

It's no Yoke

Alternative scene mags, with quasi-literary aspirations are another disappearing act in the do-it-yourself magazing world. Yet here, from Dublin, is a feisty small eco-zine, and its editor has made the cover.



The Yoke is available from
37 Thormanby Lawns, Howth,
Co Dublin, Ireland
www.theyoke.net

table, demonstrating a publicity stunt worthy of any a mainstream publication. The editor, in a naked attempt to draw attention to the magazine had gone to explicit lengths by posing nude in glorious sea blue, à la latter day Matisse – and subbed it ‘into the blue’. Nice. I can’t remember if this directly set me off turning the pages, or whether there was something in the quality of the blue, but *The Yoke* turns out to be a dandy of a magazine find.

It’s Irish, from Dublin, and is an oddly pleasing mix of a latter-day mini-literary magazine pieces, anti-globalisation polemicising of the No Logo variety, and a goulash serving of home-grown fare, from – in this issue – road protests and archeological digs down in Wicklow County, to natural magic foods, a recycling report, and the softly humorous, lovingly illustrated ‘Natural Philosopher’ column. All this in a colour-dominated, sixty-four page, 8 by 6 inch format, using a nice touchy-feely eco paper (just like *Fourth Door*.) *The Yoke* also feels determinedly alternative, and despite yet another hot-sex-magic piece, shows that here in the twenty-first century post-globalisation world ‘alt mags’ can find ways of making the small magazine field feel new and different, both from the world they once emerged from – from *Oz* to *Rolling Stone* – and from the world they exist in today. Is this to do with being from Ireland? I’m not sure, but I can’t imagine a green alt magazine of this sort happening anywhere in the neo-Britland scape. Which is another reason to proffer one’s hat and celebrate its existence. *OL*

Here at *Fourth Door Review* we know how difficult it is to produce, let alone keep on some kind of track with, a – what used to be called – small magazine. Although there may be mutterings about difficulties, in fear of becoming irreconcilable magazine bores these tend to be relegated to a distinctly low profile in conversations with outsiders – that is, almost everyone else. Yet on the rare occasion when any other magazine crosses our bows there’s a frisson of excitement to see someone else treading the same path of trying to fit a set of ideas into a limited number of pages, and declaring the same frustrations (for instance, a random example among many, Waterstones’ decision not to stock any independent publication below a minimum of 500 orders.)

So imagine the surprise and envy when the fifth issue of *The Yoke* washed up one day on the kitchen