

ACROSS THE ZAMBEZI

ABERCORNUCOPIA HAS JOINED OUR FAMILY

YOU knew, of course, although it was slightly before your time, that The Times was originally called the Daily Universal Register? That was when it first made its appearance in 1785; three years later it changed to its present title, a name that I see described as "splendidly stark . . . 'There you are!'" says Printing House Square. 'The events of our day! Take them or leave them and be blown to you!'"

This business of naming a newspaper is frightfully important. There are some very strict unwritten laws governing the names you can use and those you cannot use.

You may have Star and Sun, but never Moon — not even The Miami Moon. Spectator, Courier, Messenger and even Intelligencer are O.K., but not Informer, and certainly not Spy.

It's a fascinating subject, isn't it? And for an illuminating essay on newspaper nomenclature, allow me to introduce you to Abercornucopia, a four-page news-sheet printed for free distribution in Abercorn.

right meaning

Now there's a delightful name for you . . . no fewer than seven syllables, and conveying exactly the right meaning: Abercorn, and cornucopia.

A cornucopia was a "horn of plenty", often carried by some such lady as the Goddess Fortuna, and was a symbol of abundance. Magnificent grapes and pears poured from its decorative, bell-shaped mouth apparently for free distribution to the populace — "a sort of celestial Christmas stocking", as Abercornucopia describes it.

local events

The newsheet has just made its bow to the public of Abercorn. It is principally a diary of local events, and in issue No. 1 the editor, in explaining how the title came to be chosen ("if you don't like this title send us a better one") goes on to discuss the alternatives open to anyone in a similar position.

"Chronicle," he says, happily assumes that the facts printed (such as the pectoral dimensions of young women) are really worthy of permanent record.

"If you worship the categorical imperative and deny the existence of objective truth, you call your paper 'Pravda!'"

Obviously, none of these was suitable for Abercorn. I think the paper has been admirably christened.

WRITE-UP

*by
Man in
the North*

"Herald" and "Clarion" assume them to be worth proclaiming with tabard and trumpet.

"Mercury" rushes them to you in winged feet. "Argus" uses his innumerable eyes (naughty! naughty!) to find them for you.

two-faced

"But," says the article, "we hear nothing of 'Cyclops' with his one-eyed, single-minded menace; or of 'Janus' whose two-faced ambivalence one would have thought to be most appropriate these days.

"'Guardian', 'Sentinel', 'Monitor' and 'Eagle' maintain a puritan hunt for evil-doers . . . ; but 'Watchdog', 'Hound', 'Hawk', — not to mention 'Vulture' — simply won't do.