



The Arbalest

Affiliated with the Port Phillip Folk Foundation.

VOL. 1, NO. 11 - 10-24th May, 1973. PRICE 20¢.

7TH NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

A REPORT by Phil Day

As I write this, I find there are limitless possible opening sentences, in fact, I feel as though I could write eight or ten of these reports, each different in all respects, and still not cover every aspect of the Festival so I will attempt only to itemise major facets.

Firstly, the high spots, of which there were many. Richard Leitch's workshop on Robbie Burns, Chris Hector's "Group Singing" Frank Traynor's "History of Jazz", Mike O'Rourke's Ballads, the concert performances of "Summer Solstice", Gordon McIntyre, Danny Spooner and Shayna Stewart, "Country Express" and "The Ramblers", Mike O'Rourke's brilliant introductions on the Saturday night concert, the reception and the breakup, the parties, and overall, the "feeling of festival" that ran through the whole weekend and beyond.

Then there were the low spots though not so many, mainly centred around the incredible bitching that went on behind the scenes, both from disappointed local singers and from many of the interstate "officials" - by which I mean those who are or have been concerned with interstate folk federations, particularly Canberra and Sydney.

Although the festival, to most people, a complete success, there were certainly a number of things which deserve criticism, but certainly not to the extent of disregarding all that was good. The come-all-ye session, very capably handled by Sydney's Warren Fahey, was something which could have been brilliant, but which just failed. I hate to say "I told you so", but one of the points brought up in pre-festival discussions, and not by one person, but several, was the need for two or three come-all-yes. This was borne out in the one that did eventuate.

A festival committee has a most unenviable task in selecting singers for concerts, particularly at a national festival. This is a

subject I'll come back to later on. The come-all-ye session is a chance for all those singers, local and interstate, who the committee could not include in two concerts. Ideally it is also the place for the dozens of aspiring singers to go through their paces, and for all those who merely want to listen or to sing along in the safety of a crowd. At a rough count, there were a dozen "established" local singers and probably twice as many interstate singers who would fall into this category. God knows how many "non-established" singers were there. One come-all-ye was just not sufficient. Warren had the unfortunate task of telling singers like Chris Shaw (Canberra), Paddy Connelly (Adelaide), Brad Tate (Newcastle), and many others that they could only sing two songs because of lack of time. It's very hard to give your best in these circumstances. Many other singers didn't even get on.

There are other valid criticisms, such as the quality of the food served at the University during the day, but I think these are minor. The other main criticism, and this was quit outspoken was regarding the concerts.

Here we have two distinct schools of thought. One, and I'll only touch on this briefly, as it's not my own view, is a criticism not of the quality, but of the (so-called) predominance of Melbourne singers on the concerts. This criticism comes mainly from disgruntled interstate singers, so ordinarily one could safely ignore it, but unfortunately, it has led to some very heated accusations of nepotism, and not only from interstate people. I feel that this is, to a large extent, parochialism, but I would like to hear from the people concerned, in writing. I'll leave it up to them to push this point of view.

As I mentioned above, it is not easy to program concerts at a festival. You can't please everyone, yet committees continue to try this absurd experimenting

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

So, the response so far from the traditional singers has been poor? I've only seen a couple of copies of this Arbalest (Arbler, less Arbal? I just couldn't decline that opportunity) - but it has seemed to develop into a directory of who's singing where. Still, we mustn't knock (-knock), who's there, HUGILL, Hugilloo, "Hugill torker bowcher arbour gals aroun the corner Sally" because at least its an effort to fill a definite gap (shades of the bishop and actress) so let's try to be constructive and write something.

What can the traditional stylists offer? An article on "GRACE NOTES in the ANDALUSIAN MODE" might be of interest, but since she went there we haven't heard from her so you're as wise as I am. Is it worth talking about the feeling of at least some sort of continuity in this Alvin-Toffler-shocked world, which is given by more traditional "Folk"? Thesis: therapy for future shock in two senses. The belonging to a culture albeit a fast-changing one, is powerfully emotive, ref. "Why are you trying to be English" and the general reaction to such a question. I repeat, you're not; but you belong, like it or no, to a culture whose roots if you'll pardon it are in Merrie England. (No use pointing out the high proportion of other migrants, I'm talking about the overall culture patterns of this society). You're saddles with being a branch on the limb, or a limb on the tree, of the tree in the bog; your "culture-belonging" necessarily involves Brit. Hist., and live Brit. Hist. involves a feeling for real-life situations as portrayed in Trad. Folk - but that should be Danny's article.

What else, then? "Culture-belonging" if and only if involvement? You are involved because you belong' since you belong, how do you show your involvement? As far as passive audience reations are concerned, there does seem to have been some improvement lately in the listening habits of audiences, and if reports are correct then the "Union" is to be congratulated on heaving itself out of the mire. What about more active involvement? - sing you buggers sing! Not only in the choruses, why not give it a go yourself? Any self-respecting "established" folk singer wouldn't mind if it happened to be one of "his" songs, because "his" means his culture, and we're agreed, I hope, that that is our common property. (By the way, the group I was with a few years ago once sange "I wish I was back in Liverpool" at a concert on which the Spinners were to appear later in the evening. They weren't bothered, they still had "In my Liverpool home" to fall back on! The same principle applies here.)

There's another rub, though; are you going to dob yourself in for two half-hour brackets? New singers need the chance to perform just one or two songs while they are building up their repetoire. What's going to happen when all your regular singers move on, or give up through exhaustion? You need to keep the game alive by allowing people more chance to start in this way: organisers please note: what's wrong with a "floor singers plus one main (paid) guest" system? Or are the singers too dependant on payment every time they emit a B-flat? Saturday arvo at O'Connells is a reasonable singalong, but even that can tend towards a ring-o'-roses between too few singers. Why not give it a try; think about the songs you nearly know already, learn 'em and sing out!

Finally a suggestion for this magazine. Surely there are other folk activities besides singing? I know that Australia can't be expected to have a Geelong hobby-horse or the Bendigo furry sword dance, but surely some old rituals persist? If you know of any, let's hear about them in these pages, and if you don't - another chance for involvement - go out and look for some. I can't believe that a culture can exist without developing its own folk-lore and myths. Are there no common adages about the habits of the wombat? "See a galah before seven, 43° C before eleven??"

Good hunting,
Good singing,
Good participating,
Good belonging,
Gooding, Erick.

Phil,

I realise that this sort of thing has nae been done afore, but I'd like through your wee paper to publicly thank Gordeann MacAntsoir, Dan Spooner, Hamish Baile-Nan-Iain, Leezie Baile-Nan-Iain, Bernice O'Laoraigh, Hughoc MacEoghain, Pedr Gurteen, Di Hollings and Michael Farrell, for the much appreciated help they gied me in the Robert Burns workshop at the Port Phillip Folk Festival.

I would also like to offer my apologies to those I asked to sing and just could not fit in.

Ard Righ Lochanbhair Leitch
(Richard Lochinvar Leitch)

Continued Page 7.

WE MUST APOLOGISE FOR THE LONG GAP BETWEEN ISSUE NO.10 AND 11. UNFORTUNATELY, OUR PRESS BROKE DOWN THE DAY BEFORE WE WERE DUE TO PRINT AND COULDN'T BE FIXED UNTIL AFTER EASTER.

10/11/1982 1974 207846
Page 2.

AQUARIUS

During the May University vacation in a beautiful little village called Nimbin, 18 miles north of Lismore N.S.W., the Aquarius Festival is to be held over a period of 10 days. Unlike your consumer-type Adelaide Arts Festival, the Aquarius Festival is a non-consumer type festival by everyone and anyone interested in drawing from their own creative resources to create their own festival, together.

There will be dancing, singing, music, folk medicine, handcrafts, yoga, puppetry, street theatre, magic shows and good food of all sorts, and anything else anyone would like to contribute. Without individual involvement the festival will not be a success. The idea of the festival is for people to become as self-sufficient as possible, so no accommodation is provided. The Australian Union of Students has leased several paddocks close to the town and so we can establish an alternative life style of our own. There's lots of land for pitching tents and building shelters out of available materials such as timber, bark and bamboo of which there is plenty. Toilet facilities will be provided and there are lots of lovely fresh water holes and creeks for bathing and swimming.

Food and drink resources are in the form of 2 local stores, a butcher, a bakery, a pub, and a bulk food store which sells grains, fruit, nuts and good wholesome foods.

For the concerned conservationist, it will be a good chance to prove his/her worth and live in harmony with the natural surrounds, leaving the "chuck-the-can-out-the-window" back in the city where it belongs.

So singers, actors, dancers, musicians, craftsmen, puppeteers and lovers of life, come along and let's all LIVE!

For more information contact the Australian Union of Students C/- of any University Student Union, but most important of all - BE THERE!

THE INDOMITABLE IRISHRY

By Laim O'Murchu From Treoir

There is centripetal force which seems to pull traditional musicians together, they're a bit like thistledown or bees or what we say in Irish about straws, "bailiann brobh beart" - no sooner is there one of them then there are dozens, a fiddler starts it, another is in to help him, then there's a tin-whistle, a flute and a bodhran and before you know where you are, the whole place is alive with music, the floor is dancing around you or the ceiling is rocking above.

That's how it was that day of the Connacht provincial in Collooney. I met a young American there, a poet and a good one, whose name, with admirable poetic justice, is Tom Moore; he's wholly in love with Sligo, Ireland, in fact with everything to do with Ireland and Irish culture. In the short space I spent talking to him in Langan's pub, a whopping great session got going, new instruments kept joining in, the chairs were cleared and a set started - the set being beyond question the greatest dance in Ireland, which should be made compulsory learning in all schools - everybody in the pub was involved, young, and old alike, and all this was in the middle of the day when people were supposed to be letting up before the coming night sessions!

Outside, I got Cathal McConnell from Fermanagh to sing me his unique and lovely song "Sweet Erin the Green", while across on the mikes someone was announcing competitions - as if everybody doesn't know by now that the real competitions at a Fleadh Ceoil happen well away from the official platform.

You could be in no doubt in the midst of all this that here, and not in the gin-and- tonic strip, was the real rooted Ireland. Comhaltas Ceoltoiri deserves credit for promoting it, for the Fleadhs have been among the rare cultural achievements of recent times. But, with respect to them, I don't think they could have done anything if the deep seam were not already there I drove on up to Sligo later on that day - Sligo as we all know, being alive with the mythology of Yeats; and time and again I found myself reflecting upon that extraordinary and perceptive man who could feel his way so surely into the native tradition, despite a background which cannot have been notably imbued with it.

What events like this are doing for the country is to restore confidence in our ability to entertain ourselves. That that confidence has been eroded by the centuries of apathy, if not extirpation, is a truism of which we have by now become so tired that we should forthwith stop thinking about it and get on with whatever will force a change. The pressure of more glossy styles, inside and out, will continue to be there, but there is an irreducible integrity in the plain people which ensures that they will not succumb to them.

Upon that integrity may yet be built a strong and distinctive cultural future, but this will not happen unless the present widespread vacillation is put aside and the aim pursued with as much vigour and clarity as everyone concerned about the life of the nation can give. We have seen what a man of quality like O Riada could do with what at first sight seemed modest enough material.



FRANK TRAYNORS

100 Little Lonsdale Street,
City.

Friday 11th May 8.00 pm - 12.30 am
Julie Wong, Peter Parkhill and others.

Saturday 12th May 8.00 pm - 2.30 am
Mike O'Rourke, John Graham, John
and Juanita and others.

Sunday 13th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Danny Spooner, Gordon McIntyre

Monday 14th May 8.15 pm - 11.30 pm
Mike O'Rourke, Geoff and Dianne
Hollings and others

Tuesday 15th May 8.15 pm - 11.30 pm
Peter Parkhill and Guests. Auditions

Wednesday 16th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Christy Cooney, Tony Lavin and Guests.

Thursday 17th May 8.15 pm - 11.30 am
John Crowle, Julie Wong

Friday 18th May 8.00 pm - 12.30 am
Various Artists. Mike O'Rourke,
Gordon McIntyre, Colin Dryden.

Saturday 19th May 8.00 pm - 2.30 am
Various artists. Julie Wong, John
Graham, John Crowle, Peter Parkhill.

Sunday 20th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Danny Spooner, Gordon McIntyre

Monday 21st May 8.15 pm - 11.30 pm
Mike O'Rourke, Geoff and Dianne
Hollings and Guests.

Tuesday 22nd May 8.15 pm - 11.30 pm .
Peter Parkhill and Guests. Auditions

Wednesday 23rd May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Christy Cooney, Tony Lavin and Guests

Thursday 24th May 8.15 pm - 11.30 pm
John Crowle, Julie Wong

DAN O'CONNELL HOTEL

Cnr. Princes & Canning Streets,
Carlton.

Saturday 12th May 3.00 pm - 6.00 pm
Come-all-ye

Thursday, 17th May 7.30 pm - 12 midnight
Danny Spooner, Gordon McIntyre,
Longford Street Band

Saturday 19th May 3.00 pm - 6.00 pm
Come-all-ye

Thursday 24th May 7.30 pm - 12 midnight
Danny Spooner, John and Juanita,
Colin Dryden



Cnr. Fenwick & Amess Street,
North Carlton.

7.30 - 12 midnight.

Friday 11th May 7.30 pm - 12 midnight
Peter Parkhill, Phillip Day, Campbell Muir,
Donal O'Grady

Friday 18th May 7.30 pm - 12 midnight
Peter Parkhill, Phillip Day and Others.

the commune

580 Victoria Street,
North Melbourne.

Friday, 11th May 9.00 pm - 3.00 am
Geoff and Dianne Hollings, Contrast

Saturday 12th May 9.00 pm - 3.00 am
Mike Deany, Andrea McIntyre

Sunday 12th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Crucible

Tuesday, 15th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Dutch Tilders and Guests

Thursday 17th May 8.30 pm - 11.30 pm
Classical Guitar Night

Friday 18th May 9.00 pm - 3.00 am
Tony Kelly & Margret Roadknight

Saturday 19th May 9.00 pm - 3.00 am
Sue Emmett and Jim Buchanan

Sunday 20th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Crucible

Tuesday 22nd May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Dutch Tilders and Guests

Thursday 24th May 8.30 pm - 11.30 pm
Classical Guitar Night

keeper folk club

Friday 11th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Selected Melbourne and Local Singers

Friday 18th May 8.00 pm - 12 midnight
Selected Melbourne and Local Singers

V.F.M.C.

Monday 14th May 8.00 pm - 11.00 pm.
Workshop Night.
Alphington Anglers Hall,
Cnr. Clark and Rathmines Sts.,
Fairfield.

HEY, BEASTIE! DINNA RIN AWA',
I JUST GOT A GLIMPSE O' YE,
I'VE NO SEEN THE LIKE O' YOU BEFORE,
YE WEE PRICKLY BEASTIE!

YE'RE NO JUST LIKE THE WEE HEDGEHOG
THAT BIDES THERE IN MY AIN LAND,
OCH! NOO YE'VE CREEPIT NEATH THE LOG,
IS A STRANGER NO' TAE SEE YE?

YE NEEDNA HIDE SAE SNUG AWA',
I WAD BE FEARED TAE TOUCH YE,
YE WI' A' YOUR SPINES AN' A',
I'VE ONLY STOPPED TAE WATCH YE.

LOSH MAN! YOUR PRICKLY COAT'S SAE BRAW
FRAE A' YOUR FOES, PROTECTION,
AN STILL YE HIDE YERSEL', FRAE WHA
BUT ME, WHA'S GLAD TAE MEET YE!

HA! I SEE YOUR OWER LANG SNOOT,
BUT STILL YE'RE AWFU' WARY,
AN' NOO AT LAST YE VENTURE OOT,
AYE - I'M STILL HERE, YE FERLIE.

THERE! I THOCHT YE'D GANE IN UNDER
AGAIN; BUT NO - YE'RE GETTIN BRAVER,
DINNA BE FRICHTIT, THORNY WONDER,
COME OWER, AN' GET ACQUAINTIT.

I WATCHED YE HIDIN' THERE AN' THOCHT
THAT YE MAUN HAE GUID REASON'
FOR HOW WAD YE KEN WHAT I'D BE -
SAE MUCKLE, BIG, AN' FEARSOME!

WE AFT TIMES HIDE OORSEL'S FRAE NOCHT;
ARE WE SURELY E'ER SAE BIG,
TAE RIN AWA' FRAE OOR AIN THOCHTS;
AN' FEARED BY A' THAT'S REAL?

WE DINNA SEE THE HAUF THAT'S THERE,
BUT A' MAN WHO SEES HIMSEL',
AN' OESNA' RIN FRAE A' HE SEES,
IS STILL 'MANG US TAE DWELL.

RICHARD LOCHINVAR LEITCH.
December, 1966.

JAZZ
ALAN LEE JAZZ BAND
Thurs 8-11.30pm
THE PLANT with
Linda George Sat.
8-midnight



FOLK
BUSHWACKERS AND
BULLOCKIES - Wed 8-11.30
Friday 8-midnight
Reardon's
Polaris Inn Hotel
551 Nicholson St
North Carlton.

THE VERDANT BRAES OF SCREEN

As I went out on a May morning by the Verdant Braes of Screen. I
 put my back to a moss-y tree to view the dew on the West counterie, the
 dew on the for ---- est green.

*A lad I spied by our burnside with a lass neath another tree
 Her cheeks were like the roses red and she all wae and worn to see
 All wae and worn to see.*

*Come sit you down on the grass he said, on the dewy grass so green
 For wee birds they have come and gone since I my truelove seen he said,
 Since I my true love seen.*

*Oh I'll not sit on the grass she said, nor be a love of thine
 For I hear you love a Lurgan maid and your heart's no longer mine she said
 And your heart's no longer mine.*

*Now I'll not heed what an old man says for his days are well nigh done
 And I'll not heed what a young man says for he's fair to many's the one she said
 For he's fair to many's the one.*

*Oh I will climb a high high tree and rob a wild bird's nest
 And back I'll bring what ever I do find to the arms that I love best she said
 To the arms that I love best.*

THE ISLAND ROAD by Martin Mulvihill (New York)

THE CROSS AT THE WOOD by Martin Mulvihill (New York)

NATIONAL FOLK REPORT (Contd.)

It would seem to come down to a definition of folk music. At the risk of drowning in a torrent of abuse, I am going to suggest that within the framework of a folk festival as we know it, the greatest emphasis should rest squarely on traditional or traditionally based folk music - and I include blues, jazz, jug band and American country music in this category. I'm afraid that with the best will in the world, and admitting the technical brilliance and entertainment value of both performances, that I cannot in any way consider that Jeannie Lewis or Margret Roadknight performed folk music at this festival. And I know that this is not just my opinion, but that of almost everyone I spoke to about them - and believe me, that was a lot of people.

However, even allowing that there were singers who could have been substituted for anyone on the concerts and have done an excellent job, there is no getting away from the fact that every performer involved in the concerts, workshops and informal sessions gave his or her utmost, and every one of them was good. The argument that another two concerts could have been arranged that would have been just as good is beside the point - for if they had been, you simply reverse the positions and start arguing again.

For all these points, I enjoyed the festival throughout, and I'm positive that 95% of those present on the Easter weekend felt the same. Congratulations to everyone involved.

LETTERS *Cont.*

Dear Sir,

It is rather disturbing to think that the need for money is influencing detrimentally the attitudes of some local singers. It seems a pity that the traditional form of folk music is being tarnished by the needs of singers who earn their living purely by singing. Folk music is not a professional singing world in the classical or "pop" sense of the music. It was and still is, hopefully, the music of, by, and for the people.

If you consider the English Folk Scene at its grass roots level, only very few people earn a living by folk music, e.g. MacColl, Seegar, Ian Campbell; and even these people have other sources of income, besides club-singing, such as broadcasting, books and records.

You would find the majority of club-singers in Britain earn money other than by singing. MacColl's Critics Group includes teachers, social workers, and skilled workers. Another typical example is the Northumbrian group, the High Level Ranters, which includes Colin Ross, Johnny Handle, Tom Gilfellan and others. All are amateurs in the true sense of the word.

Many of the old traditional singers were miners or farm-workers e.g. Jack Elliott, and Fred Jordan. Such singers did not ask for any financial reward in order to stimulate their art, but sang for the pleasure of it.

The professional night-club type presentation of folk-music on the Melbourne circuit does little to promote traditional floor-singing, where the new singer can present one or two songs.

Floor-singing is an essential apprenticeship for new singers, providing an opportunity for development of singing style, without the pressure of maintaining a large repertoire, a difficult task for a new singer.

It would be a disservice to folk-music if the traditions of previous generations of singers were obscured by the constant need for money.

Folksinging should be primarily for pleasure and only at a distant second for profit. Folk music is a vital living art, which should be continually growing and renewing itself.

Yours faithfully,

JANET C. MACKAY.

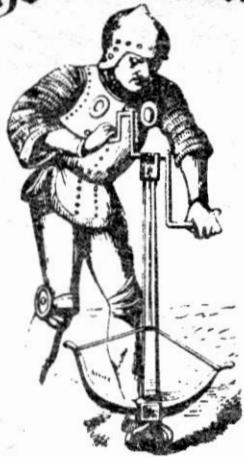
QUEENSLAND REVIVAL

Two things have appeared during national festival week that would seem to suggest a revival of folk music in Queensland. Firstly, of course, is the Queensland Federation's successful bid for the 1974 Festival to be held over the Easter weekend in Brisbane.

The second is the birth of a newsletter, in very modest form, centred around the Queensland folk federation and edited by Martin Gallagher. The news contained in it suggests a very strong "do-it-yourself" atmosphere in the Brisbane scene, with emphasis on communal services such as car repairs, flea markets, etc. to raise money for the federation, dancing sessions, car rallies, boat trips, etc.

Another sign of the revival, and one that could prove very healthy for the other states as well, is a regular ABC TV show called "Around Folk". At the moment it is concerned solely with the Queensland Scene, but with a bit of luck the ABC will wake up to the fact that there are seven other booming centres of folk music in Australia and may even (gasp) think of going national.

The Arbalest



EDITOR: Phillip H. K. Day

ASSISTANT

EDITOR: Adrienne Gurteen

POSTAL P.O. Box 114,
ADDRESS: Carlton, 3053.

DISTRIBUTION: 699 1160
9-12 Mon.-Fri.

PUBLISHED FORTNIGHTLY ON
THURSDAYS

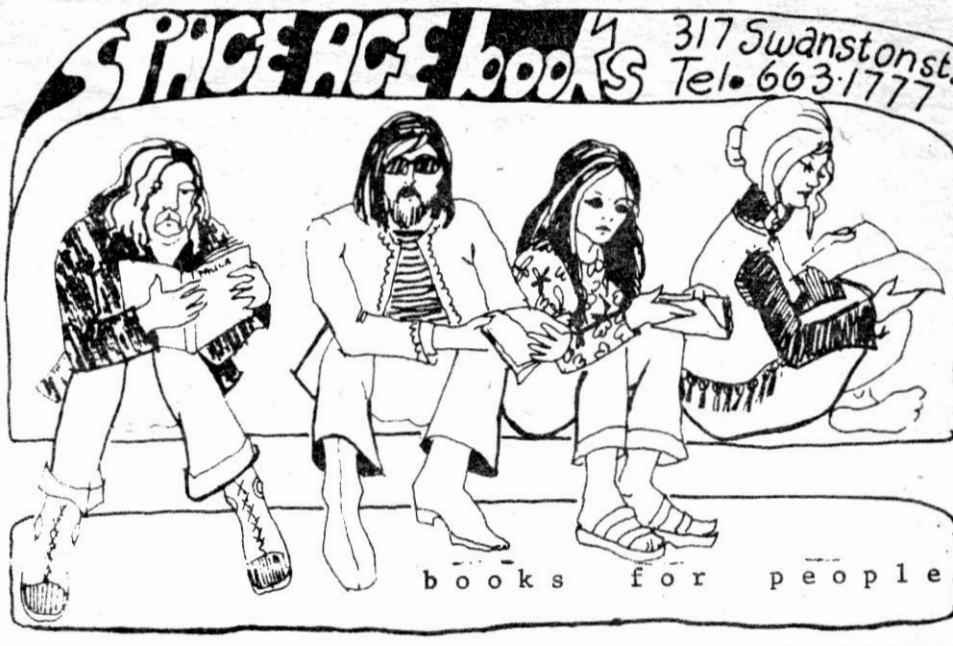
ADVERTISING RATES:
\$1.25 per Col. Inch
with artwork.
\$0.50 per Col. Inch
without artwork.

WE SOLICIT SUBMISSIONS WHICH
WILL BE PAID FOR AT THE RATE
OF \$1.00 PER 100 WORDS.
ARTICLES SHOULD NOT EXCEED
1000 WORDS.

CARTOONS \$5.00
FOR 3" x 3"

AFFILIATED WITH THE PORT
PHILLIP FOLK FOUNDATION.

PRICE 20¢.



'OLD TIME MUSIC' Magazine

All the news on Old Timey American Country Music.

- : stories on the early recording artists
- : record reviews : rare photographs
- : discographies : and more

Published quarterly in England. 60 cents per copy.

Subscriptions available. For details, write to:

John Boothroyd,
2/22 Como Street,
ALPHINGTON, VIC. 3078.

Trading Post

WANTED TO BUY: Full-sized typewriter in working condition. Arbalest. A003.

Copy of Robert Keinlein's "I will fear no evil". Arbalest A004.

Steel strung Folk Guitar, prefer narrow neck. Must have low action. Ref: Arbalest A007.

FOR SALE: Estruch Classical Guitar Hand made \$200 O.N.O. Arbalest A001.

Kriesler Portable Record Player. Needs new needle. Best Offer. A005.

Back copies of Worlds of If, and several 'numbered' Galaxies. Best Offer. A006.