

NewSLeTTeR

Editor: Dave Gelly

ISSUE 18 • April 2009



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ON TRACK AND ON SCHEDULE

Angela Davies, Project Manager of our planning grant to prepare for a full Heritage Lottery Grant, reports on progress

The Archive's mission is 'To inspire and share the story of jazz in the UK' and in its 21-year history has built up a unique archive of written material on jazz, blues and related music, encompassing over 25,000 written publications including books, periodicals, programmes and concert brochures, newspaper cuttings and personal collections of leading British jazz musicians, as well as significant photographic holdings and a wealth of ephemera.

In May 2008, NJA was awarded a £47,900 Project Planning Grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to focus on planning activities which would lead to improved access to NJA's unique collection and ensure that measures are in place for its long term preservation. This represents the first step in NJA's plans to support its mission by digitising its collections, creating an online catalogue, developing outreach facilities and connecting with a variety of new audiences.

As an expert in the cataloguing and digitisation of archives, I was brought in to manage the six-month planning programme and to co-ordinate a team of expert consultants as they sur-



veyed the collections and liaised with NJA Staff, Trustees and users to produce future recommendations for the Archive. Alongside the work of the consultants, the NJA Trustees and I have been investigating possible cataloguing software and digitisation methods, as well as beginning the process of copyright clearance.

At the time of writing, the project was on schedule to be completed by 31 March 2009, when NJA will have received comprehensive action plans from its access, audience development, conservation and training consultants. The plans will then form the basis of NJA's application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for future funding for a major project to transform the Archive into a 21st Century national resource.

The past six months has been an extremely busy time at the Archive but it has been highly successful in clarifying NJA's future plans and generating a great deal of enthusiasm from everyone involved with the Archive.

Make a date to catch the Archive's tribute to Campbell Burnap at the 100 Club (100 Oxford Street, W1) on Thursday 28 May, 12 noon - 2.30pm. Tickets £10 on the door. All proceeds to the Archive. (More on page 5)

Our Summer Event this year, hosted by Digby Fairweather, will feature the recollections and trombone playing of the great Roy Williams. It's on Saturday 11 July, 1.30pm, at Loughton Methodist Church. Tickets £10 in advance from David Nathan at the Archive; cheques payable to 'National Jazz Archive'. (Read Digby's portrait of Roy on page 7.)

And Digby will be giving his own celebrity interview with David Nathan at Wanstead Library, Spratt Road, E11 on Monday 27 April at 7pm. Tickets: £5, from the Library, Tel 020 8708 7400.



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ARCHIVAL NEWS

by **DAVID NATHAN**

Publicity

Digby Fairweather and I were invited in November 2008 to give a presentation at The Stables, Wavendon for their Sunday morning series *Jazz Matters*. During this Sir John Dankworth kindly joined us. He and Dame Cleo Laine are patrons of the National Jazz Archive and have always been very kind and helpful to us.

Apart from our own website we now have a free advertisement on a new community website www.everythingpeppingforest.co.uk which will help us with advertising future events in their *What's On Diary*.

I was also interviewed in February by David Fenn of Gateway FM, a community radio station for the Basildon and Thurrock areas, which will be broadcast in June. His programme concentrates on promoting British Jazz.

New Book Donations

Bouncing With Bartok: the Incomplete Works of Dick Twardzik, by Jack Chambers - Mercury Press

The Concorde Club - The First 50 Years! - by Cole Mathieson - NMG Enterprises.

Forward Groove, by Chris Searle - Northway Books

Ronnie Scott's Jazz Farrago, edited by Jim Godbolt - Hampstead Press



Digby, Sir John and David Nathan discuss Sir John's hat.

Photo: Brian O'Neill

The Little Giant: the Story of Johnny Griffin, by Mike Hennessey - Northway Books

Workout: the Music of Hank Mobley, by Derek Ansell - Northway Books

In addition, Vic Hobson donated his dissertation for a PhD degree from the University of East Anglia, entitled *Re-engaging Blues Narratives: Alan Lomax, Jelly Roll Morton and W.C. Handy*.

Miscellaneous Donations

John Godsill brought in more of the material that he holds for the Len Page collection, including files on Buddy Bolden.

Spike Heatley. This distinguished bass player sent some memorabilia including some lovely photographs - one taken with Tubby Hayes.

Jack Higgins. This well known promoter/agent has retired and his secretary, Carol, sent us a terrific collection of material for many fine artists that he represented such as Stéphane Grappelli, Humphrey Lyttelton

Why not become a FRIEND OF THE ARCHIVE

Have first refusal for tickets to Archive events and receive the Newsletter twice a year.

Get in touch with Archivist David Nathan. Details on the front page.

and George Melly.

Brian Hundy sent some great photographs taken during his visits to the USA in 1950/51, including Louis Armstrong's All-Stars; Wild Bill Davison, the Dukes of Dixieland and Kid Ory.

Dick Laurie, who produces that excellent magazine *Allegedly Hot News International*, donated, in conjunction with Rex Bennett, many fine magazines including Melody Makers going back several decades.

Tom Perchard donated, on behalf of Goldsmiths College, books they held which had belonged to the late Ken Rattenbury.

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OUTREACH UPDATE

By Graham Langley

The Outreach Programme has continued to expand since my last report a year ago.

We have two new partners, The Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama in Glasgow and The Music School of the University of East Anglia in Norwich. These give us a foothold north of the border and in a prime location on the east coast. Glasgow took over 300 books to boost their library and East Anglia about 150 books and a very large collection of periodicals covering dozens of titles. They are one of the few partners with facilities to take magazines, and so benefited from a build-up of duplicates.

Our reserve collection housed at Brunel University in West London also continues to grow and now holds nearly 1,000 books and around 65 periodical titles. We have also decided to lodge our video and DVD collection of around 140 titles at Brunel, because they have the facilities to show them, whereas we cannot currently do so at Loughton.

As a result of the Archive 'blitz' of last June, when we undertook a much-needed sort-out of our groaning shelves, we sent NJA Trustee Jen Wilson, who also runs Women in Jazz in Swansea, back down the M4 with her estate car packed to the gunnels with paper. Once Wij is established in its new premises, all this material will be available for viewing and research.

On an informal basis we are also helping the British Library Sound Archive to develop their periodical holding, particularly of Crescendo and Down Beat. We have supplied them with dozens of issues this year to fill gaps in their holding. We have also been the conduit for passing them around 250 rare continental CDs and a very large collection of reel-to-reel tapes created by champion collector and researcher, the late Alan Newby.

We have undertaken our first international exchange with the RojaRo Archive in Norway, sending them early issues of Jazz Monthly, Jazz Journal, Down Beat etc, and receiving in return interesting continental periodicals like

Jefferson from Sweden, Jazz Podium from Germany and Jazz 'n' More from Switzerland.

We continue to look for further partners and have one more in prospect. To visit any of our Outreach sites, in the first instance, please contact David Nathan at the Archive who will make the necessary arrangements.



ARCHIVAL NEWS

Continued from Page 2

Thanks to them and to all our donors since the last issue, including the following: Alan Burnett (on behalf of Jeff Totman), Polo Bridgstock, David Dearle, Peter Duff, Kelley Reid Edmiston, Peter Gaskell, Geoff Hancock, Len Holt, Lynne Kenderdine, Jim Langridge, Stephen Luke, Rick and Maureen Martin, Glynn Overy (from the Peter Seabrook collection), Hugh Rainey, Jeff Roberts, Susan May Robinson, Bob Scott and Catherine Tackley.

Volunteers

Our grateful appreciation goes to Wally Barnard, Steve Carter, Alan Quaife, Christine Smith and George Wilkinson for their continuing help and support.

ACKER'S STORY

Legendary clarinettist, West Countryman and all-round good egg Acker Bilk was the special guest at our Celebrity Interview in November. David Nathan reports.

Acker was in fine form and, interviewed by Digby Fairweather, richly entertained the large audience with stories from his long and celebrated career. He is the most self-deprecating of men and when asked if he ever got nervous replied, "No, I knew I wasn't very good, so no reason to be nervous!"

When asked if he listens to his own music he replied that he doesn't, "as there are so many better players" – but then added, "only kidding!"

Speaking about his brief spell with Ken Colyer's band, in 1954, Acker said that he thoroughly enjoyed the music but could not stand London, with its crowds and bustle. He just couldn't settle, and returned to Bristol, where he formed his Bristol Paramount Jazz Band. In 1957 he plucked up courage to try his luck in London once more, dropping "Bristol" from the band's name. Three years later he had his first record hit with *Summer Set*. All told, he has had eleven records in the singles chart.

It was in 1961 that he recorded his Number One mega-hit *Stranger On The Shore* which he originally called *Jenny* after his daughter. The title was changed when it was adopted as the theme for a TV serial entitled *Stranger On*

The Shore. (Jenny, incidentally, was in the audience along with Jean, Acker's wife of 54 years.) The record remained in the singles charts for an astonishing 58 weeks and has been constantly in print, on LP and CD, since. In the days of his first success he appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in the US, alongside Louis Prima. During the early 1960s he also appeared in two films: *It's Trad, Dad* (directed by Dick Lester, who went on to make *A Hard Day's Night* with the Beatles) and *Band Of Thieves*.

The arrival of the Beatles on the scene in 1963 marked the sudden death of Britain's trad jazz boom, and the end of many popular bands, but Acker insists that he remained unaffected. As he explained, this was largely because he had a dual career, encompassing jazz, his greatest love, and a long string of popular easy-listening albums with strings and brass. Through these, Acker's unique clarinet sound became part of the background music to everyday life, as familiar to a whole generation as the voices of Frank Sinatra or Ella Fitzgerald.

Through it all he has retained a sly sense of humour. Many have heard of his imaginary



Acker with two complete strangers.

Photo: John Root

friend, Bert Ogg, who could have been a great songwriter but could never get the titles quite right. Among the examples he gave of Bert's near-misses were *I've Got You Under My Sink*, *Trouble Over Bridgwater* and the musicals *Ryvita*, *Rats* and *The King And One*.

Acker also brought along with him two examples of his other great love, which is painting. These were a country landscape and a portrait of the great cornetist Wild Bill Davison.

Having made a good recovery from two serious illnesses, Acker continues to delight audiences with his playing in the unique style that has made him an international favourite. He received a great ovation, and the evening ended, as all Acker Bilk appearances do, with a performance (on record this time) of the immortal "Stranger On The Shore".

TROMBONE TRIBUTE

The lunchtime tribute session to our dear friend and colleague, trombonist Campbell Burnap, is one event that you simply can't miss. It's on 28 May at the 100 Club - a trombone extravaganza by Bone Supremacy, a brand new, fully formed band of top-flight musicians. Campbell would have loved it!

If you were around the British jazz scene in the 1970s and '80s, you will remember Five-A-Slide. This was the band of five trombones and rhythm section led by Humph's trombonist-arranger Pete Strange and featuring himself with four other top trombonists - Campbell Burnap included. Although always a hit with audiences, the band led an on-off existence, partly because its members were busy with other things and partly because it's hard to keep anything together these days. The end came with Pete Strange's death in 2004.



But when you play in a band you never know who's listening. Five-A-Slide played occasional gigs at the Concorde Club, near Southampton, and the club's secretary had a teenage son who was learning the trombone. His name was Adrian Fry and, in due course, he was given the chance to sit in. Over the next few years Pete Strange came to act as a kind of musical mentor to the young trombonist and they became firm friends.

A few years after Pete's death Adrian, now a busy professional himself and a member of the Back To Basie big band, brought up the idea of reviving Five-A-Slide with a new

generation of players. Pete's widow, Cathy, managed to find half a dozen of the original arrangements and handed them over with her blessing. Adrian set about writing some new ones and transcribing others from records. Ed Harvey and Frank Griffith contributed more, the band started rehearsing and soon all they needed was a name - because, despite its original inspiration, this was not Five-A-Slide Mk II but a brand new band with its own style. After much deliberation on licensed premises they came up with "The Bone Supremacy".

Bone Supremacy - catch them at the 100 Club on 28 May.

The Bone Supremacy consists of Adrian Fry, Andy Flaxman, Chris Gower and Ian Bateman (trombones) Nick Dawson (piano), John Day (bass), and Pete Cater (drums). You will have noticed the deliberate mistake: only four trombones. That's because the fifth part is, for the moment at any rate, left open for a guest player. For our session at the 100 Club the Fifth Man will be multi-poll winner Mark Nightingale.

Check out our website!

www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk

Writing British Jazz

Always welcome additions to the Archive are books from Northway Publications, an imprint which specialises in the memoirs of British jazz figures. Publisher Ann Cotterrell fills in the background.

Imagine the basement of the 100 Club, Oxford Street, London. A familiar venue to many jazz-lovers. Barely a beam of natural light, the dark walls enlivened by pictures of great musicians, and masses of people competing for seats, loving the music. Our first book, by Harry Gold, was launched at the 100 Club in February 2000, with Harry – ninety-four years old and all five foot two of him behind his bass saxophone – leading his band. Harry signed copies of his book between sets and kept up a level of activity that would have defeated many people half his age, smiling broadly and apparently relishing every minute. Harry's memoir had been expertly edited by my partner, Roger Cotterrell, with artwork and photo layout by two artists, our son David and our friend Peter, while Roger Horton let us use the 100 Club free for the launch. Our dreams of success were extravagant but sales at the launch and a mail-out to Harry's many friends lived up to all our expectations and fuelled our optimism.

In spite of this early success, it was obvious that we would not earn enough from publishing jazz books to keep us in Kleenex tissues but we were enjoying it all too much to stop. Our second book was by the man who was instrumental in founding the National Jazz Archive, Digby Fairweather. We have now published two very entertaining books by Digby, *Notes from a Jazz Life* and *Nat Gonella – A Life in Jazz* (co-authored with Ron Brown). We have also published two books by Jim Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain 1919–50* and his witty *All This and Many a Dog*, while Mike Hennessey, author of our recently published book *The Little Giant – The Story of Johnny Griffin*, also co-authored *Some of My Best Friends are Blues* with Ronnie Scott.

We are sometimes offered manuscripts we cannot publish, but written memoirs are important and we advise people to deposit a copy of their work in the National Jazz Archive. Our aim in selection has been to publish books we would like to read. For me, the life stories of John Chilton and Vic Ash had a strong appeal, with their tales of life in the East End, evacuation and the Blitz, and subsequent success as they worked with jazz and show business stars. Vic's anecdotes about Frank Sinatra and John's about George Melly had me especially enthralled.

Other books have a different type of appeal. The stories of musicians from Jamaica are rich in anecdotes



about their lives and the people with whom they worked. We are especially proud of our book about Joe Harriott by Alan Robertson, while Coleridge Goode's story, co-authored by Roger Cotterrell, tells of his Jamaican childhood and his career with Ray Ellington, Django Reinhardt, Stéphane Grappelli, George Shearing and others. Next October we shall re-publish *Swing from a Small Island* – the autobiography of Jamaican swing trumpeter Leslie Thompson as told to Jeffrey P. Green.

One author we were delighted to recruit was Alan Plater. As well as his fame as a playwright, he is known for his innovative jazz lyrics and drama work with Alan Barnes. He brought us some material to form a collection of reprints and we suggested he might write this up as an autobiographical memoir about his involvement with jazz and jazz musicians. I then assumed for some months that he had forgotten us. We were surprised when he got in touch and said he had finished the book. Published with the enigmatic title, *Doggin' Around*, it is a sheer delight, enjoyed by everyone who has read it, from reviewers in the Guardian and elsewhere to an enthusiastic worker in our distributor's warehouse.

Our main problem, as with many small publishers, is that the margin coming back to us is getting smaller. Bookshops and small publishers struggle to deal with internet and retailing giants. (I shouldn't be saying that as we must not upset them.) Nevertheless, we plan to continue for a good time yet. This year we shall publish a book about jazz composition by Graham Collier, and are expecting a lot of interest in Peter King's autobiography. Our recent books about British jazz include the republished *Music Outside* by Ian Carr, who has bequeathed much material to the Archive.

We have gradually evolved into a business with values, which include helping to preserve the history of jazz and especially British jazz. We have made some exceptions for books about American musicians by British writers, notably a collection by Peter Vacher and a book about Hank Mobley by Derek Ansell, but our main focus is on British and European jazz. Like the National Jazz Archive, we defiantly believe the history of this parish is worth preserving.

www.northwaybooks.com

ROY WILLIAMS

The special guest at our Summer Event on 11 July will be the great Roy Williams. He will be talking to Digby Fairweather, who brings us up to date here.

You'd have to travel a long way further than Loughton this July to find a nicer guest for our Celebrity Interview than Roy Williams. And the fact that he's genuinely regarded by many of our music's most informed commentators as "the world's greatest jazz trombonist" turns our annual celebration into an authentic double-whammy!

Roy has won British Jazz Awards and their trophies for the title so many times that – in order to ensure their proper display – he's probably had to apply to Luton Borough Council for planning permission to extend his mantelpiece. But you wouldn't know it to talk to him. Because, apart from his supreme jazz talents, Roy Williams just happens to be one of the most easy-going, modest and approachable of men. Rather than trumpeting (if you'll pardon the instrumental mismatch) his achievements abroad, Roy's content to have you believe he's happiest watching cricket at Lords, browsing through his extensive library of Wisden Almanacs and P.G. Wodehouse masterpieces, listening to classical music, or talking you through the latest gem from his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Goon Shows 1951–60. That's all of them, by the way.

Along with the rest of the jazz world, however, I know differently. Because ever since the triumphant trombone fanfare which heralded Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea amid Alex Welsh's classic Strike One collection back in 1966, it was plain that a dazzling new talent had rocketed into Britain's jazz firmament, capable of challenging the once-omnipotent George Chisholm for instrumental supremacy. Not, of course, that its kindly owner would ever have thought of doing such a thing! By then Roy had already completed ten years perfecting his craft with bands as diverse as Eric Batty's Jazz Aces in Manchester and, later, Terry Lightfoot's Jazzmen in London.

But nothing had yet quite prepared British jazz lovers for this explosive on-record emergence of a virtuoso whose brimming imagination, effortlessly linked to infallible senses of time, tone and technique, marked him out immediately as a British musician of genuine international standard. But the proof was in the hearing. In 1969 at America's Newport Jazz Festival, Roy, along with his fellow Welshmen including lifelong colleague John Barnes, played while the Supreme



Photo: www.jazzcamera.co.uk

Court of Duke Ellington's orchestra nodded appreciatively in the wings. And by the time he left Welsh in 1978, everyone in jazz knew that Roy Williams, even though he was born in Bolton Lancashire, was nothing less than an international treasure.

It's lucky that we didn't lose him to America once and for all. Because that year, as his by-now good friend and admirer George Chisholm had done previously, he paid his first solo visit to Dick Gibson's Colorado Jazz Party (a premier assembly of the greatest in their field) and thereafter kept regular company with American groups like the World's Greatest Jazz Band and its Harlem Blues equivalent, as well as with stars like Peanuts Hucko, Billy Butterfield, Bob Wilber, Bobby Rosengarden and more – all of whom expected the highest standards of jazz performance as a matter of course, but knew that their easy-going new partner could supply them without any trouble.

In Britain, of course, it was common knowledge that if you wanted the best you called Roy Williams. From 1978 to 1983 he worked in the patrician company of Humphrey Lyttelton and his band, but thereafter chose to pick the soloist's surroundings that best pleased him, as leader of his own small groups (often including guitarist-son Andrew in later years), as playing-compadre of British fellow-masters like Kenny Baker, Danny Moss and Tommy Whittle; as partner to premier American visitors including cornettists Ruby Braff and Warren Vache Jnr (both of whom, over the years, sought him out as musical and personal kindred-spirit) – and, of course, with the huge community of British friends which he lovingly calls 'the chaps', which I'm very proud to say includes me, too.

I can't wait to see him on 11 July, at the Archive's Summer Event, when we can all share those precious privileges. So aren't we the (very) lucky ones?

Editorial

This year sees the 21st birthday of the National Jazz Archive. It would be nice to say that the Great Leap Forward, alias our Project Planning Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (to be followed, we hope, by major funding) was the result of brilliant timing. In fact, it was pure coincidence. It all seems a bit unreal to those of us who remember standing wedged among tottering piles of old Melody Makers in the glorified cupboard that was our original premises. If it hadn't been for Digby and his endless enthusiasm we wouldn't even have been there, let alone where we are now. For an explanation of exactly where that is, see the front page.



Courtney Pine

Along with the rest of the jazz world, we all send our heartiest and most sincere congratulations to Courtney Pine, one of our patrons, on his being appointed CBE in the New Year Honours. The last jazz person to attain that lofty position was John

Dankworth, and look what he went on to become!



Jazz Journal

It wasn't unexpected, but the demise of Jazz Journal International is very sad nonetheless. The final blow was the death, on 23 January, of Janet Cook, who took over the editorship from her husband, Eddie, when his health declined. Although Eddie had continued to act as the magazine's publisher, he felt unable to shoulder editorial responsibility once more and announced that the February 2009 issue would be the last. Offers to take over the title have been invited, but at the time of going to press there were no positive developments to report. Apart from feeling great personal sadness on Eddie's behalf, we at the Archive are very conscious of losing a British jazz institution. Jazz Journal (the 'International' crept in later) was launched in May 1948 and had been in uninterrupted monthly

Photo:

by Helen Kitto



publication for more than six decades. In jazz terms that means from the high tide of bebop to the day before yesterday.

Naturally, we have a copy of every single issue, and the bound volumes present us with a unique wealth of information and opinion about jazz musicians and jazz recordings over that long span of time. In the process they also reveal a lot about changing tastes in jazz, particularly the phenomenon whereby music that one generation finds unacceptable, or even offensive, is welcomed by its successor as warm and cuddly. Bebop is a case in point, and also vocalists of the Sinatra era. The occasional attempts by writers in the late 1950s to disentangle rhythm and blues (good) from rock 'n' roll (bad), a task of theological delicacy, may have been doomed to failure but at least they were serious - unlike the ill-digested PR handouts which feature so prominently in some of today's glossy publications.

Let's hope that, even in these difficult times, a saviour comes along and we can start another run of bound volumes marked Jazz Journal.

DAVE GELLY