

Fifty years! It doesn't seem like fifty years since I booked the upstairs lounge bar at the Giffard Arms in Wolverhampton after contacting Ernie Bayly the secretary of the CLPGS and editor of the Hillandale News (the predecessor of FtR) and obtained his agreement to organise a local group of the CLPGS in the Midlands area. How much authority Ernie had got to give me the go ahead I cannot say, perhaps he was acting *ultra vires* but after the passage of so many years I neither know nor care. Let it suffice to say that, following an announcement in the December 1967 issue of Hillandale News, personal visits and telephone calls from me, a goodly number of members from across the region and beyond turned up at the Giffard Arms on the evening of Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 1968. Ernie Bayly had made the long train journey from his home in Bournemouth for the inaugural meeting and several of those present had brought machines with them. Sadly many of those who were present at that first meeting have passed away or let their membership lapse but our Group Chairman Eddie Dunn has been in post since 1968, unfortunately he was away on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting.

Having changed our meeting venue several times in the intervening years we are again meeting in Wolverhampton for at least some of our meetings. Our January meeting this year at our Wolverhampton venue was held on the exact 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first meeting and was our much loved annual Bring Your Favourite Record(s). Sadly due to coughs and colds the attendance was a bit depleted.

Richard Parkes acted as "DJ" for the evening and he started the proceedings with his initial selection which was a 1932 UK Parlophone issue of an obscure German dance band - Jack Bund and his Bravour Dance Band with a foxtrot called *Eccentric* – not the J. Russell Robinson composition. John Reading had selected a musical setting of the John Masefield poem *Sea Fever* performed by the baritone Roy Henderson on a 1930s Columbia disc. Henderson who lived to be 100 years old later became a leading music teacher, his most notable pupil being Kathleen Ferrier. My wife Marilyn followed this with a 1950s Decca recording transferred to a c.d. of the late Thomas Round together with Peter Pratt, Jean Hindmarsh and Kennett Sandford performing *The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring* from *The Mikado*.

The writer, as a jazz specialist, had chosen *Arabella's Wedding Day* one of four sides recorded by the Plantation Orchestra for English Columbia in December 1926. This was a group of Afro-American jazz musicians from New York who appeared on stage in the all black show "The Blackbirds Revue" at the London Pavilion. The CLPGS company secretary Mervyn Srodzinsky had brought along the UK Brunswick issue of the 1944 American Decca recording of *Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby* by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters. Bill Dean Myatt can always be relied upon to provide something obscure and that evening was no exception with a version of *Pop Goes the Weasel* performed by the traditional Irish fiddle player Patrolman Frank Quinn recorded in New York.

Equally obscure as far as UK collectors are concerned was George Sorlie. Although UK born he emigrated to Australia as a child and became a leading variety performer and touring tent showman. He recorded for Parlophone in Sydney and it was a 1928 recording of *I Just Roll Along* that Richard Parkes had brought with him. John Reading had brought along a recording

of Tom Burke performing *La Donna e Mobile* on an Imperial Broadcast record. This rarely seen label was a relatively short lived product of the early 1930s. My wife had brought along a c.d. of the Andre Rieu Orchestra from which she had selected the dreamy *Sleepy Shores*. The baton then passed to myself and Mervyn for a couple of vintage jazz 78s, The first was my copy of the Gennett pressing of the 1923 recording of *Aggravating Papa* by Ladd's Black Aces. Despite the name on the label, this was a pseudonym for the Original Memphis 5 – an all white group. Mervyn's selection was a 1927 recording on Brunswick of the Hoagy Carmichael composition *Riverboat Shuffle* by Red Nichols Five Pennies – all ten of them.

.Further selections included a 1913 issue on the Cinch label by the Royal Guards Band playing an Arthur Pryor 1909 ragtime composition *Frozen Bill*. More jazz from Mervyn and me included a 1945 release by Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band playing the traditional New Orleans march *Oh Didn't He Ramble* on the Good Time Jazz label from Mervyn, while my offering was a rare Harmony of a Clarence Williams' group from 1926 – the Blue Grass Footwarmers playing *Senorita Mine*. From Bill there was an 1948 East German recording of the American jazz trumpeter Rex Stewart. From John Reading there was an English Columbia recording of Heddle Nash singing *Yes, Let Me Like a Soldier Fall* while my wife went for a 1927 purple labelled Parlophone issue of *Jazz Me Blues* by Bix Beiderbecke and his Gang. The penultimate offering came from myself with the HMV export series issue of the 1930 recording of *Struggle Buggy* by King Oliver and his Orchestra. It was left to Mervyn to close the evening with *The Miners' Dream of Home* sung by Frank Williams (a pseudonym for the ubiquitous Stanley Kirkby) dating from 1908 and issued on The Twin label.

Thanks to my wife for the catering, the home made cakes were delicious and didn't stay on the plate very long.























































