

A JOURNEY THROUGH MUSIC

the autobiography of Don Read

A JOURNEY THROUGH MUSIC

Don Read

A JOURNEY THROUGH MUSIC
by Don Read
Copyright © 2008

First published 2008 by Don Read

Printed by XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**“In my day we couldn’t afford stress:
we had to make do with worry”**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The book covers my life from 1931 to 2007 and also contains information about events preceding my birth. This first section, written in 1998, was originally intended for members of my family to help future generations with any genealogical exercises they might engage in. It was only when I had a letter published in the quarterly magazine of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra that I decided to extend the text. The letter was about attending a Benny Goodman concert in London in 1949. The band's musical director, Bill Ashton, suggested that I should write a book. It's all your fault, Bill!

Life is a conveyor belt. We jump on at birth and drop off at death. What happens in between is up to fate and our own determination to make something of ourselves.

Don Read

SECTION ONE: UP TO OCTOBER 1953

CHAPTER ONE

BEFORE THE BEGINNING

My family research goes back to the mid-19th century and as good a starting point as any would be the marriage of one Betsy Nuttall of Queens Street, Farnworth, near Bolton, Lancs. Around 1860 Betsy had met a dashing young painter and decorator. Exactly what the circumstances were of their meeting is not chronicled in history books. Perhaps young Henry James Read had been hired to come and paper the parlour or permaglaze the privy.

There is a touch of irony in the fact that Betsy was illiterate but married a chap named Read. They plighted their troth in 1868.

Betsy and William had a son on February 24th 1869 and, being a little short on imagination when it came to names, they decided to call their offspring William Henry. WHR followed in his father's footsteps having inherited the family paint brushes and paper hanging utensils.

At some undetermined point young William emigrated to a distant land across the Lancashire border and set up shop amongst those despicable Yorkshire tykes in Bradford. Perhaps that well-known maxim 'Where there's muck there's brass' had caught his eye. He chose the right side of the booming woollen industrial town to ply his trade. Manningham was dominated by the huge Lister's mill and many wealthy mill owners lived just up the road in Heaton. The DIY industry was in its infancy and the demand for skilled men with an aptitude for hanging a roll or two of dingy flowered wallpaper and adding a lick of brown gloss to a sash window frame would have been considerable.

William Henry Read married Ellen Robertshaw on June 17th 1891 at Girlington Parish church, Bradford. He was 22 and she was 24. They set about building a well-balanced family: two boys and two girls, in order of seniority Norman, Beatrice, Wilfred and Ethel. Wilfred, my father, was born September 16th 1894 at 25 Unwin Place, Manningham, Bradford. They enjoyed just fifteen years of marriage before my paternal grandfather died in 1906 at the age of 37. My father was twelve and Ellen now had to support four young children. She became a corsetiere with Spirella and worked most of her life at the company's premises on Sunbridge Road, Bradford.

Over on the south side of the city, some eight miles from Manningham, is the somewhat nondescript suburb of Wyke (where they're all alike, so the saying goes and who am I to doubt it). Our maternal family name was Briggs and it seems the Briggses had some influence in the district from as far back as 1704.

In 1800 John Briggs senior owned 6 acres of farm land off Storr Hill. His son Joseph, born 1816, married Hanna Seed of High Fernley - just round the corner - in 1841 and made a career out of breeding. (The farming background, no doubt.) They had eleven children, one of which was stillborn, leaving seven boys and three girls.

One of the males, Frederick, married Florence Elizabeth Dawson on June 18th 1887. Miss D was one of four children born to William Henry (yes, another one) Dawson of Saltley, Birmingham and Jersey-born Mary Ann Du Heaume. They had married in 1850 and William Henry (this one was a school teacher) had taken up a position at Wyke school in 1875. The French-educated Mary Ann didn't take to the Wyke folk but stuck it out and had four children: Gertrude, Edith, William John Philip and Florence.

Florence married Frederick and had two children, William and my mother, Florence Mildred, born August 17th 1895. Gertrude and Edith never married and spent the latter part of their lives at Newlyn near Penzance.

My mother and father married in 1915, a year into the Great War. During their courtship dad walked the eight miles or so from Wyke to Manningham and back more times than I've had hot dinners. Such is the power of love.

THE KING'S SHILLING

The First World War was declared on August 14th 1914. My father walked the two miles to Lister Park to enlist in the army. It was just a month before his twentieth birthday. Hundreds of other volunteers were there to 'take the King's shilling', a euphemism for enlistment into the armed forces. The young men were addressed by an officer who promised them a wonderful opportunity to travel, live a life of adventure and serve King and country by giving the Bosch a bloody nose. They would all be back home within six months.

In reality few of them were ever to return. Many who did were minus a limb or an eye or suffering some other manifestation of the madness of war. Dad was enrolled in the 16th Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment. The battalion was known as the Bradford Pals. They were kitted out and on September 20th, four days after his twentieth birthday, my father travelled to army barracks at Ripon to commence training.

In 1915, after experiencing some of the bloodiest fighting in France, Dad was sent home on leave and married my mother on July 31st. Mother was 19 years old. Back to France and we have records of the exploits of the Bradford Pals at Serre near the Somme. In 1916, he must have been home on leave again around October, because the twins were born on July 29th 1917. Eric and Leslie were born at Rosemount, Wyke, the home of my maternal grandparents.

My father endured the worst of the major battles, including the Somme and Ypres. He was affected by mustard gas. He often regaled us and visitors with stories of his times in the army. I remember the one about the Prince of Wales visiting the trenches and asking the war-torn soldiers what they were smoking. "Tea leaves, Sir," Dad had replied. The royal visitor chatted for some time and promised to see that a supply of Woodbines was delivered. They arrived the very next day but when they had been used, they were back to rolling tea leaves in cigarette papers again.

The worst experiences he kept to himself, but in addition to three campaign medals he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Military Medal: a hair's breadth away from the Victoria Cross.

The war ended in 1918 and millions of men returned home to an uncertain future. Families had lost loved ones or now had to look after wounded husbands and sons, many unable to work. No one could possibly have envisaged that the allied governments would allow Germany to rebuild its war machine and stand by whilst Adolf Hitler (himself once a painter and paperhanger) promoted Nazism. The policy of appeasement led directly to Hitler ignoring allied warnings regarding his intention to dominate Europe. Who could have foretold that a mere twenty years hence Britain and Germany would again be at war?

My father was one of the lucky ones. He was, at least, physically intact and set about rebuilding his life. Mother always liked shop work and

with an act of considerable enterprise dad was about to make her ambition a reality.

THE ORIGINAL MOBILE SHOP

They had taken up residence at 44 Bierley Lane at one end of which was a large housing estate with no shops. At the other end Dad found an empty wooden shop and bought it. He did a deal with a farmer who owned a field opposite the housing development. No planning permission was required in those days. Pickfords was hired to move the wooden structure some half a mile up the road on rollers. A suitable space was made in the wall and the shop was backed into the field. Unfortunately the field was ten feet below ground level. No problem. Concrete supports had been constructed and somehow the building remained whole.

The venture was a good PR exercise. The event entertained the local population on what would otherwise have been a relatively dull Sunday. People admired enterprise and a ready-made clientele awaited the grand opening a few days later.

The business prospered. Sweets, tobacco, newspapers and magazines were the original items on offer, but soon Read's home-made ice cream became a big seller. The structure was still intact in 1964 but is now long gone.

My parents struck up a lifelong friendship with neighbours, Frances and Jack Breaton. At the time of writing Francis is 92 and living in a nursing home in Shipley. The Breatons, staunch Catholics, raised seven children in times of great hardship. Jack, a soft-spoken intelligent man, never rose above warehouseman. He was a disciplinarian and was tough on the children. Francis had a dry sense of humour and a ready infectious smile that somehow must have helped her get through the poverty and trauma of life with Jack.

At some point whilst running the shop Dad was offered a partnership with a cousin in a dry-cleaning business, but mother persuaded him to stick with the shop until the arrival of my brother Jack. With three children to look after, Mother could no longer devote much time to the lock-up shop and it was time to change direction.

They sold the shop and moved to a bungalow at 176 Woodside Road, Wyke, close to my mother's parents.(NOTE: violinist Tasmin Little's father was born just a few doors away). Dad took a job with William Byles and Sons, printers and stationers. Today he would have been described as a sales executive and had a company car, mobile phone, Blackberry and laptop, plus all the other trappings of the young, thrusting marketeer. In 1923 he had an attaché case containing a few samples, a decent raincoat, a trilby and a wad of bus timetables: the standard kit of the commercial traveller.

CHAPTER TWO

HIGH LIFE IN LOW MOOR

1931

I was born shortly after midnight on December 2nd 1931. Grandad Briggs took one look at me and said, "I expect you're going to name this one after me." And so it was that I was christened Donald Frederick Read. My brothers had escaped the inconvenience of a second Christian name but I would forever be Fred to my schoolmates.

My life between birth and the age of two is pretty sketchy. My earliest recollection of anything momentous was sitting on my mother's knee during a visit by Uncle Willie Briggs. We had moved from the bungalow to a farm cottage about a mile away prior to moving to a newly built house. I remember being outside the cottage watching our pet hedgehog lapping up a saucer of milk. I would probably have been about two at the time.

We were now a six-piece family and had outgrown the bungalow. We needed two floors and they were to be found on the new housing estate currently being built by a Mr Helliwell. I was three when my father propelled me in my pushchair the mile and a half to watch the new residence under construction.

1934

To this day I have never understood the origin of the term semi-detached house. There is no such thing. They are completely and totally fully attached to the house next door. There is not so much as a gnat's whisker of a gap between them. The address of the new house was 110 Huddersfield Road and it was situated about a mile from Low Moor and a couple of hundred yards from Odsal Top. Helliwell's estate comprised a hundred or so houses and we were fortunate to have secured one on the main road. This was a dual carriageway from Odsal Top to about a hundred yards past our house. Up the centre ran the twin-deck trams on their slotted rails and overhead wires. This was the main arterial road from Manchester to Bradford and Leeds via Huddersfield and a scene of constant fascination to a three-year-old.

For many of our new neighbours this would probably be their first experience of indoor toilets and real bathrooms. I believe the house cost £300. Although we were still tight for space we had the luxury of living in a brand new home with hot and cold running everything.

Life was pretty humdrum until I reached five in 1936. The highlights were shopping trips to the Maypole grocery store (watching the bacon slicer going), the post office and shoe shop at Low Moor. The twins, Eric and Leslie, were now 19. They had been educated at Carlton High School and were gainfully employed. Les worked at Busby's department store where he had progressed from being a page-boy at 16 (smart uniform with lots of highly polished buttons on his jacket and a pork pie hat worn at a jaunty angle) to something in the fur department. Eric, with an aptitude for figures, worked in the office at the BDA (Bradford Dyers Association) at Wesley Place. It was here that he met a pretty young girl called Irene Ingle. They married in 1945. Jack was seven years my senior. He left school at 14 having been offered a job as an apprentice joiner, a trade at which he later excelled.

Shortly after my fifth birthday Mother took me to a nursery school at Low Moor. The two elderly spinsters who ran the place expected their charges to take a half-hour nap every afternoon so they could crack on with their needlework. I rebelled. Who wants to sleep when there's a whole exciting world out there? Mum pulled me out and got me into Low Moor Church School in Cleckheaton Road, Wesley Place. I joined Miss Finlay's class of tiny tots in class one. At playtime we played cowboys and Indians and being unfamiliar with cinema characters I happily played the role of Trigger until I found out this was Roy Rogers' horse.

At the end of playtime we all marched into school to the strains of Marche Lorraine played on a wind-up gramophone by head monitor, Shirley Lightowler aged six and three quarters and a real cracker if ever I saw one.

Because of the age difference between us there was not much fraternisation. The twins had their clique of friends as did Jack. They rarely took me out. This was left to Mother and Dad who amply made up for the lack of sibling attention.

When I was six, mother suggested, one Saturday evening, that she take me on my first visit to the cinema. I was overjoyed. She seldom checked

the starting times of films or the nature of the film so we entered the Low Moor Picture House (too parochial to have a real name) when the action was at its highest. I shall never forget the leading actor, Laird Cregor, bashing a villain over the head with a sledgehammer. Hardly the stuff to introduce an impressionable child to cinematic art.

Mother had a casual approach to going to the movies. The Telegraph and Argus carried two full columns of cinema adverts on the front of its broadsheet format each night. Mum would scan the columns and say, "This looks like a good picture", and off we'd go regardless of the time. Performances were continuous at city centre cinemas so we might go in when a film was half way through but stop until that bit came round again. Invariably we would carry on watching until we saw the end once more.

THE LONELINESS OF THE SHORT DISTANCE TRICYCLIST

I hung out with the local six year olds and one summer evening I was out along Huddersfield Rd on my trusty tricycle, when a couple of lads not from our gang, dared me to peddle up to Larch Hill some hundred yards away. Always ready to accept a challenge I peddled like fury. They caught me up and congratulated me on this global achievement. Dare I go even further along to Larch Drive and into Beech Rd.? Of course I dare. An hour later I had circumnavigated the world and found myself across a main road and heading along a rough track towards Harold Park. Hopelessly lost I did the only thing a six year old can do in the circumstances- cry. Eventually I was spotted by our next door neighbour who had been despatched on his motor bike and sidecar to form a one man search and rescue party. Safely back home and being scrubbed down in the bath my mother told me that she and dad were just about to send for a policeman. Fearing imminent arrest for absconding I did the only thing possible: cry.

LET'S HEAR IT FOR NORM

My best pal was Norman Varley aged seven and three quarters. He always seemed to be older than me. He was a child prodigy or so his mother told everyone. He played the drums. Well a scaled down kit about half the size of a grown up one. He had inherited strange parents. His father was a dour drunkard devoid of anything resembling a sense of humour. He was thin, short, weedy and in total contrast to his wife who was very large and had big busooms and a wart on her chin.

Fifteen stone, I'd say and that was just the wart. She wore too much lipstick which had somehow managed to slip off her ample lips.

Trading as Madame Varley she read palms and tea leaves and called herself a clairvoyant. She propagated the popular cult of wearing a dead animal round her neck when she went out. Known as a fox fur it was nonetheless a dead animal. Well perhaps just the skin, head and front paws with a short length of black string to ensure that the whole creature remained in position draped around the shoulders. To complement the ensemble a small hat with a protruding large feather was de rigueur. The headgear was secured with the aid of a long hat pin. Mrs V. carted young Norm round the local working mens' clubs where he mesmerised audiences with his drumnastics. You should have heard him play the National Anthem.

Still on fashion, Bradford boasted three department stores before the war. Lingards was my favourite because, having made a purchase your money was pushed into a metal container which zoomed across the store on an overhead wire to a central cash desk. Your change came back the same route. Busbys was the largest store and nicely middle class. But if you bought your gear from Brown, Muffs and Co., you were very upmarket. When I was 14 we joked at school about Brown Muffs having a sexual connotation. Lingards had the best toasted teacakes which were the highspot of shopping trips into town. Oh, there as a fourth-the Co-op.

ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

The twins were very popular. They were good dancers and tennis players and led a full social life. In 1937 they initiated the formation of the Low Moor Tennis Club.

A nearby farmer by the name of Wilkes offered them enough land to construct two courts, one grass and one hard. Everyone mucked in including dad. On summer evenings and weekends Eric, Leslie and their friends worked on the project. A really professional job was done. A ten foot high wire fence was erected and a clubhouse built. Before long there were twenty, thirty, forty members and our home was frequented by many of the gang for club meetings, parties, singsongs and whatever else nineteen year olds got up to. My parents would arrange to be out on such occasions and I was duly despatched to bed with a, "Come along, sunny Jim (my other name). Time you were in bed", from one of my elder brothers.

There was much confusion over names. Within the twins closest circle of friends were two Hildas, two Eddies, an Agnes, and three Ednas. Hilda Knights and I sang songs together, our favourite being, "Two Sleepy People". Hylda lived with her parents in a cottage on Wilkes' farm. She married one of the Eddies (Sleeman) but they were divorced in 1947 and she married my brother Leslie.

The tennis club held fund raising dances at the Harold Club at Low Moor. In 1938 they had their 21st birthday party there. I never found out who Harold was but this working mens club was noted for its stench of stale beer and cigarettes. Through the main doors you had the option of the bar and billiards room on the ground floor or ascending the wide stone staircase to the upper landing off which was a cloakroom and committee room. Ahead, doors opened onto a large ballroom with a polished sprung floor and one of those mirrored rotating balls suspended from the ceiling. Two spotlights aimed at the device presented a magical effect when the houselights were dimmed. There was a simple platform half way down the right hand side of the ballroom. And on this structure some of the world's worst dance bands performed their extensive repertoires. Probably the worst was the Harlequins dance band but I would sit by the stage transfixed as the elderly drummer bashed his array of gizmos. Mounted above the large bass drum was a shelf upon which a dozen or so simulated skulls descending in size were affixed. Ideal for horse effects. They played all the popular songs of the day and a liberal sprinkling of old time velletas, gay gordons, dashing white sergeants and the novelty dances such as the palais glide, hokey cokey and knees up, mother Brown. I attribute all this to kindling my love of music. (Really?).

VARIETY - THE SPICE OF LIFE

Mum and dad would take me to the Alhambra theatre to see variety artistes we heard on the wireless. It was pure magic seeing all those famous comedians, -Bennett & Williams, Albert Modley, Issy Bonn, xylophonist Teddy Brown, an overweight American who only uttered one word throughout his twelve minute act. On his finale, which was always the popular tune of the day, "Let's Have Another One" (and you can read what you wish in to that) he would shout at the audience, "SING" and they would. Wilson, Kepple & Betty did their famous Egyptian sand dance act, and regular broadcaster Henry Hall brought his band and presented his "Guest Night" when famous unadvertised stars would

appear. We attended two of Henry's live broadcasts from the Alhambra. Coronation Street's Betty Driver, she of the Hot Pot at the Rover's Return, was Hall's singer. The theatre was on the Moss Empires circuit and a number one venue so we got all the top acts. I always felt a little cheated and short changed because the printed programme would list the acts from one to twelve but the illuminated panels each side of the proscenium arch would announce act one when the orchestra played the overture and act seven during the interval.

BRIGHT AND BREEZY IN BRID.

In 1938 we holidayed in Bridlington on the east Yorkshire coast. As always we arrived Saturday lunchtime - you couldn't get into the digs until after 12 noon. Having had a lettuce leaf lunch it was then obligatory to stroll along the promenade deeply breathing in the fresh sea air en route to book seats for the week's theatrical attractions. The show on the pier was a must. This would be a concert party of seven or eight performers who would make their entrance dressed as Harlequins and Columbines. Collectively they would sing their welcoming overture along the lines of, "Hello everybody here we are again, we've come to entertain you in sunshine or in rain". It was usually the latter.

On the Saturday evening we went to the Winter Gardens. Odd name for a largely summer venue with three potted plants in the foyer. The entrance led on to a balcony and somewhere in the distance there was a stage with about thirty musicians dispelling "All The Nice Girls Love A Sailor". Lucky sailor, I thought. This was the famous Herman Deruski's orchestra of wireless fame. An awe-struck seven year old slid about on the polished dance floor whilst my parents waltzed and quickstepped. In 2005, my wife Susan and I, had an overnight stay in a hotel near Bridlington. The owner's father was a friend of fellow Bradfordian David Hockney.

AN OPEN AND SHUTT CASE

My brother Jack learned to dance at Bert Shutt's dancing academy at Bankfoot, a mile down the road towards the city centre. The premises had been converted from a cinema in the early thirties and it was a well appointed establishment. Bert was a tall Brylcreemed man who wore tail coat, wing collar, patent leather shoes and a carnation in his lapel when pursuing his terpsichorean endeavours. My parents were very active in the British Legion and organised dances and functions one of

which was held at Mr Shutt's emporium. I was, as always, allowed to go along. At some point in the evening Bert asked me if I would accompany him in a rendition of "The Lambeth Walk". At the age of seven I was shy, lacking in confidence and suffered fools gladly. I went to self assertion classes where we all sat round and a guy came in and put a goose on a table. We all had to say "Boo" to it. So there we were, Bert and I belting out "Do As You Damn Well Pleasey" through the mike to the amusement or embarrassment of my parents and their friends. "Of course, he shouldn't be up this late" said their friend and my arch enemy Nellie Campbell. She was another member of the Dead Animal Round The Neck brigade.

THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING

The Campbells and the Rushworths were card playing friends who worked on a rota system. Sunday afternoons one couple would visit us for tea and whist in the evening. The next week we would visit one or other of them and so on. The Rushworths were pleasant people and lived two doors away from our maternal grandparents at Wyke. Mr R was our milkman and ran his own business. He had a small car converted into an open van which carried four milk churns from which he dispensed gills or pints into customers' jugs. On Saturday mornings I was allowed to help with the deliveries. The Rushworths had a daughter, Pauline who was my age.

The Campbells were very different. Walter was a sober Glaswegian with a thick Scottish accent. Nellie was a weedy little person with a beaked nose and a whining voice that went downhill at the end of each sentence. She believed in calling a spade a spade and spoke as she found. There were frequent arguments over trivialities but these were soon patched up in time for the next bout of card playing. They had one daughter who was about Jack's age. Betty, who was no better than she should be was urged by her mother to consider Jack as a possible suitor but nothing came of it and she married Donald Sewell who became a policeman after the war.

WHEN JOHN DONNE SAID NO MAN IS AN ISLAND HE OVERLOOKED THE ISLE OF MAN

We went on holiday with the Campbells in 1939. And this was my first trip abroad. Well, the Isle of Man is a sea voyage away. Highlights were the horsedrawn trams, the miniature but beautifully formed railway and a concert somewhere in the centre of the island with a gypsy type

singer called Monte Ray (of wireless fame) belting out “Marta, Rambling Rose Of The Wildwood” and “Donkey Serenade”. How does one’s mind come to store such inconsequential rubbish? Oh, yes and there was Cunningham’s Holiday Camp for young men only. Hundreds of them in the standard casual dress of the day, grey flannels and white open neck shirt playing tennis and indulging in other healthy pursuits. During the war this place became an internment camp. I bet you couldn’t tell the difference.

TO BELLE VISTA & THE NOT SO BEAUTIFUL VIEW

In 1939 Grandma Briggs died. She dressed in almost Victorian garb and even in the 30s her house was a time warp. Gas lighting, stone floors, horsehair sofa with antimacassar and potted aspidistra. There was a York range fireplace with oven attached on which Granny made fabulous bread and current teacakes. Her demise left an ageing husband to fend for himself and my parents felt they should take him in. My paternal grandmother had been a widow since my father was twelve and spent her retirement years on a rota staying three months with each of her children except we simply couldn’t squeeze her in our three bedroom attached house. She circulated between Uncle Norman in Birmingham, Auntie Beattie in Neath and Auntie Ethel in Kingston On Thames. Incidentally, dad was responsible for Ethel’s marriage to Uncle Arthur. Dad had met this tea salesman from the south and brought him home to stay the night. He stayed several months during which time he took up with Ethel. He became big in sausage skins - called meat casing in the trade, and died of a heart attack on their boat on the Thames at the age of 45. But I digress.

So now there were six of us and two grandparents to look after. We needed a larger house.

We moved into Belle Vista sometime in early or mid 1939. The house name was a misnomer since the front looked out onto Manchester Rd a continuation of Huddersfield Rd., which changed its name by deed poll when it reached Odsal Top. The rear overlooked a gigantic hole in the ground being used as a landfill site for Bradford’s ample rubbish. Today it is completely flat and supports a leisure centre. The house frontage had two bay windows; there was virtually no garden. The door opened on to a long slender corridor off which there was access to a room on the right running the entire length of the house, on the left a largish lounge and further along on the left a large kitchen. There were

two cellars and on the first floor three bedrooms plus two more attic rooms. You could be lost for weeks in a place like this. but it was ideal for our eight piece family.

The long room became a games room for the tennis club and housed a table tennis table and a billiards table still leaving room for a dance if one felt so inclined. I was domiciled in one of the two attic bedrooms due to having the youngest legs. In winter and with no central heating, except a candle in the middle of the floor, you could freeze to death before reaching the first landing. Once you'd got past the Polar bears it wasn't too bad providing you had enough hot water bottles.

Granddad Briggs didn't hit it off with grandma Read when she stayed with us and one evening there was a commotion. Eric and Leslie ran out of the house in pursuit of the old gentleman, a tall, slim, bowler hatted figure, as he took off up the road with his attaché case. "I'm going 'om", he announced "I'm not stopping here another minute". With nowhere else to go he stayed until his death in 1940.

1939: ON BAILDON MOOR BAH'T 'AT.

Sometime in the summer of 1939 Dad, perhaps in a fit of déjà vu, repeated his flair for shifting large bodies over varying distances. But this was to be a tour de force.

Whilst commercial travelling in the no man's land that is Heckmondwyke he chanced upon what amounted to two sliced-off upper decks of trams lying peacefully in a field. They were the residences of a large number of hens. A week later after some domestic discussion my father approached the farmer with a proposition he couldn't refuse and thirty quid changed hands. Dad was now the proud owner of two hen runs. Or to put it another way two trams without lower decks and wheels. Don't ask me how or why but he did a deal with another farmer this time twenty miles away just off Baildon Moor twixt Baildon and the tiny village of Eldwick near nowhere. The address in case you are interested was Glovershaw Farm.

Another call to Pickford's ("remember me?") and the two upper decks were cleaned out and on the move to their new resting place. The field at Glovershaw farm had a distinct list to starboard so railway sleepers were placed in position to support flooring and the two structures that were to become our holiday home or caravan as it was called in the family. The wooden tram tops were placed to form an L and at the

corner dad built a kitchen containing a stove and sink. There was an outside toilet made from four doors which was a bit confusing when you were in a hurry. There was a bedroom and a living room, grandma Briggs' old wind up portable gramophone for entertainment, and an ample supply of fresh country air. Friends were full of admiration for my father. First a shop, now a tram. What would he move next, a mountain?

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

We had some great times at the caravan once we got there. We had no car and unless a friend offered us a lift it was a hazardous journey by bus, trolleybus, tram and pack mule to reach the remote abode. We were usually loaded with supplies for the day/weekend/week as we squeezed onto the tram or bus into the city centre. Then a walk of some quarter mile to Foster Square to embark on a bus/ trolleybus to either Shipley or Bingley. If we were taking the scenic route via Shipley we alighted at Saltaire and walked down the elegant avenue that leads to the river Aire, past the four stone lions on pedestals which my father insisted walked down to the river for a drink each night at midnight. On the right the huge dilapidated Salts mill where the Lord of the manor Sir Titus Salt made his fortune and a splendid estate for his workforce.(The mill, now refurbished, houses the magnificent David Hockney exhibition on four floors). Carry on over the bridge, which spans the River Aire, and the adjacent Leeds-Liverpool canal and you came to the driverless Glen tramway, a miniature open carriage propelled by cable some half mile to Shipley Glen. A mile walk later and you could see the caravan across two fields - Sheffield and Macclesfield.

Alternatively we travelled by bus beyond Shipley to Bingley where a single deck bus would transport us some three miles to Eldwick nestling in a picturesque valley. This was the equivalent of base camp. The last leg of this amazing journey entailed a hike uphill for about two miles until reaching Glovershaw Farm. Thoroughly exhausted, mum would prepare a meal whilst dad got a fire going and I popped along to the farmhouse for fresh eggs and even fresher milk straight from the cow.

THE DALBY SYSTEM

Nellie Campbell, my parents' friend, had an aunt who had a fancy man known to me only as Mr Dalby. He had built an immobile home about a mile away from ours and from the telescope he had mounted in his garden he boasted that on a clear day he could watch us going to our outside toilet. Big deal. His holiday home was very grand with two cantilevered bedrooms, one either side of the main room.

Mr Dalby was a watchmaker by trade and had lots of highly polished brassware and labour saving gadgets. The paintwork glistened and we marvelled at his ingenuity. Dad took me to visit one summer evening and I fell and cut my knee. Without cleaning the wound they put iodine on the cut. I bear the scar to this day.

Dad was thrifty and understandably so, considering the economic climate and low wages of the thirties. After shaving he would take the razor blade and swish it round the inside of a tumbler. This was a trick he learned in the army and he could make a humble razor blade last months. On the rare occasions he bought a pair of shoes he would immediately add rubber soles and metal tips to the heels. With the miles he walked shoes needed to be maintained in good order. Spit and polish was the first job of every working day.

In August 1939 the Rugby Union Cup Final was held at Odsal Stadium instead of Wembley (or Twickenham). Odsal Stadium could accommodate at least eighty thousand and did so on that memorable Saturday. Fleet street journalists discovered that there were insufficient telephones for them to report back to their newspapers and as we lived only a hundred yards away we were asked to help. There was a constant stream of newspaper men calling at our house eager to file their stories. Mother kept them refreshed with cups of tea as they queued to use our telephone. All very exciting.

PEACE IN WHOSE TIME?

Everyone who was around at the time claims to remember exactly what they were doing when they heard of President Kennedy's assassination and Princess Diana's fatal car crash. Here is what happened on Sunday, September 3rd 1939. Edna Rushworth and daughter Pauline had called in and were about to leave. The time was 11am. Mum, Jack and I were standing in the corridor saying our goodbyes. The front room door

was open and the radio was announcing a message from the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain.

Chamberlain had flown back from a meeting in Berlin a couple of weeks earlier waving an agreement signed by Hitler and promising no invasion of Poland. "Peace in our time" explained a jubilant PM. However news had reached the government on September first that German forces were massing on the Polish border. Chamberlain sent Hitler a telegram warning that unless he received a firm undertaking to withdraw the threat of aggression within 48 hours Britain would declare war. Here now on the radio he was telling us that "Since no such undertaking has been received I have to tell you that we are therefore at war with Germany".

I think I broke the silence. I looked at Pauline and said, "We're at war". "I know", she said. We all said goodbye and they left. The full implication of that announcement could not be measured. No one could believe we were in for a replay of the horrors of 1914.

Between September 3rd and the end of 1939 there were no bombs, no enemy aircraft and precious little activity except that we were issued with gas masks at school and housewives began making blackout curtains. This period was known as the phoney war. It would all be over within six months, they said. It lasted five years.

There was a lighter side to the close of the decade. On December 2nd I celebrated my eighth birthday and I got a pleasant surprise. My parents presented me with a beautiful mahogany clockwork gramophone and half a dozen records. I remember just two of them, the Australian bass-baritone Peter Dawson singing "Waltzing Matilda" and Flanagan and Allen dueting on "Run Rabbit Run". Now when Granny Read switched off the dance music on the wireless I could slip into the front room and play my records. Independence at last.

CHAPTER THREE

FORTIFYING THE FORTIES

As we entered the new decade - my second, there were increasing signs that we were at war and the contingency of Britain being invaded.

Every household with a back garden was issued with a corrugated steel Anderson shelter, supposedly bombproof. This structure was half sunk into the ground and the upper half covered with earth or sandbags. Those without a garden were given a contraption which fitted under a kitchen table. A number of new organisations came into being. The A. F. S. (Auxiliary Fire Service) was to supplement the regular fire brigade. The A. R. P. (Air Raid Precautions) as a back- up for the police force. Air raid wardens, armed with stirrup pumps, buckets of sand and a torch were trained to put out small fires and yell "Put that light out" at any householder showing so much as the tiniest chink of light even though the nearest German plane was probably 500 miles away.

DAD'S ARMY

Men between the age of 18 and 40 were eligible for enlistment in the armed forces. The over forties and under eighteens could join the LDV - Local Defence Volunteers, the precursor to the Home Guard. and affectionately known as Lads, Dads and Veterans. They were figures of fun with their ill fitting overalls and civilian shoes, armed to the teeth with broom handles with which to practice rifle drill until supplies of the real thing arrived. Even then there were no bullets. Dad applied for and got an immediate commission in the Home Guard. His first world war record guaranteed his rank of second lieutenant. He was very proud of his position and loved the authority and responsibility. He acquired a Sam Brown - belt and shoulder strap, both highly polished, an old German Luger and a rifle and a couple of bayonets which we kept under the stairs just in case of trouble. He was, of course, able to display his medal ribbons and his five medals when on parade.

The twins got their call up papers in 1940 and reported for medical examinations. Leslie passed, Eric failed, a situation he simply could not accept. He travelled to neighbouring towns to take medicals which he hoped would allow him to join the forces but to no avail. Apart from the brotherly feeling there was a stigma attached to any young man not in uniform. People stared on the trams and ignored you in pubs.

If you were not in the forces you had to do other work which would contribute to the war effort. Through his work at the Bradford Dyers Association Eric was asked to join the Wool Control, a government organisation, at Ilkley. This enabled him to still live with us.

BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS - THE REAL THING, NOT THE BAND

In May, 1940 we saw the first real signs of war in the shape of the Blitz. German bombers hit coastal towns first and then targeted London and other industrial cities such as Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and a particularly heavy raid on Coventry.

Winston Churchill replaced the ineffectual appeaser Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister and promised us nought but blood, sweat and tears in his first and stirring "Fight them on the beaches" speech.

SO LONG LINGARDS

Bradford escaped Hitler's attention save for one stick of incendiary bombs unleashed by some short-sighted Luftwaffe pilot who thought he was over Leeds. Part of his cargo entered my beloved Lingards via the roof and destroyed the elegant store. To add insult to injury they dumped the salvaged rolls of silk and other haberdashery on the tip behind our house. There were no casualties. It was rumoured that Adolph let us off because he fancied the recently built Gothic grandeur of Bradford Grammar School as his headquarters when he conquered Britain.

Major road signs were dismantled and travel restricted. Coupons were introduced for food, clothes and petrol. Street lights became almost non-existent and vehicle headlights fitted with metal caps with small slits helped increase the number of lost motorists and minor accidents. Cats eyes were still a rarity.

At the outbreak of the war Britain had just 125 fighter aircraft. Although that number increased substantially, the "First Of The Few" were outnumbered by the Luftwaffe. However, the German bombers raiding Britain were slower and much less manoeuvrable than our Spitfires and Hurricanes. The Blitz lasted about nine months when Hitler turned his attention to the Russian front.

At home life went on as normal as possible. The games room doubled as Home Guard training room. All- night training exercises gave rise to the popular excuse for any man absent from home – “He’s out on manoeuvres”. The government bombarded us with propaganda messages such as “Careless Talk Costs Lives” and the imaginative, “Be Like Dad, Keep Mum”. Ministry of Information films at the cinema showed us how to make the best of our 2oz. of butter per week and what to do with Spam, Snook and powdered potatoes. Canadians and Americans sent us food parcels. We weren’t starving but an occasional luxury, like a bar of chocolate, was always welcome.

At school we knitted squares to make blankets for the war effort. To discourage people from even attempting to travel to the seaside a “Holidays At Home” scheme was introduced. You could take a 20 mile circular bus trip round YOUR town. Games in the park kept children amused and local concerts were organised.

TEA PARTY FOR A CONCERT PARTY

Dad organised a show for the British Legion one Sunday afternoon. It was held at the famous Low Moor Picture House, where, at the age of six I had seen my first pathological thriller. The performers were a “concert party” not unlike the ones on seaside piers, “Hello Everybody, Here We Are Again...” type stuff. Still, to me they were stars and imagine my delight when dad invited them all back to our house for tea. I sat next to the lady soprano and the comedian kept me in fits as we ate our salmon salads. Mum had an uncanny way of making a tin of salmon (20 coupons) go round a dozen hungry visitors. The secret? You mix it with breadcrumbs and supplement it with lots of lettuce and bread and margarine (no butter).

The B. B. C. was our lifeline for information. Their correspondents, in the thick of the fighting, firstly in France and then North Africa, had their reports sent back on 16inch discs so their stories were usually out of date by the time we heard them. The British retreat to El Alemain was turned into an offensive victory when General Montgomery took command of the Eighth Army in which Les was serving. Jack was called up in 1941 when he was 18. He too was in North Africa but with the First Army in Tunisia. It was said that Les and Jack were both in Tripoli on the same day but they never met.

Most of the other members of the tennis club were called up and visited us when home on leave. Irene Ingle joined the Land Army and looked terrific in her uniform. She was stationed at Wisbech and later Ely.

ALWAYS ON THE GO

Bradford was built in a valley and wherever you went seemed to entail negotiating an incline. The Manchester Rd rose from the city centre until it reached Odsal Top at which point, as I have said, it became Huddersfield Rd as it descended to Low Moor and beyond to Wyke and Brighouse. If you imagine Odsal Top as a clock face this arterial road came through from 6 to 12. Cleckheaton Rd originated at 11, Halifax Rd., at 1, Odsal Rd., at 2 and Rooley Lane at 8. The latter road, although minor was the main Halifax to Leeds bus route. Odsal was indeed a very busy intersection and now has an underpass. I mention this so that you may glean some idea of where we lived in relation to our succession of homes. We are about to make yet another move.

1943: DOWNSIZING

By 1943 we were a much depleted family. We had downsized from eight in 1940 to four plus the quarterly visit from Granny Read. Mum wanted a smaller house. We no longer need the cavernous Belle Lousy Vista where cleaning was like painting the Forth bridge. You just never stopped. Dad didn't want to move and, of course he valued the games room for training his Home Guard platoon. After some arguments mother got her way and the removal van arrived once more.

Our new address, about half a mile away, was 35 Odsal Rd., another (SEMI)attached house on an estate but again on a main road. This was to be the family home for eleven years until 1954 when my parents moved to Hoylelake. Dad's commanding officer, a Capt. Nixon and his family lived next door but one and the Home Guard HQ was just across the road. All very handy for running the local branch of the war. Dad continued to work at his regular daytime job and joined the Home Guard at 6-30 every evening and most weekends. The card- playing sessions were maintained. Walter Campbell was a private in Dad's platoon and took umbrage when he was passed over for promotion. He wanted to be a sergeant and dad wouldn't let him. The incident curtailed the whist drives for several weeks.

SPY SUSPECTS IN THE AREA

Dad came home one day and announced that he had encountered a new card playing couple with the somewhat Germanic name of Eckhardt. They were thirty-somethings and had set up a small business at Low Moor, making, of all things, lamp shades. Winston Churchill needed lamp shades like Hitler needed a bag of liquorice allsorts. The Eckhardts lived in a large house off Halifax Rd., were well spoken and kept a very big St Bernard dog. On occasional Saturday evenings we visited and whilst the grown-ups got on with their silly card games I sat in the back room discovering the delights of the American Saturday Evening Post and the Illustrated London News (for which in 1944 my father placed a regular weekly order with our newsagent, Mr Roberts).

The Saturday Evening Post was a revelation. In the austere days of wartime this magazine was packed full of stories about Hollywood, big fancy cars, match box radios and the luxurious lifestyle enjoyed by the Americans even though they too were in the war. All this reinforced my growing belief, originated from trips to the cinema, that there was a better place beyond Bradford.

I told my school friends about the Eckhardts and someone suggested they might be spies. The more we thought about it the more suspicious we became. It all added up. The lamp shade business was just a front. When Mr Eckhardt took the dog for a walk late at night might he not be sending messages back to Germany via a secret radio transmitter? Surely he would be trying to extract secrets about troop movements and Churchill's plans for the impending Allied invasion of Europe from my dad, an important officer in the Home Guard. This could be disastrous for my father's future prospects. He might wind up in the Tower of London branded as a spy's assistant.

A cunning plan was evolved. We would spy on the spy. Six of us mounted observation on the Eckhardt home from behind a bush operating on a rota system. We detailed their comings and goings in a note book until it was near bed time or it started to rain, at which time we packed it in. Nothing untoward happened and shortly after the war the Eckhardts upped and left for Sheffield. But I always wondered.

TASSEL DANCING AT THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE

Visits to the cinema and the Alhambra theatre continued on a regular basis. One Saturday evening mum suggested the three of us head for

the Alhambra “on spec” meaning that we hadn’t booked but we would take a chance on there being some seats. In the event the “full house” signs were up so mum had a bright idea. The Mechanics Institute was a glorified working men’s club which we would not normally be seen dead in. However, here we were in town on a Saturday night in search of entertainment. We bowled along to the grubby establishment and ignorant of the fare on offer tickets were purchased and in we went. Obviously my parents expected some sort of variety show. What we got caused us all acute embarrassment.

Virtually the whole two hour show consisted of a young lady wearing very little cavorting about first as a fan dancer, then a fire eater followed by the dance of the seven veils, and would you believe a tassel dance with contra- rotating tassels - one going clockwise whilst the other rotated anti- clockwise. And that was just the first half of the programme. In the second half, aided by a foreign looking gentleman dressed like an Arabian prince she did contortionist things which were unnatural.

I blushed until the red glow lit up the place. As we left no one said a word until we were on the tram home. “Oh well”, said my mother, “We’ll know next time”. A vague sort of statement if ever there was one.

Shortly before my twelfth birthday I asked my mother, on the occasion of the first afternoon of a school holiday, if I could go to the pictures in town. I would be meeting one of my mates and promised to be home by 5pm. She agreed I could go. What I didn’t tell her was that Donald Hall and I had arranged to meet Shirley Lightowler and Catherine Hoyle, (the former the cracking monitor mentioned earlier), in the Odeon foyer beyond the pay box, it being fully understood that they would pay for themselves. In the event, as I got off the bus opposite the Odeon Shirley Lightowler got off at the same time. How do I get out of this? I simply told her that I had to quickly call at a nearby shop and would see her and the others inside the foyer. It worked but I felt guilty at not having enough money to buy her a ticket.

We all sat on the front row. I can’t remember the main film but on the Movietone news was a report from North Africa and a heavy gun bombardment at a place called Halfaya Pass. I knew that Les would be around there somewhere.

THE CHANGE TO GRANGE WAS MAINLY RATHER STRANGE

It is grossly unfair to have birthdays in December. Contemporaries born in January reach a given age eleven months before those born in

December of the same year - if you get my meaning. This is of great significance to pre pubescent lads yearning to reach sixteen before their mates. I shall campaign to have all birthdays on January 1st regardless of when one is born.

Thus although I was eleven in December 1942 I could not take the 11 plus exam until the late spring of 1943. I got through it O. K. and it was decided I should go to Grange High School For Boys - motto "Abound In Hope All Ye Who Enter Here"-not particularly original. This school was a fifteen minute bus ride from Bankfoot along the eastern ring road at Gt. Horton. The move from primary to high school afforded the opportunity to acquire long pants, a sartorial embellishment which quite literally sorted out the men from the boys. I was slowly but irrevocably morphing into manhood.

At Grange segregation was deemed to be the key to healthy minds and bodies. If you stood on a ladder propped against the dividing wall you could peer or leer at the inmates of Grange High School For Girls. So that's what 15 year old girls look like, eh? They even kept us apart on the school bus. Boys upstairs, girls lower deck.

Grange was a large, forbidding establishment with brown and cream coloured walls on the inside of the pseudo- Gothic main building. There was a large hall with classrooms either side and some ancillary classrooms scattered about off the yard. The toilets were outside and partially open to the elements. A new head took over at the same time as I joined. Mr Pollard was an affable six foot three sort of chap who occasionally took us for religious instruction. We were taught German by, would you believe, a German chap who had settled in Britain long before the war. Nevertheless we considered it our duty to keep an eye on him.

I settled in quite well in the warm summer of 1943 but with wartime restrictions on just about everything, including fuel, by November we were sitting in class wearing overcoats.

I found English most enjoyable. Mechanics was the least appetising subject and I have always considered engineering workshops my idea of purgatory. Geography, art and history were interesting but music lessons seemed to consist of learning silly songs like "The Owl & The Pussy Cat", not a suitable vehicle for a twelve year old. I did like "Peter & The Wolf" with its catchy tune and that got me into Prokofiev which got me into other classical composers.

THE ART OF AVOIDANCE

I suppose children throughout history have found ways of avoiding chores and unpleasant activities. I didn't particularly enjoy football and discovered the best way of absenting myself from it was to tell our games master that I felt a cold coming on. I would be sent off to study in some far flung classroom which was better than cavorting about on a muddy field in the rain. Cricket was avoided by accompanying the rest of the class on to the cricket field and as they headed for the pavilion a couple of pals and I would carry on over the wall, head for the bus stop and a trip into town. As cricket was always the last two periods in the afternoon there was no necessity to reappear that day. We saw this brazen disregard for authority as ideal training for escaping from a prisoner of war camp should the war continue until we became eligible to take part.

AIRCRAFT SPOTTERS ANONYMOUS

We did our bit for the war effort by plotting aircraft movements in secret notebooks. When we (there were three of us in the Aircraft Spotters Club), were not otherwise engaged in watching the Eckhardts, we noted the time, date, height and direction of any aircraft that flew over our patch. I had a good collection of books on the subject. There were arguments about whether a particular aircraft was a Spitfire or a Hurricane, but anyone with a grain of aircraft recognition proficiency could tell the difference. Regrettably there was a distinct shortage of German planes in our note books. The Luftwaffe were obviously far too scared of us.

MAINTAINING MORAL

Throughout the war the BBC broadcast morale boosting patriotic programmes. All three branches of the armed forces had their own variety shows and their own bands. The RAF had the Squadronaires which boasted George Chisholm and Pete Townsend's dad, Cliff, amongst its ranks. The War Office gathered up entertainers, bundled them into neat little concert parties and despatched them to far flung outposts to cheer up the troops. This organisation was called ENSA, an acronym for Entertainments National Service Association but sometimes refereed to as Every Night Something Awful. Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn and, Ann Shelton sang songs designed to make the forces feel homesick. The Americans, who always took their standard of living with them when they went abroad, brought over the wonderful Glen

Miller band comprising the cream of musicians from the bands of Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and Artie Shaw etc. All had been drafted into the American armed forces. They also sent over what some people thought was an even better band than Millers, the lesser known Sam Donahue's navy band which was based at Plymouth.

The Miller band was based at Bedford and toured US camps in the UK. They broadcast regularly from the BBC studios in Piccadilly next door to Simpsons. When off duty the guys played jazz at the premises in Oxford Street which is now the 100 club.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

In 1944 graffiti appeared on walls with the message "Open A Second Front Now", a reference to public demand to invade occupied Europe. Our forces were moving through Italy (Les was there) towards Austria and it seemed logical that we should launch an attack through France to meet up with them and the Russians moving through Eastern countries. German forces were weakening and those on the Russian front had suffered a humiliating defeat. We had to get to Berlin before the Russians who were likely to lay claim to all they conquered. Stalin, although nominally our ally, could not be trusted.

Little did we know of the mammoth preparations that were taking place for the biggest military operation in history, the liberation of Europe. At dawn on June 6th Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy. Churchill described this as the beginning of the end.

There was a new feeling of optimism throughout the country and in our own small way our family celebrated by holidaying not at home, as we had for the past three years, but in far off Morecambe. We took our newsagent's son Malcolm Roberts, a bit of a loner, with us. Malc and I discovered the delights of the famed American sundae, the Knickerbocker Glory, price two shillings, at a milk bar along the promenade. One morning an American fighter aircraft, which I logged as a Mustang, flew very low over the seashore. And that was it. A not very exciting holiday but at least we were out of Bradford for a week..

1945: IT ALL ENDED IN CHEERS

It took the Allies a further eleven months to defeat the Germans. Our team roared through France whilst the Russians liberated, if that's the right word, Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria. The race to reach

Berlin was on. Maybe Hitler would be captured and brought to trial. In the event the Fuhrer committed suicide with his mistress, Eva Braun and Berlin was carved up into sections with the Russians, Americans, British and French each governing a portion.

On May 8th 1945 German forces capitulated. All day we listened to the BBC for the latest reports. Churchill spoke on the radio and the mood of the entire nation changed to one of euphoria. All except those who had loved ones who would not be returning. I was allowed to go into town in the evening to join my pals in the celebrations. Thousands of people, in and out of uniform were singing, cheering and dancing all night in a spontaneous outburst of relief and rejoicing. Strangers kissed and hugged one another. Those in uniform were treated like the heroes they were.

Letters from Les and Jack said they hoped to be home soon.

COIFFEUR DES DAMES THE BEST POLICY

In addition to the customary chores of housewifery, mother was a very competent hairdresser, a venture which she ran from the box room at 35 Odsal Rd

The impedimenta of the trade included a floor mounted hairdryer on castors with a large metal hood which was lowered over the victims head during a shampoo and set. The most fearful device was the perm machine, again floor standing with castors for easily mobility. This was like a standard lamp but with circular metal rings from which dangled flex at the end of which were what looked like hair curlers. These were fastened to the poor client's hair and the power switched on. I hoped we were covered for insurance claims. The customer was given a copy of Women's Own and left to stew for an hour or so. My mother would adjourn to the kitchen to attend to the chores, returning periodically to check that the lady had not been electrocuted. Mother also took on a part time job as a collector for the Refuge Assurance Company, calling on householders for their meagre weekly contributions to death and injury policies. This supplementation of Dad's income enabled us to maintain a reasonable standard of living exemplified by the periodical appearance of professional decorators to repaper a bedroom or two, visits to the Alhambra and cinemas and trips to neighbouring towns. Huddersfield, Halifax and Brighouse were industrial and boring. Ilkley, Harrogate and Otley were rural and decidedly more pleasant. Besides, on the way home from these latter places we would stop off at Guisley to sample Harry Ramsden's delicious fish and chips.

BACK TO PEACE

So hostilities with Germany were finally at an end after five long years. I had witnessed alfresco speeches by Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden and Lord Beverbrook (founder of the Daily Express). Bradford had escaped the horrific bombing, first by conventional bombs and later by the dreaded Doodlebugs and V2s, that had blighted so many industrial cities. Of course we had our share of air raid warnings and the sirens had sent us scurrying into our shelters many times early in the war but we became blasé and tended to ignore the sirens as the war progressed. There were so many false alarms.

The change back to some kind of normality was painfully slow. Sweets were still rationed in 1947, but industry, which had been geared to the war effort, gradually re-tooled to manufacture products that young families would need. There was still the little matter of the war with Japan to clear up.

The Home Guard disbanded, causing a great gap in dad's life. He concentrated on gardening, the caravan and with mum, the regular bouts of card playing. He was a fully fledged civilian again and I don't think he liked it.

JAPAN SURRENDERS

War in the Pacific region continued. Although largely the prerogative of the Americans, British and colonial forces were heavily involved. President Truman, who had succeeded the charismatic Roosevelt, wanted to finish off the Japanese as swiftly as possible but feared that an invasion of Japan would be long and bitter. He made one of the most momentous decisions in history when he sanctioned the use of the recently developed and highly secret Atom bomb.

The first bomb was dropped on the morning of August 6th 1945 The target was the Japanese industrial city of Hiroshima. Eighty thousand people died. Without waiting for a response from the Japanese government, a second atom bomb was dropped later in the day on Nagasaki. Group Captain Leonard Cheshire was an observer in the Boeing B 29 aircraft that unleashed the deadly weapon. Nine days later, on August 15th Emperor Hirohito signed the surrender agreement before General McArthur aboard the American battleship, Missouri.

On that morning Malcolm Roberts and I were strolling along the promenade in Penzance, Cornwall. My mother's aunts Gertrude and Edith had steadfastly remained spinsters and moved from Wyke to Newlyn in the thirties. With the war in Europe over they had invited us for a holiday. This was the longest journey I had undertaken involving being confined on a train overnight with a change at Birmingham. I remember the metal advertisements for the strangely named Mazawattee tea on all the Cornish railway platforms. Door to door the journey took twelve hours.

On that bright August morning there was a distinct sense of celebration pervading the Cornish town although not quite on the scale of VE day three months earlier. But this was morning and Bradford was much bigger than Penzance. The Navy was in the harbour and offering trips round the bay in motor torpedo boats. We joined the festive throng and got soaked in the spray from this 35 mph launch.

On the journey home to Bradford we stopped off overnight at the home of Uncle Norman and Auntie Gladys at Kingstanding, Birmingham.

In September a General Election was held and oddly Labour won which meant that Winston Churchill, who had done so much to help us in wartime, was ousted. Clement Attlee became Prime Minister. Churchill felt badly let down.

WELCOME HOME

Les and Jack came home. Three male members of our family had experienced war at first hand and returned physically unscathed. They must all have been affected mentally. There were parties and the tennis club got back into full swing. Jack was soon back at Bert Shutts.

We already had one Irene almost in the family and we were soon to have another.

Towards the end of the war Jack had been stationed near Gratz in Austria. One night at a dance he had met a certain Irene (pronounced Ireni) Schlogl from the nearby village of Gratkorn. The relationship blossomed and Jack was welcomed into the family Schlogl to sample the Snapps, sauerkraut and worst. When he was demobbed he was not allowed to stay in Austria so he told Irene he would return to England and deal with the formalities that would enable him to rejoin her in Gratkorn.

. The problems proved insurmountable. A British soldier wishing to marry an Austrian girl was just not on. It was almost two years before they were able to be together and Irene had to prove that neither she nor any member of her family had any connection with the Nazis or other subversive group. In the event she had to come to Britain and arrived in April, 1947 Jack having gone to Austria to collect her.

I vividly recall Irene's arrival. Jack telephoned from Bradford railway station to say they would be home by taxi in ten minutes. The family were duly assembled. Mum, dad, Eric, Les, Irene Ingle and I stood around as the door opened and in they came. Wearing a large hat and with practically no English Irene kissed each one of us in turn What would she think of us? Terrified, I imagined. What would she think we thought of her, after all two years earlier she had theoretically been our enemy. We soon warmed to her and in no time at all she settled in and learned to cook Yorkshire puddings. They were married on May 17th 1947.

BANDS, BANDS AND MORE BANDS

In December 1944 Glen Miller flew in a light aircraft to join his band in Paris. The plane disappeared over the English Channel.

The band broke up and the musicians returned to the USA. Ironically a great new band had recently been formed from the ranks of the cream of musicians returning from war service. Its leader was Ted Heath, one-time trombone player with the pre-war Jack Hylton orchestra. Heath was jealous of the superb Miller band and vowed that he would assemble a British band of equal quality. The band soon got broadcasts and made records for Decca. Amongst its ranks were Kenny Baker, Ronnie Scott, Jack Parnell and a Canadian compare/singer called Paul Carpenter. He was particularly popular with female fans.

Dance bands now formed a major part of the BBCs programme output intermingled with theatre organists, brass bands, symphony orchestras and novelty ensembles. Trois And His Bandoliers, to name but one. Late night broadcasts from night clubs and ballrooms were regular features.

1946: HEADING WEST TO SOUTHPORT

In the summer of 1946 I was still fourteen and just the wrong side of being old enough to go on holiday without parents. So I tagged along with them on a weeks vacation in Southport where the beach is as vast as the Sahara desert.

In the boarding house were a couple from the Bradford area, the Thorntons, who shared my parents interest in playing cards and introduced them to Canasta.

Mr & Mrs Thornton lived in the village of Cottingley, near Shipley. Their house, which I visited many times, was two doors away from where Glen Hill, a near neighbour in Nottingham, was born. His mother was one half of the schoolgirl pranksters who, in 1917 hoaxed the world with their Cottingley fairies escapade which ultimately involved Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Houdini. It was not until the mid -seventies that I heard about this fable. A film was made with backing from Mel Gibson and Glen Hill as Technical Director.

FOUR DISCOVER NEW RADIO STATION

As I neared the magic age of fifteen I started to hang out with my school pal Donald Hall, his cousin Keith Brewerton and his mate, Derek Glover, all from Oakenshaw on the Odsal bus route. We went to the cinema, occasional dances, swapped notes on broadcasts we heard and got together for record sessions.

On our "Bush" Superhetrodyne Delux radio I discovered the American Forces Network which broadcast a nightly programme, from 11pm until 1am., called Midnight in Munich. The presenter-, this was long before the term Disk Jockey, was Sergeant Ralph Moffatt and he played music by top American bands recorded on V discs, sixteen inch unbreakable records (fifteen minutes each side). He built up a huge following in the UK and I got a couple of requests on his programme.

These unique recordings, often made on location at ballrooms, night clubs and theatres, were atmospheric with their audience reaction, occasional bum notes and announcements by ill informed presenters. I paraphrased one introduction which I have repeated often. "And now from the magnificent Rendezvous ballroom of the elegant Beverley Hill Hotel in beautiful downtown Burbank the maestro gives the downbeat whilst the orchestra poses the question, "Blue Skies?" written by George and his lovely wife, Ira Gershwin". I swear I heard that and worse.

The great American bands heard in this fashion was pure magic and a considerable topic of conversation amongst we friends. The biggest revelation was hearing the Stan Kenton band with its ten brass, five saxes and five rhythm. Bigger and louder than all the other bands. "Peanut Vendor" was like nothing we had ever heard. I fell in love with the voice of Kenton's singer, June Christy.

British bands emulated the Americans but the Ted Heath band was identifiable, used original compositions and arrangements and had an amazingly high standard of musicianship.

I found another world in this music and the movies I saw. A blissful release from the mundane life in a middle class family living in a middle class suburb of a northern industrial city. Perhaps I was becoming a snob. I knew I had to get out of this stifling environment as soon as it was practicable. That wouldn't be for another four years.

PLAY GOES OFF WITH A BANG

After school Donald Hall and I would often went home via town rather than the direct route. A regular stop-off was the Joke Shop off Godwin St Occasionally we would buy a few tricks or novelties, a favourite being the exploding cigarette. This would cause great merriment and much chuckling by the hapless victim.

Somehow one of these ciggies managed to get into a packet belonging to Irene Ingle on the night she happened to be accompanying mother and me on a visit to the Prince's Theatre. At a particularly dramatic point in the play there was a resounding bang which these days would have resulted in the immediate evacuation of the theatre and a police cordon. Everyone gasped and looked around. Irene was not amused. I denied any involvement and the whole event remained clouded in mystery.

Mother and her friend Annie Wadsworth frequented Bradford's small repertory theatre, the Prince's, opposite the Alhambra. The twice nightly performances of the staple repertory repertoire were adequately performed by Harry Hanson's Court Players. First house at 6pm on Monday had the bargain ticket price of 1/6d, about eight pence in current money. I was invited to go along and would meet up with mum and Mrs W straight from school after a snack at Farmer Giles Milk Bar in Tyrral St My knowledge of drama was limited but the Court Players presented plays by Coward, Shaw, Bradford's own J. B. Priestley and

many other leading playwrights. There was plenty of high drama and light comedy with lots of French windows and young chaps in flannels leaping in with a "I say, anyone for tennis?" I found it all immensely enjoyable.

The winter of 1947 was severe. Floods, snow storms and gales. In the austere time of post war Britain electricity was cut off, goods were in short supply and transport disrupted.

Easter was much milder and I was invited to visit the Campbells who were now running a newsagents shop in Rock Ferry, Birkenhead. I would not normally have wished to stay within a mile of the outspoken Nellie Campbell for fear that she would criticise my tie or my haircut or both. However, two factors influenced my accepting the invitation. Donald Sewell, the Campbell's daughter Betty's boyfriend was going to be there and promised to show me round the Wirral and more importantly the Ted Heath band was appearing at Liverpool Empire on Easter Sunday. Walter Campbell got me a ticket.

The trip was a great success. Donald Sewell and I took a train to West Kirby and walked the width of the Wirral to Birkenhead. I was greatly impressed by the number of large houses. Apparently many of Liverpool's leading business people lived there. Little did I realise that I was destined to see much more of the Wirral in years to come. Liverpool Empire is a much larger theatre than Bradford's Alhambra. I bought a programme and a souvenir brochure which I still have. The Heath band was all I could have expected. Just wonderful. There was Kenny Baker, Ronnie Scott, drummer Jack Parnell (who sang Route 66 long before the Stones) and the incomparable compare and singer Paul Carpenter. It was a full house and I went back to Rock Ferry in a state of elation. I couldn't wait to tell the gang back in Bradford about it all.

Irene arrived from Austria in April and Jack and she were married at Low Moor church - St Marks on May 17th

In summer our motley quartet spent a week's holiday at Middleton Towers Holiday Camp at Heysham, near Morecambe. This was, for all of us, our first holiday without the encumbrance of parents. We had a chalet next door to a gaggle of girls and some fraternisation took place. The centrepiece of the camp was the ballroom which was a replica of that on a now defunct ocean liner. The ornate panelling had been salvaged from the S. S. Belangalia which had apparently plied between Britain and Asian ports for many a year. I got friendly with the

bandleader, a clarinettist from Leeds called Ernie Tomasso. I very much enjoyed talking about music with him.

CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

Back at Grange High the sixth form put on a play. We were kept in the dark as to its title until we were allowed to purchase tickets a few days before the performance.

We were no wiser when we saw the publicity. The production was apparently called "The Ascent Of Fb". "Please Sir, what's an Fb?". The question reverberated throughout the school but no one seemed to have the answer. Only when we were in our seats awaiting the curtain to rise was the mystery explained. On came the Head and announced a printing error. The actual title was, "The Ascent Of F6". Oh well, that's explains everything. "Please Sir, what's an F6?". We were half an hour into the drama before we cottoned on to the plot. These guys were mountaineers and attempting, on a perfectly flat stage, to climb a Himalayan mountain peak called F6.

Believe it or not I was quite good at athletics. The school sports days were held at Horsfall playing fields where I had been rescued from my round the- world- tricycle expedition aged six. I entered the 100 yds. sprint, high jump and relay. Mum came to watch and I collected the odd medal or two.

By the end of 1947 life was beginning to return to some semblance of normality. Rationing was phased out and the shops were filling up with new products. I still have my diary for 1947 making it much easier to chronicle the events of that year.

REPLANTING THE BUSH

I decided to convert our "Bush Superhetrodyne" radio into a floor standing radio-gram. This entailed building an open fronted cabinet into which the radio was supported on a shelf. Above was a lid hiding record playing apparatus comprising an electric turntable and pick up arm, the latter being plugged into the rear of the radio. With any luck the sound would emanate through the radio speaker. The whole operation took weeks but I was now able to blast the neighbours with my low fi which was better than the hitherto no - fi. In deference to the musical tastes of the family I restricted playing my jazz records to late at night or when I had the house to myself.

THE DAY I MET A MURDERER

My mother announced that she had met an acquaintance, a bank manager who lived with his family about a mile away along Cleckheaton Rd Their youngest son had been at my primary school for a while. Apparently the subject of my interest in music was discussed and it was suggested that I contact their eldest son, Harry(the name has been changed) who was a jazz fan and pianist.

The following Saturday morning I met Harry who proved to be most interesting. He was about twenty two years old. He played piano, sang in the style of Fats Waller and he played me an acetate recording of a broadcast he had done from the BBC's Northern studios in Manchester to prove it. We ran through his collection of records which was mostly from the thirties swing era. Not quite my scene but it was great just to talk to someone who was genuinely interested in jazz. Apparently George Shearing had stayed at their home after an engagement in Bradford.

I left Harry with half a dozen records he lent me. There were several by Benny Goodman small groups, but one by Dizzy Gillespie, "Groovin' High" was one of Gillespie's first recordings under his own name. I felt honoured. I saw Harry many times at his parents' home, he visited us and some years later, after he married, I called to meet his wife and newly born daughter at their home in Shipley.

I could not have foreseen the tragedy that was to occur. Sometime in the mid fifties I read a story in the Daily Express about a Bradford man who was in court charged with murdering his father. The accused's name was noted. In some fit of rage Harry had attacked his father with a blunt instrument. He was found guilty but insane and sent to Broadmoor where, for all I know, he may still be.

Socially, life in 1948 was pretty much the mixture as before - cinema, records, radio and occasional visits to Odsal Stadium for the speedway racing that took place every Saturday evening in summer. In various permutations our quartet of friends spent a lot of time together. My diary catalogues our trips to cinemas and other outings. Also listed are copious notes on what bands played what on broadcasts.

PREGNANT PAUSE

At six fifteen pm. On Tuesday March 16th I was listening to the Ted Heath band on the radio. Trumpet player Dave Wilkins was singing a Louis Jordan tune called, "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens" when there was a disturbance emanating from our front room. I could hear the sound of a baby crying. Irene had given birth and my nephew Derek entered the world. Pity he couldn't have waited until the end of the programme, I thought.

It is noted in my diary that on Good Friday afternoon I played tennis with my pal Derek Glover so the tennis club was still thriving. Easter Saturday we all went to the speedway at Odsal stadium and on June 1st we listened to a milestone programme on the Third Programme (Radio Three) called "Listen My Children". This was a surrealist comedy programme with jazz supplied by the Vic Lewis band. What would the regular listeners to this radio channel make of it? Surprisingly there were no serious complaints.

On June 15th I held a farewell party at our house for Derek Glover prior to his joining the R. A. F. for his two years National Service.

On July 23rd My school days came to an end at long last. I had little idea of what I wanted to do except that journalism seemed an interesting option. I had achieved some good results in school certificate particularly in English. There was constant pressure from family and friends to follow their ethos - get a good job, marry a nice girl, settle down, raise a family and holiday once a year in Blackpool whilst living in a nice little semi with a washing line in the back garden. Thanks, but no thanks. Any notion of making a career out of music was quickly squashed. Music wasn't work. It was just for entertainment. Work was what you did in an office or factory to earn a living.

LOOKING FOR WORK

On July 28th the bank manager, visited us to discuss helping me find employment. He had many contacts and foresaw no difficulties. He would keep in touch. I appreciated his help.

On August 2nd The impending termination of Hylda's marriage to Eddie Sleeman finally happened. They were divorced and she married my brother Les.

Dad got me an interview with the chief reporter of the Telegraph and Argus. which was owned by the company he worked for. When he heard that I was only fifteen months away from my eighteenth birthday and

subsequent National Service he said bluntly that the newspaper would not be prepared to employ me.

With my spirits duly dented the prospects of any sort of career seemed to be on hold until after National Service. Many school leavers were finding similar reactions. I decided to take on anything just to get some experience of life.

Meanwhile it was holiday time again and with Derek home on leave the four of us spent a week in sunny Blackpool. On August 29th the bank manager telephoned to say no news of a job yet but he would keep trying.

BUSINESS VENTURING INTO NO MAN'S LAND

Eric and Irene were now married and moved into the house next door but one to us which had recently been vacated by the Nixon family. Eric found a grocery shop near Liversedge, near Heckmondwyke, near Cleckheaton at the end of the world and where dad had found his tram tops. For some inexplicable reason mother saw the prospect of shop work and she and Eric bought the premises. Dad stood on the sidelines. Eric and Irene moved into the flat above the shop and mother travelled daily via two bus routes to help out. They offered me a fetch and carry job which I declined. I simply couldn't chat about the weather and the price of butter all day.

On September 2nd I went for an interview at the Labour Exchange (Job Centre). A gents outfitter was looking for a bright young lad to dispense articles of apparel to the gentry. On September 9th I received a letter offering me the job and on Monday, September 13th. I presented myself, all neat and shiny, at Stanleys, gents outfitters at the city centre end of Manchester Rd.,

NOT QUITE MY TYPE

With renewed enthusiasm for life I enrolled for a night school course in shorthand and typing. This entailed being in class by 6-30 three nights a week and since I didn't finish at Stanleys until 6pm it was a bit of a rush to grab a snack and race along to the college in Morley Street. The class was made up of three lads I knew and around twenty girls. Within three weeks the chaps had dropped out. The tutor was an elderly lady. Very precise and proper. Whenever we chatted to each other she would remind us that this was not a "Conversazione".

By late October I was skipping class and eventually quit the course early in 1949.

SPOTTED DOG

On October 25th Our fox terrier, Spot died. He was about thirteen years old and a good friend. At Belle Vista he delighted in grabbing our young cat by the neck and bumping her down the back steps to the garden. She loved his matcho image and showed her approval by sleeping on Spot's back.

November 19th entry in the diary notes that I visited a radio exhibition and saw a portable radio for £15 - it would have been cheaper today. I wanted one so that I could listen in bed or, indeed, anywhere. I didn't have £15 so no radio. On November 24th Keith went off to do his National Service in the Navy. Then there were two. The annual heavy fogs hit us in November and transport came to a halt with the result that we had to walk home from work.

December 2nd and a 17th Birthday party. Not memorable but another landmark in my life. Dad introduced me to the Young Conservatives."Hello, young Conservatives". Dad was a Liberal but he just wanted me to join any group that offered the prospect of meeting people. I attended a couple of meetings but felt like a fish out of water. Where was I going to fit in? I had no idea.

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

The year slid blissfully to an end and seamlessly into 1949 which turned out to be a very different kettle of fish. New circle of friends and a clearer idea of what I wanted to do. Life was looking decidedly brighter.

In 1949 one of my mates was in the midst of a lengthy on-off relationship with a girl called Flo. It was rumoured that she was illegitimate and that he had got her "into trouble" in Fagley Woods. Neither of these allegations was ever substantiated but I saw less of him. School friendships tend to fade as new interests develop..

CAMEO CAPERS AND GO, MAN GO AT THE GAIETY

In the spring of 1949 I responded to an advertisement in Melody Maker, the then bible of the jazz fan. A London based organisation

planned a nation-wide network of jazz clubs and were anxious to contact people who would take on the task of getting a branch up and running in their area. It would, of course be a labour of love but so what. Any involvement with a jazz venture would be wonderful. I received a reply and some glossy leaflets. I was definitely the sucker, sorry guy, they were looking for and would I place an advertisement in my local newspaper to recruit members. Membership fee would be 7/6 (40p) per year and they would send me the necessary paperwork. We were promised live bands from London, discounts on trips to London jazz clubs, magazines etc.

I put the ad. in the Telegraph and Argus and telephone enquiries started to come in. I told people what was in store but insisted that they send no money until I got back to them. Dad was overseeing all this and thought it might be a rip off. A week later I tried to telephone the London office but the phone was dead. Dad and I went to the police and told them the story. They checked and found the London premises had been vacated. Luckily I had not collected any membership fees. The debacle turned into an opportunity which ultimately changed my life.

SUPER COOL COOP

One of the many calls came from a chap with an American accent who said he would like to call and see me as he promoted jazz and was curious to know more about my intentions. I invited him to visit the following evening. The door bell rang and when I opened the door there stood this tall lanky young man wearing a long raincoat and a wide brimmed hat. He chewed gum. "Hi, I'm Lou Cooper and I run jazz in this town".

We hit it off immediately. I told him the whole story and he told me about the Sunday afternoon sessions he helped run at the Cameo Club in Godwin Street. He invited me along and they let me in free of charge. I was made very welcome and could see they needed a boost to attendance figures. There were maybe 40 people present listening to records and to a quartet of local musicians none of whom I knew.

I made some suggestions and the owner of the club said I should be co-opted onto the committee. Perhaps my offer to induce all the people who had phoned me to visit the Cameo had some influence on that decision. I went back to Lou's home and listened avidly to his records. He had Kenton records I didn't have. He was devoutly American in his

outlook and had a map of the New York subway on his bedroom wall. I met his parents and two sisters Lorna and Cathy, all of whom were very friendly. A terrific family.

Lou and I became great friends. We shared the same zany sense of humour, laughed at each other's jokes and were fanatically passionate about jazz. We exuded COOL like nobody else in Bradford. He introduced me to the Saturday night dances at the Gaiety ballroom above Burtons on Tyrral St The venue occupied two floors, the first being a snack bar with a juke box and the second floor the ballroom with a corner band stand. The attraction, apart from the girls, was the band. A nine piece group with four saxes,two trumpets and three rhythm. They had some fine arrangements and played plenty of jazz numbers. I was soon a regular habitué and gladly handed over my 2/6 to listen to this excellent band, play the juke box and chat up young ladies over a cup of coffee.

NO SUCH THING AS BAD PUBLICITY

Together with Lou and other new found jazz friends,several from Leeds, I went on trips to Manchester and other towns to see bands. I suggested an idea which might boost the Cameo Club's attendances for the Sunday afternoon jazz sessions. I would write a letter to the Telegraph and Argus, using a pseudonym and denouncing the performance of jazz on the Sabbath. As a follow up the committee members must all then write letters supporting the venture. The idea was greeted with some scepticism but they all agreed to go along with it providing the newspaper bothered to print my letter. I signed the scathing attack on the Devil's music, Old Codger and in brackets a fictitious name and false address. If they checked the whole scheme would fall apart. A few days later the letter appeared in the newspaper with a headline. I got phone calls. We all wrote our response letters and the issue was kept boiling for a couple of weeks. There were letters of support from people we had never heard of. The ruse worked and attendances increased. We were able to put on an occasional big band of local musicians. With this backing Lou and I duetted on a scat vocal to Woody Herman's "Lemon Drop".

Two fans came over regularly from Huddersfield. Derek Coleman was a Londoner sent by his father to Huddersfield to learn the wool trade. He was very cool, wore shades and sharp clothes. The other guy was not so cool or smart but he played reasonable jazz on trumpet. His name was

Roy Castle and he went on to become a well known entertainer before his death from cancer in 1995.

PALS TO THE PALADIUM

Derek called me one day in June to say that Benny Goodman was appearing at the Palladium in July. How would I like to spend a weekend with him and his family and see the great American clarinetist.? There was an Anglo-American union feud which prevented musicians playing in each others country except for variety theatre performances. I jumped at the chance.

Derek's parents lived in a large house in Barnes. We arrived late Friday evening and on Saturday did the sight seeing bit winding up at the famous theatre. I have the programme still. It was a typical variety show until the last act which was Goodman with an all British big band but with one American musician, Buddy Greco, on piano, Kenny Baker was in the band having left Ted Heath in 1948 to become a freelance session musician. In the programme a certain saxophone player is listed as Johnny Dankwork. We spotted the error. We had heard of this twenty-one year old alto sax player through the Melody Maker.

Our seats, three rows back in the orchestra stalls, were paid for by Mr Coleman. After the show, which was marvellous, Derek and I wandered round Soho and into Mac's rehearsal rooms in Windmill St This was the Saturday night venue of the Club 11, so called because Johnny Dankworth led a sextet and Ronnie Scott a quintet. Out and out modern jazz with no concessions. Tunes by Charlie Parker (Dankworth's influence), Dizzy and Monk. Pure heaven. We told John how much we had enjoyed the Goodman concert. He was very friendly. We got a taxi back to Barnes about three in the morning. On the Sunday afternoon half a dozen young musicians came round to the house for a blow. One guy was a fine pianist who also played vibraphone. His name was Victor Feldman and in the mid fifties he moved to New York where he recorded with Andre Previn and many top musicians. He died at an early age probably through the excesses that caused the premature demise of so many great jazz musicians. Victor's two brothers had opened a jazz club after the war at 100 Oxford St where jazz is still played.

I had spent a wonderful weekend in London but come Monday morning I was back behind the counter at Stanleys doing my "Suits you, Sir" bit

long before Paul Whitehouse. "Now Sir, how about a nice tie to match your new pyjamas?"

One Sunday evening Lou and I were walking into town from his home. We were discussing the idea of a permanent jazz club rather than the once a week sessions on other people's premises. We agreed such a project would require investment. As we passed a coal merchant's Lou disappeared. He knocked on the chap's door and when it opened I could hear him say, "Excuse me, Sir, but my friend and I wish to open a jazz club and I wondered whether you would care to make an investment..... The door shut abruptly before Lou made the T. We fell about laughing at the very audacity. He would do things like that.

UPBEAT WITH DOWNBEAT

We both took out air mail subscriptions to the American fortnightly music magazine, Downbeat. (this was the year the magazine ran a competition to change the name Jazz) We would phone each other as soon as an issue arrived on our doormats. There was all the hot new. "Woody reforms, takes new band into Birdland", "Kenton set for Hollywood Bowl", "Bird's quintet back on 52nd St." Trivia to most people but vital information to the cognoscenti. We collected our copies of Melody Maker from a musical instrument shop opposite Stanleys on Friday lunchtime. I would secrete mine behind the counter and skim through the main items whilst the shop manager did the books. Lou worked at Listers Mill in the accounts department developing skills that were to prove useful in later life. His education had been constantly interrupted by asthma attacks and he used an inhaler.

RACING FOR LUNCH WITH STEVE

Throughout 1949 I wrote copious letters to the Melody Maker and the newly formed Musical Express. I maintained a regular correspondence with MM columnist Steve Race, then a pianist but later to become a well known radio voice climbing to the dizzy heights of comparing Any Questions and reading the news. My letters would usually question the wisdom of some famous musician hiring an unsuitable drummer for a recording session or the limitations of the three minute duration of 78rpm 10 inch records. For reasons I will never know Steve always wrote back and in one letter invited me to lunch should I happen to be in London. He probably

thought the chances were remote. I phoned Aunt Ethel and asked her if I could stay with her for a few days.

Two weeks later I hurried along New Compton St in my best bebop outfit. drape jacket, gabardine pants, thick crepe sole shoes, very loud tie and sun glasses (to keep out the ordinary world). Steve Race was standing outside the Star restaurant. "Hello, Don, you look just like I imagined". I took this to be a compliment. My first meeting with someone famous.

Mike Butcher was a sub editor on the Times but wrote a jazz column in the New Musical Express. We corresponded and this contact was to come in handy early in 1950.

The year closed with parties. I was always allowed to bring a gang back home so long as I warned the neighbours and gave mother enough notice to procure a tin of salmon for sandwiches. Kenny Leitch was in the Navy but when on leave proved to be a terrific drummer with tremendous enthusiasm and dedication to jazz unlike most local musicians who were stuck in day jobs that would keep them tied to provincial domesticity for the rest of their lives. Kenny's girlfriend, Shirley, boasted that she also went out with Freddie Truman, the Yorkshire cricketer. They were all great company. I began to see a future in the music business. In what capacity I had yet no idea. But it did seem musicians needed gently organising. I revelled in finding a bunch of people who talked my language. They were modern thinking with a broader outlook on life than my dear family. Heaven knows what those at home thought of my Bohemian ways!

CHAPTER FOUR

I was now eighteen and received my call up papers. This was January 1950. I expressed a desire for the RAF. Although I hated the idea of being away from home and my friends I decided that the experience might have benefits. A chance to travel and look after myself.

AN AGENT, ALREADY

The Cameo committee suggested that I should pop off to London for a weekend and book a band for the club. It sounded like a good idea and I telephoned Mike Butcher, who had taken on the management of a new small band in addition to his day job on the Times. This was the Johnny Dankworth Seven, much influenced by a Miles Davis recording session band of 1949 with a unique voicing. Mike said that the new band was looking for gigs and if I came to London he would take me out to the British Legion hall at Kingsbury, North London, where the band were performing the following Saturday evening.

I booked a room at the Regent Palace hotel rather than stay way out at Kingston with Aunt Ethel. After all it could be the early hours when I left the gig. I met the musicians and feeling like some bigtime impresario discussed a deal. They desperately needed work and I was treated royally. A deal was clinched in the interval. They would receive a guarantee of £25 against 50% of the door takings which ever was the greater, admission to be 5 shillings per ticket. A date was fixed - a Friday in April. I stayed until the end of the dance listening to this wonderful band. The young lady vocalist was Marie Benson who later joined a successful radio vocal group called the Stargazers. Although John was nominally the leader this was a co-operative band and decisions were made democratically

Of course I knew I was very likely to be in the RAF by the time the Cameo date came up but I would have to take that chance. I telephoned the Cameo owner from the British Legion hall and got approval for the deal. My first experience as an agent. I remember arriving back at the Regent Palace to find the entrance cluttered with "Ladies of the night". Somewhat nervously I decided to enter via a side door.

Back at the Cameo the following afternoon I made the announcement to the enthusiastic audience now numbering about 150. They were

euphoric and Peter Baynes, whose mother owned the premises, poured champagne for the committee. We were going to put their hitherto little known dancing academy on the map.

GETTING RID OF THE JAZZ NONSENSE

Sods Law worked overtime and I received a letter from representatives of his Britannic Majesty to the effect that my presence was requested at RAF Padgate, near Warrington, on the Wednesday before Good Friday. Lou commiserated. His asthmatic condition exempted him from going into the forces.

Shortly before I went off to Padgate I was playing a Stan Kenton record at high volume when Eric entered the house. He was not pleased. He switched the volume down and uttered the immortal words, "It will do you good to get into the army, my lad. It will get rid of all this jazz nonsense". How do you answer that? If I had been interested in something sensible like engineering or bee keeping I suppose I might have had some support but jazz! That row! I remember once getting into a conversation with a member of the family and I must have said something about how marvellous it must be to be able to play jazz and not have to clock in and do a routine mundane job. The response was negative in the extreme. "I was talking nonsense. It was a job just like any other". I thought in that case I wonder if there are people visiting the labour exchange and asking for a job as a jazz musician. How could I expect anyone to understand?

A NICE BLUE SUIT

I arrived at Padgate and along with several hundred other pale young men got indoctrinated into the Royal Air Force. We were kitted out, numbered and told not address sergeants as Sir. We filled in lots of forms, had a meal and found our allocated living quarters and bunk beds. We slept. The next day we paraded, sorted out our left feet from our right and were shown how to keep our forage caps from falling off. After lunch we paraded and were told that since it was Good Friday the next day we were all being sent home on leave until the following Tuesday.

I turned up at the Gaiety the next night in civilian dress but with a drastic new haircut much to the amusement of the gang and the house band. "Thrown you out already, have they?" Lou commiserated again.

The posters were on display for the Johnny Dankworth Seven date which I was destined to miss.

WAILING ON THE WIRRAL

The following Friday we marched down to Warrington railway station with full kit and entrained, as they say in the forces, for RAF West Kirby, the scene of that epic hike with Donald Sewell in 1947. There was a two mile march from West Kirby railway station to the huge camp. We were to be entombed here for eight weeks to undergo basic training, a euphemism for learning the rudiments of polishing coal and bawling, "Halt, who goes there?" when on guard duty.

I had acquired the £15 Pye portable radio which I had long coveted. The first night at West Kirby I was lying on my bunk dreaming of mum's apple pudding and playing my radio when our corporal emerged from his tiny room at the end of the communal hut - there were thirty of us per hut. He offered me a deal. I could be the recipient of immediate promotion to senior man providing I lent him my radio each night after lights out at 10pm. I suggested he might care to contribute towards the cost of batteries and could he detail the role of senior man. For all I knew this premature elevation to a higher rank might entail responsibilities for which I was ill equipped. Corporal McNasty was not pleased with my response to his generous offer. "Do you want to be F. senior man or don't you?" he barked. I did, I did, I did.

Two weeks later, whilst engaged in janitorial duties in the gentleman's rest room, (bogs to you) I fell foul of a certain Sergeant Mcreally Very Nasty who had some difficulty with arranging the letters of the alphabet in the right order when speaking. He had discovered a microscopic speck of dust and with a deafening roar directed in to my left ear at very close quarters opined that I was not fit to be in the human race. I was demoted forthwith. I told Corporal Nasty that under the circumstances he could no longer borrow my radio since the conditions had now become null and void. He said oh yes he could and did.

I tried not to think of what was happening at the Cameo the night the Dankworth Seven played there. I lay on my bunk bed playing the radio (until 10pm) whilst my mates were bopping to the great little band which I had booked. I wondered if any of them thought of me. "Pity Don's not here", I'll bet they were saying. "Never mind, fancy a bop?" Little did they know I was to get my own back three years later. Marian

Williams was the singer with the band that night and if you want to know when Cleo came in you'll have to wait, so there.

To build up our puny bodies we ran the three miles from the camp to the beach at Hoylake, did some physical jerks and ran back again. Two airmen committed suicide during the two months I was there. I think the worst thing that happened was on day two when we marched to the camp cinema for what we thought was going to be a training film. It was a graphic demonstration of the umbrella treatment given to VD victims. Enough to put you off sex for life.

We were not considered suitable advertisements for His Majesty's armed forces until the eight weeks squarebashing was complete and therefore we were not allowed out of camp. No trips to Liverpool or anywhere else.

My parents came over to stay with the Campbells at Rock Ferry and came to see the passing out parade at the end of the basic training. A grand affair with a military band, lots of gold braid, saluting and eyes-righting. We were let out afterwards and I went with mum and dad back to the Campbells. Nellie was suddenly much more polite and amiable. Perhaps I was growing up.

YEARNING AT YATESBURY

After a week's leave and a chance to catch up on the news with Lou and friends, including how the Dankworth date had gone, it was back to West Kirby and on to pastures new. We had been given lists of trades from which we had to select one. This would decide our fate for the next fourteen months and presumably our role in any future hostilities. I stuck an imaginary pin in the list and opted for Radar operator. That course was full but they could offer me Radar mechanic. Had I been picked for Radar operator there would have been a four week course before settling down to a relatively normal lifestyle. In the event I got stuck with Radar Mechanic and a walloping six months course. What on earth had I let myself in for?

I was posted (another odd piece of military jargon) to RAF Yatesbury, a large sprawling camp of wooden huts on the A4 near Caln in Wiltshire and immediately opposite the white horse carved out of a hillside. The camp had been condemned years earlier but the Air Ministry decided it could be patched up and made to last another century or two.

Life at Yatesbury was very laid back compared to the rigid regimentation at West Kirby. It was like being back at school except there was only one subject "RADAR and everything you always wanted to know about it but were afraid to ask".

There was a chap in my hut by the name of John Hamp. He was from London and was a friend of Carrol Levis who had a "discoveries" programme on radio and variety tours. Our paths were to cross in later life.

TEN DOWN, FOURTEEN MONTHS TO GO

There was an appreciable amount of studying to be done and in the summer of 1950 I made the most of the Wiltshire countryside by climbing up past the white horse to the top of the hill and taking in the wonderful view. This softened the task of getting to grips with the electronic complexities of Britain's wartime defence system.

Yatesbury was about two miles away from RAF Transport Command HQ at Lynham and on Friday afternoons some of the lads would disappear, armed with a 48 hour pass and hitch a flight to their nearest home RAF base. There were random flights to Yeadon, the Leeds-Bradford airport but it was a gamble as to how you would get back for 9am Monday morning. Periodically coach trips were laid on to Leeds and Bradford and I opted for this despite the lengthy journey on pre- motorway roads.

There was a good social scene at Yatesbury. A decent cinema, NAAFI (club with bar, food and games) and hobby clubs. Not much in the way of jazz but I found a pub in Chippenham that had live jazz on a Saturday evening and a bunch of us made regular visits.

Eventually the six months course ended, and with my brain chock- full of enough technical know how to build a RADAR station I assumed that the remaining sixteen months would be a doddle. I was told they would be sending me to RAF Ringstead in Dorset but the particular type of equipment at that station required another two months special training. Was this to be the super secret latest state of the art gear? No it was built in 1940 and was virtually obsolete. I was to go to RAF Bawdsey, a country house near Felixtowe where they specialised in old, falling-to-bits type RADAR.

Have you ever tried travelling from deepest Wiltshire to Felixtowe by train? It ain't easy and even when you reach the Suffolk coastal resort there is a bus ride to a ferry, not much larger than a rowing boat, across the River Deben, and a brisk walk up to the secluded Victorian pile. Two months of this in the depth of winter would drive me nuts.

1951: ROCKIN' AT RINGSTEAD

After Christmas leave at home I started 1951 at RAF Ringstead near Weymouth, Dorset and what a great little place it was. Just 100 personnel with a lowly Ft. Lieutenant in charge, little or no discipline and a work routine that entailed being on duty either mornings or afternoons. The living quarters were situated at the top of a hill and reached by a B road off the Weymouth-Wareham A353. The RADAR site was a mile down towards the coast with the operations bunker hidden deep in a wood and the eight giant aerial masts scattered about in nearby fields.

There was a good NAAFI and on my first leave I brought all my records back with me and started regular sessions for anyone interested. One airman who marvelled at my latest Stan Kenton records was a young Welshman called Les Williams He had worked on his father's farm but had studied music at Cardiff and was new to jazz. He couldn't believe that what Maynard Ferguson was doing with a trumpet was possible. We met up most evenings for a pint and chat mostly about music.

It was rumoured that the operations bunker was haunted. Apparently during the war a young WAAF had been found dead along the track leading to the hidden building. From time to time there had been reports of sightings of a ghostly apparition and during my time at Ringstead a telephone operator, left alone one night, had run the mile back to the camp site in a fit of terror. Two military policemen later had the same experience. I made sure I always got transport back to camp at night.

Weymouth is a typical seaside town with a pier, kiss me quick hats and sticks of rock. The Fortes cafe on the promenade was reputed to be Charles Fortes first venture into the catering business. Most Saturday evenings we would head for the town in civilian clothes. On the pier was the Ritz ballroom with a small band led by a saxophone player called Jack Barnes, another chap I would encounter some three years later.

The summer of 1951 was a joy living on the Dorset coast but I desperately wanted to get back to civilian life and pursue an idea.

I wanted to form a nation-wide organisation of jazz clubs along the lines of the collapsed venture of 1949. I would call it Encore Musical Administration and under that banner activities would include a new magazine and recording studios. A grandiose plan which lack of capital prevented seeing the light of day. Still we all have our dreams.

One Saturday afternoon I lay in my pit (the bunk bed) and switched on my portable radio which had been a lifeline to the outside world during the previous twelve months. A girl was singing the lines, "So whether your in Huddersfield or Devon, we hope you'll like the Johnny Dankworth Seven". It was the new singer, Cleo Laine. How I longed to be in that BBC studio.

"TESTING, ONE, TWO"

The first audio tape recording equipment was beginning to appear in the specialist electronics shops along Edgware Road. I had to have a means of recording from the radio and copying fragile shellac records. Tape was the answer. I bought an open reel tape deck made by a Sheffield company. I needed an amplifier and speaker to complete the set up. I don't remember how I acquired them but I set the system up in a workshop at Ringstead and with the help of a colleague who was a genius at electronics we got it working. All the chaps came to watch us as we spoke into the tinny microphone. "Testing - one, two, testing. Mary had a little lamb".

Suddenly in walked the C. O. and asked what we were doing. He showed great interest and joined in, "Testing one, two". Work was abandoned for the rest of the afternoon.

1952: THE BIG CHANGE

After Christmas leave I didn't mind going back to Ringstead for the final three months of National Service. Life in Dorset was easy. Les Williams had been moved across Weymouth bay to a Radar base on Portland. I saw him occasionally and we vowed to keep in touch when we left the RAF.

On February 6th 1952 King George VI died. and on the morning of Sunday, February 10th we paraded on Weymouth promenade with black armbands and muffled drums. A sombre event. I spent a weekend in London at the end of February to check out the jazz scene. Three more weeks and I would be free again.

ELATION AND MOURNING

I was officially released from the RAF on Friday, March 28th The same day my brother Eric died although I didn't know it at the time.

I had telephoned home to say I would be with them sometime during the weekend as I wanted to stop off in London. I left Ringstead and travelled to RAF Old Sarum at Salisbury to complete paper work and get a pep talk from an officer. We had to hold on to our uniforms in case we were recalled should there be a skirmish with Russia.

From Salisbury I caught a train to London and checked into the services hostel at Waterloo. I should have telephoned home to let the family know exactly when I would be arriving but I didn't. I spent the weekend in London and on Monday afternoon took a taxi to Victoria coach station. There was a coach leaving for Bradford around 3pm. Arriving at approximately 8pm.

The driver dropped me off at Odsal Top. It was dark but I could just make out two familiar figures. Francis and Jack Breaton were walking across Halifax Road heading in the direction of Odsal Road. I caught them up and noticed that they looked serious which was odd for the usually ebullient Francis. I joked about being a free man again and how wonderful it was to be home. I heard Francis say to Jack, "He doesn't know".

I had no idea what she was talking about and I carried on making jovial conversation except they were not responding. Something was obviously wrong.

We reached home and I knocked and opened the door with a cheery, "Hello, I'm home". Mother stood there in tears. "It's your brother, lad, he's dead".

How do you cope with two opposite emotions simultaneously. The feeling of relief and elation at being home for good after two years in the forces and suddenly being told of a death in the family.

Eric had died on the Friday. They had telephoned RAF Ringstead but no one there knew where I might be. They expected me home Friday evening and when I didn't arrive they assumed I must be in London but had no idea precisely where. That only added to my feeling of grief.

The next few days were dreadful. Friends called, there was the funeral and that awful atmosphere that hangs over a bereaved family home. I had not seen much of Eric during the previous two years. Just fleeting chats when on leave. The age difference somehow kept us from becoming close. Les took it very badly. Twins do.

After a week of grieving I decided to pick up the pieces and circulate.

Sometime during 1952 Lou and one of the fans from Huddersfield decided to move to London. He got a job and bought a tenor saxophone. He took lessons from Harry Hayes, one of the country's leading players and progressed rapidly enough to get a job playing in a Mecca ballroom band in Leeds. I went over to the Locarno ballroom to see him. The job didn't last long and he was soon back in London.

PICCADILLY CIRCUS

The Sunday afternoon sessions had moved from the Cameo club to the Piccadilly Club, a two- flights- up dance school in a back alley run by two experts in Latin American dancing- Jack and Winnie Dixon. They adjudicated at competitions all over Europe and were well known in that niche of the dance culture. When strutting their stuff you would have thought they had just arrived from Brazil. Jack was a very funny man with a fund of jokes delivered with a Yorkshire accent at variance with his slick hair style and pencil thin mustache which gave him a Latin demeanour. Winnie was slim, and with her black hair in a bob she looked decidedly Spanish. They had the latest Cha Cha, Rumba and Samba records sent from Cuba, Argentina and Brazil. They knew their stuff. Jack sat in with the musicians on bongos and conga drum adding a Latin feel which in turn created a terrific atmosphere.

ANYONE FOR DULUX?

I set about finding a job and was offered the position of representative for a Manchester based company of decorators merchants, J. P. McDougal and Sons Ltd. Their Bradford branch was situated on Manningham Lane opposite Busbys department store where Les had worked. He was now a partner in Oliver Land Ltd., a furriers just a little further along Manningham Lane.

The Bradford branch manager was an amiable chap called Whitelaw, brother of Billie, and knowing of my interest in all things show biz he kept me up to date on the actress's progress. My task was to look after the requirements of the army of painters and decorators which abound in society. I didn't know at the time that this long established company might well have supplied my paternal grandfather, William Henry, with his decorating requisites.

I hated the job but discovered Happiway Tours and their charming manageress, Jean Dawson three doors away from the McDougal showrooms. I took Jean along to a session at the Piccadilly Club and she hated it. We had a tenuous relationship for seven months.

SPECIAL GUESTS AT THE PICCADILLY

I read in the Melody Maker that Kenny Baker was to undertake a variety tour which would include Bradford Alhambra. I wrote to him care of one of the other theatres asking if he might consider dropping in at our Sunday afternoon club. Artistes working in variety often arrived in the town they were to play on Sunday in order to check into their digs and be ready for rehearsals early Monday morning. Kenny wrote back saying he would be delighted to come and gave me the expected arrival time at Foster Square railway station. There was a P. S. - he would have with him a pianist and accordion player by the name of Stan Tracey, of whom we knew little save that he was part of the London jazz fraternity.

We put the word round and the club was packed as I waited for the arrival of our guests at the railway station. I greeted them, bundled them into a waiting taxi and onto the club. Instant jubilation as we walked in. They were very friendly and like most jazz musicians welcomed the opportunity to have a blow. One of the great attributes of jazz is that everyone knows the tunes. All you need to do is pick a key and tempo. They sat in with our local musicians only the best of whom had been invited to attend.

TAPE EXCHANGE

During that summer of 1952 I exchanged correspondence with a young jazz fan in Portland, Oregon. Wally Heider worked for his father's law firm. He had an open reel tape recorder which he took along to dances and concerts when big name bands were in town. He could also record radio programmes. He wanted to exchange tapes and suggested that if I could make recordings of British bands such as Ted Heath and the newly formed Jack Parnell band and the Vic Lewis band, he would send me rare material by Kenton, Herman, Ellington etc. recorded at live performances. WOW! The only problem was my amateurish equipment was just not up to the standard he would expect. Soon the tapes from Wally started to arrive and I felt guilty that I couldn't reciprocate. I eventually found a chap with some recording equipment who liked trad jazz. He offered to record some radio programmes for me for a fee. Not wishing to lose Wally's wonderful flow of priceless recordings I agreed to pay.

LONDON BECKONS

I spent a weekend in London with Lou and his flatmate at 71, Eton Avenue, Swiss Cottage. Early in October Lou telephoned to say his pal was returning to Huddersfield and how did I fancy taking his place? I told him I would have to think about it - I did for a full 30 seconds. Count me in.

I told my parents I was thinking of moving to London. If I did mum and dad would be on their own. My dear mother offered these words of encouragement, "You won't like London. You'll be back within a month". The old middle class ethos - know your place, settle down etc. I don't think either of my parents had ever visited London.

I travelled to London by train on October 19th But I wasn't heading for Eton Avenue. Lou had called a few days earlier to say there was a much larger flat at 116, Sutherland Avenue, Maida Vale and he had fixed us up there. What he hadn't told me was that three other guys with assorted girl friends also shared the ground floor flat. He met me at Kings Cross and broke the news. What the hell, I'm in London. I would have slept in the park. This address was the first of three 116s in my life-the other two being Harold Davison's Shaftesbury Avenue office and our present home in Nottingham.

A Foothold in the Music Business

I arrived in London with just £80. I figured that would last me several weeks until I got a job. The tapes were still coming in from Wally Heider who thought that now I was in London and nearer the action I would be more able to balance our exchange deal.

I met a chap from Cricklewood who tinkered in electronics, such as it was in the early fifties. He could build me an amplifier if I got a tape deck. I bought a Ferrograph deck, a real professional job, the Rolls Royce of tape decks, from a shop in Edgware Rd and took it over to Cricklewood. The chap said it would take a couple of weeks to put everything together. I forget the price but I was prepared to blow my entire £80 just to have the joy of playing the tapes that seemed to be arriving by the cartload. Besides, once I had the means of playing the tapes I could link up with another machine and make copies to sell. This would also help me get into the elite circle of jazz musicians and influential hangers on.

At last the tape equipment was up and running. Just one problem. Mr Electronics Know All said that it would fit nicely into two suitcases. Even so I got my tape recorder and parted with most of my savings. Luckily I got a job as a sales assistant in the electrical department of John Barnes department store at Swiss Cottage.

The store was part of the John Lewis Partnership and all employees were theoretically partners. My wage was £6 a week rising to £6.10 shillings after six months. I assumed that as a partner I would be in for a cut of the profits but it didn't work out quite that way.

The store catered for the largely Jewish community that resided in Hampstead, Golders Green and the Finchely Rd area and maintained an upmarket facade by having departmental managers in morning suits. I sold kettles, toasters and a few of the newfangled television sets that were just coming in. Apparently everybody wanted one for the Coronation. Occasionally I would window dress and look out of the great curved corner plate glass onto the busy Finchley Rd., More than once I saw an old, battered former British European Airways bus pull up across Goldhurst Terrace there to await the arrival of a black guy loaded with luggage and a pair of bongos. Singer Frank Holder lived just down the road and was about to join the Johnny Dankworth Seven en route to far off one night stands. I day dreamed until one of the staff

would bring me me back to reality with a, “Mr Read, can you show this gentleman a two pint kettle in lime green with knobs on?”

It must have been about the second week in November when I started work at John Barnes. Lou worked as the accountant for a garage just across Finchley Rd so we travelled to work together. At night and weekends we played the tape recorder and the other flat sharers brought their friends round to hear these unique recordings.

BIRTHDAY BLUES

On December 2nd 1952 I celebrated my 21st Birthday. I say celebrated but it was a bit of a disaster. It was decided there would be a small party for just the occupants of the flat plus, perhaps another three or four hangers on and Jean who came down from Bradford. I was a little apprehensive as to how she would take to these strange London folk with their funny ways. I soon found out.

The party kicked off about 10pm but it happened to be just about the foggiest weather London had ever experienced (massive publicity ever since)and invited guests rang to say they couldn't make it. Then other friends telephoned from the West End to say all public transport had stopped and they would try to find their way to us on foot. Maida Vale is not that far from Soho where they thought they were. No SATNAVs in those days..

By one a.m. complete strangers were entering the flat having groped their way from wherever. Some had heard that a party was in progress and this would provide adequate refuge until morning. We got visits from the landlady who lived upstairs, first it was would we turn the noise down, then would we throw some obnoxious people out who had found their way upstairs and were enagaged in “relationships” on the staircase. By three a.m. it was estimated there were 72 people liggig about the flat. They had drunk all our booze and were in a state of collapse or being violently sick. Mrs Landlady was not amused. I stood on a table and announced that the party was over and they must go home. Someone asked who the F. I thought I was. Nobody moved. In times of desperation brilliant ideas sometimes emerge. I got Lou to sort out some Latin American records and we got a Conga line going. I led them round the flat, through the kitchen into the hall and out through the front door where I extricated myself from them. For all I know they may be still Congaing along Edgware Rd., in some ghastly

time warp. If you see them please let me know. They owe me for the booze.

It was said that Ronnie Scott and several other well known musicians were at the party but we'll never know. Years later I did meet people who talked about London's worst "Pea Souper" and how they had found a party in Maida Vale.

Jean was not best pleased. At eight a.m. the landlady called and politely but firmly asked us all to leave by 6p.m. permanently. Jean asked me to get her to Kings Cross and said that she did not think we were compatible. She was half right. I was compatible, she wasn't.

RANDOLPH CRESCENT

By mid afternoon we had tidied up the flat and had more visits from the landlady with whom we pleaded to be allowed to stay. No deal, we had to go by 6p.m. Lou had disappeared and returned about 5 p.m. with the news that he had found a flat for the two of us round the corner in Randolph Crescent. With no time to argue or check the place out we gathered up our belongings and flitted without settling the rent. We overlooked the laundry which would be due to appear on the Monday morning. In order to retrieve it we had to face the landlady and settle the rent. You simply can't win.

The new pad was a first floor, a one room and kitchenette job. The landlady was an alcoholic who languished all day in a dressing gown. Lou's sister phoned to say that she and a friend were to spend a weekend in London and would we show them the sights. We did and Lou was taken with Barbara, the friend. Thereafter there was no more talk of heading for the USA. The focus was firmly on Barbara. It was time to leave the Maid Of Ale.

Near neighbours on Randolph Crescent were jazz singer Beryl Bryden and two girls from Leeds one of whom married Tommy Steele. Thought you'd be interested!

ALL'S FAIR IN FAIRHAZEL GDNS.

We answered a newspaper ad. For a basement flat in Fairhazel Gardens behind the John Barnes store. Mr Tedesco and her son Allan showed us round and a deal was struck. One medium size room and a small bedroom, share kitchen and bathroom. Fine we'll take it. The rent was £3 a week. Lou took the small bedroom and they put me a single

bed in the main room. French windows opened onto one of those delightful grassy areas, not quite parks, that adorn the London scene. I could walk to John Barnes' staff door in five minutes. Lou could be at his garage across Finchley Rd., in seven.

1953: THE BIG YEAR

Life at 64 Fairhazel Gardens was good, but I was desperate to get into the music business and telephoned just everybody who might be able to help. I went to see an agent who was also a prominent bass player, Jack Fallon. He couldn't help but promised to keep in touch. Twelve years later he told me he wished he had given me a job. I made contact with the leading band agent, Harold Davison, and he also said he would let me know if anything turned up. We were to work closely in years to come.

One Sunday morning Lou took me to meet a trumpet player who had played in a band at Leeds Mecca ballroom shortly before Lou had moved to London and I was still defending the country with my RADAR box of tricks. A basement flat in Willesden was our destination and a jovial Liverpoolian greeted us and introduced us to his wife and newish baby. These were the Ross McManuses. We coochie-cooed the infant and tickled him under the chin as one does. The coffee and conversation were good and that was that. Some three years later Ross telephoned me to enquire if I knew of anyone wanting a trumpet playing singer. I was in the Harold Davison office when I took the call and asked around. Someone shouted out that Joe Loss was bereft of a male singer. I told Ross, he got the job and stayed several years. He was the sleepy guy in pyjamas heading downstairs for the fridge in the R. White's lemonade TV commercial of the 80s. Oh, yes. The baby metamorphosed into Elvis Costello.

The tapes from Wally continued to arrive. Rare live performances by Miles Davis, Duke Ellington and a whole series of broadcasts by the Kenton band performed in all kinds of venues from clubs to cinemas. One had the whole 20 piece band strung out in a line in front of a cinema screen. The line up at that time was probably the best Kenton ever had. There were some great soloists such as Frank Rosolino (trombone), Lee Konitz (alto sax.), Zoot Sims (tenor sax and one of the original Four Brothers from the Woody Herman band) and trumpet player, Conte Candoli. Lead trumpet was Buddy Childers who had

occupied that chair on and off since he was a mere sixteen years old! Maynard Ferguson had left the band but June Christy was back there.

People came to hear the tapes. A columnist(Mike Nevard) from Melody Maker, a couple of jazz club promoters and many fans. I met a young chap from the East End called Ted Scott. He was a great jazz fan, had a good recording set up and we swapped copies. Until quite recently Ted's name came up on BBC TV credits as chief sound engineer.

Lou and I were now out most nights and weekends visiting jazz clubs. Sunday lunchtime there was a big band led by one Tony Anton at a pub in Acton. On one visit we witnessed a very young Tubby Hayes blowing his socks off. His tenor sax was almost bigger than him. There were Sunday night sessions at the Mappleton Hotel in Coventry Street and umpteen venues in Soho. I went along to a Mappleton session on a trip to London before I moved there. I got talking to two Canadians who had just arrived in London that very day. They were Art Ellefson (tenor) and Kenny Wheeler (trumpet). They told me that Ted Heath had shown some interest in hiring fellow Canadian, Maynard Ferguson but had decided against the idea. Perhaps just as well. Ted's band would not have been a suitable vehicle for Maynard's excessive high notes playing. That night a chap with the appearance of Buffalo Bill came in accompanied by a lady. Compare Tony Hall. announced that, "We are privileged to have Mary Lou Williams in the room tonight". Her male friend was agent extraordinaire Jack Higgins, later to become a good friend when he worked for the Harold Davison office.

The Union feud continued. No American musicians were allowed to play in Britain lest they deprive British musicians of work. Who did they think would be left without a job for a night if Charlie Parker had played a concert in London? Likewise no British musicians were allowed to play in the States. There were occasional exceptions such as the Benny Goodman concert I had seen in 1949. Variety appeared to be exempt from this crazy rule.

JAZZ AT THE GAUMONT STATE

Harold Davison persuaded the Musicians Union to allow a concert at the Gaumont State cinema, Kilburn for charity- the Flood Disaster which had hit Devon the previous year. The American impresario Norman Granz promoted an annual 90 day concert tour by about a dozen or so of the creme de la creme of American jazz giants under the name "Jazz

At The Philharmonic". There was a set format with the opening and closing numbers played by the entire ensemble with them splitting up into varying groups throughout the concert. The rebel rousing finale with everyone jamming always brought the house down. Although the personnel changed from tour to tour Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson were virtually permanent fixtures. It was Granz who built them up to become international stars. LPs of the concerts were hugely popular as much for the atmospheric content as for the actual music. Granz was a millionaire by the late forties. In the summer of 1953 JAPT as it was known by aficionados was to tour Europe but missing Britain due to the M.U. ban. It was a coup for Davison to present this amazing package of the jazz elite at Kilburn. It was the equivalent of the Three Tenors multiplied by four.

Needless to say Lou and I were there. On stage walked Lester Young, Ben Webster, Benny Carter, Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge, Oscar and Ella, Ray Brown, Gene Krupa etc. This our first opportunity to see American jazz musicians and we were in seventh heaven.

In mid May I was temporarily back in the Royal Air Force for two weeks of what was called G Reserve training. I was instructed to present myself at RAF St Margaret's Bay, Dover and to have with me full uniform retained after demob in March 1952. In the event I was minus cap and one sock.

The Radar gear was the latest State of the Art equipment about which I knew very little. Since the personnel were deep into rehearsal for the Coronation parade in London they had little time for me. The two weeks was a pleasant alfresco respite from the claustrophobia of John Barnes.

BACK TO BRADFORD AND BARBARA

Back in London Lou was by now really smitten with his sister's friend, Barbara.

He was intent on two things. Being with Barbara and getting to the USA. In the summer of 53 he left London and returned to Bradford. I was sad to see him go and thought that he would henceforth be stuck in a provincial time warp. I wrong I was.

In June the country went Coronation mad. I was invited by a jazz promoter, Bix Curtis, to spend the day watching the great event on television at the 51 Club just off Leicester Square. I dragged my two

suitcase tape recorder along and set up a microphone in front of the TV thus capturing several hours of the proceedings and occasional barks by the club Alsatian guard dog to add to the atmosphere.

It crossed my mind that after nine months in the Smoke I had still not found a niche in the music business and I did not want to make a career out of selling electrical goods to the good people of Hampstead. Should I consider heading back to Bradford and set up Encore Musical Administration?

HOORAY FOR HOLYHEAD

In late August the Melody Maker announced that it was organising a special trip to Dublin for a concert appearance of the Stan Kenton band. Ireland was not affected by the union ban. I phoned Lou and he said he would see me there.

On Saturday night Sept. 19th a packed train left Euston heading for Holyhead to link with a ferry to Dun Laoghaire. The engine was adorned with a sign wrongly ascribing this to be the Melody Express, causing some embarrassment to the staff of the Musical Express.

I started a conversation with a girl sitting next to me, after all we were all in this together and we all shared a commitment to jazz; outsiders would simply not understand. We reached Holyhead early Sunday morning and boarded the ferry. There was the gang from Bradford, all the old Cameo and Piccadilly fans and, of course, Lou. Only the two of us knew quite what was in store since this was the band line up that we had heard on Wally's tapes.

We reached Dublin mid afternoon, saw the sights, had a meal and headed for the theatre. There were two performances, six pm. and eight thirty. We both had tickets for the first show. We managed to get seated together. This was, up till then, the greatest night of our lives. We were not disappointed.

On they came. All those legendary names we knew from dozens of records, broadcasts and tapes. Two nights earlier the band had played in Munich and the performance had been recorded. I have two LPs of the Munich concert.

June Christy sang, "How High The Moon", the anthem of all modern jazz musicians at the time, "I'll Remember April" and other favourites associated with her.

When the concert ended we went round to the box office and managed to get two tickets for the second performance. We made it back to the ferry and had a nightmare voyage in very rough seas. At Holyhead Lou boarded his train for Bradford and I caught the Melody Express back to London. It was 10 am before we arrived at Euston. I headed straight for the store and proffered my apologies to the department manager for being late. He said the personnel manager wished to see me so I went upstairs to his office. He couldn't understand why I should have gone all the way to Dublin to see "A dance band". I was reprimanded and given my third black mark. The other two having been for murdering customers who wanted me to fit plugs to their lousy toasters.

The dichotomy between my world and the real world was yet again being challenged.

On Friday, September 28th I handed in my notice at Mr Barnes' famous store. I would have to work another week but after that I would return to Bradford and start up my own business. I phoned home and told my mother I would be home on Saturday, October 10th She was pleased. I phoned Lou and he suggested he come to London on Friday October 9th We'd do the town and he would be able to help with all the luggage I had including many of his records which he had left behind. Lugging the damned two part tape recorder was bad enough but add to that all my personal belongings and it was clear I would need some help.

Working out my notice at the store I said my farewells to friends on the staff including that nice Mary Muntings from accounts. Then on the Thursday night something happened which changed my life.

THE FATEFUL PHONE CALL

About 6-30 Mrs Tedesco shouted that I was wanted on the phone. It was Bill Le Sage, pianist and manager of the Johnny Dankworth Seven. He asked me if I had heard that John was about to form a big band. I said I had heard vague rumours. Well, it was official. In fact the band would start rehearsals the following Monday and would I be interested in being its road manager. I said I would give my right arm gladly. Bill said that wouldn't be necessary. Would I like to go along to the 51 Club in Leicester Square to meet him and John just to talk things over. This was obviously a very low key interview. Perhaps they were saying thanks for the gig at the Cameo. An hour later I entered the dingy club and was warmly greeted by John and Bill. We chatted, Bill told me what the likely routine would be and that he could offer me £8 a week "and

all the jazz you can handle". Initially it would be a fetch and carry job, general dogsbody. And could I start Monday? You bet I could. On the tube back to Finchley Road I mulled over the proposition and pinched myself in case I was dreaming.

"DEAR BRADFORD - PLANS CHANGED"

The first thing to do was to phone home and explain that my return would be delayed somewhat. The fact that I was able to mention the name of a well known bandleader seemed to make an impression on my parents. They both offered their congratulations and wished me luck. The following day, my last at John Barnes, I smiled a lot, but I told no one about my new employment.

I didn't phone Lou. I thought I would let him come to London for the weekend and I would break the news to him. I met him at Kings Cross and he asked me if I was all packed. The guys in Bradford were looking forward to my return. I told him the news. He was overjoyed and we spent a great day together. I saw him off at Kings Cross the following day and went back to the flat to prepare for my first day in the music business.

At 10am on Monday October 12th I presented myself in smart suit and polished shoes at 116 Shaftesbury Avenue. The first floor offices of the Harold Davison Agency. A secretary gave me coffee whilst I awaited the arrival of Bill Le Sage. He arrived scribbling notes on the back of envelopes and we took a cab to the Royal Forest Hotel Chingford where the Dankworth band was about to start its first rehearsal.

It was agreed secrecy was to be maintained for the two week rehearsal period in order to prevent journalists from the Melody Maker getting a sneak preview of the band which was already being talked about by the music business and fans as likely to be a major force, such was John Dankworth's reputation.

It was freezing cold and I identified several of the musician wearing duffle coats, the standard ex-WD, fiver a time outer garments. There was Eddie Harvey and Eddie Blair (trombone and trumpet), both moving into the big band from the Dankworth Seven. Rex Morris (tenor sax) was a well known jazz player and Morris Pratt... had left a well paid job with Ted Heath to lead the trombone section.. Derek Abbott. similarly moved from a secure position with Geraldo's very popular and polished band.

Frank Holder (singer) was ex Seven and suddenly I spotted Cleo Laine. In total there were sixteen musicians, three singers-Tony Mansell being the ballad singer. Then in walked John. He came over and welcomed me aboard. How different was this informality from the rigid protocol of the august John Lewis organisation.

During the day I was asked to arrange coffee for the chaps and generally fetch and carry. All the guys were friendly. They had already heard that I had a tape recorder and a batch of interesting tapes direct from the USA. That gave me some immediate status.

The arrival of Sonny Bilgorri – “tailor to the stars”, brandishing a tape measure heralded the startling colourful array of band jackets. Trombones in dark green, saxes in lime green, trumpets in red and rhythm section in orange. John in smart lounge suit. Sonny was a friend of Harold Davison as was the travel agent, Dennis Doubens, who’s duty it was to ensure that a roadworthy coach and driver was always available. Timpsons was the chosen coach company and Len our hefty driver proved to be extremely helpful when “the gear” (equipment) had to be humped up countless flights of stairs

When the jackets arrived so did a photographer to take publicity photos for the glossy souvenir brochure which publicist Ken Pitt (later to become manager of David Bowie and very rich).was busy producing with a glorious text by Kitty Grimes. She was the sister of the girl I had chatted to on the train to Hollyhead. It was she who described John in the brochure as “Cool, kempt and shevelled”.

With the two week rehearsal period almost at an end songs, instrumentals, speciality numbers and small group items were run over and over, bits changed here and there until the library of some thirty pieces of music, mostly arranged by John, were ready to set before the public. New music stands arrived, trumpet and trombone mutes were collected and latin American percussion instruments procured. Bill Le Sage’s vibraphone required a large wooden crate to protect it from the rigours of touring. The metal music stands slotted into groves in two large wooden boxes. Alan Ganley’s drum kit was a weighty item. The suits, Cleo’s dress rack and sundry items all suggested an impending hernia. Thankfully Len handled most of the really heavy stuff when loading and unloading on gigs.

So we arrived at Friday Oct 23rd 1953. And all assembled at Alsop Place, Baker St to embark on the spotless Timpson coach. We were heading for the band's debut at the Astoria Ballroom, Nottingham. Pre publicity and John's not inconsiderable reputation as a bandleader (The Seven), his arranging and saxophone skills had already placed the band in no2 spot next to the mighty Ted Heath band before a note was played in public.

The capacity crowd of 1600 crammed into this most famous provincial ballroom where bands made their debuts and where, if they pulled in the crowds, regular engagements would follow.

Harold Davison arrived complete with hefty overcoat and cigar as befits a top agent. The national and musical press were in attendance when at 8-30pm the revolving bandstand slowly facilitated the disappearance of Arthur Rowberry's house band and into view came the colourful sight of the Johnny Dankworth Orchestra. And singers. On walked John, alto swinging from the lanyard round his neck -wild applause and,"A one two, a one two three four" count in to "JaDa". An old jazz number from the twenties now given a distinctly 50s treatment.

Len and I watched from the balcony and picked up appreciative comments from the patrons. Cleo sang "Jeepers Creepers", Tony Mansell sang a popular ballad of the day and Frank Holder did his Latin American spectacular bongo and chanting item to tumultuous applause. I could see Harold Davison almost counting his commission.

The following day we headed for Blackburn where another capacity crowd went wild when Alan Ganley did his drum feature. "Ee, inty like Jeff Chandler", I heard a young girl tell her friend.

The following day, a Sunday concert in Dewsbury to help us up to Glasgow where a two week residency at the famous Green's Playhouse ballroom (four flights up by lift) would break the band in. Dewsbury being only ten miles from my native Bradford brought forth a team of old mates from the jazz club I had helped run. I got to stay at my parent's home that night and the coach picked me up bright and early at Odsal top. Many of the musicians were well used to touring and knew most of the regular venues. They spoke of Greens in disparaging terms as we headed north to Glasgow.

As Len and I got the gear in and onto the stage a chap in DJ and black tie acquainted me with the strict routine. No musicians to leave the bandroom during the interval in case they got set on by an angry mob. Two bouncers would be positioned at the sides of the stage throughout the band's performance for protection purposes and we must not use one particular lift. The one the bouncers use and which is usually covered in blood by 10pm. I stayed close to Len.

We had arrived in good time and several of the guys and myself went in search of digs for the two week stay. Several had stayed here previously and we rounded on a place near Sauchiehall St After the first night's performance we headed back to the B&B and after a long journey and most of us went straight to bed. Sometime later we heard the sonorous voice of a singer belting out some pop song at full throttle. Eventually we went out on to the landing in search of the culprit. A not unattractive twenty something confronted us and we asked her to kindly refrain from singing at this ungodly hour. The request, in more direct and down to earth terminology was met with some expletives and we all returned to our beds. Some six months later we played a Sunday concert in Morecambe and who should be our guest artist but the Glasgow belter. Her name was and still is, Shirley Bassey.

A devoted big band fan came to see the band. Eric Hamilton was a manager with the Clydesdale electrical retailing organisation. He had a copious collection of big band records and, since he got Wednesday afternoon off, invited members of the band and myself round to his flat. I took my trusty tape equipment and listened to the Kenton "Concert In Miniature" tapes Wally Heider and sent me. I have visited Eric and his wife once or twice. He built up his own hi fi business and he related his experiences on trips to LA to Kenton conventions and the like. I guess he bumped into Lou who was to become the Kenton Concepts rep in Canada.

Sunday was a day off and John drove Cleo, myself and a young lady of low standing I had picked up, over to Edinburgh to the home of Pat Smyth, excellent pianist and solicitor.. John had spent some time at Pat's place producing arrangements for the new band.

At the end of the two week Glasgow engagement we headed back to London stopping off at York for a Sunday concert at a cinema. The Seven had played there previously and there was a good crowd to witness this first visit by the new big band, The cinema was owned by

the Prendagast family and was part of a 30 cinema circuit. I didn't know that until quite recently. Mr P was a very friendly chap as was his son, Barry, a confirmed jazz fan who played his jazz records over the house PA system as we set up. On one occasion when we played there I recall going along to the office after the show to pick up our fee. Mr P (I never did know his first name) welcomed me and introduced me to a tall elderly but distinguished looking chap wearing a Homberg hat and a carnation in his lapel. His appearance was decidedly two decades previous. "Don", said Mr P. "Have you met Jack Buchanan?". Good Lord. This man was the matinee idol of the thirties West End musical theatre scene. Mr P was well connected. My mother would have loved to have been present.

The story doesn't end there. Young Barry aspired to be a composer and sent us some music he had written. In the event John ran it through at a band rehearsal but it was unsuitable and asked me to return it with a polite letter which I did. A few years later Barry turned up in London having changed his name to John Barry. He formed a small band which got a residency on the popular Saturday teatime TV series "Oh, Boy" with a remit to play rock n' roll. I remember Les Reed, the co-composer of the Tom Jones hit, "It's Not Unusual", was the pianist. I attended a rehearsal of the band and Barry-sorry John, asked me if I would be interested in managing the band. I declined since I was then (1959) looking after seven trad jazz bands. Our paths were not destined to cross again until 1967.

Back in London and into the routine of four or more one night stands per week. I got to places I had hardly heard of. If the job was within striking distance of London we would return after the gig. Otherwise we would seek out B&Bs and travel on to the next gig. Drop off point was Alsop Place but arriving there often in the middle of the night meant a cab back to my flat so Len would detour round to Swiss Cottage on his way home. Bless him.

We played the Gaiety Ballroom,(we're all gay at the Gaiety) Grimsby, every few months. Two things I recall about that gig. We stayed at Mrs Reid's B&B. She would ask us to sign in the guest book and tell us repeatedly that, "They've all been here, yer know. Look", pointing to the names of the bandleaders whose musicians had stayed there- T. Heath, J. Loss, E. Winstone, V. Lewis" We got into the habit of reciting along with her. The ballroom manager would always enquire what time we planned to leave the next morning (Friday) and turn up armed with at

least a dozen copies of the Melody Maker to distribute to our musicians.

A PLACE CALLED DENMARK

Bill Le Sage set about finding us an office and did so via the quaintly named music publishers Box and Cox. They were based in Denmark St, a short thoroughfare off Charing Cross Rd It so happened that an alley way led to an old row of terraced properties, now condemned but in sound working order, called Denmark Place. Number 2 held music publishing stuff for B&C but the first floor did have a couple of rooms we could rent. There was a wash basin in a ground floor room with health- giving cold water and an outside toilet.

CHAPTER FOUR

1954

John cajoled junior secretary Del Milton into joining us from the Davison office. We set her up with a desk and chair in the front office whilst I set up shop in the rear room. We were now a real business enterprise. and a general waiting room for band members, family and friends of John and Cleo to get a good cup of coffee.

John attracted the intelligentsia of Fleet St and interesting people from all walks of life. Time to get the place spruced up. An architect friend of John's produced some trendy black and white wall paper and modern desks with matching table lamps and telephones. However we quickly outgrew the two small rooms and moved into slightly larger two rooms on the fourth floor at number 4 Denmark St From my office window I could look out onto a cacophony of music publishers. Just about every room in the street was overflowing with music folk. Heads of well known music companies, arrangers, copyright specialists and song pluggers whose only aim in life was to get leading artists to record or broadcast their latest songs, "Hot from the States". Don Black was just one of many song pluggers at the time. He, of course became a major lyricist working with John Barry, Andrew Lloyd-Webber etc.

My routine was divided between travelling with the band on one night stands and spending time in the office. Some of the well known folk who popped in from time to time included journalist and TV presenter Kenneth Allsop and Herbie Kretzmer.

LET THERE BE LIGHT SHOWS

Whilst still based in Denmark Place a chap telephoned to say he had an ingenious device which would be invaluable to the band. Naturally I asked him what it was but he insisted on coming to the office to demonstrate. We would require a record player and a recording of the band. Somehow I persuaded John that he should witness this supposed gizmo that would transform his fortunes.

The chap duly arrived at the appointed hour and set about wiring some boxes to the record player. Some sort of projector was pointed at the wall and as the record played random patterns of coloured light danced around in sync to the music. Was this the first disco light show? In the

event we thanked the man for the demonstration and bid him farewell. Should we have offered to buy the rights to his invention and wait a few years for the disco boom? Who knows.?

POSH NOSH

Lunch was enjoyed at Julie's caff across the road. A basic establishment with four long tables each accommodating around half a dozen hungry music folk. The stars would join us and many's the time I asked Petula Clarke to pass the HP sauce or Tommy Steele to sling the salt. The parasitical song pluggers hovered to find out when Johnny (as he was to outsiders) would be in the office because they really had this number one, sure-fire, copper bottomed, guaranteed hit. Oh, look here comes Matt Monroe with Alma Cogan. One time I saw Doris Day strolling down the street. Well, she did have a financial interest in one of the publishing companies.

PUBLISH & BE DAMNED

One publishing company was run by Fred Jackson who despite a very English name spoke with a thick Germanic accent. He terrified me in my early days. He ran the UK end of Mills Music which published Duke Ellington's many-over 1000, compositions. John signed a publishing deal with Herr Jackson and I came in to regular contact with gauleiter of Denmark St

This short, somewhat insignificant street, with its legion of music workers was the engine room of the music industry. Publishing was the hub linked to record companies, artists, press etc. Denmark St had the songs which could make a singer famous and rich. History was made here. Illustrious names such as Francis, Day and Hunter, Feldman's, Noel Gay and Southern etc. adorned the front covers of sheet music stored away in countless millions of piano stools throughout the world. Wardour St for the film industry, Hatton Garden for jewellery, Denmark St for music.

ROUTINE PROCEEDURE

The gigs were mainly at the rear end of the week. Thursday, Friday and Saturday-dances in ballrooms, baths (with a portable floor over and empty pit), town halls and even factory canteens. Sundays were reserved for concert engagements. Sometimes two performances.

There were guest stars, usually comedians or singers and a visit from a representative of the Lord's Day Observance Society was a regular hazard. The society's influence was dictatorial. Artists were warned not to wear make up, the stage should be generally bare and acts which involved lewd jokes or contortions were not allowed. An evening of Edwardian operetta items with a potted palm or two might just have scraped through the rigorous rules. Needless to say much of this was ignored.

DANKATRONICS

To lighten up the Sunday evening's proceedings John and I came up with a truly innovative concept. Our driver had built a wooden wardrobe to house Cleo's frocks since the outfitter's rail suffered from an ability to allow dresses to come into contact with metal objects guaranteed to rip inches of tulle. Without reference to Cleo I painted the wardrobe silver, fixed four small wheels on the base and a number of knobs, switches and light fittings. Suddenly we had invented the Dankatron -an ingenious piece of technological wizardry into which one could insert a sheet of blank manuscript at the top and after much spluttering and explosions a full musical score would emerge at the lower end. John would pass the music round to members of the band who would, with puzzled looks, attempt to play the nonsensical arrangement. John would feign a look of exasperation and resort to a serious piece of alto saxophone virtuosity. The exercise was short lived when Cleo complained that her frocks were getting soot stained.

Regular fans came to see the band and were often to be found in John and Cleo's dressing rooms. Joe, Lol and Neville were a devoted threesome from the Coventry area. Carol from Coventry eventually shared a flat with Cleo and made up a foursome on a two week holiday we had youth hostelling in France in 1956.

Nights off often meant an unexpected trip to a cinema, restaurant or club. John was still living with his parents in Woodford and would come up to the office about 6pm when Del and I were about to leave and pursue our own agendas. After dictating a few letters John would ask if we knew what movies were on and would ask Del to phone Cleo, tell her to grab a cab and meet us at the office. Off we would go to the flicks and discover that only Del had any money. She knew the routine and had brought the petty cash along for such a contingency.

John enjoyed playing jazz clubs and must have been the only big band leader to spend free evenings blowing with hand picked rhythm sections at the Flamingo, the '51 etc Ronnie Scott's was still a distant dream.

The Melody Maker and the very New Musical Express ran annual popularity polls and award ceremonies. John took top honours in the best alto sax, arranger, composer, band leader sections. Lita Roza was voted top female vocalist in 1954, Cleo waited in the wings as it were. The poll winner's concert was usually held at the Albert Hall and drew a capacity audience.

The Melody Maker was the bible of the music business and ran band competitions throughout the country with heats and the big winner concert at Belle Vue, Manchester. There were literally hundreds of dance bands. Next to the radio and cinema, dancing was Britain's most popular pastime. I imagine there were some twenty big name bands broadcasting, making records, playing one night stands and concert dates in 1954.

Bill Le Sage decided he wanted to leave the band and stay in Town. Bill played piano and vibes as well as acting as band manager dealing with the finances, marshalling the band and general administrative duties. He would be difficult to replace having been with John since the first days of the Seven in 1950.

John asked me if I felt up to taking on the managerial responsibilities to be vacated by Bill. So long as the Davison office procured the engagements I had enough experience of the admin duties to cope. I tried not to think that I was still only 22 and about to become general manager of an organisation with twenty one people. Naturally I said yes and John suggested we employ a band boy (roadie in present parlance). I would still tour but the load would be lightened.

About this time Cleo told me she was about to vacate her Holland Park flat and move in to a pad in St John's Wood. A friend, Maurice Clark, a music publisher, was leaving premises in Abbey Gardens. Cleo would move in to the basement and would I like the first floor flat?. I felt isolated at Fairhazel Gardens and jumped at the offer. The rent was £3 a week paid in cash to the volatile French landlady. I telephoned Les Williams, my buddy from RAF Ringstead, and suggested he quit farming and come and join me in the big city. Les was an excellent

arranger in the light music and classical field. I had played jazz records in the NAAFI at Ringstead and whetted his appetite for jazz. He joined me and took a temporary job with a dry cleaning company in Acton. Cleo recalls some people on the ground floor but I simply cannot remember them and they must have left because the not unattractive Pat Pretty from Torquay moved in with a librarian girl friend. We were on the first floor and a couple of semi starving actors, who we once heard on "Children's Hour", occupied the top floor. Carol from Coventry and Del joined Cleo in the basement flat. Cleo or Clem as she was addressed by close associates travelled in John's car and was invariably back at her flat an hour or so before me. The cocoa was ready and waiting. We all got along swingingly and especially when we learned that Pat Pretty was a PA on the TV programme, "Emergency Ward Ten". We got the plots daily.

Shortly before I left Fairhazel Gardens I got a phone call from one of the Bradford jazzers. Kenny Leitch was an ex sailor and excellent drummer. He had visited New York and done 52nd street. 'Nuff said. Ken fancied a few days in London and asked if he could kip at my place and hear the tapes from Wally Heider? He worked in the wool trade and brought with him a length of finest worsted suggesting I had it made into a dinner suit. I did and it came in handy for posh dos and the like. I once lent it to a very young saxophone player, Peter King, for his first society gig in Park Lane. He is one of the country's finest jazz musicians..

No sooner had Kenny arrived than he phoned fellow drummer Phil Seaman who he knew slightly. He then disappeared saying he would be back later that evening. He went missing for several days. His mother phoned concerned about him. What could I tell her? Ken eventually phoned to say he was back in Bradford. His plans for moving to London were abandoned and London missed out on a really wonderful drummer. He died in Bradford in 2002 and I attended his funeral along with many of the jazz fans from the old days. How many more fine jazz musicians opted to stay in their provincial environments and jobs largely on economic grounds?

Del got Les a job in Denmark St with, of all people, Mills Music, and the dreaded Fred Jackson. Les had found his métier and loved working in an attic arranging songs for big name artists. From my fourth floor office I could just about see him in the window of his top floor room.

Cleo had a friend who was an air steward with BEA. He drove a very large Oldsmobile with the accent on the old. After one engagement somewhere in the Midlands he drove Cleo and me back to London. The weather was bad, the roads icy. Somewhere in the middle of nowhere the vehicle had a blowout and hit a tree. We clambered out to witness a very smashed up car. We were lucky to be alive.

FLYING MADE SIMPLE

Cleo had occasion to use the services of British European Airways in June 1954 when the band had its first two week holiday period. Cleo elected to visit France. John, Del and I took her to Heathrow where, just inside the entrance were a few old Nissen huts left over from the war. Passengers were required to check in at one of these corrugated relics. No fancy terminal buildings in those days.

I drove my newly acquired Lambretta scooter to Hoylake to where my parents had recently moved from Bradford. Must have been my RAF passing out parade that persuaded them to move to the coast. That and the fact that the card playing Campbells now had a newsagents in Birkenhead.

HISTORY REVISITED

Band rehearsals were usually once a week either at the Cafe Anglais in Leicester Square or Dinley's Rehearsal Rooms in Marylebone. When those locations were unavailable we found ourselves in the Chez Salusia, a drinking club in Frith St., later to become the Ronnie Scott Club, or a taxi drivers hang out in Gerrard St., the location of the first Ronnie Scott Club. Dinleys eventually became part of Trinity College of Music where our eldest daughter, Jane studied for five years. She was just a few yards away from Bobby Lamb, a trombone player who ran the jazz department and who had sat next to Bill Harris in Woody Herman's band. Great honour.

I visited Jane there once and walked down a corridor I recall humping Alan Ganley's drums down in 1954. Nostalgia. But history does repeat itself. The band made recordings for George Martin at Abbey Rd studios. Abbey Gardens was just a few yards away and the road crossing made famous by the Beatles was trodden daily by we residents of no. 15. Jane has been a first call soprano for the classical session singing group London Voices for several years, and made many a trip to the very studio I visited with the band in the fifties. Jane and

her husband Matthew- a bass/baritone, were on the background sessions for two Lord Of The Rings movies and two Harry Potters.

Whilst on the subject of our darling daughter there are a couple of interesting stories. She once telephoned me at our Nottingham home and said,"Daddy, listen to this". She held her mobile phone round a corner and the unique strains of the Dave Brubeck quartet greeted my ears. "OK", I said, always ready for the unexpected."What's the story". Jane explained that London Voices were on a session at Abbey Rd with the LSO and Dave Brubeck quartet. The recording was apparently. A private work especially for Dave's publisher as a tribute for a long and happy relationship.

Whilst still at Trinity Jane phoned and asked me if I knew an American musician called Eddie Daniels. He had just finished giving a lunchtime recital and noticed her tapping her foot at a jazz item. He chatted her up and said he was playing at Ronnie Scott's that night. Would she care to be there? He would leave her name on the door so that she could get in as his guest. Her response rather diluted any thought he might have had of a flirtation. "Love to", said Jane. "So long as my Dad come too". I did. She got me out of the queue and smoothed the entry in to the club I had visited so often in earlier years.

There's one more involving Jane then I will opt out of the nepotism. In 2004 Jane's Godmother, Elaine Delmar (more of her later) called her to ask if she would like to go to a recording session involving the BBC Big Band at a studio near where Jane and Matthew lived in Acton. Arriving at the studio Elaine suggested Jane sit in the canteen where she could see and hear the proceedings over coffee. After a while, in came a chap in a dirty raincoat carrying a trombone case. He got himself some coffee and since she was the only other person in the room asked Jane if he might join her. They chatted, swapped stories about their children and showed photos. She twigged that this guy was no ordinary musician when he produced photos of his family on two yachts, both his. Eventually he said he must go fetch his trumpet from his car and disappeared. Shortly afterwards Jane flipped as she heard just what the Australian, James Morison can do with trumpet, trombone and just about every other instrument in the band. She phoned. "Daddy, should I know James Morison?". I sent her a tape of the Antipodean marvel and she flipped again. Jane is a soprano with English National Opera. She played Carlotta in "Phantom Of The Opera" for two years 2000-2002

But I digress. The chronology has gone to pot. Number 4 Denmark St housed Regent Sound Studios in the basement, famous for being the location where pop record producer Micky Most, recorded the Animals enormous hit, "House Of The Rising Sun" for a fiver.(one hour fee). Essex Music (publishers) were on the first floor. Their MD was David Platz who eventually set up a separate company for John's compositions. Benny Lee worked for David as a song plugger. I remembered him as a fine singer and stooge for Bernard Braden (along with Pearl Carr) on the "Breakfast With Braden" Saturday morning radio show before I left Bradford. There was also a series called "Bedtime With Braden" leading to umpteen TV series' in which Esther Rantzen made her debut. Braden played the first recordings of Barbra Streisand.in 1964. Not a lot of people knew that!

Next floor up was Les Perrin and his secretary. Chain smoking, witty, jazz fan and doyen of publicists. We paid him £7 a week to handle our publicity and never a week went by without some story about John and Cleo in the nationals. This led to John having a weekly column in the Daily Express.

Les pulled stunts and one of the most audacious was when he was publicising the launch of the Malcolm Mitchell band which was to debut at the Astoria Ballroom, Nottingham (where else?). The year 1954 was the height of the cold war and scares about atom bombs and the like.. Les travelled to Nottingham the day before the band debut and dropped leaflets from a hired plane over the town bearing the message, "This is a raid" followed by some inducement to rush down to the Astoria and catch this new band. Naturally the constabulary were not best pleased and locked him in a cell. As far as I can remember John played some part in his release but he was fined. Perrin eventually handled PR for the Stones and organised Mick Jagger's wedding in the

We occupied the top floor. Essex music eventually vacated and in came Dennis Preston, record producer, jazz critic and radio presenter. He opened a studio in Holland Park where we recorded for him for release on EMI. His engineer was Joe Meek, who eventually opened his own studio, wrote "Telstar", a huge hit and in a fit of paranoia murdered his landlady and shot himself.

UNDERCOVER EXCURSIONS

I would make occasional forays to the Lyceum Ballroom off the Strand to check out musicians that might be worth purloining. Oscar Rabin had the resident band with some fine musicians. From the ranks of Oscar's orchestra we got tenor player Don Pashley, the great Danny Moss (tenor) and one of the world's finest big band drummers, Kenny Clare (Duke Ellington is reputed to have offered him the job in his band). My visits to the Lyceum and the brief clandestine conversations I held with musicians -"John want's to talk to you"- must have been noted by Oscar and his partner Harry Davis who actually conducted the band whilst Mr Rabin played baritone in the sax section. I could imagine whispered tones on the bandstand. "See whose just come in?" Lock the guys in the band room in the interval".

Archer Street was the alfresco employment exchange for the band business. Daily, around lunchtime, musicians in search of work milled around networking, swapping anecdotes and checking out vacancies. The "Melody Maker" had a quaint way of reporting the departure of a musician from a band simply announcing that so and so was leaving so and so's band to freelance. Today ministers of the crown leave their departments to, "Spend more time with their families". euphemisms are the easy way out.

The Davison office announced two week tours for us accompanying Nat King Cole and Johnnie Ray. My 1954 diary has an entry for Thursday April 1st -rehearsal with Nat Cole. The tour was a revelation both for us and the public. Cole was immensely popular having had many hits. We, of course admired his jazz credentials. A wonderful pianist-he influenced Oscar Peterson, an immediately identifiable singing style and some terrific musical arrangement by the likes of Billy May and Nelson Riddle. Add to that the brilliant drumming of Lee Young -Lester's brother and you could imagine the joy we all got from that tour.

The Johnnie Ray tour rehearsal was on April 15th and in complete contrast to the Nat Cole engagement. Ray was an over the top eccentric pop singer with a manic delivery. His hits, such as "The Little White Cloud That Cried" were frankly rubbish but Ray delivered his songs in such a manner as to excite teenage females to wet their knickers. Ray would feign injury during his act and I recall the Sheffield City Hall engagement when, at the end of his act, Ray grabbed the microphone stand. strutted about the stage like a demented madman(much in the style of some present day performers) as he screamed the last words of the song he moved nearer and nearer to the edge of the six foot high

stage. I grabbed our driver, the faithful Len, and we ran down the outer aisle just in time to catch Ray as he fell. Again he pretended to be injured but signalled that he was OK. The young audience went wild as we carried the limp singer out of the auditorium. He made a miraculous recovery.

Ray may have been a second or even third rate singer but what a showman. He let us all into his dressing room, ordered drinks and took phone calls from worried fans. The press coverage was worth a fortune. At Belle Vue, Manchester he took the whole band on the rides in the amusement park before a show. Musically it was all very sub-standard but an amusing relief from the one night stand routine.

On August 23rd we commenced a two week engagement in Torquay. The weather was good and days were spent on the beach, sight seeing and brushing up my swimming prowess. I am by nature a worker and felt guilty about the excessive free time. When we played Torquay the following year I returned to London and the office after a couple of days in the sun rejoining the band for the closing two days of the engagement.

On August 29th we played a concert at the Spa, Weymouth. This had been my Saturday night recreation whilst stationed at nearby RAF Ringstead some three years earlier. The adjacent ballroom had a resident band led by one Jack Barnes. I used to chat to him about jazz. In 1955 Jack somehow turned up at the Davison office and Harold introduced him as the new booker who would be taking over our engagement diary. Small world.

On Wednesday September 22nd Lou and Barbara were married in Bradford. I was best man looking smart in my new Cecil Gee suit. On Sept. 30th they set sail from Liverpool for Canada and the start of a new and very successful life. I was visiting my parents in Hoylake and went along to the Liverpool docks to see them off.

There were plenty of broadcasts and occasional TV spots for the band. The BBC monopoly was the sole means of broadcasting. And they clung to some rather old fashioned ideas left over from the days when Lord Reith ruled with an iron fist. It is said that in the thirties radio newsreaders wore dinner jackets and black tie in order to present an image (which could not be seen) of decorum and sobriety.

I noticed that both radio and TV engineers put on brown warehouse coats when busying themselves positioning microphones, cameras, lights etc. The class system seemed evident.

TO AFRICA

John was offered a two week engagement in South Africa. Unaware of the apartheid system that prevailed John was met by Dave Lee, a fine British pianist who was to become a major part of the Dankworth organisation. Dave showed John the appalling injustice inflicted on the black population. The tour was completed and soon after returning to London an offer came in for the whole band to tour South Africa. John declined as a stand against the political system. The Melody Maker ran a front page headline, "Dankworth turns down £10,000 South African tour". Father Trevor Huddleston, a staunch advocate for integration in South Africa became a close ally. and was associated with Christian Aid, an organisation dedicated to helping the non- white South African majority.

A concert at the Royal Festival Hall was arranged to assist the charity in fund raising. Humphrey Lyttelton and Lionel Hampton donated their services. along with the JD band. John became a leading figure in inter-racial unity and when a call came from Cannon John Collins, an associate of Father Huddleston. A young man had apparently stowed away on a ship from South Africa, been caught at Southampton and was now in Winchester prison asking for Johnny Dankworth who would vouch for him. He had seen John on the South African tour and figured this was the passport to a new and freer life. John drove to Winchester where the young man was released into his care. All did not work out as it should have.

Young Cameron, aged about 20 arrived at our office with virtually no luggage, He was taken out and equipped with the basics and on to Cleo's Kilburn flat. David Platz was asked to give him some kind of job which he quickly left and threw himself on the state. I gave him shelter for a week or so when others had declined due to insufficient domestic space. It has to be said that he simply did not fit in and was unwilling to conform to our way of doing things. He eventually disappeared out of our lives.

John was innovative and on one series of evening broadcasts introduced a succession of guests from various departments of the

arts. Classical clarinettist Jack Brymer, violinist Alan Loveday and even Spike Milligan who was now becoming a firm radio favourite as the leading man in the Goon show radio programmes. John now had the arranging support of Dave Lindup a unique talent with a sense of humour. He was what Billy Strayhorn was to Duke Ellington-collaborator, bon viveur and friend. They would burn lots of midnight oil working on new compositions and arrangements sometimes rushing the manuscripts into a waiting taxi to be transported across London to a copyist primed ready to produce the band parts often with minutes to spare before a broadcast or TV rehearsal. The pace and pressure were all part of John's uncanny talent and ability to battle through life.

THE PROMOTERS

The promoters who ran organised dances and concerts were an odd bunch. Ed W. Jones, an elderly agent ran Sunday concerts in the greater London area and as a token of goodwill sent white silk scarves as Christmas presents to artists who had helped him make a few bob in the proceeding year. John had acquired half a dozen. Other bandleaders rather more.

Gerry Cohen, a dour man from Leeds ran dances in the North. Whilst still living in Bradford, Lou, myself and several of the jazz crowd went to Leeds Town Hall to see the distinctly boppish Ralph Sharon Quintet playing for dancing. Ralph later emigrated to the USA and became Tony Bennett's MD and pianist. On this occasion notices had been erected at either side of the stage bearing the legend "NO BOPPING". Presumably council,officials considered several hundred young people jumping up and down would damage their highly polished sprung floor. Just as the band were in full flight on a very boppish tune on to the stage came Mr Cohen, tapped the microphone in the age old tradition and in broad Yorkshire announced, "Now ladies and gentlemen..."boos from the crowd. Gerry was not best pleased. "I said, ladies and gentlemen, and if you're not ladies and gentlemen you can have yer money back and leave". Some did. More boos. He then reminded the audience now gathered round the stage area that there were clear notices saying NO BOPPING and that there must be no bopping by order of the council. He then uttered these immortal words, "Bop is dead. Isn't that right Mr Sharon". This was 1949 when the emerging genre was growing in popularity. Ralph Sharon looked dismayed and as Gerry gave him the carry on nod carried on with the bop tune he had started prior to the unseemly interruption.

Cohen came up to me at a dance he was promoting in Scunthorpe. "You've got to tell Johnny to stop playing the bop.". I asked him what he meant. "The public don't want the bop" I explained that John had the most popular band in the country. The hall was full to capacity. We must be doing something right. He scurried away in disgust but continued to book the band regularly.

I wish I had been able to introduce Gerry Cohen to Dizzy Gillespie., co-founder of bop, I have no doubt he would have proffered the same advice. "You've got to stop playing the bop".

Alf Danvers was a jovial little man who ran dances at East Kirkby Festival Hall.in Nottinghamshire. He owned a printing firm in Coalville. His stationery had an enormous bright art decor heading. He would often arrive after we had spent half an hour trying to gain access to the hall. Leaping out of his old banger with a broad smile his opening gambit would be, "Ere, have you heard this one? A chap goes in to a pub.....". We were in no mood for his inane jokes but undaunted he continued his comedy act even when John and Cleo arrived, following them in to their dressing rooms.

Duncan McKinnan (known as Drunken Duncan for reasons I need not go in to) was a Scottish promoter who extended his activities as far south as Carlisle. The Seven had worked for him regularly but the big band's first visit to Carlisle rather surprised me. The venue was the Market Hall. We arrived mid afternoon and found the place to be a thriving and busy market with dozens of stalls selling everything from vegetables to clothes and toys. Members of the band who had been in the Seven pacified me by explaining that by 7pm the enormous. Building would be transformed in to a glittering ballroom. Well, not quite. The bus was to be driven in and would serve as a dressing room. Cleo would hold on until the chaps had changed and then slip into her stage attire. Behind hastily erected curtains. A stage with lighting and amplification was put in place and some semblance of a dance hall achieved. I think those who wanted to dance did so on a stone floor.

CHAPTER FIVE

SO ENDS THE FIRST 12 MONTHS

1954 quickly disappeared. October 23rd, the first anniversary of the big band, was spent playing a dance engagement in Nelson. So much had been achieved in twelve months. The band had won the Melody Maker popularity poll, John taking the best alto, composer, arranger plaudits. Cleo came no. 2 after Lita Roza, records sold well and radio and TV dates were in abundance. It was wonderful to be part of this amazing enterprise and be in the almost constant company of people with whom one could talk jazz. John was easy to work with and had a great sense of humour. As a parting shot at gatherings he would lapse into East End trivia with, "Love to all at number 43 and tell Ada I'll let her know". All of which was utter nonsense but the sort of chat one might have heard neighbours saying over the garden wall. Not to be outdone Cleo would come out with, "Life ain't all yer want, but it's all yer got so stick a geranium in yer 'at and be 'appy".

I had and still have an abiding admiration for John and Cleo. I don't recall either saying anything unpleasant about a musician. If they really did not like someone's playing they would generally just change the subject. So unlike many so called musicians and singers in today's pop scene who slag each other off at the drop of a million selling record.

SCOOT

On Christmas Eve 1954 we played a dance at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. I had put my Lambretta scooter in the bus and was able to make the forty mile journey to Hoylake to spend Christmas day with my family. On Boxing day I left at noon to make the 130 mile journey to Nottingham where we were playing at the good old Astoria.

PLUGGING THE GAP

Some song pluggers doubled up as singers and four I knew broadcast regularly. One. I have already mentioned-Benny Lee. Paul Rich, Dick James and Cyril Shane were the others.

Dick James is the voice on the original Robin Hood TV series (riding through the glen). He once borrowed a fiver from me in a pub so that he could take some well known singer to lunch. He did some freelance work including singing with Geraldo's excellent band. Geraldo was a

debonair, sophisticated looking man with slickered back hair, and a carnation in his lapel. He wielded a long baton when conducting his eighteen piece orchestra. He was, however, Gerald Bright from the East End and had retained some of his east end lingo. Dick James arrived late for a Geraldo broadcast rehearsal at Aeolian Hall in Bond St Gerry glared and shouted across the empty studio, "Ere Dick, what are you late for?". To which Dick retorted, "I'm late for your rehearsal, Gerry".

James eventually opened his own publishing company which just about ticked over for some years until the equivalent of winning the lottery several times over occurred. When Brian Epstein clinched a deal for the Beatles with George Martin. George suggested Brian would need a publisher and sent him to see Dick James. Dick eventually died a very wealthy man.

I have covered Benny Lee elsewhere There is more to tell about Cyril Shane. Cyril, too, opened his own publishing office and in 1970 I sent him the manuscript and demo disc of a song I had written called "Just To Know You". Cyril quickly replied that he liked the song and would offer it to Des O'Connor (yes, really), who was looking for a suitable duet to perform with American singing star Connie Stevens on a TV spectacular from the Palladium. A few weeks went by and Cyril wrote to say the song had been accepted by Des and Connie Stevens and that the TV show had been pre sold to 127 countries. The programme was transmitted on ITV but with no means of recording, it does not form part of my memorabilia. I do, however have the original correspondence from Cyril and the demo recorded by Linda Saxone, a well known singer and broadcaster at the time. More of her later.

1955: THE INVENTION OF THE TEENAGER

The year kicked off with the usual one nighters, broadcasts, concerts etc. But there were some important events which affected not only the band but the entire entertainment industry.

Tuesday, March 15th At home at Abbey gardens when the 7pm news announced that Charlie Parker had died in New York. Such was the physical state of this great jazz musician that the doctor who issued the death certificate estimated his age to be around 53. "Bird" was, in fact just 34 years old. Blighted by the excesses of drugs, booze and even food Parker simply burned himself out.

Within days graffiti appeared on walls both in London and New York bearing the legend "Bird Lives". That is also the title of a biography by Ross Russell.

I must confess that I had paid little attention to the music of Duke Ellington. After all I had jumped on the jazz conveyor belt just as bebop was entering the jazz lexicon. Ellington sounded a little dated until a man from EMI gave me an LP the title of which proved to be well justified. "Ellington Masterpieces" had just four extended performances of the Duke's finest works. "Mood Indigo", "Sophisticated Lady", "The Tattooed Bride" and "Solitude". Ravishing. I was mesmerised by the tone colours Ellington produced from the conventional jazz band instrumentation. Anyone who puts jazz down should hear this album. Of course there are many other illustrations of ravishing jazz such as the Miles Davis-Gil Evans collaborations.

The Ellington record got me delving into Ravel and Debussy and deeper. And yet I still had the urge to jump up and down when I heard some roaring jazz from Woody Herman or a Jazz At The Philharmonic swinger. I loved the rapport that is established between musician and audience when a quote from another piece of music is introduced into a solo. It doesn't happen much today partly because young jazz musicians do not have the vocabulary. Technically they maybe brilliant with their academic backgrounds but you won't hear two bars from "My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown" (big in the thirties). Time was when a member of a jazz audience caught that moment when a soloist slipped in a bar or two from some well worn and probably very corny song and acknowledged receipt of the message with an involuntary, "Wow" or "Yea". Great fun –an ingredient sadly lacking in today's chamber music jazz. Odd that in the late forties, JATP producer Norman Granz, who encouraged his musicians to swing like mad and excite audiences, wrote a message in programmes on "How To Behave At A Jazz Concert". Perhaps he felt that dancing in the aisles was going a little too far.

At our Abbey Gardens flat Les Williams and I usually went into our respective offices in Denmark St by bus. More than once when I was travelling alone I waited in the bus queue on Abbey Rd for the 159 when a Rolls Royce would pull up and Maurice Kinn, owner of the New Musical, would beckon me in. The NME offices were almost opposite ours in Denmark St

On April 6th we were at Hammersmith Town Hall to record backing track for a short film produced by Michael Carreras who went on to create Hammer films.

Before the move to London I was an avid listener to the American Forces Network in Germany and also discovered that with a little knob twiddling I could pick up the Voice Of America transmitted worldwide from New York. A nightly programme presented by one Willis Conover provided access to the latest jazz records. Conover had a very dark brown voice and was very economical with announcement. Once when compering a Newport Jazz Festival he approached the microphone and uttered the briefest introduction an artist had ever had. He said simply, "Ladies and gentlemen-Ella". No point in wasting time on superfluous affirmations of her stature.

We had an LP release which I sent to Mr Conover and received a letter saying that he knew of John and the band and would devote an entire one hour to John's music in a future programme. This he did and we were able to meet him on a visit he made to London.

Another visitor from the States that year was Wally Heider, the Portland, Oregon fan who had sent me all those amazing open reel tapes in the early fifties.

Wally called from his London hotel and asked where and when he could see the band and meet John and Cleo. We were in Scotland at the time and he flew up and caught up with us in Edinburgh. He was impressed. Wally became one of the best known recording engineers on the American jazz scene and is credited on hundreds of recordings, some of which I still have.

On Sept. 30th the mighty Kenny Clare joined the band at Wolverhampton and the band entered a glorious period

THE BIRTH OF ITV

In 1955 rumours of a woman calling on leading agents and producers were rife. She was involved with the Independent Television Authority, set up to run commercial TV in opposition to the BBC monopoly. There were to be two production companies in the London area, one to cover weekdays the other weekends. Other companies would be allocated

regions in the provinces, such areas to be governed in line with county boundaries and population density.

A golden opportunity (“A licence to print money” as one Scottish TV chief phrased it) being touted round the entertainment business.

Britain’s major entertainment agency was run by the Grade brothers, Leslie and Lew. Their younger brother also ran an organisation specialising in producing lavish shows, He had changed his name to Bernard Delfont. Val Parnell, uncle of drummer and one time bandleader, Jack Parnell, also fitted into the equation. His connection with the London Palladium resulted in the ATV company, headed by Lew Grade, presenting the enormously popular “Sunday Night At The London Palladium” TV show. All were approached by the mystery woman seeking involvement in the new and exciting TV venture. The first ITA transmissions were on Sept. 22nd 1955.

Harold Davison had close links with the Grades and this ensured we got our share of TV spots including the coveted SNATLP. show This, incidentally is where Bruce Forsythe got his big break.

We filmed our spot in the Carreras short movie at Pinewood. A stage proscenium was built and created the illusion of a stage show. At either end of the stage two showgirls in tights stood and smiled. One was Jackie Collins, sister of Joan.

Dave Lee arrived in London, renewed contact with John and replaced Derek Smith, the band’s pianist, who departed for New York where he made quite a name for himself recording with some of jazz’s finest musicians. Accompanying Dave and his wife was South African journalist Herbie Kretzmer who became a regular visitor to our office. He landed the job of TV critic on the Dairy Express and among his many accomplishments, wrote the lyrics for Les Miserables, which must have kept him very comfortable in retirement.

ELVIS WHO?

An event of historic proportions occurred on a long journey back from a South Wales concert. Around 1am we stopped off at a greasy spoon on the A4. As we queued for a mug of lukewarm tea and a curled sandwich the juke box was plainly audible. A strange caterwauling

emanated from the device as if some fault had developed. A couple of the chaps went over to investigate.

With looks of incredulity they said the offending noise was one Elvis Presley and he purported to be singing-if that's the right word, a song called "Heartbreak Hotel". The words were unintelligible, a sort of mumble. Some of the band's musicians laughed, others dismissed the whole experience as some kind of bad joke. I understand Mr Presley went on to become some sort of icon as in I con you into thinking I am the next big thing.

On November 23rd Cleo recorded a 10inch LP for Esquire called "Cleo Sings British".

1956 CHANGES

The post war baby boom meant that there was an emergent group who were to be labelled "teenagers". In 1956 the war had been over for eleven years and youth showed distinct signs of wanting its own culture. Youth discovered Elvis Presley and they liked him principally because he represented all that their parents hated. Whilst mums and dads preferred the gentler sounds of Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra,. And Doris Day youngsters wanted something more raunchy. Presley and his imitators supplied the simplistic heavy rhythmic beat and feel of what became Rock and Roll born out of black race music of America's deep south.

Jack Barnes was now handling most of the band bookings. The bands being those of Vic Lewis, Jack Parnell, Ronnie Scott (short lived) and John Dankworth. Harold was busy wheeling and dealing with American agents. He travelled to New York with Vic Lewis intent on breaking down a crazy union barrier that prohibited the free exchange of musicians. No US musicians, apart from a Palladium engagement for Duke Ellington as a solo artist in 1948 performed in the UK for some twenty years. Harold returned to London with a deal for a limited exchange of bands on a one man for man arrangement.

STAN THE MAN

The first exchange was to be between the Ted Heath band to go stateside and the Stan Kenton band.to tour the UK. I suggested to Harold that some kind of celebration was called for. He told me to talk

to John and see what we could come up with. We settled for a private party with just the Kenton musicians and the Dankworth men. Secrecy was paramount in order to avoid gate crashers. I persuaded the manager of a drinking club in Frith St to let us have his premises for the event. The date was to be Good Friday, March 30th And, boy, was that a good Friday!

Our band members, sworn to secrecy, started to arrive around 10pm. The jazzers brought their instruments anticipating playing along with their American counterparts. The Kenton band were playing two concerts in Croydon and were expected back in central London around midnight. At 12-30 am two Timpsons coaches pulled in to Frith St and disgorged rather more than Kenton's 20 musicians. Lots of very familiar faces headed towards me as I did my bouncer act intent on warding off the uninvited. "Sorry but this is a private party" I realised that I was addressing my refusal to Ronnie Scott, Tubby Hayes and Phil Seaman. They were eager to assure me that they were all long lost friends/ second cousins/ pen pals of key members of the Kenton band. They got in along with recognisable members of the Kenton band. Soon the jamming started with a great bonhomie generated between this Anglo American collaboration..

Stan Kenton (all six foot four of him) arrived with Harold Davison who introduced me to the man I had revered since I first heard his unique sounding band on AFN at the age of 14. When I left some hours later he shook my hand with a "Thank you Don, please thank Johnny for the party".

I placed a saucer on a table near the exit with a notice."This was intended to be a private party. If you were not invited would you make a donation to the costs". I got 2/6 (25p) and two buttons. Years later the premises became the Ronnie Scott club.

SUR LE CONTINENT

On May 21st we started a two week holiday. John had suggested four of us- he and Cleo plus Carol and I should have a car trip round the south of France staying in youth hostels. He may have been the most famous bandleader in Britain but he did have a sense of adventure. At first I said no way. I wanted a two week rest away from the band, one night stands, agents, record producers and the like. But as usual I saw

the light, especially when John said it would only cost us £25 each.
Sold!

In the event we had a great time enlivened by a call from Del to ask John to phone George Martin. We had recorded a parody on the nursery rhyme "Three Blind Mice" in the style of several well known bands, Stan Kenton, Glen Miller, Billy May and Eric Delaney. John did a whimsical narration and that was that. The call to George confirmed that we had a hit. Mice was in the charts. We celebrated.

TEN OUT OF TEN FOR TENACITY

In the summer of 1956 the band had a two week engagement at the Villa Marina Ballroom, Douglas, Isle of Man (no man is an island except the Isle of Man). John, Cleo and I rented a semi-detached house overlooking Douglas and with a magnificent view of the Atlantic ocean.

I had placed a classified ad. in the Melody Maker since we now needed a band boy(roadie). I anticipated dealing with the replies upon my return to our London office two weeks hence. We moved into the semi on the Sunday, our day of arrival on the island. At 8-30am the next morning I was woken by the sound of the door bell. Since virtually no one knew where we were residing I assumed this must be the milk man. I was in for a surprise. Not yet fully conscious I opened the door to find a bedraggled young lad with a trumpet case and a small duffel bag.

"Mr Dankworth?", he enquired nervously. I told him who I was and asked what he wanted. "I've come about the job", he replied. Somewhat annoyed about being awakened at the unearthly hour I told him we had no vacancies for trumpet players and was inclined to close the door. "No, the job of band boy", he replied.

I invited him in and told him that the band boy job was strictly for someone based in London, assuming he was local. "I am from London", he said. "I've hitched hiked and I desperately want this job." John Dankworth had heard the commotion and come down to see what was happening. When he heard the story he beckoned me aside whilst the lad downed a hot cup of coffee. I said such tenacity should be rewarded and we hired young Simon Napier- Bell on the spot.

Simon stayed about six months. Frankly he was a lousy band boy: late, dilatory and slow to load up the band bus after a one night stand. Little did anyone realise he was checking out the music business for a future that was to make him rich.

Simon Napier- Bell disappeared for some years but surfaced as manager of the Yardbirds and Mark Bolan. He wrote the lyrics to Dusty Springfield's hit, "You Don't Have To Say You Love Me" and went on to "invent" Wham and is thus responsible for George Michael.

In 1990 Napier-Bell was declared bankrupt but earned a decent living from royalties. He surfaced in the late nineties managing a Russian singer called Alsou who he said would top the charts. She disappeared without trace as did Simon.

NICE MICE

The Mice record success ensured more broadcasts, TV spots and record signing assignments for John.

In October 1956 our government, under the aegis of Anthony Eden, had a little spat with Egypt over the Suez canal. I decided it was time to upgrade my transportation and opted for trading in my Lambretta for a brand spanking new BMW. I got it from the Lambretta dealer who insisted that the BMW Isetta was the transport of the future. No dangerous side opening doors. Just one at the front. An optional three or four wheels and an engine placed at the back of the driver's neck. The gear change was placed where the driver's door would be in a conventional car. With a top speed of 40 MPH and the ability to be parked head- on into the curb, this was really the wonder vehicle of the fifties!

The car cost £350.. And was one of the first eight to arrive in the UK. I wanted the first but a film company had apparently collared the first seven. I never saw a movie featuring seven bubble cars but there might well have been a very exciting car chase sequence.

I had never driven a car and I persuaded Dave Lee, a near neighbour, pianist with the Dankworth band and later founder of Jazz FM radio station, to teach me the rudiments. I took my driving test and the examiner was so smitten with the novel vehicle as we whizzed around Hendon Central that he speeded up the test so that he could quiz me about this strange little machine.

A week after the test I drove the Isetta up to my parents home in Hoylake and the next day I took a girlfriend to Blackpool. Driving along the promenade we spotted a large banner above the entrance to the Tower Ballroom. "The New Wonder Car -Come and see the remarkable BMW Isetta".

Naturally we were curious and as we entered the foyer a smooth talking salesman was extolling the virtues of the new wonder car to some 50 or so bemused holidaymakers."Would anyone like to step inside this amazing little motorcar?"he asked. Several people took up the offer. "How about you, Sir?". He was looking at me. "No thanks", I said, "I've got one". He turned away and then as if a delayed reaction hit him he responded somewhat aggressively, "No you can't have got one of these. They're not yet available in this country". I knew we were into a bit of one-upmanship so I told him it was parked outside and that I had driven it up from London. I took him to the door to prove my point.

He rushed back to his podium in a state of great excitement. "Ladies and gentlemen", he announced,"This gentleman actually owns one of these amazing vehicles and, not only that, he has driven it all the way from London". I took the applause graciously.

Someone at the back shouted, "It's a fix". I rounded on him and insisted he come outside and check the odometer. It registered just 450 miles. He was convinced.

I travelled thousands of miles in the Isetta during the following three years experiencing only one mishap. On one occasion I was following John's Renault Dauphin when he stopped and I didn't. Whereas a conventional car might have suffered a dented bumper I need a replacement door!

The gear stick, situated adjacent to the right hand wall, had a habit of working loose. Once, when returning home from a gig in Luton I had Dave Lee as a passenger. We were travelling flat out (40mph) along a darkened A5 when I handed him the gear stick asking him to look after it for me. He was not amused.

I recall the stares of bemused pedestrians along Oxford St when I shoe horned my brother, his wife and two small children into the tiny car when I took them on a sight seeing tour. Happy daze!

At August bank holiday I saw my first Beaulieu Jazz Festival on Lord Edward Montagu's front lawn. It was not a particularly big affair but grew annually until 1962 when, in deference to the local villagers, his Lordship terminated the event. Peter Burman played a major role in organising the festivals and I got to know him quite well.

He lived in Hampstead and invited me to a club in Golders Green to hear a young girl singer. She was just seventeen and sound very mature for her age. She was the daughter of Jamaican trumpet player, Leslie "Jiver" Hutchinson. Her stage name is Elaine Delmar. We were to become good friends and in 1966 with the birth of our eldest daughter, Jane, I asked her if she would consent to becoming Jane's Godmother. She said yes and she has carried out her duties superbly keeping an eye on Jane when she moved to London and further education. They are very good friends and although musically they are at opposite end of the spectrum they visit one another's performances.

Peter Burman ran occasional bijou concerts in the Purcell Room of the Royal Festival Hall using small jazz groups. All under the heading Jazz Tête-à-Tête.

1957: THE WIND OF CHANGE

Jack Barnes told me that there was a shifting pattern emerging in booking big bands. Colleges and Universities were increasingly booking traditional jazz bands such as Chris Barber, Alex Welsh and Ken Colyer. I knew little of the trad band scene but was conscious of the divide that existed between followers of traditional and modern jazz. They simply did not mix. In fact the leading trad agency run by Lyn Dutton was virtually unknown to me until 1959.

Sunday concerts became scarce due partly to the popularity of ITVs "Sunday Night At The London Palladium". People were staying in on Sunday nights. We played some Sunday night gigs at the Marquee, the luxurious room beneath the Academy cinema in Oxford St. (the pillars were carpeted). The promoter was Harold Pendleton whose National Jazz Federation had been a loose arrangement linking jazz clubs throughout the country. Harold was a jazz loving accountant and looked after the affairs of the Chris Barber band, the leading traditional jazz band at the time. They too played the Marquee. This was, I should point out, before Harold took a lease on premises in Wardour St and retained

the Marquee name. Just about every rock band got its first break there in the mid sixties.

John and I discussed the situation and decided to seek suitable premises in which to run weekly Sunday evening jazz nights for the band when no other engagements were booked. I happened to walk along Oxford St and heard music emanating from a basement. The sign said London Dance Institute. I wandered in saw the large room well furnished with a one foot high stage at one end. Dance lessons were in progress. I sought out the manager, asked him if we might rent the room on Sunday evenings and got a favourable response. They didn't normally open Sundays and the chance of an extra few quid seemed to appeal. He showed me round and took me to another room about half the size of the main room. This was primarily a café for the patrons but I visualised it as part dressing room.

I got John to look the place over and it was decided to proceed with our plan. The band's first performance at this new and regular Sunday night venue in the heart of the West End., was April 28th The venture was a great success. The room could accommodate around 200 people, especially if some wandered off into the café. Most of the band could just about squeeze on to the stand if the front line instrumentalists were positioned off- stage on the dance floor. The conventional sax section line up and had modified into trumpet, tenor sax, trombone and baritone with John leading on alto sax. Very much the line- up of the Seven plus baritone. This gave the band a very distinctive sound.

In the long queue waiting to gain admission that night was a very tall photographer who worked for Kodak. He chatted up a young lady and the two eventually moved into a flat in St John's Wood. He was (and still is) David Redfern whose photos adorned the walls of Ronnie Scott's club and, in the early eighties, some US postage stamps. The flat they moved into was top floor at 15 Abbey Gardens where I lived. Pure coincidence.

Jazz At The Philharmonic impresario, Norman Granz, brought his touring jazz greats to Britain in the summer of 1957. They played a concert at the Gaumont State theatre in Kilburn the same night that the band played the Oxford St club and our attendance was well down on the norm. An hour into our performance I whispered to John that I was popping out for a while leaving Del, our secretary in charge of the door.

I got a cab to Kilburn, headed for the stage door where Dougie Torbutt, Harold Davison's tour manager, was having a breather. I asked him if he would let me "borrow" one or more of the JAPT musicians, the list was mind boggling- Oscar Peterson, Ella Fitzgerald, Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, et al. Just then Diz came to the stage door wearing a bowler hat. I by- passed Dougie and asked Diz if he fancied a blow with John's big band after his performance. There would be booze, girls and some great jazz. How could he resist.

I phoned Del and told her that I was bringing Dizzy Gillespie and would she get the message to John but not to announce it since the whole thing could backfire if Diz changed his mind. In the event I turned up at the club and bundled the great trumpet player out of a cab and into the club. There was a look of surprise and elation on the faces of the hundred or so fans. Diz headed for the band and without a word., took out his trumpet and sat alongside the trombone section. John acknowledged his arrival and put the band in to "Take The A Train". Dizzy blew his socks off as did the rest of the band. The word was out that the world's greatest jazz trumpet player was in the club and half the audience from Kilburn, instead of going home, headed for our Oxford St club. We played overtime and the room was packed.

Other American jazz greats also played impromptu sessions at the club. During that JATP tour Oscar Peterson celebrated a birthday. He was staying at the Dorchester Hotel and was awakened by a phone call from Norman Granz wishing him a happy birthday. Oscar thanked him but politely said it was very early and couldn't he have phoned later. Norman, in good spirits told Oscar to get out of bed, go over to the mantle piece, look under an ornament and tell hm what he had found. Oscar was not best pleased about the invitation to play party games at this (for musicians)unearthly hour but he complied. He reported to the millionaire jazz entrepreneur that he had found a key. Granz now told Oscar to look out of his window and say what he saw. Nothing except a row of cars. "The one in the middle is yours". It was a Rolls.

IN FOR THE COUNT

On October 28th The Count Basie band played at the Royal Festival Hall. I had suggested to John that our entire band should attend the concert. He agreed and I got 22 tickets. We sat on the second row and were blown away by the band. The dynamics on "Lil' Darlin", the overall sound of the band,. the great drive of the rhythm section, arrangements

by Neal Hefti, Basie's economical piano style, were all mind blowingly wonderful.

BONGO EXPERT DEPARTS - ENTER THOUP MAN

Frank Holder had been singing with the Dankworth team since the first days of the Seven in 1950. His high spot was a Latin American number in which he worked himself up into a frenzy playing bongos and singing whilst the brass section beat, scraped and shook Latin American instruments. In 1957 Frank decided to leave the band and strike out on his own. He was replaced by Bobby Breen, a slightly built man of Caribbean origin with a pronounced lisp when he spoke but, fortunately, not when he sang. He was hip and cool with his big brimmed hat and long coat.

Bobby carried a primus stove with him on tour in order to cook meals. I remember being out on a Scottish tour when we pulled in to Kirkcaldy main square. Bobby emerged from the coach, took a look around, and exclaimed, "Man this is the crazyeth theene I ever did thee. I'm gonna cook mythelf a thoup", as he disappeared back into the bus.

1958: HUNGARY ROCKS

On March 12th the Nottingham Evening Post ran an article by a Hungarian journalist on how the Eastern block countries were beginning to accept the hitherto Western decadent youth cults, Rock 'n' Roll and "Jive". Hungarians in particular were starting to latch on to the burgeoning dance craze. I quote: " Many middle aged men and women have become ardent patrons. In the evening some of them go to small taverns and restaurants in back streets or around railway stations to hear and dance Rock 'n' Roll. Others do the same in their shabby flats. The hot rhythm is more thrilling than our gypsy orchestras playing a czarda".

Accompanying the article was a photo of a young couple dancing to the previously regarded "decadent and deviationist" Rock 'n' Roll. The young lady was one Susan Chettle, now, since 1964, my dear wife. It was to be another four years before we met in London. Don't know who the chap was. Punchline: Our Son, Robert, married Hungarian Ibolya Nemeth on 7.7.07.in London. She was very amused when she read the long preserved article.

Dick Bock, the head of the American record company Pacific Jazz, made contact and arranged a meeting. This took place on a sunny Sunday afternoon whilst strolling over Hampstead Heath. John, Dick and I talked over the possibility of recording for the label and four tracks were made either at Abbey Rd or at Dennis Preston's Record Supervision studio in Holland Park.

George Martin, forever on the look for new opportunities suggested that we record an album of "My Fair Lady" songs. The show was a huge hit on Broadway and would soon open in London. Just one obstacle. The record could not be released until a specific date governed by the show's producers. In fact no recording could be played on the radio until the day of the original cast recording. We in the business had heard the songs and obtained clandestine recordings from friends working on transatlantic liners or aircraft. I remember tuning in my radio at midnight on the official release date and hearing the Andre Previn/Shelly Mann album. A joy. The stage version of MFL opened at Drury Lane theatre on April 29th 1958 and I was fortunate enough to see it within the first three months.

I was now off the road, except for very important engagements, with Dave Lee taking on the managerial responsibilities on tour.

John suggested we produce a quarterly magazine. He even came up with the appropriate name, Quarternotes (the publication, although in a different form, is still circulated today). I spoke to Harold Pendleton who was well connected with printers and he put me in touch with a small outfit on the top floor of an old property in Berwick St, Soho. The man in charge was Jack Higgins, he of the Buffalo Bill appearance at the Mapleton session back in 1952. Jack helped me in producing Quarternotes which had articles on the band members and jazz associated happenings written by anyone willing to contribute 500 words for free. Melody Maker journalists, publicists and members of the band were cajoled into penning a few words. Distribution was largely by way of sales on the band's engagements.

On Tuesday, March 17th John and Cleo were married in secret at Hampstead registry office. Best man was Pat Brand, the editor of Melody Maker. The only others present were Dave Lindup, Pat Smythe and John's old friend Ken Moule.

Cleo received an invitation to act in a play called *Flesh To A Tiger* at the Royal Court Theatre. This was a wholly new experience and very demanding as she would be on stage throughout the performance. It would also mean leaving the band. It was decided that this was the time for Cleo to start branching out in a solo career. She continued to do occasional gigs with the band but also accepted radio, TV and concert engagements as a solo artist. During the three week run of the play we had a weekly radio series which went out at 10-20pm Wednesday nights. Cleo was contracted to appear, so I picked her up in a cab from the theatre stage door, still in stage make up, as soon as the curtain came down and we sped swiftly to from Chelsea to Bond Street's Aeolian Hall in time for her first song at around 10-30pm. No pre recording in those days. The broadcasts were live.

Cleo got rave reviews for her stage performance. Laurence Olivier saw the play, went backstage and told her he hoped to have the pleasure of working with her one day. A compliment of the highest order.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

We were approached by a man with a French accent called Ron Rietti who said he could get the band some TV shows. We had little idea of who he was or his connections but we met several times and waited patiently for the engagements. They didn't happen.

I bumped into Ron one day in Shaftesbury Avenue. He borrowed a fiver from me and said that he had a French singer /guitarist who was looking for a break in the UK. He mentioned the name, Sasha Distel. I was up to my neck in other endeavours and passed up on this one. Ron was to pop us again a few years hence.

The Redferns were still living up above me but I did not know them apart from a passing hello on the stairs. One day I asked David where he worked and he mentioned Kodak. He told me he was a photographer. When I mentioned that I might have some work for him he enquired what I did. His eyes lit up. Apparently he was a great jazz fan and had seen some of the American bands when he was stationed in the army in Germany, When he told me he had met his girlfriend, Kate, in the queue at our Oxford St club I thought how uncanny that we should meet here at 15 Abbey Gardens. I was soon to give David his first photo assignments in the jazz world.

The Redferns eventually moved to Kilburn but we continued to work closely. David was at our Oxford St club on the Sunday night I kidnapped Dizzy Gillespie and he got photos of the event.

TRAGEDY

Two girls in their early twenties moved into the top floor flat. One was a pretty Glaswegian and the other although plain in appearance, was quite pleasant and sociable. Tragedy was to follow. About a year later when I was spending a lot of time in the Manchester area I visited my parents in Hoylake and during lunch picked up my Dad's Daily Express. Inside was a story about a Glaswegian girl who had been killed on a fairground ride in Blackpool. I recognised the photo as the pretty girl upstairs at Abbey Gardens. She had, somehow got caught in the mechanism and dragged into the machinery.

The following week I was back at the flat. I went upstairs to the empty rooms and found a solitary shoe belonging to that bubbly, ever smiling young girl.

BANDLEADERS UNITED

John was a member of the Music Directors Association, a group of bandleaders who met at quarterly intervals to thrash out disputes, primarily with the BBC. and the emerging ITA companies. John asked me to deputise for him at one such meeting held at the Dorchester Hotel. As I entered the room there were a dozen or so top bandleaders in Britain. Ted Heath, Joe Loss, Vic Lewis, Eric Winstone, etc etc. all names I had known from many years as a devoted radio listener. I was a little nervous. I explained that John couldn't make it due to a band engagement up North. They were all most courteous and as they proceeded down the agenda they would ask for a show of hands. The chairman (Sidney Lipton, I think) asked me if I thought John would approve. I gave the right answers and eventually departed after handshakes and a promise to give their regards to John and Cleo. The coffee was particularly good.

A young chap by the name of Len Black entered our orbit. He was from Newcastle and got a job in Denmark St with a publishing company. He had no permanent address in London and I offered him a spare bed at the flat providing Les Williams had no objection. The princely rent of £3 a week was now split three ways. Len had a fund of jokes and was a very amiable flat mate.

Ernie Garside was a young jazz fan based in the Manchester area. He made occasional forays to London and I gave a bed for the night if Les was away visiting family in Wales. Ernie was to provide the motivation for my departure from the Dankworth domain.

THE FESTIVE SEASON

In the Summer of '58 rumours circulated that a jazz film was attracting long queues at a small cinema in Regent St We went to investigate and discovered the now legendary "Jazz On A Summers' Day", a documentary woven around the Newport Jazz Festival in the USA. Naturally we all went to see the movie. When I say all I mean the entire London jazz fraternity. I have the DVD and still marvel at the glorious combination of the coastal location with boats sailing round the Newport area, and the tennis courts which were annually converted in to the world's most famous jazz festival. The plethora of jazz stars, the economy of Willis Conover's announcements. The unique style of Anita O'Day's take on "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "Tea For Two" wearing an outsize hat. Jimmy Guiffre's "The Train And The River" with Bob Brookmeyer on valve trombone. and Louis Armstrong's great band.

BOUNCING AT BEAULIEU

On August 2nd the Dankworth band played the Beaulieu Jazz Festival, a British replica of Newport. This annual venture had actually kicked off on a small scale in 1956 at the instigation of Peter Burman and jazz loving member of the aristocracy, Lord Edward Montagu. By 1958 the event had grown and was attracting major artists and crowds of several thousand. The centrepiece of the festival was a fairground roundabout built into the stage. I was roped in to five of the festivals as stage manager, press officer or just general helper. As with Newport the joy of a beautiful location set near the Hampshire coast and some rattling good jazz was a delight. The London jazz fraternity journeyed down to his Lordship's place to gaze round the famous motor museum in the morning and enjoy the music the rest of the day, with picnics and camping on the lawn.

In late Summer of 58 Ernie Garside phoned to say he had found an unused ballroom which could be hired for twenty pounds a week. It was in a suburb of Stockport just a few miles from central Manchester. How did I feel about a joint venture promoting jazz in this venue?

I had several discussions with Ernie and visited the Empress Ballroom (with adjacent cinema). Was this the passport to satisfying the entrepreneurial spirit? There would be a mountain of work to be done. The ballroom had remained unused for several years. There was no stage and the walls were sadly in need of a lick of paint. The room was actually on the circle floor of the cinema. The building was a mile or so from Stockport town centre. There were obvious risks. I made the decision to strike out in a new direction. I was 26, single with no ties and the energy of a two year old. I really needed the energy of a 26 year old. I knew I would be forgoing a trip with the band to the USA, but the Stockport deal was now and I had to make the move.

I phoned John. I remember it being a Sunday afternoon and he was now living with Cleo at a flat in Kilburn High Rd about a mile away from Abbey Gardens. I said I would like to talk to him and probably sensing my reason, he said he would come round. I made coffee and he arrived. I told him about Ernie's proposition and that I had given it much thought and visited the premises and wanted to make the move. He was very complimentary and offered to maintain contact. There would be opportunities to work on some ideas. He said that if we were about to run a ballroom I would need a typewriter and a band for the opening night. How about his band at absolute cost price? I asked how much this would be and he simply answered, "You work it out". I knew that the profit we would make on that first night would allow Ernie and me to pay for the stage we built and additional lighting, plus some living expenses for a few weeks. That first night we had to get the bouncers to stop admission at 8pm We were bursting at the seams.

1959: ON MY OWN

I decided to keep the flat. I had no intention of living in Stockport. Two or three days a week should be enough and Ernie could handle the rest. With Les Williams and Len Black maintaining our tenancy I knew I could keep my London contacts.

I put the word about that I was running a ballroom in Stockport and would like any famous folk to record a message to our fans, which could be played to promote any recording they may have on the market. First up was the American act, the Kalin Twins, who were riding high in the charts. "Hi all you folks at the Empress in Stockport, this is the Kalin Twins and we are really pleased to be sending you this

message et etc". On my next trip to the ballroom we set up the twins' recording. I announced the special message and we played the tape followed by their record. The hundred or so youngsters seemed ambivalent. I asked what the problem was and it transpired they thought was all a con. They did not believe this big American act would have recorded a special message just for them. You can't win.

I got Jim Dale, the popular singer/entertainer, well known for his appearances on "Six Five Special" TV show, to guest at the ballroom. I travelled up to Stockport with him and we swapped show biz anecdotes. The policy we evolved was jazz on Sunday nights, Monday-disco, closed Tuesday and Thursdays. Ballroom dancing to a ten piece live band Wednesday and Saturdays. We changed this format as we gained experience but the venture ran quite successfully for about a year. We decided to terminate our collaboration with three band engagements in Nottingham. I asked Jack Barnes to get me the best terms for the bands, of Ted Heath, Vic Lewis and Andre Rico (a cha-cha band proving very popular at the time). Promoting the Heath band at the Astoria was a highly successful event-wall to wall people and working on a percentage of the door taking I was able to give Ted a particularly handsome fee. What a joy to be "employing" this wonderful band I had revered for many years. The other two promotions at the Palais did not prove so successful.

I was now back in London full time and searching for opportunities. The Dankworth band had toured the USA, played Newport Jazz Festival and offered a lift from New York to Newport to Dizzy Gillespie. Of course, I was jealous at missing the trip but I was now my own man and I stood or fell on my own decisions. Some worked- others did not.

Les Williams said he had seen Matt Monro who was out of work having been with the BBC Show Band which the BBC had dropped. I met Matt and offered to help. I made countless phone calls to no avail. Nobody wanted to give Matt any work. Dave Lee told me that there was a revue being rehearsed at the Lyric theatre, Hammersmith. I contacted the producer and at his invitation took Matt along to run through some songs. The guy took me aside and shook his head. The seven piece cast had to wear tights and Matt, to be fair, was a little over weight.

Someone suggested I phone a night club in Streatham. They booked singers and were sure to be interested in Matt who was quite well known through radio broadcasts. I phoned the less than enthusiastic

owner who said we could come round and Matt could go through a couple of songs if we wanted. It was a wet Tuesday afternoon when we showed up at the club. The house pianist had been brought in but the owner busied himself with the bar accessories and paid little attention to the two standards Matt sang beautifully. I wandered over to the bar. "Well, are you going to offer Matt a week's engagement?" "No", came the reply. "Let's face it. He's a little fat guy and just a second rate Frank Sinatra". I was furious and told the man he would eat his words. We left. In almost desperation I telephoned George Martin. At that time George was one of four A&R men at the Manchester Square offices of EMI. His colleagues had big name singers on their books. George had the Goons. He said he would see what he could do to help Matt whose work he knew and admired. He phoned back the following day and said he had just completed an album with Peter Sellers and there was space for a three minute song on the tail end. Would Matt be interested? You bet he would. Somehow things went haywire and although Matt made an excellent recording of "Love Walked In " with the Johnny Spence orchestra, the label credited him as Fred Flange. I believe Sellers objected to Matt's name being used on this otherwise comedy LP. The fee paid Matt's rent for a week or two and as I was busy with other ventures we shook hands and went our separate ways. A year later Matt had a hit with "Portrait Of My Love" and then "Born Free" written by one time song plugger Don Black and Barry Prendergast (John Barry). That's show biz!

BACK TO BEAULIEU

August Bank Holiday and another Beaulieu. This time I was to deal with press relations. I still didn't have any real ideal about my future but it was very evident that the traditional jazz scene was expanding, although there existed a very distinct chasm between the aficionados of traditional and modern jazz.

George Webb was the Father of British Traditional Jazz Revivalism in the late 40s. Back then the image of Traddies was corduroys, knitted sweaters, banjos and endless discussions on the minute attributes of recorded solos by their New Orleans masters all enjoyed in the smoky atmosphere of the back rooms of pubs. It was a strictly non profit making hobby.

In The fifties the bands of Chris Barber and Humphrey Lyttelton had big hits with "Petite Fleur" and "Bad Penny Blues" respectively. The mere

idea of actually making money out of jazz was anathema to the purists. Humph's move into mainstream jazz caused some consternation. It was Humph's band which had been barracked in a 1957 concert in Birmingham when clarinettist Bruce Turner suddenly produced an alto saxophone. to shouts of "Go home dirty bopper".

Ken Colyer and a handful of authentic New Orleans bands stuck rigidly to the musical style of their mentors. Others ventured into a slightly more commercial repertoire.

With the arrival of Rock and Roll in the mid fifties, coupled with a rebellious youth cult anxious to have its own lifestyle, college students adopted Trad as the good time music to dance away the night. A standard uniform prevailed. Teenage girls borrowed their father's shirts (worn outside the jeans that were just becoming fashionable) and bowler hats.

As the college circuit bookings proliferated so did the number of bands. By 1959 there were some 15 Or 20 professional Trad bands regularly working four nights a week in colleges, ballrooms and clubs set up by a growing army of amateur promoters who toured the country in search of any premises with a dancing licence. There were feuds in which the leading agents had to mediate. Lyn Dutton had most of the top trad bands under his aegis until 1961 when the mighty Harold Davison agency, hitherto a big band booking office, started to take an interest in the Trad boom and enticed Chris Barber and Terry Lightfoot (via me) to change agents. The die-hards were apoplectic.

FOO KINNELL-WHAT'S IN A NICKNAME?

There were about a dozen trad bands that went fully professional In Nottingham Bill Kinnell was running trad sessions at the Test Match whilst, just up the road, Ken Allsop promoted trad jazz at the Trent Bridge Inn. Bill later moved to the Dancing Slipper. All three venues in the West Bridgford area. My dear wife to be, Susan Chettle, was social secretary of the students union at Notts. & District Technical College and booked many bands including the Alex Welsh band. Susan became great friends with members of the Welsh and Chris Barber bands who she had met at the Test Match sessions. Ex Barber banjo player Lonnie Donegan played variety at the Empire theatre. Donegan introduced Susan to a young new comedian called Des O'Connor who he worked in to his variety act. Paths cross as we shall see.

Susan helped out on Saturday mornings at Bill's jazz record shop. Despite being a jazz store such was the demand for "Mary's Boy Child" by Harry Belafonte that it became Bill's all time best selling record.

I first came into contact with Bill through my involvement with the trad scene. Bill had sustained an arm injury in a motor cycle accident in his home town of Bournemouth, This left him with one useless arm. His secretary drove him to gigs and sometimes to London to do the rounds of agents. He had visited Jack Higgins at the Davison office to book some of the trad bands they now represented. Jack phoned to say Bill was on his way round to pick up some publicity material on the Lightfoot band.

This was our first meeting and I found him a very agreeable man with a first class knowledge of jazz history unlike so many promoters who had jumped on the proverbial bandwagon with little or no interest in the music.

It was only when I met Susan that the link became clear. Bill Kinnell, Ian Dove, Susan Chettle- all from Nottingham and here we were discussing the Lightfoot band and others playing at Bill's venue, the Dancing Slipper (known to Humphrey Lyttleton as The Golden Gumboot).

At Bill's Dancing Slipper sessions Alan Gilmore, a technical engineer set up his recording equipment and some wonderful jazz was committed to tape over the years. Many have been released commercially and I have an LP of Tubby Hayes, Britain's world class tenor sax player, on a particularly memorable night in the late fifties.

Bill did well out of promoting jazz and later rhythm and blues. He ran sessions in neighbouring towns and eventually opened a drinks club, the Gallery, in a Nottingham suburb. This was not such a good idea. Bill liked a drink and the temptation of owning his own bar was to lead to his downfall coupled with the economics of the business. We were living in Salford but made frequent forays to Nottingham staying with Susan's parents.

The Gallery closed and Bill ceased promoting. He moved to London and for a time was taken in by Ian Dove. He then moved into a flat in Hampstead with Don Aldridge who had been on the jazz scene in

various capacities for some years. Bill grudgingly took a job as car park manager at Selfridges where one of his chores was to keep an eye on Chris Wright's Rolls. Whilst there, and at the height of IRA activity, Bill spotted a parcel, picked it up and removed it to a safe place before calling the place. It was a bomb. No one was hurt.

Bill started Sunday lunchtime sessions at a pub on Euston Rd He engaged John Chilton, trumpet player and jazz author, to put a band together. George Melly came along and that, so I am told, was the beginning of Melly's long association with John Chilton's Feetwarmers.

Bill came to visit us at Salford and, of course Nottingham after our move there in 1973. A chance to meet up with fans and musicians from the Slipper days. He and Don Aldridge, for reason I'll never know, moved to Haverhill in Suffolk in the seventies and Bill died there in 1985.

Speak to almost anyone who lived in Nottingham in the fifties and sixties and they are quite likely to recount anecdotes of their misbegotten youth evenings spent at the Trent Bridge Inn or the Slipper. Some of America's finest jazz musicians played at those venues. Today the Slipper is a café.

JAZZ ON ANOTHER SUMMER'S DAY

I had taken David Redfern and his girlfriend to Beaulieu intent on getting some good photos of the proceedings. They slept in a tent whilst I had a posh hotel in Brockenhurst. They got terrible colds. but some fine shots of the Dankworth and other bands were obtained and this started David off on a career which is now part of jazz history. I named him Master Of The Jazz Camera.

Whilst at Beaulieu I met up with Colin Hogg, one time manager of the Ted Heath band but now working with Lyn Dutton's Agency handling Chris Barber, Alex Welsh and a half dozen other trad bands. Colin said Terry Lightfoot was looking for a manager. Now the implications were fraught with problems. The idea of a manager crossing over from handling the modern Dankworth band to a traditional jazz band would be frowned on by the diehard traddies. Any attempt to commercialise the sacred idiom would be met with derision. When two years later and managing half a dozen trad bands and about the same number of weekly trad jazz sessions, I casually showed off my second hand Ford

Consul to a trad journalist he ran an item in his column saying that I had ADMITTED buying a car out of the money I had made out of trad jazz. How dare I? Was I supposed to live in abject poverty in keeping with the trad jazz lifestyle?

I met Terry and we struck a deal which was unusual. Manager's normally worked exclusively for bandleaders. However I told Terry that the trad scene was going to get bigger and bigger. I could help him but not exclusively. I would take on other bands, handle their publicity, promote jazz sessions and so on He didn't like the idea but it worked reasonably well for four years when the mini trad scene subsided as the Beatles and their ilk took over.

I was approached by a minor agency run by a Soho club owner with absolutely no knowledge of jazz or agency protocol (he had a trad band on his books with a "contract" that simply said, "Dear Jim, I hereby sign up with you. Yours truly,.....")and relied on a girl who had a modicum of booking knowledge, one Ruby Bard to whom everyone was "My mate", even Lew Grade. This agency had an office suite in a very prestigious address, Princess Arcade, Piccadilly (the back door was on Jermyn St). A deal was struck for me to have a room in return for handing PR for two of their newly acquired trad bands. The address looked good on my business cards and stationery. With no rent I had one of the best addresses in London.

Squeezed into a tiny office on the fourth floor I discovered Vic Lewis was running an agency. He offered to do a swap. My large office on the ground floor for his fourth floor office for a fiver a week. It seemed like a bad deal but I would be more secluded and free from constant intrusions by musicians popping in for a free coffee with their wives when on a shopping trip from the suburbs.

On the domestic front Pat Pretty found a flat in a block just across Abbey Rd and suggested that she, Les Williams and I move in. It was certainly better than the tatty 15 Abbey Gardens. We only stayed a few months, when again, Pat announced that a house in Abercorn Place was being converted into flats and she had her name down for one. Would I like to share with her? Strictly platonic, you understand. Les had taken up with a girl and wanted to move in with her so Pat and I took on the new top floor flat at 1 Abercorn Place. "West Side Story" was all the rage and I took some ribbing from friends and colleagues about the flat sharing with Pat. I got frequent choruses of "I Feel Pretty"

as I entered our favourite Soho hostelrys. I recall that James Blades, percussionist with the London Symphony Orchestra, lived on the ground floor.

Pat left ATV and got a job as PA at the Vic Lewis Agency.(how many more coincidences will he come up with?) Vic had a band which played music associated with Stan Kenton. I once popped down to pay him my £5 rent and spent an hour with Pat and Johnny Mathis whom Vic had booked for a British tour. Songwriter and ex song plugger, Don Black also joined Vic's organisation.

I soon set about getting the Lightfoot band organised. They wore drab grey, unpressed suits on stage. Their publicity photo was dreadful, and there were no press releases., sparse information about the venues they were booked in to and a general amateurish approach to their business.

I arranged a photo session at a leading studio. On our arrival a young Cliff Richard was just leaving and chatted. John Pannifer was a tailor with the Jackson group and had kitted out the Heath band. I gave him the brief to make Terry's band look smart. Nice grey suits, white shirts and blue dickie bow ties with black polished shoes were now the order of the day on concerts and at the better venues. They could wear what they wanted on pub gigs.

Press releases went out from my office to newspapers and magazines in towns they were to play. Records made at Dennis Preston's Record Supervision studios and released on EMI's Parlophone label were heavily publicised. Paddy Lightfoot, Terry's brother and banjo player with the band. wrote a tune called, "The Old Pull And Push" about a goods engine. I set up a publicity photo session at Campden Town goods yard and got David Redfern along. We found the oldest engine in the yard, borrowed a train driver's hat and put Terry on the footplate, clarinet in hand. This sort of thing was frowned on by the trad cognoscenti. Blatant commercialism.

Jack Higgins had joined the Davison office having persuaded Harold that trad was the next big thing. We described the scene as a mini boom. Nothing compared with rock and pop today but there were trad festivals, all- nighters and river boat shuffles that attracted very good crowds.

CHAPTER FIVE

1960: THE SWINGING SIXTIES

A chap I knew vaguely phoned me from Norwich. He knew the trad scene and realised that most towns had a name band venue. There was nothing happening in Norwich except a local band in a pub. I told him to hold fire until I contacted him again within a few days and not to discuss this conversation with anyone. The trad jazz promoters were primed waiting to charge off to any town at the first sniff of a possible venue suitable for putting on one night a week trad sessions. The following Saturday I caught a train to Norwich, and after a leisurely meal headed for the famous Sampson and Hercules ballroom where the resident band was playing to a packed house. The time was 8pm. I left and walked slowly down the road to the Empress ballroom (why were so many using this name-no imagination). Even from outside I could tell by the echo the place was half empty. No wonder, the music was strictly old time. I went in and saw about twenty couples valetaing round the floor to records

I asked for the manager, told him I would like to hire the room for Saturday night jazz sessions. I thought he would consider this a likely desecration of his premises but he was quite definitely interested.. After some haggling and an explanation of what trad was all about we struck a deal -£20 a night rent, and we also got the cloakroom takings!

We signed a letter of approval and I caught a train back to London. I phoned my Norwich contact the next day and suggested we go 50/50 on the promotions accepting that I may not be able to be at every session. He was happy with this and on the Monday I called Jack Higgins and told him to book me the first six Saturdays with the best bands available. Within hours Jack had lined up Chris Barber, Acker Bilk, Terry Lightfoot (surprise, surprise), and Kenny Ball. He suggested we open with the Sandy Brown-Al Fairweather band, a fine Chicago style band not in the top league but nevertheless we could get them for £25 guarantee against 50%of the door takings. If the venture was a flop on the first night we would only be committed to a band fee of £25. In the event the attendance was 1600 happy jivers. We made an extra ten pounds on the cloakroom, and Al and Sandy took home £140. more than they had ever seen. They would have been happy with 50 quid. I signed the contract for the rest of the bands Higgins had negotiated.

Word got around that I had made a fortune. Me -the cheeky chappy who had crossed over Oxford St from the Dankworth modern jazz club to 100 Oxford St.-the home of trad jazz then trading as Jazzshows. Jealousy is a terrible thing.

I went out on tour with Terry's band when they accompanied the legendary trombonist Kid Ory, who, then in his eighties, had been in New Orleans at the very birth of jazz. With him came another great from the New Orleans school but who somehow sounded quite modern-trumpeter Henry Red Allen.

Robert Masters had a daytime job as an accountant but played trumpet with Dick Charlesworth's City Gents- a trad band bedecked in city business mens' attire with bowler hats. They had played Norwich for us and Robert had noted, with his accountants eye, the profitability of this venture. He phoned and offered to traipse round the country looking for more venues which we could run together. I agreed and he discovered a severe shortage of big name trad bands playing Plymouth and Exeter. We could take a band for two consecutive nights at an advantageous fee.

Ernie Garside managed a venue for us we had discovered in Huddersfield and we found another one in Blackburn. Soon we were running five sessions a week plus my handling the PR or management of six trad bands. I bought that second hand Ford Consul. A chap who designed very futuristic posters came to see me. I showed one to Terry Lightfoot and we placed an order for a couple of hundred. When my other bands saw the posters they all wanted something similar.

I calculated that there were around sixty provincial newspapers carry weekly jazz columns. I circulated all the leading trad bands offering a weekly press service. I could guarantee their news item would be mailed to my increasingly long list of publications with jazz columns for the princely sum of £5 per week.

1961: TOO BUSY TO NOTICE

In mid 1961, I visited my family in Hoylake. I looked in at the Cavern and bought owner Ray Mcfall a pint at the pub round the corner. He asked when I was returning to London and I told him first thing Monday

morning. "Stop over until lunchtime and pop in and see this new beat group we put on from 12 to 2pm They are terrific and you can't get in for wall to wall office girls".

I told Ray I had to get back to London and I really wasn't interested in beat groups O. K I have been plagued with comments about how I am supposed to have missed the Beatles but had I seen them I would probably have walked away. With a handful of tradjazz bands and various ancillary work I really wasn't the slightest bit interested in pop music..

BEATLED

It must have been shortly after I visited the Cavern and told owner, Ray Mcfall, that I couldn't accept his invitation to stop over and see the "beat group" that was attracting so much attention amongst the office girls of Liverpool, that a certain Brian Epstein caught their act.

Epstein worked for his father in the family furniture stores, NEMS. Brian ran the record department and one day in July '61 Billy Harry, who edited the new publication "Merseybeat", dropped in and asked if he could leave a dozen or so copies of the paper. They were eagerly snapped up by fans who dropped in to listen to the latest beat records and Epstein asked Harry for 144 copies which also quickly disappeared. Brian started to take an interest in the burgeoning Liverpool beat scene. He heard about the Beatles and dropped in to a Cavern lunchtime session on Nov 9th 1961 He met DJ Bob Wooler and owner Ray McFall. Young Priscilla White was in charge of the cloakroom. She was later to morph into Cilla Black.

Brian signed the Beatles to a management contract and produced a demo disc. This was sent to EMI and it is chronicled that Ron White, head of EMI, wrote to Brian Epstein on Monday Dec 18th 1961 saying that EMI would not be interested in signing the group. The demo had been passed round several of the company's Artist & Repertoire managers and none had expressed any interest. George Martin was on holiday at that time.

Pye Records also turned down the group and a test session was set up with Decca where A&R man Dick Rowe rejected the group on the grounds that 'guitar groups are on their way out. The demand is for girl singers'.

Frustrated and furious at the offhand treatment he received Epstein had another go at EMI this time contacting George Martin who ran the Parlophone label – a miscellaneous corner of the giant EMI group with such artists as the Goons, Flanders & Swan Etc. Martin, of course, had produced records by the Dankworth band in the fifties.

Apparently Epstein was so annoyed at the manner in which responsible people at record companies ignored the obvious talents of the Fab Four that he threatened to boycott EMI records at the several record store then owned by NEMS George Martin offered the lads a couple of days at the Abbey Rd studios to see what they could do but made no promises. The rest is history.

The Beatles first recording contract awarded them the princely sum of 1p per single-half that on overseas sales. The Rolling Stones, then with Decca were earning bigger royalties from fewer sales and a £3million advance.

Epstein negotiated a publishing deal with Dick James which was detrimental to the Beatles' interests.

Brian Epstein died of an overdose on August 25th 1967. He was 35. This ambivalent attitude of recording managers and publishers has affected them dearly but human nature and judgement influence decision making. The old adage that “you win some-you lose some” comes to mind.

I remember in 1967 I sent a demo of Family to EMI. It landed on the desk of a new A&R man, a mature ex dance band leader. He called me to say he was very excited about the group. He had the perfect song for them so I went to see him. He played the song and after eight bars I told him it was completely wrong for Family-an R&B group. His song sounded just like the poppish Hollies. He simply couldn't understand.
BOOM BOOM

By now jazz club promoters were falling out due to bands playing gigs too near another venue running trad nights. Clashes occurred and some bookers placed bands within a short geographical range of a date they played three weeks earlier. The promoters got together and formed the Jazz Club Promoters Association. Since I was both a jazz club promoter and manager of several bands I was in a precarious position but somehow got elected Secretary of the group. A ten mile, three week

barring clause was inserted into contracts for engagements and peace reigned for a while.

Humphrey Lyttleton had a big hit with "Bad Penny Blues" in 1956. Chris Barber's clarinettist, Monty Sunshine had a winner with "Petty Fleur" and Lonnie Donegan had been so successful that he left his position of banjo player with the Barber band to go solo and play variety theatres. All this out of traditional or mainstream jazz. So it came to pass that Acker Bilk, with an excellent publicity backup by Peter Leslie who worked with Dennis Preston at Record Supervision, wrote a simple little piece called "Stranger On The Shore". Acker's band were bedecked in fancy clothes with striped waistcoats and bowler hats. The record of "Stranger On the Shore" stayed at no1 in the charts for weeks on end. Kenny Ball recorded "Samantha" and "Midnight In Moscow" and hit the charts with both. I tried hard to find material that might take Terry's band into that position but failed. Nevertheless the Lightfoot band was right behind the three Bs in earning power.

Alan Sytner, of the Nottingham family who ran a major luxury car concession in Nottingham, owned the Cavern in 1960. and I would pop along to the Matthew St cellar and take him round to the pub for a pint and discuss future booking for the bands. That situation prevailed even after Alan sold the club in 1961 to Ray McFall.

I was asked to write columns on the trad scene in Harold Pendleton's bi-weekly newspaper Jazz Circle and the weekly Record Mirror. The workload was such that I eventually had both these columns ghosted but ensured that I got plenty of plugs for my bands.

Ian Dove was a Nottingham journalist who landed in London around about 1958. He worked on the Record Mirror and later helped set up Music Week, a trade journal for the music business. Their offices were those vacated a few years earlier by Harold Davison - 116 Shaftesbury Avenue. Harold's agency moved to a posher address in Lower Regent St when the American bands started to come here in 1956. He also bought a flash American car, I recall. It was through Ian that I met Susan in 1962. We married in 1964. More anon.

The other ghost writer was Peter Clayton who had edited Jazz Circle and was now freelance. Peter eventually became the presenter for a BBC radio 2 Jazz programme.

Jack Higgins phoned, Did I know any black trad jazz musicians in London? No I didn't. Jack was desperate. I asked what the gig was. Some big do at the Albert Hall in a week's time and they needed a black New Orleans marching band. We did some brain wracking and came up with six possibles at least three of whom played only modern jazz. So long as they could play "When The Saints Go Marching In" several times over, that should suffice.

A week passed by and Jack came round to my office around six pm as usual. It was our custom to go for a pint, discuss the day's activities and gossip, go for a meal and on to a jazz venue preferably where one of our bands was performing. So where are we going? Jack remembered that this was the night of the Albert Hall bash. Maybe we ought to look in. Little did we realise the scale of what was about to unfold.

We took a cab to the Albert Hall and headed for the stage door, asked for the representative from the Harold Holt Agency (THE classical booking people) and were shown to a box. The place was packed with ICI staff. This was their annual do. The lights dimmed and on came the band of the Brigade of Guards, about a hundred of them. As they marched off through the auditorium on came members of the London Symphony Orchestra, about 75 of them. They were followed by a full ballet company and a contingent from Covent Garden Opera. clowns. jugglers. tumblers, circus animals (long before they were banned). A distinguished opera singer, (so distinguished I have forgotten her name), sang an aria or two. Eventually, on trooped our jazz band in true New Orleans style playing The Saints and wearing

straw hats with their DJs. Joe Harriott, a Charlie Parker disciple, looked somewhat out of place but nobody noticed. The whole event lasted over three hours. The following evening it was back to a pint, a bite to eat and round to 100 Oxford St to nod our hellos and straight through to the rear door, out into Newman St and into the Blue Posts for the rest of the evening swapping stories with other managers, musicians, agents and the like. This, you understand, was before I met Susan.

LUTON HOOT

The Lightfoot band was booked for a Tory party fund- raising engagement at Luton Hoo, a stately home. Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, was to attend and make an important speech. I contacted David Redfern and asked if he fancied a scoop. He was game and I

primed Terry that at some point during the evening I would grab him and thrust him into the company of the PM so hands could be shaken and photos taken. David and I would then speed down to Fleet St and give the historic photo to the first Sunday newspaper that would take it to run in conjunction with the PM's speech.

Terry was in the midst of a vocal item with his band when, across a crowded room, I just made out the sight of a group of distinguished looking folk. This had to be the PM's party. I signalled to Terry and as he sang the last note I yanked him off the stage and across the dance floor and straight into the PM's presence. "Sir, this is bandleader Terry Lightfoot who is providing the music for tonight's event". Hands were shaken as the PM mumbled something about being delighted to meet...etc. Redfern took his snaps and we all relaxed for thirty seconds before I bade Terry goodbye and headed for Fleet St We opted for the Sunday Pictorial (today's Sunday Mirror). I asked for the picture editor who came swiftly to see us having heard that we had a shot of the PM at the Tory bash. He took away the negatives and we nervously awaited his return. Yes, he might well be able to use the best photo. David and I went home anticipating a scoop.

When the paper hit the local newsagents we anxiously flicked through every page. On the back page was a photograph of a child on a donkey taken at Luton Hoo, "Where the PM had made an important speech. Etc etc" The bastards..

I imagine David still has his photos of that event buried in his files under "Prime Ministers I have photographed".

Yuri Gagarin, the Russian cosmonaut, caused the cancellation of a prestige gig

The Lightfoot band's date sheet in one particular week was pretty mundane. Four jazz clubs in the greater London area. Friday, Windsor, Sunday, Wood Green. I forget the Saturday venue but wherever it was I had to cancel it when the Davison office called to say there was a very well paid gig in a bullring in Malaga, Spain. I made the flight arrangements which involved a plane change at Madrid.

The band and I checked in on time at Heathrow but the Russian cosmonaut was about to return to Moscow after a visit to London. His flight was delayed causing ours to leave three hours late. We missed our connection in Madrid and, despite helpful airline staff, there was no

way we were going to be able to get to Malaga on this Saturday evening. Plane, train, car were all totally out of the question. I phoned the organiser of the event in Malaga. She commiserated and we spent a pleasant Saturday evening in Madrid flying back to London Sunday morning. In the event the band was paid for their attempt to make the engagement.

There was a short tour of American Air force bases around Berlin and I went along for the ride. This was the height of the cold war and we were shown the eerie Checkpoint Charlie, the only entrance and exit linking East and West Berlin.

A few weeks before the Berlin trip the band and I were aboard a ferry boat on one of the popular river boat shuffles from London Bridge to Southend. There were around six bands playing during the trip. The bar was open and the youngsters were jiving on this warm summer's day. At Southend we were met, unexpectedly, by a chap who invited us up to his home for an alfresco meal and a chance to relax before the return trip to London. Transport was laid on and we spent a pleasant few hours reclining on the sumptuous lawn of this obviously wealthy business man.

Back to the Berlin story and on the Sunday morning I had picked up some English newspapers and was sat in the hotel lounge when I heard a very English voice say, "Anything in the Sunday Times, old boy?". The voice belonged to our Southend host. Small world.

Back to Beaulieu in '61 this time to potter about managing the stage and getting the bands on time. David was there of course and got stunning photos of Anita O'Day doing her "Jazz On A Summer's Day" act complete with big hat. She headlined the last night of the three day event which attracted some 6,000 fans. Nothing compared with Glastonbury, but a record in those days. The BBC TV news carried clips of the Friday night programme which helped boost Saturday and Sunday attendances.

I introduced diehard trad bandleader Ken Colyer, who adhered strictly to original New Orleans format to Edward Montagu. Ken's embarrassed response was hesitant not being familiar with members of the aristocracy he could only utter, "Howdy do, yer lord".

Shortly after the '61 Beaulieu bash John Dankworth called me to ask if I would like to set up a short tour for the band and Anita O'Day. Naturally I said yes and went round to the Denmark St office to discuss details. The band had recently taken on board a new pianist who I had heard when the band played a Sunday night gig at the Marquee club. The chap was a fine pianist and injected some humour into his performance singing in a high register as he played.

When I arrived at John's office there was this short, youngish pianist. John did the introductions,. "Don, meet Dudley Moore". We shook hands and I mentioned that I had seen him at the Marquee club and greatly enjoyed his playing. He had not long come down from Cambridge. John told me that Dudley was a bit broke and would welcome any gigs I might be able to get him. Naturally I said would do my best, but I didn't have to. His career took off in several directions. History in the making.

Ron Rietti called. Remember him several pages back? Why didn't we make a British documentary in the manner of Jazz On A Summers Day but at the next Beaulieu jazz festival? I talked it over with Jack Higgins. I phoned Edward Montagu and we arranged to meet at Beaulieu to discuss the project. All went well and bands were approached. Everyone was eager to be part of a movie. There was just one fly in the ointment. Rietti's film people stated that no other film crews should be present when they were filming. Edward Montagu insisted that the BBC unit had to be present on the Friday night. This was essential to guarantee a full attendance on the following two days. The problem was intractable and negotiations collapsed just 24 hours before the Festival commenced. The project had to be abandoned.

At the '62 festival some local hooligans caused trouble. The villagers were non too pleased about the noise and general upheaval. In deference to them Lord Montagu announced that this would be the last jazz festival at his stately home. Sad. Even sadder is the fact that, to my knowledge no recordings were made at any of the festivals. I had frequently campaigned for live recordings but recording companies preferred the facilities of a studio.

1962: ANOTHER MOVE

The Pigalle night club was situated in the basement of Princes Arcade where I had my office. I spotted posters announcing two three weeks engagements of Sammy Davis Junior and Peggy Lee respectively. I

decided to take Terry and his wife along to one of these performances. They opted for the Sammy Davis show. And what a show. He was on stage for two solid hours. Terry rarely stepped out of the jazz scene but I think he and his wife really enjoyed seeing one of the world's great entertainers.

GLASGOW GIG

Early in 1962 there was a phone call from a fan in Glasgow saying that he wanted to come down and to London to see me about a huge proposition. He came and said he represented a restaurant owner who was loaded and wanted to put on a concert at Ibrox Park with Louis Armstrong and his band. Of course-would that be for just one night or seven? (standard joke). Whilst he was in my office I phoned Jack Higgins at the Davison office, told him the story and he asked me to hold on whilst he spoke to Harold. Back on the line Jack said it might just be feasible since the Armstrong band wanted a European tour and Glasgow might be one leg. My fan was ecstatic and phoned his mate in Glasgow. Jack and I would fly up the following week to meet this unknown promoter and check his financial viability.

We flew to Glasgow and were dismayed to find that the restaurant was, in fact, a pretty down- market caff. However the deal was discussed on the basis of money up front and a tentative date was fixed. The event did actually take place. The name of the promoter? Reo Stakis who became one of Britain's leading hoteliers.

DREAM MEETING

My dear wife Susan claims that we met in the winter of 1962. She had been on a couple of dates with tenor saxophone player Tony Coe. A marvellous musician.

I visited Ian Dove at the Record Mirror. Ian was being paid handsomely (£5 a throw) for ghost writing my column in that bi-weekly publication and naturally he felt obliged to give my bands a liberal sprinkling of mentions. I met him in his office and said hi to Benny Green who was writing for the RM. Benny became a well known broadcaster, critic and collaborator with John Dankworth on a couple of musicals.

The door opened and in stepped this very attractive, slim young lady with her hair in a bun and a big smile. Ian Dove did the introductions.

“Susan Chettle-Don Read.” I leapt in with both feet on learning of her interest in jazz and link with Bill Kinnell. I suggested that rather than discuss matters in this crowded office atmosphere, we should have a candlelight dinner. She didn’t keep the first date preferring the company of Tony Coe, apparently. However she phoned and we met. What started then has lasted over 45 years, produced three wonderful children and(at the time of writing), five terrific grandchildren.

Susan had worked part time in Bill Kinnell’s Nottingham record shop. Ian had been a reporter on the Nottingham Evening Post and taken Susan to see a stage show he had to review starring new US rock and roll group Buddy Holly and the Crickets. Shame on him! The programme, which Susan still has, notes one of the supporting acts-a new young comedian, ex-Butlin redcoat and, “possessor of a very pleasant voice”, Des O’Connor. He keeps popping up as you will see.

Dennis Preston phoned me to ask if I could help Elaine Delmar who had recorded for him. I recalled seeing her in that Golders Green club years earlier. She was now creating quite a name for herself on jazz gigs, concerts and broadcasts. She had also appeared in a couple of West End shows.

I accompanied Elaine on a cruise from Harwich to Amsterdam. On board were Rolf Harris and his wife and Don Black. Elaine and Rolf were the cabaret on the return journey.

STRINGS ATTACHED

In the summer of '62 Elaine was rehearsing for a part she had in the musical “No Strings” at Her Majesty’s Theatre in the Haymarket. She called me and as my office back door in Jermyn St was but two hundred yards away why didn’t I drop round to the theatre and catch her running through some songs for the show? I entered the empty auditorium and sat somewhere in the stalls, a solitary figure. Elaine was on stage. Suddenly I became aware of someone walking along the row behind me. I half turned and spotted a bald, short man in his late fifties, I would guess with an unlit cigar in his hand. He came and sat immediately behind me. I nodded with a slight smile as we British do. He asked me if I had a light. I smoked in those days and offered him my lighter. “The girl’s good”, said the stranger. “Glad you like her, I’m Don Read, her manager”. “Good to know you, Don”, came the reply, “I’m Richard Rodgers”. How do you respond to such a statement?

Collapse in a heap, slide through a hole in the floor, or remain calm and say, "So glad to meet you". We exchanged some brief pleasantries before he stood up and said, "Gotta go back stage and see Cy (Coleman- co-writer of the show) and off he went. I walked back to my office a few feet above the pavement. Call it cloud nine if you wish but I had just met a true legend.

Jim Godbolt was an authority on early jazz and agent for the Al Fairweather/Sandy Brown, Bruce Turner and Mick Mulligan bands. The latter specialised in drinking the equivalent of a small brewery each night and certain members of the band had been known to have fallen off the stage whilst taking a solo. The Mulligan band owed much of its success to their singer, George Melly. Musically Godbolt and I were at opposite ends of the jazz spectrum and seldom had cause to converse, other than when a gig for Terry Lightfoot had been booked via Jim's agency and he would phone requesting publicity material. His manner could be abrupt, some might say downright rude but the eccentricities of jazz folk brought to mind the words, water and ducks back.

I was surprised to get a call from Jim suggesting that we share premises he had found in Wardour St Why would I want to do that? He raised the subject of economics, Yet I was comfortably able to afford the fiver a week renting my cupboard in Princess Arcade –the best address in London etc. I would need some thinking time.

An example of the commercialisation of the trad jazz scene manifested itself when a contingent of musicians from Eric Winstone's dance band came to see me. They felt that if Kenny Ball (who had started his career playing with the Syd Phillips band) could get a hit so could they. They were prepared to leave a steady job with Winstone and metamorphose into a trad band. And would I manage them? I explained it didn't work like that. The genuine trad jazz bands had paid their dues slogging away for a pittance in pubs and low- paid gigs for years and had built a reputation with fans and the business. Intruders would not be welcome.

Publishers latched on to the possibilities of making a few quid from the burgeoning trad scene and one actually accosted me in Denmark St with his "Ideal song for Terry Lightfoot"- "You've Gotta Have A Banjo In The Band, Joe". I believe Billy Cotton was the only bandleader to give that one house room.

Shortly before their first hit record the Kenny Ball band came to see me asking for management. With Terry Lightfoot and half dozen other bands to look after I declined the offer but then Jim Godbolt could have been agent for the highly successful Chris Barber band but declined for whatever reason. With my part time secretary I could just about cope with the demands placed upon me.

A sideline story fits in here. I had occasion to seek a part time secretary in early '62 and in came the amazingly beautiful Sri Lankan singer, Yolande. I hired her purely on her secretarial qualifications you understand, and she stayed about six months before moving to the USA. Sometime later she surfaced replacing Annie Ross in the legendary Lamberts, Hendricks and Ross vocal group. They specialised in vocal gymnastics on intricate jazz pieces singing words to musicians solos taken from records by the likes of Count Basie, Duke Ellington etc. This genre was named vocalese. Yolande fitted in admirably and made quite a name for herself.

Another part-time secretary was Vicki Turmaine who had turned up at the Dankworth club on Oxford St some years earlier. She knew this young saxophone player who had a gig in Park Lane but had no DJ or dress shirt and bow tie. Could he borrow mine just for the one night? I lent Peter King my kit and it was returned intact save for a cigarette burn on the shirt cuff. He redeemed himself by being an amazing alto sax player and remains, today, one of our best.

At that time I knew several musicians who worked for Geraldo's Navy, so called because the eminent bandleader booked musicians for the Cunard cruise liners. I had occasional unexpected visits from a singer who brought me a box of King Edwards –the cigar not the potato. Fifty for a fiver.

Harold Davison had moved into the very big league and became European representative for Judy Garland, Sarah Vaughan, Louis Armstrong, Sammy Davis Junior and Frank Sinatra., He could now throw away the AC2's RAF uniform I had seen on a photo taken at his wedding in 1946.

Ron Rietti appeared again. He arrived at my office with a proposition which I took with the proverbial pinch of salt. By way of compensation for the Beaulieu movie fiasco which would have earned me £2000 for acting as technical director, he proposed that I accompany him and

three other business men on a three week trip to Mauritius. My response was, "Ron, I'll believe it when I have the plane ticket in my hand". To my great surprise the ticket arrived a week later.

At Heathrow I met my newly found colleagues. Ron, and a chap in the film industry were to discuss, with the Mauritian Minister For Arts, the concept of a movie starring Cliff Richard the story of which beggared belief. Cliff and entourage would supposedly be on a flight to Australia when their plane would develop engine problems and be forced to land in Mauritius where the entertainers would put on a show and Cliff would fall in love with a beautiful local girl as they get caught up in a sub plot involving a gang of criminals which Cliff and his gang would solve before flying on to Australia with his new girl friend. THE END.

Sam Bomash was an ex Joe Lyons food executive who wanted to set up some hamburger joints or some such thing. And an American who had plans for a housing development or two. We were indeed a motley crew with little, if anything in common. We stayed in Curepipe in the centre of the island. This one- horse town minus the horse, was indeed like the ones I had seen in a thousand western movies. Just a cross- roads of four streets comprising wooden shacks and one slightly better hotel which might just have merited one star back home. We had stopped for refuelling at Rome, Nairobi and Antananarivo in Madagascar. We had an added member to the group who boarded in Rome. An attractive film industry German woman.

After a reception in the Mauritian capital, Port Louis, and brief meeting with Ministers, I decided to spend a day at the hotel whilst the others set up their meetings. A music student came to see me and had somehow heard that I was connected with the music business. Could he bring his band to play for me? I said I did not think that was a good idea but he insisted and that afternoon some seventeen young musicians arrived, set up in the hotel lounge and commenced playing some rather old arrangements of popular dance music. What could I say? "Great guys, I'll call London and set up a tour of the UK for you". Hardly. I let them continue for an hour or so and then said that I had to keep an appointment. They left and we kept in touch for a while. The rest of the three weeks were largely spent using a hire car and the lady film person and I checked out beautiful beaches and swam a lot.

Needless to say the Cliff Richard movie never materialised. I don't know how the others did businesswise but I was grateful to Mr Rietti for the

trip and he did turn up just one more time. He produced a film made in London starring Jayne Mansfield. I was invited to the press showing and every film reviewer from Fleet St made a bee line for the exit as the closing credits came up on the screen. It ranks as one of the worst films ever made. Herbie Kretzmer was there. He just looked at me as we left and said he didn't believe it.

I took Susan to see Frank Sinatra at the Hammersmith Odeon. I got first house tickets from the Davison office and suggested to Susan that we might get to see the second house if we hung around the foyer and spotted Harold Davison. We did and he said that all tickets were sold but we could stand at the back of the stalls. Just then an elderly, but distinguished looking gent entered the theatre alone. It was Sam Goldwyn.

Sinatra was, as you would expect, wonderful and Susan said that had he beckoned she would have been up on that stage in seconds. Fortunately he didn't and we are still happily married.

I moved in to the Wardour St premises and helped build a partition to make two offices. Jack Higgins came round and gave advice on how not to build a partition. We handed him a hammer and nails and he finished the job whilst Godbolt and I made the tea. My part time secretary joined us in Wardour St working for me in the mornings and Jim in the afternoon elevating her status to that of full time secretary. 145 Wardour St was nearer the heart of the jazz fraternity and the Intrepid Fox, a handy hostelry where most lunchtimes and early evenings one might spot the odd trad band leader, manager, musician, fan, journalist from the Melody Maker or Jazz Circle.

Jack Higgins was intent on building a trad jazz enclave for the Davison office and enticed several bands to leave their agents. The Dutton agency had the bulk of the trad band scene sown up with Barber, Alex Welsh, Terry Lightfoot and others. Jack persuaded them that he could provide a better service. The Chris Barber band was the first trad band to sign up with the Davison office. Since Jack and I hung out together most evenings doing the rounds of jazz venues and pubs it was inevitable that he would try to persuade me to influence Terry Lightfoot to switch agents. I recall Harold welcoming Terry aboard and handing him the Parker 51 he had used to sign the contract. To be in the same stable, as it were, as Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland et al was quite a prestigious move.

Terry's date sheet soon filled up with more lucrative engagements. A "Sunday Night At The Palladium" TV show came up through the networking of the Davison and Grade offices.

The Davison office, through Jack brought in top American jazz musicians to tour with British rhythm sections. One such jazz great was Ben Webster. The term legend should never be bandied about. Genius is vastly overused but far too many musicians have been designated as legends. On a BBC 3 series called Jazz Legends they did a programme devoted to Alice Coltrane. She may have been a fine musician and wife of John Coltrane but his spouse 's position in the jazz pantheon did not have her down as a legend.

Don Kingswell was an amiable chap who could have doubled as Minnesota Fats in the film "The Hustler". He had been managing Jazzshows (the 100 Oxford St stronghold of trad) for some months supplementing his income by selling-on sample LPs given to him by journalists on the music trade papers. He also tour managed a few package shows for pop promoters He lost his job with Jazzshows and turned up at our Wardour St offices with the sorry tale. I offered him the top left hand draw of my desk and a chair from which he proceeded to run his business empire.

I once caught Don scrutinising my wall map. Index finger moving slowly up the A30 from Redruth, eyes firmly focused. "Here, Don" he said after ten minutes of navigating through Cornwall, "Where the bleeding hell's Middlesbrough?"

"GET OFF THE STAGE"

When it comes to tenor saxophone players there are a handful of musicians to whom legend could be used without contradiction. Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Lester Young, Stan Getz, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins between them chart the evolution of jazz saxophony. All these players influenced young musicians and their styles were distinctive and highly individual. A connoisseur would identify any of them after hearing less than four bars. So Ben Webster had the Dancing Slipper, Nottingham, on his tour list. Don Kingswell got the short straw to manage the tour. Susan and I drove up for the weekend and stayed with Susan's parents.,At 8-30pm Promoter Bill Kinnell announced that Kingswell and Webster had not arrived. When

they eventually did. having travelled by train, Webster was very drunk. This man was one of Bill's heroes. But there was no chance of hearing him at his exquisite best. There was some debate about letting Ben take to the stage. He did and his performance was simply embarrassing. Questions were put to Don Kingswell as to how he had let his charge get into this state. The first session was cut short and later in the evening when Webster mounted the stage he was simply incapable of playing. A distraught Bill Kinnell addressed the capacity audience. "This man was one of my all time heroes. Tonight he has disgraced himself and let us all down." He turned to Webster and said, "Get off the stage". He was in tears..

"Black Nativity" was a remarkable show. It comprised twenty- four black American choristers- twelve men and twelve women, one of whom was Madelaine Bell who stayed on in London, led by the gospel singer, Marion Williams. Their performance of spirituals was truly amazing and in some songs they generated enormous excitement, the girls using tambourines to great effect. They had the audience, some of whom looked like they had come straight from the City, dancing in the aisles.

Rhythm and Blues, that genre born out of an amalgam of earthy blues and what was called race music had taken a strong hold. Harold Pendleton put on R&B on Thursday nights at the Marquee (when it ran in the basement beneath the Academy cinema in Oxford St.) We took little interest until one Friday morning Kingswell came in to the office and said that he had passed the Marquee the previous night and there was a queue round the block. Alexis Korner's band was the attraction. This venue became the magnet for R&B folk, such as John Mayal, Graham Bond, and a chap called Mick Jagger who would sometimes get up and sing with the Korner band. We went along to take a look.

WHEN SONNY GETS BLUE

An influx of American blues singers arrived and toured. Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee were a well- respected blues duo who were in need of transport for a short series of engagements in R&B clubs. I was asked to help and thought it would be a fun experience. I collected them from their hotel and we set off up the A1 to, I forget where. Sonny, a large man who sang and played harmonics, was blind. Brownie, played guitar and sang. He was the better educated one and was interested in art.

Around lunchtime they expressed a desire to eat and as we were approaching Grantham I thought this might be an ideal place to take in sustenance. I stopped outside the Odeon cinema which had a café. In we went and the fifty or so diners raised their eyes at the sight of two large black men, one leading the other with me heading for the nearest free table. "What yer gonna have, Sonny?" Bownie's voice could be heard a block away as he perused the menu. "I think you should have the fish and the chips, man". Sonny, eager to try a traditional British dish, concurred. "Yer man, I'll have the fish and the chips". In the interest of Anglo- American relations I fell in with the agreed "Fish and the Chips" decision.

The food duly arrived and all eyes focused on Sonny as he proceeded to pick up the food with his fingers oblivious of the cutlery. Not a momentous story but probably a talking point among the good folk of Grantham for some time. Black blues artists were an uncommon sight in Grantham in the early sixties especially in the Odeon café.

KORNER POCKET

I became friendly with Alexis Korner and he asked me to help him put on a gig in a Putney pub. I had posters printed and persuaded David Redfern to accompany me for a fly posting session. He slapped the paste on the posters whilst I drove the car and looked out for the police.

The day before the session, Alexis called to say we would need a relief band. I questioned the need but I rang round some likely prospects to no avail. All were booked. In desperation I called jazz critic and tenor player Benny Green, who, although a jazz and not an R&B player, agreed to bring along a rhythm section. His contribution to the session was lost on the young crowd. Standards by Cole Porter and Jerome Kern did not mix readily with songs by Muddy Waters and Speckled Red.

Alexis, with his dark brown voice, was regularly heard as voice- over on TV commercials in the seventies. **DISCLAIMER.** The term R&B is used in current pop circles but it bears absolutely no resemblance to the real R&B of the sixties.

Which reminds me of something I said about some of today's jazz musicians "If the audience stamp their feet, clap their hands to the music, and dance in the aisles then according to some young jazz

musicians your doing it wrong". So much of today's jazz is more akin to chamber music.

1963 ALL CHANGE

The Lightfoot band were scheduled to record a "Saturday Club" broadcast at the Playhouse theatre Northumberland Avenue, then a BBC studio. Susan and I saw the band in and chatted with producer Terry Henebery and presenter Brian Matthew. The customary three hour rehearsal was in progress. I told Terry we were going for a meal and would be back in time for the actual recording. Several pop people were on the show. By the time we returned the recording was over and the band were packing up. Terry, who, like me, was not favourably disposed to pop people surprised me by saying, "You should have been here for the recording. There was this beat group from Liverpool (The Beatles) and I must say they were terrific". Coming from a die-hard jazz musician that was some pronouncement.

Many years later, Bill Kinnell, another man who had little time for anyone in the pop world, came out with an equally surprising statement. "Have you heard that girl, Karen Carpenter? She's terrific". I checked her out. She was. How tragic that she died at such an early age.

Don Kingswell tour- managed a package show which terminated with a Sunday concert at Liverpool's Empire theatre. The show was in full swing when, as Don recounted the story the next morning, "This geezer comes up and tells me he wants his group to go on and play. I told him to "F ...off". but he called the theatre manager who insisted that this bleeding group should play". Don relented and the Beatles played two numbers and brought the house down. Don was introduced to their manager, Brian Epstein. Don went on to manage the American band Sha Na Na. How he found his way round America I will never know.

POP ARRIVES WITH VENGEANCE.

The pop scene exploded. It's fair to say that ever since that Elvis Presley record in the A4 greasy spoon and the 1956 movie "Rock Around The Clock" at the Dominion cinema in Tottenham Court Rd., young people throughout the UK and America had gone wild having at last got their own culture which their parents would hate. They began to shy away from trad and support pop. Even the BBC had to recognise the cultural change..

Rhythm and Blues was developing into a side genre of the rock scene. Alexis Korner led British R & B and his band played regularly at the Marquee attracting queues round the block. The Stones picked up the style and you know what happened to them. Other bands popped up, and one, Manfred Mann called in at our Wardour St offices for a cup of tea when they were booked at the Marquee.

By mid 1963 I sensed that the writing was on the wall for the trad jazz mini boom. It was going to be difficult to maintain a decent living in the jazz business. As if the Beatles were not enough, along came those upstarts, The Rolling Stones to bring despair to respectable parents everywhere. The rationale was simple. As parents got to like those nice clean cut Beatles the Stones would drive a wedge between the young and older folk with their unkempt appearance and aggressive demeanour.

The crunch came when in the late summer of '63. Terry Lightfoot and I had a disagreement and terminated our four year long association. We didn't meet again until 2004 when Susan and I went along to a Lightfoot gig in Long Eaton near Nottingham and we shook hands and buried our differences. I moved in with Susan at her flat in Cromwell Rd and kept up some business with the Davison office. I actually booked a pop band which Jim Godbolt, Don Kingswell, Susan and I saw at a "beat" club in Woolwich. David Redfern came along and the resultant photo is somewhere in this book. I did some work for a PR company in Mayfair and was introduced to a wealthy stockbroker. He took me on one side and made a business proposition. "I want you to go up to Liverpool and find me another Beatles". He was deadly serious. He was willing to give me a generous allowance and a cut of the deal. I tried to explain that Beatles did not grow on trees and the likelihood of finding another group with their charisma was one in a million. To him all pop groups were the same. He would never understand why I turned down the proposition.

1964 Terry Henebery, whom I had come in to contact with when he produced Jazz Club and Saturday Club broadcasts for BBC Radio, was poached by the newly formed BBC2 TV channel. Being one of the few producers who knew anything about jazz, he got the brief to produce a series of jazz programmes called, would you believe, Jazz 625 (625 being the number of lines that made up the TV picture, still black and white in those days).

As the Davison office brought in American bands and solo musicians Terry picked them up for his TV programmes. Thus the likes of the Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, Count Basie, and Stan Kenton bands were all featured along with Oscar Peterson, Sonny Stitt, and a plethora of jazz greats. In all, one hundred programmes were made over two years. An isolated programme made in colour in 1970 featured Miles Davis at Ronnie Scotts. In an act of blatant insanity that tape was erased by the BBC.

Terry told me in 2003 that the entire 100 programmes were bought by a man in Cornwall who contacted him, and arranged for copies of the entire collection to be sent.

LIFE SIZE

Some work for the PR company set me thinking about the massive interest in the Beatles and I saw a gap in the market. Whilst there were lots of photographs of the Fab Four there were no life size photos of each of the Liverpool lads. Suppose female fans wanted a large photo of, say Paul, to pin on their bedroom wall where would they get one?

I contacted Apple, the management company set up to run the Beatles' affairs. At that time it was said that anyone with a bright idea could walk in off the street and get a cheque from the Beatles to fund a project that sounded viable to them. I wasn't looking for funding. I just wanted permission to produce life size photos. I was put through to the Beatles' lawyer, David Jacobs (not the radio presenter) who, to my astonishment, said if I could find suitable photos to reproduce I would be lucky. I asked if they wanted a royalty. The answer was no, if I could find a photo with the Beatles not overlapping one another I could go ahead. In order to produce four separate shots of the boys they must be completely separate. I asked David Jacobs to write to me confirming the arrangement. He did.

I spent a day phoning every photographer likely to have the right photo. David Redfern didn't for sure. Eventually I called Thames Television, spoke to their press department. They thought they could help. They would call back. I had a nail-biting twelve hours to wait before they phoned to say yes they had the right photograph. I asked what sort of a deal they would want. "Just a credit", came the reply

I found a photographic company that could separate the four Beatles and blow the individual shots up to 6ft. They would be black and white but that did not matter. I ordered cardboard tubes and placed a display ad. in the Musical Express.

I priced the photos at 50p each or £1-75 for the set of four. They sold like the proverbial hot cakes. I forgot to keep a set. Years later I would enter a ballroom or club and see the photographs adorning a wall. I didn't bother to tell the owners where the photos came from. They wouldn't have believed me.

UPSTAIRS AT THE DUNGEON

A call came from old Bradford friend, Kenny Leitch. Two musician friends wanted to run a beat club and could I advise them? Anything for a fee. After a couple of phone calls I travelled to my home town to discuss their intentions. They came up with a proposition. Would I find suitable premises and get the project up and running. We agreed terms and I started the quest for Bradford's first disco. I was able to renew old friendships with the folk who had frequented the Cameo Club but, of course we were all a decade or more older and wiser. I looked upon this move north as a sabbatical.

I fancied the idea of a basement club rather like the Cavern but I just couldn't find a suitable location. The name had already sprung into my mind. The Dungeon Club sounded about right. I did find a first floor ex-dancing club above a furniture shop in Westgate and felt it would be just what we needed. I put the idea to the backers who said we would have to find another name. We couldn't possibly call a first floor club The Dungeon. Oh yes we could and did. We opened the world's only upstairs Dungeon a month later and packed the place with college students. We made tables out of beer barrels sliced in two with a circular top nailed on. The students painted the walls black and we installed some spooky lighting. We had created just the right atmosphere. How very different from the ballrooms I had been used to.

There was a kitchen with a hatch and Susan took over the catering concession. Some of the girls who came to jive helped out. I set out a weekly programme with disco on Monday, closed Tuesday, pop group Wednesday, Thursday disco, Friday Rhythm & Blues night with semi-name bands. Saturday lesser name R&B bands and closed Sunday.

One Monday evening-disco night, one of the regular girls introduced me to one of her mates. "This is Kiki". Kiki had paid her 2 shillings admission and I had seen her at some other sessions. I chatted to her and was surprised when she said she had just got off the train from London where she had been backing Dusty Springfield. Kiki Dee developed into a big name in the sixties and seventies.

We booked some well known names in the R&B field. Long John Baldry brought his Bluesology. The pianist was one Reg Dwight. A professional hanger on with Baldry's appearances at that time was a young layabout by the name of Rod Stewart. He came along to this gig and asked me if he could do a couple of songs with the band. Courteous if nothing else. I had heard him sing at Jazzshows in London and like most of the audience thought he had little talent. So there we were with Reg (to become Elton John), Rod Stewart- to become Rod Stewart and young Kiki Dee. I sometimes wonder if that night, Kiki and Elton hatched a plot to record "Don't Go Breaking My Heart" in future years. I had found a small cottage in the village of Baildon, near Shipley about five miles out of Bradford. Susan joined me. I took out an agent's licence and soon the phone was ringing with beat groups asking for management, agency or just gigs. I made a point of checking them out before we got them any bookings. Hang on. What the hell was I doing hob- knobbing with pop groups?- well they did lean towards R&B which was rooted in blues.

Susan took up daytime residency in the kitchen bashing out contracts on her elderly typewriter whilst I worked frantically with a diary at a desk in the only other ground floor room. At 6pm we dined and drove to the Dungeon.

FAME IS THE SPUR

One of our Friday night attractions was Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames. They were late arriving and I stood out on the pavement whilst a capacity crowd anxiously awaited the big name London band. They arrived at 8-30pm. the time they should have started playing. They had been lost in central Bradford. I let Georgie Fame know that I was not best pleased and would he get the guys on as quickly as possible. Just then a taxi drew up and out fell Phil Seaman-probably Britain's greatest jazz drummer. and cause of Kenny Leitch's disappearance for several days in London back in 1953. Phil- drunk as usual, lay on the pavement, looked up, saw me and uttered a few badly chosen words.

“Bloody Don Read... what the F.... are you doing here?” “Employing you, Phil but only if you shift your arse”. He apologised, smiled and played like a demon the whole evening.

We found ourselves booking quite a lot of groups (as they were then called) in to the Big Daddy Club in Halifax. The strangely named club owner- cum- wrestler, Shirley Crabtree, and his two rather large brothers, ran the club and specialised in presenting has- been groups that were several years out of date- Screaming Lord Sutch, Eden Kane, (very biblical) and Heinz (after the bean people, presumably). The club’s weekend ads in the Halifax Courier were a gem, “Next Saturday-THE BEATLES. cannot be with us so instead we’ve got Screaming Lord Sutch.”

Shirley would phone me regularly to enquire who might be available and worth booking. One Monday morning he brightened up our day with his enquiry. “Here, Don, how much is she going out for, Tamla Motown”. All this was before he became famous for his Saturday afternoon TV wrestling performances. I suppose I could have offered him Simon and Garf’s Uncle.

MEL TORME MEETS THORA HIRD

No, that is not the title of an unlikely album but an even more unlikely family relationship. In the sixties the wonderful American singer married Jannette Scott who just happened to be the daughter of actress Thora Hird. How they got on is not noted but I imagine Mel scat singing round the house would not exactly excite the Morecambe- born comedy star.

In the forties when Mel was trying to make a name for himself as a solo singer his publicist coined the phrase, “The Velvet Fog” on account of Mel’s husky voice. The inevitable happened and the singer arrived for a week’s club engagement to find a misspelt poster announcing, “This week-Mel Torme-The Velvet Frog”.

That is an example of the importance of ensuring that your artist’s publicity information is sent out to venues in hard copy and not in a casual telephone conversation.

Here is another information disaster

Tommy Leonetti was a successful American singer in the sixties. An administrative failure on the part of his agent or manager resulted in some confusion when he turned up for a week's engagement at a night club. Tommy headed for the manager's office to announce his arrival. "Hi, I'm Tommy- your cabaret for the week".

The manager looked surprised. "So where are the other two?", he enquired. Tommy said he was a single act- there was no "other two". He wasn't part of a trio. "Listen", said the now aggressive manager, "I'm paying for three guys - Tommy, Lee and Eddie and you had better find the other two, or else."

I wonder if any club booked Simon and Carbuncle?

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Another club owner phoned shortly after the Tamla Motown incident. His venue was an old suburban cinema in Bradford that had become a sort of working man's night club but privately owned. The chap had booked a few groups through us and had delusions of grandeur or he was just plain bonkers. Anyhow the nature of his phone call was to ask me to meet him and discuss a proposition that would make me rich. I thought of gift horses and mouths and went to meet him the following morning at his club. The cleaners were sweeping up the debris from the previous night's activities and the place stank of stale beer, stale fags and stale people.

Coffee was brought and he started his presentation in his broad Yorkshire accent. "I'll get straight to the point. I want you to get me Frank Sinatra". "Of course", I replied calmly. I had met people like him several times and neither of my eyelids battered. "Will that be for just one night or a week?" I enquired looking deadly serious. "I'm not joking. I'm willing to pay him £10 000 and lay on the best room at the Midland Hotel and a Rolls Royce. Now, Don, I know you can get a word with Harold Davison (now Sinatra's European agent) and I want you to phone him and arrange it all". I tried to bring him down gently, and explained that ten grand wouldn't cover the expenses of his security people. I think he settled for Frank Ifield.

Susan and I had left the bright lights and ample jazz of London for village life in Yorkshire. We had worked hard and benefited from the emerging pop scene. The Dungeon, and the booking agency were

becoming a burden. On some Saturday nights we would have a dozen or so groups booked out into clubs and ballrooms throughout the country. Some actually got to venues on time without breaking down, played the gig and got paid. Others did not. The record was a Saturday when 26 groups were working via our back- room agency.

Time to hire some help. A young chap called Ray entered our lives. He knew the scene and proved invaluable in booking groups we had never heard of. One day he asked me if I had heard of a singer by the name of Ricki Valance. I vaguely had in connection with a hit that received much publicity due to it being in bad taste. The song, "Tell Laura I Love Her", was, as far as I can recall, supposed to be sung by some guy who had just been killed in a car accident. For whatever reason the dreadful song made number one in the charts. Ray knew Mr Valance who apparently was destitute, looking for relatives in the north and needed a bed for a couple of nights.

We took the poor guy in. He stayed three weeks, disappeared and kept popping back We got him a few gigs.

We booked the Temperance Seven, an odd band with a euphonium and whiskered musicians Their act was twenties jazz. We knew a couple of the chaps from our time in London. The night they were to play for us I had to be in London on business so left Susan to make sure they got to the venue on time (I forget where it was). In the event they turned up at our little cottage in the afternoon. Cephus Howard cooked everyone a meal and generally confounded the neighbours who thought we were all weirdos, especially as the Crabtree giants had paid us a call the week before. Curtains twitched.

Rhythm and Blues hero ALEXIS Korner stayed with us when we booked his R&B band for a seven night tour of Yorkshire venues.

WEDDING BELLS

Without telling Ray what was afoot Susan and I drove off. on December 3th to be married at St Mary's church, Burton Joyce, Nottingham on the fourth. During the pre- marriage pep talk with the vicar he asked if I might be able to help his son who apparently was a rock fanatic. I said I did not think so but the lad became editor of Melody Maker in the seventies.

Jack Higgins came along to he wedding and took photos after marshalling family members with the finesse of a regimental sergeant major. The following week an item in the Melody Maker announced that "Don Read got married last week. Jack Higgins produced the show!". Ian Dove was responsible for that.

We honeymooned in Edinburgh after a long drive with two stops. One at RAF Northallerton where Susan had Nottingham friends and Morpeth where we cut the wedding cake with a nail file. On reaching Edinburgh we looked for a hotel and rounded on a terraced three star job that was decorated entirely in tartan. Floor, walls, ceiling and landlord. He was difficult to see. We went to a cinema that night. Next morning we headed back to Baildon and the day job, booking groups..

One venue we dealt with a lot was the Beachcomber Club in Bolton. This was a three- story building with coffee bar, basement disco and live groups upstairs. As we increased our business with the three young men who owned the club I visited them and heard of their plans for expansion. They were intent on buying an old cinema and turning it into a club (here we go again-I guessed they would be wanting Frank Sinatra on opening night). They were a rational trio with their heads well screwed on the right way. If I ever felt like moving in with them I could have the bookings at the night club, the Beachcomber and the group they managed-the Warriors from Accrington. I wasn't so sure about the latter appendage but the first two venues were likely to be lucrative.

1965: CHANGE COUNTIES

Susan and I talked it over and decided we had nothing to lose by moving to the greater Manchester area, but we would not rush into anything. A deal was arranged and for three months I travelled four days. a week to Bolton and back, by car over the Pennines. I liked the Beachcomber, its owners and the bigger picture that is greater Manchester. We found a new house we could rent in Salford and in March '65we packed our belongs in Baildon and headed for Bolton. Or rather Salford.

We were able to continue booking groups seamlessly but we added a few and I took a look at the Warriors. This was a six or seven piece group with a singer who was rather short and had a high pitched voice. Overall the group was modelled on the Hollies, a successful Stockport based group that were just beginning to record ("He Ain't Heavy, He's

"My Brother" was one of their hits). Being none too keen on pop music I didn't pay much attention to the Warriors but they were easy to book at £25 a gig and we could keep them busy between working the Beachcomber, Bolton Palais and out of town gigs.

A Manchester DJ took an interest in the Warriors and arranged for a demo session with London based recording manager, Joe Meek who I knew when he worked as engineer at Dennis Preston's studio. I still have a copy of that demo with a young Jon Anderson singing away. No one was interested in signing up the group or Jon and we carried on booking them.

We got so busy and we had to hire an assistant again. Just like Ray in Baildon this chap knew far more about the pop scene than I did. He would spend evenings visiting venues all over the North West area and he mentioned an R&B group from St Annes On Sea that had a good organist. They were the John Evan Smash and I found this lot difficult to book. They were not particularly popular with the young crowds but we managed to keep them fairly occupied.

Norman, Eric and Eddie, the three friends who owned the Beachcomber, took me to see progress on the new night club. This was not going to be a jumped-up working men's club but a plush, well appointed venue with a gaming room. At the appropriate time I put forward my suggestions for artists I considered worth booking for cabaret at their Empress Club. Naturally there was a limit on fees and I worked to a budget. I visited London and had a meeting at the Grade agency in Regent St with Billy Marsh, an old established. Booker who suggested Des O'Connor for opening week. His fee was within budget. Billy thought we might do well with Dickie Valentine. I worked on a schedule of alternating big names with slightly lesser known singers.

An excellent house trio was contracted and I became very friendly with its leader, pianist Geoff Moore. The club opened in June 1966 and prospered. The food was good, decent wines, cabaret, house band and gaming room. This was a venue I could invite BBC and Granada TV producers to without embarrassment.

I had made contact with the head of Light Entertainment for BBC North, Peter Pilbeam. I invited him and his wife to the club and later to dine at our home. At that time Peter had a remit to supply acts for two possible spots on BBC Radio2-a slot at 5-15pm and a late night insert at 10-

15pm. He booked the Geoff Moore Trio into both spots on a regular basis. A singer could be added and this proved useful since I had singers working the club. The broadcasts added kudos to the club due to the credits on the broadcasts. Not only that but I started writing songs which Geoff slipped in to the radio programmes.

The club's first week saw Des O'Connor playing to a packed room for six consecutive nights. Elaine Delmar came up to do a week and stayed with us. Then Freddie (Parrot Face) Davis did a week which brought the proverbial house down. The funniest act I had seen in a long time. I caught every performance and, naturally Susan joined me.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Dickie Valentine proved very popular. He had his own trio with him and we chatted about his time with Ted Heath band sitting alongside Lita Roza and Dennis Lotis (how did Ted dream up those romantic names?). Sadly a year or so after Dickie's engagement he and his three musicians were killed in a horrific car crash whilst returning home to London from an engagement in Wales. A great loss.

HAPPY FAMILIES

Susan mentioned that we seemed to be giving quite a lot of work to a Leicester based group. I went to see them in action and was favourably impressed. They were R&B with bells on. The lead guitarist played a double necked instrument. Their singer, Roger Chapman, could sing blues tinged songs by the likes of Muddy Waters, with expertise. I upped their fee and put them in better venues. This can spell ruination for an agent. The better the venue the more they are likely to be poached by the vultures in the business. They traded under a somewhat nondescript name which was changed to Family.

On November 7th 1966 we were blessed with a daughter, Jane. Born at Hope Hospital, Salford.

The road from Salford to Bolton passes through Farnworth where, I found out many years later, when I was temporarily into genealogy, my paternal great grandmother hailed from. Fate plays interesting tricks. Farnworth had a sort of nightclub called Blighty's and for some reason I never worked out, it got itself on the Davison office list of venues where visiting American jazz stars played. We saw the Stan Kenton band there

in 1972 and an all star group under the heading of Giants Of Jazz in the same year. How's this for a line up- Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonius Monk, Art Blakey, Sonny Stitt, Kai Winding and Al McKibbon. (and that was just the house band!

MORE MOORE

I must have been a pain to Geoff Moore. I would get an idea for a song and not being a musician, I would cajole Geoff into letting me visit him at his home before he went to the club to do his stint with the house trio. He ran a family business and didn't have much time to spare. Anyhow we would adjourn to the living room with the grand piano and run through some ideas. Most were a sheer waste of time but occasionally something worth developing emerged. The Moore's young daughter, Claire, would look in to see how we were getting on.

I made many trips over to the Cavern and booked Family there regularly. Ray Mcfall now had an assistant, DJ Bob Wooler, who had been helpful in developing the Beatles in 1962. I was in the club one time when I walked Prime Minister Harold Wilson, there on some youth promotion scheme.

Naturally I would endeavour to pop across the Mersey to Hoylake and catch up on family news. Being only forty miles away from the Wirral we saw the real family frequently and showed off our new baby which we christened Jane. We asked Elaine Delmar and Bill Kinnell to be God parents and they readily agreed. Elaine and Jane have remained firm friends to this day despite being two singers at opposite ends of the musical spectrum.

John Hamp was head of light entertainment at Granada TV in Manchester.. We had met in a previous life when we were in the same billet at RAF Yatesbury in Wiltshire in our National Service days in 1951. Back then I chatted to him about his connection with show business. I met him again in 1959 when he was managing a Mecca ballroom in Streatham, South London. From there he joined Granada and rose through the ranks. John produced a nightly, early evening magazine programme on which singers, groups and the like could make appearances. Michael Parkinson was one of the presenters. He had helped out on the door at Dankworth gigs in his home town, Barnsley.

I visited John at his Granada office and ran through my list of eligible artists that might slot into his programme. He accepted just about all of them. Family, John Evan Smash, Foggy Duo (just what you might think), Warriors and a two girl act called the Caravelles who had landed in Manchester with their manager. They had had a hit with a song called "You Don't Have To Be A Baby To Cry". Strangely enough their London agent, prior to them moving north, was George Webb, the diehard trad jazz pianist who virtually started the trad revival almost single handed after the war. What was George doing handling a girl pop duo? We all had to make sacrifices.

I still have demo discs made by the Warriors (with Jon Anderson), and The John Evan Smash (with Ian Anderson). John Hamp is best known for producing the very successful "Wheel Tappers & Shunters Club TV show.

BOOTH MUSIC

I picked up a Temperance Seven- type band in Manchester. They called themselves the Vintage Syncopators, had a euphonium and played 1920s pop music. Nobody was particularly interested in booking them so I pulled a publicity stunt which worked rather better than expected. On platform three of Manchester's Exchange railway station there was a booth in which you could make a recording for about £1. I told the band of my evil plan. They said it would never work. "Trust me", I said, "I'm an agent".

I visited the booth and chatted up a station person with a peaked cap and snazzy waistcoat. He was in charge of the platform. I slipped him a fiver and told him I would be back the next morning at 11am with photographer and band. We all turned up at the appointed time and headed for the booth. Two of the band with the smallest instruments squeezed into the booth whilst the rest tuned up their instruments on the platform. A pound note was slipped into the booth slot and the band proceeded to make their first (and last) recording. As the music started the photographer clicked away, the railway official, right on cue came up and, true to his script, said, "You can't do that. It's for speech only by one person at a time". The band's leader explained that they had been asked to make a demo record for a major recording company in London but didn't have the money to hire a studio. This was the only solution they could think of. We all dispersed to the nearest pub and had a good laugh. The well connected photographer rushed his photos

round to a news agency and next day 25 million people read the story and saw the photos. Eat your heart out David Redfern, Sunday Pictorial, and Harold McMillan. The item was carried in five national newspapers.

Getting stories in the nationals is very much a hit or miss affair. You try your hardest with a cracking story and it is ignored or too much is happening elsewhere. With Lightfoot's band I used a story that succeeded. Terry's drummer's wife had a baby. I took David Redfern up to the hospital along with the drummer and ran a story that he had skipped a job with the band to be at his wife's bedside. The London Evening News published photo and suitable caption. People who had never heard of Terry Lightfoot the previous day now had. And yes it was a real baby!

1967: ANOTHER PICCADILLY-MY THIRD

Ian Hamilton was a Manchester based agent who was doing nicely with a few groups on his books and some good club contacts. I booked his bands, he booked mine. I suggested I might consider moving into his central Manchester office suite. His address was Piccadilly, not quite so prestigious as the one in London but better than the one in Bradford. Bolton had been my business base for over two years and moving into Manchester city centre would be useful for picking up gossip and networking. The office banter with three bookers would engender more business and a happier working environment.

Not long after the move I sent the Warriors to the Star Club in Hamburg for a three week engagement.

Ray McFall and Bob Wooler came to see me with the news that Ray had gone bankrupt. How could this happen to some one who owned the Cavern Club and witnessed the emergence of not only the Beatles but half a dozen other groups and Cilla Black?

CHRISALISING

One day Ian came into my office and told me about a young chap who had just vacated his position as students union representative at Manchester University where he had completed a business studies degree. The chap desperately wanted to get into the music business and could we take him in, show him the ropes and use his knowledge of the college circuit? Yes, we certainly could. Chris Wright entered our

lives the following Monday morning and we moved a spare desk into my capacious office.

Chris was a quietly spoken young man with a pleasant personality. He was very efficient and soon picked up the wrinkles of negotiating. There was absolutely no indication that one day he would be worth around £200 million. That's two hundred million pounds.

We had bachelor Chris round for dinner. At weekends he would either visit his family in Louth, or head for London to weigh up the scene. Anna Ford, then a student at UMIST called in to see Chris and generally ask for help in getting gigs for her folk singing act.

One Monday morning Chris came into the office as usual and said that he had signed up a Nottingham group, the Jaybirds, who he had seen the previous night in London. It so happened that this group was managed by our dear friend, jazz promoter Bill Kinnell and Susan knew the lead guitarist's parents who were jazz fans and who used to take their son along to sessions at the Dancing Slipper. The Jaybirds lead guitarist, Alvin Lee, became a huge international success

Chris gave me a list of strange names from which he proposed to select one to be the new name of the Jaybirds. They were all nonsensical to me but I picked one out. "This is as daft as any" I said, passing the list back to him. "That's the one I fancy", replied Chris and so was born Ten Years After. Armed with a good group under his management Chris moved to London, teamed up with Terry Ellis, who had managed the Animals ("House Of The Rising Sun"). They amalgamated their names and Chrysalis started business in an attic in Regent Street.

Timing is all important in agency work. I booked the excellent R&B Spencer Davis Group with their 19 year old singer, Stevie Winwood, into a Wakefield club. I went along to see them in action and secure more bookings from the club owner. At the end of the night I asked if we could negotiate a repeat booking. The owner was adamant that the group had not gone down well and they would not want them back.

About six weeks later the Spencer Davis team had a record climbing irrevocably up the charts with Stevie Winwood's "Keep On Running". This news had apparently not escaped the young people of Wakefield. "Please can we have them back?" came the call. By now they were well out of Wakefield's price range. Had the club owner given me the

authority to rebook them after their first appearance I could have negotiated a deal.

I got word that a certain Tom Jones was about to have a hit. Tom who? He was barely known. My London music publisher informant told me to book 'em while they're still cheap. I negotiated a booking into a Bolton club for Tom and his eight- piece band for £100. The engagement took place just as "It's Not Unusual" was entering the charts and getting substantial airplays. I had a similar stroke of luck booking Lulu and the Luvvers (?) on a double booking at Preston and Leigh just as her first hit, "Shout" entered the charts. Status Quo were a larger group than they are today and decidedly more pop orientated. They went down well due to records being in the charts.

The Tom Jones venue was where I saw the moon- landing on a giant screen in 1969. Now that was an event no agent could have topped.

HIGH NOTES

In the summer of '67 a call from Ernie Garside livened things up "Are you sitting down?" he asked. When people preface their news with "Are you sitting down?" you know something important is about to follow. "Go on then". I responded expecting him to tell me he had won the football pools and was going to put on a concert starring every great American jazz musician still alive. It was not quite on that scale. "I've got Maynard staying with me". Now that may or may not mean much to you so I will explain

Maynard Ferguson was a Canadian trumpet player of amazing virtuosity and I do not exaggerate. His range went up to the stratosphere. His tone and the jazz content of his solos were impressive. But he was essentially a high note man. I had first heard him in 1949 on a record he made whilst with the Charlie Barnet band. This was a feature on Jerome Kern's "All The Things You Are" and such was Maynard's high note performance that the Kern estate tried to have the record banned on the grounds of bad taste. I loved it as did Lou and all the other guys at the Cameo club in Bradford.

Stan Kenton, whose band was always bigger, louder and ready to push jazz to its very boundaries snapped up Maynard. In 1950 Kenton toured with a 36 piece orchestra with strings and French horns added to the conventional band line up. Special compositions for the jazz soloists

were commissioned and fellow trumpet player Shorty Rogers wrote a feature for Maynard called simply, "Maynard Ferguson".

By the sixties Ferguson had his own band with various degrees of success and in 67 he had a slight fracas with the American tax people. Ernie, unlike me, stuck to jazz and went to the USA where he mixed with all the jazz greats including Maynard. In need of a refuge till the heat cooled off. the trumpeter was eager to accept Ernie's offer to take up residence in Stockport -jazz capital of the world!

Ernie's message was that the following Wednesday night at the 43 club, a Manchester jazz haunt as they say, Maynard would be rehearsing his new British band. Did Susan and I fancy being there? Yes we did.

Ernie had picked out the cream of northern based jazz musicians, all delighted to be playing with the great American trumpet player. There was no official audience- just a dozen or so folk Ernie had invited. We sat at a table and I recognised the chap next to me tapping his foot. He was, in fact, another Maynard-Bill Maynard, the actor who you may know from the TV programme "Heartbeat". I had met him years earlier when, as a comedian, he had appeared on a Sunday concert as guest with the Dankworth band.

The band was rough but it was fascinating to hear Maynard and to be in his presence. I'm just a soppy fan at heart! Some years later I had occasion to visit a gent's hairdresser just a few yards away from what had been Ernie's flat in 1967. I mentioned this to the hairdresser. "Yes," he said with a look of disdain. "I was his landlord. "Well", I reminded him,. "You should put a plaque on the wall. Ernie had one of the world's leading trumpet players staying with him". "Oh, him," said the barber, "Practising his bloody bugle at three in the morning., "I threw the buggers out.". I bet he would have thrown Mozart out!

JUST ANOTHER DAY

Every once in a while fate throws up an unexpected series of events that start out as just another day. And turn into an unforgettable experience.

I had Family playing at one of their best venues - Sybyllas Club in Swallow St, off Regent St I had to be in London and called in to the club

to say hello to the guys. What happened next was a sequence of epic proportions. It was around 2-30 when I entered the club which was in semi darkness. One member of the band came over and asked me if I had spotted the two people sitting in an alcove having a drink. I looked round and there were John Lennon and George Harrison.

John Gilbert, the son of Bond movies director, Lewis Gilbert, came over. John wanted to do a deal with me to take over Family. No way.

The door opened and in walked a familiar face. Barry Prendergast alias John Barry. Now I had always addressed him as Barry and I got some weird looks when I greeted him. We hadn't met for eight years but he remembered me. He already had a couple or three Bond movies under his belt. We had a drink and he asked if I could hang around for an hour or so, there was someone he felt sure I would want to meet. The hour went swiftly by and in walked two very attractive young ladies who I certainly did not recognise. "Don" said Barry/John, "Have you met Nancy and Tina Sinatra?". I was tempted to say not since that wild party in Scunthorpe last Saturday but I didn't. I just swallowed hard and shook their delightful hands. John/Barry explained that Nancy was here to discuss details for her to sing the title music of the next Bond movie, "You Only Live Twice". Which Lewis Gilbert would direct. The Gilberts were involved with the movie "Alfie" for which Sonny Rollins wrote the music & played on the soundtrack.

I departed from the club discreetly about 4pm. and left the wheeler-dealers to their deliberations. The Sybylla's engagements were booked through a minor agency in Soho and a cheque for the group's fee usually arrived on my desk about a week after each gig. Despite several phone calls I had not received the fee for a gig six weeks back. I located the office of the agent, who I had never met, walked in and was confronted with by small gent who confirmed that he was the chap I dealt with. I told him I had called for the outstanding cheque and would not leave until I got it. He said his boss would be in shortly and a cheque would be signed, could I pop back in an hour? I called back on time, the boss had arrived and signed a cheque for me. This was handed over with apologies and I reminded him that henceforth I would appreciate prompt payment. He was quite humble and I went on my way. On the train back to Manchester I thought about the events of the afternoon, pulled out the cheque and examined it closely. Nothing wrong except I suddenly realised that the Kray agency was owned. lock

stock and double barrels by the Kray brothers, London's arch gangsters. They didn't come after me and the cheque cleared.

1968 IN THE MILLER MOOD

One-time Radio Caroline (pirate pop radio station) DJ Simon Dee, had a teatime TV magazine show called simply, Dee Time. Originally London based we got word that the show was to move to Manchester and with it would come Terry Henebery with two producers new to TV. Susan and I were at the BBC offices when Terry and his colleagues arrived. We offered to show them the jazz scene when they had settled in and the following week we all went to a large pub in Cheadle. to see the Syd Lawrence band. This was a Thursday night gig for members of the Northern Dance Orchestra, the Manchester based BBC house band. It had two weekly national broadcasts and accompanied several comedy shows. Syd Lawrence was an excellent trumpet player with the NDO. The accent was on Glen Miller's repertoire which guaranteed a full house.

Terry invited us to the Dee Time shows which had well known guests for interviews. The programme went out nationally on BBCTV at 6-15pm and had an enormous viewing figure. The resident band was led by none other than Maynard Ferguson who had to hold himself back from those high Cs.

The two young producers= to-be were Sydney Lottery, who was to produce hundreds of comedy shows for BBCTV and James Moir who became head of Radio 2.

On the domestic front we lived in a sort of cul-de-sac, somewhat grandly named Cholmondley Manor and Susan mentioned a neighbour whose husband was, apparently, a country (and western) singer. I found out that the western bit is superfluous since it is the cowboy sub genre of country music. I must confess that I hate country music which I find slushy, overtly sentimental, banal and vomit inspiring. However I met David H. Lee (I never did find out what the H stood for). He seemed a decent chap and had made an LP for some people in London whom I knew. It was loaded with Jim Reeves type songs including the nauseating "Old Shep" about a pet dog that died. For whatever reason David was hot property on the working men's club circuit in South Yorkshire where, on Sunday lunchtime and evening sessions, his fans would queue to not only get his autograph but take him home for lunch.

WHO'S THAT WITH DAI DAVIES?

It is always interesting when stars and celebrities turn up in unexpected places. Presidents and Prime Ministers pop into pubs and chip shops for PR photo shots. Roy Orbison played a gig in Leeds, walked into a club, spotted a girl and eventually married her. Bluesman Champion Jack Dupre toured the UK, met a girl from Halifax and settled there. Harrison Ford and Calista Flockhart were spotted on a canal boat in Staffordshire. Michael Douglas and Katherine Zeta Jones make occasional visits to her old haunts in Swansea.

In the sixties David H. Lee was a big hit on the South Wales club circuit and met a certain Dai Davies, a comedy mime act from Port Talbot. David showed me a photo of Dai and without further comment handed me the photo you will see at the end of this book. I did a double take on recognising two familiar faces. Standing next to Dai and his wife and daughter were none other than mega super stars Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Naturally I asked David to explain. Being rather more interested in Dai, David casually said that Dick and Liz often dropped in when visiting Burton's family. Taylor would help prepare the supper table while Dai and Burton nipped down to the chippie. This was when the two were at the peak of their international fame. In 2000 I sent the photo and story to the Daily Mail. I had asked permission to do so from Dai's daughter who is on the photo. I have her letter thanking me for the press coverage.

DIRECT FROM NASHVILLE-NEAR SALFORD

There was a so called night club quite near our home and I booked David in for a week. The owner billed him as being, "Direct from Nashville". David suddenly developed an American accent as fans enquired when he was returning to the States. He lived just two miles away.

Another neighbour, of Dutch origin, sold encyclopedias for Robert Maxwell. He was handy at car repairs and saved me a fortune. He announced that a relative was coming to stay and perhaps I might know her. She was Linda Saxone (no not the shoe shop people) and I recognised the name through countless broadcasts of her singing with bands. When we met I offered to get her some work and was easily able to do so. She agreed to demo a song of mine with the Geoff Moore

trio. Through Peter Pilbeam, Linda and the trio did a broadcast which included my song. I had this recorded. And there was no need for a demo session. I lost no time in sending the recording off to a number of publishers who, as I expected completely ignored it. The demo disc stayed on a shelf until late 1969 when I sent it to Cyril Shane, a publisher I knew from the Denmark St days. You'll have to wait until we reach 1971 for the rest of this story.

In 1968 Ken Russell produced and directed a film, "Song Of Summer" for the BBC about Delius, the eccentric Bradford born composer and his Scarborough born amanuensis, Eric Fenby. The frivolous Australian composer Percy Grainger's visits to the French home of Delius were such a contrast to the dour demeanour. of the monstrous, tyrant who wrote such beautiful music. The film made a lasting impression on Susan and me. I learned more about my fellow Bradfordian than in the eighteen years growing up in the city. I was always aware of the statue of Delius in Bradford city centre but I don't think many local people realised the magnitude of his work.

Apart from Delius other notable Bradfordians are JB Priestly, John Braine and David Hockney. More of him anon.

Still in 1968, at the height of the psychedelic movement, Jim Webb wrote "MacArthur Park" in San Francisco. There was a somewhat dramatic instrumental passage somewhere in the middle. That passage turned up as the theme of the Pearl and Dean cinema advertising films accredited to a British composer. Now how did that happen?

1969: TEATIME IS DEETIME

Simon Dee's Dee Time ended and our Thursday evening pattern changed. Terry Henebery, Sydney Lotterby, James Moir and any guests from the Dee show had for weeks gone on to catch the Syd Lawrence band. I told Syd it was evident that his band was now so popular, albeit on the local Manchester scene, that it was time to consider out of town gigs.

A young car dealer from Stockport had got himself involved in an arrangement with a London based country music magazine whose editor was looking for a backer to support a tour of four leading American country singers. Could I help? Country music is anathema to

me but the more I looked at the deal the more I was drawn to the venture. The artists were Hank Snow (as legendary to country folk as Kid Ory was to the jazz fraternity), Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and a couple of others whose names escape me. They wanted someone to handle the PR. Here I was. The short tour would kick off at Belle Vue, Manchester, followed by the London Palladium, Birmingham Town Hall and Newcastle City Hall. When I gave the story to the press a call came via the Palladium from Ringo Starr's people. Could Ringo and a party of six have a box at the Palladium show? How could I resist? High spot of the tour was not the music or the stars but when we reached Birmingham several of us were having dinner in the hotel prior to the concert when I glanced round at the next table. There were Woody Herman and his wife. I was tempted to speak but decided against it. I remembered that Woody's great band was on tour in the UK for the Davison office. I didn't even mention this to my colleagues. I doubt if any of them had ever heard of Woody Herman.

. During the evening, trying to escape the awful country music at the Town Hall I did wish I could sneak out and catch the Herman band playing up the road but duty called.

THEN THERE WERE FIVE

The major event of '69 was another trip to Hope Hospital. This time to our amazement and delight it was twins. Not just any old twins but a boy and a girl. So as not to feel demoted we gave Jane a wickerwork chair (can't think why) The twins were under weight and spent days in incubators. Very anxious times, but they gained weight under the expert care of the wonderful staff and we took them home to make up our now five- piece family. Being one of four brothers (the title of a Woody Herman hit) I felt euphoric at having two daughters and a son.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1970

By now I had observed the arrival of a variety of popular music styles. In the late fifties Lonnie Donegan, one time banjo player with Chris Barber's band, had had hits with "Rock Island Line" and "Does You're your Chewing Gum Loose Its Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight?" Chas McDevitt and Nancy Whisky, based in Denmark St perpetuated Donegan's brand of music called Skiffle. In a parallel universe Rock had been introduced by Elvis Presley, Bill Haley and his Comets, home grown Tommy Steele and a gaggle of other British performers.

Listening to my car radio on countless journeys I heard the burgeoning music which was mostly extraordinarily simple, with lyrics that neither scanned nor rhymed, mumbled by inept, overpaid young people, backed by three guitars and drums. On purely economic grounds this was far more viable than the costly big band of some sixteen musicians. Rock/pop was the music of youth and there was little point in condemning it. In some form or another it was here to stay. Not, thank goodness, to the exclusion of jazz and classical music forms which would always survive without the excesses of what Stan Kenton called "Children's music".

Having said that, I did find Stevie Wonder interesting and dare I say, Earth Wind And Fire, quite exciting with their catchy songs and strong rhythmic feel. I bought the LP for our children so I could listen to it! Confession time I dug the Beatles (Ella recorded "Can't Buy Me Love") and I recognised ex-Dankworth drummer Kenny Clare. Aretha Franklyn's gospel tinged voice was a revelation. Billy Joel was another pop singer and composer who caught my imagination. But they were all second-raters to Ella, Peggy Lee, Carmen Mcrae and the amazing Mel Torme. Could you tell Beyonce from Brittany Ferries (sorry, Spears). I can't.

1971: SLOW DOWN

A quiet year. My Leicester group, Family, were to make a record for Liberty. I had occasion to be in London and went round to the publishing arm of Liberty Records. This division was being run by ex secretary of Fred Jackson, the scary Denmark St publisher. Upon arrival she apologised and said the staff were in some panic because they had

just, that morning, clinched the rights on a new musical by two unknown young men called Andrew Lloyd -Webber and Tim Rice. I was shown a poster which announced, "Joseph And His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" I paid little attention.

"Family" were anxious to move to London and seek fame and fortune. After a brief period of big time they broke up with some members moving in to other groups. 1971 was otherwise a quiet year. Far too quiet to support a five- piece real family.

A letter from publisher Cyril Shane announced that he had taken my song, "Just To Know You" to Des O'Connor who was in need of a ditty which, in essence, said, "I love you but you don't love me so I will settle for just knowing you as a friend" (boo hoo). This was a one- off requirement for a duet with American singer Connie Stevens in a TV "spectacular" from the Palladium. The show had lots of stars and had been pre-sold to over 100 countries. With no VCR to record the show I had to make do with catching the live performance in a friend's house in Macclesfield. Des came up to Manchester for cabaret and I was able to renew acquaintance with him. He said he was hopeful of recording "Just To Know You" Still waiting, Des.

SYD LAWRENCE ECHOS OF MILLER

I booked the Sid Lawrence band in to Crewe Theatre and they put the "House Full " signs up. The Rank circuit had ballrooms., later to become bingo halls, scattered around the North. On contacting their head office to enquire about engagements for the Syd Lawrence band I was put through to their booker. To my surprise this was Garry Brown, one time bass trombone player with the Dankworth band. I visited him and we set up a string of dates for Syd's band.

I knew I was going to have to quit the music business and diversify into other areas of marketing. My relationships with rock/pop groups had not resulted in any breakthroughs to the big time. Ian Hamilton had closed his agency, married one of the "You Don't Have To Be A Baby To Cry" girls and the only other Manchester agency I might have worked with had a director I would not have hit it off with.

HAIR TODAY

I met a chap who was a big wig in the men's hairpiece industry (go on laugh- I know you can spot them a mile away!). Hair styles were long in the early seventies and during our chat he said he could do with some PR and by the way, what did I think of his hairpiece? I said he couldn't possibly be wearing one. He gently lifted it an inch or so and I was completely surprised. I tried to imagine what it might be like to be involved with an inanimate object rather than performers of one kind or another, some of whom were temperamental, slagged off their colleagues, got drunk on stage, were frequently late and generally a pain.

I knew of several music colleagues who had thrown in the towel having had their few years of glory and found that the relentless onslaught of the pop culture and its attendant parasitical agents, managers, recording people left them disillusioned.

Colin Hogg, one time manager of the Ted Heath band had worked in Lyn Dutton's trad agency for some years. Davison took Dutton's office over and although several of the better, more established bands they had represented survived and even prospered under the Davison banner many of the rest simply retreated to the local scene from which they had emerged a few years earlier. Colin married his secretary and took over a post office in the provinces.

Lyn Dutton worked from the Davison office for a while but left to run an antiques business. George Webb bought a pub.

Jim Godbolt ended his lengthy position as an agent one day when the frustrations of pop group mania took hold. and he swept his desk clean and walked out of the music business forever. He too had succumbed to the lure of pop, becoming agent for the Swinging Blue Jeans. He took a job reading gas (or electric) meters peddling round his patch on a bike. None of us lost our abiding interest in jazz. We simply found the conditions of working in the music industry distasteful as a new generation of people moved in. Change is often painful and sometimes intolerable.

I felt I still had ideas, some outrageous, which might help companies to increase their sales. For the hairpiece people I produced a poster intended to be sited in ladies hairdressers. This depicted two photos of an attractive model, one with her normal head of hair, the second had been doctored to show her bald. The caption read. "Ladies, how would

you feel if this happened to you? Why let it happen to your husband or boyfriend?" There followed the name of the hairpiece company and phone number. Chemotherapy was not around in those days so there were no TV appearances of bald women. The posters were sent to hundreds of hairdressing saloons with an offer of a generous commission for leads. It worked and an influx of enquiries came in from understanding wives.

There was a light-hearted side to all this and the sales reps had a fund of stories and jokes. I like this one. After a lengthy sales presentation a prospective customer finally told the rep-"O. K. I'll have one of your hairpieces but there's just one last thing I want to know-can you swim in it?". Exasperated salesman: "No, sir, but if you turn it upside down and fill it full of water your goldfish can", and also; "Doctor, doctor, my hair keeps falling out have you got anything to keep it in? Doctor-"try this paper bag". "Doctor, how can I avoid falling hair?" "Step to one side". And so on.

Susan took. An interest in local politics thanks to a near neighbour, Isobel Parker. The two of them went to meetings, helped in local elections and met the local bureaucrats. She played bridge with another group of neighbours. Her family had a business in Nottingham which had originally been a coal merchants run by her grandfather with a horse and cart. Now her father, two uncles and her brother Jim ran a successful and well respected haulage company in the suburb of Radford. Just round the corner from where author Alan Sillitoe lived and the location for his "Saturday Night And Sunday Morning" the film version of which brought Albert Finney, who came from Salford, to public attention

We saw no reason to remain in Salford. and considered moving to Nottingham where Susan's extended family resided. We made the move in August 1973 having found a detached four bedroom house overlooking the river Trent. Bill Kinnell's jazz promotions at the nearby Dancing Slipper had long since ceased. He was now in Hampstead with Don Aldridge, a jazzier who had toured the UK with a young folk duo called Simon and Garfunkel a year or two earlier. Don had been on that famous railway station platform in Widnes when Paul Simon wrote "Homeward Bound".

1974: ACROSS THE POND

Lou and Barbara were in Bradford visiting their parents.. We took the children and stayed overnight in my home town to be with the Coopers. Lou had worked hard and educated himself. He had risen to become assistant chief accountant at the Canadian Broadcasting Company, chucked that in and bought a small record shop. But now he had a franchise on the well known Canadian business – Sam The Record Man. Apparently on Friday nights at 9pm he had wall to wall people. He took on two further massive stores.

Lou invited me to Toronto with a side visit to New York. We managed to cram in hearing the Buddy Rich band and Lew Rawls, The Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band, the Charles Mingus band and the CBC house band led by Rob McConnell with and without guest Sarah Vaughan plus a trip round the United Nations building and Niagara Falls. Lou used his connections with the CBC to get me a two hour radio interview on the Dankworths who were becoming a major attraction on the US music scene. The Coopers home had been the residence of the Ecuadorean Ambassador to Canada with beautiful manicured lawns and self cleaning pool. Lou was a perfect example of self education, determination and achievement, from relatively humble beginnings. He never wavered from his core interest in jazz and became Canadian representative of Stan Kenton's Creative World organisation with the opportunity of frequent meetings with his teenage idol. In more recent years Jane and her husband Matthew, a bass-baritone, have visited the Coopers when Matthew has had engagements in Canada.

Bill Kinnell regularly came up to stay with us in Nottingham and renewed old friendships with the jazz fraternity. He died in 1987 and we attended his funeral. Jane came along since Bill had been a godparent and close friend of ours. Also present were a contingent of musicians from the London trad scene. Kenny Ball, Pat Halcox from the Chris Barber band etc. This was a cremation and as the curtains closed the musicians had their instruments poised and played an impromptu version of the old New Orleans hymn "Just A Closer Walk With Thee". Jane, a classically trained soprano turned to me and whispered, "How do they do that without a rehearsal?". Jazz and classics-two different worlds.

Enter Garfield Morgan, boss cop in the long running TV series "The Sweeney". He came to Nottingham to run the Playhouse theatre and I somehow made contact with him. He visited us at home and we discovered he was living near the Dankworths at Wavendon in Berkshire. I asked if some jazz might be promoted at the Playhouse

and I arranged for the wonderful Stan Tracey (remember him from accompanying Kenny Baker at the jazz Club in Bradford in 1952 – see, you’ve forgotten already) and rhythm section to perform his suite, “Under Milk Wood” dedicated to Dylan Thomas with narration by actor Donald Houston.

1975: STYLISTICALLY POP

I wrote a pop song called “Don’t Do Anything I Wouldn’t Do” (if you can’t fight ‘em join ‘em!). miraculously it was published and recorded by an unknown group called Love Together (sounds like an orgy). It sounded very much like the Stylistics, the American singing group with a falsetto chap. I think it got in to the charts at 250 or thereabouts. The group came up to Radio Nottingham where we all chatted on air and had a nice cup of coffee. That was the end of that little venture.

In 1978 I persuaded a city centre hotel with a basement bar to promote monthly name jazz events. We had George Melly with the Footwarmers, Harry Edison, trumpet player who played on most of Sinatra’s hits, Peanuts Hucko, leading US clarinettist who had been in the Glen Miller, and Louis Armstrong and many others over a period of about a year.

At that time French composer Erik Satie’s Gymnopedie No.1 was everywhere. Any play on TV with a couple of lovers running towards each other in a misty wooded glade, arms outstretched in an anticipated embrace, would have Gymnopedie No.1 playing in the background. TV commercials used it and radio producers squeezed it in anywhere they could. When I heard it playing in the reception area of my dentist I decided something had to be done.

I checked to see if anyone else had written a lyric to Satie’s melody. Blood., Sweat And Tears and Rod Argent had recorded instrumental versions but no vocal version was catalogued. I spent a few hours writing a three verse lyric, gave it the name Odyssey and got a musician friend to write it out for me. Photo copies were sent to six publishers and were promptly ignored. What about Cyril Shane, the publisher who had clinched the Des O’Connor deal? Worth a try. His response is reprinted in this book. “Don, it’s a lovely idea but it would be hopeless.”

FAMILY LOSS

Whilst caught up in the promotion of "Odyssey" my father died suddenly of coronary thrombosis and chronic bronchitis. On September 16th Leslie found him collapsed in the bathroom. I mourned his loss but because I saw him only occasionally it didn't impact on me quite as severely as it should have. After all, dad had gone through the hell of the first world war, worked very hard to keep a family of six in style and survived to 84 in reasonable health. I was bitterly disappointed at not being able to get to his funeral due to appalling weather conditions. That really did hurt.

Just nine months later, on Aug 6th 1979 my mother died. I visited her in Clatterbridge hospital on the Wirral shortly before we lost her. She had stoically raised four children in times of considerable hardship on my father's meagre income. This she supplemented by hairdressing at home and collecting insurance premiums for the Refuge. Her tastes were simple but her gifts to our family enormous. She too was 84. Mildred and Wilfred gone.

Life goes on and publisher, Kay O'Dwyer at Francis, Day and Hunter said she could get my song to Cleo Laine. I said I could get the song to Cleo Laine quicker than she could., and I did. I sent the lyric to John Dankworth and waited. Sometime later he called and asked if I could read the words out since he had misplaced them. I went through the song over the phone omitting the title. Some time later John called to say the song had been recorded on an album Cleo had made with James Galway, for RCA Victor. They had recorded some twenty songs and just maybe mine would be in the final sixteen to make up the album. I had learned never to count chickens. Eventually John called again to say that my song, now called, "Drifting, Dreaming", was first track on the album. He had lifted a line from the song to become the title since he couldn't locate my title and there had been no time to contact me. I didn't care. He could have called it "I Love Erik Satie" it would have made little difference to my jubilation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1980

I sent flowers to Cleo and phoned RCA to get a release date which was delayed. Jane called me from Nottingham city centre on her way home from school. She had just met our local vicar, Peter Bailey (all our three children went to school with their two and we were good friends with the family). Peter was clutching the album which he had just bought. He told Jane to phone home and tell us to meet at his house in half an hour. We heard this stunning arrangement by John of my little song and sung by one of the world's greatest jazz singers with the master of the flute. The album was called "Sometimes When We Touch" after the song which was the second track.

The following week we took friends to a concert by John and Cleo at Leicester's De Montfort Hall. John greeted me with the news that RCA, in its infinite wisdom, had decided to issue a single in addition to the album and I had the A side. A song which Cleo had written was to be the B side. I saw Cleo and we joked about this. It was all good natured and she was delighted that all had turned out so well for me. She and James Galway were to appear on the Val Doonican TV show the following Saturday. She sang "Drifting, Dreaming" during the concert and, of course on the Doonican programme.

RCA went mad with publicity and printed very large posters which adorned record shops throughout the country. We holidayed in Cornwall and visited just about every record shop in the county to check out the publicity. Susan pulled the album to the front of racks to ensure it could be easily seen.

The RCA rep came to see me and brought a dozen complimentary copies of the LP. Radio Nottingham called for an interview. Radio 2 gave the song daily airplays. The album made No. 2 in the classical charts and stayed there for many weeks. Worldwide sales of the two formats reached around a million. Lou phoned from Toronto to say he had given a whole window of his huge record store over to a display for the record.

Just about the same time as the record release, we were invited to the launch of David Redfern's book of stunning photographs of the world's leading jazz people. The launch was held at Ronnie Scott's Club in Frith

St., the hallowed premises where in 1956 I had organised a party for the Stan Kenton band. Susan and I called in to see publisher David Platz whose Essex Music company had the floor beneath us at 4 Denmark St David had set up a separate company to publish John Dankworth's music and "Drifting Dreaming" was now part of that repertoire. I felt I was back in the music business again.

I thought for one careless moment that the phone might ring and some publishing or recording executive might want to sign me up for a multi million pound deal. No such luck and I slunk back into life of utter normality.

Five years passed before I wrote another lyric, two in fact, to music by Ravel and Debussy. They stayed on the shelf for twenty years before I had demos made. I framed Cyril Shane's rejection letter. It still hangs on my office wall alongside the giant poster advertising the album with a beaming Cleo and James staring into each other's eyes. Google "Drifting, Dreaming" and you'll find lots of links, but don't confuse it with Duke Ellington's "Drifting and Dreaming" recorded by, among others, Bing Crosby and Vera Lynn.

I in no way considered myself a lyricist. But it was fun to dabble. In 1985 I wrote some words to Debussy's "Claire De Lune", and Ravel's "Pavane For A Dead Infanta" only to learn that Ravel was still in copyright until January 2008. and therefore no one can create a new song from his works until that time. Many jazz musicians have used the instrumental version of the Ravel piece, Duke Ellington for one, but no lyrics may be added within the copyright period. How Hayley Westenra came to use Ravel's exquisite tune with lyric on her first CD remains a mystery.

I wrote a song dedicated to Ronnie Scott and his club naming some 60 musicians who had performed there. Bill Ashton, indefatigable Musical Director of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, said some nice things about the song but his singer at the time didn't think much of it. Too young to recognise the musicians I had named, no doubt. I can't sing it to you but here is the lyric:

GREAT SCOTT words & music by Don Read 23385

If you like jazz then head down to Ronnie Scotts
Every night's a musical treat

All kinds of folks from cockneys to Hottentots
Congregating down in Frith Street

Smart Beauticians, politicians
Love the sound that's so universal
Movie stars, a party from Mars
Sneak in just to catch a rehearsal

Now I'm gonna name
A few of the guys who came
And played their music in Ronnie's Hall Of Fame
The memories will remain
Life will never be the same

Stan Kenton brought a very large orchestra
"Peanut Vendor" broke up the crowd
They say they heard 'em down at the Dorchester
I don't think they were that loud

Jimmy Knepper, Art Pepper
Art Blakey, Wynton Marsalis
Francis Boland, three guys from Poland
Claimed they played with Parker in Paris

And Carmen McRae
A very neat Anita O'Day
I could have listened to Ella through 'til dawn
And Sassy, sweet Sarah Vaughan
Ain't you glad that jazz was born

Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins and Buddy Rich
Barney Kessel and Bobby Shriver
Frank Foster, Sonny Rollins and Woody Shaw
Milt Jackson-MJQ

John and Cleo blew in from Rio
Played the gig, moved on to Chicago
Things got busy, when they had Dizzy
Stan Getz played his "Desafinado"

Ben Webster was great
Charles Mingus arrived quite late

Miles Davis, Joe Pass and Buddy Tate
I don't really need to state
To them I can relate

Phil Woods, Bob Cooper, Bud Shank and Shelly Manne
Johnny Griffin and ...what's is name
Hank Mobley, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn and Archie Shepp
Clark Terry and John Coltrane

Harry Edison, Neils Orsted Pederson
Maynard Ferguson, Oscar Peterson
Cecil Taylor, now he was a wailer
Played requests for some drunken sailor

It makes you feel good
The way that all music should
So what is the magic this place has
It's home to the giants of jazz
It's really got bezaz

The Jones boys Hank, Joe, Max, Philly Joe and Thad
Peter King – the great Tubby Hayes
Stan Tracey, Basie, Herman and Ellington
Monk, before jazz funk was the craze

Roland Hanna played great piano
Thompsons-Barbara, Lucky and Eddie
Evans Bill, Evans Gill
Mother Hubbard's youngest son, Freddie

And Ronnie's old jokes
Brought chuckles to all the folks
So whether you like jazz cool or hot
We're grateful to Ronnie Scott
The guy who gave it all he'd got

TAG It don't mean a thing
If you ain't got Pete King
65 musicians plus the odd one out

CABLE ON THE TABLE

In 1984 the communications giant Rediffusion decided to set up the first cable TV operation in the UK. Homes throughout the land had been wired up in the thirties in order to rent a wireless for a weekly meagre amount. Much of the cabling was still intact or could be repaired. Four channels of programming were to be made available to homes with the cable in situ in 43 areas of which Nottingham and Mansfield were but two. These two locations were to be managed from a Mansfield depot. I somehow got involved with the PR side of this new venture.

The area manager, who had been with Rediffusion forever had, in the late forties, managed a radio station for the company in Barbados. For a festival he had hired the services of the Louis Armstrong band and repeatedly referred to Armstrong as "My old friend, Satchmo". You meet many show biz folk who like to think they are on intimate terms with the stars.. Susan had had dinner with the Alex Welsh band and the Armstrong band before I met her but she didn't bang on about Louis being her mate.

The brief with Cablevision, as this division was called, was to get 10,000 subscriptions within twelve months. This was accomplished by some devilish cunning and astute marketing. From his first floor office in Mansfield the regional manager could look out on a large car park full of vans bearing the legend Rediffusion. I suggested they all should have a diagonally mounted roof sign with just one word-CABLEVISION. The Nottingham Evening Post vans could be spotted from afar due to their roof signs.. I might just as well have suggested shooting the managing director. Head office would not permit such a thing.

I borrowed a car from the sales reps pool, mounted a roof rack and got a sign writer to produce a one word sign with the largest type face possible. CABLEVISION screamed out across the car park. I drove round the centre of Nottingham just so a few thousand shoppers could clock the name. Added to copious advertising and publicity photos etc no one was going to ignore this new innovation.

I had some twelve foot banners made and got the reps to go out at night when it was dark and tie them to barriers on main roads round the city centre. The police and local authorities tend to. Believe some important personage must have given permission for the banners and we got away with it for at least a week when a sharp letter from the city fathers demanded the banners be removed forthwith. By then another umpteen thousand Nottingham folk had seen the name CABLEVISION.

By the time the sales reps knocked on their doors they were prime customers. I gave the reps a photostat of a particular evening's fare on BBC1, 2, ITV and channel 4, the only terrestrial channels available. Everyone carried sports programmes. "Now Mrs Jones, if you don't like sport (and she didn't) that's not fair, is it?" Cablevision offered a choice of three or four extra channels –the fourth being a premium channel of films.

In March 1985 Robert Maxwell bought the entire Cablevision enterprise from Rediffusion, sold it on and it eventually became NTL.

BUCKS FIZZ

That was the year we went to Buckingham Palace. Susan had been Chairman Of Housing (note the Chairman status –not Chair or Chairperson or even Chairwoman-she believed in sticking to the traditional title). As is customary, the Mayor and his Lady get to attend a Buckingham Palace garden party and Susan, as a council official was invited along with myself in tow. Chauffeur driven limo, hired morning dress and all. A memorable event.

Susan was deeply entrenched in local politics with particular reference to housing matters. She served on the National Housing And Town Planning Council which brought her into contact with minister of the realm. One in particular, who had, during his heyday, just about every portfolio in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet, happened to be our own MP, Kenneth Clarke. At elections our home was used as a committee room and Ken and his wife Gillian were regular callers. It so happened that KC is an ardent jazz buff and when we met at functions he would invariably be surrounded by party members deep in discussion on political issues of the day.. At an opportune moment I would ask him about his visits to jazz venues both in London and abroad. Frequently in Washington he would head for the local jazz rooms. In the seventies it is said that he often shared a table at Ronnie Scott's with John Prescott. Jazz can demolish political boundaries even if it's just for an evening.

FANCY A TRUMPET SECTION?

Central Television had studios in Nottingham from whence emanated some show biz programmes for which session musicians were brought in from London. Their MD called to say that the guys often stayed in

Nottingham overnight due to working on several TV recordings. These chaps were the very cream of session men. They were usually at a loose end and did I fancy setting up a blow for the jazzers among their ranks?. I found a suitable venue, a bar in Milton St and got the word that Kenny Baker would be interested in being part of the session plus a couple of others. Bill Kinnell was staying with us and would naturally be interested in being at the session. Sod's law took over on two fronts. I was summoned to a conference in London on the day of the session and Nottingham experienced its foggiest day in years. Couldn't see your hand before you, as they say. I had to leave the session in the capable hands of Susan (a veteran of jazz club organisation) and Bill one of the most experienced jazz promoters in the country.

Kenny Baker and the three other top flight session trumpet players popped into the Bell Inn where a trad band was entertaining the meagre crowd that had braved the fog. The band's trumpet player had not made it through the pea souper. The trad musicians were in deep trouble. With no trumpet player the band would sound anaemic. Suddenly the clarinettist turned to the trombonist and, exclaimed in wonderment, "That's Kenny Baker standing at the bar". "Don't be ridiculous" was the apparent retort. The clarinet player eager to make use of this unexpected bonanza left the stand, went over to the bar and spoke, "Excuse me but aren't you Kenny Baker?" He received an affirmative reply and explained the band's dilemma. "Sorry, old chap" came Kenny's response. "I would love to help you out but I'm booked to play up the road but these lads are the best trumpet players in Britain. They'd love to have a blow". What transpired I never did find out but the mere thought of three of these wonderful session men sitting in must have made a memorable night for the amateur trad band and the few members of the audience.

SATELLITE YEARS AHEAD

I swatted up on satellite TV and in 1986 wrote three full -page articles for the Nottingham Evening Post on this miraculous medium which would transform our lives and bring many more delights to our existing four channel TV sets. "It will never catch on" said the dismal Jimmies "Four channels is ample". I found a company that owned hundreds of video jukeboxes and collected in the videos after a given period. These were wiped clean, boxed and sold as second hand for £1 each. I bought hundreds and sold them to the staff of factories. Video recorders were just catching on.

Our three children were now into further education. All were drawn to the arts. Twins Sara and Robert respectively went to the Italia Conte School Of Music & Drama. and Wimbledon College Of Art. Jane, by now a dazzling soprano, was at Trinity College Of Music sited on the former Dinley's Rehearsal Rooms of the Dankworth days.

1987: LONDON 3 DAYS A WEEK

Two jazz events. Sonny Rollins, American giant of jazz at Mansfield Leisure Centre and Sonny Stitt, Charlie Parker disciple at Grantham. Both events memorable.

The colossus of the tenor saxophone, Sonny Rollins, played a concert at Mansfield Leisure Centre. Don't ask me how this came about. Rollins is known for his ability to play long solos lasting up to and sometimes beyond twenty minutes with an amazing aptitude to create brilliant lines of superb jazz.

Sonny Stitt, a genuine disciple of the Charlie Parker school of bebop alto playing, switched to tenor and proved to be just as formidable on either instrument. Partnered by tenor player Red Holloway the two gave blazing interpretations of modern jazz virtuosity. Sat on the front row in the orangery of Belton House I revelled in this performance of my kind of jazz. Ernie Garside turned up and Danny Moss, one-time tenor player with the Dankworth band.

I was invited to team up with a London based company that sold floppy discs by the cart load to the likes of ICI, BBC. and other very large organisations. In those early days of computers you kept your files on floppies. A sales team of eight girls handled telephone sales. The two principals of the company had visited a satellite exhibition and fallen for the new concept. Although I was technically illiterate I was enamoured with this new innovation which promised lots of channels from a dish.

I commuted to London three days a week and set up the company's satellite division staying overnight at my two daughters' flat in Islington. The girls found a top floor flat in a distinctly stinky house but students will endure anything. Two rooms and a tiny bathroom. Their very odd octogenarian landlord, a Mr McPhail, called every Friday teatime for the rent in cash and a pep talk on how they were desecrating his beautiful

flat. Move the moth- eaten arm chair six inches to the left and you got an avalanche of verbals on rearranging the magnificent antique furniture, bought in a job lot from a scrap dealer. By the time it reached the top flat the smell from the ground floor had dissipated sufficiently to make life tolerable.

One Friday I hid behind a door and upon his arrival listened to this Dickensian landlord laying down the law. The girls had had the audacity to replace some curtains. They were on the verge of tears. I confronted the old sod and announced that I was their father and did not take kindly to my daughters being treated in this fashion. He calmed down, got his rent and fled. The following week he brought chocolates but still criticised their shifting some item of low quality furniture.

The crunch came when the girls woke up to the smell of gas emanating from a gas fire which was switched off. They phoned the gas company who came round and made the apparatus safe. They asked for the landlord's phone number and called him. He was plainly in breach of some regulation or other. That night he came round and played merry hell saying that the girls had no right to phone the gas company-they should have phoned him and he would have had a repair done by his dim odd job man. Illegal was his middle name.

As is customary the girls had laid out a deposit when taking on the tenancy. They gave notice of their intention to leave and requested the return of their deposit. No way. They had destroyed his wonderful flat, broken his antique furniture and caused trouble with the gas fire. All rubbish, of course.

They took Mc Phail to court and turned up looking immaculate. Even I wore my best suit and polished my shoes. McPhail and his very odd job man looked like tramps. The judge soon worked out who was telling the truth.

"And what are you studying Miss Read?" Music, your Honour". "Really that's most interesting. And your sister?" "Drama, your honour". "Fascinating". McPhail constantly interrupted and kept approaching the bench only to be told by the judge to SIT DOWN. I said my bit and the judge found in the girl's favour as they say in legal circles.

Some months later McPhail's photo appeared in a Sunday newspaper

with a story to the effect that he had refused the Post Office's attempt to upgrade his home telephone equipment which apparently was archaic. He was a millionaire having owned much of the property in Thornhill Square, Islington.

Sara completed her drama course at Italia Conte School of Music and Drama and stayed on to administer the drama course. Matthew Bennett had been a Bluecoat boy in the Nottingham school days. Even then he had set his eyes firmly on our youngest daughter. As so often happens she rejected his advances with the usual, "If Matthew rings tell him I'm out". They married in 1993.

Whilst the girls were still at Thornhill Square Matthew moved to London and got a job. He has moved on since then and is now UK MD of Alba. One Sunday evening in 1988 I drove down the M1 heading for the girl's flat ready for an early Monday morning appointment in London. Matthew drove to Nottingham. I arrived at the flat to learn that Matthew had just phoned to say that he had witnessed the aftermath of the Kegworth air disaster in which many people were killed.

Had I started out an hour earlier I would probably have seen the whole thing. The plane crashed across the M1 and into a grassy embankment just a few yards short of the East Midland Airport runway.

LOST AND FOUND

One night I heard the excellent BBC Big Band on the radio and an arrangement was credited to Les Williams. I had lost contact with Les since around 1961. I wrote to the programme's producer asking if he could put me in touch with my old friend. He replied giving me Les' phone number and we were soon chatting about old times. He was living alone in a flat in Kingston On Thames and I went along to visit him. He still did arrangements for bands and singers plus occasional broadcast assignments. There was always a few pounds to be earned from copying (arrangements by other arrangers). He was not in good health and although he spoke of a wife who was almost permanently in hospital, there were no photos around the flat. He claimed to have a son who was living in the USA but again no photos. I did suspect some degree of fantasy but I went along with whatever he said. I paid many visits to that Kingston flat over the next two years and we exchanged Christmas cards up until 2000 when he wrote to say he had had a

heart operation. That was the last I heard of him and innumerable phone calls went unanswered.

I learned about the technicalities of satellite TV on the hoof, talking to dish manufacturers, receiver designers et al. Do you know what an LNB is? Neither did I. It's the device that collects the satellite signal as it bounces off the dish and sends it to the receiver. In those early days of the fledgling industry, you required a dish measuring at least 1.2 meters in diameter to get a good signal and this was invariably ground mounted. A robust metal stand was necessary. To pick up more than one satellite the dish would need to traverse an arc. All the available satellites were in a western orbit so a clear line of sight was essential.

I had to find suppliers of dishes, stands, bracketry and receivers. I sourced dishes from Portsmouth making regular trips and tying up to six 1.2 metres dishes on the roof of my car. The stands came from a chap in Bradford who made them in his back garden. He put me in touch with a small firm in a Bradford suburb turning out receivers in a couple of prefabricated buildings. They were Pace and grew to become Europe's leading suppliers of satellite receivers. Barry Rubery, one of the two owners of the company met me on a lay by off the M1 near Mansfield and loaded our first order of a dozen receivers into my car boot. Barry left the booming company in the mid nineties 50 million quid better off.

Rupert Murdoch decided he was going to be the leading supplier of satellite programmes and started a company he called Sky. Their original offices were in central London. Not long after the first programmes came on stream I called the Sky offices to suggest that the film channel offered too many repeats. Some movies were repeated almost daily, due, no doubt, to an unsatisfactory supply chain. I spoke to a secretary and told her the purpose of my call. She asked me to hold and the next voice I heard was that of ex-Sunday Times editor and broadcaster, Andrew Neil. who Murdoch had appointed MD of the new organisation. I told him of my concern that the few viewers they had would dwindle even further if they did not correct the problem. He was courteous and thanked me for my comments. Nothing changed.

We gave around ten satellite systems to the Sky presenters. At that time Sky was reported to be loosing around £2 million a day and there was much scepticism about it's chances of survival.

Marketing satellite offered a veritable bonanza to the thousands of aerial installers throughout the country who took up the challenge of installing the complicated equipment against considerable hostility to the size of the dish. I spoke to many executives who demurely stated that their wives would not let them have such a blot on the landscape in their gardens. At around £1500 a throw the equipment was not cheap but with the passage of time more efficient technology brought the dish size down to 90cm and the price down to about £500. I conjured up various marketing slogans such as SATELLITE FANTASTIC and SATELLITE YEARS AHEAD but the Cypriot born director of the company simply did not recognise such genius for which Satchi and Satchi would have charged him a fortune.

I was walking through Soho one sunny afternoon when a disembodied voice shouted my name. I spotted Dave Lee, onetime Dankworth band pianist. I had heard of his involvement with a new jazz radio station to be called Jazz FM. Over lunch he told me of his plans. Ella Fitzgerald would open the station. Jazz luminaries from the US and UK would congregate at the launch party. Harold Davison and Norman Granz both financial backers along with city financial institutions would lend kudos to the venture and Ken Clarke would be on hand to lend political weight. Dave was in seventh heaven. As we parted he was on his way to meet Ross Russell, who had first recorded Charlie Parker and written the definitive book on Parker.

A year on, I visited Dave at his home in Kingston to discuss satellite TV for residents of the cul de sac in which and his wife Leila lived. Naturally the first thing I wanted to discuss was how Jazz FM had changed in the course of twelve months from a hard core jazz radio station into a pathetic shadow of its original remit. With a change of policy with what is laughingly called soft jazz, a genre that earned the likes of sax player Kenny Gee a fortune but was shunned by jazz fans. Endless wallpaper music to a pop beat. The accountants had come in, looked at the listening figures and fired Dave.

Susan and I were invited to John Dankworth's 60th anniversary concert at the Barbican. Old members of the original band were present and Cleo, of course, as was George Martin and his wife who had been his secretary in the old days. The London Symphony Orchestra were also on hand to play a few tunes. Quite a night.

In that first year in the Satellite saga I drove around a thousand miles a week. I wrote a handbook for installers with a preface intended to defeat the “it won’t catch on” brigade. I cited three prime ministers who had publicly derided television. Lloyd George, in a parliamentary debate on communications in 1938 told the house of commons, “Television? The British public won’t stand for it. There is no demand”. Well the second part was right. Only about 50 sets were in use and all in London.

In 1946 Winston Churchill called television “A tuppenny halfpenny punch and Judy show” and Clement Attlee, when electioneering in 1951, had a microphone thrust in his face by an eager young TV interviewer. “Would you care to say a few words to the viewers?” asked the BBC chap. “No” came the abrupt response as Attlee stormed away. What politician would refuse an opportunity to ‘say a few words to the viewers’ today?

CHAPTER EIGHT

On a "Tomorrow's World" TV programme (theme tune by John Dankworth) I watched a chap demonstrate a flat satellite TV antenna – couldn't call it a dish. It was a sheet of plastic measuring about 3ft square and printed on it a Fresnel ring configuration. With a bracket out front and the ubiquitous LNB he produced a clear signal of a Sky transmission.

Could this be the antidote to unsightly dishes? Affixed to a south facing wall the plate would pick up the satellite signals and if painted to blend in with the wall the equipment would be virtually invisible. I gave him the caption for a press photo "Flat Feat". He didn't react. He was a technician devoid of a sense of humour. That got the device a write up and photo in the Sunday Times.

I took an ordinary 90cm dish, made some bracketry and a fold up stand. My rear garden faces south. If I set the equipment up on the ground, pointed the dish to 23 degrees west and angled the contraption I could get a good picture on the monitor TV. Voila! the portable satellite system. I had the whole thing boxed and called a local car dealer who at that time was giving away video tape recorders with every car he sold. I persuaded him, after a demonstration, to buy a dozen portable satellite systems at £100 apiece and give them away in a sales promotion campaign.

I somehow managed to sell the first satellite systems to Rumbelows and Comet. Eventually the equipment got better and dishes smaller. There was still public hostility to the unsightly dishes and you couldn't erect them in conservation areas or on listed buildings. And there was still those executives' wives who wouldn't have one of those things on their house. No way.

Simple solution. I got a paint spray company to make up four colours – brick red, black and two shades of stone. Spray the dish the colour of the wall and it should be reasonably invisible. I gave the spray a name - DISHGUISE. I still have some in my garage if you want some.

ECLIPSED

I had been subjected to some instances of one-upmanship over the years. Back in 1962 Susan had phoned me late one night to say she

was with some business friends at the Stork Room and I was asked to guess who had just sung with the band. I was in bed, and in need of sleep, in no mood for guessing games. "Ella", she said before I could say George Formby. I asked her to explain. Ella Fitzgerald had come into the club with a few associates and had sung a couple of numbers with the house band. Artists of Ella's magnitude were not given to impromptu performances with strange musicians. But she had. I said Ella wasn't in the country and I was shot down. She was on a private visit.

In 1987 I opened my Sunday Times to see a half page photo of a girl sitting alone on a theatre stage. I read the caption and learned that this was Claire Moore, graduate of the Northern College Of Music, who was about to take over Sarah Brightman's role in the Lloyd-Webber hit musical "Phantom Of The Opera". I woke my family up. They had been regaled many times with my tales of visiting pianist Geoff Moore's Bolton home, to construct a song or two and how his young daughter had wandered in to hear what we were up to. As my sleepy family came downstairs I showed them the photo and said this had to be the Claire Moore who had listened so attentively as her father and I made some sense out of my feeble attempts to write songs. I phoned the Moore household later that morning, spoke to Geoff, with whom I had lost contact for some seventeen years and confirmed that this was, indeed the very Claire in question.

CHAPTER NINE

YES, MINISTER

In 1993 when Susan was chairman of the National Housing and Town Planning Council their annual conference was held in Brighton. A couple of years previous, when aware of the forthcoming event, she had asked Ken Clarke, our local MP and Health Minister at the time, if he would speak at the conference. He then became Home Secretary and Susan had said no matter what hat he was wearing the invitation still stood.

In June of that year Ken became Chancellor Of The Exchequer. Everything was still go until the week before the conference when Susan had an appointment at the Old St HQ of the NHTPC. Ann Holmes, Director of the organisation, passed her the phone saying, "I think you had better take this call - it's Downing St". Kenneth Clarke's secretary explained that PM John Major had called a cabinet meeting for the day of the conference. Susan's response was, "I don't care what time he gets there as long as he arrives". The speech was re arranged for later in the afternoon. Whatever the cabinet meeting was about it certainly interested the media. A posse of reporters followed Ken down to Brighton and the conference received considerable press coverage.

I got to chat to Ken briefly about his recent trip to Washington and the jazz he had encountered there. But I imagine he had more pressing matters on his mind.

Hylde, Les' wife, died in 1994. An original member of the tennis club of which Eric and Leslie were founders, she had partnered Les in various shop keeping enterprises. A greengrocers in Bradford, a hardware store in Moreton near Hoylake when they had joined the rest of the Reads on the Wirral in 1959, and a confectionery shop in West Kirby. She had nursed Les through many years of ill health

TO NUMBER 11

In the summer of '95 we were invited by the local Conservative Association, to join a coach trip to number 11 Downing St We arrived, walked up the short street after showing our identity documents and entered the Chancellor's official home. Ken and Gillian greeted us on the first floor and I was taken to his office which was somewhat untidy.

I recall there was a photo of British jazz trumpeter Ken Colyer. Gillian told us we were free to walk round the house but on no account were we to try and go through a particular door. It led directly into the PM's residence. We found our way into the kitchen, which juts out from the main building, affording a perfect view of the comings and goings in this epicentre of the world. We chatted to the couple who ran the kitchen. Not cooks but general helpers and they regaled with tales of past residents who had lived at No 11. They had been employed there for many years. From this vantage point we spotted a few familiar faces-mostly Ministers. It's an odd feeling.

We asked if we could go outside and take photos. We could. No sooner had a few of us stepped back into Downing St than Norma Major arrived and unloaded her shopping. Shortly afterwards the door opened and out stepped John Major who came over and asked where we were from. "Ah, Ken's constituency, He's been very good for us," said the PM. He apologised for seeming to mumble due to sucking a Polo mint. Trivia perhaps, but it's good to know that Prime Ministers suck Polo mints. It makes them seem almost human. The PM said he had to dash off to address the House. We didn't like to detain him.

Back into No 11 for tea and cakes then along to a pub for drinks and back into the coach for the journey back to Nottingham. It doesn't happen every day.

1996

My retirement year. But that doesn't mean you stop work. I spent some time on genealogy and I have much more to do. I also wanted to write an article about a strange event that happened 47 years earlier in 1949. At that time both Lou and I received by air mail copies of the American music magazine Downbeat. I will now let my article take over :

This article was broadcast on Jazz Notes, BBC Radio 3 on April 1st 1996 and appeared in Jazz Journal, May 1997.

ALL THAT CREWCUT

Nineteen forty-nine was a funny old year for jazz. Whilst young musicians were eager to absorb the innovatory complexities of bebop

an older generation of critics, musicians and fans had difficulty coming to terms with the burgeoning cult with its flattened fifths and sartorial and verbal eccentricities. The gulf between the traditionalists and the cool school of modernists grew ever wider.

The great debate on the state of jazz raged on, fuelled by some strange pronouncements such as Charlie Parker's assertion, made in a press interview, that bebop wasn't rooted in jazz and Woody Herman's claim that the public's declining interest in popular music was due to the fashion for long skirts. Remember the New Look?

Stan Kenton declared his intention to reform his band after a year out studying psychiatry and Chubby Jackson packed in his big bebop band and headed for the sticks to play for square dances. All very odd.

But that was nothing compared to the strange goings on in the editorial offices of the Chicago based music magazine, *Downbeat*. Whether as circulation booster or out of a genuine concern for the future of the music the powers that be at *Downbeat* decided that the term "jazz" was out-moded, passé, obsolete.

Downbeat's July 15th edition announced a competition inviting readers to submit their suggestions for a word to replace jazz. A full page entry form appeared on page 5. There would be 26 prizes with the outright winner receiving \$500 but this would be doubled if HE was a subscriber to the magazine. Note the HE.

The issue dated July 29th announced; 'What's The Word Contest Names Bernet Ork. As Second Prize'. Third prize was the Nat Cole Trio – yours for the evening, free! Other prizes ranged from dinner and a visit to a jazz club with a famous vocalist (no names) to record players, albums and tickets for Jazz At The Phil. concerts.

The hype continued and on August 26th we learned that a panel of four distinguished judges had been chosen. On their corporate shoulders fell the daunting task of choosing the 26 finalists from a veritable avalanche of entries.

The judges were three eminent jazz-loving professors of English, including a certain S. I. Hayakawa, described as a recognised semanticist. The fourth judge was Stan Kenton, the well known psychiatrist.

Although the deadline for entries was August 31st the world was kept in suspense until November 4th when the startling results were announced and one of the most embarrassing events in the history of musical journalism unfolded with Downbeat's front page headline, "CREWCUT, CONTEST'S \$1000 WORD".

Second choice was Amerimusic, (get it?) followed by Jarb (don't get it). Of the remaining 23 selections I thought Syncope, Improphony and Ragtibop all had a certain charm.

The humiliating exercise was summed up in a statement, and I quote, "The judges were unanimous in the opinion, shared by the editors of Downbeat that none of the hundreds of words submitted is adequate as a substitute for Jazz. The 26 terms they selected merely are the most logical and acceptable, if one were to be made".

The final word must go to the outright winner, Miss Esther Whitefield, a music librarian with a Los Angeles radio station. Asked how she came up with the name Crewcut she replied that it was simply the exact opposite of the name for classical music - Longhair.

I still fantasise about what might have happened had I entered the competition and won second prize, which I considered far more exciting than the lousy \$1000 first prize.

Picture the scene. It's 1949 and I'm living in the family semi-detached in suburban Bradford. I am looking forward to an evening in polishing my collection of Crewcut At The Philharmonic 78s. when the door bell rings. Suddenly I am confronted with 21 sharp-suited chaps in sunglasses trampling across our lawn. The man in front speaks, "Hi Don, I'm Charlie Barnet and these are the guys in the band. We're here to play some real cool Crewcut for you and your folks".

I'm struck dumb as they all squeeze in to our front room. A voice from the kitchen yells: "If I'd known you were inviting some friends round I'd have made some sandwiches".

Now I am in a state of acute euphoria and calling the shots. Bebop Spoken Here, Gloomy Sunday, and Cherokee. Maynard's in the band so we'd better have All The Things You Are and of course, my favourite Barnet number, Pompton Turnpike.

All goes well until the neighbours start throwing bricks and the emergency services arrive led by a man from the council demanding to see our music licence.

Maybe I should have settled for fourth prize, a night out with a famous vocalist. But where would I have taken June Christy on a wet Tuesday night in Bradford?

There is a postscript to this story. On the same page that the winning entries were announced there was a brief item to the effect that the Barnet band had broken up. The Herman band stood in as second prize but I don't suppose the guy who dreamed up Amerimusic worried too much about that.

In 1998 I mentioned this debacle to the great American trumpet player, Clark Terry when he played in Nottingham with John Dankworth. His eyes lit up, "Man, I've been dining out on that story for 50 years and nobody believed me".

1997 HOLME IS WHERE.....

Holme Lodge on Julian Rd, just four streets away from our house, is a Cheshire Home. A Victorian building converted in 1948 to a home for the disabled. Susan had been on their management committee for many years and I was asked to help in the celebration activities planned for the following year which would make the home's 50th anniversary.

The link between HOLME and HOME seemed to present a golden opportunity for making a marketing point. I wrote a song called "Holme Is Where The Heart Is" and got a trad band to demo it in the style of Louis Armstrong. He had had a hit in the forties with a song called "That's My Home" and I copied that style. This was to be the theme song for the year long celebrations. I had three twelve foot banners made bearing the legend, "HOLME IS WHERE THE HEART IS", which some people didn't understand and pointed out an apparent misspelling. We produced a concert at the Albert Hall (Nottingham not Knightsbridge), had fetes and a visit from HRH The Duke Of Gloucester.

I had met Lord Cheshire briefly in the mid eighties and as with so many people of his stature found an almost saintly aura around him. I was able to refer to my copies of the Illustrated London News for 1945 and

to the drawings of him sitting in the nose of the B29 that dropped the second atom bomb on Nagasaki. He was there as Britain's observer at the invitation of the American government. The experience made a lasting impression on this war hero who had won the VC for his exploits as a fighter pilot.

On his release from the services Cheshire helped a disabled ex-serviceman who was unable to find any organisation to take him in. That started a chain reaction resulting in an international group of many Cheshire Homes, a much under publicised charity.

REUNION

Susan and I went to a Kenton convention in Daventry in 1998. Kenton's repertoire was played by the excellent BBC Big Band (the only British band that gets regular broadcasts -every Monday Radio 2 10pm.) In the fifties there would be perhaps three a day and many would slip in an instrumental number from the Kenton library.

At Daventry two original Kentonites were on hand to play and recount anecdotes to a packed room. Trombonist Milt Bernhart joined the Kenton band at the age of 20 in 1946. Buddy Childers played lead trumpet when just 16. After years on the road both became session musicians in the Hollywood studios but still played jazz on non working nights. Bernhart can be heard soloing in that great Nelson Riddle arrangement of "I've Got You Under My Skin" by Frank Sinatra. I was able to pass on good wishes to Buddy Childers from Elaine Delmar. She lived in LA for a few years in the sixties and became friendly with the Childers family. He grabbed my arm when I mentioned her. "Is she here?" he asked. "Great girl-wonderful singer". We all have our heroes and Childers and Bernhart were definitely amongst mine.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE AGAIN- 37 YEARS ON

In 1999 Jane was in the cast of Phantom Of The Opera. She understudied the role of Carlotta, the second most important role in the musical, and she played the role on some 75 occasions. An after show party was attended by present and past members of the cast and some did their party pieces. In came a carbon copy of Cilla Black with all her eccentricities. It was Claire Moore. As the champagne flowed Jane introduced herself. "We've never met, but our fathers have". Claire remembered those song writing episodes at the Moore

family home in the sixties. This was at Her Majesty's theatre in the Haymarket where in 1962 I had met Richard Rodgers.

Sara graduated from the drama course at Italia Conte School Of Music and Drama, stayed on and administrated the course before deciding not to venture into the precarious world of the theatre. She married a colleague from school, Matthew Bennett, and worked for the Kier construction group in Bedfordshire. Today she looks after her husband, two sons and runs her own PR company from their rural home. Matthew is UK head of an international marketing company.

Son Robert had taken a Saturday job when he left Bluecoat school which he attended with his sisters. The job with a shirt designer in an alleyway opposite Paul Smith's first shop. Robert had aspirations to become an artist but when he moved to London to attend Wimbledon School Of Art he got a Saturday job with HMV and this pointed him in a different direction. He worked at the Oxford St store and became manager of their Sutton branch. In 1999 he applied for the position of Retail Operations Manager with the BBC with a remit to oversee the organisation's retailing operations. He applied at 10am and by 4pm he had been offered the job. He witnessed Greg Dyke's arrival at the Beeb and his untimely departure. In September 2006 Rob took over the position as Operations Director at Tate Enterprises and was responsible for marketing the George and Gilbert book amongst many others. An avid collector of sci fi comics in his teens he graduated to records and his flat is adorned with shelves jam packed with CDs, videos and books on art and movies. Our garage is a repository for his larger works of art and boxes of carefully wrapped sci-fi comics. Worth a fortune on E Bay, I imagine.

In her capacity of committee member of the National Housing And Town Planning Council Susan had monthly meetings in London and would make a point of seeing the children. One Friday she took Jane to one of the regular free lunchtime sessions at 100 Oxford St., scene of our revelry in the trad jazz days. I doubt if Jane was enamoured with the banjo dominated trad band on stage but she got a shock when the band stopped and leader Micky Ashman, one time bass player with the Chris Barber band, leapt off the stage and with a loud "SUE!". Gave her mum a big hug. They don't do that with ENO at the Coliseum.

These days 100 Oxford St is like a time warp on Friday lunchtime sessions. The place is full of "old" people. I dare say I knew some of

them forty years ago but I recognised very few the last time we popped in. We did recognise one lady. The only table we could get was occupied by two people one of whom was actor Liz Smith. Apparently she is, or was, a regular at the club. You will know her from TVs the Royle Family and most Mike Leigh films. She was 50 before getting into serious acting. She is now 85.

As I have said, we all suffer the indignity of being upstaged by our children, or spouses and I am no exception. After the Susan and the Ella experience there were to be more. Susan casually reported that before we met she had had dinner with Louis Armstrong. Oh, yes and I've just had an audience with the Queen.

In 1958 She had been out with the Alex Welsh band, that excellent acceptable face of Trad/Mainstream/Chicago jazz. They had been supporting the Armstrong band here for an anti-apartheid concert at the Festival Hall. The Dankworth band were on the bill and I was backstage. Susan was in the stalls. We were destined not to meet for another four years. She dined with Satchmo whilst I went home. No justice.

After the show they went for a Chinese meal at The Lotus House on Edgware Rd naturally Susan went along. She struck up a conversation with Peanuts Hucko, Armstrong's clarinettist at that time. He was with the Glen Miller band when it arrived in the UK in 1944. Hucko sent Susan postcards from all over the place for some years. Coincidentally I booked him into the Nottingham hotel Friday sessions in 1978.

"CAN I BRING MY DAD?"

Eddie Daniels is an excellent American saxophone player and a brilliant clarinettist. I saw him with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band at the Village Vanguard in New York with Lou in 1974.

In 1989 Jane was at Trinity College Of Music and Daniels came to play a lunchtime recital. After some Mozart he moved across the musical spectrum to some jazz and noticed this young lady on the front row tapping her foot. This must have been the worst chat up line any musician could come out with. "I couldn't help noticing you were the only one tapping your foot". Jane told him of the family connection with foot tapping music and he moved into phase two chat up. "Well, I am playing at Ronnie Scott's tonight. Why don't you come down-just mention my name and you can walk straight in" "Love to" replied my

cautious daughter, "So long as I can bring my Dad". He could hardly say no.

I arrived at the appointed time outside Ronnie's and joined the queue whereupon Jane emerged from the famous jazz Club, yanked me out of the queue with a, "You don't have to queue- I've squared it with Eddie Daniels". The cheek. After all my years in the jazz business and my daughter gets me into Ronnie's for free.!

GETTING THE ABBEY HABIT

Her last bit of one-upmanship was in 2001 when, as a first call member of the classical session singing group London Voices, she was at Abbey Rd studios (in the very studio I had visited many times with the Dankworth Band and George Martin). This session was for Dave Brubeck who wanted to present his long standing publisher with a gift- a recording of a specially written oratorio. In addition to the 50 strong London Voices the LSO also attended.

Jane phoned me at our home in Nottingham. "Listen to this". She held her mobile phone round a door and I could clearly hear the immediately identifiable sound of the Dave Brubeck quartet. They're just having a little session before resuming the recording" She explained the whole reason for being there. I didn't know Brubeck was in the country. Another private visit.

CHAPTER NINE

2000: A BRUBECK BY ANY OTHER NAME

A year earlier I had taken a phone call from a Nottingham based girl singer to say that the previous night she had a gig at the University. Afterwards a very tall chap with an American accent came up and said how much he had enjoyed her singing. After some chat she asked him quizzically, "I think I ought to know you". Darius Brubeck", came the reply. "You may have heard of my father, Dave". Collapse of girl singer.

I asked her if she got his phone number and what was he doing in Nottingham? She hadn't got his phone number but I tracked him down, left a message and he called me. He explained that he was here to study music (a nice tribute to our distinguished university), do some tutoring and would be living on the campus for a couple of months. He had brought along his wife from their home in Durban, South Africa.

That night we took the Brubecks on a tour of ye old Nottingham and to dinner in a pub. The following Sunday Tommy Saville's big band was performing their monthly gig in West Bridgford where we live and we took the Brubecks along. The girl singer got some lessons from Darius (named after Dave's one time mentor Darius Mihaud). And I got some photos which the Nottingham Evening News were pleased to publish. I told Susan not to mention "Take Five", the enormous hit of Brubeck's. Darius must get fed up of people telling him it's their favourite jazz record. However it did come up in conversation and he dismissed it by saying, "Well it did put me through college". I'll bet it did. He couldn't understand why trad jazz was so popular in Nottingham rather than modern jazz. Frankly neither could I.

SHOOT THE GOALIE!

There is an assumption that if you are a male you must like football. It is taken for granted. Sit next to someone on a bus and they are quite likely to discuss the merits of the striker in the local team and why the manager must go. I have never understood this desire to inflict one's opinions on complete strangers. I tend to get my own back by retaliating with a non- stop account of some jazz event. Here is an example.

I had arrived at the studios of Radio Nottingham to do an interview about something or other. It might well have been about the great Eccles cake mystery which a particular afternoon presenter found interesting enough to invite me to pontificate on the innards of half a dozen examples I had purchased from various bakers. As I entered the building a chap was on his way out. I held the door open for him to pass and he started. "Did you see that goal on television last night? My cat could have saved that. Call himself a goalie?. And that striker, what's his name? He should be pensioned off. Well past his sell by date. I don't know what Forest are playing at. It certainly isn't football" and on he went. I struck back with a vengeance. "But what about the Duke Ellington band at Newport in '56 when Paul Gonsalves (tenor sax) played twenty six choruses on "Diminuendo And Crescendo In Blue" and the crowd went wild. One of the great jazz performances of all time. Have you got the CD?"

The football fanatic glared at me and uttered just two words. "Yer Wot!" "Ha", I said, "You don't know what I'm talking about and I don't know what you're talking about because you probably don't like jazz and I don't like football". With that I disappeared into the august surroundings of my local radio station and gave an expert dissertation on the Great British Eccles cake mystery. Expert? Well, when we lived in Salford we were just two miles from the original Eccles cake shop in Eccles.

Nottingham's Broadway Arts Centre announced a five day season of jazz films. On closer inspection I noticed that apart from the famous "Jazz On A Summer's Day", all the other "films" were, in fact, some of the Jazz 625 TV tapes made in the mid sixties and featuring the cream of British and American jazz musicians and bands. They were produced by Terry Henebery who now lived in semi retirement near Otley in Yorkshire. It so happens that I had a cousin who lived about a mile away and I had visited said cousin and then Terry and his wife after dropping Susan at her annual housing conference in Harrogate in 1998

I asked the Broadway manager if they would like to have a guest appearance by the man responsible for these historic programmes. He said he would and I arranged for Terry and his wife to have dinner with us prior to a trip to the theatre. After the performance Terry was announced and gave a fascinating insight as to what it was like working with these jazz legends followed by a questions session which lasted until after midnight.

In August 2000 Jane married Matthew Hargreaves, a bass/baritone who worked freelance but often with Welsh National Opera. They met whilst touring in L'Elisir d'Amore. We caught up with that production in Lincoln and noticed glints in their eyes.

Matthew's family are a very interesting group of people. His father, Robert, was ITN Washington correspondent in the seventies and interviewed Nixon, Kissinger et al at the time of the Watergate scandal. Uncle Roger Hargreaves created the Mister Men books, brother Martin is an excellent artist specialising in illustrating books. And so it goes on.

I received a letter from the TV presenter Bob Holness saying that he was to compere an event at Wavendon the John & Cleo's home. They moved into the Old Rectory in the sixties and converted a stable block into a small theatre. In the late nineties they were able to rebuild and turn the dilapidated building into a 400 seater theatre with modern equipment, lighting, dressing rooms etc. They had a ceremonial launch which Princess Margaret attended. The following night was a gala night with members of the original band and some very well known guests including Mrs Henry Mancini. It was something akin to "This Is Your Life" with John sitting in a very large arm chair whilst some of those who had passed through his career related some anecdote. The purpose of Bob Holness' letter was to invite Susan and I along and would I care to recount some significant event from my days in the Dankworth domain?

I did ten minutes on the Kenton/Dankworth party in Frith St 1956. but was eclipsed by an hilarious story from the mid fifties by ex bass trombonist Garry Brown. He and half a dozen of the band members were trawling through West Hartlepool before the band's performance in a local hall, looking for a B and B for the night. It was a late dance and they would not be able to book in until around 1.30am After an exhaustive tour of the town they found a B&B with the Vacancies sign in the window. They found the landlady and she confirmed that she could accommodate them. They were pushed for time and didn't bother to check out the accommodation.

Upon returning to the digs at 1.30am the landlady greeted them and led them upstairs. They could distinctly hear considerable snoring emanating from a room. In fact it was the sound of mass snoring and as the door was opened they saw before them a dormitory with about

fifteen occupied beds. They were horrified and pointed out that they expected single or twin bedded rooms not a dormitory full of truck drivers. The landlady was equally shocked. "I'll have you know these men are not any old truck drivers, these are with Eddie Stobart".

It was good to chat to members of the original 1953 band and various radio and TV folk. and, of course, John and Cleo.

2002: MILLER'S MAGIC MUSIC

It is common practice to celebrate the centenaries of the famous and there is a flurry of activity amongst devotees of Glen Miller, the bandleader whose distinctive style of popular music brought joy to countless millions during the war. His music lives on in the tribute bands here and in the USA who rekindle the memories of an older generation that danced, sang and fell in love to "Moonlight Serenade" "Tuxedo Junction" "Pennsylvania 6-5000", "My Guy's Come Back" and dozens of other well remembered tunes of a distant era. Miller was born on March 1st, 1904 and as we know died on a flight from England to Paris on December 15th, 1944. His stay in the UK was tragically just a few short months.

I always regarded Miller's music as peripheral to my core interest-jazz, but just as any jazz musician would have a high regard for Frank Sinatra most would feel an affinity to at least some of Miller's music. The band had a liberal sprinkling of jazz musicians who were given a chance to shine in the small group contingent known as the Uptown Hall Gang.

During the war I saw the films in which the Miller band appeared, "Sun Valley Serenade"(1941) and "Orchestra Wives"(1942). In 1953 a somewhat inaccurate biopic got the Hollywood treatment but "The Glen Miller Story" enabled us to relive the memories of those Saturday lunchtime BBC broadcasts the band gave when, as the American Band Of The Allied Expeditionary Force, it was posted to England early in 1944. The nearest I got to the Miller magic was in 1970 when, as a music agent in Manchester I negotiated Syd Lawrence's new Miller style band its first one night stands. In 1978 I booked clarinettist and sax player Peanuts Hucko, onetime Miller musician into a jazz club at a Nottingham hotel. A good chance to chat about working with the great band.

Fast forward to May 2002 when I spent a few days with our youngest daughter, Sara, and family at their Bedfordshire village home. On this warm spring day I had lunch in the garden whilst listening to radio 4 on my mini radio. At 1-30pm I heard the strains of “Moonlight Serenade” and a voice- over announcing the start of a new series devoted to the stories behind famous pieces of music. The first in the series was to be Glen Miller’s theme tune. Now I knew that after a brief stay in London the Miller band had been based in the Bedford area. The radio programme was about to be more informative.

A succession of interviews, including one with the last remaining survivor of that illustrious band unfolded in detail. Then a local lady, who must have been well into her late seventies, told how she and her friends would meet up at Milton Ernest Manor, where the band was based, on Friday nights and dance with G. Is stationed just up the road at Thurleigh airbase. This was eerie. As I looked out across my daughter’s garden, the village of Milton Ernest lay a mile down the road. To my left the garden led to a field at the end of which was a railway line with a constant swish of Midland Mainline trains scurrying by. Beyond this the ground rose to a high plateau where a water tower was clearly visible. Thurleigh airbase was, alas no more. It was just an unspectacular industrial estate with a adjacent Ministry of Defence facility.

After the broadcast I jumped into my car and headed for Milton Ernest Manor now a nursing home. I stood in the grounds of the distinguished looking building and if this had been a movie I dare say the ethereal sounds of eighteen khaki-clad musicians and a bespectacled leader announcing the next number would have echoed around my ears.

I drove up the hill to Thurleigh and, yes, the area had all the hallmarks of a derelict air base now littered with industrial units. The water tower at least looked like a relic of wartime England.

Back at my daughter’s home in tiny Radwell I looked out for seventy something folk, eager to ask them if they had danced to Glen Miller’s band. I soon realised that virtually all the residents were newcomers. I asked my daughter to enquire around but I rather think she opted out of this particular bit of research. Nostalgia? It definitely is what it used to be.

In 2007 we visited the Miller museum at Twinwood from where the fatal flight took off. Lots of photos of the band and visiting celebrities such as Bing Crosby, Bob Hope etc.

Somewhat less known was another American service band that landed in England around 1944. This was Sam Donaghue's navy band. The fact that they were based in Plymouth and eclipsed by the mighty Miller band did not help them build a reputation but it was one hell of a band. More jazzy than Miller's.

MASTER OF THE JAZZ CAMERA

We attended a reception at a gallery in Notting Hill to launch David Redfern's second book. And as with his first book he recounted the days at Abbey Gardens and his first foray into jazz photography. He had gained considerable success in his field. His photos of great American jazz stars were used on US postage stamps. He had had access to Miles Davis, Frank Sinatra and most jazz greats. Sinatra asked him to take a passport photo and allowed him on to the stage whilst he was performing. David opened a New York office and started a photo library, which the national press regularly uses. We were to visit him again at his 65th birthday celebrations in 2005.

David Redfern and Chris Wright's Chrysalis organisation are just a hundred yards apart on Bramley Rd West London.

John Dankworth was awarded the CBE in the early seventies, Cleo the OBE in 1979. She was made a Dame in the nineties and John became a Knight in 2006. They will both be 80 in 2007. No other couple in jazz have had so many accolades as this amazing duo. She from humble beginnings, an audition with the JD Seven leading to worldwide fame and John, a remarkable talent as a musician, arranger, bandleader and Cleo's musical director. Their son, Alec, is a world class bass player who has worked with Dave Brubeck and many other UK and American leading jazz musicians and daughter Jacqui, a fine singer following in her mother's footsteps. John gave employment to more musicians than anyone in the British band business. Some tremendous talent graced the ranks of the band-drummer Kenny Clare, trumpeters Dickie Hawdon and Eddie Blair (an original Seven member), tenor saxist Danny Moss and Bill Le Sage to name but a few.

THEN THERE WERE TWO

On September 14th My nephew Derek phoned to say that my brother Leslie was in hospital and I should visit him. He was not expected to last very long. I drove up to the Wirral the next morning and was at his bedside when he passed peacefully away. He was 85 My remaining brother, Jack was there. Les had suffered a whole spate of illnesses and I regret only seeing him once a year when I made my pilgrimage to the remaining family after taking Susan to her annual conference in Harrogate. For the previous few years I had found Les sitting watching TV breathing in oxygen from a tube.

MORE LYRICS FOR CLASSICS

This next item spans five years. In 2002 I decided to re-promote “Drifting, Dreaming”, the lyric I had written in 1978 and which had been recorded by Cleo Laine and James Galway in 1980. I wrote to the then publisher and suggested he might push the song around the current generation of singers such as Aled Jones, Katherine Jenkins, Stuart Watson etc.

He did not seem too keen on the idea and actually asked me what I really wanted him to do. I had just told him but perhaps he was so busy with his pop repertoire that he wasn't really listening to me.

I sent the music and lyric of “Drifting, Dreaming” to Pamela Cook, the Mansfield based musical director of the girls' choir, Cantamus. She replied saying that, yes, it might well be suitable for the choir and meanwhile why didn't I talk to her arranger, Michael Neaum? Mike and I met up and he suggested that I pick up where I had left off in 1978 and write more lyrics to classical compositions. He sent a tape of 20 extracts of well known pieces by Albinoni, Chopin, Beethoven and for good measure two more by Satie. I set about trying to fit in some appropriate words. I threw in some of my own choices including an item by Miles Davis which had intrigued me for several years.

In the sixties Davis had written a cute little piece of music for his stepson, Jean Pierre. A very simple tune. So simple, in fact, that he wouldn't perform it publicly. He played it in the dressing room to warm up and his musicians would ask him if they could use it on stage. “No, man we don't play children's tunes”, was his constant response. It took until the early eighties before the public heard “Jean Pierre”. On one particular night Miles asked the band what they would like to play and someone said, “Hey, Miles, man, why don't we do that Jean Pierre thing?” Miles must have been in a good mood because he agreed to play it and it

was so well received by the audience that it became the final number of most of their concerts thereafter. In 1998 I contacted the British publisher, Sony, and asked permission to add a lyric to Mile's tune. They contacted the Davis estate's attorney and permission was granted on a 50/50s split of the royalties. A deal I did not expect. The title had to be changed slightly so that any royalties did not slip into the Davis bank account. the title is now, "The Story Of Jean Pierre" and it is very definitely a children's song.

ARTICLE ON LYRICS FOR CLASSICS 1.7.03

Newspapers and magazines are awash with articles about the problems besetting classical music. Sales of records are down, attendances at performances are plummeting, school children can't tell an oboe from a triangle etc. Were it not for subsidies, sponsorships and grants the genre would simply collapse we are told.

"What more can we do to attract audiences, particularly young people?" cry the critics and musicians. Well I don't claim to have the answer but I do have a format that might help.

Classical music is art but depends on support from marketing, PR, design and advertising people just as with any other product. In an effort to popularise it, there are those who go to extremes such as the wet T shirt brigade like Opera Babes, who add drum and bass to Dvorak, Bond (beautiful people) and Vanessa May with her electric fiddle. Some producers feel nudity or a row of men sitting on lavatories will bring in audiences.

I believe there are less radical methods well worth pursuing. For instance a tasteful lyric to a well known classical piece of music can be aesthetically acceptable and give the music a greater identity. Overlay a lyric to the music and it becomes a song. Give the song a title such as "Tomorrow Is Forever" (my song version of Albinoni's Adagio In G) and you have a much more identifiable tag and one which doesn't scare non-classical members of the public.

Of course there are those who would consider adding words to a great work by Mozart sacrilege and I admit they have a point, but some melodies seem to be crying out for a lyric and indeed the concept is by no means new. I remember as a child during the war hearing a record

of an American dance band on the radio playing a tune called "This Is The Story Of A Starry Night". I didn't know it was Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 6. Around the same time a popular song was a catchy little number again from America with the title "So Deep Is The Night". It was the melody of Chopin's Etude In E Major. If you had announced the original titles to my mother and countless millions of people they would have run a mile. But this was "dance music," tuneful and acceptable. They sang along with it. Two classical pieces got a new lease of life. Anything wrong with that?

So why not entice people who would not normally buy a classical CD or attend a classical concert with a few different interpretations of music they know but wouldn't normally spend money on?

Turning a hitherto orchestral piece of music into something that a choir, quartet or soloist can sing need not be offensive providing the lyric is tasteful. No pop slang, no slurred sloppy rhymes and in the hands of a skilful arranger who stays as faithfully to the original music as the addition of words will allow, the whole effect can be enjoyable and dare I say, commercially viable.

How many composers wrote music to existing poems? What I am proposing is simply reversing the process. Oh, yes. I have injected a little humour as well.

2003: ENIGMATIC

On their birthday, August 12th (grouse shooting begins) I took the twins, Robert and Sara to Bletchley Park. I was fascinated by this establishment which had played an immeasurable part in winning the war. I had read the novel about Bletchley's activities and since we were visiting Sara and Matthew's home about twenty miles from Bletchley I thought it an opportunity to let them see just how important the place had been to the war effort. Bletchley and its secrets were kept under wraps until around the early eighties. Those who had worked there during the war were sworn to secrecy and such was their loyalty that spouses had scant knowledge of what their other half had been doing in the war. The goings-on at this famous country manor revolved around the ENIGMA coding machine by which the Germans were able to send messages about allied shipping movements in the Atlantic. There were massive convoys of allied ships bringing much needed supplies to our shores from America. The Germans were intent on sinking as many as

possible. We captured an Enigma machine in 1941 and the brightest brains in Britain set about the daunting task of finding out just how it worked. This involved building what was, in essence, the world's first computer named Colossus. A replica is on view at Bletchley Park.

A conducted tour round all the huts where up to 7000 service personnel worked in shifts code-breaking messages from German Enigma machines, took around three hours. I felt it vital that our children, well two of the three, should know about this installation without which we might well have lost the war. The book "Enigma" by Robert Harris is fiction but so much of it is fact.

2004: SPANISH INQUISITION

In February 2004 we were invited to spend a brief holiday with a friend of Susan's in Mijas, a village near Malaga. Margaret Shotton is a Doctor of Philosophy and had lived in Nottingham until moving to Spain in 2001. She had been a regular early morning visitor to McDonald's in Beeston, a Nottingham suburb, where she noticed Susan buried in her Times and Telegraph crossword puzzles. They struck up a friendship and Margaret became an avid crossword addict. Their choice of venue was largely governed by the endless supply of free coffee after you had bought the first cup.

We spent a delightful three days with Margaret and decided to move on to Malaga for the last three days. On our final day we realised that, although we had seen most of the sights, we had yet to visit the recently opened Picasso Museum. This was an inconspicuous building down a side street just a few minutes walk from our hotel. We arrived some ten minutes before the 10am opening and joined a group of around a dozen tourists waiting for the doors to open. Susan disappeared into a shop and as she emerged I noticed the arrival of a vaguely familiar man aged around 65. Brown jacket, sun glasses, trilby and walking stick. "Who does that remind you of?" I asked Susan. She hesitated and ventured a guess, "David Hockney?". "It is David Hockney" I spluttered. He nodded a sort of greeting. I couldn't resist an opening gambit. "Good morning, good to meet a fellow Bradfordian so far from home". That broke the ice. And we chatted about our home town. We had visited the Hockney exhibition, which takes up four floors, at Salt's Mill in Shipley, the scene of childhood expeditions to the mobile home near Shipley Glen. Two of Hockney's male friends joined in the conversation. "Have you been to Barcelona?" asked the world

renowned artist. We hadn't. "You must go," he said. "The cathedral is awe inspiring." We knew that. It's reputation was legendary. Hockney chain smoked and bemoaned the petty restrictions we in the UK had to endure. Through the slight American accent there was still a trace of Yorkshire. You never lose it.

Promptly at 10am the doors opened, we trooped in and up the stairs. Hockney produced a purse, took out some money and bought an admission ticket. No one recognised him. He checked in his camera at security as did we and into the first gallery we went. I asked Susan not to crowd him. so we kept a discreet distance. However, whenever we got up close to one of Pablo's great works of art there was David peering over our shoulders explaining the nuances of the work. Susan spotted a sculpture and over he came and told her much more about it than the guide could have done.

There was an amusing incident when we spotted an attendant seemingly admonishing Hockney over we knew not what. Hockney appeared to accept whatever criticism was being levelled at him but the attendant kept pointing to the walking stick. The museum had only been opened three months and apparently here was some upstart stabbing his cane into the pristine floor. Suddenly an office door opened and out came a female official with clip board She almost ran towards the attendant and, although we were out of earshot, she obviously ordered the poor man to back off. She knew who he was telling off even if no one else did-apart from us.

After we completed our tour of the galleries we headed down to the basement hoping for more artistic delights. It was just a basement but sure enough David and his pals followed us. Upon leaving the building I did something I don't think I have ever done in my life. No, I didn't want his autograph-just a photo. I took a shot and one of the accompanying young gents took two more.

We said our goodbyes and headed for some alfresco coffee. We phoned our very artistic son, Robert at his BBC desk. "Guess who we've been chatting to?" At first he didn't believe us but soon joined in the excitement.

There is a follow- up to this story. In 2005 we found ourselves staying at a rural hotel near Bridlington where Hockney's mother had lived and his sister still did. The hotel had a small gallery with some paintings, the

work of the owner's father. There was a copy of the Guardian opened at a page showing a large photograph of David Hockney. At dinner that night we asked if we might meet the artist. He came to our table and it transpired that he was a personal friend of Hockney and if we were staying through to the following lunchtime he would be at the hotel. Regrettably we had a lunch appointment in Whitby but as the story unfolded the artist revealed that he had set up locations in the area for Hockney to paint. The results were exhibited at the Annely Juda gallery in London in 2007.

Robert bought us a reproduction of Hockney's Mr and Mrs Clarke and Percy for Christmas 2006. It complements Hockney's painting of Salts Mill which adorns our staircase. Susan spotted this on a postage stamp some years ago and wrote to the post office head office people who sent her the poster. In case you don't know the painting, Ozzie Clarke was a fashion designer in the sixties and Percy, his cat.

On 7.7.07 Robert, married the lovely Hungarian lady Ibolya Nemeth, who worked at Bush House when Rob was retail operations manager at the Beeb. They have travelled abroad extensively and currently live in North London..

BIRTH OF THE COOL 1.4.05

"Man, I'm so cool it hurts!" That's the kind of expression you might associate with any streetwise teenager in today's society. If you think that the adjective COOL, in the context of restrained or relaxed is the exclusive property of youth you would be wrong. The phrase I quoted emanated from a musician as he stepped down from the band bus in Kirkcaldy on a wet Tuesday lunchtime in 1955. Even then COOL had already been around for several years.

The word like so many catch phrases came from the American jazz fraternity. The emergence in the late forties of a new generation of young musicians eager to embrace the more harmonically complex style pioneered by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk et al was described by musicians, critics, and fans as cool as distinct from the hot jazz of the twenties and thirties. The raucous exhibitionism of Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller and Cab Calloway was an embarrassment to the young protagonists of the new genre who wanted to prove that black jazz musicians could behave seriously. Some adopted an almost blank mien. It became unfashionable to clown about on stage (unless

you were Dizzy Gillespie) and the epitome of cool was Miles Davis who, partially due to a throat condition, confined his performances to playing and rarely made announcements. His music was ultra cool. Musicians wore shades to keep the real world out. How cool is that?

If you saw the show/film "Sweet Charity" you may recall the wonderful example of coolness in the dance sequence with Sammy Davis Jnr. and a chorus performing the most "laid back" routine ever. They were so cool they almost fell over. By the way, 'man' was a general term aimed at both sexes.

So cool has been with us certainly since 1947 when Charlie Parker recorded his tune, "Cool Blues". Oddly it wasn't until 1957 that Miles Davis had an album of compositions recorded some years earlier called "The Birth Of The Cool". Eventually the pop music world adopted the word.

But some expressions have a shorter life. That favourite of trade unions, "At this point in time" is rarely heard these days and references to 'level playing fields', 'clear blue water' and 'take a rain check' have slid quietly out of public consciousness. "Pants", which is decidedly uncool since being uttered by Jack Straw virtually disappeared and was replaced by "sucks" (lousy). Youth will always have its own vocabulary which will inevitably change with the years. Cool seems to have a determined longevity. There is a new John Travolta movie out called Be Cool and I am willing to bet that some elderly jazzers, come next December, will be sending Christmas cards inviting the recipients to "Have A Cool Yule".

My brother Jack died in hospital on July 14th 2006. Irene phoned with the bad news. I had not been given sufficient warning to travel to see him. He was 80. So now there was just me left of we four brothers. The generations come and go. I thought of our grandchildren – a new generation and so it goes on.

MUCH MORE ON LYRICS FOR CLASSICS

In 2004 Pamela Cook agreed to have Cantamus demo four of our songs, these were "Child" (Air On A G String), "At Midnight" (Claire De Lune), "Country Scene", (Warlock- Capriol Suite) and "If We Were In Love" (Chopin- Etude In E Major). Three months later we were in a Mansfield church to record ex Cantamus soprano, Rebecca von Lipinsky demo-ing four more of the Lyrics For Classics collection. These were

“Childhood Days” (Satie- Gymnopedie No3), “The Story Of Jean Pierre”, (Miles Davis), “Seascape” (Satie-Gnossienne No1) and “Drifting, Dreaming” which Cleo Laine had recorded in 1980.

Although there are eighteen songs in the collection we decided to demo just thirteen. Jane and Matthew did the final five. “Drifting, Dreaming”, (Satie Gymnopedie No1)-I had to have my daughter’s rendition if only for the family archives. “To A Wild Rose” (Macdowell), and “Mirage” (Debussy), “Beautiful Miracle” (Ravel) and “Danse Gastronomique” my take on Saint-Saëns “Danse Macabre”. The latter being a humorous lyric somewhat in the style of Edward Lear’s nonsense poems.

SCARY FAIRY

It’s not easy getting a whole bunch of songs before the public so I hit upon the idea of doing something a little outrageous (at least within the classical genre). A parody on “Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy”(Hairy Fairy), has some ever so slightly suggestive words. A letter from the choir secretary of a very well known Derby company suggested that if I sent them one of the songs they just might record it for demonstration purposes thus saving me the expense. Very kind of them. I sent them “Hairy Fairy” and got a sharp response to the effect that the choir director had seen the lyric and felt that some of the words were obscene and not the sort of thing she could put before her choristers and the respectable audiences for whom they perform.

Wonderful stuff. Just the sort of publicity I revelled in. Remember that letter I wrote to the Bradford Telegraph and Argus in 1947 criticising the performance of jazz on the Sabbath? To add to the controversy the Nottingham Girl’s High School choir had performed “Hairy Fairy” (albeit with a couple of words changed) at an end- of- term prize giving event. The staff and students seemed to love it. Then there was Sinfonia Chorale, 42 piece mixed choir that performed the song in two churches without one complaint or even a strong letter to the parish magazines. That choir has recorded three more songs from the Lyrics For Classics collection.

I got a neighbour to build me a website. www.lyricsforclassics.com is available for all the world to hear the demos of ten soundclips plus free downloads of “Hairy Fairy” and “Danse Gastronomique”. As I write this there have been 9500 free downloads of these two songs. Peanuts for a pop song but not bad for a semi classical parody. Our first customer

for arrangements of the songs was the children's organisation "Stagecoach". They bought sixteen arrangements.

NOTE; Jane is friendly with Sarah Connolly, world class soprano who is equally at home at Covent Garden or the Met in New York. If she were a pop star she would be profusely featured in the media. She hails from Nottingham and attended Clarendon College(as did actor Robert Lindsay) a couple of years before Jane. But you won't read much about Sarah in the local media. Why? because she's classical and not pop. If you wander round the Castle museum in Nottingham you may learn about Graham Greene's short stay in the city but not about Eric Coates, the Hucknall born composer of light classical music that everyone of a certain age will remember. He wrote the theme of radio's twice daily programme "Music While You Work" which ran from June 1940 for 27 years plus countless other familiar pieces which were ingrained in the public consciousness. "A Sleepy Lagoon", the theme of Desert Island Discs is a Coates composition.

Since 2000 I have been involved with community matters

JANE'S 40TH BIRTHDAY PARTY, ENO AND ELAINE

Jane was 40 on November 7th 2006. Matthew organised a secret party at a London hotel. Friends and family convened at 2-30pm in the appointed room. The first person I saw was our dear friend and Jane's godmother Elaine Delmar, deep in conversation with a group of opera singers from English National Opera with whom Jane works. Two ends of the musical spectrum. Promptly at 3pm in walked Jane with Matthew who had had the unenviable task of keeping Jane in their hotel suite all day. She was stunned.

One guest was Tony Bell, old school chum of all three of our children and an actor recently with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Tony, now in his 40s has that rare gift of making you laugh almost before he says anything. He should have his own TV show.

A good time was had by all but the highspot was the chorus of ENO in their rendition of "Happy Birthday". Absolutely operatic.

On the popular long running radio programme, "I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue", Humphrey Lyttleton invites the team to sing the words of one song to the melody another Try these:

NONSENSE

22.5.04 To the tune of Jingle Bells

Ingoldmells, Ingoldmells
We are on our way
We left just after breakfast and it's going to take all day
I'm sure it will be raining so I have brought my mac
And by the time we get there
It will be time to come back

To the melody of Thelonus Monk's "Blue Monk" in the style of Flanagan & Allan in cockney accent Try it on Karaoke night at the local.

**STROLLING ALONG
SINGING A SONG
UNDERNEATH A CLEAR BLUE SKY YYYY
HERE COMES THE SUN
ISN'T LIFE FUN
I'M A REALLY LUCKY GUY
I AIN'T GOT NO TROUBLES
TROUBLES NEVER TROUBLE ME
TROUBLES NEVER TROUBLE ME**

To The Tune Of You Go To My Head
You Go To My Feet
And you linger like a haunting chilblain
That verruca that you brought back from Spain
My chiropodist is filled with disdain

To the tune of "Feelings" (Must be sung in a broad cockney accent)
Ceilings, I can touch the ceiling
Even when I'm kneeling
Kneeling on the floorer
Long beds, I has to sleep in long beds
When I sleep in short beds, me feet stick through the doorer

FLAT PACKING WITH GRANKULLA/MUNKARP 2.4.06
Should we perchance, move to a new flat (sorry - apartment, in case I have any American readers) we would need to equip our abode with a few sticks of furniture and accoutrements.

I would refer to my dog-eared IKEA catalogue and as I skimmed through the pages I would draw up a list of “must-haves”.

I would definitely need a couple of Toviks, a Grankulla/Munkarp and a Linnan. That should start me off. However, half a dozen Frejas would be useful and two Storms might add to the ambience.

Perhaps three or four Hamnedas to stuff stuff into would be an absolute necessity and, of course, without half a dozen Bumerangs (no you don't throw them and they come back to you) my clothes are going to be severely creased.

Everyone has a Billy or two. Common as muck

When I am nicely set up I shall resume my plans for opening a store in Sweden. I plan to major on beds, wardrobes, sideboards, cushions and light fittings, all with English labelling. That should teach 'em a lesson

P. S. My spellcheck has just blown a fuse.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE NOT FORGOT

I stayed with Eric (Hamilton) and his wife in 1990 whilst on a business trip to Glasgow. He was still a devoted big band addict and had made many trips to Los Angeles to big band conventions. At these events, as you may guess, bands, musicians, fans, critics and record people come together to talk about and listen to the jazz they grew up with and which had blown their minds away.

THE JOY OF JAZZ

Hearing such amazing jazz by Duke Ellington, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman and Count Basie, all with their immediately identifiable sounds, was both a blessing and a handicap. The immense pleasure I and other jazz buffs derive from this music is all pervading. Yet only a minute percentage of the population, both in Britain and the USA, have any affinity to jazz so you can't strike up a conversation on the subject with just anyone. Of course many will say they like jazz but on closer examination it turns out they like just a few examples that made the charts such as “Girl From Ipanema”, which succeeded because it had a catchy tune, great samba rhythm and a singer with an unusual voice. I liked it because of Stan Getz's tenor saxophone solo. I have heard DJs

play that record and not mention Getz who just happened to be the world's number one tenor sax player. Brubeck's "Take Five" was a big hit due to its quirky tune and time signature. There are countless others ranging from Duke Ellington's "Skin Deep" in 1952 to Woody Herman's "Woodchopper's Ball" (1939.) Glen Miller's "In The Mood" doesn't count. Peggy Lee managed to sound like a jazz singer whilst singing some fairly ordinary songs.

The Miller band was wildly popular in both its pre-war and wartime manifestations but was never looked upon by aficionados as a jazz orchestra. Just a very good dance band. Miller's music lives on in the number of ghost bands that dress up in US military uniform and ply their trade in concert halls throughout the country. Ask anyone under thirty today about Woody Herman and they would probably ask if you meant Woody Harrelson.

SAXUAL ORINETATION

I was amazed to read in Radio Times that the Saturday 6pm Radio 3 jazz spot was to be devoted to "gay jazz musicians". In all my years involvement with jazz the subject never came up. Nobody cared whether a musician was gay, black, white, trans-sexual, or wore brown shoes. It's what comes out of your instrument that counts-absolutely nothing else. We forgave those who turned up late, stoned and badly dressed just so long as we liked what they played. By comparison with today's pop musicians they were saints. Jazz was once considered the enfant terrible of the arts, today it is sidelined almost as a niche genre. Call me old fashioned but when I hear the latest CD releases by some contemporary jazz musicians I do wonder if they should assign their offering to chamber music. No swing, little melody or rhythm. No interest. Ronnie Scott is claimed to have said, "How do you make a million out of jazz? Start off with two million".

GRUMPY OBSERVATIONS

If the audience stamps its feet, dances in the aisles, and shouts out responses to a soloist's quotes then some young musicians would say you were doing it wrong.

I remember reading a News Of The World article in the forties with the heading, "Young Girls Found In Soho Jazz Den". Today such a story wouldn't merit a line.

HAIR CUT

When will women who appear on TV learn to control their hair which persistently falls over their eyes requiring them to sweep it back into position every few seconds? Helen Mirren please note.

LOCATION, LOCATION, FRUSTRATION

Why do news reporters have to travel to Buckingham Palace/Downing St, Parliament, a chip shop in Barnsley in order to create the impression that they are more in the know than if they simply sat in a studio and read out the report sent by telephone or E mail?

ASPIRATIONS

When will the TV reporter, who was sent to Sussex to report on the bird flu story, learn that the eighth letter of the alphabet is pronounced AITCH and not HAITCH.? Difficult as it is to explain to the younger generation I would expect their English teachers to tell them that such an aberration of the English language could cost them a job when applying for an interview. I overheard one young lady saying that she worked at the HAITCH Q OF HAITCH MV

OUTDOORS IN Young journalists please note, Outdoors its ground, indoors its floor. You can't report a fight in a pub car park where a man was knocked to the floor. So why do you?

NOW AUDIENCES DO "STAND UP" Time was when an audience would only stand in recognition of some great personage or for the National Anthem. Today they rise from their seats at the drop of a studio manager's clip board. And why are audiences told to applaud when, on the Lottery show, the balls drop down a chute? What a clever little ball. Let's give it a round of applause.

Are there agents from whom TV producers can rent an audience? Do applicants have to pass an audition? "Now Miss Jones, show me how loud you can scream". How is it that Saturday evening TV show audiences descend in to mass hysteria at the first sign of a performer doing something ever so slightly unusual or to show that they have collectively recognised the song a contestant maybe trying to sing? However, on a recent TV show I did see one young lady sitting - yes

sitting - in her seat motionless. No clapping, no screaming her head off.
I wonder if she was expelled from the studio and banned from future shows for being too undemonstrative?

IMMORTAL BARRED

In 1993 our youngest daughter, Sara, then administrating the drama course at the Italia Conte School of Music & Drama, married Matthew Bennett who worked in office equipment.

Had we been able to employ the services of William Shakespeare to write an ode for the occasion he might have come up with something like this. It appeared on a parchment scroll suitably burnt round the edges and now adorns a wall of Sara and Matthew's home office.

ODE TO SARA AND MATTHEW 1993

Che Sara, Sara, Sara,
The strolling minstrels play
Is this the name we'll christen her
On this St Doris Day

Nay, we'll pronounce it Sara
Not Sarah or Sahara
Pray rhyme it with tiara
And that actor- Kate O'Mara

And if, foresoothe they recognise
Her services to drama
Perchance she will be interviewed on TVs "Panorama"

And burly sales executives
The Toms, the Tims and Tristrams
Will form a guard of honour
Outside Bennett's Business Systems (Plc)

And folk, abed in England
Will arise to find a statue
Commemorating Sara
And her loving husband- Mattue W. Shakespeare (deceased)

ODE TO THE JOB HUNTER Oct 1996

As I survey the "Sits. Vac" column
I get dismayed and sad and solemn
This one says, "We're market leaders
In nuclear fast reactor breeders".

Now here's a job that might appeal
The hours, of course, are quite unreal
But OTE's a hundred K
Plus exs. car and perks, they say

It's I. T. Sat. Coms, CD Roms
Incoms, sitcoms, High Tech diddly om poms
Only high achievers need apply
To join the team in- URUGUAY?

Shaping distant global markets
Hitting ever upward targets
Negotiating at board level
Now that's a job in which I'd revel

Clinching deals, exchanging contracts
Networking and making contacts
Loyal to the corporate structure
I'd toil until I got a rupture

With my mobile, laptop, fax
I'd synergize their info packs
Or should I try those other bleeders
And flog their fast reactor breeders

AGE IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER 26.5.05

If you have been reading newspapers as long as I have you will know
that the press is obsessed to the point of paranoia by people's ages.
You, dear reader (56-I chose that age at random in the belief that at
least one of you will 56 and I can't possible list all the ages of my other
four readers).

I am sure you know the sort of thing I mean. There on page ten of your
local rag is a photo of Henry Bloggs, 64, tending his prize winning

petunias as his wife Henrietta, 36 (she says!) looks on admiringly. Just imagine what this does for neighbourly relations and community spirit. "She's never 36. She's 52 if she's a day". Exclaims her at number 45, (53). as she reads the photo caption to her hubby Alfred, 47 and grandson Tarquin, 10 ³/₄.

You may remember, long ago, when newspapers couldn't resist informing us of the weight of ships as in, "This is a photo of HMS Howsyerfather, 26 thousand tons, sailing down the Thames". Now we could all see that it was rather a large ship. What more did we really need to know? It's a good photograph of Henrietta Bloggs looking every inch 52 so why should we be so interested as to want to have her age verified? Why not tell us her religion, bust measurement-(well in her case perhaps not), height, what primary school she attended etc.

Of course any journalist will tell you that specifying the age of a subject is very concise. It doesn't take up much precious space. But I claim that in 9 out of 10 cases age is irrelevant. Sure, if the story is about a 99 year old pensioner climbing Everest, age is relevant. If a 5 year old composes a symphony that's relevant. We would stand back in amazement as we read either story. But hang on. Do we really want to know that this 99 year old mountaineer is a pensioner? Wouldn't we assume that anyway?

Only the press suffer from this malady. TV does not. They show you a shot of a politician walking towards the camera and past it. Then he/she's in front of the camera being interviewed by Andrew Marr. You have to guess both their ages but the people at the television company figure their viewers are smart enough to work it out for themselves. This may give rise to exclamations of, "Oh, she's looking much older, isn't she?" Much older than what, when, who? Well, much older than the last time you saw her in the local newspaper judging a baby competition when the photo caption said she was 42.

Hollywood heart throb Cary Grant neatly side-stepped a telegram request from a journalist which asked, "How old Cary Grant?". The Bristol born movie star responded succinctly, "Cary Grant fine, how you?"

But I can't sit here all day typing out this nonsense. I'm off to my newsagent -67, for a paper to check the age of the bloke who made

the speech at the function we attended last night. My wife thinks he must be 40 but I doubt it. More like 53, I'd say.

STRIKE UP THE BRAND 6.3.05

I remember driving along Lenton Lane, Nottingham, some years back and noticing something odd about the neon sign on the roof of Central TV. The letters T and V were missing. My immediate thought was for passing strangers who might be forgiven for thinking the building could be Central bus station, Central Engineering or Central Pharmaceuticals. The removal of those two vital letters reduced the identity of the premises yet this was simply a re-branding exercise. Central TV had become Central. This was all part of the craze of the late eighties when, presumably a proliferation of companies specialising in rebranding other companies names were doing a roaring trade.

Mention Halifax to most people and they will think of a Yorkshire industrial town. We all know Halifax is the home of a financial organisation once known as the Halifax Building Society. But the organisation became a bank and rebranded itself as The Halifax. Just down the road in my hometown I grew up being aware of the Bradford and Bingley Building Society now known only as the Bradford and Bingley.

A few years ago the Post Office/Royal Mail somehow got talked into re-branding its image. Now you can't do much to glamorise an organisation that delivers mail. It is a basic utility and needs no embellishment to make it prosper yet overnight it became Consignia. Did you hear anyone say they were just nipping down to Consignia for a stamp? The whole idea was ridiculed and within months the fancy name was dropped. But at what cost? Many thousands of pounds. You can't change all your stationery, repaint your transport and rebadge uniforms etc. for peanuts.

Remember British Airways re-branding mania with aircraft tail fins painted with abstract images of African art? Mrs Thatcher exploded at the removal of the Union flag and images were quickly replaced.

Companies used to have Personnel Managers but imagine the reaction of someone I heard of who received a letter, typed by an inept secretary, apparently from the Head Of Human Race Horses. The National Housing And Town Planning Council sought brevity in its name

change to ROOM. A lady celebrating her ninetieth birthday received a congratulatory letter from her building society's Twilight Administrator.

Of course some things do need renaming. In the fifties I once found myself in New Brighton-just why I cannot recall. At one end of the promenade was a long, low building emblazoned with huge lettering GENTS URINAL STALLS.. Now there was a no nonsense council that believed in calling a spade a spade. In America it would probably have been designated as a BATHROOM. Kentucky Fried Chicken has become KFC. The early morning news on BBC TV is known as Breakfast although you can't actually eat it, and a clothes chain called the French Connection invented a sub heading which left little to the imagination but due to its implication adorns many a T shirt.

Some towns could use a little re-branding. You would never find a Grimethorpe in California but I wouldn't want to change Giggleswick which conjures up an image of a town full of happy smiling folk.

No one could imagine re-branding such solid institutions as the BBC although I bet they've tried. In my young days in Bradford I fantasised about opening a chain of restaurants right across the industrial landscape of West Yorkshire and calling them Dark Satanic Grills. After the war lots of businesses sprung up using the word Enterprises as in Jo Bloggs Enterprises. It was so common, and still is, I thought it grossly unenterprising and unimaginative. It didn't give you a clue as to what they did but it was supposed to create an image of entrepreneurial skills. I hated the word and dreamed up the term Encore Musical Administration for a countrywide network of jazz clubs I had plans for developing. Being just seventeen at the time I found it difficult to raise the capital required and with National Service looming I abandoned the idea.

But names change with generations. The humble British bun has metamorphosed into the American muffin. Chips are fries and if you are into computer technology you will use the American slash instead of the British stroke we used to have on our typewriters. Humphrey Lyttleton uses "slash", refusing to be Americanised. They use "alternate" for "alternative".

East Midlands Airport has been re-branded as Nottingham East Midlands Airport because foreigners don't know where the East Midlands is, but Doncaster Airport has added Robin Hood to it's name

presumably in the hope of attracting hordes of Japanese tourists searching for Robin and his merry men. (The airport is now back as East Midlands Airport).

A recent addition to the plethora of TV advertising is one for a detergent with a name that defies belief. Introduced by a completely unknown (to me) chap in rolled up shirt sleeves going by the name of Barry Scott who demonstrates the miracles of the wonder stuff named Cillit Bang. I wonder what committee of clever marketing executives dreamed that one up and how much they charged the client? They might just as well have called it Zebra Crossing.

Celebrities get unusual names.. River Phoenix, Paris Hilton (after her Dad's hotel- will she marry Grantham Travelodge?) Newt Gingrich -US politician. Rugby star Austin Healey, named after the famous sports car, should have teamed up with Minnie Driver and made a "road" movie. Countries and their cities have joined in. Ceylon is now Sri Lanka, Bombay has become Mumbai, Thailand used to be Siam and Peking is Beijing.

The PR people tried re-branding Nottingham in the hope of attracting more tourists. They used a big N (no, not a big Hen). If you live abroad and are thinking of visiting the UK just look for the big N and be careful you don't wind up in Norwich, Northampton or Newcastle.

There was a delightful song in the sixties called "The Days Of Wine and Roses". Today it might be rebranded as "The Daze Of Rows Of Winos". After a band had played a particularly lacklustre rendition of "Autumn Leaves" a drunk yelled out from the back of the room, "That was awful. No wonder Autumn left"

In the sixties Julie London had a hit with a song about a river in the Crimea and Lucille Ball starred in a long running TV show set in a location I failed to find on any map- The Isle Of Lucy.

BRING BACK THE 2X2

Down town and country roads they roar
The huge and ugly -4x4
The highfalutin, high polluting Chelsea tractor
Oblivious of its fumes extractor
And now I see the bloke next door
Has gone and bought a 4x4
Should I join him-no I'll wait

Till they produce an 8x8
WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT COMEDIANS WHO STAND UP? HOW
ABOUT CLIMB LADDER WINDOW CLEANERS AND KNEEL DOWN
PLUMBERS? ("I've been doing kneel down for ten years now")

Suggested reading :- John Dankworth- Jazz In Revolution 1998 Cleo
Laine CLEO Simon & Schuster 1994
David Redfern Jazz Album. Eel Pie Publishing 1980 and The Unclosed
Eye Sanctuary 1999
And finally..... Try this in your best John Gielgud voice

PAG'S BAG An ode to Paganini

In 1782 in downtown Genoa
Mamma Paganini had a son, don'tya knowa
When he was six he was a real virtuoso
He proclaimed, "On violin I am the greatest- only more so"
At eight years old he wrote a nice cantata
For the French he coined the famous Franc Sonata (That's not strictly
true, I made that bit up.)
He was so prolific
Critics said, "He's terrific"
And his fame spread throughout Italy

Niccolo Paganini, he had a dream
And in that dream he wrote a cute little theme
It was a real mean theme
A theme de la crème
And everybody said he is a gen-i-us

In 1981 a chap with a cello
Played Paganini's theme and made it sound less mellow
One day he chanced to play the theme to his mother
She said, "You should discuss this with your talented brother".

And so the Lloyd-Webber boys, Julian and Andrew
Re-arranged the theme and added sounds that were brand new
And they added a beat
And it sounded a treat
And they cried, "Eureka, we have got a hit!"

A man from the television on the south bank

Said I don't want to Bragg but I'll be Earnest and Frank (Well, nothing really rhymes with Melvin)
As a signature tune
It would be quite a boon
And they all shook hands and went off for a pint

Long live Paganini
They re-arranged his theme a teeny weeny
They thought it an improvement
Especially in the first and second movement
So Andy didn't hesitate or suffer any qualms
The theme had variations by Schuman, Liszt and Brahms
If they could do it then why shouldn't he
Paganini's theme
It's really a dream
You know what I mean
A theme de la crème

Jazz and Rock fans thought it quite a rave
But some critics said, "That ain't no way to behave
Paganini would turn in his grave
If he were alive today"

So go find a little old tune by Chopin, Verdi or Liszt
And if you can, work out a plan
To give that theme a new twist
Then add a really strong beat
That knocks you right off your feet
Add words by some fellow
Like Elvis Costello
And like the Lloyd-Webbers you'll join the elite

PHOTOGRAPHS

John Dankworth band, Marquee Club, early 60s
Elaine Delmar and Jane Read 2006
Burton & Taylor mid 50s/Prime Ministers
With David Hockney 2004/Kenny Baker & Stan Tracey 1952
Matthew Hargreaves, Michael Neaum, Jane 2004 plus
Susan & DR outside No 10 Downing St 1995
Auditioning band in Woolwich 1963

Melody Maker 1949
John Dankworth & Don Read. Wavendon
Press story 1968
Robert with Gilbert & George 2007
Downbeat Competition 1949
Jane's 40th friends & family 2006
George Martin, Chris Wright/ Community work 2001
Cleo Laine-James Galway LP & EP cover 1980
Rejection letter 1978
Last night of proms in the park 2003