

MART RODGER MANCHESTER JAZZ

NEWSLETTER NO. 74 DECEMBER 2014

ALLAN DENT: Allan now has the date for his operation and he has told Mart that he hopes to make his return to the band in the Spring. We look forward to this, but in the meantime we want to thank Peter Brown, Jon Critchley and Ged Hone for “depping” with the band in Allan’s absence.

PAVILION ARTS CENTRE, BUXTON: We are next booked to play at this great venue on Sunday, 18th January. This is a lunchtime session starting at 1.00 p.m. When the band played there earlier in the year we had a very enthusiastic audience and were pleased to receive such a good review in the local magazine, Pure Buxton, which we referred to in our last Newsletter.

ACKER BILK: It was sad to hear that Acker Bilk has passed away. He had not been well for quite a long time but it still comes as a shock to learn that we can only hear him on record now. Many years ago, when Malcolm Gracie resigned from the Zenith Six, his trombone replacement chosen was Alan Rodeley who had come to live and work in the area as he was employed in the Aerospace industry. Alan came from the South West and when he started to play with the Zenith he remarked that Mart’s playing was very much in the same style as Acker Bilk. Everyone stopped and said: “Who?” None of us had heard of Acker at that time! However, we did some time later and of course Acker became hugely successful and famous. One time, the Zenith 6 and other bands were booked to play on a Mersey cruise to the Isle of Man and back, along with Acker’s Paramount Jazz Band. This was a jazz cruise, music all the way there, music for a couple of hours in Douglas, music all the way back and many jazz fans packed the boat. As Mart walked on board Acker called him over and took him to his cabin. Mart was amazed to see several barrels of Somerset scrumpy cider waiting for all Acker’s pals. Some kind friend took a photo of Mart on board many hours later, looking fairly poorly!

TIMPERLEY SPORTS CLUB: We were very disappointed just before our regular monthly gig in October at the Branksome Function Rooms in Timperley to receive a phone call to tell us we could not have the room as it was going to be used that afternoon for a funeral gathering. This was on the Monday evening before the Thursday afternoon gig. Fortunately Mart had a few phone contacts and e-mail addresses and he asked Fred Burnett to put it on his all-important website, jazznorthwest.co.uk The cancellation was then put on the band website as well. However, on the day, Mart and Janet spent an hour outside the place stopping the jazz fans from going in. 30 people turned up who we had been unable to contact, and we promised to let everyone know when we found another new venue. Mart arranged for the band to have the Thursday afternoon gig at Timperley Sports Club, Stockport Road, Timperley, Altrincham. WA15 7LU, and we enjoyed our first gig there on 27th November. It was great that so many friends turned up and we look forward to playing there every month from now on. It is a very nice room, no steps, good car park, bar, etc. As the 4th Thursday in December falls on Christmas Day, we will be there on Monday, 29th December instead, but from then on we will be back to our usual 4th Thursdays which will be at Timperley Sports Club in 2015.

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GOOSTREY VILLAGE HALL: At our recent gig there, we were able to send £260.00 to St. Luke’s Hospice in Winsford to add to our next £10,000 raised for them. Our next concert at Goostrey is on 6th March, when we hope to add more to our donation to this important Hospice.

25 YEARS FROM THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL: It is hard to believe that 25 years have passed since the band played a 14-day-tour in East Germany just six weeks before the collapse of the Berlin Wall. This followed their first appearance at the Dresden International Dixieland Festival in 1986. The band comprised of: Mart, Allan, Eric, Bob Ascough (banjo) Colin Smith, with depts Roy Fischer and Pete Cotterill, as Joe Palin and Pete Staples couldn't come. When we arrived in 1989 Germany was still divided and the Aeroflot flight there diverted far north to avoid West Germany and then flew south to arrive at the airport at Leipzig. We travelled by coach most days to the next venue and stayed in good class hotels everywhere, which were denied to the general population. We had great meals at these hotels, but the standard of food, vegetables and provisions in the shops was a different story altogether. We saw a great deal of DDR, as it was known. It was a very different place then, so close to West Germany but so very far away. There were Russian soldiers everywhere and one day our driver had to stop the coach to allow 85 Russian tanks through. This was chilling, but Janet managed to get a quick photo. We played in the most amazing concert theatres, cinemas, halls, clubs etc. to enthusiastic audiences everywhere. Carl Heinz Drechsel was our presenter on the trip and we were proud that we didn't keep him waiting at all, even on the morning that we returned home. Our last concert was in Neubrandenburg and we had to leave at 3.00 a.m. after a very short sleep to drive for over three hours to get back to East Berlin airport for our flight home. It was a shame we then had a wait of six and a half hours for our flight from Amsterdam to Ringway! The whole two week trip was amazing and we have such great memories of the entire tour.

JOHN MAYALL: When Mart finished his National Service, the first thing he did when he returned home was to form a new band. The band he led before his call to serve Queen and Country was Mart Rodger's Jazz Aces, which on his departure became Eric Batty's Aces and then Dizzy Burton's Jazz Aces before it folded. Mart had often played with John Mayall, who also lived locally, when a teenager. During his 2-year-stint in the army while serving in Foston, near Derby, Mart and John formed a duet and would often be booked to play the interval spot at the Bodega in Manchester. They called themselves "The Dreamland Boys". On his return to Civvy Street, Mart asked John if he would like to join his new band, which he called, "The Hounds Of Sound". This band played for several months, but then Mart was tempted away by an offer to join the Zenith Six. John had friends who played more in the Blues idiom and he started "John Mayall's Bluesbreakers". This band became very successful and John moved to live in London. He then became so famous in the USA and beyond that he eventually moved to Los Angeles and has lived there ever since. Over the years his band has toured regularly and when he was playing at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester recently it was a chance for Mart and Janet to chat with him. It was close to the end of his 80th birthday tour which covered a great many cities all over the world. John had retired his "Bluesbreakers" and the recent tour features three new musicians with him, Greg Rzab, Rocky Athos and Jay Davenport. Everything they played was outstanding. Their new CD is called, "A Special Life". The opening band was "King King" from Scotland, which was also a very entertaining and talented group.

MORE PLACES TO SEE THE BAND:

1st Monday of every month:

High Lane Conservative Club, SK6 8DR 8.00 p.m. 5th Jan.,
2nd Feb. 2nd March, 6th April etc.

3rd Thursday of every month:

Poynton British Legion Georges Rd. West SK12 1JY 8.00 p.m.
15th Jan. 19th Feb. 19th March, 16th April etc.

4th Thursday of every month: Timperley Sports Club,
Stockport Road, Timperley. WA15 7LU 2.00 p.m. Monday,
29th Dec in place of 4th Thursday, 22nd Jan. 26th Feb. 26th
March 23rd April etc.

11th Dec. Glossop Jazz Club

28th Dec. Wilbraham Arms, Alsager

18th Jan. Buxton Arts Theatre 1.00 p.m.

31st Jan. Boston Spa

27th Feb. Dragon Theatre, Barmouth

6th Mar. Goostrey Village Hall 8.00 Tkts. 01477-537970

12th Mar. Glossop Jazz Club

9th April Burton Jazz Club, Marston's Social Club

12th April Stafford Jazz Society

26th April Rochdale Jazz Club

12/13th June Kirkcudbright Jazz Festival

VIDEO OF THE BAND: We have been sent a copy of a video filmed at the Rochdale Jazz Club last year and are so pleased with it that we have asked Mike White, who filmed it, if we can put some of the tunes on our Band Website. It was filmed while Allan was playing and we are delighted with the balance and presentation! Mike has given permission for this, so Mart has already started and the tune "Breeze" has already been transferred. Mart is looking at putting more of the tunes on. It is also on YouTube and you can find it at

<http://youtu.be/Hn9fgeb5PEU>

FRED BURNETT—www.jazznorthwest.co.uk

Fred Burnett devised his website quite a few years ago and the bands have been grateful to him ever since. He has spent many hours making it so interesting and keeping it up to date very regularly. Many bands who don't have their own sites have been glad to have Fred's help when he includes them with their photographs. All we can say is, "Well done, Fred and thank you!"