



SLOWLY DOWNWARD TAGLIBRO



ISSUE TWENTY-FIVE

A UNIVERSAL SIGH

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THE UNIVERSAL SIGH. THOUSANDS OF NEWSPAPERS GIVEN AWAY AROUND THE WORLD.

On March 28th and 29th 2011 thousands and thousands of copies of a publication entitled *The Universal Sigh* were handed out in many major cities around the world. Many people might now be wondering why this happened.

Well me, I got back from London, from Brick Lane, where I and a fellow-conspirator handed out about three thousand free copies of *The Universal Sigh* outside a record shop called Rough Trade East.

This was the culmination of an idea that had its germination in a seething mass of humanity that I'd been embroiled in at the top of the steps down to Oxford Circus tube station, where amongst the heaving throng of commuters were valiant distributors of London Lite and Metro and the Standard, attempting to hand them out.

The newspaper thing began some months previously, in the summer. I'd left a newspaper on a bench in the sun, and when I returned to get it a few hours later it had already begun its inevitable decay; the paper had rippled slightly, the whiteness was yellowing, and it was feeling more brittle and delicate than it had before. I thought that this constituted a wonderful medium.



Oiks reading 'newspapers' on the 'tube'.

There's nothing archival about a newspaper. It doesn't pretend to be definitive; just because a newspaper comes out we don't expect news to stop, or sport to finish. A newspaper is just a simple statement, an account of how things were at the time of writing. Newspapers aren't even preserved. The vast bulk of them are recycled and turned into more newspapers.

The last packaging that I'd produced for a record was the hefty chunk of cardboard and paper that accompanied *In Rainbows*, but something of that kind was entirely inappropriate for this new record, which was very much more a state-of-play document.

After a lengthy concatenation of ideas, the usual meetings, conversations, work, doubt, worry and fear of the

unknown, we had produced a large-format 36-page full colour newspaper which was to be presented, along with various other articles with the record *The King of Limbs*.

Afterwards, in response to the idea that began in a crush of commuters at Oxford Circus, we made another one.

The Universal Sigh was a 12-page tabloid, printed using web-offset lithography on newsprint paper, just like the LA Weekly or London Lite or The Daily Mail. It may have been printed using the same machines that produce these newspapers.

The newspaper can of course be seen as a relic of the past, a dying format that has no place in the modern world where digital content interfaces seamlessly with an ever burgeoning plethora of shiny devices; portable tablet computers and e-readers, laptops, netbooks and smartphones.

But it is also a tactile pleasure, a finger-inking, page-flapping, paper rustling codex of information that won't crash or corrupt. It won't become useless without electricity. It won't end up on the shores of somewhere far away, its innards picked at by underpaid children. But it will, with time, slowly crinkle, yellow, fade and crumble; much as we will.

BAD WOODS. SCREENPRINTS NOW AVAILABLE FROM SLOWLY DOWNWARD MANUFACTORY.

The *Manufactory* has some prints from the **Bad Woods** series recently exhibited at the **Work On Paper** show

in London. They are screenprinted on Fabriano paper, the print size is 450mm x 450mm, paper size is 500mm

x 510mm, and are numbered, signed, and stamped with the Lazarides stamp. The cost per print is £200.

