



Editor: David Nathan

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Jack Parnell snared by National Jazz Archive

This year, on November 18th at 8.00pm to be precise, in the latest of a string of British Jazz superstars to grace the National Jazz Archive's Celebrity Interview, we are honoured indeed to welcome the great JACK PARNELL.

Jack has enjoyed a career every bit as distinguished – and in several cases, much longer – than his distinguished predecessor guests! Born in 1923 within the halls of showbusiness (he is the son of variety artist Russ Carr and nephew of the all-powerful impresario Val Parnell) our welcome visitor – as well as something of a showbusiness legend – is still one of the most forceful and dynamic drummers in or beyond Britain's jazz shores.

I was reminded of this less than a year ago when he and wife Veronica cruised the Caribbean for P and O as guest star with my own band, Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen. During nightly appearances with the band Jack relentlessly pushed us to new levels of inspiration with a percussionistic force and charisma recalling Krupa or Rich. In that relaxed three-week stint we had plenty of time to sit down and chat too, and during these happy interludes, as well as an on-board celebrity lecture of his own, I was reminded that Jack is a walking treasure-chest of (frequently hilarious) jazz and showbusiness tales (come the night you may like to remind him about the one about pianist Winifred Atwell!).

From time to time he has talked about putting some of these stories into a book; a process rendered slightly slower by his devotion to golf which, back home in Southwold, Norfolk, he plays as often as possible (wife Veronica plays too, off a handicap of 26!). So, just in case the links continue to drag him away from the WPC, our Celebrity Interview this year offers a unique chance to catch up with the rich memories of Jack Parnell; arguably Britain's greatest living jazz drummer.

Although he would most certainly deny it, via one of those modest shakes of his head with which he tends to dismiss his own lifelong achievements, Jack is unquestionably a star too and has been since the 1940s. One unforgettable moment for me comes in the (otherwise eccentric) film 'London Town', Britain's first postwar attempt at a full-scale Hollywood-style musical, and starring amongst others the late great comedian Sid Field. 'London Town' was the financial launching-pad

for the great Ted Heath Orchestra of which Jack, along with his lifelong friend, Kenny Baker, was a founder member. During one extended musical number 'The 'Ampstead Way' he appears in a cameo-scene playing drums and delivering a charming rhythmic monologue backed by the band. The effect recalls Phil Harris, except that this example of what might, I suppose, be called 'rap plus style' is delivered by a young knock-out drop of a male sex-symbol and in the years until now, Jack has lost none of his natural charisma. With the Heath band he was not only drummer but stylish singer too and as we found out again during our cruise he still sings with much of the effortless swing and style of a young Nat Cole. He is also a natural comedian, and shows featuring him over the last thirty years have frequently been designed to include a moment in which he takes centre-stage to deliver a slice of well-judged 'standup' night by night.

In the sixty years of his career as we will be recalling with you at Loughton on November 18th Jack Parnell has, in Johnny Mercer's phrase 'been round the pool', leading his own headlining big band, later working as ATV's Musical Director and more recently returning to jazz with a variety of American friends and British co-stars including the touring ensemble 'The Best of British Jazz' which he only left following the death of Kenny Baker in 1999.

Jack continues playing regularly however and a recent CD recording by his quartet at Ronnie Scott's featured a young and brilliant tenor-player, Dean Masser and most weeks in 2003 he can be heard playing near to home with other gifted locals including pianist Mike Capocci. At eighty years old he has lost none of his passion for music; continues to explore the craft of classical piano and regularly returns from semi-retirement to conduct for fellow craftsmen including Laurie Johnson and the legendary Robert Farnon. It's a riveting sixty-year saga which we will be retracing in an evening which promises a one-off insight into the worlds of British jazz and showbusiness spanning jazz swing, orchestral music and – of course – the senior end of the pop scene too! We very much look forward to welcoming you back to Britain's centre for jazz research for another unforgettable evening! See you there.....

Digby Fairweather



Editors Note: Tickets at £7 can be obtained from me at the Archive but please book early in view of the limited accommodation. Cheques should be made payable to Essex County Council.



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Jazz at the British Library Sound Archive

Paul Wilson gives us the Lowdown

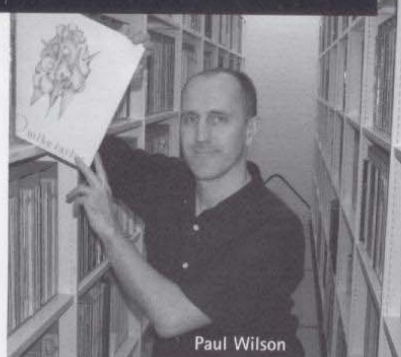
Users or readers who are new to the National Jazz Archive might wonder why the collection excludes sound recordings; after all, it is through recorded media that most jazz is nowadays experienced. The explanation is simple. Back in 1988, when the foundation stone of the archive was being laid by Digby Fairweather and his associates, although there was then no UK archive with responsibility for preservation of non-audio media relating to jazz, the British Library Sound Archive (formerly National Sound Archive) already had a vast collection of jazz on record and tape. This had largely accumulated since the early 1960s through voluntary record company deposit, off-air radio transcription and donations from collectors, radio stations and public libraries. It would have been pointless to attempt to replicate the well-established facilities and resources for audio preservation and playback at the National Jazz Archive so it was sensibly agreed to establish the two archives as complementary partners. To date, the arrangement has worked well, serving both the audio and non-audio requirements of jazz students and researchers in the UK.

Nowadays the British Library houses one of the most comprehensive jazz collections in the world, ranging across every period and genre since the inception of recording. International in scope, it nevertheless puts a special emphasis on the British contribution, of which we can be justly proud. Yet, despite the first-rate quality of our finest performers, there have been very few published histories of the music as it developed in the UK and much of our recorded legacy has been neglected. At a time when we are inundated with new, re-issued and re-re-issued jazz on CD, including much of questionable value, it is a lamentable fact that many of our celebrated "classics" have been out-of-print since the days of shellac and vinyl. More worryingly, rumours continue to circulate that master tapes of certain key labels have been destroyed, either by accident or design, or simply lost. You may have noticed the increasing number of releases that have been poorly mastered from an LP copy of the original issue. In some cases this is due to inadequate research failing to track down master tapes which

have repeatedly changed hands as a result of record company take-overs, liquidation, back catalogue sales or incomplete record company documentation. In others it is likely that masters have indeed been destroyed, so the Library's disc copies – often in pristine, unplayed condition despite being decades old – have by default become the best extant audio source. With this in mind, the completion of our collection of jazz on published discs remains a priority.

Another is the still more at-risk legacy of UK jazz radio sessions, notably such BBC series as *Jazz club*, *Jazz workshop* and *Jazz in Britain*, which featured specially-recorded sessions, often by ensembles which seldom or never performed publicly. For decades BBC Radio was the principle source of jazz listening, particularly for those outside the major urban centres where live jazz was, and remains, virtually non-existent. As the majority of these sessions were not preserved by the BBC, the British Library aims to assemble a comprehensive collection from those increasingly rare surviving sources; typically by way of donations from the musicians or from off-air recordings made by enthusiasts. Thankfully, as the existence of the National Jazz Archive testifies, jazz is well served by such enthusiasts and we've had considerable success to date. Another major collection, arriving imminently, comes courtesy of Peter Newbrook, pioneering co-founder with Carlo Krahmer of one of Britain's first independent record labels, Esquire, who sensibly had the foresight (and the equipment) to record *Jazz club* from 1946 onwards.

Since 1985, a third priority for the archive has been the first-hand documentation of Britain's jazz history via our *Oral History of Jazz in Britain* project. Almost two hundred career-length interviews preserve the spoken testimony of key protagonists and witnesses, allowing the historical facts to be traced from myriad angles and viewpoints. They often provide unexpected insights, as when Doris "Doddie" Dunn (b. 1904-), a long-term jazz fan and friend to many musicians, suddenly revealed she had attended one of Britain's very first jazz concerts (the OJJB at the Hammersmith Palais in 1919), then struggled to recall, perhaps for the first time in seventy-



Paul Wilson

three years, the ecstatic audience response, with venue personnel ordering dancers to desist from the forbidden shimmy.

Nearly a half-century later, but equally revealing of the times, guitarist Keith Rowe recalls more extreme audience responses to the Mike Westbrook Band in sixties London: the reluctant soloists fending off appreciative embraces and kisses from the all-male audience at an interior designer's party in Virginia Water, then being beaten bloody and hospitalised by a gang of thugs at Notting Hill's Mercury Theatre, for declining to play *Twist and shout!*

Together the National Jazz Archive and jazz collections of the British Library Sound Archive constitute an invaluable historical resource for the study and enjoyment of an oft-misunderstood musical art.

Editors Note: Thanks to Paul, Curator (Popular Music) at the British Library Sound Archive for this most interesting insight into their work.

The library and listening facilities of the British Library Sound Archive are accessible to anyone with a British Library readers' pass. Further information and the online catalogue can be accessed via our web page:

www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archive/nsa.html or by writing to: The British Library Sound Archive, 96 Euston Rd., London NW1 2DB; telephone: 020-7412 7440; or email: sound-archive@bl.uk

'Paraffin Joe and his Nitelites' Larkin Jazz Day Held at the NJA, Loughton, Saturday 24 May 2003

Some sixty people attended this event, which was organised by Philip Larkin Society Committee Member Wendy Cole, with a degree of help from the undersigned. Its purpose was both to celebrate Larkin's lifelong love of jazz and to demonstrate his major gifts as a writer about the music, be it in poetry or prose. As a major bonus, live jazz was provided by the distinguished pianist and composer Michael Garrick, saxophonist Martin Hathaway (also director of the Essex Youth Jazz Orchestra) and jazz singer Joanna Forbes, a member of the renowned Swingle Singers.

Amongst the poems read (by Wendy, John Osborne and Paul Walker) were 'Reference Back', 'Love Songs In Age', the bleakly magnificent 'Aubade' (superbly realised by Paul), 'The False Friend' and, of course, 'For Sidney Bechet', which was complemented by the reading of Larkin's 1960 *Guardian* review of Bechet's biography. Other prose pieces included a selection from the *Daily Telegraph* columns that comprise the body of *All What Jazz* (read by Paul and myself) which demonstrated Larkin's profound understanding of the music – even of styles and

musicians that he did not care for – and from *Larkin's Jazz*, the collection of his other jazz journalism that John White and I edited a few years ago. These included pieces on his absolute favourite, Louis Armstrong; Fats Waller; the jazz writer Whitney Balliett; Larkin's (often very surprising) nominations for the *Melody Maker* 'Jazz Poll' of 1965; and his unpublished radio obituary of Armstrong in July 1971.

The music was consistently resplendent. The newspapers had given advance notice of the closing number, Garrick's setting of the recently discovered Larkin squib, 'Fuel Form Blues'; however, enjoyable and important though that was (a world premiere, no less!), it was surely superseded by Michael's wondrous setting of 'The Trees'. One of Larkin's most beautiful poems, it was transformed into an equally magical song; another world premiere, this, and all present agreed that Michael should record it as a matter of urgency.

The two-plus hours fairly whizzed by, and at the end the departing audience seemed delighted with what they'd heard and experienced. It was a

privilege to be involved in this Extraordinary Meeting of the Larkin Society; large and special thanks to Wendy for its devising and delivery, and to David Nathan and the NJA itself. Let's hope another similar enterprise is forthcoming before too long.

Dr Richard Palmer

Editors Note: Thanks to Richard for this fine report. A lifelong jazz fan, he has been a staff writer for *Jazz Journal International* since the 1970s. His jazz books include monographs on Oscar Peterson (1984), Stan Getz (1988), Sony Rollins (1998), and he was Editor and Consultant for *A Jazz Odyssey - The Life of Oscar Peterson* (2002). *Deceptions: The Work of Philip Larkin* will be published in 2003.



Dr Richard Palmer

ARCHIVAL NEWS

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT – IT'S OFFICIAL!

After eight months of hard work, the National Jazz Archive has a Service Level Agreement with Essex County Council.

The agreement runs for a period of 25 years, with six-monthly meetings to review what is happening in practice.

In December 2002 Cllr Wendy Cole, chairman of NJA Trustees, signed the agreement; the final touch was put to it for Essex County Council in February 2003 by Cllr Bonnie Hart, cabinet member for Lifelong Learning and Libraries.

Exploratory talks for the agreement took place at County Hall in July 2002, when Head of Libraries Margaret Keeling, Cllr Bonnie Hart, Cllr Wendy Cole and Digby Fairweather met with officers from County. A draft paper was prepared and submitted to the Trustees for their comments towards the end of last year.

Said Wendy: "I feel very thrilled that we have achieved this. The matter has been talked about for many years: this agreement endorses the important service provided by the Archive under Essex Libraries."

For the Trustees and Executive Committee the time has come to roll up sleeves and work on the serious business of promoting more events and attracting wider publicity for the National Jazz Archive.

EXPANSION PLANS

Jacky Scott has been commissioned by the Trustees and Executive Committee to help with expansion plans for the Archive.

Her excellent track record as a fundraiser includes helping to obtain £2.7 million Arts Council funding for the Stables Theatre at Wavendon.

WEBSITE AND E-MAIL

As shown on the front page these have been set up since the last issue and we hope you have occasion to use these.

OPEN DAY - JUNE 15th 2002

Thanks are due to Jim Godbolt, Editor of *Jazz at Ronnie Scott's* for permission to reproduce the feature by Pete King which appeared in the September - October 2002 issue.

KING OF SCOTT'S

I was pleased to receive an invitation to speak about the club's history at this year's Open Day at the National Jazz Archive at Loughton Library, Loughton, in June. I'm not much of a public speaker and admit to feeling somewhat nervous at the prospect of facing a hundred-strong audience, but, it transpired, I needn't have worried.

The afternoon is one I shall always recall, as I was wholly comfortable in such a friendly crowd, who obviously knew their British jazz history, but I am particularly grateful to my "presenter" Campbell Burnap, who had gone to considerable lengths to wise up on the club's history and my connection with it, and brought along relevant newspaper clippings.

Ambrose and Hooray

All this put me entirely at ease and I was able to answer questions without difficulty. When I spoke, it was gratifying to see nods of acknowledgement when certain names came up. Like, for instance, when I mentioned bandleader Bert Ambrose, a legendary figure, with whom I briefly played in the late Forties. I told the story of him on the bandstand at the swank Embassy Club in Mayfair being pestered by a Hooray Henry to play a certain number and this cheeky toff sent a waiter with the request on paper - wrapped in a five pound note. "Ammy" looked at this, reached for his inside pocket, withdrew a tenner, wrapped it around the Hooray's note and fiver and instructed a waiter to return to sender. That story went down well.

I was pleased to meet curator David Nathan and congratulate him and his colleague Ken Jones on the truly splendid job they are doing at the Archive. I was most impressed by the scope of the material, including a complete set of JARS, they have collated and indexed for easy reference. Compliments, also, to trumpeter Digby Fairweather for his sterling role in getting the Archive off the ground some 12 years back. It is truly a unique institution of invaluable help to researchers and I was delighted to be there on 15th June.

My thanks to Campbell Burnap for his contribution to a lovely afternoon. I'm sorry I had to leave immediately after the "gig" was over. I would liked to have mingled with such an attentive and knowledgeable gathering.

CLUB DIRECTOR, PETE KING

Pete's interview was followed by the customary live music session featuring Digby Fairweather and Friends, the Friends this time lending tremendous support were Andre



Pete King (centre) flanked by Campbell Burnap and Digby Fairweather at Open Day 2002

DONATIONS

NEW BOOKS

Publishers/authors who have generously submitted gifts of books include:-

Tony Bacon -

All Music Guide to Jazz 4th Edition - Backbeat Books

Trevor Bannister -

Michael Garrick

Bernhard H Behncke -

Storyville Index

Peter Broadbent -

Charlie Christian (updated version) - Ashley Mark Publishing Co.

Cambridge

University Press -

The Cambridge Companion to Jazz

Digby Fairweather -

Notes on a Jazz Life - Northway Publications

Dave Gelly -

Nobody else But Me - Backbeat Books

Coleridge Goode &

Roger Cotterrell -

Bass Lines - A Life in Jazz - Northway Publications

Geoffrey Haydon -

Quintet of the Year - Aurum Press

Raymond Mitchell -

Feeling My Way - Discography of Eddie Lang

Penguin Books -

The Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD - 6th Edition

Oscar Peterson -

A Jazz Odyssey - Editor & Consultant Richard Palmer - Continuum

Keith Samuel and

Peter Simkins -

The Brighton Jazz Line - Evergreen Graphics

Chris Sheridan -

Brilliant Corners - A Bio-Discography of Thelonious Monk - Eurospan

Alyn Shipton -

Iain Cameron

The Cheerful Little Earful - Continuum

Williams -

Fabrice Zammarchi -

Underneath a Harlem Moon - Continuum

A Life in the golden Age of Jazz -

A Biography of Buddy DeFranco - Parkside Publications Inc.

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, RECORDS & MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Among the many fine donations were:-

PAUL CLATWORTHY

Gene Lees Jazz Letters

EDDIE COOK

Jazz Hot (France) and Musica Jazz (Italy) magazines

DENNIS FOAN

bequest of £500 following his death by his son Mark

TONY KING

index to Gramophone Jazz & Swing Reviews 1955-1970 and Jazz Review 2002

TONY LEPPARD

TERRY ROBINSON

large framed photograph of Muddy Waters by Terry Cryer

NEIL SIMPSON

JIM STORK

Big Band World - new British magazine

GEORGE WEBB

catalogues his record collection which is being sold by Mole Jazz to benefit the Archive

VANESSA WISEMAN

books from the late Brian Hughes collection

To them and all other donors our grateful thanks.

PUBLICITY

Several magazines have helped to promote the Archive and its events most notably *Jazz Journal*, *Just Jazz*, *In Tune International* and *Big Bands International*.

Campbell Burnap often mentions us on his Jazz FM radio programme and Bridget Metcalfe on BBC Essex and Paul Barnes on BBC local Radio for the Eastern Counties have also helped with publicity.

David Nathan was interviewed by Chris Walker and this went out on 24th March 2003 on Radio Solent and Radio Southern Counties (BBC)

Godfrey Smith mentioned the Archive in his Sunday Times column on May 4th 2003 and we were also acknowledged for our assistance at the end of the fine BBC4 television documentary on Artie Shaw - *Quest for Perfection* which was first aired on the 9th July 2003.

The local *Guardian Group of Newspapers* ran a whole page feature on the Archive in its July 31st 2003 issue.

CHARLES FOX COLLECTION

Space has now been found to house this important collection in the Archive and thanks are due again to Brian Robinson for his excellent work in sorting out the material.

Vic Lewis at Open Day, 7th June 2003. A report on his marvellous interview with Campbell Burnap and the musicians who played at Open Day 2003 will appear in the next newsletter. Photo courtesy of Vikki Lince, Guardian Group.



GEORGE MELLY – CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

29TH NOVEMBER 2002

The National Jazz Archive had another very successful Celebrity Interview when George Melly richly entertained a capacity audience in conversation with Digby Fairweather.

It was 2 hours of sheer enjoyment as George regaled the audience with stories about his career in jazz, his family background, his love of art especially surrealism and music hall even including a brief Max Miller routine who was one of his heroes.

Jazz was of course the main theme with highlights being his 12 years with Mick Mulligan's band and a 31 year association with John Chilton's Feetwarmers which ended at Christmas 2002 with their customary stint at Ronnie Scott's Club



Above: Digby Fairweather interviewing George Melly.
Left: George Melly in the Archive. Photos courtesy of Ashley Watts.



from which time Digby Fairweather and his band have been supporting him.

George, full of charm and bonhomie stayed on for 30 minutes afterwards to chat to fans and sign autographs and copies of his excellent book trilogy *Owning Up*.

His passport shows his occupation as Jazz Entertainer which is as precise a description as one could want and amply demonstrated in the interview.

David Nathan

BENEFIT NIGHT AT ONGAR JAZZ CLUB

Once again the Archive has been greatly helped by the tremendous gesture of donating £1,000 from the Club's Presidents Evening on the 16th May 2003 – the President, of course, being Digby Fairweather.

Two splendid groups were featured with Dave Shepherd (clt) leading off supported by Bill Thompson (tpt), Jackie Free (tmb), Martin Guy (drums), Pete Skivington (bass) and Craig Milverton (pno).

Their set comprised "I Saw Stars", "Riverboat Shuffle", "All I do is Dream of You" – done at breakneck speed by Dave and the rhythm section, "Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans" – featuring Bill, "Big butter and Egg Man", "That Old Feeling" – featuring Jackie and rhythm, "Making Whoopee" – Craig Milverton solo and a rousing finale in "Hindustan".

The second set featured Digby leading Tim Huskisson (clt), Nevil Skrimshire (gtr), Pete Corrigan (bass) and Craig Milverton (pno) and they played "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans", "I'm Confessin' that I Love You", "Indiana", Basin Street Blues, "Some of these Days" – Digby plus Rhythm, "Stardust" – Tim plus rhythm and to finish "Dinah".



David Nathan left with star musicians, Pete Corrigan, Digby Fairweather, Martin Guy, Bill Thompson and Dave Shepherd (photo courtesy of John Root)

After a short break during which the cheque was presented to Digby the two groups merged for a jam session playing "At the Jazz Band Ball", "Sunday", "Spain" and "Nagasaki" to conclude a wonderful evening's entertainment.

Thanks as always go to Jean and Stan Ball and their Ongar colleagues for their continuing support and to the superb musicians who freely gave their services to help the Archive.

David Nathan