

# A MUCH TRAVELLED JAZZ CLUB

1975/6 THE CLAYTON ARMS MARLOW. Live gigs began on an irregular basis in 1975 following on from several years of record recitals and jazz film shows under the rather cumbersome title of The Chilterns Jazz Appreciation Society. It was a diet of local bands including Ian Smith and Mike Drake. The function room was too small for serious jazz presentations (capacity 30) and the real ale drinkers and darts players in the front bar did not appreciate the music. There were 16 gigs.

1976/7 THE BELL AT MAIDENHEAD. Monthly. In contrast to the above, the Bell was just too big and small crowds of 30 at the most were lost in the 200 capacity hall – there was a complete lack of atmosphere. Don Rendell and Pat Crumly's "Edge" were the highspots. 9 gigs.

1977/82 THE FIREFLY BOURNE END. Weekly. Remembered with much affection. Looking at the little back room today (it is now a snooker hall) it is hard to imagine that we somehow got 90 punters in most Monday nights to hear some of the top names in jazz, as a result of co-operation with the Pizza Express Jazz Club in Soho. Too many highspots to list, but Sonny Stitt, Wild Bill Davison, Bud Freeman and Jimmy Witherspoon were amongst the giants who appeared. Complete bands included Alex Welsh, Humphrey Lyttelton and Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia. 290 gigs.

1982/3 WOOBURN GRANGE. Fortnightly. Following the change of landlord at the Firefly we moved a mile to this rather weird nightclub with a grand piano. The building (now demolished) was the setting for TV's Fawlty Towers. Probably the most memorable gig in the Club's history featured an ageing but incredible legend – Duke Ellington's greatest singer Adelaide Hall. 28 gigs.

1983/4 MASON'S BOURNE END. Fortnightly. As a result of controversy of other "goings on" at the Grange, we set up in the little function room at Masons and had some great times: Georgie Fame, Scott Hamilton, Fapy Lafertin and Charlie Byrd. There was also a BBC Jazz Club recording. 51 gigs

1984 BENSONS' NIGHTCLUB HENLEY. Not a great success, and only 3 gigs. The regulars were shocked at the drinks prices and did not appreciate the bouncers on the door. An ambitious booking for the Dutch Swing College Jazz Band caused a near riot with well over 100 potential punters having to be turned away with all 100 tickets (maximum capacity) sold out in advance.

1985/1994 MARLOW FOOTBALL CLUB. Monthly. Very happy times. Only the cost of renewing a music licence caused our eventual departure. Highspots were many: Ruby Braff, "Sweets" Edison, Scott Hamilton, Barney Kessell, Humphrey Lyttelton and blues singer Angela Brown. 120 gigs.

1995/2000 CROSS KEYS MARLOW. Small and rather cramped in the back bar, but the landlord was obliging and we stayed till he retired. It was the Frank Toms Trio most Monday nights with mainly British stars. Highspot was a meeting between Peter King and Nelson Rangell. 304 gigs.

2000 THE CROWN HOTEL MARLOW. Weekly. Not ideal and we did not stay long. A guest appearance from Japanese superstar Keiko McNamara & Peter King will not be forgotten. 16 gigs.

2000/2007 T.J.O'REILLY'S MARLOW BOTTOM. Fortnightly. Large enough to house a Big Band for the first time in our history and the advantage of a friendly landlord. The Eaves Suite played host to some marvellous gigs including Jean Toussaint, Derek Nash, Alan Barnes, Gary Potter, Scott Hamilton and the Willie Garnett Big Band. During our last year the writing was on the (damp) walls and this part of the building is now rather controversially being turned into a motel. 148 gigs.

2007/???? THE BRITISH LEGION HALL MARLOW. Slightly irregular gigs at present (due to other bookings in the popular hall) but we hope to be soon back to fortnightly. We are very happy here and appreciate the comfortable and large room and the co-operative Legion Committee and staff, and the nice beer ! Highspots have included Jean Toussaint, Vasilis Xenopoulos/Steve Waterman, and Gary Potter. 16 gigs in 2007. The BBO Big Band has also moved their Charity Concerts here.

 WE CELEBRATED THE CLUB'S 1000<sup>th</sup> GIG IN NOVEMBER 2007 WITH ART THEMEN AND ALAN BARNES !