

Newsletter



Editor : David Nathan

ISSUE 6 AUTUMN 1998

10 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION ARCHIVE

It seems impossible that it's ten years since the National Jazz Foundation Archive opened its doors, but it's true. Ten years of amassing a heritage; everything about Jazz, British and American, that you don't listen to but look at instead - books, periodicals, memorabilia, posters, pictures, photographs. The visual index to hundreds of thousands of lives spent in the service of Jazz music and to the glorious heritage they left behind or continue to create for us.

It's been a marvellous decade in which the NJFA has grown from a couple of boxes of magazines (donated by the late collector 'Chips' Chipperfield) into a monumental research collection housed in a gracious and beautifully equipped Archive on the first floor of Loughton Central Library. Quite a transformation! Early on the collection could easily be accommodated - as it was - in a tiny office in the corner of Loughton's Reference Library.

Looking back, those early days were fun; a time in which the feeling (as now) was of something special coming to be and everyone offering willing support, as well as regular and spectacular philanthropy. Library suppliers such as Dunn and Wilson and Rempoy bound endless volumes of 'Melody Maker' 'Jazz Journal' and 'Downbeat' in handsome durable covers and all for nothing - just because someone up there loved the music! Friends such as Graham Langley - whose own 'British Institute of Jazz Studies' at Ascot pre-dated our project - took this precocious latecomer to his heart and selflessly handed over valuable stock. And of course, at the very core of the project, librarians Frank Easton (who first found us space at Loughton), Rob Froud and Elaine Adams worked tirelessly, both at the start - and, more importantly after the fanfares were over and the real graft began. Our first launch in November 1988 was hosted by Charles Fox and although he may have felt private reservations about the scope of our project then - probably our whole collection would have fitted into one room in his Weymouth flat - I'm sure, if he's looking down now he feels much happier. His collection too, after all, is safely lodged with us.

So many more good things have happened since then. Our re-launch in 1993, for example, where John Dankworth and Cleo Laine cut the ribbon across the door of our new and beautiful room, music filled the building, and celebrities from Lol Coxhill to Benny Green to George Webb gathered to celebrate with us. Two editions of the long-running 'Jazz Score' were recorded at Loughton and then of course the annual 'Celebrity Lectures' began, in which performer/authorities including John Dankworth, Harry Gold, John Chilton, Kenny Ball, and Tiny Tim Winters came along to tell us about Jazz as they saw it. There have been wonderful 'open days' with music, lectures and plenty of good Jazz gossip and in October 1998 - a great new departure - saxophonist Tim Whitehead will be premiering his Jazz suite based on researches at the Archive; a fine example of history seeding new music.

Jazz musicians have always taken the Archive to their hearts and of course two annual events in our calendar couldn't happen without them; our fund-raising concerts. One of them is held - thanks to Jean and Stan Ball, of whom more later - at Ongar Jazz, housed in Budworth Hall Ongar in April and it's always a sellout. The other one - at the 100 Club Oxford Street, for which clubowner Roger Horton (another longtime friend of the Archive) similarly gives his premises and all the takings free



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- does very nicely too and over the years several thousand pounds have been raised by Jazz musicians coming out to blow for the Archive for nothing. To list all those great players would take another article, but I want to thank the great George Webb whose appearance (sometimes with the Dixielanders, sometimes solo) is a privilege for us. So is the presence of Nevil Skrimshire (on every fundraiser so far), the great Cy Laurie (ditto), Campbell Burnap, Dave Gelly, Dave Shepherd, Alistair Allen, Keith Nichols, Bridget Metcalfe, Pete Skivington, Stan Bourke, Ted Beament, Paul Bridge, Adrian Macintosh, and so many more. Thank you all.

One of our greatest gifts from ever-generous Essex County Council has been the provision, for several years now, of a part-time Jazz Archivist at Loughton. I shan't forget the days that Elaine Adams and I got together to interview for the post. On the first of those days, a string of applicants who, to be honest, were - well let's just say 'O.K.!' Then just as Elaine and I were reaching the bottom of our list and talking resignedly about re-advertising, in walked Ken Jones; smile as bright as his shoes, talking about Bob Crosby! We were saved and over the next few years Ken became an integral part of the operation as well as an invaluable friend to researchers; his name is rightfully credited (along with the Archive) in many of the best Jazz books of the 1990s. When finally retirement loomed for Ken, Elaine and I wondered how we could possibly find an equal. But then on day two - and last in the queue again - came David Nathan; an authority to match his predecessor and ready to take over. For the past seventeen months David has run the Archive with visionary skills and comparable devotion and happily he and Ken Jones collaborate from time to time in joint projects too.

It's been a remarkable ten-year cycle of joy for which so many thanks are necessary. To all those mentioned of course. To Jean and Stan Ball and all our good friends at Ongar Jazz who (in addition to our sellout fundraisers) have done everything over the years from organising carloads of supporters for Archive events to indexing volumes of the 'Melody Maker' for free. To a recent-comer Grace Kempster (Head of Libraries, Information, Heritage and Cultural Services) whose continuing commitment to the National Jazz Foundation Archive gives us bright hope for the future. And of course to all of you for coming along with us on this wonderful Jazz adventure. THANK YOU!

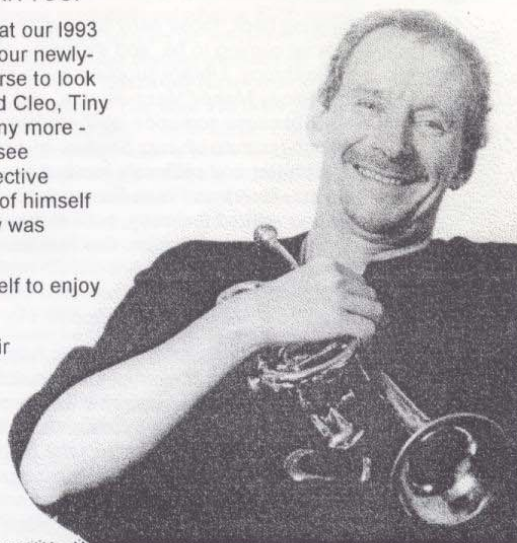
Before I go, may I leave you with a memory? This happened at our 1993 re-launch when, as I said, British Jazz musicians gathered in our newly-opened Archive space to see what was happening and of course to look through parts of our collection. Many of the players - John and Cleo, Tiny Winters, George Webb, Dave Shepherd, Bill Thompson, many more - were thumbing through back copies of the 'Melody Maker' to see themselves as rather younger men and women. And one reflective browser was the late Benny Green, glancing back at pictures of himself with Ronnie Scott's great nine-piece band of the 1950s. Benny was shaking his head and I asked him why the apparent regret?

"Looking back" said Benny " - I just wish I'd allowed myself to enjoy it more".

Perhaps for many players, looking back at the emotion of their performing careers in tranquillity is one favour the National Jazz Archive can do them. If it also supplies - as of course it does - a firm in-print heritage for the great music called Jazz then its existence in the world of British Jazz is one of the grand things; one of the standard-raisers for a musical form that took too long to be granted the dignity it deserved. And that's a proud banner indeed.

Thank you all for helping to make it possible - and of course, here's to our future!

Digby Fairweather. Founder/NJFA.



NJFA BENEFIT NIGHT AT 100 CLUB

This will take place on **Wednesday 13th January 1999** and tickets will be available at the door on the night. For pre-bookings the tel. no. is 0171 636 0933. Digby's band will perform along with George Webb's re-formed Dixielanders with other star guests to be announced.

OPEN DAY REVIEW

The Open Day on Saturday 6th June was a hugely enjoyable and successful occasion with over 100 in attendance on a very hot afternoon from both a musical and climatic sense!

Andrew Simons, the Jazz Curator at the National Sound Archive commenced proceedings with an excellent recital entitled "Documenting the Jazz Fringe" which incorporated the following musical items:-

1. Johnny Mercer with Henry Hall's BBC Dance Orchestra
- "I'm Building Up To An Awful Letdown".
2. Jam Session from New York, presented by Alastair Cooke, 1938
- "Keep Smiling At Trouble"
- "Just The Blues"
3. Lauderic Caton Quartet
- "The Jumping Jive"
4. Feldman Trio and Friends
- "After You've Gone"
5. The Feldman Club House Band
- "Don't Blame Me"
6. Gracie Cole's All Girl Orchestra
- "Lullaby of Birdland" (vocal-Cleo Laine)
- "Cole Storage"
8. Big Bill Broonzy
- "Some Of These Days"
- "She Done Moved"
9. Anita O'Day with the Johnny Dankworth Orchestra
- "Four Brothers" (Johnny Dankworth, alto sax solo)



This was followed by Digby Fairweather and Friends performing live, the Friends being John Altman (soprano sax), Chris Hodgkins (trumpet), Cy Laurie (clarinet), Nevil Skrimshire (guitar) and George Ward (bass) - see photo above.

The enthusiastic audience showed their appreciation as the band played such crowd-pleasers as *Indiana*, *Sweet Sue*, *Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams*, *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me* and a rousing closer in *Beale Street Blues*.

An added bonus was the attendance of George Webb, pictured above with NJFA archivist David Nathan, who was persuaded by Digby to recount some anecdotes regarding his early encounters with jazz and the subsequent formation of his Dixielanders much to the audiences delight.

Notables in the audience were John Clement from the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University, Ben Cree of Mole Jazz, Ray Crick of Academy Sound & Vision, singer Bridget Metcalf, jazz promoter Susan May, tenor saxophonist Spike Robinson and writer Peter Vacher.

Our thanks to all who attended and especially to Andrew, Digby and Co, for providing great entertainment without charge.

Benefit Night

This was held at Ongar Jazz Club on April 24th and was a sell-out raising £900 for the Archive. Digby Fairweather organised a terrific band with Campbell Burnap, Dave Gelly and Humphrey Lyttelton's rhythm section, Ted Beament, Paul Bridge and Adrian Mackintosh along with guest stars Cy Laurie, Nevil Skrimshire and Annie Bright in the second half.

It was a wonderful evening and our thanks again to all the musicians for giving their time and talents so freely and all at Ongar Jazz Club especially Jean and Stan Ball for their tremendous help in organising the gig.



ARCHIVAL NEWS

PUBLICITY

Following visits by **Eddie and Janet Cook** of *Jazz Journal* they kindly gave a very nice write up on the Archive in their May editorial.

Campbell Burnap invited archivist **David Nathan** on to his Sunday Night Jazz FM programme *Mainstem* on March 15th and a number of enquiries and visitors have ensued as a result. Our thanks as ever to Campbell for his invaluable support in helping to publicise the Archive.

The new leaflet was issued and included within recent copies of the *Jazz Rag* and *Memory Lane* resulting in over 25 offers to date to help the Archive.

DONATIONS

Vera Salmon widow of *Jazz Journal* reviewer Ron Salmon, kindly donated a splendid collection of books along with a framed photograph of Dizzy Gillespie and framed portrait of Louis Armstrong both of which now hang proudly in the Archive.

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

Tony Bacon - *The Sax & Brass Book*
Outline Press

Ted Cherrett - *The Genius of Django*

John Fordham - *Jazz Heroes*

Collins & Brown Ltd

John Dankworth - *Jazz in Revolution*

Ben Sidran - *Talking Jazz*

Pomegranate Press

Randi Hultin - *Born Under the Sign of Jazz*

Sanctuary Publishing Ltd

Brian Wood - *The Song for Me*.

In addition **Eddie and Janet Cook** donated a considerable number of issues of the French magazine *Jazz Hot* and the Italian magazine *Musica Jazz*, plus some *Down Beat* copies we were missing.

Our thanks to all of the above for their generous gesture.

CELEBRITY TALK BEBOP BEGINNINGS IN BRITAIN

This takes place in the archive on Friday November 6th at 8.00pm and Digby has excelled himself this year by lining-up not just one star guest but three! They are **Tony Crombie**, **Jack Fallon** and **Stan Tracey** who will doubtless regale us with fascinating insights into this revolutionary period of jazz in Britain. Tickets priced at £3 can be obtained from the Archive but please book early in view of the limited accommodation.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTION ... TIM WHITEHEAD'S SOUNDTRACKS

October 15th sees the world premiere of new music inspired by the collection of books and other publications in the Archive. This has been funded by the Eastern Arts Board through the Andrew Milne Jazz Award applied for by Jazz East and takes place at Loughton Library at 8.00pm (doors open at 7.30pm).

Tim Whitehead one of Britain's best jazz saxophonists/composers spent eight days in the Archive and the music has been based on the research carried out by him.

He was, naturally, a most welcome visitor and has given his blessing to reproduce the letter written to Archivist David Nathan following his research:-

Dear David

Thanks so much for making me feel welcome at the Archive and thanks even more for all the invaluable help you gave me, in my researches this summer.

From my point of view one of the most useful things you did for me, was to find me a room where I could ruminate musically on what I'd been finding amongst all the wonderful, fascinating and sometimes tragic life stories and collaborations and events contained in all those books and magazines.

The result of those moments of response which I recorded on my walkman, is, so far, a dozen pieces of music, some of which I'll perform at the Archive on October 15th with my quartet plus Philip Sheppard on cello. I've got far more than I need for the concert, but I'm hoping to complete and rehearse 80-90 minutes of music.

Some of the song titles are the words or derived from the words of the musicians whose thoughts fascinated me, like "Why Shouldn't I Imitate Birds?" - Eric Dolphy (in response to a question put by Leonard Feather), "Play What You Don't Hear" - Miles Davis & "Respect for the Song" - Keith Jarrett. I want to find a way of using lots of other quotes, some of which have been reproduced on the publicity leaflets and posters, like "This is how the world ends, not with a whim but a banker". (Paul Desmond talking about Vogue fashion models).

I spent a lot of time reading up on my mentors which was fundamental to the project and I had a fascinating time exploring the developments and events that occurred in the early 1950's in the UK when "modern" jazz was played by smart suited John Dankworth's and Ronnie Scott's and "Trad" jazz was performed by Humphrey Lyttelton's and George Webb's wearing roll-neck sweaters and crepe soled shoes.

I learned a lot and enjoyed it hugely but recognise I only had time to scratch the surface much of the time.

Thanks again for your help. Looking forward to the gig in October.

Best wishes Tim Whitehead.

Editors note - Tim it was a pleasure and I look forward to the gig. Tickets priced at £12 (£9 concessions) are available from me at the archive during usual opening hours, tel. no. 0181 502 0181 or Jazz East tel. no. 01223 722811. Tim will be accompanied by Pete Jacobsen (piano), Arnie Somogyi (bass), Dave Barry (drums) and Philip Sheppard (cello).

