



REAL TIME

Perhaps 'other ways' is a better expression. The fairs seem to act as a kind of wonderful 'neutral territory' where people can come and dress/behave/perform in ways which would cause total collision outside. They also seem to illuminate aspects of parallel worlds, another country which shares the same territory but which is rarely seen. At its most extreme this showed itself in the chaos of the second Bungay May Horse Fair which, even at this distance, tends to evince wry grins and sharp intakes of breath from people who were there.

Perhaps this is a clue as to how and why the Fairs will continue; they ease the burden and restrictions of normal, ordered, mundane living. "We could do things in real time," recalls Bruce Lacey.

Much of that real time is distilled into these pages.

Don Mathew.



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WHERE TO NOW?

Sir,

By most accounts, the Bargham Fairs were magic. The ones that followed, the Albions, the Green Fairs, the Houghams and the Follyes, they too were often magic. A sensuous blend of revelry, craftsmanship, and purpose. But now it seems that the spark has gone and the Fairs are in danger of becoming merely a pleasant tradition rather than an instant thought provoking experience.

As a punter and sometime participant, the Fairs were, at their best, joyous and optimistic occasions. They had a message, which though difficult to pin-down, seemed to have something to do with co-operation, self-sufficiency, tolerance and self-determination. The Green Gathering at Glastonbury had that atmosphere and sense of direction. But recent Fairs in East Anglia haven't.

So what can be done?

Most people live in towns but Fairs are in the country, so I think the Fairs should be moved-

re-birthed - in towns. That would mean that whole communities would participate. It would mean that the concept of 'participate' and 'punter' would dissolve - everyone would be involved. Whole streets would become markets. Theatre groups would pop up - the initial element of surprise - on back roads. Music of all kinds, all day, all night. Bank tellers dressed as highwaymen. Planning Officers as cloned Witchfinder Generals. Shops could revert to their former uses - saddle makers, blacksmiths, plumbers (though the lead would have to be dispensed with)...The possibilities are endless.

And because everyone would be involved, ideas of self and community determination, of 'doing it yourself' would naturally dominate. And those that didn't get involved, those that moaned and whined and wrung their hands - they could be put in the stocks and fishheads thrown at them.

Yours in peace,
John Ellerby.