

Newsletter



A Brief History

Issue One Spring 1996

In 1987 a number of interested individuals discussed the need for the establishment of some form of archive for jazz.

There was no nationally recognised archive in the field and there was some concern that collections in the hands of private individuals might ultimately be lost if no arrangements could be made to safeguard them.

In 1988 the National Jazz Foundation Archive was registered as a charity.

An approach was made to Essex County Council's Library service. This was favourably received at officer level and subsequently a formal approach was made to the Library, Museum and Records Committee seeking accommodation for the Archive.

In due course accommodation was offered at Loughton Library. This location was chosen because space was available in a prestige building and it enjoyed good communications with central London.

Until the present time Essex County Council Libraries department have generously funded the Archive in terms of dedicated staff, purchasing, heat, light, cleaning and accommodation.

The launch at Loughton, Autumn 1988



Back: Roger Dave Campbell Tiny Eddie George Charles David
Horton Shepherd Burnap Winters Harvey Webb Fox Dennis
Kneeling: Derek Digby Frank
'Eggy' Ley Fairweather Parr

NATIONAL
JAZZ
FOUNDATION
ARCHIVE

NJFA
Loughton Library
Traps Hill
Loughton
Essex IG10 1HD
Tel. 0181 502 0181

OUR MISSION

The aim of the National Jazz Foundation Archive is to be the national archive and research centre for printed material, photographs and memorabilia relating to jazz.

The scope of the collection is jazz generally with the emphasis on British publications but foreign works, particularly American, are also collected.

The goals are:-

To acquire all material published in the UK on jazz through purchase, exchange and donation.

To acquire older material and memorabilia, photographs, concert programmes, posters, etc, through exchange, purchase or donation.

To acquire unpublished material, including personal letters and files of major British jazz musicians, by developing personal contacts.

To acquire foreign publications by establishing contacts with a view to soliciting donations and exchanges.

To offer a full information and enquiry service.

Fund Raising Campaign

The Archive is the brainchild of jazz musician, broadcaster and librarian Digby Fairweather who wanted to establish a national archive which would accommodate and positively encourage the donation of jazz material for study and research. He has seen his idea grow into an archive of international status housed in its own elegant premises and is pleased with progress so far.

Digby says : " That this collection has grown so quickly has everything to do with the unfailing support, both moral and financial, of Essex County Council's Libraries department. Thanks to them the Archive has steadily grown bigger and busier. However much remains to be done - full time posts must be financed and premises must be extended. Money is needed for these projects and this is where the jazz loving public can help us. "

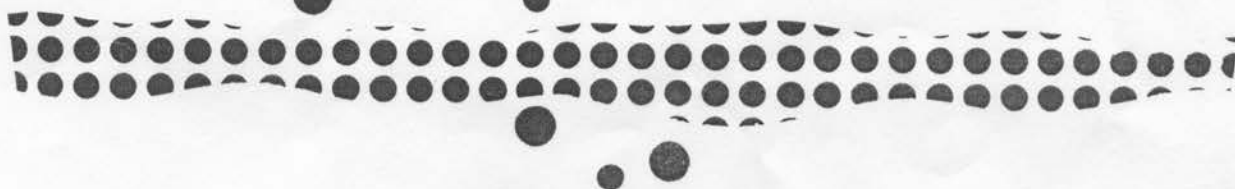
In 1995 the Archive was swinging to the sounds of jazz when it held an Open Day on 17th June. As well as live music from Digby Fairweather, Campbell Burnap, Geoff Taylor and Nevil Skrimshire, the National Sound Archive played rare recordings from their unique collection and there was a collector's sale of books and periodicals. Attended by authors, journalists, musicians and jazz enthusiasts the day attracted much favourable comment.

The night before, Ongar Jazz hosted the first fundraising concert for the Archive, with all the musicians giving their time for free. The purpose of the open day was to launch the Friends of the Archive scheme; funds from this scheme and from the concert are being used to improve facilities, make important purchases and to expand the collection.

This year there will be two fundraising concerts.

On Wednesday 17th April 1996 at The 100 Club in Oxford Street, London W1, there will be an evening of entertainment starring **George Webb's Dixielanders**, **The Great British Jazz Band** featuring Dave Shepherd, Pete Strange and Mike Cotton and **Jazz Guitars** a jazz guitar duo with Nevil Skrimshire and Ray Catling. The event will be presented by Campbell Burnap and will end with an All Star Jam Session. Tickets are £8.00 - just come along on the night and buy them on the door; the evening will start at 8.00pm.

On Friday 19th April 1996 Ongar Jazz will be presenting The President's Jam Session, being billed as Britain's greatest jam session. The evening will include the debut of **The Broadcaster's Band** featuring Digby Fairweather, Campbell Burnap and Dave Gelly. In addition Britain's ragtime master, Keith Nichols, will be playing a solo session on the piano. Tickets are £10.00, available from Stan and Jean Ball on 01277 362309 and the venue will be Budworth Hall, Ongar, Essex starting at 8.00pm.



THE CHARLES FOX COLLECTION

Charles Fox, jazz critic, broadcaster, writer, journalist and the first patron of the National Jazz Foundation Archive, died on 9th May 1991 aged 70, leaving the bulk of his estate to Bobby Korner (widow of Alexis).

In March 1992 Ken Jones, our archivist, was contacted by Victor Schonfield who, speaking on behalf of Bobby Korner, asked if the Archive would be interested in acquiring - as a donation - the residue of the Charles Fox estate comprising most of his magazine collection, some books and virtually all his personal papers and correspondence.

Ken made arrangements to collect the material from Charles' former home in Weymouth accompanied by his wife. The house was a small three-storey Georgian terrace on the sea front, the ground floor of which was a cafe. Charles Fox's grandfather had been a motor engineer and in his time what was now the cafe had been a workshop for the construction of steam motor cars.

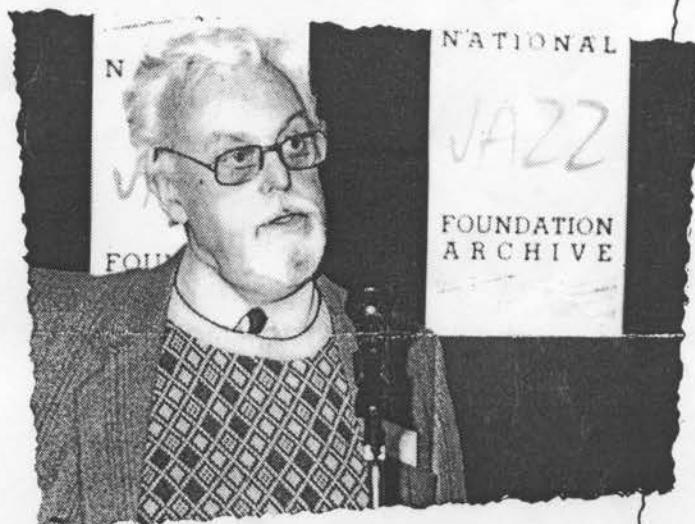
Access to the two upper floors where Charles had lived was by a very narrow staircase. The rooms were lined floor to ceiling with bookshelves and these were absolutely full of books and magazines, mostly jazz. All over the floor were piles of books, magazines and papers, in the midst of which stood Victor and Bobby trying very hard to sort and pack the material into boxes.

It was the coldest April day on record in Weymouth and the house was freezing as the gas and electricity had been disconnected. For the rest of the day the four 'sorters and packers' muffled up in coats and scarves worked steadily to sort and pack as much as possible before the daylight failed, pausing occasionally to carry the packed boxes to the car. It became obvious that they would have to make another trip as the small hatchback became full.

The second trip was made with a 15cwt van and the procedure was as before, albeit on a much warmer day. However this time the house had to be cleared completely and despite having the van there were still 15 boxes of papers that had to be sent by carrier.

Back at the Archive the process of sorting and collating the material is continuing. The magazines have been integrated into the existing stock (almost doubling our holdings) and the remainder has now been sorted into four main categories - Correspondence and Personal Effects, Radio Scripts, Notes and Writings and Collected Items. These will now be sorted into chronological order.

The bulk of the work has been done by volunteers and special thanks are due to the dedicated volunteer, Brian Robinson, who is largely responsible for the progress made to date.



Items picked at random from the collection include Christmas cards from Dizzy Gillespie and Gil Evans, a personal diary from 1966 (an appointment with Ornette Coleman on Easter Monday), and a radio script (undated) for a programme on Don Redmond.

When the collection is fully sorted it will be an invaluable source for jazz researchers giving not only a picture of Charles Fox's life and career but also a unique insight into the world of jazz. Special thanks for this collection are due to Bobby Korner and Victor Schonfield. But it doesn't end there. A short while ago Ken received a phone call from Mrs Christine Jenkinson who subsequently donated 400 cassette tapes, including interviews, broadcasts and general jazz topics, which had been originally recorded by Charles Fox and will further enhance the Charles Fox Collection.

THE WESTBROOK ARCHIVE

Mike Westbrook has been a major force on the British, and indeed the world music scene since the early sixties. A multi-talented composer, arranger, bandleader, pianist and tuba player, he has been responsible for a steady stream of the most thought provoking musical ideas of the last thirty years.

Never one to stand still, Mike has consistently re-invented himself, leading combinations from trio to large orchestra, brass band to rock orientated group and experimenting with multi-media ideas in the form of theatre, dance and cabaret performances.

A prominent feature of his musical life has been the themed compositions he has created for his various permutations of musicians. Citadel/Room 315, The Cortege and Westbrook-Rossini are just three of the major works that he has taken all over Europe and beyond, both individual concert tours and participating in many of the major jazz and more general music festivals.

Mike's wife Kate Westbrook, artist, singer and tenor horn player, has been a major collaborator and influence over the years, and together with saxophonist Chris Biscoe makes up the Mike Westbrook Trio which gives recitals in venues large and small throughout the land.

Any working musician, particularly one as busy as Mike Westbrook, has to cope with the non-creative aspects of performing: correspondence, contracts, tour itineraries, travel arrangements, etc. Over the years this builds into a unique record of an artist's life, and Mike decided to see if a home could be found for the formidable mass of paperwork which had accumulated, the alternative being several trips to the council tip!

Enter Graham Langley, NJFA committee member and secretary of the British Institute of Jazz Studies. Through Margery Styles, long time Westbrook enthusiast and editor of Smith's Academy Informer, the Westbrook newsletter, Graham was introduced to Mike and Kate, and in December 1995 hired a van and made the long trip to their home near Plymouth.

What awaited him on his arrival, apart from excellent hospitality, was a veritable treasure-trove of Westbrook memorabilia. A dozen large boxes were loaded aboard the van for the return trip and on inspection back at base were found to include: two boxes of photographs and slides of the various groups Mike has run over the years; two boxes of concert and festival brochures documenting where Westbrook music has been heard over the years; one box of posters, handbills and publicity materials and seven boxes (as yet unsorted) of correspondence, contracts, recording details, tour itineraries as well as documentation regarding Mike's many compositions.

Graham Langley has volunteered to undertake an initial sort of the material before it is delivered to Loughton, and because of other commitments this will take a little while, but it is hoped that the "Westbrook Archive" will be available for researchers to inspect before the end of 1996.

It is unique materials like these which turn a library into an archive, and the NJFA is anxious to obtain as many similar collections as possible to allow our jazz heritage to be fully documented and understood. Anyone with any material which might add to our store of knowledge is asked to think of the NJFA first when the time comes to find it a good home.



THE NATIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION ARCHIVE AND THE MELLON MICROFILMING PROJECT

The Mellon Microfilming Project is an important venture in preservation microfilming work, with several basic aims: to promote high national standards, to select and commit to film material of national importance and to make such film widely available through the creation and exchange of machine-readable records.

In 1988 the Andrew W Mellon Foundation of New York gave grants to the British Library, the Bodleian Library and the Cambridge University Library to support preservation microfilming efforts in the United Kingdom and Ireland and to provide the infrastructure for a national co-operative effort. The British Library received 1,500,000 dollars to support filming other than in Oxford, Cambridge and the British Library itself and awards are being made from this fund to other institutions.

Any library may apply; awards are made for microfilming of material which is of national importance and the material must be in need of preservation. Provision for reasonable access to the microfilm must be guaranteed, records must be provided for inclusion on the Register of Preservation Microforms and all filming must meet British Standards. Wherever possible there is a requirement to film complete runs of periodicals.

The National Jazz Foundation Archive contains several old and rare magazines - a complete run of the "Melody Maker" from the first issue in 1926 up to 1981, when the jazz content had become insignificant, "Tune Times" published from 1933 to 1935, "Jazz Record" dating from 1943 and 1944, "Jazz Scene" and "Jazz Tempo". Holdings of "Jazzology" - the magazine of the British branch of the American Jazz Society, and "Jazz Music" published from 1942 to 1960, are not complete, but the British Institute of Jazz Studies has lent the missing volumes in order to form complete runs. The BIJS has also lent "Swing Music" published in 1935 and 1936, and has borrowed "Ballroom and Band" from a collector - this magazine, dating from 1934 and 1935, is rarer than the proverbial hens teeth.

The Archive has been awarded a grant from the MMP to cover 100% of the micro-filming costs of these nine periodicals, amounting to £7,800.00. The microfilming is being undertaken by a professional bureau; work is likely to take several months.

