

unedited first draft

TOM STAGG
REEL I [only]
October 3, 1969

INTERVIEWER: Paul R. Crawford
ALSO PRESENT: Paul Crawford's
 children, Don Smedley
NOTES: Richard B. Allen
SUMMARY: Dan Weisman
TYPING: Dan Weisman

I'm Tom Stagg of London, England. It's the Third of October 1969. We're talking about jazz in England from the earliest recollection....

About 1949, at that time, there probably were only two or three jazz bands, mainly based on the early dance bands of the period.

The dance bands of that period were Billy Cotton, and Harry Roy, the Savoy Banner Band...which played at the Savoy Hotel in London, which played for many years from the late 1920's.

The British jazz bands originated from this type of music, probably, partly due to the fact of the visit of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in 1919, where, of course, they used a British pianist, Billy Jones.

My first recollection of a band I helped [was] George Webb's Dixielanders. They played at a place called the Red Barn in Bexley Heath, Kent, which now is a outer London suburb. At that time, [it] was a separate Kent town.

I can't recollect the personnel right now, but they played King Oliver numbers, and ODJB numbers. They were a very tightly arranged band, stuck very closely to the original scores, and were pretty popular.

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They had, I can remember, Bob Dawbarn on trombone, who is now on the staff of the Melody Maker newspaper, writing on pop music. But, at that time, was a very good traditional style trombonist.

This was the same time as Ken Colyer became interested in...probably a little later, probably about 1950, 1951. Ken Colyer came on the scene with a friend of his, Sonny Morris. Sonny Morris still leads small bands of his own.

But, at that time, the two played together in Middlesex which...is now an outer London suburb, but, at that time, was a separate town. They played improvised jazz, completely. It was much more earthy, and ethnic.

They stuck nothing at all to any set arrangements, or scores. They were playing...tunes they heard on records, but not sticking to...the old 78's of King Oliver, and Armstrong, around at that time.

They were sticking to these tunes, but they weren't sticking to the arrangements. They were just playing. This was the first improvised jazz in England.

They cut a few records for a small private label of their own, and then eventually on a label called Esquire which was run by a fellow called [Carlo Kramer?], who is still active in England, on the record producing side.

The first jazz concerts that I attended were probably around

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this time, 1952 or [19]53, after Ken Colyer had left for New Orleans.

The Mike Daniels Band from Croyden - the Croyden area where I lived, and always have lived - were around at that time. They were playing at the Croyden Jazz Club. A fellow by the name of Frank [Gitgood?] who promoted in the Croyden area way back then, and still does today (i.e., promoted them.) He was one of the biggest promoters, and enthusiasts in the South London area.

They used to hold concerts at a place called the Civic Hall in Croyden, which is now pulled down. There's a big store in it's place. The Mike Daniels Band used to play there. The very first Humphrey Lyttleton Band used to play there.

The first Humphrey Lyttleton band that I saw was made up of members of the Melody Maker Poll Winners Award Concert. At that time, Eric Delaney was the drummer. Delaney is now, of course, a showman, and a swing drummer. His own little band is on tour for about 52 weeks a year, playing at halls, camps, and ballrooms throughout the country.

Humphrey Lyttleton, at that time, had a purely traditional style band of trumpet, trombone, clarinet; and drums, bass, and guitar [that] he was using at that time. They were playing, again, mainly Armstrong and Oliver numbers. But Lyttleton must have been one of the first jazz musicians in England to write his own numbers, and to arrange his own numbers; and these things are

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gradually...infiltrating into the British music scene. This is probably 1953.

Lyttleton also was one of the first jazz bands to get a major recording contract with Parlophone Records. And recorded extensively with Parlophone on 78's for, it must have been 10 years or so. Probably as much as one issue a month at that time. So, he was the most well known band at that time.

The smaller bands around here. Ian Bell Band played at a place called the Park Lane Ballroom in Croyden which was next door to the fire station. That's all been torn down now.

The Red River Jazz Band were around at that time. I can't remember the personnel. These were local bands. But mainly, the Humphrey Lyttleton band at that time.

There was also the Chris Barber Band [which] came into existence around that time. Colyer was still away in New Orleans. Chris Barber had a small band of his own, mainly playing in the London area.

They played at the Hammersmith Palace [?] for an Esquire Record concert. Barber, again, was trying...he was playing sort of semi-arranged jazz, even at that time, putting in a few numbers of his own, probably following along the lines of the Humphrey Lyttleton Band, at that time.

There was only a very small [number] of musicians, probably about, no more than about 30 around the London area at that time.

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[PC interrupts and asks TS about the Ken Colyer Band of 1949.] Yeah.

Ken Colyer came back from New Orleans in late 1953, and this altered, really, the whole aspect of traditional jazz in England. The first thing he did, was to get together the finest of the traditional musicians of that time in the country, and he chose Chris Barber on trombone.

Before that, for a very short period, a fellow called Ed McDonald who came from the north of England [was on trombone.] He used Chris Barber; and Dizz Tisley on guitar, and banjo, at that time, and these were the finest musicians of that period. This was about 1954.

He came back with a whole range of new ideas, and new tunes. He had been out here for some time. It is not generally known he cut some records with Emile Barnes.

This changed the aspect entirely because, after a few months, a lot of small bands were cropping up everywhere, playing a sort of Ken Colyer style jazz, and even today there are Ken Colyer inspired trumpet players.

About the same time, the Humphrey Lyttleton Band went its own sweet way, still playing semi-arranged stuff. Lyttleton was a great man for experimenting, and he ended up with what he called his Paseo Band by adding a sort of an African bongo players, and giving it a sort of West Indian tinge.

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So, he went one way. The Ken Colyer Band went the other.

After a few months there was trouble in the Colyer Band between Colyer and Chris Barber, and they decided to split up, and go their own separate ways.

Colyer chose...well, what happened was that, technically, Barber sacked Colyer. Barber keeping the remainder of the band, and Colyer choosing different musicians.

From that day onward, of course, Chris Barber has never looked back. He now no longer plays in the traditional idiom as such. He ranges from Duke Ellington, and even modern rhythm and blues tinges, and plays mainly on the continent where the work is.

Colyer has stuck to his early principles, and still plays basically the same music as he did when he started. And he stuck to a - more, or less, a - steady personnel. He's had very few personnel changes.

He was recording for Columbia Records for some time, and then his contract expired with them. He's no longer got any sort of recording contract at all now, but records on a variety of small independent labels, so he still has quite a steady output.

Chris Barber does a tremendous amount of promoting as well. The jazz and blues festivals - we've had about eight now for the past eight years - are promoted partly by Chris Barber; and you can see how his music has changed by the types of bands, and

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musicians, he's had at these jazz festivals over the years.

The early ones were purely a traditional style music, and one of them included Louis Nelson with the Barry Martyn Band.

And today, the 1969 jazz festival was purely rhythm and blues, and soul-time music, which is now what Barber is playing with basically the same personnel, although he adds an electric guitar, a fellow by the name of John Slaughter who plays electric guitar.

These two main bands, the Lyttleton, and Barber, and the Ken Colyer Band - the three bands in fact - were the three main bands through the late 1950's.

About 1958, [19]59, there were many small amateur bands. People playing, young fellows playing just for the fun of it, springing up all over the place. One in particular, the Barry Martyn Band, started about 1959 -- at that time using Keith Smith on trumpet. They played mainly in their own little area there in Surrey for small dances and scouts' [parties.]

Barry Martyn sprung, he was a sort of home-town boy from a place called [Virginia Water?]..... He comes from a musical family. His mother sang at one time. His father, I believe, played saxophone, or he played drums...with small dance bands for many years, and he went into the greengrocery business.

Barry had heard these bands of Lyttleton, and Barber, and Colyer, and was duly inspired; and by the age of 14, he was

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knocking about on drums, then. He had a few local fellows around, and they used to play about a three-piece band for boy scout dances, and our British Legion dances.

He palled up with Keith Smith, at that time, and they were very friendly, at that time. Their first little band was known as the Francis Amis Band. That was in 1958.

They were not a very popular band. It was a very local band in the Surrey countryside. They used to play small jobs, carnivals, and things like this.

By late 1959, Barry had sorted out really what he wanted to do, and what he was going to do. Keith Smith had gone his own separate way, and Barry, then, had a regular band.

They had their first London job in, about, 1959 at Studio 51, the Ken Colyer club and they got the residency every Wednesday. The Wednesday night residency there...was their first London job.

They never really looked back from there. Barry went about seven years without a personnel change in his band, except for the trumpet player who never did take it very seriously, and decided to retire at an early age.

[That was] Clive Blackmore who was a Kid Howard inspired trumpet player, but he was only ever an amateur. He was quite satisfied in the early days doing these local jobs. But when Barry decided to broaden his outlook, then Clive went his own

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way, and Cuff Billet, from Portsmouth, joined the band, and that band stayed together for about seven years.

Now, in 1961, Barry decided it was about time he found out more about it, and come to New Orleans. He had no money at all and, I can recollect a little story.

I was with Barry the night before he left for New Orleans in February 1961. They were playing a job at a place called the Palm Court in [Purly?] which is in Surry, which is now, again, a London suburb. It wasn't then. Barry had exactly 30 shillings in his pocket, and was due to leave for New Orleans the following morning.

He went to New Orleans via Canada, and he worked...in a boot factory in Canada, putting laces in shoes, and eventually this type of work. He worked on a road gang, and all this type of thing, and eventually, after about eight months, arrived in New Orleans with about 1,000, odd, dollars inside him.

While he was here, he made two recordings. At that time, he wanted a dance band sound. He recorded Kid Sheik's Swingsters, which was a regular band of that period. And he also recorded Kid Howard with John Handy.

It was interesting, in this respect, because John Handy had never been heard of in England before 1961. Of course, Handy has gone to great things since then. This is partly due to Barry's efforts in England, and on the continent.

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He came back in late 1961, early [19]62, duly inspired, a far better drummer. He had lessons from Joe Watkins, and Cie Frazier. This had changed his outlook completely.

He kept the same personnel, but took them off the road, and they did very few jobs while he...knocked them into shape with what he wanted them to do. This is the difference.

By this time, it was about 1962, the Chris Barber Band had gone on to being a very professional unit. The Ken Colyer Band had stayed exactly as it was, and it still is. The Humphrey Lyttleton Band had gone on to a more progressive style.

People of the Barry Martyn Band, the smaller bands, were beginning to become known. This was just before what was known as our 'trad' period in England. There were many, many small bands cropping up at that time. The Barry Martyn Band was just about the finest of the bands around at that time.

There were, literally, hundreds of small bands popping up overnight all over the country, including Acker Bilk...who came up from the west of England, and the Terry Lightfoot Band which were very well known in England. There were lots of bands at this time.

Barry got his band into shape, and he decided the only way, the thing to do for the fellows in New Orleans was to start promoting as well.

He played through 1962, working on a first tour with the

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help of Sammy Rimmington, who is well known in America, and in Europe, for that matter. He now resides in Denmark, Sammy, and has a band in Denmark.

They decided to bring over Kid Sheik [Colar.] It was a very amateur effort. I helped on this particular; his very first tour. We had no idea that we had to have Ministry of Labor permits, work permits etc. etc.

What happened was we just wrote to Sheik, and asked him if he would come, and he said yes. He jumped on the boat, arrived at Liverpool, and they promptly decided to send him back because he had no work permit, nothing, really at all.

[After] a frantic phone call from the Board of Trade, and rushing about, they decided to let him stay, providing he took it as a holiday, and he didn't work here.

Eventually Kid Sheik stayed here, in England, for about three months. He'd play about four nights a week with the Barry Martyn Band. Another band he played with [was] Keith Smith, and any other band he could get work with, and he was quite happy over this arrangement.

He was the pioneer. Kid Sheik was the pioneer of real New Orleans music in England. He taught the local fellows a hell of a lot. And also promoted the Barry Martyn Band.

Before this, the only other band that had come to England - a New Orleans band - was in late 1959 when the George Lewis Band

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came over. George Lewis, himself, came over in 1957, and played with the Ken Colyer Band. It wasn't a great success. It wasn't widely advertised. It wasn't widely publicized, but, for the few who saw George with the Ken Colyer Band, this inspired many people.

The person promoting, Paddy McEwen [sp?] lost a tremendous amount of money over this early tour, but Hal Davidson, who was about the largest promoter in England, decided, in 1959, to bring, to have a, sort of, three band project.

He brought over the George Lewis Band, the Kid Ory Band, and Earl Hines. They lost a tremendous amount of money, and the whole project was shelved. This was another one of the reasons why Barry decided that if these things were done on a smaller scale, they could still be done.

After the Sheik tour, it was decided between a sort of small society we set up - a small group of people in the south of England, a small group in the north of England - to try to bring over one, or two musicians from New Orleans per year.

This helped in many ways. It gave the New Orleans musicians more work, and they became widely known, and especially people like John Handy. But, it also promoted the Barry Martyn Band tremendously.

Kid Sheik was followed the following year, 1964, by Kid Thomas, and Emmanuel Paul; and, at the same time, late in 1964,

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George Lewis came to play with the Barry Martyn Band. Of course, this was the second-to-last tour George made.

The Martyn Band still had the same personnel, and were playing the same type of music, and still are today, for that matter.

By 1964-65, the British trad period had just about petered out, really. British music is rather funny, really. It goes through great phases where you have the...it goes in...rounds. You have the trad period, the...country and western period, the folk period, then the...pop, rock and roll, soul period. Then, it all goes around again in one big circle.

It's pretty quiet on the traditional side, at the moment, you see, since about 1964. From that time, since 1964, the bands that were left. Ken Colyer's gone his own sweet way still playing around (dog's barking and apparent sound from music box obscures interview at this point) pretty quietly, doing the same thing he always has done.

Humphrey Lyttleton now plays only progressive jazz. He has a lineup of trumpet, and about two saxophones, baritone horn, alto, and soprano on occasions; and plays, mainly, progressive jazz for private parties, and all.

He was playing one job a week at the Six Spells at Chelsea, and they have visiting musicians of the type [like] Jimmy Witherspoon, and this type of singer does work with the Humphrey

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Lyttleton Band.

Chris Barber, Ken [Colyer,] and Acker Bilk, mainly, stay on the continent now. They do much of their work in Germany, and even as far as Poland, behind the iron curtain.

Of the smaller bands, Barry Martyn Band is still going strong and the small bands such as [Mike] Casimir's Band and the brass band side....Mike Casimir, who has a band, and also leads the only brass band we have in England.

In the Midlands, there's Dan Pawson's Band, and other small ones which are quite well known to a minority [and] are well known in their own particular area. If anything special happens, they all group together, and are known by the chosen few in England who follow this type of music....

No major recording company will entertain a British jazz band at all these days. Barry Martyn records mainly for Doug [Dobel's?] '77' label and a subsidiary label called Swift and, of course, for his own labels. He runs Mono and Rhythm Records.

Steve Lane's Band, mainly, only records for their own VJM label. This is the set-up. There isn't a major company in England which will record British jazz, not even the progressive style.

The Columbia, now and again, will record a modern band. But, of the traditional style musicians, they don't get a looking, unless they record for their own labels, or for a label which is only closely connected with local, traditional music.

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That's really about the whole set-up of British jazz, as such, other than the brass band period which started...again, the first brass band to play was around 1960. Kid Sheik played in a brass band, in 1961, in England. He was the first New Orleans musician to play in a brass band in England. I believe, to this day, he's the only one to march with a British brass band.

Mike Casimir [has] the only organized brass band, at the present time. They were playing for carnivals, fetes, and what we have is donkey derbies, and this type of thing. Very spasmodic work.

It's mainly pick-up bands, they're not steady personnels at all. They play only, really, during the summer. They do protest marches and CND - ban the bomb marches - and this type of thing.

The donkey derbies...originated in rural England, way back now, probably in the 1880's, where they have a group of donkeys, and a group of children as jockeys, and they name all these donkeys, and they name the races.

It's like a small horse race. They run only about 20 yards, and only [wager] a few shillings on each one. In fact, there's one held every year in a place called Wellington, in England, and one of the races is named the Paragon Stakes after Mike Casimir's Paragon Brass Band.

It's like [Maurice?] dancing in England. It's part of...English heritage, rural English heritage. And really, that's

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the brass band scene....

I first became interested in traditional style jazz while I was still in school. I was born in 1938. This was about 1948-49.

The first record I ever bought was Louis Armstrong's 'Basin Street Blues,' which I bought second-hand at some ridiculous price, about 8 shillings [which], at that time, was a hell of a lot of money.

I was doing a paper route, and had seen this record in a post office, and had saved for about four weeks to buy this record, hoping it hadn't gone. I used to go down, and look at this record, for about four weeks before I could afford to buy it.

I bought this record, and this was the very first record that I ever heard. This was, as I say, by Louis Armstrong.

I went on from there, decided I would buy some of this music on records. I bought a few Humphrey Lyttleton 78's, and eventually - I think it was for a birthday, or part of a birthday present - I bought one of the first LP's by the Humphrey Lyttleton Band. I can recall it was called 'Humph at the Conway.' The Conway Hall was a hall in Red Arms Square, London where they used to hold early Humphrey Lyttleton Band concerts.

At that time, I went further, and went on, and on, and bought any record that I could afford to buy by every band imaginable. This was before I decided to specialize in just New

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Orleans music.

There was no New Orleans music, as such. They were all bands, such as the Armstrong 78's, and the British bands. We had only heard of George Lewis, and Bunk Johnson, in those days. There were no records about, although very few and far between.

The first jazz concert I went to was at the Civic Hall in Croydon. I saw the Ian Bell Band, and the Red River Band.

The Ian Bell Band were an offshoot of the George Webb Dixielanders. I only ever saw George Webb's Dixielanders once in Purton [sp?]. It was about the same time, just before they broke up. It must have been about 1950-51, just before the band finished, and most of the musicians joined either the Ian Bell Band, or some other small bands of that time.

These concerts were held once a month in Croydon, and, I don't think I missed one between 1950 and, about, 1954, still collecting records all the time.

About 1955, I had such a tremendous collection of odd records that I decided to specialize in just New Orleans music, excluding the long-term ex-patriots like Armstrong and Kid Ory, mainly for the reason - at that time, and it still applies today - is that through lack of money.

There's so much music about of one sort, that to specialize you had to cut out the other types of jazz which I still have to today. Not because of any dislike, but the preference is - and

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always has been - New Orleans music, home-grown from the city.

I can remember going down to the local record store in Croydon, England, and taking all these great [Heford?] 78's, and a few LP's, down there of the British stuff...selling them and, in part, exchanging them for what New Orleans music I could get. I did this through about 1955-57.

Now, in 1957, a few people, Graham Russell and a girl, Rae Wittrick, decided to form a Bunk Johnson appreciation society. They were holding once a month meetings in a pub, the Porcupine, just off Charring Cross Road in London.

I joined this with my brother, at that time, who was beginning to play a little bit of banjo. We joined it, and the first meeting we ever went to -- it must have been in late 1958 when Graham Russell came out of the [Royal] Air Force.

The first records we heard were the Folkways 'Music of New Orleans', and it was in 1958 that I first heard the Bunk Jazz Information's, and managed to buy a copy of the Commodore, at that time, of the Jazz Information sides.

This did a tremendous amount of good. This society had a membership of, perhaps, 200 or so. The London meetings only had about 10 or 12 people turn up once a month. But, we used to play records, and exchange records, and buy records, and this was the basis of all our collections, I think, at that time.

Barry Martyn turned up at these meetings. At that time, he

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was a keen record collector then, and I think we all acquired our first American Musics at that time, probably beaten up 78's, at that time.

The first American Music LP I bought was at that time. I paid a fantastic price for it, about four pounds. It was the Bunk '44 American Music.

I've still got the original one, to this day. I only ever played it about once. I have two copies of it, and I never played this original one more than about once or twice. It was a new one as well. I was so proud of this.

These meetings, we had trouble at this pub that we were using. We had to move to another pub, and gradually less and less people came to these meetings. [They] petered out.

But, the Bunk Society still produced a newsletter, and sold records, and we had our own record label at that time known as Purist Records. We had a sort of Bunk reissue program. We had a couple of unused American Music sides issued on it, and some Bunk with Doc Evans reissue[s].

We're very proud of these things, and mainly sold them to only members. There were about five 78's, and two LP's, issued over a period of about four years. This got me interested in record production, and also a little bit of writing.

I used to write one or two (dog barking) short articles for a couple of magazines around at that time. One, published in the

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Midlands in Birmingham by a fellow called Les Page. And I did a little bit of writing for this small magazine.

About 1956, the Bunk Johnson Society folded through lack of support, and we were pretty quiet from about 1959. The Bunk Society[']s folding seems to have been pretty quiet around that time for a couple of years. Mainly stuck together [were] the people from the society. We corresponded, and exchanged records, and news.

George Lewis had turned up...early in 1957, and we'd seen our first New Orleans musician. I can remember the [Stolth?] Theater in King's Way in London, which has now been torn down, all standing outside in the crowd gazing, in awe, at George Lewis, who was the first musician ever, New Orleans musician, to come to this country to play some concerts with the Ken Colyer Band.

In late 1958, early 1959, when the George Lewis Band turned up; and George came with Kid Howard, and Jim Robinson, Slow Drag [Pavageau], Joe Robichaux, and Joe Watkins. We all turned out at [Houston?] Station, in London, to see the band arrive.

This was our first real encounter with New Orleans musicians. We spoke to them, and we had parties, and we got to know them all personally.

This was a great thing. Before that time, we only had such a few records in comparison with today, and they were only really

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names on records labels and on sleeves.

We didn't know any of them personally. We got to know them all personally, and we had a marvelous time. I, in particular, travelled most of England following this band around. I saw about eight concerts out of the 12 - I think it was 12 that they did - and I managed to get to around eight of them.

Well, that band went back...out into the continent, and eventually went back. By this time, I knew Barry Martyn pretty well because I met him through this Bunk Johnson Society which had now folded.

In early 1963, I decided to write to Rae Wittrick, who had been running the society, and asked what had happened about it. She still had the mailing list, one thing and another, but was doing nothing. It was pretty stagnant.

She said, if you want to take over the running of the society, by all means do so. I've still got all the mailing list, and all the people interested.

The record side was defunct. So, I took over the whole of the set-up of the Bunk Johnson Society, and for a couple of months produced the monthly newsletter.

[I] decided it was pretty useless to carry on calling it the Bunk Johnson Society because nothing was happening as far as Bunk Johnson was concerned. We were generally dealing with New Orleans music, so I changed it to the New Orleans Jazz Appreciation

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Society.

This society exists to this day, although it's pretty quiet, and doesn't do a lot, but it keeps 200-300 people informed [about] what's going on through letter, word-of-mouth, telephone calls, etc., etc., in England.

In 1963, as was mentioned earlier, Kid Sheik arrived, and it was decided that the only way to do this properly was to form another society. This was an idea of Barry Martyn's to deal, mainly, with promoting New Orleans musicians in England; at that time, only England, and the Promotional Society for New Orleans Music was formed.

The first musicians to come over with this society [were] Kid Thomas, and Emmanuel Paul, and they came to England in 1964. After this tour, a northern promoter became interested. He could see that there was something in this type of music, and he decided he would bring over George Lewis, with this society of ours, to tour with Barry Martyn Band.

George Lewis came in...September 1964, and had an extensive tour, and a recording session. This 1964 tour was probably the finest tour that George Lewis made in England, and the continent; only in England with the Barry Martyn Band.

But, it was a very, very good tour. George was playing very well, at that time, in England, and this is probably the finest tour that George made in England.

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In late 1964, Alton Purnell came. Not promoted by the promotional society at all, but by Keith Smith. Keith Smith became interested in promoting, and entirely on his own brought over Alton Purnell.

[In] 1965, I officially became attached to the promotional society, and Don Smedley, sort of semi-officially became our official photographer. He is now called.

The first thing we all worked on together, that's the two of us and Barry Martyn, was the Harold Dejan tour of 1965. And probably, Harold had the most influence to the people in England.

He was such a friendly guy, and mixed so well with the British public, and they accepted him so much. Although he turned up without a saxophone, and we had to hire him a horn because we didn't dare bring him in. We were still avoiding Board of Trade, and permits, and one thing, or another, in those days.

He turned up just with his mouthpiece which he told the custom's people was his lucky charm. We hired him a saxophone from some place in Wales. We had to go as far as Wales to find him a saxophone.

Don and I toured with Harold. All the jobs he played in England, which were down in Wales, or right around the London, area, and up to the north of England as well.

He was so popular wherever he went, and Harold was the first musician in England to record with a brass band. He called it the

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Young Olympia Brass Band, using only British musicians.

On the same day, [we] recorded a set of dance tunes, recorded live at a dance of... This was a most peculiar dance. It was a [public] works dance, and had people there ranging from 60 to about 16, and the impression we had was that this wouldn't go down at all well.

None of the people there, at all, had heard of Harold Dejan, or New Orleans music, at all; but Harold turned up, and completely took the place over in about five minutes flat.

It was quite an odd line-up as well. Harold played alto; and we had Frank [Brooker?], on tenor; John Coles, on amplified guitar; Terry Knight, on bass; and Barry on drums. It was a real little dance band sound. And from that day to this, that line-up hasn't been used in England at all.

This is quite something. This was recorded at the time, live, and this is my first dabble in issuing records.

I issued this particular recording with Barry Martyn on the label, which was known as New Orleans Anthology, which was a one and only effort; because, again, we got into a bit of trouble with the performing rights society over it.

Of course, we hadn't paid our dues and one thing, and another. Although, we paid for the session. We hadn't paid all the official things that had to be paid. So, that was the one, and only, effort on that label. This was in 1965.

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We decided then that Harold being so popular, and his [being our] first tour - discounting the George Lewis tour which was promoted by an outside promoter - but these tours had gone so well, at that time, and the Barry Martyn Band, in particular, was very popular.

Then, I joined, I became a partner in the promotion society, and I joined the Barry Martyn organization, became Barry's band manager, and also the one who looked after him on tour, looked after the band. We were out on the road, did most of the driving on the road, and this was in late [19]65, and early 1966.

The next tour we promoted in 1966 was, again, Kid Sheik because he was pretty popular, and we brought over John Handy. This, again, was a very good tour. This was the first time that New Orleans musicians had gone over to the continent, and Sheik and Handy went to Belgium. [cf. above. Errors above?]. This was the first time that it had happened.

They were very popular in Belgium, especially Handy. This was when Handy was becoming well known outside his own country, and things were beginning to go well for him, you know, the other recordings etc. This was a very good tour. It went well.

It was followed...While Sheik and Handy were in England, Keith Smith, through a German promoter, [Littman and Rau?], decided to bring a band to Europe. Alvin Alcorn came with Jimmy Archey, Darnell Howard, Alton Purnell, again; Cie Frazier, and

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Pops Foster. This was the last tour Darnell Howard was to make. Of course, he died shortly after, and not long after Jimmy Archey [died].

While they were here working for Keith Smith in England -- and Keith Smith covered the English side of this tour for the German promoters. Sheik and Handy, still being here, we had quite an epic recording session known as the Eagle Brass Band.

We recorded inside, using Sheik, and Alvin Alcorn, and Keith Smith, on trumpets; Cie Frazier, on bass drum; and Barry Martyn, on snare; Handy, on alto, and the rest were made up of local musicians; Jim Young, on tuba, he later recorded with the Olympia Brass Band.

This was recorded for George Buck who, to this day, hasn't issued this session yet. But it is a very, very fine session, and quite a historic session as far as English recordings go.

This brings us up to 1967, when we worked on a tour, and brought Louis Nelson to England. Now, Nelson had a very good tour of England and, also, went to Belgium.

We tied up with some Italian people who were not promoters, but just enthusiasts. They heard a couple of New Orleans records, and when I say a couple, this is literally true. Between a gang of about six or eight of them, they had about five records between them.

They had written, and asked me, in fact, if they could have

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Sheik and Handy; but they had written so late, it was impossible to organize anything with Sheik and Handy. We said, the next musician we bring to England, we would offer them.

We offered them Louis Nelson, and they jumped at the idea. So, we flew with Nelson to Milan.

Now, Louis Nelson was the first New Orleans musician, ever, to go to Italy. It has worked out today that he has paved the way, for every subsequent musician that comes to England now takes in Italy as well.

So, Nelson paved the way. He was a tremendous success in Italy, and they wanted him to stay longer, although being under contract with us, he couldn't.

We played in Milan and Genoa, smaller places, [Sondrio?] for the finish of an Italian professional cycle race, I remember. We played...these cyclists all arrived, and they gave out the trophies, and we played the session afterwards.

Nelson was so popular, although none of us spoke Italian, and very few of these Italians spoke English. We, sort of, communicated through music, and were treated so well. It was really something quite fantastic.

They looked after us in the best hotels. And we only worked about...we were there, actually, only about 10 days, and we only did about five jobs, in 10 days, and they looked after us all the time.

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We went down to Genoa to do a job in a club in Genoa - the Louisiana Jazz Club, in Genoa - which was in a little courtyard, rather like a New Orleans patio, rather of the sort of the Court of Two Sisters, in fact. And this little club is a fantastic club with old posters stuck all around the walls, and they've got various trophies which they give to themselves.

They've got their own little band, the Louisiana Jazz Band, who play only about once every two months. They have a session, and they've got this whole jazz club there, and no one ever comes.

They just play for themselves, and now, of course, they've got all the photographs of the Nelson tour. Probably, Nelson was the only person I went to Italy with, but they've, probably, got photographs of the other musicians there, as well, now.

This place was packed solid for about two nights, and this is the only time this has ever happened there. We had a really fantastic time. This is, as I said, in 1966.

When we came back to England, George Lewis was waiting for us. We had a second tour with George Lewis, and this was rather a sad occasion for us, really, because this was the last tour that George ever made.

Nelson was due to return home to the states. Before he went, the day before he went, we did a recording with the Barry Martyn rhythm section which was Graham Patterson, on piano; Barry, on

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drums; and Brian Turner, on bass. Cuff Billett, on trumpet; George Lewis, on clarinet; and Louis Nelson, on trombone.

This was the only recording, at that time, which Nelson made in England, and it turned out to be the last record that George ever made. I think I might be saying that, that's the last recording that George Lewis ever made.

The tour went well in the beginning. We travelled the length, and breadth of this country, taking in places like Nottingham, and Manchester, and Birmingham; and, in fact, George Lewis played one job in Birmingham with the Ken Colyer Band.

It was the only other time between 1957-1966. That's the only New Orleans musician that Ken Colyer had played with between all that time, and this was the only other band that George played with on that tour.

Towards the end of that tour - the George Lewis tour - we were in the north of England. We played in [Redrum?], and Manchester.

We came back to London - that's the Barry Martyn Band - we came back to London, and left George in Manchester because, of course, he had his manager, his manageress, Dorothy Tait insisted on so many hours and so many days rest in-between the jobs, so we decided to move him to Manchester in a hotel.

The Manchester Sports Guild, who were promoting this tour, and who had promoted the earlier tour of George Lewis with the

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Barry Martyn Band, decided, and asked Dorothy Tait if George could play another job with a local band, a local Manchester based band.

As George was feeling pretty fit, and he hadn't had any illness at all while he'd been in Europe. He had been taking, having his nasal spray, and his tablets, and things. They asked Dorothy Tait if George would play one night with this local band; and, if I remember correctly, Dorothy said yes, this would be o.k., providing George only played two sets of 45 minutes in the evening with a gap in-between.

Well, George played the first set. This was on a Thursday night. In fact, we only had one other job to do with George. The Barry Martyn Band had only one other job in Nottingham to do, on a Friday.

Well, this was on a Thursday. We were all down in, back in London. George played the first set with this local band, and collapsed during the second set.

I had a frantic telephone call. I was in bed about 7:00 on a Friday morning, and I got a frantic telephone call from Dorothy Tait to say George had collapsed on the stand, had been rushed into a hospital, a private room in a hospital in [Eccors?], which is a suburb of Manchester.

She was beside herself, really didn't know what to do. So, I said, well, you stay exactly where you are, and I'll come up

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immediately. This was about seven o'clock in the morning, on a Friday morning.

I phoned Barry Martyn, and told him you better cancel the job at Nottingham, and tell them we couldn't do the job because George had taken sick. At that time, not knowing what was wrong with him, I rushed up to Manchester by train to see Dorothy Tait.

I met her in a hotel, and she was really in a bad way. She was beside herself, didn't know what to do, what to say, or anything.

I said, well, the only thing we can do is go out to see George, and see how he is. At that time, she hadn't seen George. They had taken him to hospital.

So, we went over to this hospital in [Eccors?], which is way out of Manchester, and saw George in his private room. He really did look sick.

I had only seen him about two days previous to this, and he was so full of life, and said he had felt better than he had for months. He was laying naked on the foot of the bed, and he looked so ill, and drawn. It knocked the stuffings clean out of him, this one extra job just, sort of, clicked.

But, of course, knowing George as we knew him, he said there was nothing wrong with him. He'd be out of bed in about two days. He was fussing because Dorothy Tait was making such a fuss over him. He was getting annoyed. He seemed quite happy in his own

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way.

I sorted out what had to be done as far as these other jobs were concerned and, of course, our contract had been broken and nothing would come of this, and I tied up the loose ends with the Manchester Sports Guild, and came back to London.

Of course, we had no work then. Our jobs...we had this one other job that had been cancelled. So, I said to Barry, we will take it easy for the rest of these days, and I'll go back up to Manchester at the end of the following week, which I did.

George was still in hospital when I went up there. He was much better, walking about in the room. Dorothy said she had made arrangements for him to fly home.

Just before he flew home to New York, from Manchester to New York, I left, and I came back. I said cheerio in Manchester to George and, in fact, that was the last time that I saw George.

I heard, Dorothy phoned me. I phoned Dorothy just before...she made the arrangements to go back through New York before coming back home. And just before they left, Dorothy phoned me to say George had taken sick again, but the doctor decided he could travel.

They flew him to New York, and they put him into hospital in New York. They put him in an iron lung for a couple of days, I think, and he stopped on the way down to New Orleans, again, had treatment before he ever came home.

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Of course, that's the last tour that George ever made, and that's the last time I ever saw George was in Manchester. It was very sad.

That was in late 1966, 1967. [In] 1967. The local music scene in England had died down. It was the tail end of our, sort of, trad period.

There was not too much work about. The Barry Martyn Band had personnel troubles. The trumpet player decided that his day job was far more important than the music he was playing, and decided to quit.

Barry, then, employed Dan Pawson for a while, from Birmingham, a band leader from Birmingham. This was not a good union at all. Also, Barry also worked with Keith Smith. The band didn't work much at all.

I finished my business with Barry, and we went our own separate ways; although, even to today, we are still very friendly, and we do work a little together on the recording side with Don [Smedley] making the photographs.

Nelson was called back to Italy by these Italian people, and went straight from the states to Italy. [He] made a very long second tour which apparently didn't go too well. Whether it was because he was by himself, and felt a bit out of place, I don't know.

On his way back, he called into England, and did a couple

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of...private jobs while he was in England. I didn't personally catch him when he came back the second time, but he made a couple of records with Barry.

One [was] with Mike Casimir's Brass Band, although the record came out with Barry's name. But, in fact, it was Mike Casimir's band, for La Croix Records.

And the second one was just Louis Nelson with Barry Martyn's Band. This is the only recording of the Barry Martyn Band with Dan Pawson. They only played together for a very short period.

La Croix Records was just beginning then, and this was the first we heard of Lord Richard Eakins, who was a record producer. Before then, he was just an enthusiast from Birmingham.

As I say, I went my own separate way. At that time, I was doing a lot of writing. I wrote a lot of sleeve notes for George Buck. I did sleeve notes for Pearl Records, the stuff that Pearl, to date, hasn't been used. But, some of the stuff for George Buck has been used.

I was writing for Jazz Journal, Jazz Times, a local book, and a small magazine from Birmingham which I can't recall the name of, at present and, generally, doing a lot of historic, historical work for New Orleans music, and the musicians in England.

In fact, I have my own little archives, and I know the record collection...consists of almost every issued recording of

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New Orleans music, including all the negro bands, and also the mixed bands, as well...[It] includes the bands on tour in the state,s and England, and on the continent. [There are] very few recorded examples of New Orleans musicians on the continent, at present. That took us up to 1967....

Late in 1967, Kid Sheik shot through England on a very quick visit. He was in England for about one week, and, I think, he did two jobs as well....He came back mainly to work Belgium, and Italy. While he was there, he made a recording.

In 1967, the same applied with John Handy. He shot through England for about one week, taking in about two jobs with the Barry Martyn Band on his way to, again, to Belgium and Italy.

Halfway through 1967, of course, the Olympia Brass Band turned up, and this was the first New Orleans brass band we ever had in England at all.

Prior to the Southern Travel Director's Council we had, really, nothing at all to do with them, except we tried to organize a party. We organized a private party for the fellows while they were in England.

But, offically, we had nothing to do with the promoting of it, at all; although, fortunately, the U.K. side of the Southern Travel Director's Council allowed us to partake in all the official business which they had to do at the Hilton Hotel.

Also, one job for the Salvation Army. They allowed us to

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partake in all...what was going on which they had to do. They included us in it, which was very nice of them because they had no reason...there was no reason why they should do it, but they included us in these things.

It was a fantastic occasion for us. We went completely mad for a couple of days taking photographs, as I say, of this private party which went down very well. This [was] half-way through 1967.

Between then and 1968, nothing happened at all. It was a completely dead period. Band work in England was, literally, nothing. The bands really scraped around, and, mainly, were playing in pub jobs...in something like the kitty halls.

The band will play in a London - or a London suburb - pub just for what they can get by passing the hat around, and this was really sad for England because, to us, we've gone down a stage.

We had a very good period where British traditional style bands were playing concerts, and big jobs. The Royal Festival Hall. The Conway Hall, which we already mentioned. The Royal Festival Hall has symphony concerts, and symphony orchestras, and the British traditional bands got to the stage where they were playing this type of job.

We now feel as if we've gone down a step. The English bands are now playing these pub job, which are really few, and far

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between. The Studio 51 - the Ken Colyer Club as it's known - was always open five nights a week. It was never open on a Tuesday, or a Thursday; but was open five nights a week, doing two sessions on a Sunday, and an all-nighter from Saturday night to Sunday morning.

There are no longer all-nighters and just before we left to come to the states, the Studio 51 had a rhythm and blues band there on a Saturday night, and no traditional band there at all.

Ken Colyer just plays there, sometimes, on a Saturday; sometimes on a Sunday, but it's pretty sad. The Barry Martyn Band is about the only other traditional band to play there now. It's not open during the week at all. This was the mecca of traditional jazz in London.

The only other club running traditional style jazz is the 100 Club in Oxford Street. That is still open seven days a week. But, again, is employing rhythm and blues bands, rock and soul bands, and this type of music, and private parties. And every now, and again, when the Kenny Ball, or the Chris Barber Band, or the Acker Bilk Band are back in England, they will do one job at the 100 Club while they're in, passing through.

So, it's come to this, now. We've got plenty...of London pubs having jazz bands in them, which are very very nice for the public, but not too good for the musicians.

They're all, virtually, pickup bands. There may be, perhaps,

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a dozen, in the London area, of these places going. You can hear music for seven nights a week which is, as I say, nice for the people, but not too good for musicians either.

There are no small bands making a living out of traditional style jazz, at the moment.

The larger bands, people like Humphrey Lyttleton, only play when a job, they're called for a job. It's not a regular band. They play society jobs a hell of a lot, and weddings, or parties.

When they're called to play, the Kenny Ball, the Acker Bilk, and the Chris Barber bands, all play on the continent, mainly Germany or Poland, the majority of the year.

The Ken Colyer Band has a steady amount of work around the country, but Ken Colyer has his own devout followers, which he's always had, and can keep a steady amount of work going in this way.

But, jazz clubs are petering out as such. We had jazz clubs all over the country. We still have jazz clubs all over the country, but they're now farther apart, and more spasmodic. Whereas [they played] once a week, or once a fortnight; they are every other month now, and this type of thing.

Up to 1968, the last tour we had of a musician, ourselves, was Andrew Morgan; again, only taking in one week in England; and, again, Italy and Belgium. This being, of course, that they're spending more time on the continent because the work is

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now on the continent.

And sad, but true, it isn't worth keeping a New Orleans musician. We can't afford to keep a New Orleans musician in England, when the Italian...and Belgian promoters are paying most of the cost to bring them to Europe.

The Olympia Brass Band came back again in September, October 1968. A larger unit, this time, which was even better than the first.

On their way to the Berlin Folk Festival [they] stopped only two days, but managed a party, and a recording, and from that, through October 1969, nothing has happened at all. It's been very, very quiet. The Barry Martyn Band made an extensive tour of the United States, taking in the New Orleans Jazz Festival.

I, myself, have been keeping pretty quiet, but active, dealing, mainly, with my own archives of files, and recordings, and, lectures, and filing, and keeping the music alive as much as possible.

Up until now, our visit here, what we've been doing [is] a lot of research, and hearing a lot of music, meeting a lot of people.

Some great people we've met, not just musicians, but other visitors in town. We've met a great lot of people, people like Eric Brown, who I only personally knew by letter; Yoshio Toyamo, the Japanese trumpet player. It was nice to meet these guys, who

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I only knew by letter, and to meet in one place.

I've learned a hell of a lot on this tour, and I've got a tremendous amount of work to do now when I get back, to add this to my own particular files to keep it going in England as much as possible.

One good thing when we get back next week. Two days after we get back, Emmanuel Sayles arrives; so, for a little while, we'll have a bit of New Orleans back in England, again, for a short period.

And that's just about the score.

END OF REEL