I write this in the full consciousness of being a good poet in a country not over-endowed with them; as much in sorrow as in anger; after years of earnest scanning of magazines, anthologies and the like; after considerable contact with poets of all ages and all levels of expertise. The stimulus is simply my recognition that most "poetry" published on the page is not very good, very important or even very interesting. That's no unusual complaint; I know, but in this case it can be set off against a major fact in the surroundings of the poets responsible — the lyrics of many pop songs are considerably better, more important and more interesting. This is certainly unusual.

Can you imagine an anthology of the lyrics of popular songs of the forties or fifties? Can you remember what the verbal (as well as the musical) idiom of the pop song was like before the Beatles? Of course there were good things — some lifted from Blues or Folk song idioms, some related to musical comedy or vaudeville or musical hall — and some were well presented — by Ella Fitzgerald or Peggy Lee, Eckstein or Torme, for example — but when I grew up and started moving my ears the bulk of the stuff was incredibly bad. Snobs about pop songs were snobs, but they were right.

All this applies to the English-speaking countries (possibly excluding Canada because of the French-Canadian influence), though not, say, to France. There Aragon or Prévert, Cocteau or Sartre might provide lyrics which a pop or nightclub singer performs as a "hit", which surprises neither the poet nor anyone else. Why, then, was it so in the USA, Britain and Australia? It is not the lack of good lyric poets (Dickinson, Cummings, Roethlisger — Yeats, De la Mare, Auden, Thomas — Neilson). It is not the lack of good musicians of the right kinds (Mingus, Coltrane, Ives, Copeland — "Warlock", Williams, Britten — Grainger). It is certainly not any feebleness in the British lyric tradition common to these countries (going back through "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", Kubla Khan, and Songs of Innocence and of Experience to the Elizabethan lutanists, Shakespeare and the Border Balladists). It may be that William Carlos Williams was right when he said of *The Waste Land* that Eliot "gave the poem back to the academics", but Eliot isn't that important (except to academics), or that Morris was right when he said that repetitive, joyless factory labour killed the song in the folk — for whatever reason, singing had somehow become a sign of moral irresponsibility or intellectual flaccidity by the thirties. The critics thought so (whether "New Critics" or contributors to *Scrutiny* or correspondents of the *New Statesman*), and the poets slipped away, blushing uncontrollably.

Now songs are the oldest and deepest reservoir of poetic vitality and delight — few people hum epics to themselves or bellow prose narratives to the moon of a drunken three o'clock morning (these things have their place, but it's not a place we'd go to very often) — therefore this situation couldn't remain. There is no culture, no town, no family, without nursery-rhymes — even if the child has to make them himself — and these embrace our earliest art-version of love and of fear, of belonging and alienation, laughter and unease, what is and what (somehow) might be.

That is why we apply, we socialise. As we grow up, lyrics are for skipping or kissing to, for choosing who's it, for jeering and consoling with. Then, after puberty, the popular songs take over; they inherit both the socialised consciousness of rather frightened and excited teenage groups and the secret words of individual, sensitive and under-equipped human beings. Therefore the tasks and possibilities of these songs are and should be major. Nonetheless, one of the most eloquent weapons of this sort of lyric is humour, and another — by definition — lyricism. In other words, the ironic discrepancies of the world of experience must coexist with the "naive" confidence and affection of the child.

The sixties give us groups and individual singers that could do all this and more. Thom Gunn, who should know about the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary poetry as well as most, said in 1967 (before some of the best of the Beatles' lyrics had appeared) that both Beatles and Stones were producing "excellent poems — better in fact than many that get printed in books and magazines." This is even more true of lyrics since that time, and especially if we include those from North America. I shall quote Thom Gunn later, but can't give a scholarly citation except that he wrote in *The Listener* (I can't find it again and quote from Ken Quinell's article, "Lost in the Mood of Change", *Poetry Magazine* 3, 1969; he probably made no mistakes in his quotation).

I am at the moment reading two collections of lyrics from songs of the last few years, and clearly such books presuppose the merit of the lyrics as poems in their own right. This is not to say that lyrics do not need the music or that the music is subsidiary. In some cases (the Stones, and I think the Band) the words are virtually a decoration for the music; in other cases the music is primarily decorative, although it can suggest or qualify a mood (this seems sometimes the case with Dylan and Cohen). There are also special cases where the lyric possibilities are less conspicuous in work descended from Talking Blues (Arlo Guthrie is a clear example), and this sort of "semi-lyric" relates in turn to some Beat poetry and to the poems of the self-styled "Incredible New Liverpool Scene". Another sub-species might be the "contemporary folk", especially Protest songs by Malina Reynolds, Pete Seeger and so on. However, all these examples, it should be remembered, are shading into the central mode to which is my present concern, a mode of poetry close to music, interwoven with music, able to be remembered, able to give delight, able to be remembered and sung, and most of all able to sing to a generation as the orthodox poets rarely do. To make a poem requires an intricate series of transfers and contracts between poet, poem and audience, and such masters as Dylan, Cohen, Donovan and the

Beatles do this with audiences of millions and at millions of levels of intimacy and awareness according to their individual listeners or groups of listeners.

Many poets (orthodox) complain of their tiny audience. Well, the songmen and songwomen have their troubles too. The level of "accompaniment" on the juke-box, whatever care they have taken in the studio, will probably mask or mangle significant words; there are moneyed thieves who buy the rights and hire mediocrities to "rearrange" and pervert that crucial relation between words and music; there is the constant irony that everybody liked it and nobody listened (fortunately this is often not quite true); there is the transitory nature of pop fashions, there is the snobbish contempt or (at best) indifference of the academic literary critic, the periodical music or poetry critic, and even sometimes the poet; most of all there is the persistent guilt-by-association which rejects the poems because of the existence of long hair, drugs, contraception, Viet Nam protest, Yoga, flying saucers, Atlantis or whatever the older generation happens to be most hung up on at the time. Spiro Agnew, who is said to be Vice-President of the USA, joined the chorus of incompetent literary critics yesterday (15th September) when he claimed it was "pointed out" (i.e. as a positive fact) that "With a Little Help from my Friends" was about the drug "friends" Speed, Benny and the like. Now this may be gratifying to Spiro and to the drug-wedded adolescents who want to believe that Ringo's on their side, but the song clearly states that the "friends" are the rest of the group, setting a song for him which he's able to sing — as he put it —

You know I'm not very good at singing because I haven't got a great range. So they write songs for me that are pretty low and not too hard.

This brings me to one of the crucial obstacles to a proper reading of these lyrics, the drug scene. Mostly, it's not relevant, but those on the lookout can often convince themselves that say, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" is about LSD. In this case they look for one commercially successful mass-produced imaginative breakthrough (if that's what some drugs are to some people) where they should see a timeless reordering of vision (based, Paul says, on Julian Lennon's title for his kindergarten painting of his schoolmate Lucy) unlikely to be marketable in guaranteed quantities, ever. However, there are some songs, like Donovan's *Sunshine Superman*, which specifically evokes drug-idioms; even here, though, the drugs are a metaphor of the translation of the singer and his love to a higher plane of reality rather than as an assertion that drugs are the way there — the way there is love:

Could've tripped out easy
But I've changed my ways.
It'll take time, I know it,
But in a while,
You're gonna be mine, I know it,
We'll do it in style ...
I'll pick up your hand and slowly
blow your little mind.

not by showing her full of acid, one gathers — there are better tricks "in the book". I have heard people who pretend to be fascinated by the lyrics of Joni Mitchell (one of the youngest and best on the scene) claim that "Michael" in "Michael from Mountains" is Marijuana — how insensitive can you get? Admittedly, there are songs that specifically refer to and advocate drugs as a way to either a higher or a richer being, but not many, and certainly not many of importance. If drugs are to be added to the list of great breakthrough experiences, if "getting high" means what it should mean, there's no reason why singers who've experienced this shouldn't sing about it. Fortunately Pentacostal, mystical and inspirational experiences are more interesting to most of these poets, and drugs are well behind wine, women for men, as the case may be) and song as earthly or vehicular experiences; otherwise, the drug-traffickers would have the greatest PRO operation on earth (outside war-traffic) ...

The sort of poetry in these lyrics needs comment, of course. It varies — no one mistakes Judy Collins for Bob Dylan or Leonard Cohen for the Beatles — but some generalisations are obvious. Leadbelly and Guthrie, Elvis and Holly notwithstanding, the new thing about the new poetry is its strong sense of context and its surrealistic evocation of that context. Elvis' *Heartbreak Hotel* is an example of the prototype style, defining a world created by an emotional state, controlled by its own laws and referring back constantly through the presentation to the singer's state as our world continually refers back to its Creator (if you believe in a Creator). The world is "Elinor Rigby" is our own urban world, but described with a barrenness which is itself evocative, moving from orthodox pathos — picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been to surrealist precision which can express the drift into public nonexistence and the need to retain that bridal secret identity that will never be able to be realised:

Waits at the window, wearing the face that she keeps
in a jar by the door.
The world of Lucy, the "girl with kaleidoscope eyes", is not our world, but innocence, plus the call of love, can make it so.

Greater leaps in logic than "Lucy" demands are often made by more demanding poets like Cohen and Donovan. The latter's "world of doesn't have to be" not only defines rationality, it also defies sin — for most of these poets, "Sin" is the state of dispersed, self-conscious, conformist man, imprisoned in his own cities and screwed-up, taxable wars. To come back to union with God (for those poets who see the concept), with nature, with the one you love, with the mangled you love, with yourself, is the state of Grace. But, says Cohen, when you're not feeling holy

your loneliness says that you have sinned.

Of course, the failures are legion — Joni Mitchell sings of having had a king who could rule her and reject the sort of city seen by loneliness: "a ghostly garden filled with gangs and girly shows." However, the relationship is blown:

I had a king dressed in drip-dry and paisley
Lately he's taken to saying I'm crazy and blind.
In "It's all over now, Baby Blue", the personal and general failures of the world are united: Dylan is speaking to failed lovers, who (like prosperous businessmen) cannot see that

The vagabond who's rapping on your door
Is standing in the clothes that you once wore.

The Beatles, with an elegant irony on the meanings of "screw" point out that

there are people standing around
who'll screw you in the ground,
they'll fill you with their sins,
you'll see.

Then immediately add the consoling promise

I'll make love to you
if you want me to.

For most people the world is divided between the Administration and "Us", which is common, especially in the Protest songs, which "blast the masters of war", though even the unprotesting Donovan says, in "To Susan on the West Coast Waiting",

Our fathers have painfully lost their way
before he makes his normal gently joyous prophecy about the peaceable kingdom of love. But mitigating factors in the best poets prevent this denunciatory element from gaining control.

The Beatles ask Ringo ("With a Little Help from my Friends")

What do you see when you turn out the light?
and he replies, no longer an inferior in danger of going off key,
I can't tell you but I know it's mine.

There seems no doubt that this sense of the inviolable reality and beauty of human experience prevents most of these poets from describing anyone as a zombie or a fascist pig. Thank God, a second significant force against rejection is the sense that through experience is unique it is also representative. Keatsian rather than Shelleyan, Leonard Cohen whispers at parting "Hey that's no way to say Goodbye"

Yes, many loved before us
I know we are not new,
In city and in forest
They smiled like me and you.

We are participants in a ritual cycle rather than in "progress", as Cohen reaffirms in "Stones of the Street":

With one hand on a hexagram
And one hand on a girl
I balance on a weeping wall
That all men call the world.
Joni Mitchell, Cohen and Laura Nyro (possibly the best black poet we have) all write frequently of the end, loss or lack of love, but the poet and the song go on searching, to be wounded or dazzled again. The savage a life surprises none of these poets.

But neither does the delight of life, whether the low-comedy satiric surrealism of "I am the Walrus", the sardonic perceptiveness of Myro's "The Film Flam Man", the daft visionary serenity of the various poet-figures (Hurdy Gurdy Men, Fools on Hills), the sensual completeness of "Chelsea Morning", the mingled delight and melancholy of most of Cohen's songs, and most of all the delight of the maker — the sharpness and rightness of words, the self-shaping eloquence or the driving rhythm of music.

The verbal delight is crucial, even in the very limited poem Simon and Garfunkel can find on a subway wall, but I'll give a small list of examples limited to the smaller units of eloquence. Cohen begins "The Old Revolution" with the line "I finally broke into prison". Laura Nyro calls her ideal man "Captain Saint Lucifer". Joni Mitchell invites her lover to stay by promising, triumphant over the timescale that she yet accepts, "We'll put on the day/And we'll talk in present tenses". Judy Collins, whose father always promised they would live in Paris, but who only got there herself, watches "The Paris sun set in my father's eyes again." Donovan creates a place worth living in: "Children fair/They ride there/On the dreamy mare" (notice the apparent naivety that conceals the remarking of his image of "nightmare" into a positive gentle dream). Phil Ochs describes now, at Christ's birth and resurrection, "the universe explodes as a falling star is raised;/The planets are paralysed, the mountains are amazed/Paul Simon sees the pathos of the prophet whose words cannot be accepted or understood.

But my words like silent raindrops fell
And echoed, in the wells of silence.

Jim Morrison calls one of the Doors' most popular compositions (in honour of the brotherhood of humanity once the Doors of Perception are cleaned so that we can see Eternity and each other) "Hello, I love you, Won't you tell me your name?" I could go on with these snippets, unfair to the composition and the poet, but good bait — but I retreat from the task of trying to type Dylan's or the Beatles' attitude to language by one or two examples.

Their music is of course one of the reasons why most of the people I've mentioned have or have had the attention of vast audiences, but there is a more direct relevance to the quality of their lyrics in this music, whatever it "comes from" Chuck Berry, Leadbelly, Weill or Brel or Tannis Motown. To quote Thom Gunn again:

The demands of music have structured the lyrics,
making some kind of stanza form necessary. And while their strength as songs comes from the interaction between word and stanza, the stanza becomes the norm to which the variables of word and perception can relate. *Court. P. 15.*



STOCKTON FERRY 7

Page 8: Who is Wayne?

This noir travel memento looks like a submission from outside our immediate loop ... since I have no recollection of where this came from, or who the hell "Wayne" is/was. It's addressed to Max... and might even have been a letter he received from a friend still on the

road. The fact that the piece doesn't have a title and asks Max to "give it a name" self-defines it as a low rent Salinger - a kind of even more depressing version of "For Esme with Love & Squalor"...



MAX - here's the piece of atmosphere. Give it a name!

The Luftwaffe are up and about this afternoon along the Rhine, dropping aerial sewage, banking up into a brown sun. They're Starfighters, a squadron of them. Two hundred, or four hundred, I forget which have crashed in the last six years, most cases killing the pilots, but the Bundesregierung keeps ordering more. They need replacements.

In a train this afternoon, in the refreshment car, sitting on one of a row of stools alongside a bunch of English students, helping them drink the sour plonk they bought at Ulm. Trains in Germany go very fast. After a while you discover the reason - to wipe out the scenery. The Rhine is somehow more poxy and unmaidenly than travel posters lead you to expect. It's a bit like a crowded motorway in a flood. Main street of a continuous city that stretches most of the way to Cologne. The castles are there, high up on the hillsides above the smogline. Like most of the historic offerings Germany has, they seem out of place, like a gumtree in the middle of a city demolition site.

Coming into Cologne towards evening the smog is surreal. Moon landscapes of flat grey dirt punctuated by factory chimneys and high tension wires spindling to the horizon, all wallowing in smog. We've been drinking together for protection all afternoon, trading impressions, and the general feeling is one of impotent dread. These guys are used to bellyaching about the triviality of life in the welfare state. A dose of capitalism has sobered them. You notice very quickly here among students that Leftist politics is not the game it so often is in Australia. There's a chilling ideological earnestness that makes you long for their empty land of Holdens and telegraph poles where it doesn't all seem so deadly serious.

And Anika gets on. Out of the smoke of Cologne, with her portable supply in her pockets. It's feasible. In New York you smoke to kill the taste of the air. Cologne looked as evil. At any rate there's something in Cologne that has alienated Anika a hell of a lot. She smokes cigarettes like a laboratory machine. We have difficulty in communicating. Her English is as bad as my German; but after a while you adjust and learn to ride on the various species of smiles, gestures, thoughtful frowns. She's been studying Sociology and discovered what you discover about it, and from it. Now she's wondering how you subvert and at the same time subsist. I don't follow too well when she starts theorising. There's something about the German language which makes it possible for them to work with concepts and modes of thinking that seem unreal when translated. Anyway she's going to London to spend a week with a group called the Soft Machine who she met while they were playing in Cologne. I tell her my motives, or try, because they're a little obscure, and irrational, like my hating the smell of my shit while in Germany. I'm going to London because it's there.

At Ostend there are swarms waiting to get on to the steamer, among whom many hairies going to the Isle of Wight Festival. I know this spells trouble with immigration. A week ago at the Canadian border I was with a busload of Americans trying to get to a happening outside Toronto. Half didn't get through. But Anika is nudging. Would I be so kind? Fags are over five bob a packet in England. Anika needed a week's supply and she could only take 200 into the country. 400 might just last her. Could I?

So at last we're onto the steamer and upstairs in the open air, flipping crew members a mark to provide free deck chairs. It's after midnight now, and one or two stars are on the brink of visibility. We drink, and continue drinking, for I've got French currency I have to get rid of. Only notes are cashed in banks. Bilious Belgian beer goes trickling down, and my German starts to improve.

So that presently Anika and I are clawing at each other in deck chairs with my overcoat spread over us in the sweet reek of her tobacco. It's getting colder now that we are out into the Channel. We just have to stick together. But what am I going to do with her in London? She is developing an expression. We continue to claw as my feet get colder. I suddenly want to screw her when we get to Dover. She's embarrassing and prick-teasing at the same time. It's that freezing cold time just before dawn, and there's a stir of feet around, and lights out in the water or somewhere in inexplicable positions. We've lost all sense of direction, and the clapping and hissing of the water is slowing down, and we can't see anything. Where are the white cliffs? I wanted to see them. Anika hadn't heard of them. But But there's a clutter of lights behind us. Dover. We've come into the harbour, but everything is out of position. I thought in front, and people are starting to scabble around and collect their things. Then it's another queue and Anika gives me the 200 cigarettes and holds onto my waist. Finally on the wharf and multiple queues now for Immigration. British Citizens, Commonwealth and Irish Republic. Aliens. I head for my queue, and Anika follows. Stupid woman. I really started hating her, and the way she's clinging around.

"You're an alien", I tell her, pointing at the sign. "Sieh', du bist fremd."

So she trails off, looking confused, while I get out the passport that tells me I'm a British subject. And feel warm inside thinking about simple unalienating British food. I can imagine the station tea rooms, with broadbeamed maternal middle aged women, and meat pies and hot tea and railway refreshment room tomato sandwiches. Did you ever think that a railway refreshment room tomato sandwich would have the capacity to make you nearly cry? At the Munich Hauptbahnhof it's just Bratwurst and Brötchen and Bier.

Naturally we Commonwealth people have a shorter queue, as it's not long at all before I'm trying to explain to a young bloke in a uniform why I don't know how long I'm going to stay.

"What, you mean you're just going to stay on and on ad nauseam?"

"Well look....."

"Wait over there, and we'll talk about it in a few minutes."

Rejected, I queue up with Isle of Wight hairies who didn't make it.

Presently Anika comes through, looking, and sees me. Hating still, even more now. I start making vague ineffectual gestures and pointing at the men in uniforms. But she won't take the point. She wants a confrontation. I go up and start making harassed noises and wishing her a good stay in London. She looks bewildered, muddled and upset by the sudden walls of politeness. And snuffles off, without looking back, carrying her coat and a light case.

The last trickles of travellers are through. The London train, out of sight somewhere, starts pulling out. I see I have Anika's cigarettes. What to do? But as the young nauseated officer comes back I realise there is nothing to do. I am more cogent this time, and summon together dignity and an accent.

"Don't sound like an Australian to me." A supporting officer comments, who had heard Australians.

But I'm wearing clean clothes, and have sixty pounds, so I'm not in the persecutable class.

Dover station is empty at half past six, with morning now established in a grey cold sweeping down the platforms. And the refreshment rooms aren't open. But there is a porter. A porter, genuinely English and proletarian, with a broom, sweeping the cold off the platform.

Remembering sullen negroes with loud, smoking machines cleaning roadhouses, and brawny peasant women with inscrutable faces, it's Dover. "Good morning. Up early," the bloke has stopped sweeping for a breather. And the white cliffs were there after all, through the end of the station, white with morning.

Peace, Wayne.

On its surface, it's a reminiscence of a casual relationship between a young, unnamed Australian traveller who is drifting unhappily through Belgium and Germany, hating the food, accompanied by a young German girl who chain smokes and wants to spend a week in London with a band she met when they played in Cologne. He also can't speak more than a few words of her language.

Upon their arrival in Dover after a night of drinking away his French loose change on the Cross Channel Ferry, (coins cannot be exchanged outside France), and dreaming of "simple, unalienating British food", he ditches the German girl and is hassled by Customs despite holding a Commonwealth Passport. An Official remarks ... "don't sound like an Australian to me", but finally he is let in to the UK - only to find the refreshment stand closed.

Like I said, it's depressing and derivative of Salinger's misery lit ... but it's well written and has a subtle narrative resolution. It's also fresher than 'tame hippie' or "artsy/nice"... and would make a wildly successful existential film if shot with unknown actors on heavily grained 16mm stock... then blown up to 35mm and released in midwinter in cold European art house cinemas.

... and I still don't know who Wayne is!

Page 9: A Page of Odds & Ends... & Where's Bernie?

The really telling part of this page is a pronouncement in full Helvetica Bold Letraset that "Stockton Ferry is a Hill, Ryan, Beiers Production" - with no mention of Bernie Kelly!

Cont. from P. 8: THE STRANGER SONGS.

Far enough, though I would add that Thom Gunn is covertly comparing 'Stones' and 'Bachelors' lyrics with precise their monologues and the powers of the music are emotional as well as structural.

As all events, the new quality has come in with the new music, probably more consistently in eloquent balance with each other than anything since 'Dandelion' and 'Campion'. Let me try to remind you of the simplicity - a sequence of one comparatively insignificant song "And your Bird can Sing", get the same and rhythm right, later in the traditional narrative of the loneliness of his mistress's pet add possible meanings of the "bird" to name 'Sparrow', though, cover with a realisation definition of "me" throughout, cook in a moderately veering company for his hearings, serve hot or cold. The more realisation of one can then go straight on to Cohen's Suzanne or Niyro's "Stones Don't Please". Good cooking.

New Poets, New Music, ed. Schmittroth & Mahoney, Winstrop Publishers, Cambridge, Mass. 1970.

The Bachelors' Illustrated Lyrics, ed. Abridge, Macdonald, London, 1969.

by Norman Tailcoat

A MORATORIUM PARABLE FOR THE VERY YOUNG

One day Sidney the snail was out for a walk, and he thought he would go down and look at the tulip bulb that had been planted in the flower bed.

But when he got there, he could hardly believe his eyes.

"There's a green thing on it!" he cried.

And so there was, a little green shoot was growing out at the top of the tulip bulb. But Sidney the snail had never seen a tulip shoot growing before.

"This green thing has come and stuck itself on the poor old tulip bulb," he said. "So I shall pull it off, and then the tulip bulb will feel better."

Then Sidney took hold of the tulip shoot and gave a big pull. But the shoot did not come off.

"I shall fracture my shell if I pull any more," said Sidney. So he didn't.

"If this green thing is so troublesome for me pulling it, it must be even more troublesome for the tulip bulb," said Sidney.

"I think I shall have to go and get my friend Godfrey the grasshopper to come and help."

So he dithered off to the front lawn. And there was Godfrey the grasshopper, playing a song on his back legs.

"Hello Godfrey," said Sidney.

"Hello Sidney," said Godfrey.

"This tulip bulb in the flower bed needs our help."

"I'm playing a song on my back legs just now," said Godfrey, playing a song on his back legs.

"You must be awful," said Sidney. "There's a green thing come and stuck itself on the poor old tulip bulb."

"How do you know that the tulip bulb doesn't like the green thing stuck on it?" asked Godfrey.

"Would you like a green thing stuck on you?" asked Sidney.

"No," said Godfrey thoughtfully.

"Well, come and pull it off the tulip bulb then," said Sidney.

"Oh, all right," said Godfrey, and he got up on his back. Then they went down together to the tulip bulb in the flower bed. "It won't take long," said Sidney.

"So Sidney took hold of the tulip shoot, and Godfrey took hold of Sidney. Then Sidney pulled on the tulip shoot, and Godfrey pulled on Sidney.

But the tulip shoot kept on not coming off.

"My necks have gone all neckless!" cried Sidney, going up at last. "That's a stupid green thing!"

"My necks have gone all neckless!" cried Godfrey. "It's the stupidest green thing that ever was!"

"We'll have to teach it a lesson," said Sidney.

"We'll go and get Cutbert the cockroach to come and help," said Godfrey.

So they hopped and dithered off to the woodpile. And there was Cutbert the cockroach, sitting on a mound of shavings.

"Hello Cutbert," said Sidney.

"Hello Sidney," said Godfrey.

"Hello Cutbert," said Godfrey.

"Hello Sidney," said Sidney.

"And it's on the tulip bulb," said Godfrey.

"In the flower bed," said Sidney.

"When the tulip bulb is," said Godfrey.

"With a green thing on it," said Sidney, just to make everything quite clear.

"Hello Sidney," said Cutbert, waking up. "Hello Godfrey." "So you've come and help pull it off," said Godfrey.

"Why?" asked Cutbert, wishing he had's woken up. "If you don't come and help me," said Sidney. "I've had my necks made neckless for nothing."

"And I've had my necks made neckless for nothing," said Godfrey. "So you have to."

"Oh, all right," said Cutbert, and he said goodbye to the mound of shavings. Then they all went down to the tulip bulb in the flower bed.

"My necks! But the green thing beat us this time," said Sidney.

Then Sidney took hold of the tulip shoot, and Godfrey took hold of Sidney, and Cutbert took hold of Godfrey. And they all pulled as hard as they could pull.

But the tulip shoot wouldn't give up holding on to the tulip bulb. And in the end, Sidney gave up holding on to the tulip shoot instead, and they all fell backwards on top of each other.

"That nasty horrible green thing!" cried Sidney, as he picked himself up. "It's got my horns all floppy and flattened!"

"That nasty evil green thing!" cried Godfrey, as he picked himself up. "It's got my legs all warty and lumpy!"

"That nasty savage green thing!" cried Cutbert, as he picked himself up. "It's got my whiskers all bristly and barbed!"

"We'll have to put an end to it," said Sidney.

STOCKTON FERRY IS A HILL-RYAN-BEIER'S PRODUCTION

"Before it hurts anyone else," said Godfrey. "We'll go and get Ernest the earthworm to come and help," said Cutbert.

So they scurried and hopped and dithered off to the back garden. And there was Ernest the earthworm, just disappearing down a hole in the ground.

"Hello Ernest," said Sidney.

"Hello Sidney," said Ernest, peering coming above ground again.

"Hello Ernest," said Godfrey.

"Hello Godfrey and Sidney," said Ernest.

"Hello Ernest," said Cutbert.

"Hello Cutbert and Godfrey and Sidney," said Ernest. "I was just off down for my dinner."

"There are more important things than dinner," said Sidney.

"And they're green and nasty," said Godfrey.

"And you've got to come and help pull them off," said Cutbert.

"What for?" asked Ernest.

"They're a terrible danger," said Sidney.

"And so have to stop them while we can," said Godfrey.

"Or they'll come and stick on all of us," said Cutbert.

"Are you sure?" asked Ernest.

"We can't all be wrong!" cried Sidney and Godfrey and Cutbert.

"Oh, all right," said Ernest, and he abandoned his dinner. Then they all went down to the tulip bulb in the flower bed. So Sidney very cautiously took hold of the tulip shoot, and Godfrey very cautiously took hold of Sidney, and Ernest very cautiously took hold of Godfrey, and Ernest took hold of Cutbert most cautiously of all. Then they pulled and pulled and pulled and pulled.

And all of a sudden, the tulip shoot broke off from the tulip bulb.

"Hoarsey!" cried Ernest, as the tulip shoot flew up into the air.

"We've destroyed the danger!" cried Cutbert.

"We've conquered the green thing!" cried Godfrey.

"We've saved the tulip bulb!" cried Sidney.

But do you know what? The silly old tulip bulb wasn't saved at all. It never grew any more when its shoot was gone. It just died away.

Wasn't that a shame!

Richard Harland

Anyone who wants good drawings, personalised art work, posters, or who would like a good afternoon to see Ros, 64 Parry St., Cook's Hill.

Moccasin, sandals, all leatherwork. See Bob, 11 Railway St., Cook's Hill.

Wanted - One striped blazer about M size. Max, 66 Bell St., Cook's Hill.

Registered at the 4th Floor of the University of Auckland. Printed in A.S. copyright in the University of Auckland.

OUR THANKS TO JACK ROZYCKI LINDY BERNIE COUSIN MICHAEL LESLEY VAL AND FRIENDS AT THE UNSW.

Covers by Ross Kalend

FOR SALE - RECORDS

| | |
|--|--------|
| Asto Guthrie, "Running Down the Road" | \$3.00 |
| "In a mackerel" | \$3.00 |
| Blue Cheer, "Vincent Van Gogh" | \$3.00 |
| Family, "Music in a Doll's House" | \$3.00 |
| "The Who Sell Out" | \$3.00 |
| Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, etc. "Solid Gold Soul" | \$3.00 |
| "The Crazy World of Arthur Brown" | \$3.00 |
| Sly and the Family Stone, "Stand" | \$3.00 |
| Alan Brown Set, "London Swing" | \$3.00 |
| Gene Washington, "Shake a Tail Feather Baby" | \$3.00 |
| "Chicago Transit Authority" (double album) | \$5.00 |
| P.P.M., "A Song Will Rise" | \$3.00 |
| P.P.M., "In Concert" (double album) | \$5.00 |
| "The Beatles" | \$2.00 |
| "The Dobbins" | \$2.00 |
| "The Clancy Brothers in Ireland" | \$2.00 |
| Clancy Brothers, "The Boys Won't Leave The Girl Alone" | \$2.00 |
| "Lightnin' Hopkins" | \$2.00 |
| "Newport Festival 1963" | \$2.00 |
| "Newport Festival 1959" | \$2.00 |
| The Koolhaas Singer Singers, "Good Time" | \$2.00 |
| "Folk '66", Colla White | \$2.00 |
| "The Great Leadbelly" | \$2.00 |

all records in excellent condition, see Max Ryan, Paul Ryan or Jim Beiers, or call at 66 Bell Street, Cook's Hill

Thanks to Liz for cheering us up when we thought she was dead.

Allen to my friend. Love and lechery from Bob.

For Hire - Two musicians, world experience will play at parties, birthdays, christenings etc. Contact Ross and Paul at our office; reasonable rates, good times.

Happy birthday Kristin: Love from Stockton's Ferry.

For a joint effort contact Steele Lane, (Lone's sister), at 22500. Reverse charges.

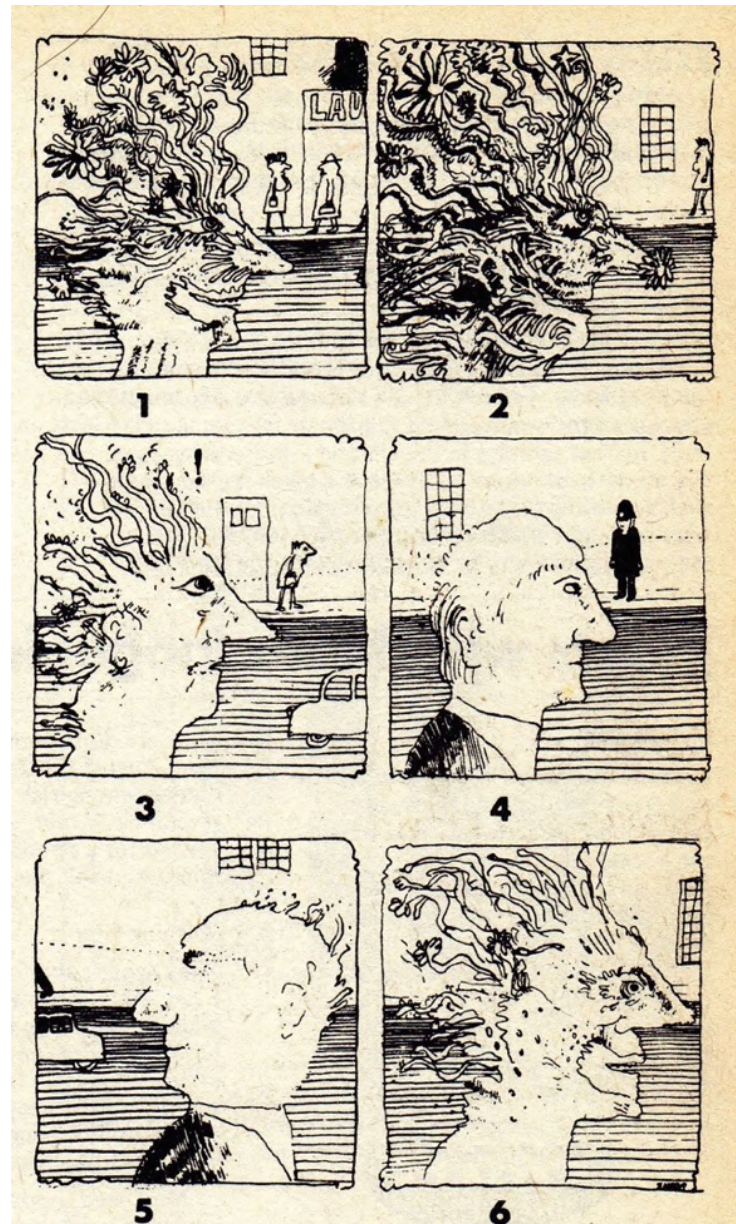
ARTISTS @ ROSS'S

OUR THANKS TO JACK ROZYCKI LINDY BERNIE COUSIN MICHAEL LESLEY VAL AND FRIENDS AT THE UNSW.

Covers by Ross Kalend

I suspect Bernie wasn't credited because of some vindictive act, but simply because he wasn't present at the Tharunka office layout sessions for SF #2. Apart from his Road Test of Blue Cheer, he has no other submissions in this issue, which meant he was now more of a passenger, not a helmsman on the Ferry.

There is also a spillover from Norman Talbot's "Stranger Songs" article and an acid tripping cartoon filched from an unknown source, (possibly the British edition of Oz Magazine - but the artist's name is illegible & a reverse image search didn't yield a clear answer), that I still find funny; here's a cleaner version -



Who is Richard?

Where things get really strange, however, is not the omission of Bernie, but the addition of a short story by future children's author **Richard Harland**²¹ entitled "A Moratorium Parable for the Very Young".

²¹ <https://richardharland.au>

It's written in an odd, childish style with cartoon characters, (Sidney the Snail, Godfrey the Grasshopper, Cuthbert the Cockroach and Ernest the Earthworm) and cartoonish concepts involving a struggle to stop a "dangerous" green shoot sprouting from a tulip bulb. In the end, they work together to try and detach the dangerous green shoot from the bulb - but in doing so, rip the bulb out of the ground, destroying it.

Since Richard went on to become a university lecturer and a prolific published author, it must have some connection to being a "Moratorium Parable" ... I can certainly apply my own interpretation, but I don't quite see it within the text.

Meanwhile, if you feel you have decoded it, you should send your comments to Richard on his website...

<https://richardharland.au>

Page 10 - "Box" ... or Bob Goes Hollywood:

Fired with the unbridled enthusiasm of a complete auteur and unburdened by any practical experience, I had recently launched into making a short film, which I thought would be a straightforward and easy thing to do... because... well, there were a lot of short films out there, right!

"BOX"

(WORK TITLE)

Written and Directed by Bob Hill
Produced by Bob Hill and Bob Chand
Camera by Bruce Downe and Bob Chand
With Maureen Bonnamini as the Death Girl
Jim Beiers as the Boy
Braham Hughes as the Priest
Jean Talbot as the Mother

"We started work on the film a lot later than we expected to. The \$500 grant from the SRC was only the first stage. I found that we had to redevelop the plot to an actual shooting schedule — the original script was a balls-up and almost unworkable, so I rewrote the entire shooting sequence to fit a practical schedule. We're at least half way through now with all the major sequences already filmed. I suppose the entire film could be put together in less than a month when I get the time after the exams — the hard part is yet to come; the sound will probably be the most crucial part of the film. The final cost of the film should be about \$1700 — \$1800."
"It's a bit dull talking about it like this but the 'plot' concerns a Boy from a village (the film is set in peasant surroundings — 1900s) who has an affair with a witch girl. The townspeople call the Priest when the Boy and the Girl are discovered making love and the Boy falls into a death trance which the witches have put on him. The priest passes judgement and the Boy is placed in an open coffin and led away, through the town cemetery, into a deep gorge where he is buried alive. The last scene is of the Boy looking up to the cliff's overhang where all the witches are assembled and are looking down and laughing at him as he gets covered with dirt whilst the townspeople chant to break the curse."
The scenes shown here were all shot in the bedroom where the Boy is taken to after he has been cursed. He is veering between clarity, madness and death.



FRANK LITTLEWOOD, STEPHANEE REAY, PAUL RYAN, JEAN TALBOT

The Freak Out section is only a minor part of the film — the shadows on the walls worked beautifully — it's a pity the shadows don't come out in colour too. The film will be screened some time in December. I'll show it at the university first if it's not too embarrassing."
— Bob Hill, September.



JIM BEIERS



JEAN TALBOT — DURING THE SCENE WHERE THE BOY JIM BEIERS SEES HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY SPACE OUT FROM HIS CONSCIOUSNESS.

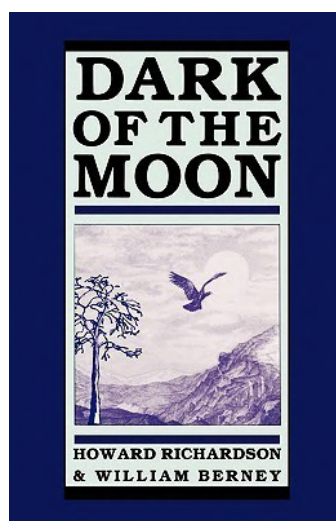


MAX RYAN, MAEVE VELLA, JEAN TALBOT, BOB HILL

STOCKTON FERRY 10

The screenplay for “Box”, (referencing the coffin that gets carried through half the film), started as an idea based upon Stephen Crane’s American Civil War short story “The Upturned Face”... mashed into William Faulkner’s novel “As I Lay Dying”; As I started to write the script, (in a 2 column structure, because it was the format of a TV script I had found), I soon discovered it needed more subtext to sustain it... otherwise it would just be a sequence of disconnected moving images without narrative context.

A subset of theatre people I knew at this time introduced me to a play they were considering producing - “Dark of the Moon” - a folk-horror hybrid musical that had been successfully produced on Broadway in 1945, then revived in the West End by the great Peter Brook in 1948 ... and even performed at the Independent Theatre in Sydney in 1950. The play is a sort of Hillbilly Romeo and Juliet - based on the Scottish classic ‘Barbara Allen’ folk song but reset in the Appalachian Mountains with a colourful cast of Moonshine-flushed yokels... and witches!



“Dark of the Moon” became the core inspiration for “Box”, essentially by defining its setting and tone. A quick summary from Wikipedia reveals the core of the play’s narrative - which I flipped and flopped into a much simpler story... though I kept the visual concepts of a witch girl and a tribe of hillbillies led by a fundamentalist preacher performing pagan rituals.

This perennial favourite is based on the haunting folk ballad of "Barbara Allen." Employing a large cast and imaginative settings in the Smoky Mountains, it recounts the story of John, a strange "witch boy" who upon first beholding the beautiful Barbara Allen immediately falls in love. He is given human form to woo and marry her on the condition that she remain true to him. The marriage is consummated, and Barbara gives birth to a witch child whom the townspeople destroy in a superstitious frenzy. During a religious revival Barbara is led to betray John thus breaking their spell of love. As she dies, he returns forever to the world of the mountain witches.

I located my script in a vaguely 1900 period setting – depicting a similar isolated mountain community where they still practiced “ole time religion” & witchcraft; Naturally, this led me to the abandoned Minmi Quarries, though I had to hunt further afield for the wooden house (Failford, north of Bulahdelah) and field locations (somewhere near Morpeth, I think...). The interior scenes shown in the photographs on this page, were shot in my bedroom on the top floor of a wonderful old building called “Malmo” in King Street – which has now been destroyed, of course!

I think the real miracle I pulled off was not that I made anything more than a typically amateurish student film ... but firstly that I got it funded... and secondly that I managed to drag so many people along on the journey...

In 1969 I had seen an advertisement from the Australia Council Experimental Film Fund for grants short films - an initiative that advertising man Phillip Adams had conned the John Gorton Government into. With more nerve than a rat with a gold tooth, I put in my application, then asked the Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Brin Newton-John (him again - Olivia's Father - and a very decent man!) to co-sign as a referee - which he willingly did.

I don't really know why they Australia Council funded me, but the fact that my application came from the frontiers of civilization, plus Brin's fingerprint probably secured me the main budget to at least start my film. Wisely, the grant of @ \$1000), was given in vouchers whereby the Australia Council would then pay them for legitimate production costs. My vouchers went solely into camera hire, film stock, a couple of lights and the services of a surf movie cameraman and his assistant.

I went looking for people: Bob Chard, a young hustler I knew from somewhere around the traps and who had the lease on the Port Stephens cinema, owned a camera and had various contacts for an Assistant and some lights. The camera he owned was a Bolex H16 wind-up - a wonderful, robust 16mm camera with a 3 lens turret. However, you couldn't shoot sound with it because it made a noise like a coffee grinder ... and you could only safely get shots of 25 seconds duration on 100 feet loads! Still, it has been a favourite of film schools and beginners ever since 1935 - and used by legends such as Ridley Scott, David Lynch, Spike Lee.

Bob Chard and his Assistant were also the only ones who got paid...



The legendary H16 Bolex wind-up camera

The cast featured my co-conspirator Jim Beiers as The Boy and a beautiful art student who turned up in our loop - Virginia Mort - whom I renamed "Justine Morte" for some strange Hollywood reason. Norman Talbot's wife is also in there... along with my Stockton ferry alumni Max Ryan and his brother Paul. The rest I rounded up in the traditional student method of "hey, watcha doin' Saturday? Wanna be in a film? Looking at a dreadful low-res copy of "Box" in 2025, there's some great faces in there... and full-on nudity.

The complete tale of the making of "Box" is too much of a saga to transcribe here and will have to wait for another day, but apart from dragging large numbers of people around the outskirts of Newcastle and even up to Failford, I'm amazed at how willingly they came along and gave themselves up to the project. I think they gave me back a lot of the energy I was fast running out of..

**

This 'progress report' was written when I was halfway off the cliff ("so far, so good") and I had only an inkling of the difficulty of the tasks that lay ahead - namely the editing,

soundtrack and print supervision. In 1971 I found myself in Melbourne where I could survive by working on magazines, and more importantly, access editing facilities. It was there I discovered a brilliant organist and composer named Ron Nagorcka. Ron, a beautiful man with a large disfiguring facial birthmark that never held him back,²² was not only a brilliant musician, but also had the keys to an old bluestone church in Carlton which had a fantastic pipe organ. Soon enough, we snuck into the church, set up a 16mm projector and ran the workprint of "Box" on a portable screen above the altar whilst Ron improvised a score. This all happened (several times) during the hours of 6.00pm until dawn, with Ron and I getting out before we were discovered! Ron also had the keys to the Percy Grainger Museum, (since he was a Music Post Grad), where we used old valve tape recorders and sound mixing gear to tidy up his Church recordings and loop what little dialogue and sound effects we needed. It was a fantastic adventure - and the sort of unexpected experience that only filmmaking can bring.

The laboratory costs, however, were running up - far beyond any vouchers I had left. Again, luck and chutzpah were on my side and through my connections on "Farrago", where I was working for virtually no pay, the head of the Melbourne SRC (whose name I now shamefully can't recall) came to my rescue and paid the outstanding bill, which was more than \$500! It was much better than having my legs broken by debt collectors...

Eventually, back in Newcastle, (though my timeline here is a little wobbly, and it might have been a little earlier in the post-production journey), I still had to pay for titles, release prints and posters. This time, the Newcastle University Student Union bailed me out with a \$500.00 grant to get me over the line.

A bizarre aspect this extra funding, was not that the Student Union bailed me out, but they had to have a public debate about it in a forum not unlike a Council Meeting; it was held on the grass in the Union courtyard... where my competition for a grant was - **BERNIE** - who had been busted for possession and now needed to be really bailed out, in the full sense of the phrase! He seemed quite upset that the Union was considering granting money for a film, rather than helping a student in serious self-inflicted trouble. Art vs Commerce never seemed so starkly divided.

Though I never found another title for "Box", I had done something many first time would-be filmmakers then and now fail to do - **I actually finished my film!**

"Box" was first screened at the University of Newcastle Union in October 1971... and then given some select screenings in Sydney and Melbourne on a circuit of film clubs as part of a package of short experimental films made with the Experimental Film Fund grants. I seem to remember it may also have been screened at an arts festival run by the Australian Union of Students ... some of whom later created the Aquarius Festival in Nimbin, after which many of their leaders bought communal properties in the area, turned on, tuned in... and dropped out completely... until they became millionaire landholders decades later... and sold out again!

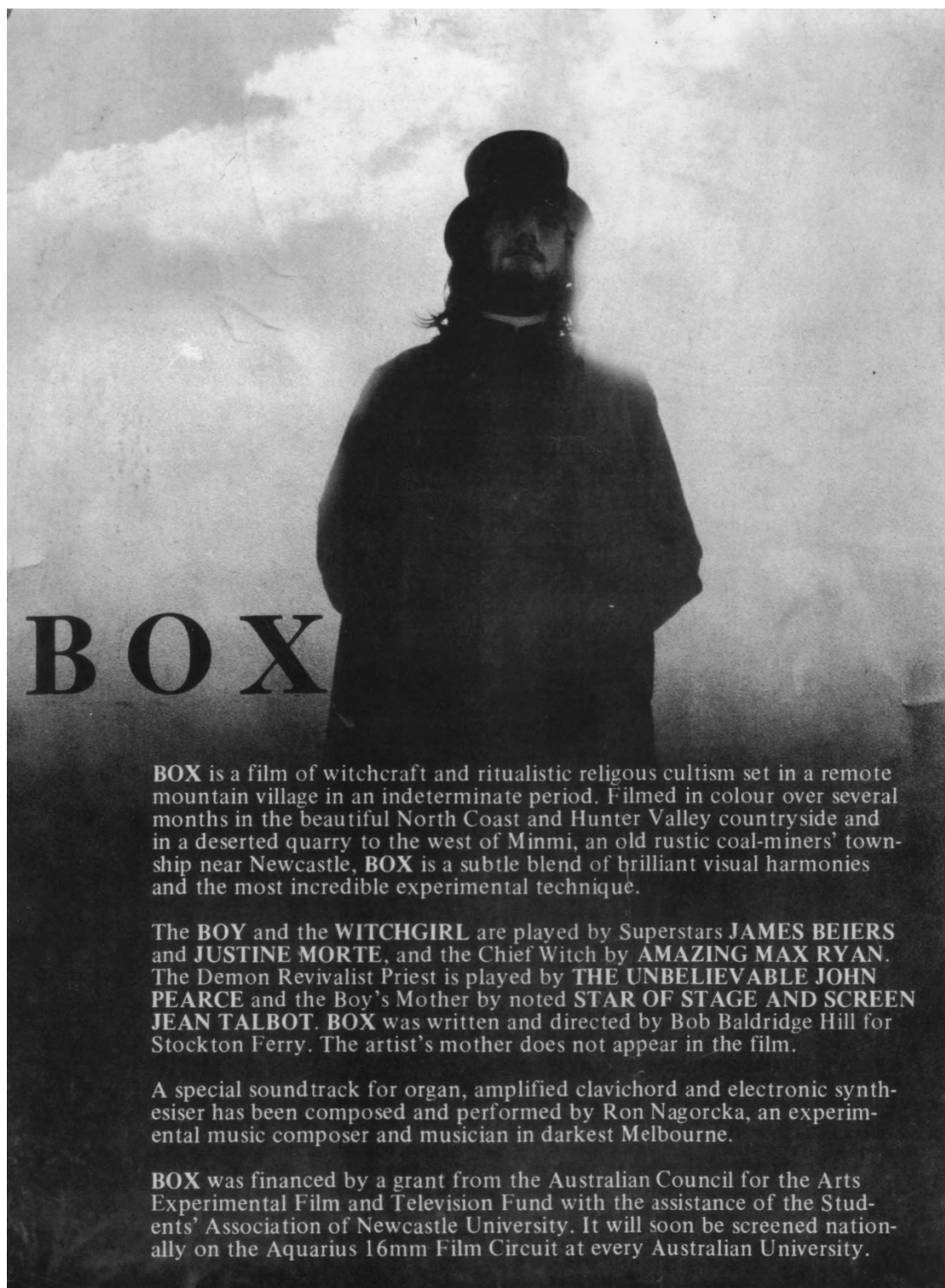
In early 1972, "Box" went into the AFI's Vincent Library in Melbourne (a part of what is now known as AACTA) and though it was hired out privately from time to time, I never received any royalties from which I could repay my university benefactors. It was my welcome to short film distribution...

In early 1973, following a main actor's tragic death (ref page #51), I hoped "Box" would be quietly forgotten - and never shown again in the public domain.

²² <http://www.ronnagorcka.com/biography>

“BOX” – the Poster:

Like many films, short or long, a POSTER is often the best thing about it ... and “Box” would probably be a worthy inclusion in this category. Following the completion of the release print, I knew I needed an intriguing poster that both stood out and posed as many questions as it answered. I also wanted to reflect the film’s visual tone... while declaring its self-aware arthouse posture. Ultimately, the blurb I cobbled together became a satirical version of a high art endorsement for an obscure and impenetrable film by an unknown director in an unknown foreign country. It was a sort of half circus promotional bill, half information package - mixing “Superstars” that Andy Warhol hadn’t yet discovered in with real information.



“Baldrige” is actually my 3rd Christian name. The guy on the poster was an extra whom I had a good photo of... not a main performer

The only part I took seriously was acknowledging Ron Nagorcka's score and making sure I gave nods to the Experimental Film Fund and the Student's Association of Newcastle University... all of whom I owed the courtesy of a credit. For myself, "the artist's mother does not appear in the film", is a kind of Stockton Ferry joke-within-a-joke that "... loudly declaring *"even if I know this blurb is corny - I'm here and I'm saying it anyway!"*

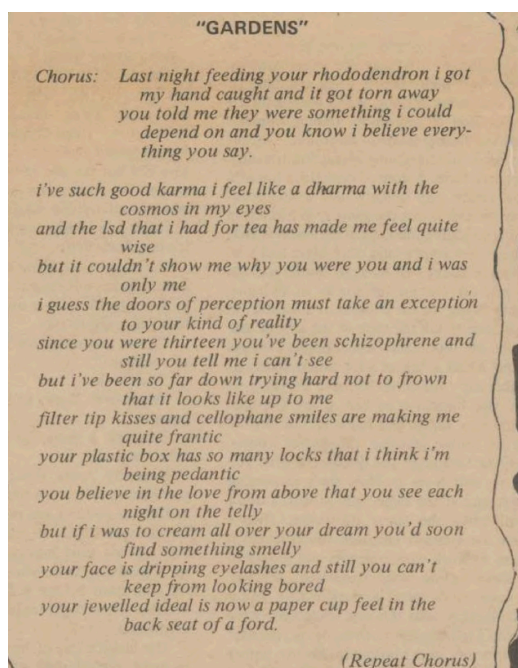
Page 11: Alf Hickey Rides Again

Alf was always going to get a sequel...

By this stage, most arts students who had read the first Alf poem in Stockton Ferry #1 understood Max's proposition that Alf was a pastiche of a pastiche and was always meant to look like the work of someone who knew that it wasn't an Ern Maley hoax, but a hoax within a hoax, within another hoax - like a set of Russian Dolls.

It was also about this time that Saint Bob Dylan had retreated from his first creative burst and had descended into doggerel, repetition and rehashes of old folk tracks (ref "Self Portrait" with "All the Tired Horses", "Wigwam", "Copper Kettle" etc). Often his best tracks were by other writers such as "Early Morning Rain", "The Boxer" etc. and though it's sacrilegious to say it, my own contention that his best work finished with Nashville Skyline", after which the masterly songs became fewer and fewer; For every "Knockin' On Heaven's Door" there are at least 10 duds - a posture he maintained into the 2000's, with only the odd gem such as the single from the "Wonder Boys" movie soundtrack "Things Have Changed" (2000).

So, in the finest traditions of "a writer in trouble" and being a Dylanised disciple, Alf had started knocking out pastiches of pastiches... with the same carelessness as a bad Dylan album. The rhythms were now simpler and the words even more contradictory than his first effort. The rhymes became even more juvenile, and the images became just lurid set dressing. Still, who couldn't love lines like these –



It also gave me my finest prose moment in Stockton Ferry when as the anonymous "Gerald Dobrianski", in one quick take I knocked up a faux critical endorsement of the

Page 12: Return of the self-appointed film critic...

Once again, I'm astonished at how sloppy our proof reading was when we laid out Stockton Ferry issues; In this case, the main figure in one of my reviews, the Director John Korty, had his name misprinted over and over again as John Kory!

I'm equally astonished that I chose to give his film "Riverrun" the full Pauline Kael treatment despite its less than stellar reputation - both then and now. It's sparsely scripted (always a good thing!), well shot, (I borrowed the silent montage opening for "Box"), reasonably well acted by 3 fresh unknowns... and redolent with earthy textures and leitmotifs drawn from nature. Life, death and re-birth feature viscerally in the narrative... all of which are the usual tenets for art house success and cult status. Unapologetically arty, "Riverrun" is an OK film... though a bit heavy handed in its symbolism. However, it falls a long way short of being a masterwork despite it's being fully funded by a studio (Columbia) looking for another "Easy Rider" or "Five Easy Pieces" ... and they could easily have promoted it into at least a reasonable box office position. However, it seems they washed their hands of it as quickly as they could and unceremoniously dumped it after a barely visible release.

John Korty later went on to a more commercial filmmaking career and even directed a couple of very good films such as "The Diary of Miss Jane Pittman", but he was basically either a low budget Indy director, or a slightly better than average TV director.

I assume I liked "Riverrun" because it was showing in my favourite venue - the Astor in Glebe, which became The Valhalla (remember all those fridge calendars), then an occasional live venue, then the Valhalla mark #2 with 2 cinemas ... and then, inevitably, a block of apartments: *plus les choses changent, plus elles restent les memes...*



...If you didn't have one of these on your share house fridge in the 80's & 90's - you weren't trying hard enough!

In the centre of Page 12 was one of Ross's drawing/collages of Jimi Hendrix, (another recently absurd drug death), appearing out of the smoke of a listing ferry... which had nothing to do with anything on this page...

On the right of page 12 was a book review by another favoured English Department lecturer – Tony Hassall. It was a solid appraisal and defence of the artistic merits of the recently banned novel by New York writer Philip Roth – 'Portnoy's Complaint'. The novel is now regarded as a sort of literary version of "American Pie", with added Jewish sexual trauma. Ultimately, its world-wide banning made Roth a very rich man.

Since 'Portnoy' was also banned in Australia from the time of its release in 1969, (it was rescinded in 1971), it was both a timely piece and a well-structured argument on the old art vs pornography chestnut. It is also crushingly dull ... and reads like one of Tony's well-structured lectures of that period (though I always liked his ones on Henry Fielding). Tony was a good guy and we were happy for his contribution, but we should have been more like Tharunka and printed something a lot more in your face instead – such as Wendy Bacon's "Cunt is a Christian Word".

And what the hell was Jimi Hendrix doing on this page?

"RIVERRUN" - A film by John Kory.
Mark Jenkins
Louise Ober
Distributed by Columbia.

It's unfortunate that Columbia brought out "Crownwell" at the same time as it brought out "Riverrun". Both are well made movies but from the point of view of box office, "Crownwell" was a better proposition - very few people have heard of Mark Jenkins but everyone knows Richard Harris. "Crownwell" has been given a lavish buildup, plenty of press coverage and placed at the prestigious Hoyts Mayfair. "Riverrun" sneaked in for a week or two at the quiet off the path "Astor" (Glebe Point Road) and has now disappeared from sight. My sympathies go out to Peter Clifton and John Ryan - the young Sydney film makers responsible for "New Times", the brilliant "Genesis" and the shortfilms "Hard Journeys" - who went to a lot of trouble restoring the old Astor and have since shown "Yellow Submarine" and have "Wonderwall" booked in for some time next month after they show "Genesis" in its new version. They have the right intentions but don't seem to be making much money from their efforts. They are also one of the few cinemas in Sydney giving concessions to students.

But back to "Riverrun". The story is that of a retired seaman returning home to the farm being run by his daughter and her boyfriend. He is treated as a kindly but stubborn type of old man who doesn't understand the scene he suddenly finds himself in. A crisis soon develops between the old sailor and the young man over his discovery that his daughter isn't married and is about to have a baby. The film develops this tension between the old man's possessiveness for his daughter he hardly knew and the young man's excitement of his intrusion to a brilliant climax where the daughter gives birth to the baby at home without medical aid. The scene where the young man delivers the baby is undoubtedly one of the greatest pieces of realism ever shot; it's almost inconceivable to imagine an ACTOR actually delivering a human child with his own hand for the purpose of a film - and then cutting the umbilical cord! Even if they faked the shot, which I doubt, it would still be a masterpiece of cinematic technique.

The beautiful Californian coastal landscape comes across in very muted rich tones. Kory utilizes sunlight and landscape with a brilliant montage technique of cutting one scene to flash in a contrasting one to break up the overall setting into a series of IMPRESSIONS rather than allowing it to develop into a single, localized and definable landscape. We never quite get an ENTIRE conceptualized feeling about the farm and its surrounds, only an increased awareness of its stillness and beauty with each scene. The scenery never becomes repetitive as one comes to feel increasingly more aware of the relationship between the environment and the characters. Kory strengthens this relationship by developing their personalities in the framework of particular backgrounds - the old man becomes identified with the lake setting, the local hotel bar where he relates his tales and the wheat area of the nearby town. We see the young man and the girl lying naked in the sun in a secluded paddock, happily repairing fences and sitting in an empty room silently listening to Toscani on a record player. Kory plays off the characters against the changing backgrounds as if they were some vulnerable species of animal which cannot live outside its own territory. The old man stalks about the house at night unable to sleep but relaxes into a pipe-smoking, story-telling old sally when behind the door of the dingy. We see the young man uncomfortable and tensely aware of the old man's mastery as he attempts to row correctly across the water, and the girl sitting in the bow serene and beautifully distant, deep in the half-mother world of a pregnant woman.

At the end of the film the old man goes back to the sea and the young man stands outside the window of the bedroom watching his girlfriend nurse her baby, he knocks on the window but she doesn't hear him - the screen goes blank.

Apart from the irritating philosophy of the young man's Berkeley drop-out rationalisation which is thankfully underplayed and has no real relevance to the film anyway, Kory has timed and balanced "Riverrun" nearly to perfection. The connection between the flashes of the young couple love-making and the flashes of the old man's escapades with his henky-took women all around the world are balanced so delicately that the impressions blend in with each other; it sometimes looks as though there is a certain amount of prostitution in the young couple's relationship, and at other times we associate the old man's thoughts with incoherent images of his daughter rolling around naked in his mind. There is no heavy symbolism to force the point down our throats though and Kory has enough style to carry off the screen play without cluttering the soundtrack with "mood music" - the film is left to operate on its own terms and the audience can gain as much from what is said as it can from that which isn't said.

Not a heavy movie by any means, not a deep one well handled, it is hardly representative of the Drop-Out group philosophy, but remains rather as a film exploring the relationship of alienation between different personalities, all of which appear to be casualties of a suburban age where it is a sin not to succeed and a crime not to even want to. I found it hard to believe that I had seen Peter Sellers try to imitate the drop-out thing in "I Love You Alice B. Toklas" only three days before... that's what I mean by a casualty. Bob Hill...



Review of Portnoy's Complaint by Philip Roth.
(Penguin, 51-35 at all police stations.)
Title: ONE FOR THE COUCH.

Portnoy, like Morgan, is a suitable case for treatment. The title puns neatly on the meanings of complaint. On one hand it is a disease (psychological) to be treated; on the other it is a lamentation, protesting at the circumstances which lead to the condition. The disease is defined on page one: "A disorder in which strongly-felt ethical and altruistic impulses are perpetually warring with extreme sexual longings, often of a perverse nature. Spielvogel says: 'Acts of exhibitionism, voyeurism, fetishism, auto-eroticism, and oral coitus are plentiful; as a consequence of the patient's "morality", however, neither fantasy nor act issues in genuine sexual gratification, but rather in overriding feelings of shame and the dread of retribution, particularly in the form of castration.'" It cannot be said that Philip Roth has not played fair with the censorious: if that is not their cup of tea, they need read no further than the first page.

Those who read on find Portnoy on the couch spilling his all to his psychoanalyst. I suppose it was inevitable that the novel would sooner or later invade the sanctuary of psychoanalysis and issue forth in a confessional stream. Older forms of arduous confession were protected by a pledge of secrecy on the part of the priest and a decent shame on the part of the sinner, though some of the more radical forms of Christianity did encourage public confession. It is generally agreed that confession, whether public or private, is good for the subject. Whether it is good for the listener is another matter - psychoanalysts have a higher suicide rate than any other sector of American society.

This is precisely the dilemma of the reader of Portnoy's Complaint, who finds himself asking "what am I doing here?" with disturbing frequency. Voyeuristic eavesdropping on the confidences of others has an initial excitement which all too rapidly leads to boredom. And parts of the novel are boring despite the titillation of the sexual explicitness. The novel's power to shock with its unaccustomed frankness diminishes rapidly, and by the end, what began as a hugely enjoyable joke told with considerable gusto had petered out into a compulsive repetition of the taboo words and actions.

The claim of Portnoy's Complaint to be considered as a serious novel rests on its portrayal of the claustrophobic family life in the Jewish ghetto of Newark, seen through the eyes of the protagonist as a child and an adolescent. There are some fine things here, recalled with poignant nostalgia, like the Sunday morning softball games, or Portnoy's first visit to the home of his girlfriend at University - a genuine mid-western WASP American called Kay Campbell - which he describes as: "a memorable weekend in my lifetime, equivalent in human history, I would say, to mankind's passage through the entire Stone Age." Yet even in these memories the note of hysteria is barely suppressed. "I am whimpering on the floor with MY MEMORIES! My endless childhood! Which I won't relinquish - or which won't relinquish me! Which is it!" And the childhood has followed a pattern which to Portnoy constitutes a joke in pretty dubious taste: "Who else do you know whose mother actually threatened him with the dreaded knife?... Who else on top of this mother, has a testicle that wouldn't descend?... Who else do you know who broke a leg chasing shrikes? Or came in his eye first time out? Or found a real live monkey right in the streets of New York, a girl with a passion for The Banana? Doctor, maybe other patients dream - with me, everything happens." Readers who passed their childhood in similar circumstances have applauded the accuracy of Philip Roth's ghetto, and the response it evokes. As an outsider I can only say that Portnoy's childhood didn't seem sufficiently different from that in the Australian middle-class to justify the mammoth dimensions of the hero's neurosis.

What saves the novel is its sense of humour. Though subject to the law of diminishing returns, when read at a sitting, individual incidents, turned up casually, are extremely funny. Clearly a bedside book, or a coffee-table book, to be dipped into in an idle moment. On the censorship question, the book, whatever its failings, is an authentic personal testament and not in any sense pornographic. It ends with Portnoy himself passing the Frankfurter test (twice in Israel; and I'm sure that the novel would not unduly distend whoever does the equivalent of the Frankfurter test in Australia. Whether Penguin Books have chosen the subject for their test case on censorship wisely is another matter. While heartily wishing them every success, it might have been hoped that they would have chosen a more substantial work on which to fight so crucial a principle. Readers seeking erotic stimulation had better stick to The Perfumed Garden. Those who enjoy Jewish humour will like Portnoy's Complaint.

A. J. Hassall.

STOCKTON FERRY 13

Page 13: The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, The God Squad ... and Autographed Moneybox Footballs

After the Martin Sharp Vincent poster in Issue #1, this was always going to be my favourite Stockton Ferry page: In the era of marijuana panic, it wasn't hard to track down the Gilbert Sheldon cartoon of the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers smoking weed while killing each other - since it had been printed in Zap Comix. The fact that the cartoon plot turns out to be an ironic fiction whereby the Freaks have made a movie to terrify the public into not smoking weed,

commentary treatment. In the ultimate accolade, a Las Vegas newspaper even voted it “The second worst movie ever made” - after Ed Wood’s hysterical “Plan 9 from Outer Space”.



Reefer Madness (1936)

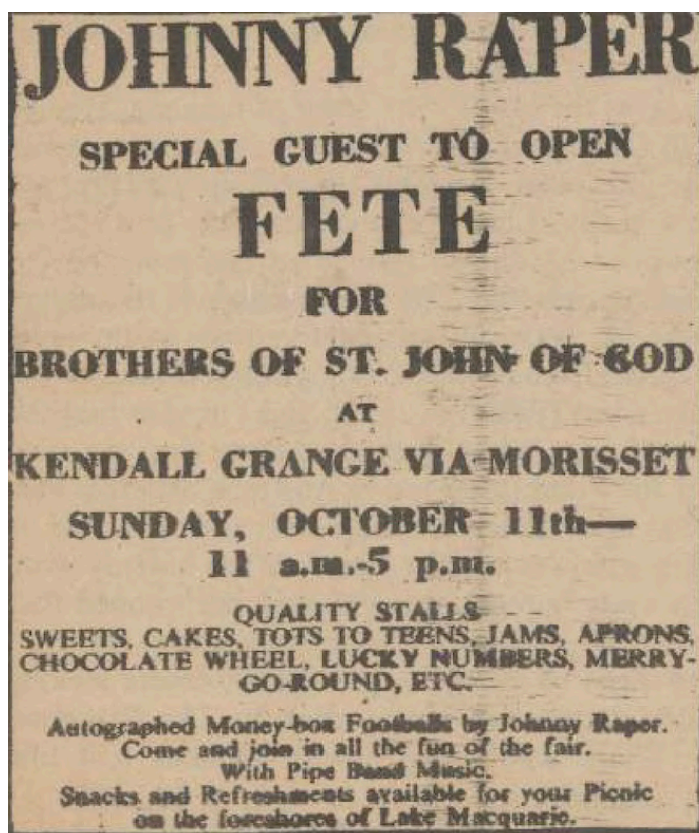


The Reefer Madness movie drug bust - an event staged in a similar way to Jim's bust...

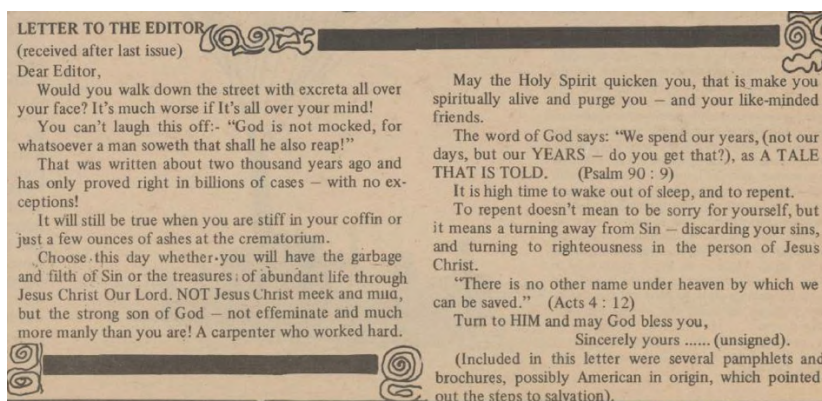
A treat for the kiddies –

At the bottom left of this final page is a clipping that Max had found in a suburban newspaper - a real advertisement for a fete being run by the ‘Brothers of St John of God’ in Morisset... with their Special Guest, a semi-disgraced international rugby league player who’d been shunted out of the great St George club in Sydney for various misdemeanours - usually involving alcohol. He would eventually be quietly shunted out of Newcastle too - this time for being connected to stolen car tyres (!) For opening a Catholic fete, he was the perfect choice...

The real kicker, and the item that caught Max’s eye when he found it, is found in the fine print - “autographed footballs by Johnny Raper”! What more could any kiddie want than a plastic money box football with the great Johnny Raper’s scrawl on it? Today, it would be a priceless collector’s item...



As a parting gesture we printed the ONLY letter of complaint we ever received - from an anonymous God Squader who wanted us to be physically turned to ashes by Jesus Christ! His Jesus was not the “meek and mild” version, but **“the strong son of God - not effeminate and much more manly than you!”**



This would obviously be Muscular Christianity's finest moment in Newcastle if they managed to make it happen – that is, inciting Jesus to zap the **effeminate** and **unmanly** filth creators of the Stockton Ferry!

If we had been given an address for this contributor... we would have sent them a Johnny Raper autographed money box football!

EPILOGUE:

Stockton Ferry Sinks:

Stockton Ferry #2 would be the last issue we put out. It was now the end of October 1970 and I was busy failing my upcoming Geography exam, whilst starting to edit a rough cut of “Box”.

My English Literature grades shrunk from a High D... to a C and I barely attended enough classes on British Constitutional History to even vaguely understand the riveting details of the 1846 Repeal of the Corn Laws! However, to my everlasting regret, if I had been attending and paying attention I would now be able to better comprehend the madness of Trump's tariffs!

There was some talk of a 3rd Stockton Ferry, which I wanted to do as an entirely visual issue made up of collages and intriguing images - all without words. It would have been a declaration that we'd taken our own advice and crossed over into the astral realm, but "existential anguish" had worn us all down ... and we started to drift apart.

As mentioned earlier, I moved to Melbourne for most of 1971 and abandoned my Newcastle University studies. I returned from time to time to honour my commitment to use the Student Union's funds and finish my film. It was screened in the Union building a year later in October 1972.

What We Missed:

Stockton Ferry were all young, white, heterosexual males from comfortably 'safe' middle class backgrounds... and didn't get the importance of the LGBTQ+ movement at all. Godfrey, whom we knew well, was 'acceptably' gay in a flamboyant and theatrical way, but the cruelty of legislation that criminalised homosexuality for less protected males and females was a foreign country to us. I remember a small campus group of young men shyly hanging out together at the Students Union who were 'different'... but never thought to engage them in conversation or invite them to contribute to our magazine's agenda. A future influential editor of the Sydney Star Observer was among their group – so the opportunity was available to actively promote their rights... but we were just plain ignorant.

We were less ignorant of what was then known as "Women's Lib", but since it hadn't yet reached the street demonstration stage (in Newcastle, at least)... and was of secondary concern when compared to the anti-Vietnam movement - not that we wrote about that either! With 20/20 hindsight, we should have had women with us on the Ferry ... and even more importantly, **listened to them.**

A tragedy ... and notes on what happened to the rest of us

JIM BEIERS

In February 1973, I was waiting to collect my youngest brother, John, at Sydney airport; Even though he hadn't finished high school, John was already a dedicated musician who would eventually make music his whole career from his mid 20s onwards. 8 years younger than myself, he paid his own fare with takings from his band's gigs to fly down from Taree attend a Rolling Stones concert with me at Randwick Racecourse. I seem to remember that I was to meet Jim Beiers before the concert... but from the distance of 50 years plus, I can't be totally sure of the actual arrangements...

What I do remember was the first thing my brother said to me as he stepped out of the baggage claim - 'we got a phone call - your friend Jim has been killed in a car accident'.

The rest was a blur to me as my brother relayed what little he'd been told... and I remained stunned throughout the Stones concert that night as they went into their full Sympathy for the Devil mode.

Eventually I heard from one of our circle, (probably Max's brother Paul), that on the 22nd February 1973, Jim had been sitting with a girlfriend (whom I'd never meet) smoking a joint in their Kombi van on the side of the Hume Highway near Seymour in Victoria and enjoying the sunset. He may have been coming back to Sydney for the Stones concert, I just don't know.

As he pulled out onto the highway, a truck came up on his side of the road, probably in his mirror's blind spot and wiped out his driver's side completely - but spared his girlfriend on the passenger side. Jim was conscious for a while but died within the hour as the emergency services people tried to extricate him... or so I was told.

Shortly after the Stones concert, I attended Jim's funeral in a little wooden church near Belmont which was packed with equally stunned friends and family. Godfrey may even have been there.

Jim's much older brother Peter, (a veterinarian - and the person who raised Jim), organised the funeral and had "When the Saints Go Marching In" played over the tinny speaker system as the service finished - which made us all cringe, especially since we knew of Jim's sophisticated taste in music. I think it was Peter's way of cutting us out of the family loop - since he disapproved of our arts student lifestyles and non-career making endeavours. We certainly weren't invited to the crematorium at Beresfield and I note that there is no memorial for Jim there, with his ashes "scattered in general plot"...

which seems an unfathomably cruel way to memorialise such a promising life cut so short.

James Andrew Beiers

DEATH

22 Feb 1973 (aged 20–21)

BURIAL

Newcastle Memorial Park

Beresfield, Newcastle City, New South Wales, Australia

PLOT

Ashes scattered in general plot. No memorial at Newcastle Memorial Park

And now, all these years later, I feel the need to record at least what I can remember of such a promising life wiped out in the blink of an eye... and will forever wonder who what Jim might have become.

MAX RYAN:

I always knew we weren't just total dilettantes who would move on to more conventional lives when we left Newcastle University...

Though our lives drifted apart fairly soon after Stockton Ferry, from what I can glean from Google and Facebook etc, Max remained true to himself by spending a long time in India studying eastern mysticism, (Jim, Max and and Max's Brother Paul had travelled together to India doing the hippie trail during the summer holidays of 1970), then at various times living and performing spoken poetry with a musical backing in Byron Bay and Newcastle. Max has also published his poetry... and a quick search readily found these links -

<https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A76764>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=639575228173147&set=pb.100063620251674.-2207520000>

<https://peril.com.au/back-editions/in-conversation-with-pete-emptage-and-max-ryan/>

<https://letterboxingqpf.wordpress.com/2013/07/07/circular-poetry-contributor-max-ryan/>

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/byron-shire/praise-for-local-poets-life-work/news-story/b79810a4fcafd502fa7950ccf1ec4d>

<https://dangerouslypoetic.com/product/rainswayed-night/>



Max performing with musical backing by Peter Emptage, 2021 (Facebook)

BERNIE KELLY:

The last time I saw Bernie, he was arguing his case on the Newcastle Student Union lawn – pleading with the Union to financially support him in his fight against being busted for drug possession. He made a rather accusatory statement that if the Union could support a film - they should support him! It was so odd, I wasn't even offended.

I haven't seen Bernie since that day and I never heard the outcome of his case, but I assume, or hope, that it was just a fine. In those days a record like that would wipe you out from a teaching career, or the public service.

Bernie and I never really argued much over the Stockton Ferry articles, but it was obvious we were from different planets. However, even then I recognised that diverse viewpoints are necessary in magazines, especially the counter cultural ones, and I never really allowed myself to get too worked up over his material vs mine for as long as we could accommodate both... which we managed to do.

And to this day, despite all those LSD trips, I'm still amazed at how coherently he could speak and write about the acid academics and his own psychedelic adventures. If anyone knows where his journey took him, I'd love to know.

BOB's JOURNEY:

Also in 1972, I managed to find some private funding to produce a "proof of concept" film sequence for another exotic period project that I had developed called "Swamp Angels" - so named after a Max Ernst painting. Jim was again a co-conspirator, and we shot for a couple of days in amongst the ghostly dead gum tress poking out of Lake Mulwala in Yarrawonga with a couple of cast and crew picked up in Sydney and Melbourne.



Lake Mulwala

The cameraman was Byron Kennedy - who, along with George Miller, became famous as the co-writer and producer of the first and second “Mad Max” movies. In a truly Icarus moment, Byron was later to die tragically in (his own) helicopter - buzzing the Warragamba Dam when flying into the sun...



*Bob, lower left, Jim, upper right.
On my film shoot in Yarrowonga, 1972
(The cute blonde in the cut-off shorts has now
been Mrs Hill for 47 years).*



Tuscany, 2014

By late 1972, I was back in Sydney where I joined the Commonwealth Film Unit (soon to change its name to Film Australia) as a Production Assistant - the lowest rung on the ladder - where I proceeded to actually learn the craft of filmmaking from the ground up. It was a great break - and I soon progressed to production managing crews on shoots in locations such as the NSW country and the Northern Territory. Near the end of 1973, Producer Damian Parer (son of the famous wartime photographer) threw me in the deep end on a “Hector Cat” children’s road safety film - as the Props person.



Bob (top left) - holding up a wooden rainbow on "Hector Cat". Film Australia. 1973

It was like a lightbulb in my head went off - when all my filmmaking ambitions coalesced into one category - the art department! For some years I had been trying to make strange and exotic images on film ... creating moving tableaus that referenced my favourite artists and film directors ... and I now found an occupation that satisfied all my ambitions: I knew I wasn't really a film director, though I still enjoyed writing and producing, but the **production design** aspect of making films gave me all the creative scope I was looking for since I had started making "Box" in 1969.

Leaving Film Australia in 1974, I knew I had the script of the film I was willing to kill for - a 52 minute "short film" (in those days, anything less than an hour was a short film) I'd written called "Listen To The Lion"... named after a Van Morrison song I'd first heard whilst travelling over the Bulahdelah mountain range, at night, some years earlier while lying in the back of a Kombi van...

Stockton Ferry becomes "Stockton Ferri"

After a torturous funding process, I received \$25,000 from what was then a version of today's Screen Australia. I started the main shooting in 1975 and completed the special effects sequences (flying harnesses and rigs) in 1976 ... which I had to fund myself by working on TV commercials.

The film was produced under the banner of 'Stockton *Ferri* Films'. Not only did I still like the name, I wanted to acknowledge my journey from the "Stockton Ferry" magazine... through to "Box" ("a Stockton Ferry Production")...through to "Listen To The Lion" – Produced by "Stockton Ferri Films". There was also the concern that the REAL Stockton Ferry people might notice my use of their name on a publicly funded film!

Though I wrote, designed and produced the film, I had the good sense to ask Henri Safran ('Storm Boy', the feature film, 1976) to direct it. Together we won both the Greater Union short film award and the Rouben Mamoulian Award at the 1977 Sydney Film Festival. The win gave me a ticket around the world to attend a film festival in France and then on to meet filmmakers in Amsterdam, Berlin, London, New York and LA. It also gave me a career boost into the ranks of top-level Australian film designers and proved to be the best investment I ever made.

THE COOLANGATTA GOLD

The film that launched the internationally recognised IRONMAN CLASSIC!

Steve Lucas (Joss McWilliam) is a nineteen year old who is filled with the burning resentment of being forced to live in his brother's shadow.
His brother, Adam (Colin Friels), is burdened by his father's desire for glory, and must win *The Coolangatta Gold* Tri-Aquathon. It is the greatest endurance test of them all: a marathon involving a 20 kilometre beach run, 6 kilometre swim and a 17 kilometre surf ski from Surfers Paradise along the golden arc of beach to Coolangatta and back to the start.

The Coolangatta Gold is a story of human endeavour and endurance against overwhelming odds.

DISC CONTENTS

- Feature
- Scene Selections
- The Making of Coolangatta Gold
- Gold Morning Australia Segment
- Photo Gallery

THE COOLANGATTA GOLD

Joss McWILLIAM Colin FRIELS Grant KENNY

THE COOLANGATTA GOLD

Brother against brother.
Father against son.
All going for gold...

PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE RECOMMENDED FOR PERSONS UNDER 15 YEARS

Approximate feature running time: 113 minutes

© 1984 Hellograph Pty. Ltd. All Rights Reserved.
Packaging, Artwork and DVD Menus and DVD Label ©2004 Magna Pacific
Distributed by Magna Pacific Pty Ltd. www.magnapacific.com.au

MAGNA PACIFIC **BECKER**

WARNING: This digital video disc is sold on the condition it is not offered for sale or hire outside Australia. The copyright proprietor has licensed the film (including the soundtrack) contained in this digital video disc for home use only. All other rights are reserved. Any unauthorised copying, selling, exhibition, rental, exchanging, hiring, lending, public performance, diffusion, and/or broadcasts of this digital video disc or any part thereof is strictly prohibited.

Now with the responsibilities of a young family, and worn out by a decade of juggling low paying Australian feature films with average TV commercials, I disconnected from features and concentrated on cultivating high end TV commercials only: For the next 20 years I was Production Designing for some of the best (and most demanding) commercial directors in the business... and in amongst big budget shoots within Australia, I soon found myself travelling to even more exotic places for work than feature films had ever taken me. Looking back at my professional CV, the list of countries includes New Zealand (4 times), Germany, Austria, USA, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam... and I loved every minute of it!



Bob builds an Indonesian village - in Vietnam! 2009



Studio set build - Julia Stone music video - Bali 2011

I briefly returned to feature films in 2006 to design a tight little crime thriller for my favourite TV commercial director - a film called "Restraint" starring Theresa Palmer and Travis Fimmel (just 6.0 on IMDB), which never found the release platform it deserved and sunk without trace.

By about 2008, after nearly 40 years of either trying to make my own films or working on features and TV commercials for others, I was nearing 60 and felt it was time to slowly back away ... but not stop being involved in the art form. Rewiring my brain, I had earlier gone back to university ...and did a Graduate Diploma in Film & Media Arts at UTS and followed that up with an MA in Film Studies at Sydney. In 2008 I started teaching at Tafe... and then in 2017 at AFTRS. I was still doing some film design work whilst mentoring a niece who, after a successful career in fashion design, had hit the decks running as a Director of Music Videos; In 2018 I helped her create the Treatment for a video she shot in Mexico for the Australian artist Dean Lewis that won "Best Music Video" at that year's ARIA Awards. She was nominated for the same award in 2021 for a video she also directed and shot in Mexico - this time for Julia Stone from a Treatment I helped her develop. In my early late 60s/early70s, I had suddenly become young and hip!

Today, both my daughters are in film - but they wisely saw the light early and headed into Distribution. The eldest is the office manager of Kismet Films, (who were originally called Hopscotch, then became eOne before morphing into Kismet), and the youngest is just finishing a 6 year contract at Screen Australia where she rose to become the Acting Head of Scripted and more recently, Acting Head of Investment. You might say, they followed me into the family business...

Since filmmaking is now deeply embedded in my DNA, I continue to do research and articles on production design for various organisations I am affiliated with, such as the Australian Production Design Guild and "Make A Scene" - a design initiative for the Powerhouse Museum. I also continue to do Craft Judging for the Guild and AACTA and mentoring students and ex-students with their scripts and edits. Having taken this semester off from all forms of teaching, I might even pick up the Phd thesis I had planned but dropped when Covid hit... whilst I'm still young!



North Sydney, 2025

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0384076/?ref=ttfc_cr

<http://www.showreelfinder.com/files/cv/Bob%20Hill%20-%20Resume.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/bob.hill.35912>

<https://apdg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Aaarrhh-Matey-14-Dec-2018optimised.pdf>

<https://apdg.org.au/2022/06/from-daleks-to-outer-space-and-killer-bees>

<https://apdg.org.au/2022/09/the-master-craftsman-2>

Bob Hill
North Sydney
May 2025

Bob@bobhill.com.au

ENDS