



ASPRA AGM 2019

Advertisement manager's report

Advertisement volumes and revenues continue to rise. This is a good thing and a bad thing. It's good insofar as it brings in more money, but a bad thing for the editorial team, who have to work much harder as a consequence. As the table below shows, in last year's Spring issue we produced 20½ pages of editorial ('lit') in a 32-page issue. The problem, if that's the right word for it, is that it's necessary to maintain a balance between editorial and advertising – we wouldn't want to have 21 pages of editorial and 27 pages of ads in a 48-page issue, for example. The editorial would be swamped by the ads.

Issue sizes and ad:lit ratios	Size	Ad:lit	%
Spring 2018	32pp	11.5:20.5	36:64
Summer 2018 – our 'bumper Summer issue'	40pp	15:25	37.5:62.5
Autumn 2018	56pp	23.5:32.5	42:58
Spring 2019	64pp	26.25:37.75	41:59

The upshot is that we went to 64 pages, double the size of our original issues, with our Spring 2019 issue. With his crack editorial team, Phil filled, and you don't get to type that often, 37¾ pages – almost twice the amount of our early issues. And it's not easy, not straightforward, all these extra pages. It's not just pasting the words into a template, finding a few pics and moving on. It's nailing it into a wobbly no-prisoners format, on an 8in (approx) screen laptop that forgets who's boss, that takes the time. Insert photo, type ('print') goes bananas. Delete photo: type still bananas. Our type size is smaller than it was: loads more to read but a b*st*rd to correct and organise on the tiny screen.

We reduced the paper weight slightly, dropping from 150gsm (grams per square metre) to 135gsm. You can hardly tell the difference. Saddle stitching (ie stapling) 64 pages of the heavier weight paper, in our A5 format, wasn't an option. It's still perfectly fit for purpose – any number of consumer magazines (eg Radio Times) are running paper half this thickness, but it did mean moving the printing to Germany, which delayed things slightly.

Most of our advertisers prepay three issues, which entitles them to a 10% discount. This saves a lot of hassle invoicing each advertiser for each issue, and then chasing if or when the funds don't show up. (It goes without saying it saves them a lot of hassle too.) It does mean though that at any one moment the ASPRA bank account contains significant forward funds, and this rolls on every time we publish another issue. At the time of writing we have more than 40 active advertisers. Broadly, about a third of these will need to renew (or cancel) their advertising in any one issue, and there are always potential advertisers in the wings. Keeping on top of it is, as you might suspect, surprisingly time-consuming. It's amazing how much time, and I mean this in the nicest possible way, some advertisers expect me to spend on their £20 ads. Phone calls, emails, emails, emails, proofs, visits – they get good value for money, and then some.

We're not going to increase the issue size again. 64 pages is (!) enough, and that means we will not be accepting many more new ads.

A £20 quarter-page advert in our next issue will go to 2000-ish homes. What a bargain.

Colin Gamm

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2 April 2019