



## How It All Started

I'll never be entirely sure when the first inklings of an idea that we should perhaps have some kind of National Archive for jazz books, periodicals and memorabilia in Britain crept into my head. But it was probably soon after the day in 1985 that my band and I made the trip to Southsea Pier to record a TV show celebrating "Fifty years of Nat Gonella". Somewhere between the run-through and the recording I was introduced to Chris Clarke, newly-appointed jazz curator of the National Sound Archive who'd come to see about interviewing Nat for the "British Oral Jazz History".

"What's that?" I asked.



L to R: Chris Hodgkins, Ian Abbey (E.C.C. Cllr) Pat Wawn (Chair of E.C.C. Libraries) Seated Digby Fairweather, at the opening in 1988.

Chris explained that the "BOJH" was an on-tape research project for which prominent British Jazz people were interviewed about their lives. Each interview was then cross-indexed with others for future generations of researchers to use. "Sounds good" I said, recognising through the mists an acknowledgement that what jazz musicians in Britain - or anywhere - were doing could, and should, be worthy of historic acknowledgement. "It is a good scheme" affirmed Chris. "Why don't you try doing an interview for us sometime? And come and look over the Jazz Section while you're at it". I did, and was duly impressed. Stacked in perfect order on hundreds of shelves in a department of the British Library was a large proportion of the recorded legacy of jazz, on everything from cylinders to LP's (this was a couple of years BCD). Books and periodicals about jazz, however, were a different story; a small and random collection on no more than a dozen shelves at best. I mentioned this to Chris, and he nodded. "Yes, but there's a problem. For one thing, this Archive is about sound - recorded sound - not words. And I doubt if we'd have the time to handle books as well. Or the space come to that. But let me look into it".

Good as his word Chris did look into it, and soon after we had a meeting with several of the big bosses of the British Library. But as one, they shook their heads. "No room" they confirmed "You'll just have to look elsewhere".

So, for now Chris and I were back to square one. But I had an idea - or a dream at least. Where better to start looking for premises than with my old friends and employers at Essex Library Service? I'd worked at Southend Library for twelve years - and my old boss, Frank Easton was now Deputy County Librarian of Essex - as he is still today. "Well" mused Frank at our first meeting "I'm not sure what we can do. But there is a spare office in a corner over at Loughton Library. Perhaps you could use that for now".

From that moment on fate seemed to smile. Chris Hodgkins, the newly-appointed boss of "Jazz Services" agreed to help co-ordinate the project. Then, via the fine British Dixieland drummer and friend to Jazz, Brian Chadwick, we inherited the collection of man-about-jazz Chips Chipperfield, who had asked Brian to retain his legacy until a suitable and permanent home could be found for it. Chips' books, magazines and souvenirs formed the basis of our collection, and were soon supplemented by donations from Graham Langley of the British Institute of Jazz Studies and John Blandford who between them supplied a complete run of Melody Maker from 1926 to 1981, and by many other friends who contributed valuable gifts and collections. Almost day by day, the seeds we had sown flowered into summer shows of goodwill.

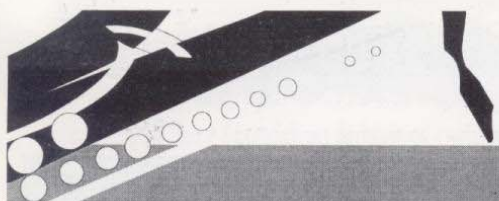
Essex County Council Libraries has continued to offer us unfailing support, ever since those early days. Expanded and dedicated premises are now staffed by our very own archivist Ken Jones, who knows his way round our collection as no-one else does. "We're very lucky here" he said to me last time we were together "because this place seems to generate nothing but goodwill. Isn't that marvellous?". It certainly is Ken; jazz, joy and happiness, as Fats Waller might have put it. And as Louis Armstrong would certainly have added as a postscript: "Sure sounds good to me".

Digby Fairweather



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## The Chris Hayes Collection

Chris Hayes had been a journalist for over 60 years when he reached the age of 80 in January 1996 and decided to present his valuable collection of biographies, built up during his long career, to the National Jazz Foundation Archive at Loughton Library.

Chris was born in Tooting, south west London, on 24 January 1916, son of a silk warehouseman. He started writing letters to newspapers as a schoolboy and as a teenager he acted as a local correspondent at his home in Hertfordshire for Everybody's Weekly, interviewing winners of competitions.

He had been interested in dance music since the age of 10 and used to stand outside the stage door of the Brixton Astoria collecting autographs of top musicians, little knowing that one day he would become a personal friend! He joined the music paper, Melody Maker, as an office boy in 1930, and soon after it changed from monthly to weekly publication; in 1933 he was given a job as junior reporter.

His first assignment was to go along to Archer Street, just behind Piccadilly Circus, every afternoon to pick up stories from the musicians who used to meet there to discuss work. His assistant editor, Dan Ingman, encouraged him to write features and he was responsible for Potted Personnels, a biographical series which covered almost all the popular dance bands, Voices In The Air, devoted to singers, and his own speciality, a gossip column called Chatter, which ran for many years before and after the war.

He spent five years as a Lance Bombardier clerk in the Royal Artillery, until discharged through ill health necessitating a year in hospital, and he rejoined the Melody Maker in 1946 as senior reporter, writing top stories, spending five years doubling as staff photographer, and contributing many features, including Band File, a penetrating question-and-answer series about all the leading pop groups, including the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, a far cry from his pre-war interviews with such famous bandleaders as Harry Roy, Henry Hall and Billy Cotton.

He retired from the Melody Maker when he reached the age of 65 in 1981 and then wrote several books on dance music:- Dance Music At The Savoy Hotel, Stairway To The Stars (the story of the Skyrockets Orchestra), Signature Tunes and Signature Tunes Supplement, Four Men - One Song (the story of the Radio Revellers), Melody Maker Memories, Leader of the Band (volumes 1 and 2) and Voices In The Air. He also produced a series of Dance Band Diaries which tell in condensed form the history of dance music from 1926 to 1955, based on stories in the Melody Maker.

Chris has always believed that a good journalist should present plenty of facts woven into a compelling story written with integrity and accuracy, and he was described by his first post-war editor, Ray Sonin, as the best investigative reporter he had ever worked with. During his long career he became one of the most knowledgeable music writers in the country and a close friend not only of bandleaders, musicians, singers and pop stars, but dozens of variety artists he met while backstage at theatres.

## Acquisitions of Note

\* The Chris Hayes collection : a library of thousands of cuttings, notes and biographical details of jazz and popular music, compiled by Chris during sixty years as author and journalist, including fifty- four years with the Melody Maker. Chris not only generously donated this collection but also spent many hours sorting and collating it to enable it to be available for immediate use in the Archive.

\* The personal papers of Van Phillips, band leader, composer and former president of the Musician's Union.

\* Among material donated by Campbell Burnap - a good friend and firm supporter of the Archive - was an exquisite London Palladium programme from 1919 featuring the first visit to Britain of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.

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great importance to the buyer. Price must  
be reasonable as well as the Quality Right  
We mount our own Kings and as we only  
Sell for Cash we can offer them at Prices 25%  
below the charges of Other Houses.*

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Experience helps &  
our Reputation will  
Protect our Clients

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Pentonville Rd. Kings Cross NJ  
City Branch 71 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.4

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8. The Great Original American  
**DIXIE-LAND JAZZ BAND**  
and **JOHNNIE DALE**, a Jazz Dancer.  
Presented by Albert de Courville for the first time in England.  
The creation of Jazz. The sensation of America.

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**MAUD GIBSON'S ACADEMY**  
Music, Singing, Elocution and Dancing

\* Perhaps the most unusual acquisition, included in the effects of the drummer Joe Daniels, which were donated by his grand-daughter, was a trick drum. This drum formerly used in Joe's stage act, has a chicken painted on its face which, upon operation of a hidden pedal, flaps its wings and lays an egg!





## A WORD FROM OUR PATRONS..

The National Jazz Foundation Archive is already doing important work for the documentation of jazz music in Britain. Since the very early days the standards of locally produced jazz have been extremely high, thanks to the efforts of countless gifted musicians who have devoted their abilities to the cause of their beloved music over the last half century or so.

Indeed it is true to say British jazz has tended to set the standard of the music in Europe ever since its beginnings. Moreover many British jazz performers and performances have been highly praised by critics and musicians alike in the birthplace

of jazz - the United States. But accolades have also come from many famous American performers who have listened to or played with British jazz artists. Sadly, however, knowledge of British jazz world-wide and even in this country is limited. Jazz enthusiasts in this country do not have sufficient access to the fascinating stories behind many brilliant British-based musicians of the past. Jazz legends like Buddy Bolden and Jelly Roll Morton were indeed colourful characters, but they have their parallels in British jazz history. The stories of such contributors to our jazz heritage must already exist in the archives, but it is also important that such material is easily available to succeeding generations.

Perhaps the goals of the National Jazz Foundation Archive should be twofold.

Firstly it should endeavour to acquire every piece of information possible, every artefact, every historic photo.

Secondly, it must do everything in its power to raise funds to see that its activities are widely publicised and accessible throughout the nation for those who find it of interest.

This second goal is as monumental a task as the first, but it is equally important. The advent of the NJFA Newsletter is an extremely helpful step to increase awareness - and therefore usage - of this priceless facility.

John Dankworth and Cleo Laine



## HELP US TO ENSURE THE ARCHIVE CONTINUES TO GROW AND THRIVE

Make a donation.....

any donation you make, whether it be of materials or money, will contribute directly to the Archive and will enable it to maintain and build the collection. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to the " National Jazz Foundation Archive ".

Remember the Archive in your will.....

if jazz is an important part of your life and has given you pleasure over the years, why not remember the Archive in your will so that future generations can enjoy looking back at the musicians, events and milestones in jazz history.

Become a Friend of the Archive.....

by making a Deed of Covenant which allows the Archive to recover income tax. The money goes straight to the Archive.





## Fun For All At Fundraisers

The week beginning April 15 1996 was a busy one for the National Jazz Foundation Archive as - within two days of each other - two major fundraising concerts for "The Grand Cause" took place. The first - on Wednesday 17th - took place at London's celebrated home of Traditional Jazz; the 100 Club. Owner Roger Horton kindly lent the room out for the evening for free, and on hand to begin the show were George Webb's Dixielanders (just as they began Britain's Jazz Revival fifty years ago). Fine sets were also heard from the Great British Jazz Band of Pete Strange and Digby Fairweather plus Nevil Skrimshire and Ray Catling's "Jazz Guitars" (joined by guest stars Cy Laurie and Charlie Connor) and a concluding jam session featured Jim Douglas, Malcolm Smith, Chris Hodgkins and many more. Benny Green was star compere; a great time was had by all and the event raised over £600.

Two nights later, thanks to dear friends Jean and Stan Ball plus committee, a sellout concert at Ongar Jazz raised a fantastic £1200 for the Archive. This was a nonstop parade of star guests closely following one

another; swing clarinettist Dave Shepherd and friends, a solo set from Keith Nichols, a blues recital by Britain's "Queen of the Blues" Beryl Bryden, an unscheduled but hoped- for appearance by Cy Laurie and the debut of the "Broadcaster's Band" headed by Campbell Burnap, Dave Gelly and Digby Fairweather. Bridget Metcalfe and Annie White sang; Ron Rubin played piano, and the tireless rhythm section of Nevil Skrimshire, Len Skeat and Stan Bourke worked as hard as they'd done two nights before - all for the Archive and all for nothing. All we can say is "thanks a double million" to everyone. Ongar is all set for a repeat night on April 18th 1997 and - STOP PRESS - the 100 Club has confirmed for two days before 16th April. So we'll just have to do it all again!! SEE YOU THEN.....

Digby Fairweather.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you would like to help the Archive continue its work, please tick the relevant space and return to the Archive.

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE MONEY OR MATERIALS

☐

I WOULD LIKE TO REMEMBER THE ARCHIVE IN MY WILL

☐

I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A FRIEND OF THE ARCHIVE

☐

Name : .....

Address : .....

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Telephone : .....

