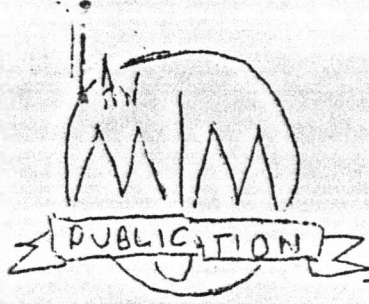


The RAMBLER

NUMBER THIRTEEN.
FEBRUARY 1958.
ONE PENNY.

DEPRESSO-
- COFFEE



"I AGREE WITH
YOU, ANDREY, ONE
CAN MAKE A
FETISH OF
AUTHENTICITY...."

JE

EDITORIAL

26th January.

Issue 12 was a bit more illegible than usual due to the cold weather. When it's cold the ink gets thicker than usual and won't flow properly. I had no means with which to heat the duper so I just had to let it go. Sorry.

By the way, although you may not have had time to comment on issue No. 12 - your comments on that issue will still be published in a later issue - so keep writing, won't you?

I'm pretty hard up for material at present, having used up all my back-log, so if you can write something, I'd be grateful. There's a reprint from CARAVAN No. 6 (The January issue) originally titled A LETTER FROM LONDON, published by kind permission of Lee Shaw of CARAVAN. Sandy Paton is the author - and if you haven't heard him sing, then I'd advise you to do so the first chance you get.

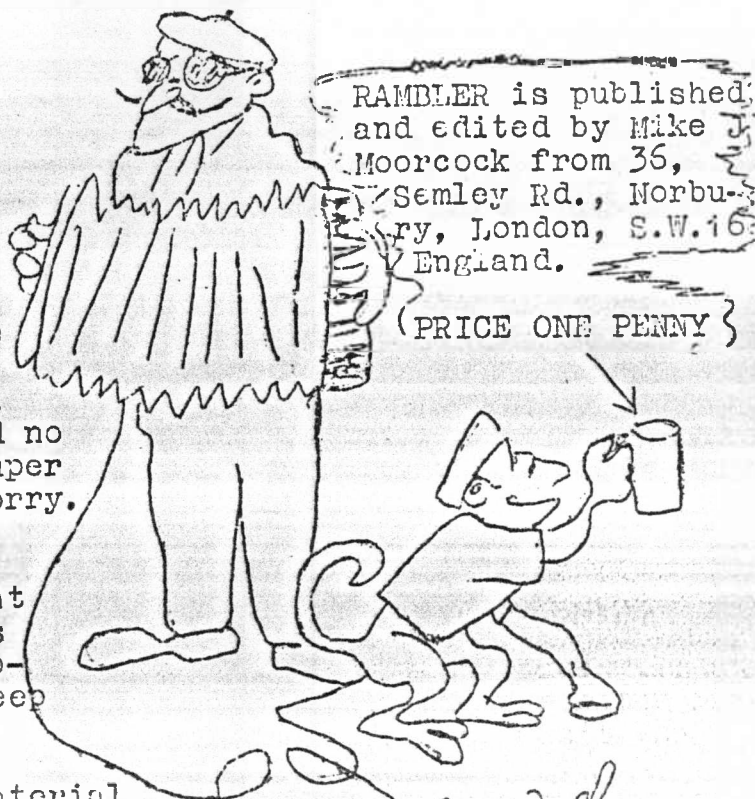
Jim Cawthorn, Art Editor of BURROUGHSIANA and asset to TARZAN ADVENTURES, has drawn two cartoons for this issue - the cover illo and the one on the opposite page. All messiness of reproduction should be blamed on to me - the same goes for the putting of Ray's illos on to stencil. I'm not much good in this line.

Dominic Behan and John Hasted will be opening a new club on Friday nights at the PRINCESS LOUISE soon, I'll write more about it later. Watch for this - and go to it, it should be a Good Thing.

The Hoots at the Princess are always worth attending as are the PERSONAL CHOICE programmes. If you live in the South London, Croydon and Surrey area there will be a new series of Hoots on Friday nights from the 31st of Jan.

I can never guarantee you a copy of RAMBLER - there are never enough to go round - unless you give me your name and address. There are so many people who come up to me and ask for it that the fifty or so copies I generally have in by bag are gone in an evening.

SING prints a lot of information and songs. From Eric Winter, 38, Westbere Rd., N.W.3. Highly recommended - write to Eric for details - or hope to see him at the P. Louise most nights when there's something on. CARAVAN is 6d. a month from: LeeH Shaw, Apt. 5P, 780, Greenwich St., New York 14 or John Brunner, 144, Fellowes Rd., London, N.W.3. 10c in the States. Trades accepted.



RAMBLER is published and edited by Mike Moorcock from 36, Semley Rd., Norbury, London, S.W.16, England.

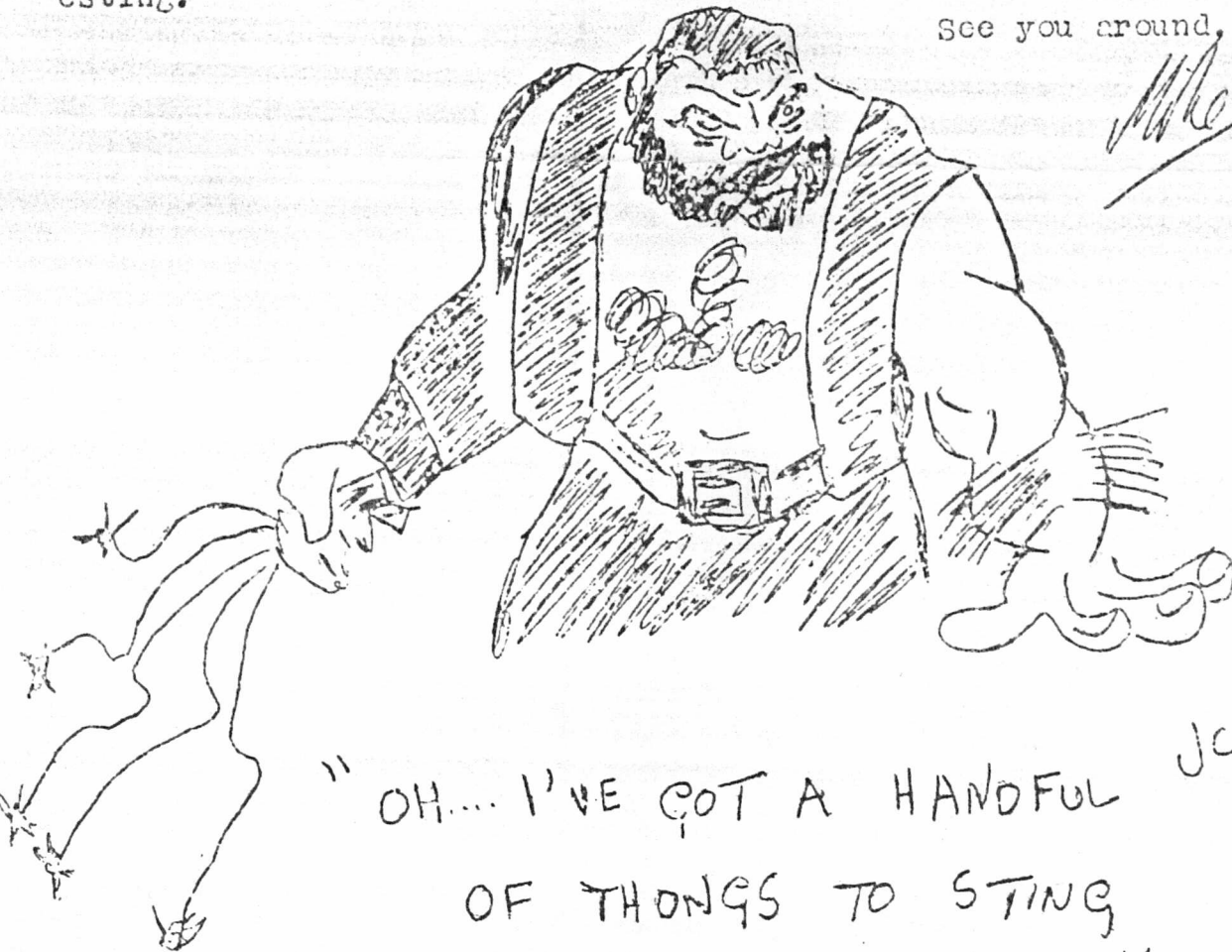
(PRICE ONE PENNY)

FREQUENTERS OF THE 'G AND G'. If you're interested in a song about the 'G' ask me about it - or write to me and ask me about it. It's a bit rough at present and extra verses are always welcome. Those who want this regularly, by the way, can generally find me at the 'G' - nearly always on Thursdays. Also at the DUKE and SAM WEDGES.

Mailing list subscribers ain't encouraged on account of this costing 2d. an issue to mail - but if you can't get it any other way, then send me a postcard with your name and address on it labelled RAMBLER.

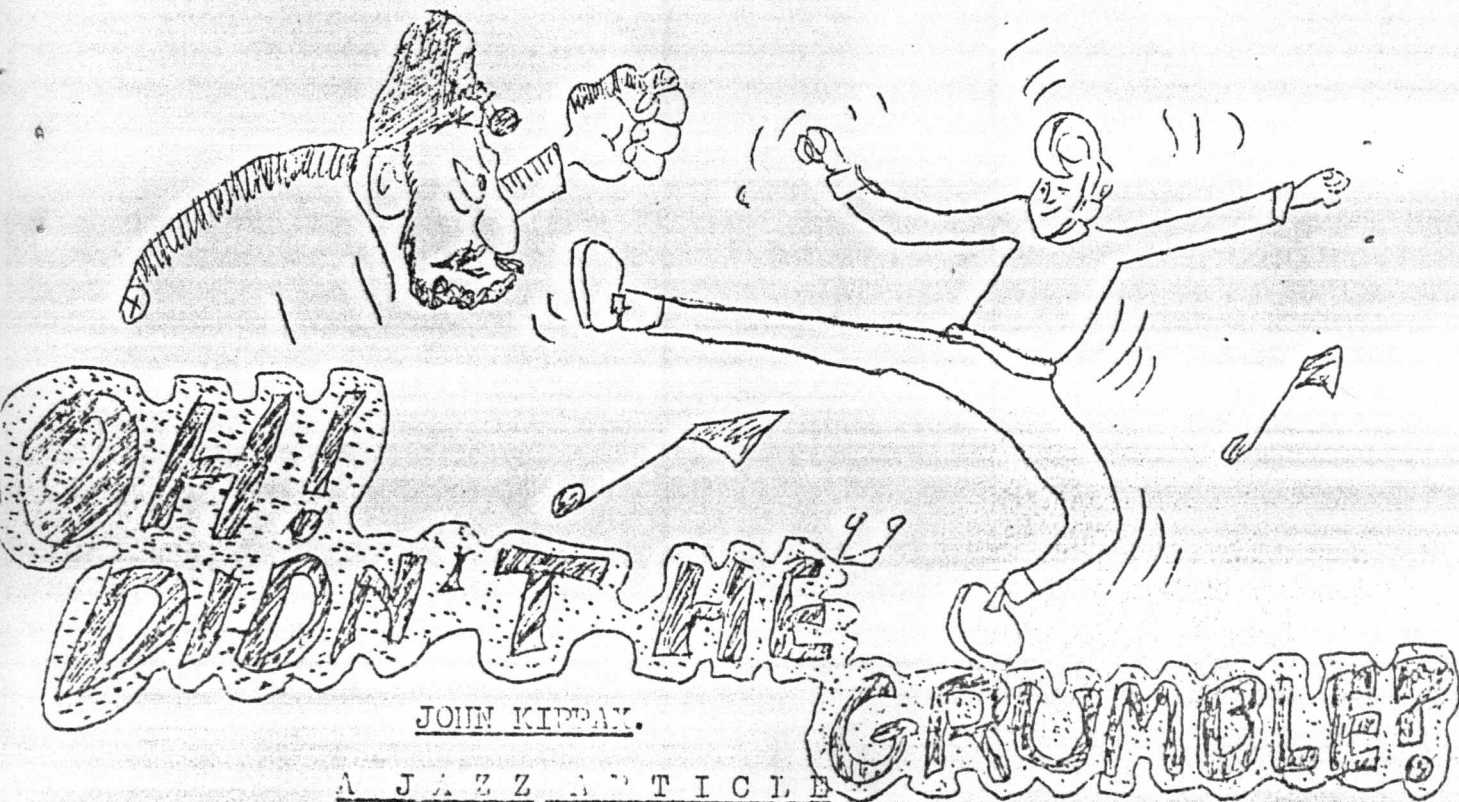
Lined up for future publication are reprinted articles by Pete and Peggy Seeger. The first republished from a bulletin issued by Pete in defence of accusations of 'Un-American' Activities and the second the introduction to Peggy's recent PERSONAL CHOICE appearance at the Princess Louise (republished from a bulletin put out to advertise the series. If you have already read either or both of these pieces and don't want to re-read 'em here, please write and say so. If enough people don't want to see them again, then I shan't publish them - for a bit anyway. I think they're worth reprinting, however, if you haven't seen them before as both are really interesting.

See you around,



" OH... I'VE GOT A HANDFUL
OF THINGS TO STING
YOU - "





The constant appearance of good records makes each revised edition of 'Jazz' by Rex Harris go out of date soon. The current edition (1957) contains a list of long and extended playing discs suggested as a basic collection; already it could be altered to include the two Alan Lomax L.P.s of unscripted blues, conversation and work songs - but the early section had a nasty gap which could have been filled even before the list was included. Harris hops straight from the Blues (after Emancipation) to the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (after World War One). I don't believe that instrumental Jazz was created by white men (although Willis Conover on 'Music USA' often gives me that impression) and I feel that Harris has missed out the styles played in New Orleans before 1900 - the Negro marching bands that were formed a few years after Emancipation, and the smaller dance bands that developed with/from the parade balls. Surely this period contains the real birth of Jazz, the mixing of marches, hymns and other songs into a repertoire played in distinctive Afro-American manner.

To represent the music of the small band I'd include the Vogue EP from the George Lewis Climax Session - the one featuring CARELESS LOVE. Buddy Bolden's DON'T GO 'WAY, NOBODY, and those gorgeous performances of JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE and JUST A LITTLE WHILE TO STAY HERE. This set, with an example of instrumental Blues, a tough dance tune, and two spirituals with a beat reminiscent of marching music, can be regarded as fairly representative.

Now let's include a contemporary example of the archaic Jazz played in street parades and burial processions.

The only available example is the Melodisc LP of the Eureka Brass Band; the band was recorded in New Orleans side streets in 1951 - a terrific atmosphere is created by the traditional drum-rolls, cornet signals and the faint background sounds.



Ray Nelson

The band swings out with the spiritual SING ON, spends four or five minutes with the tune, then plays a traditional burial march - GARLANDS OF FLOWERS, a lovely piece lasting eleven minutes. The second side of the record opens with another traditional burial march, WEST LAWN DIRGE (six minutes) which leads into JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE (three and a half minutes) to form an impressive linked dead-march and hymn. Finally, to prove that no holds need be barred, we get a rowising shake-it-and-break-it LADY BE GOOD - although I wish a traditional piece had been used instead.

Instruments used seem to be: two (possibly three) cornets, two trumpets, one (two ?) clarinet (s), an alto and a tenor sax (which certainly don't spoil anything), sousaphone, snare drum, and a really effective bass drum.

(James Asman, writer of the sleeve-notes, admits in a letter in October that no definite details are available and, of course, men probably alternate, which doesn't help!)

I'd like to form a club with this record as membership card. The only people who've heard of it seem to be the ones who own a copy. I sometimes wonder just how many copies have been sold. I once wondered if the 'Jazz Journal' knew about it - I think the record was available when an article in the publication said the best example of a jazz march in British catalogues was a Paul Barbarin version of one - the writer praised this version for beginning with a drum-roll but also said that a piano solo was included and the tempo was not that of a march.

Oh, I know that there are marches galore in the jazz repertoire - MY MARYLAND, GETTYSBURG, HIGH SOCIETY, OH DID'T HE RANBLE, IF I EVER CEASE TO LOVE, RAMPART STREET PARADE, not to mention spirituals regarded as marches - but I'd run a mile to hear a convincing version of any of them. Jazz marches are a rare species to hunt.

TURN PAGE.



In America one can buy six titles by Bunk Johnson's Brass Band - veteran jazzmen using their trumpets, horns and drums to record reputedly superb versions of TELL ME YOUR DREAMS, OH DIDN'T HE RAMBLE, OVER IN GLORYLAND, NEARER MY GOD TO THEE, WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN and JUST A LITTLE WHILE TO STAY HERE - but no British reissue seems imminent or even probable.

And six reputedly excellent versions of jazz marches were issued here by Esquire - the discs made in 1945 by Pudi Blesh under the name ORIGINAL ZENITH BRASS BAND - but the titles were deleted 'for contract reasons' and I can't get them anywhere! (Even the Eureka took two months to arrive when ordered by an efficient dealer. It's all part of a plot! Grrrrr!)

So I fall back on the versions offered by ordinary jazz bands. Well, I once heard Colyer's Jazzmen play IF I EVER CEASE TO LOVE - the tempo was perfect, but the double bass spoiled the illusion. Otherwise I shrink from the versions of WHEN THE SAINTS GO SPRINTING IN and OH DIDN'T HE RUN LIKE HELL - er, see what I mean? When a band plays at a dance, I don't mind marches being played in fast 4/4 time, but I'd like marches to be played in a reasonable manner on records.

The tempo of SING ON by the EUREKA BRASS BAND suits me - not more than four other 'ordinary' records of marches in my collection have such a sane tempo - and all four contain a gay double bass and piano.

Call the EUREKA tempo '17' - a jazz band rarely plays a march with a tempo of less than '20'. It makes a lot of difference, unless I'm living in a peculiar and personal time stream!

I'm familiar with five versions of OH DIDN'T HE RAMBLE and none of them are satisfying. Horton's has the best funeral atmosphere but the actual music is too fast, thus sounds strained, and the piano annoys me; Kid Ory's seems a little more comfortable, but not much and also has its non-mobile instruments; Armstrong's begins gloriously but goes to Hades in a gut bucket beginning with the clarinet solo; Celestin's is too fast and has a (yeah!) piano solo; and now I come to this week's discovery - a new George Lewis LP on Vogue which includes his version - a thing I've been waiting for - but later the piano solo comes in!

I can pretend not to hear a double-bass, but not a piano. Even in the rhythm section it annoys me, and in solo it makes me want to put footprints on the wall. Bunk Johnson actually omitted the piano from MARYLAND on his excellent BRUNSWICK EP but it crept into his HIGH SOCIETY on HMV and added to the peculiar uncasiness of the record (which, nevertheless, is the most 'marchy' version I've found of this tune).

You may ask "If a jazz band isn't marching, why on earth should it pretend to be?" Well, not long ago my gramophone went haywire and insisted on playing with roughly 10% loss of speed - it was annoying at the time, but also gratifying - I put my ideas to the test and found that a lot of standard jazz tunes (not only marches) sounded more natural at the reduced speed (although the pitch was altered of course). In fact, some of my extended playing versions of tunes like THE SAINTS sound pretty god at 33½ rpm!

There's a bad tendency to assume that extra speed makes a tune more exciting, and marches are favourite victims of this deadly tendency.

I want my jazz marches to have marching instruments, march tempo and march beat. Until all the jazz bands come over to my taste I'll have to suffer patiently and be thankful for such small mercies as the Eureka Brass Band.

I might even form that club.

Anyone care to join ?

+ +

REPORTS of any folkmusic activity in any part of the world if written up and sent to RAMBLER will be gratefully received. Jazz articles also accepted (we generally feature one per issue). Art work (straight or cartoons) also required. The more you send - the more everyone gets for their penny.

MONEY can not be paid for any material submitted as we are an entirely non-profit making zine - running at a big loss every issue. Contributions will be paid for in free issues and eternal gratefulness.

WAX DOLLS of Donnegan and other murderers of songs supplied on request - pins extra.

+ +

"We were sitting around in a Waterloo pub some time back - last summer - when in walk Jack and Daryl.

"Jack's dressed kind of casually. Pyjamas, slippers, stetson - and his big raccoon skin coat....."

- Male Price.

NOTE: The story gets better further on - but I decided I couldn't print the rest of it after working out the number of female readers. No prizes for guessing who Jack and Daryl were.

Mike.

REVIEWS



AMM

I.W.W. SONGS (To fan the flames of discontent). Published by the Industrial Workers of the World, 2422, N. Halsted Street, Chicago 14, Illinois. Price 25 cents. Twenty-ninth Edition.

A couple of issues ago I reviewed the book that was brought out to satirize this little book.

Of the two, I prefer the BOSSSES' SONG BOOK.

Of the 55-odd songs in this book only a few are free from a depressing sort of fanaticism,

where they, themselves, are satirizing others they are at their best. THE PREACHER AND THE SLAVE, IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN THE SOUPLINE, CASEY JON'S THE UNION SCAB etc. are all worth reading.

Still, I was a little disappointed when I got this book - I had expected just a little more.

Perhaps, in America, there is need for an association like the I.W.W. - I don't know enough about it, but this beastlike hatred of the 'boss' seems to me to be just a little unreasonable. It seems more an outlet for a kind of mental energy than anything else. I am, of course, always willing to be told otherwise by someone who knows more about the thing.

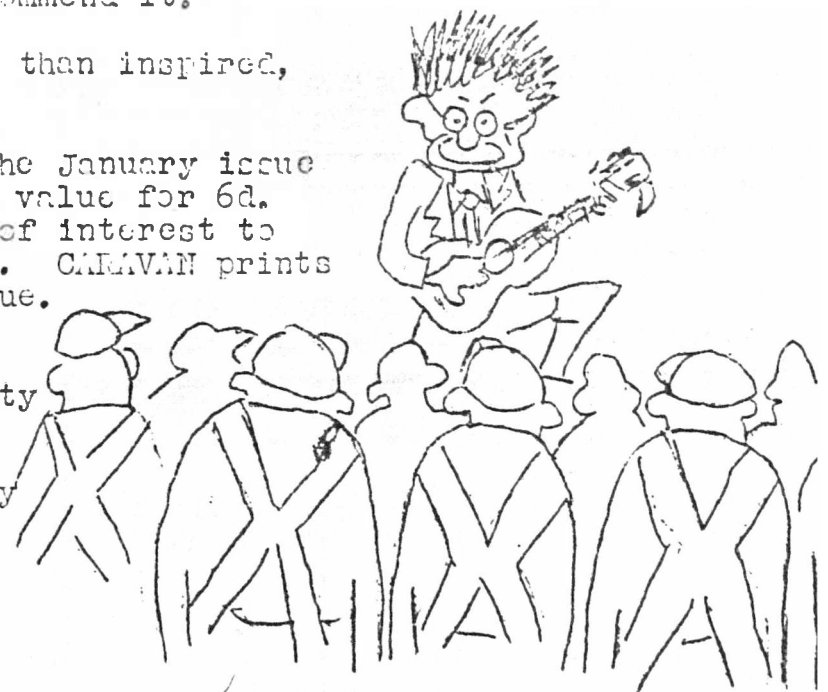
I can't honestly recommend it.

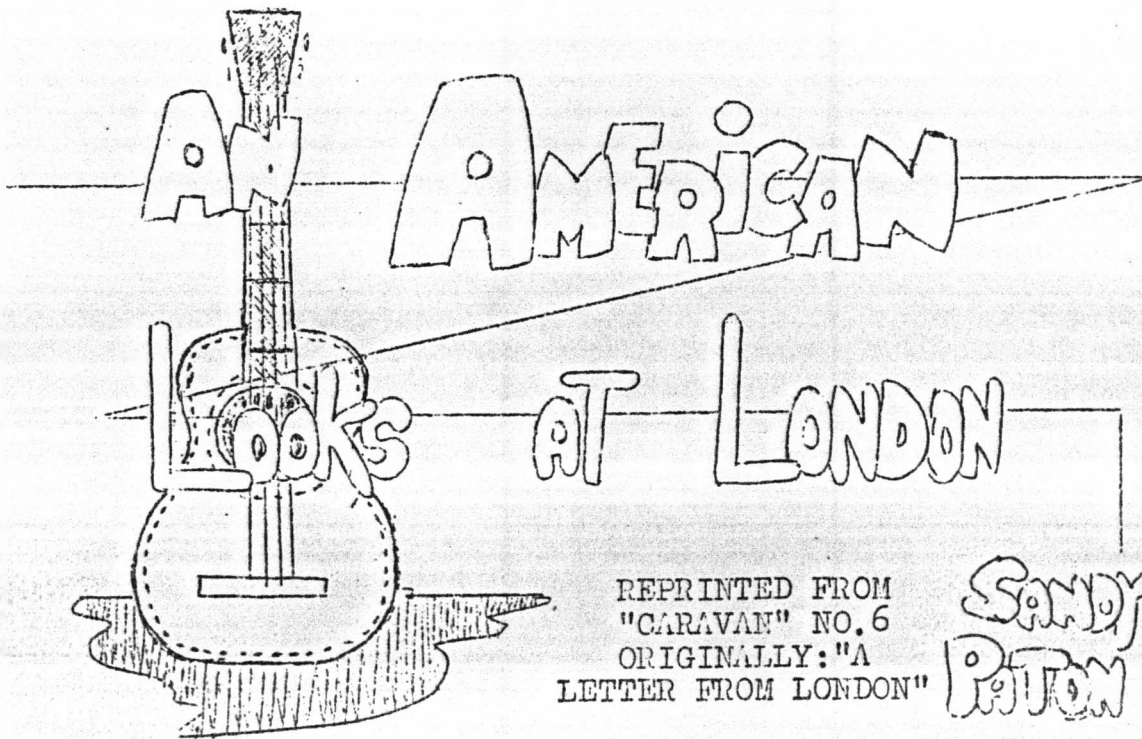
It depressed, rather than inspired, me.

Much more enjoyable was the January issue of CARAVAN. Really good value for 6d. News, views and articles of interest to all folkmusic enthusiasts. CARAVAN prints several songs in this issue.

Words and music were provided for the sea shanty HANDY JIM.

If you haven't already sent for an issue of CARAVAN, I advise you to do so immediately.





REPRINTED FROM
"CARAVAN" NO. 6
ORIGINALITY: "A"
LETTER FROM LONDON"

SANDY
PATON

I'm not sure that your John Brunner ((regular CARAVAN London correspondent)) does justice to London in his regular letter. I find myself wondering how much he knows about honest-to-god folkmusic when he goes on at such length about skiffle, men who can play a hundred instruments (including wash-tub bass), "Freight Train", etc. Sure, there is still a frightening amount of skiffle going on in England, but real folkmusic - that which accepts, without shame and loathing, the British traditional songs and ballads - seems to be fighting its way back through the deluge of Leadbelly imitators and Guthrie-manics. For which I breath a fervent "thank God!"

If you've heard these skifflers, you know how completely they flatten out a once fairly (and only fairly) interesting melody to fit it into the skifflers' demand for sufficient noise and hysterical rhythm. This, like a lot of the New York enthusiasts' products, isn't really based on a love and an interest in folk music! It's merely a substitute for rock and roll which permits the participant to maintain his "Intellectual" standing. He can still scoff at Presley, but only because he is doing to "Cumberland Gap" what Elvis does to "Blue Suede Shoes". Ask any one of these skiffle enthusiasts to teach you a British song and they'll look at you blankly and ask if you mean something like "God Save The Queen". They only know American songs - and not very good ones, at that. Hell, if they sing "Foggy Dew", they learned it from Burl Ives, and no one ever heard of old Harry Cox, who sings an infinitely superior version up in Sutton, Norfolk. Paul Clayton knows a version very similar to Harry's, ask him to sing it for you and you'll see what I mean.

About this "flattening" of a melody: I've heard these kids pounding out a Woody Guthrie song, for instance, which I've heard sung by Guthrie himself on a (Pardon the expression) Stinson "Folksay" record - and, by God, you can hardly recognise the melody. Another example: look at the "Puttin' on the Style" which Randolph collected in the Ozarks and compare its melody with the flat but boisterous version sung by the skiffles here. Sure, the Gateway Singers in San Francisco may have taken the first step in eliminating any lyric touches from the melody - and they may even be the source of the song as it is done here, but these foot-stomping souters have gone them one better. By the time the song gets into the Skiffle Cellar, it has no melody left at all!

I hadn't intended to spend so much time blasting skiffle, in general; guess I got carried away. Actually, I feel there is this to say for skiffle: the phenomenon does get kids up and participating, gets them to making their own music, (less so at the Skiffle Cellar than at other skiffle coffee-bars). This is one strike against the "juke-box lethargy" that grips most of America's youth and leads the way to the inevitable extinction of "self-made music" (that which, with careful nurturing might lead to a new, if different, brand of urban folkmusic in America), and, as such, is certainly good.

On the negative side of the ledger, aside from their musical destructiveness, (which may be more a matter of my taste versus their's) they, in seeking pulsing rhythms and tempos, completely ignore and, resultantly, deny their own fabulously rich musical heritage! Here, in London,, a few weeks ago, Caroline and I attended a BALLADS AND BLUES concert on British Industrial Songs. Ewan MacColl, A.L. Lloyd, Seamus Ennis and Dominic Behan made up the programme. In the first half they sang working songs and industrial ballads; in the second half they sang a variety of personal favourites of theirs - for example, MacColl, Lloyd and Ennis sang Scots, English and Irish versions of one ballad - "My Bonnie Laddie's Lang A-growin'". MacColl sang "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow"; Lloyd sang an Australian version of the Irish "Old Man Rocking The Cradle" and was followed by Ennis doing the Irish original. Anyway, my point is this: this was a damned exciting evening of real folkmusic and there were less than 75 people in the audience! Any night at the Skiffle Cellar will see more than that number crowded in to hear five English kids imitate a negro dialect and buzz into a kazoo! Pardon me one vulgar "Jesus Christ!"

To change the course, if not the subject - these little coffee bars are a great institution. If only America could manage a similar one. I wonder if we can't because of union difficulties (I know that one can't pay union scale on coffee profits) or is it possible in England and not in America because these English kids can't afford a movie-and-milkshake type evening?

This last idea looks, on first glance, like a pretty sound one. Wages are pretty low, by comparison, and one can have a full evening of music (?) and social banter over a ninepenny to shilling cup of coffee. Darn cheap entertainment for a date, anyway you look at it (no pun intended). Still, I wish we had a few places like them. A lot of good young folksingers could earn ten bucks a night and gain a lot of experience in working in front of a crowd which, I'm sure, tends to sharpen a guy's style and give him the confidence to really let himself get 'into' a song. We'd surely end up with a larger number of professional-quality amateurs which would, in turn, help "sell" folksongs to a larger group of non-participants. If my only introduction to folkmusic had been through the sounds produced by some of these kids who have never had to make a song appeal to a crowd of only slightly interested people, I'd probably still think 'folkmusic' meant Nashville radio.

Looks like this leads me into one final area - which I hope will not just add new fuel to an already burned out fire. This debate of yours about "ethnic authenticity" and whatever its opposite may be called.

In a letter to the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, Dr. R. Vaughan Williams writes a few pertinent lines. He is referring, primarily, to dance, but the ideas carry over, I believe, to songs as well. We are all familiar, I think, with the term "unconscious artistry" as used to describe and define the folksong and its singer's style. (See, for example, the introduction to Leach's THE BALLAD BOOK and Richard Chase's introduction to his little pocket book, AMERICAN FOLK TALES AND SONGS.) With this phrase in mind let me quote you a sentence or two from Dr. William's letter:

"What can be more self-conscious than the present cult of supposed 'naturalness'? It is just as bad to dance in a sham rustic style as it is to sing a folksong in a sham rustic dialect. I believe that this new back-to-the-land movement is likely to lead to the idea that if dancing (try inserting the word singing here...SP) is badly done it must be authentic. This, I think, is the reverse of the truth."

One more quote from the letter, for what it is worth:

"The avowed purpose of the E.F.D.S.S. is to preserve and practice our folksongs and dances. Why do we wish to practice them? Is it not because we find them beautiful? Otherwise let us relegate them to the shelves of our libraries and museums."



End of quotes, but a few words left for me to write. Why in the name of heaven should a fellow who can sing try to imitate one who can't sing, just because the one who can't was born eighty years ago on a rocky Kentucky hillside? The melody being attempted by the can't singer may be very beautiful and haunting. How much better then, for the world of the future, that it is taken by the can-singer and preserved for its intrinsic value as a thing of beauty? To imitate is phony, no matter how good the imitator may be.

And that concludes this rambling letter from your American London correspondent.

- Sandy Paton.

SANDY PATON is currently appearing at the Troubadour and Breadbasket and is worth hearing.

- MJM.

PS. Sandy obviously only seen one side of London's coffee bars. I invite him to visit my own favourite coffee-houses.

NEW CLUB

On Friday, February 14th Dominic Bohan and John Hasted open a new club at the Princess Louise. This will be reported in the first RAMBLER issued after this event.

PERSONAL CHOICE

The PERSONAL CHOICE programmes are proving extremely successful - so far Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl have appeared. Seamus Ennis is to appear next WEDNESDAY 5th February. These will be reported in future issues of RAMBLER. Tickets 4/- at the Princess Louise, Holborn.

Singing

AMICARAVAN



A boon to the folksinger. This magazine prints many songs and articles every issue. Recommended. Details from Eric Winter, 38, Westbere Road, N.W.2. England. Usual price is a shilling.

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