



THIS ILLUSTRATION FIRST APPEARED AS A HEADING FOR COLLECTOR'S CORNER IN *THE GRAMOPHONE*, SEPTEMBER 1938. FOR FURTHER DETAILS SEE PAGE 11.

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# GLEANINGS FROM HERE & THERE

**AS A LEAD UP TO TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME**, I was required to read-up a bit on Jazz from the columns of the record collector's bible 'The Gramophone'. I have been fortunate in this respect because I have bound volumes dating from 1929 to 1947. These were given to me in the 1950s by the late Hugh McSherry, a record collector of a former generation. To this I added my own holdings (unbound) which give me a picture on all record releases in Great Britain until the late 1960s.

While I was looking for reviews of certain records, I maintained a watch for black and white illustrations to enliven the pages of the Gazette. Some of these have been used as decorative pieces on pages of this issue. During this research, I could not help but notice how Jazz records made their way into the columns. Originally they were lumped in with Miscellaneous and Dance until Compton McKenzie finally gave them the attention they deserved in the mid 1930's with a new column called 'Dance Popular & Rhythm'. This gradually got changed to 'Swing Music' - under Edgar Jackson in 1936.

Foremost in the fight for recognition, Jackson gave considerable stature to Jazz. He was aided in this cause by correspondents who peppered the 'letters to the editor' column with complaints that Jazz was not receiving a fair deal.

Looking back on these times it was common practice to see Red Nicholls and his Five Pennies sandwiched between a brass band and Gracie Fields! The record in question, Limehouse Blues, was described as "A most interesting and intelligent interpretation!"

**OUR GUEST CONTRIBUTOR** to this edition of the G&T Gazette is Peter Turner, a Londoner who has lived in Wellington for the last 9 years. An internationally recognised writer and commentator on photography, his other interests include a passion for the 'blues'. His experiences in London during the swinging sixties make interesting reading.

**IN MARCH 1939**, Compton McKenzie, editor of *The Gramophone* devoted his editorial to comments on a recent chamber music competition which his magazine had held. In these columns I came across a reference to a certain individual who is well known to record collectors in Wellington. I quote the passage in its entirety. "Mr. John Gray of Dunedin, New Zealand, who is twenty years old, sent in two splendid lists, and was choosing the Beethoven C Sharp Minor and Brahms' Sextet in B flat if he had won in both lists. May he have better luck next time! I wish I had known as much about chamber music at twenty as Mr. John Gray'.

**SEVERAL MONTHS AGO** I was contacted by Ray Harris to see if I would be interested in his collection of 78 rpm jazz recordings. I jumped at the opportunity and after a couple of visits managed to set out about 1,500 records in my garage

where I began to sort and play what I'd acquired.

I had no hesitation in taking on this collection even though my lifetime interests in collecting records could be described as having a lean towards classical vocal recordings from the golden age of opera. Those who know me a bit better would know that while I have never gone out of my way for jazz recordings, I have never excluded them on the grounds that they did not hold sufficient interest for me or my wife Jill. In fact, I thought I had a fairly representative collection of about 150 or so from the Original Dixieland Jazz Band era to a treasured Errol Garner. Those with a long memory will perhaps even recall me incorporating some of these items in my presentations over the years. So this move to acquire a more in-depth library of recordings is not due to an inspirational 'God sent' blinding light. On the contrary, I was at home to a fairly large proportion of what Ray had given me. To help me explore some of the more unfamiliar titles, he kindly gave me a copy of John Hilton's *Who's who in Jazz* - from Storyville to Swing Street. To this I added a volume by Ian Carr, Digby Fairweather and Brian Priestley called *Jazz - the essential companion*. These have helped me get a handle on the less familiar names which I came across.

Ray's collection of Jazz recordings has naturally moved with the times and so it would be wrong to think that it all ended with the 78 rpm era. However, if I were to describe this collection in a phrase, I would say think 'post war releases' and you would probably obtain an accurate description of what I found amongst these shellacs. A lot of the big bands, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw etc., with a good representation of Dixieland on re-releases. These came in the form of pressings from all the major labels like HMV, Columbia, Brunswick, Decca. However, sprinkled throughout were more exotic issues from America and England. It would be interesting to learn from him how he acquired these because I can not recall seeing any of them in the shops I frequented in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

I was greatly assisted in my mammoth task of becoming familiar with what I'd acquired by Brian Blackford, who restored a PYE black box gramophone into playing condition. This came to me through the good offices of Rod Cornelius two years ago. Using this machine I was able to stack up several discs in one loading, press play and go about my business of an evening without forever having to get up and change the record every 3 minutes.

Slowly but surely I worked my way through the collection, putting to one side those which appealed to my ear. In some instances, I didn't bother playing clusters of recordings which I took to be indistinguishable from one disc to another such as those which the big band era put out as commercial dance recordings. In the end I sorted out a hundred or so which I felt I could live with for the rest of my days.

I will play to you some of these when you come to my evening on the 17th of July. The programme will be made up of the following jazz personalities.

Bessie Smith, Mildred Bailey, Lionel Hampton, Eddie Condon, Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, Pinetop Smith, Peter Johnson, Albert Ammons, Mel Henke, Joe Venuti, Ella Fitzgerald, Bonnie Baker, Ronnie Kemper, Ray Ellington, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw and several others.

## AIN'T NO CURE FOR THE SUMMERTIME BLUES

I find it unusual to write about music because I am not a musician. That said, music, from Gregorian chant to Polynesian percussion, is one of my passions, but my life has been more towards the visual arts - photography in particular, though I like painting too. Yet there is a curious affinity between all these forms of expression - I call it 'authenticity' - the reality of lives lived and stories told. Which is why I like blues music - the best of which one finds on 78s. It's a rough sound, but it gives you the real picture and blues as a musical form has endured, since it first emerged in the 19th century. Blues created jazz. Blues created rock 'n' roll. Blues in some ways created me. So here's a short story about the blues and a bit of autobiography.

First, the autobiography and the very first record I bought was a 78 of Elvis Presley singing 'All Shook Up'. (I was nine years old). My sister and I wore it grooveless on a wind-up gramophone. The neighbours were probably worn out too as we were only allowed to play records in the garden. Elvis, however, gave a white face to black blues music. That was before he went sloppy, left Sun Records and started to sing kitsch.

Blues is black music of an unrelenting but subtle, persuading kind, and it sounds so much better live than it ever can via a recording. To be sure there are tremendous contemporary blues players, but the 'old time religion' brings it to you heart and soul. Recordings retain some of that essence, and the older ones project it in a way that resonates. It ain't essentially 'scratchy', but it does feel like the real thing.

Now, back to the autobiography. My interest in the blues came through jazz and listening to musicians such as Chris Barber, and Ken Colyer. That was 40 years ago in London when 'Trad' was considered very contemporary and we listened with a sense of awe to the sounds of black music reproduced by white aficionados. Some, like Colyer, had even made the pilgrimage to New Orleans and carried back the message - one might call it a translation - to Britain. The music was dark and exotic; stuff of the night and slightly forbidden. It was exciting and I fell under its spell. Aided, I should add, by more beer than was proper for my tender teenage years.

One of my favourite haunts became the Eel Pie Island Hotel, a once grand but at the time rotting building in Twickenham on the river Thames. It was an island, real and metaphorical. In its prime the hotel featured a ballroom and that had been turned into a jazz club. Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays the joint was rocking, or swaying, to the sounds of clarinet and sax. I loved it. It moved

me. In truth I was probably moved more by the decaying sprung dance floor, but the experience was good enough to convince me of the authenticity of the music.

My introduction to jazz had come via skiffle and a young banjo player called Lonnie Donegan who had major record successes in Britain singing and playing his own versions of some classic country blues. He also played with Barber and Colyer. Legend has it that he got to play 'his' kind of music so the rest of the band could take a break from performing. The musical world was different then but Chris Barber noticed that while the mainstay of their audience was a mature group in their mid twenties, Donegan was reaching a much younger group. At age 11 I knew all the words to 'Rock Island Line' and quite a few other blues, work and gospel songs. Over the years Donegan has been hailed as a primary influence on popular music. Even the Beatles who started as a skiffle group have spoken of his importance and Donegan once had the dubious honour of co-starring with Ronald Reagan on a TV show hosted by Perry Como! Lonnie Donegan has recently resurfaced singing alongside Van Morrison and Chris Barber in the 'Skiffle Sessions'. You can't keep a good man down even though he's almost 70.

Later I would hear blues played again in a pub in Kingston (just up the river from Twickenham) where another young chap, Eric Clapton, would induce his guitar to moan and wail, cry and sing like there was no tomorrow. Parts of the jigsaw puzzle seemed to be coming together. Clapton has gone on to become famous but he made the blues his own and I loved his sound. Shortly after I first encountered him he joined a band led by John Mayall who was Britain's blues purist.

The curious part of this was how the blues, which is African folk music, seemed to mesh with an English consciousness. We embraced it. Moreover we seemed able to play it with a sense of authenticity that I was not to experience again until I visited Chicago - where urban blues has a home and the guitar sound of 12 bar can be heard in clubs all over the South Side. I bought lots of records on my first two trips to the States. Through Lonnie Donegan (his real name was Tony but he borrowed 'Lonnie' from a great American bluesman, Lonnie Johnson) I had discovered Leadbelly (born in 1885) who wrote some of the songs Donegan was to introduce to an English audience. Leadbelly made recordings for the Musicraft label and had a famous association with Blind Lemon Jefferson - they were both from Texas. Of the two Jefferson was probably more accomplished and his musical phrasing and rough poetic style could still be heard in popular music in the 1970s.

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In June 1930, The Gramophone conceded that swing, rhythm and jazz deserved its own special place in the magazine. This also saw Edgar Jackson make his debut with the magazine, giving the column distinction and credibility.



Reviewed by  
**EDGAR JACKSON**

**PROGRAMME for Monday 17th July 2000 at Bill & Jill Main's 93 Burma Road, Khandallah, special guest Ray Harris.**

*First Bracket:* **BESSIE SMITH** St. Louis Blues (Handy) with Louis Armstrong (Trumpet) & Fred Longshaw (Organ) - Parlophone R.2476 (re-issue) Recorded 1925 **BESSIE SMITH** Nobody knows you when you're down and out (Cox) with Clarence Williams (Piano) Ed.Allen (Trumpet) & Cyrus St.Clair (Tuba) - Parlophone R.2481(re-issue) Recorded 1929. **MILDRED BAILEY and her Alley Cats** Downhearted Blues (Alberta Hunter-Lovie Austin) - Decca 18109 Recorded 1940s. **LIONEL HAMPTON and his quartet** Hamp's Salty Blues (Burley-Hampton) - Brunswick 03732. **EDDIE CONDON and his orchestra** Aunt Hagar's Blues (Handy) Vocalist Jack Teagarden - Brunswick 04303 *Classical refrain:* **TOMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** Sleepy Lagoon (Coates) Tommy Dorsey (Trombone) - HMV EA3266.

*Second Bracket:* **JELLY ROLL MORTON'S RED HOT PEPPERS** Jelly Roll Blues (Morton) Vocalist Jelly Roll Morton - HMV B9848 (re-issue) Recorded 1924. **JELLY ROLL MORTON'S RED HOT PEPPERS** Steamboat Stomp (Morton) HMV B9979 (re-issue) Recorded 1924. **JELLY ROLL MORTON** Buddy Bolden's Blues (Morton) Piano & Vocal - Vogue Y2067 (re-issue) Recorded 1939. **JELLY ROLL MORTON** Mamie's Blues (Morton) Piano & Vocal - Vogue Y2119 (re-issue) Recorded 1939. *Classical refrain:* **DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA** Creole Love Call (Ellington) with vocal - HMV EA.2809 Recorded 1927. **RALPH SHARON TRIO** A Bachelor Gay (Tate) - Melodisc 1169.

*Third Bracket:* **FATS WALLER & HIS CONTINENTAL RHYTHM** Ain't misbehavin' (Razaf-Waller-Brooks) Fats Waller (Vocal refrain and organ) - HMV EA 2189 Recorded 1938. **FATS WALLER** Alligator Crawl (Waller) Fats Waller (Piano) - HMV EA1458 Recorded 1935. **FATS WALLER** "London Suite" - Soho (Waller) Fats Waller

(Piano) - HMV B10060 Recorded 1939. **FATS WALLER & HIS RHYTHM** Eep, Ipe, Wanna Piece of Pie (Blain - Dann) Fats Waller (Vocal refrain and Piano) - HMV BD906 Recorded 1940. **FATS WALLER & HIS RHYTHM** All that meat and no potatoes (Kirkeby - Waller) Fats Waller (Vocal refrain and Piano) - Regal Zonophone G24800. *Classical refrain:* **ARTIE SHAW AND HIS ORCHESTRA:** The Donkey Serenade (Frimil - Stothart) - HMV B8893 Recorded 1939.

*Fourth Bracket:* **PETE JOHNSON & ALBERT AMMONS** Pine Creek (Johnson-Ammons) Piano duo - HMV 3225. **MEL HENKE** In a little Spanish town (Lewis-Young-Wayne) Piano solo - Oriole LB1074. **JOE VENUTI** Doin' the Uptown Lowdown (Gordon-Revel) Violin with sextet - Columbia DO1036. **ART TATUM** Sweet Lorraine (Burwell & Parish) Piano solo - Decca Y6088. **ERROLL GARNER** Summertime (Gershwin) Piano with Shadow Wilson (Drums) & John Simmons (Bass) - Columbia DC654. *Classical refrain:* **WILL BRADLEY & HIS ORCHESTRA** In the hall of the Mountain King (Grieg) Parlophone A7496.

*Fifth Bracket:* **INK SPOTS & ELLA FITZGERALD** Into each life some rain must fall (Fisher-Roberts) Vocal with instrumental accompaniment - Decca Y5938. **BUCK**(Piano) & **BUBBLES**(Vocal) Sweet Georgia Brown (Bernie-Casey-Pinkard) with novelty orchestra - Columbia DO1654. **ORRIN TUCKER & HIS ORCHESTRA** If I could be the dummy on your knee (Greene-Stryker-Lees) Vocal by Bonnie Baker - Columbia DO2150. **DICK JURGENS & HIS ORCHESTRA** Cecilia (Ruby-Dreyer) Vocal by Ronnie Kemper - Regal Zonophone G25184. **RAY ELLINGTON QUARTET** Gone for tea (Deniz - Ellington) - Decca F9351. *Classical refrain:* **TOMMY DORSEY & HIS ORCHESTRA** Song of India (Rimsky-Korsakow-Dorsey) - HMV EA1979.

In 1965 I had gone to Guildford School of Art, about 60 kilometres to the South West of London, to study photography. There I acquired my first 'serious' camera, which I bought from John Mayall's road manager. Mayall had been to art school and the camera was so cheap it must have been stolen... At art school I also met a bunch of students who had previously been at Epsom Art School, just down the road geographically, who were passionate about the blues. Although I hadn't known this, Eric Clapton, my hero from the King's Head pub in Kingston, had been an art student at Epsom, though he was now in the process of becoming a 'super star', but still playing blues music. These blues aficionados who were using the art school system to avoid having to get a day-job would get together and jam or just play records. One or two finally became successful recording artists.

One that I particularly recall was Top Topham. To my regret I have no details of the label he recorded for, but it was probably Mike Vernon's 'Blue Horizon'. Another was Duster Bennet who did, I know, record for Vernon. Bennet played harmonica and worked for a while with John Mayall. Top Topham was a guitar player and preceded Eric Clapton as lead in a blues band called The Yardbirds. The Yardbirds turned into a pop group and lost their way, sad to say. They also lost Eric Clapton, who went off to play with John Mayall. It was a small circle, but made larger by people such as Alexis Korner and Cyril Davis. Korner, I recall, played in a club in Ealing, west London close to where I went to school. He had a rough voice which he used to good effect and attracted some of the best musicians to play with him. The Rolling Stones were born in the Alexis Korner 'Blues Incorporated' school and Cyril Davis could play harmonica with real style. Sadly very little was recorded.

They were wonderful days (well, nights mainly) and I got my grounding in the blues. Other notables on the British Blues scene were Mick Fleetwood, who created "Fleetwood Mac", later to become internationally successful. He, as drummer, was partnered by Peter Green and John McVie who had worked with John Mayall (it's a small world) and used the talents of Beryl Marsden and Rod Stewart as vocalists. Marsden had sung jazz for some time, Rod "The Mod" Stewart was a blues wailer from North London who happened, eventually, to make a small fortune from his very particular vocal talents. But at the time I first encountered him he was just one of the lads. There was a lot of 'ladishness' attached to the blues in Britain. Rod Stewart later joined up with Long John Baldry (he was called 'Long John' because of his height) and a woman - Julie Driscoll - to form 'The Steam Packet'. Their music came from Brian Auger and 'The Trinity'. They brought a very contemporary style to making blues music, but never failed to salute their roots. In retrospect I think it was a happy coincidence between a sense of musical

possibility and wanting to be as John Lennon was later to call himself 'A Working Class Hero'.

Blues roots were in the United States and the shipment of slaves from Africa who carried their music with them and adapted it to their new environment. I found this out by reading the sleeve notes on LPs I bought from Dobells Record Shop in the Charing Cross Road in central London - a Mecca for blues and folk music enthusiasts. Then I met a most remarkable man, Paul Oliver, in the unlikely setting of the Architectural Association School of Architecture where he taught what I guess would be called 'Cultural Studies' and I gave lectures on visual communication. It must have been about 1972. Oliver had written a book 'The Story of the Blues' based on an exhibition he had curated for the USIS (United States Information Service) which had been shown at the US Embassy in 1964. It was largely photographic and through that connection we discovered each other. And he knew so much about blues history. He gave me a copy of the paperback edition, published by Penguin, (ISBN 0 14 00 3509 5) and it remains my blues bible. Though entirely focused on US blues, it offers a real context to the music I had been listening to in London - social, cultural, and the instrumental and the vocal skills involved.

The blues are almost impossible to characterise in a broad way; as a musical form it is basic but each player brings individual touches, nuances and voices to what their fingers do with the frets on a guitar or the keys on a piano. It would be impossible here to give a sensible account of US blues because there is simply not enough space. So let me make some rough divisions and let you work it out. The first is city, or urban blues, the second rural, or country blues. Then you find a multitude of sub-genres, the most important of which is Rhythm & Blues. And, don't forget, almost all owed something to African Americans - which I did not know as I made my way to the Eel Pie Island Hotel. Paul Oliver managed a useful overview in his book; identifying and quantifying the variety of US blues music.. From the swamps to the desert, blues was played and sung by people with gracious voices and crude instruments to make a sound that joined an announcement of history to chords that compelled the feet to tap and the hands to clap.

Returning to my photographic obsessions, there is another book beside Paul Oliver's I would recommend. It was published in 1996 by Hamlyn, London. 'Portrait of the Blues' by Paul Trynka with photographs by Val Wilmer (ISBN 0-600-59436-X). I know Val and her work, documenting many of the finest US blues players. Trynka takes a less analytical standpoint than Oliver - he lets the

musicians speak for themselves - but it remains a fine evocation of the blues spirit. And the photographs are excellent.

What follows is a very rough discography - some are LPs, some CDs. They are intended as an introduction to the blues and don't represent any kind of definition. First is contemporary blues and Robert Cray who is a fine musician. Jeff Healy is another.

Then come the great guitar players. I would nominate Elmore James, but take my hat off to BB King. These guys could make their instruments cry and sing with great eloquence. So does Eric Clapton. Funnily enough, Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones is a good blues guitar player. Like Clapton he has the right 'feel' which is transferred back to the way the sound works on the senses. Richards is more a rock and roller, but when he plays blues you know you're there.

Now the singers. Listen to Bessie Smith who was magnificent. Or Robert Johnson who cried on behalf of us all and inspired the likes of Eric Clapton. BB King can sing and Eric Clapton has a voice. There is a dynamic cross-over between the guitar and the voice box. Oh, listen to Muddy Waters too and the greatest American poet since Walt Whitman - Chuck Berry.

I like blues music because it is simple and direct, just like the best photography. And like that medium, it has cards up its sleeve.

© Peter Turner

Some recommended listening can be had on...

Eric Clapton 'From the Cradle' Reprise, 9362 45735 2  
Elmore James CD-Blue 313, Hughes Leisure Group, 399249 031320  
Bessie Smith, 'The Complete Recordings' Columbia, 47307/47308  
The Rolling Stones, 'Exile on Main Street', Rolling Stones Records CDCBS 450196 2  
Muddy Waters 'King Bee', Sky, 84918  
The Jeff Healy Band 'See the Light', Arista 007192 094417  
Robert Cray, 'Showdown!', Sonet SNTL 2954

Probably the best introduction to British blues, which is appropriately and entirely American, is 'Stoned Alchemy' - a compilation album, Charley Records, 82333 10671. It is R'n'B really, but if I was to start anywhere it would be with this album.

And finally, even though I don't refer to them in the body of the text, could I recommend Little Walter's 'Boss Blues Harmonica' Chess, 82333 09162 and Sonny Boy Williamson's 'Work with Me', Chess 82333 10612

### Test your knowledge on Record Labels

- 1 What well known recording company of the 78rpm era had Beethoven's portrait on their label.
- 2 Record companies have used animals on their label designs for many years. For instance HMV used a dog and Pathé a rooster. What company used the head of an elephant (a), a lion (b) and bird of paradise (c).
- 3 Can you name two recording companies who utilised one side of their discs to tell you about the recording on the other.

Answers:

1 Decca, 2 (a) Jumbo (b) MGM (c) Odeon-Lyric 3 Edison (Diamond Discs) & Aeolian-Vocalion

**Front Cover:** During the period beginning June 1938 through to May 1939 the following people contributed articles to the 'Collector's Corner' column.

They were S.G. Greaves (Scotland), Roberto Bauer (Italy), Leo Reimens (Holland), Carl L. Bruun (Sweden), Knud De Hegermann-Lindencrone (Denmark), Ira Glackens (America), Ralph E. Higgins ("Rondo") and L. Hervingham Root (Australia), Paul Wilhelm (Germany), H. Hugh Harvey (?) and G.K. Bishop (America).

I have looked long and hard at this illustration and the only figure I am prompted to nominate as belonging to an actual contributor is the one with a clerical collar in the background. I assume this to be Canon H.J. Drummond, who later went on to be a joint author with J. Freestone for a book called 'Enrico Caruso - His Recorded Legacy'. If any of our English readers would like to enlarge on who the characters actually represent, we would like to hear from them.

**Rear Cover:** The easiest person to recognise in this depiction of 'The Gramophone' staff is the editor Compton McKenzie, who is seated left putting records through the spindle test! Another whose contributions to sound fidelity were noted for many years might be Percy Wilson, who is shown with a trumpet to his ear. Once again, we ask our English friends to elaborate on who these characters are. We offer them a free subscription to the G&T Gazette for their time and trouble!



HEADED BY THE CAPTION, 'ONE OF THE CANTANKEROUS CORRESPONDENTS', THIS LIVELY DEPICTION OF THE GRAMOPHONE STAFF APPEARED IN THE JANUARY 1939 ISSUE. THE ARTIST WAS E. SQUIRE WHO WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COVER ILLUSTRATION. FOR FURTHER DETAILS SEE PAGE 11.