



VJAZZ 47  
August 2010  
Distribution 650

# VJAZZ

To Proactively Collect, Archive and Disseminate Australian Jazz



## ABC1 Collectors

At Ralph Powell's invitation Gordon Brown and the film crew from the television program Collectors spent the day filming at the Archive. After a tour of the Archive Mel Blachford, our Collections Manager, showed Gordon some of the rare and more interesting pieces housed within the vaults. Towards the end of the day everyone gathered around John Adams on the piano and Barrie Boyes on tenor saxophone to enjoy several choruses of *Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey*.

Left : Mel Blachford with Gordon Brown holding Ade Monsborough's plastic saxophone.

Didn't we have fun.

## STOMP and CIRCUMSTANCE

## Look who's rehearsing at the Archive

Recently John Gill, leading ragtime pianist, dropped by and took the opportunity to limber up for his coming performance in Melbourne. What a treat for us all.

*Petite Fleur* and *A Moi De Payer*

**Red Onion Jazz Band**

**Wes Brown**

**I wish I could shimmy**

**What Fling was that Mr Brown ?**

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# Maurie Fabrikant

By Graham Eames

We first got to know Maurie at the 1996 Bathurst Australian Jazz Convention (of course we knew him before on a nodding and saying hello basis. Who doesn't in the traditional jazz world?) when I was programmed in the same band as Maurie, "The Balled Eagle Jazz Band", it was a most enjoyable experience.

Even though Chris Kelsey's Balled Eagle Jazz Band had been around for a long time as a convention band, it seemed to work so well in this particular combination that the band was invited to quite a few festivals, including the Moe Jazz Festivals, Newcastle Jazz Festivals, Dubbo Jazz Festivals, the Mildura Jazz, Food and Wine Festivals and the Southern Highland Classic Jazz and Ragtime Festivals, as well as two three-week long tours of the East Coast. During the Adelaide Jazz Convention in 2001, the Balled Eagles cut a CD, which is now totally sold out.

Maurie was invited to perform with the Adelaide-based band the "Jazz Ramblers" at the Barham Jazz Festival when their regular piano player decided to go caravanning around Australia. Due to other circumstances the band also had some other Victorian musicians depping for that festival. Maurie and the rest of the band enjoyed the experience so much that he wanted to cut a CD with this band, and again they became very successful. Now known as "Jazz Ramblers Barham Connection", this band has been invited to Moe, Mildura and Dubbo Jazz Festivals on numerous occasions, as well as being invited back to the Barham Jazz Festivals. The Adelaide Jazz Ramblers band is still going strong to this day.

During one of the performances of the Jazz Ramblers Barham Connection at the Moe Jazz Festival, the band was heard by Mr. Rod Andrew, who was so impressed that he wanted to take this band on a tour to New Zealand. As Kanga Bentley's health started to fail a bit at that time, it was decided that Dave Sutton would take the trombone chair, thus vacating the drum kit for Rod Andrew. Hence the Hot Peppers in their present form was born.

The New Zealand tour was hectic, successful and eventful, traveling from the utmost northern tip to the most southern part of the North Island.

It's interesting to note that prior to the New Zealand tour Maurie had never possessed a passport, not being a person to indulge too much in sightseeing, but any chance to play jazz almost anywhere is of the utmost importance to him.

One week of rehearsal in Hamilton, 17 gigs and one three day Jazz Festival during the whole month of August in 2003 was the Hot Peppers tour of NZ.

A rare event occurred during this tour - Maurie was heard to sing (!!!). At a visit to the Glow-worm caves we were invited to sing, to experience the beautiful acoustics of those caves; we were all dumbstruck when Maurie started up his own interpretation of "Glow Little Glow Worm, Glow".

Maurie and myself also play together in the Fred Stephenson led band "The Merry Men", a very jolly outfit and a bit different to Maurie's normally preferred line-up of piano, banjo and tuba. This band plays at festivals and gigs in and around Melbourne. This is a fun band with much camaraderie amongst the band members, which results in a very relaxed and polished performance.

And then of course there's Maurie's Jolly Rollers Jazz Band, known just as well for the slogan on the back of the uniform shirts as for the type of jazz this band plays.

A deliberate effort on Maurie's part is that this band has no fixed personnel, whoever is available and/or who is most suitable for the type of jazz Maurie has been briefed to play.

It's no secret that Maurie is passionate about Australian jazz



Jim Mills (bjo) Maurie Fabrikant (p) Gavan Gow (cl) Rod Neal (tb)

composers and insists on including as many as possible in his repertoire, especially those of the Bell brothers.

Luckily for us we had the use of the talents of Terry Wynn who researched and made up charts of any composer we wanted to play the music of, lead lines for me and chord charts for the others band members. Part of the success of the Hot Peppers, Jazz Ramblers Barham Connection and Maurie's Jolly Rollers is due to the professional charts of Terry Wynn.

You don't get to know Maurie without getting to know Doreen (or DB, "the Dearly Beloved" as she's known to all and sundry). Both Maurie and Doreen are very hospitable and generous, on many occasions Maurie has come home and informed Doreen that he's invited somebody to stay with them for a couple of days as they had nowhere else to go. When Doreen asked who are they, Maurie would say, "Don't know them, only just got talking to them during the festival, but they seemed decent enough people." Generosity has been abused, but a lot of beautiful friendships have been formed, including the one between the Eames and Fabrikant families, also with Maurie's "number one favourite daughter", "number two favourite daughter" and "number one favourite son" and of course Maurie's "little bro". Not only amongst ourselves, but through Maurie we've met and formed so many other friendships with like-minded people.

We are all familiar with the "Maurie-isms" I don't think he's ever used my name, I'm only ever referred to as "Eamsie Old Sport" and my wife as Mzzz Eames, "Shittles, is that right?" as a form of amazement, etc.

There're a lot of people who have known Maurie & Doreen for a much longer time than us, and therefore I was honored to be asked to write something about Maurie. Many thanks also to Ian "Weary" Williamson and Garry "Rumble" Richardson, who we called on for some support and input.



## Fabbles

By Garry Richardson

It has been well and frequently said that they threw away the mould when they made Fabbles. Actually, I think they had already thrown it away and he grew from the mould (pun intended) when no one was looking. When the yanks found poor old Saddam hiding in a cellar, we all looked at the photos and laughed because we'd known all along: he was there at 40GCNP, though I doubt the Saddamite had a bunch of computer cards in his shirt pocket.

40GCNP, purpose built in the early sixties for processing wine and raising three urchins, has been the scene of many a revelry and many a kindness. Both Maurie and the DB (Dearly Beloved)—and later the offspring—are of an extraordinary generous and welcoming disposition. In fact I know of only one person who has been declared persona non grata, and when I said I was no more deserving than he, I was informed gruffly "with you, mate, it's a pleasure".

The gruff voice and amazing memory for names should have made MF a politician, standing to the left of the fence, of course. Or at least a big-deal car salesman, hiring jazz bands to promote his yards. But no: he started in an aircraft factory,

sold Honeywell computers, taught computerology at the Chisel Institute, operated an embroidery for the benefit of his friends, and retired so he could preside over the VJC.

Then there's the Henry George Society, which you'll have to study for yourself, a strong doubt about the role of humans in global warming, and an alarming tendency to do mental arithmetic with immense speed and confidence. Oh, and I suppose we should mention a passing interest in belting the guts out of innocent pianos. If you haven't seen Bill Beasley's cartoon on the subject, your life has not been as blessed as it should be. At one stage he had no piano and I had one but was too peripatetic to keep it. Two problems solved until Norm Follet conveyed it to my house a few years later. Soon, Moz obtained an electric goanna: at last count he had so many of these he had to store one in Adelaide.

Could this discourse be complete without a mention of a tendency to bons mots? Yes, I think he used to invent them as a way of avoiding boredom on the train going to work. Some he has kept for several decades, such as "standing in the direction of up". "Gudday, Fabbles, howarey?" "Mate, I have the strength of ten." Once we were comfortably gazing at the scenery and filtering some beer I remarked how lucky we are. **"Mate, we are kings."**

Well, there you have something of this bloke known well by many. We all copy him—how do you think I learned to speak like this? Well, mate, I only hope Jelly would approve.

## VJA's tribute to the Red Onion Jazz Band



In June 1962 the Gin Bottle Jazz Band was due to appear on ABC TV's "Lets Make a Date". The band's name is too controversial for a teenage audience" the ABC executives decided. So the Red Onion Jazz Band was born. Allan Browne and Brett Iggulden had formed the band some months earlier, drawing on school friends, neighbours and friends who had a mutual interest in model aeroplanes. Appearances at clubs, hotels, concerts etc. all over Australia were followed by overseas tours. There were appearances by the band at the Australian Jazz Convention, numerous recording sessions, as well as guest spots on radio and television. The Red Onions even had their own fan club and manager. The band became one of the most popular 'traditional style' jazz bands in Australia. Roger Beilby

Two of the legends of Australian Jazz are the Yarra Yarra Jazz Band and the Red Onion Jazz Band. The Victorian Jazz Archive paid tribute to the Yarras in an exhibition that has just closed. The next exhibition, featuring The Red Onion Jazz Band, will have its **opening day at the Archive on Saturday August 7th 2010**. The following day the Onion's leader Allan Browne is organizing a fun day at Bennett's Lane featuring many past members and fans. It will be open to all and some great jazz is assured. Eric Brown

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FLING

**By Bill Brown**

JAZZ festivals come and go, that is a fact of life. However the Southern Highlands event at Mittagong has survived mainly through the tenacity and dedication of John Buchanan. I have had the privilege of attending the last two. Both were well organised structured affairs with a great emphasis on the field covering the early era of classic Jazz and Ragtime. This year's event went further including the word Swing, which of course widened the whole concept.

Thus we had sessions dealing with the small group Jazz of Count Basie and Duke Ellington from the thirties period. The Basie material covered the marvellous Lester Young whose cool sounding tenor sax [as against the florid sound of Coleman Hawkins] influenced a whole range of modern sax players plus the other Basie sidemen of note, trumpeter Buck Clayton and trombonist Dicky Wells.

Likewise the Ellington material covered the small bands led by Duke players Rex Stewart, Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, often with Duke on piano.

At the festival, players like Trevor Rippingale and Michael McQuaid obviously organised a lot of those events. Trevor excelled himself by setting up the Saturday night set, a re-enactment of the 1938 Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall Concert. They followed the original concert routine and the big band was magnificent. Trevor, Paul Furniss and three other reed players all took turns at being Benny. The drummer, Will Dower, did the Krupa bit to perfection including the drum sticks being thrown in the air. All in all, a great night.

It is difficult to relate other highlights as there were so many. The aforementioned Trevor Rippingale led his Wolverines in a set covering Bix's original Wolverines tunes. Here Geoff Power came into his own. Then a set covering early white jazz bands covered a sometimes neglected area, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, Original Memphis Five etc. Michael McQuaid again chronicled this area and we had the bonus of the fine cornet of Stephen Grant. Stephen (the modest unassuming genius) was on piano elsewhere.

On the Saturday there was a marvellous Ragtime set with Stephen at the piano, assisted by reed player Paul Furniss and other occasional 'blow-ins'. He did a terrific raft of Scott Joplin numbers. His solo version of Joplin's Solace was a tour de force. His style of playing it so slowly without being boring or repetitive was wonderful. Jazz was often designed to make the eyes moist: here Stephen succeeded.

Paul Furniss, one of Jazz's great heroes, with Michael McQuaid did a marvellous tribute to fine Jazz clarinetists Edmond Hall and Omer Simeon. Sandra Talty, drummer and vocalist, appeared in various settings and did a good coverage of female jazz singers including a Boswell sisters segment with added 'sisterhood' vocalizing from husband Richard and that McQuaid fellow.

So, all in all a great weekend.

There was a good attendance that seemed to enjoy the festival. There was a fine turnout from the Victorian Jazz Archive. Actually the Collection Manager and the chap who often lurks in the Sound Room [known apparently as the odd couple]

stayed at a religious Retreat in Bowral. Although there was no crossing of the Rubicon, finding the Road To Damascus involved they were chastened by their experience that could change their lives. But as the joke says. "Make me pure and holy" but -hey man -not yet.

## CLASSIC JAZZ APPEALS TO ALL AGES

**By Gretel James**

We were delighted when one of our favourite musicians, Jo Stevenson, paid a visit to the Archive on the first of June. As most of you know, Jo is a doctor and luckily the surgeon with whom he works on a Tuesday was away, and even though Jo is so busy (he and his wife Irene also have four children) he found the time to spend a couple of hours checking out what he had heard about us. Here he is with our doyen of the Archive, Eric Brown, our registrar and the man who knows more about Australian jazz than all of us put together. Even though Jo still looks like the 13-year-old school boy I first met 27 years ago, he has already travelled the world with several bands and never seems to be without gigs.

His audiences have come to enjoy his wonderful musicianship, whether on clarinet, soprano, alto, tenor or even bass saxophone. He was one of the young musicians from the original Young Musicians' Workshops run by the Victorian Jazz Club under the guidance of Marge Burke. We have heard him with Hotter Than Six, Fireworks and many other groups including his own Stevenson's Rockets, the latter currently playing at the Emerald Hotel, Clarendon St., South Melbourne on a Sunday night. The group also features Stephen Grant on piano, Chris Ludowyk on bass and Ian Smith on drums - a great night of HOT jazz.



**Jo Stevenson with Eric Brown**

The Victorian Jazz Archive acknowledges the past support of the following organisations: The State of Victoria through the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Arts Victoria, Parks Victoria, The Ian Potter Foundation, The Myer Foundation, The Pratt Foundation, The Trust Company of Australia, The Helen McPherson Smith Trust, Diana Allen of Jazz Australia, The Estates of the late Don Boardman, Ron Halstead, David Ward and Ward McKenzie Pty Ltd. and Sam Meerkin. The Archive gratefully acknowledges the financial support given to the VJA Capital Fund by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, A.C., D.B.E.

## Petite Fleur and A Moi De Payer

By Dick Hughes

INSPIRED by Bill Brown's splendid tribute to Sidney Bechet in the May Issue of VJAZZ and encouraged by your expressed wish for "many more articles" from me, I submit the following memories and impressions. Under separate cover, you will find (I hope) a CD of my May 16 2MBS-FM Bechet program. This begins with an interview he granted me in Paris early in October 1954 for Eric Child's Rhythm Unlimited program on the ABC. It was unearthed – and part of it heard – for the ABC-TV documentary on the Hughes family that was screened in February.

I chose May 16 to air this interview because it was the closest Sunday to May 14. Bechet was born in New Orleans on May 14 1897, and died in Paris on May 14 1959.

He could be perverse and prickly and I was surprised when he agreed readily to an interview for the ABC, during which he named Big Eye Louis Nelson as his favourite clarinetist and said that the favourites of his own records were *Blues in the Air*, *The Mooche* (on which he doesn't play a solo) and *Blues in Thirds*.

I first met Bechet on July 31, 1953, after I had heard him at the Trois Maillets. I have a tolerably prehensile and retentive memory, but can remember but one tune he played that night, a stunning version of *Just One of Those Things*. This masterpiece has obliterated other memories of his performance.

I remember far more clearly our next encounter on Thursday, September 30, 1954 (The night of the old Melbourne Show Day public holiday, as I hear some of you bellow). This was at the Vieux Colombier, his main headquarters in Paris, where he was playing then with the band of the clarinetist Claude Luter, which he dominated, as Bill Brown implied.

Bill also mentioned, in his "Real Musicianer" article in the May issue, two compositions of Bechet that I first heard that night – *Petite Fleur* and *The Pay-off* (not that it was called *The Pay-off* then). Try as I could, I could never hear exactly what Claude Luter was saying when he announced the number on the bandstand of the Vieux Colombier on the five nights I went there.

Bechet's friend, Andre Coffrant, who had written the storyline for Bechet's ballet *The Night is a Witch*, wrote it down for me on the afternoon of the interview. It was *A Moi De Payer* that I had heard once in some freakish fashion as *Amour De Paix*. Bechet told me before the interview that *A Moi De Payer* had been written for a film called *Série*

*Noire* and that it would star Erich Von Stroheim whom you may remember from *Sunset Boulevard*. An excerpt from *Série Noire* with Bechet playing *A Moi De Payer* was intended for the screening of the family documentary *You Only Live Twice* but the copyright figure was too high.

It wasn't until 1961 that I eventually acquired a copy of the record and so thanks to the arranging ability and chords knowledge of Johnny Mc Carthy introduced it to the repertoire of the Ray Price Quartet which consisted then of Ray (banjo and guitar), John Costelloe (trombone), John Mc Carthy (clarinet and saxophones) and me on piano. But what to call it? We used to play at least five nights a week then and people would always ask what it was, for it was a haunting and dramatic theme. *A Moi De Payer* means loosely 'I must pay' and, because *Série Noire* was again loosely a gangster film I proffered *The Pay-off* as an apt translation.

With Wally Wickham on string bass, we recorded it in late April or early May 1962 and it was released as a Coronet single in June 1962 and – wonder of wonders – it made the hit parade. That was how Kenny Ball and The Jazzmen heard it and made a great record of it later in 1962. The success of *The Pay-off* is a classic example of the right people hearing the right music at the right time in the right place.

### "I tracked down Bechet's widow – Elisabeth"

Well all right then! But what about *Petite Fleur*? It was Chris Barber's record of this, with Monty Sunshine on clarinet and Chris, as I recall, playing bass instead of his usual trombone, that became so popular in 1957/58. Monty came to Australia in 1977, played at the Sydney Opera House and told me he had first heard *Petite Fleur* when he was on a holiday in Spain and that it was played by, I seem to remember, an accordionist in a bar. This was in the mid 1950s and he didn't hear it again until he heard Bechet's record on a car radio. Monty said Bechet made about 30,000 francs (sorry my calculator's kaput) and sent him an autographed photo of himself on which he wrote "*To Monty, who made Petite Fleur in the sunshine*".

It's gratifying to know that the grand old man of Jazz made some money out of *Petite Fleur*, but I often used to wonder who, outside of the Ray Price group, had made money from *The Pay Off*. For reasons I have never fathomed, I scored

an Air France flight to Paris in March 1978. I tracked down Bechet's widow – Elisabeth – whom Bechet had introduced me to in Paris in 1953. The conversation was conducted in fractured English and French in Bechet's old home outside Paris – 8 Rue P. Brosuette, Grigny, if memory serves: and it does (quelquefois) There was another 'home' – an apartment he shared with Jacqueline Pekaldi, who obliged him by presenting him with a son, and who, Elisabeth told me, was left everything in his will. She said that, sous l'influence de stupefiants (when he was drugged), he had on his deathbed changed the will in favour of her whom Elisabeth referred to as *the other woman*.

At some stage of the three-or-four hour session of meditation and reminiscence ("Louis and his wife were very nice to me [this would have been on the Armstrong All Stars late 1955 trip to Paris] but I had the feeling that Louis did not like Sidney very much. Sidney got his son Daniel to take drumming lessons from Kenny Clarke,"), I had occasion to use the smallest room in the house. I was perplexed when she asked me, after my brief absence in the handy W.C. what I had thought of it. I told her as best I could that it was a combination of the aesthetic and the functional/operational.

"Because that's where Sidney composed it," she said.

"Composed what?" I said.

"His biggest hit! *Petite Fleur*! He was sitting there one day when he shouted; "Quick! Grab my saxophone so that I can play this goddam tune, otherwise I'll forget it." Or words to that effect anyway.

I'm glad I made a tidy three-figure sum from *The Pay-off*. Bill Brown rightly and generously acknowledges John Chilton in his "Real Musicianer" article on Bechet in the VJAZZ May issue. Chilton, one of the warmest-hearted and canniest musician/writers I've ever been associated with, narrates in his monumental Macmillan Press book "Sidney Bechet The Wizard of Jazz" how "Hughes cemented his acquaintance-ship" (le mot juste!) "with Bechet" and how the "two men" (man and superman) "shared a bottle of champagne".

The money I earned from two other ABC interviews I did in Paris, with Albert Nicholas ("Louis wanted me first to be in the All Stars. Barney Bigard... he'd climb on any bandwagon") and with Lil Armstrong ("those Hot Five records were good, but I thought the banjo and trombone were terrible"), plus the sum from the Bechet interview might just have covered the cost of half the bottle of champagne. My pockets and wallet were hurt, because, when the bill was presented, it was a classic instance of *A Moi De Payer*.

# I wish I could shimmy like my sister Kate

By Pam Clements

**BEYONCÉ** has taken “booty shakin” to a whole new level but this was all the rage in Melbourne back in the 1920s and 30s when the shimmy was in vogue. I thought the shimmy was focused on the upper part of the body, but oh no, Shirley Andrews states that “its special feature was a turning-in of the knees and toes followed by a shake of the bottom.”<sup>1</sup>

Dance is driven by the rhythms of the day and in the 1920s the rhythms fashioned such dances as the Turkey Trot, Black Bottom, Tickle Toe Foxtrot, Heebie Jeebies, the popular Charleston and of course the Shimmy. They represented freedom, fun and something a little bit naughty. We’re talking about the “Saturday Night Dance” and in the 1920s and 30s you could expect it to be divided 50/50 or 60/40 or two separate dance floors to cater for both old time and modern. The slow and fast foxtrot and tango were always popular.

Wikipedia states that until the 1950s the primary form of accompaniment at Australian public dances was jazz-based dance music. Visiting overseas bands brought it with them, performing on stage and playing in the dance halls. In Melbourne, the large dance halls included the Green Mill near the Arts Centre, Palais de Dance and Earls Court in St Kilda, Maison de Luxe at Elwood, Cliveden in Carlton, Orama at Footscray, Casino at Brunswick, Percy Silk’s at Glenferrie, and then there was that wonderful sprung floor at the Freemasons Hall in Collins Street. These dance halls were large. The Leggett family opened up their new dance hall in 1921 and it was continually enlarged to accommodate 4000 dancers by 1926. At Leggett’s you could also take dancing lessons and see new dances demonstrated.

***“Jazz was not only a new style but a new sound.”***

The composition of the bands changed with the emphasis on rhythm. The drums became very important and good drummers were highly paid. Leggett’s boasted the highest paid drummer in the dance scene at this time. One of the great drummers, who cut his teeth at the Green Mill and the Palais, was Benny Featherstone, a multi-instrumentalist who when the mood took him could play a mean tin whistle or perform a washboard solo. After a stint overseas where he was lucky enough to meet and take lessons from the great Louis Armstrong, he settled in Melbourne playing with Art Chapman’s band before leading



**Franki Stott and Her Gay Collegians Merrie Dance Palais in North Fitzroy 1930**  
Included Grace Funston (trumpet) Stella Funston (saxophone) Franki Stott (Banjo)  
Pat Robinson (piano) Dora Lightfoot (drums).

his own band, which, included Frank Coughlan, to play at the Rex Cabaret. He had an instinctive feel for modern dance rhythms. Joe Watson was at the Green Mill, Ern Pettifer’s band at the

***“Instruments  
...reinforced the rhythmic  
drive of the music”***

Palais, Billy O’Flynn and his Orientals came to Earl’s Court and Jim Davidson, after completing a six month tour at the

Palais, increased his band to fourteen and settled in Melbourne to lead the new ABC Dance Band for many years. Frank Coughlan played in all the ‘Palais’ bands (Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne) before settling into Sydney’s Trocadero.

With encouragement and inspiration from overseas there emerged some wonderful all-girl dance bands. One of the first was the Thelma Ready Orchestra. Thelma came from a musical family who were trained to read and play music in the classical tradition. It was Thelma’s father, returning from a recent trip to



**Wearing their uniforms of apricot georgette and silver lace L to R Alice Organ (sax) Kath McCall (p) Thelma Ready (bj) Lena Sturrock (vn) Lillian Stender (dr and voc) June 1928. “We always wear a uniform. It is far more becoming than half a dozen frocks all different”. Pg 63**



America who inspired and encouraged her to take up the banjo—but where to go to from there? Thelma recalls, “I went for a holiday and met two musicians, a pianist and a violinist. I was walking down the beach at Lakes Entrance with the two girls and all of a sudden I got an idea: I wonder if I could form a band of four or five girls? When I came back I started work on it. I found two other girls. One was a singer, she had a very lovely voice and I got her to study the drums. Drummers were hard to find, so I got an outfit and had her taught to play, ... I looked for a saxophonist and found Alice Organ and away we went.”<sup>2</sup>

All-girl bands from overseas, like the twenty girls that made up the Ingenues, and Babe Egan and the Hollywood Redheads who toured here to great acclaim, were inspirational. Gradually Melbourne all-girl bands came into their own, Eve Rees and her Merrymakers, The Alice Dolphin Orchestra, Evelyn Goold's Ladies Orchestra and Gaye Funston and her Concert and Rhythm Orchestra. These girls worked hard and enjoyed a hectic round of engagements. The bandleaders were not only wonderful musicians but also hard-headed businesswomen. Thelma believed that “her girls were professionals and when they played they got paid.”<sup>3</sup> There were some instances when she had to instruct her girls not to play until she was holding the money.

It seems that dancing and music thrived in the hard times between the wars. Dance halls blossomed, new dances were created, and musicians found work. Losing yourself in the moment or getting in touch with your inner feelings is what creation and improvisation is all about and the essence of both dancing and jazz. Sadly, dancing as an art form today seems to be more about performing for an audience and less about getting together and having fun. Kate was for the latter and I'm up for that, come on Kate, let's shimmy.

## Reference

1. Shirley Andrews *The Lively Dance Scene in Melbourne in the 1920s and 1930s* was a talk given as part of a series of talks and other activities organized by Dr Kay Dreyfus and held during the first days of the exhibition she arranged for the Museum of the Performing Arts, *Sweethearts of Rhythm* (March – May 1995) Both the talk and the book are housed in our Archive
2. Kay Dreyfus, *Sweethearts of Rhythm*, Currency Press, Pty Ltd., Australia. 1999. P.62
3. Ibid p.61



**Evelyn Goold's Southern Cross' Ladies Orchestra 1932:**

Evelyn Goold (piano) Ilma Cook (violin) Lena Sturrock (saxophone) Sylvia Cook (Cello) Grace Funston (trumpet)



**Eve Rees and Her Merrymakers, Caulfield Town Hall mid 1930s:**

Stella Funston (alto sax) Lorna Quon (violin) Alma Quon (drums) Grace Funston (trumpet) Alice Dolphin (alto sax) Greta Vincent (bass) Gwen Mitchell (violin) Eve Rees (piano)



**Gay Funston and her Concert and Rhythm Orchestra mid 1930s:**

Mona Nugent (oboe and piano) Greta Vincent (cello) Grace/Gay Funston (trumpet and saxophone) Doris Hopkins (banjo and ukulele) Molly O'Connor (saxophone and violin) Gloria Duke (piano) Irene Cox (violin) Marion de Saxe (flute and saxophone).

# STOMP and CIRCUMSTANCE

## Graeme Davies' Life in Music

### PART ONE Early Days

LIFE can be a series of chance connections, synchronicity and, perhaps, a little networking. Mine has encompassed all of these and more. On telling Mum that I was going to Ivanhoe to listen to some records she asked "Whose house will you be at?" I replied "I'll be at my new school friend John Kellock's place." "Say hello to his Mother then, he was born in the same hospital as you, two days later." Two Leos no less!

I'd met John at Macleod High School and understandably we seemed to be drawn to each other, I introduced him to my friend Hamish Hughes, who was living at our place as his mother had gone north to some place called *The Gold Coast* with entertainer/multi-instrumentalist Stan Bourne. They hit it off as well. John had a great collection of 'Modern Jazz' - Gerry Mulligan, Jonah Jones, Stan Getz etc and, although I'd been raised on Fats Waller, Kid Ory and The Bobcats, I did find it very interesting. At this stage I'd been to a *Mrs Robinson* for piano lessons and far from graduating me she'd issued an edict, declaring "You'll never be a pianist."

After that I joined *The Victorian Banjo Club* for a year or so and also started to learn clarinet, from cigar chain-smoker Mr Basil Farrell. I was 13. He'd excuse himself mid-lesson and I could hear the radio broadcasting a horse-race, if his horse won, everything was fine. A loss would create a low cigar smoke cloud in the room leaving me feeling like throwing up. It was good experience for playing nightclubs later on. I later started on Alto Sax with newly arrived Scot Alec Doherty. He used to stick me in Mrs Doherty's wardrobe to practice long notes. Years later I was playing Caulfield races when this Scots brogue cut through the crowd "Is that you Greeame? I canna see ya but I recognise your tone." Forty years later! Just incredible.

My first clarinet was picked out for me by Kenny Weate who played clarinet and sax in *The Heidelberg Town Hall Orchestra*, most of whom, including Ken, came down to 'Kirwan's Milk Bar' in Fairfield, run by my parents. They'd come for a malted milk or a pineapple-juice, after the Saturday dance. I was usually shunted over the road to the local picture theatre on Saturday night and managed to catch *The Glenn Miller Story*, *The Gene Krupa Story*, *The Five Pennies* and *The Benny Goodman*



*Story*, great timing indeed.

Kenny Weate and his accordionist brother Bruce had been virtuoso stars of the Australia-wide Tivoli Circuit in their teens. Ken went on to marry singer Helen Reddy and after the marriage failed, moved to South Africa and sadly, died in the 1980s of liver failure.

Adolescence brought some rather interesting times. Mum's "Kirwan" side of the family gave forth Auntie Ethel who would visit, play Mum's piano, sing tunes like *In The Mood* and *Stormy Weather* then belt out a pretty hot boogie in between. Plus Uncle Max, who played hot trumpet at parties, in boats, in fact wherever and whenever he could, and he still does! Mother Beryl threw in a bit of Chopin and Liszt for contrast.

### Golf and Jazz

My father George was the driving force behind my early jazz experiences, and he had a superb record collection. It was full of all the right stuff and to this day I don't know where the hell he got it all from, Kid Ory, Louis Armstrong, The Bobcats, Fats Waller, Nat Gonella, The Dutch Swing College Band and more. He'd cry out "Listen to that clarinet, listen to that trombone."—and when spinning his marching band favourites like Colonel Bogey, he'd drift into yet another world! "Listen to those euphos [euphoniums] and those Double B flat basses, wonderful stuff." Sadly he put the record player away when he took up golf and we got T.V., although later he finished up with a great cassette collection in his car.

"You know what Fats Waller said?"

"No Dad"

"If you ain't got jazz in you, ain't nobody can teach you how [to swing]."

My matinee years, not surprisingly, also included lots of golf. Eighteen holes

after school each night, 36 holes on Saturday and Sunday and Junior Pennant matches against other young hopefuls on Sundays. In the middle of all the golf I still managed to jam on clarinet with Hamish on guitar. Early one freezing Sunday morning the Junior Golf Pennant Team was shuffling around the putting green waiting for the Junior Pennant Captain. He arrived half an hour late walking slowly and with great care, sporting a big smile with dark circles under his eyes. "Sorry I'm late fellas I did my first gig last night and we got £5.00 each and there were girls there." [the average weekly wage was around £6.00 a week]. This was Barry Buckley no less, later known, for nearly 50 years, as the outstanding bassist with many of pianist Bob Sedergreen's groups.

I resolved to form a band immediately!

Day jobs suddenly became a part of our lives, me as copy boy in an advertising agency, and Kellock as a trainee customs agent in a large company that employed one Andrew Symes, a guitar-playing Scot. Later, with a little encouragement from John and me, he took up tenor banjo and became a valued life member of Maurice Garbutt's *Yarra Yarra Jazz Band*. The company also employed one John Bramwell whose late industrialist father had made 'Bramac' raincoats a household name. Bramwell had a mate with a trumpet out in Bayswater who 'plays really high notes but can't play any tunes'. Would I go and show him how to do it?

Several years earlier my Christmas holidays had been spent by the beach in wonderful bayside Carrum and as next door neighbours we had the Hall brothers, cornetist John and trombonist Peter, who later became well known as a 'bop' player. With plenty of time to spare I learnt a little trombone and also a bit of cornet not realising that both skills would be invaluable to me in the near future. I never saw the Halls again!

Meeting John Hawes was an interesting experience. He was very single-minded about playing the trumpet and could play C above top C because no one told him he couldn't. He also sang, and had learnt the words to quite a few tunes from his older brother trombonist/vocalist Jeff. So I showed him the fingering to *'Tin Roof Blues'* which he mastered in about an hour. I went back next week and we did *'Apex Blues'*, the same song upside down. Then we probably did a 12 bar blues and presto with my *Golden Wedding* and a couple of other clarinet favourites, we had a small repertoire. Kellock was very impressed and he and I organised a dance at a hall next to the Ivanhoe railway station.

...to be continued in the next issue



## WES BROWN

Still playing at 87

By Ken Simpson-Bull

PROBABLY best known for his work with Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixie-landers, drummer Wes Brown is still going strong. He is currently actively involved with no fewer than three bands and plays up to three gigs a week.

Wes's career story was broadly covered three years ago in VJazz No.33, but recently interviewed, Wes revealed some interesting facts and up-to-date information that bears relating.

Just to recap and for those that missed our first article, Wes's first instrument was the cornet which he played in his school band for several years and then in municipal and army bands. But his major ambition was to play drums. His favourite group was Bob Crosby's Bob Cats and he set out to emulate their popular drummer, Ray Bauduc. In fact he was so much a fan that he once phoned Ray in the United States for a chat. "Is that Ray Bauduc?" he asked, pronouncing his surname as in *duck*. "The pronunciation is *bore dook*," came the southern-accented reply, "as in the Dook (meaning Duke Ellington)."

Wes's professional engagements began in 1938 when he had a long series of gigs with pianist and band leader Will McIntyre. He also played many times with Roger Bell.

In 1946 Wes was offered Ken Thwaites' job as drummer in the

### *"nine-year stint at the Collingwood Town Hall"*

emerging Frank Johnson band. This band's great popularity was rewarded by a nine-year stint at the Collingwood Town Hall. In fact, in the 1949 Battle of the Bands, Frank Johnson's group proved more popular with audiences than the already famous Graeme Bell band.

When Frank Johnson's band broke up soon after the tragic death of trombonist Wocka Dyer, Wes moved to the 431 Club for a while with a smaller Frank Johnson outfit. From then on he did mainly free-lance work that included a fairly long engagement with Nick Polites at the Auburn Hotel in Auburn.

For seven years Wes was drummer for the very popular Maple Leaf band that included Kim Rushworth (reeds), Bob Whetstone (trumpet), Harry Price (trombone), Conrad Joyce (bass), and Chris Farley (banjo).

Wes remembered that on two or three occasions he played with the legendary Ellington trumpeter Rex Stewart. On the first one, "We were up

in Sydney for recording dates with Parlophone and the ABC," Wes said. "There was an afternoon festival we were booked to play, and Rex Stewart turned up and sat in with the band. It was quite an experience."

With all of his recording dates and gigs, Wes still maintained a regular daytime job with the SEC and even found time for another passion of his—motorcycle racing. After the war Wes decided to take up competitive riding. He said, "The first time I went out my front brake cable broke, I crashed, and finished up doing my collar bone. But a few weeks later I started racing again and kept going for 32 years."

Wes was with the Hartwell Motor Cycle Racing Club from 1948 where he was on the committee for thirty years serving at various times as secretary and president. In 1958 he won the

### *"I crashed on the last lap"*

sidecar Grand Prix at Phillip Island and picked up many other trophies over the years. "The last race I did was at Amaroo Park in Sydney and I crashed on the last lap," Wes said. "But I was OK because I landed on my head and it didn't hurt," he joked. He was 60 years of age.

Wes is an honorary member of the Musicians Union. He remembered that when the Frank Johnson band applied for union membership it was required for each member to be able to read music. Most of the group couldn't, but Wes requested that the band be examined as a whole and they were admitted.

Wes and his partner, Kay, play for the Stonnington Brass Band. "It had always been an ambition of mine to have a band within a band [shades of the Bob Crosby Bob Cats?]," Wes said, "so I went ahead and formed a trad group which we called 'The Stonnington Stompers'. Because the Brass band had no banjo or reed players, we had to recruit these players from outside and the group has become very popular indeed." Wes continued, "My partner, Kay, and I make beautiful music together." Kay Greany only took up a musical instrument at age forty but now plays banjo, tenor horn, euphonium, cornet, tuba and drums. And although she plays regularly with the Stonnington Brass Band, she occasionally joins Wes in the "Stompers" and the "Okeh" bands.

In 1995 Wes received a call from Herb Jennings of

the Golden City Jazz Band in Ballarat. Herb was doing an overseas tour and needed a drummer. The tour was to be seven weeks and Wes was 72 years of age—nevertheless he accepted and he regards the trip as a great highlight of his life.

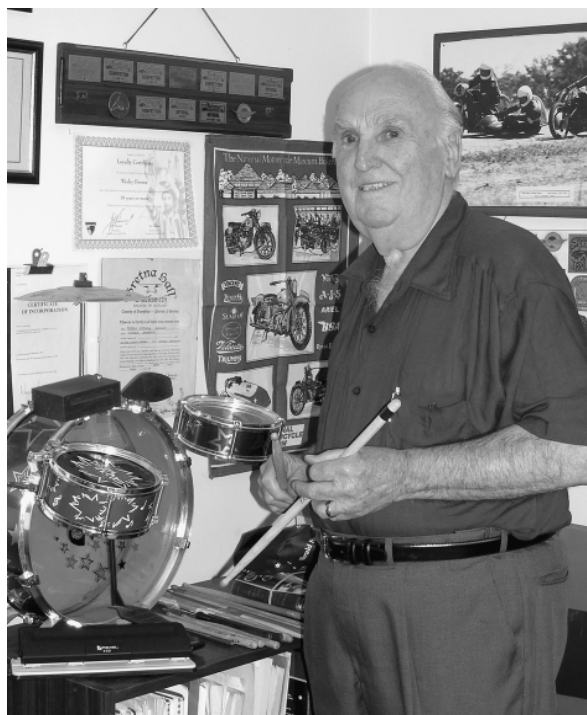
The band consisted of Herb Jennings on trombone, Bob Pattie on cornet, Ross Nicholson on reeds, Ian Bowmaker on piano, Peter Ratnick on string bass, and of course Wes on drums.

At Heathrow the group picked up a Ford Transit van, crossed on the ferry over to France, and drove down to their opening gig in St Raphael on the Riviera for a four-day festival. The band did three and four shows a day!

It was then back to London from where they headed north playing 17 or 18 jobs along the way, finishing in Edinburgh. The band then crossed on the ferry to Sweden where they played at a four-day festival. It was then on to Norway for yet another four-day festival.

At one of these festivals a middle-aged lady walked up to Wes and said, "You play like Ray Bauduc." Wes says that that was the greatest compliment he ever had. From Norway the band drove back to London and flew home. Wes played with the Golden City Jazz band for quite a while after that until the to-and-fro travelling to Ballarat became a bit too much.

Today, apart from the Stonnington groups, Wes also plays with the Okeh Jazz Band whose members include Keith Hamilton on trumpet, Ted Egan on piano, Jim Mills on banjo, Alan Clarke on bass guitar, Danny Kennedy and Bob Fergus on reeds, Don Duncan on trombone, and Les Chapman on tuba. Wes is not planning an early retirement!



A recent photograph of Wes Brown

## Newsworthy

When John Gill visited the Archive recently the volunteers on duty were treated to an impromptu performance on our Yamaha piano. John has been described by The Bulletin as 'the greatest ragtime and stride piano player in the land' and ranks among the very best in the world. He called in on his way back home to Perth after visiting the prestigious Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival in Sedalia, Missouri and also the Blind Boone Festival in Columbia, Missouri, USA. He has been invited back there many times over the past seventeen years to represent Australia. Whilst in Melbourne he gave two performances, followed by one in Sydney and one in Queenscliff, all to packed and enthusiastic audiences, where he performed the ever-popular music of Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, Willie the Lion Smith, Thomas 'Fats' Waller and Eubie Blake. **Gretel James**



### Who said education wasn't fun?

#### **Our first School visit to the Archive was great fun.**

On Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of May sixteen year 12 students visited the Victorian Jazz Archive from Croydon Secondary College, Warrandyte High School and the Yea High School off-campus music program. On arrival the students were treated with refreshments arranged cabaret style followed by an extensive tour of the Archive where they could experience first-hand day-to-day museum practice. Volunteers were there to discuss the part they played in the Archive's operational process.

A quartet consisting of Ross Anderson, Derek Reynolds, Kim Rushworth and Charley Farley, entertained, demonstrating the calibre of Jazz music that they could aspire to. All the students were presented with a T Shirt and an Australian Jazz Convention bag. They left having spent an enjoyable and educational afternoon at the Victorian Jazz Archive. **Marina Pollard**



### **Georgia Lee** February 1921 - April 2010

From the Torres Strait islands to the international stage, blues singer Georgia Lee (Dulcie Pitt) achieved so much; she was Australia's first indigenous jazz singer; the first Australian female to cut a recording in stereo; toured with Nat King Cole and was a regular with the Graeme Bell Jazz Band. She was on radio, TV and the stage. It doesn't get much better than that. The VJA has a copy of her 1962 album *Georgia Lee Sings the Blues Down Under* which has been commercially unavailable for nearly 50 years.

### **...in memory of my father Max Fitch**

When my father Max Fitch died recently, I thought it appropriate to give his music collection to friends of his that supported him, and that I knew would appreciate it. Even though it was meant to be a gift, one of those friends insisted on giving me \$200 - as Dad was a believer in and admirer of the work of the Victorian Jazz Archive, I thought it appropriate to pass the money on to you. *An email from Ian Fitch to the VJA*

### **Peter Sheils** February 1937 - April 2010

The Australian Jazz fraternity has lost yet another musician who helped put Melbourne on the map as a vibrant centre of great Jazz. Peter had put up a very courageous and hard fought battle against cancer. Farewell Pete—Thanks for the music and the memories. *Lois Stephenson. More...Please refer to our web site.*

### **Bruce Gray** August 1926 - May 2010

The Dixielander on Clarinet also played with the Southern Jazz Group, the Australian Jazz Convention's All-Star band and later Bruce Gray's All-Stars. Recorded as *one of the founders of the traditional jazz scene in Adelaide.*

### **Dr Roy Gillott** April 1923 - June 2010

Originally a Yorkshire boy, Roy was a classically trained pianist who loved Jazz. If a piano player was needed he was there. He could be found playing in traditional bands at festivals and conventions especially at Merimbula. Even while fighting Alzheimer's he could be found playing at the Elsternwick club right up until February. *More...Please refer to our web site.*

## **Awards**

**Queen's Birthday Honours Henry 'Harry' Harman** was awarded the **Order of Australia Medal** "for service to the performing arts as a Jazz musician and as a mentor of emerging artists." A Dixieland Jazz man, Harry has been playing the tuba and acoustic bass for more than 50 years.

**The Australian Jazz Bell Awards** saw **Graeme Bell** and **Bob Barnard** on stage together once more as Bob was inducted into the Awards Hall of Fame.

## FROM THE LIBRARY

### "Beyond Category"

The Life and Legend  
of Duke Ellington by John  
Edward Hasse

Reviewed by Ken Simpson-Bull

IN 1956 the once famous Duke Ellington and his orchestra were all but washed up. This world-renowned pianist and bandleader who had once commanded \$4000 (in 1930s dollars) for a single night's appearance was now struggling to earn a living.

Suddenly came one of those rare and pivotal moments. On Saturday night July 7, 1956, the Duke and his band were to perform at the Newport (Rhode Island) outdoor jazz festival. His appearance early in the evening with a small band had little impact on the crowd, but now, just before midnight, his full band took the stand.

They went into *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* written by Ellington back in 1937. After the maestro set the pace at the piano, drummer Sam Woodyard and bassist Jimmy Woode set a medium rocking beat.

In the middle of the piece, instead of playing a brief chorus, saxophonist Paul Gonsalves launched into a blues chorus, then another and another and the audience really picked up.

Then a women got up and started dancing and "that really fired Duke up and he fired us up", recalled trumpeter Clark Terry. Couples started jitterbugging, dozens surged towards the stage and fans climbed on chairs and clapped and cheered.

Organiser George Wein grew edgy and, fearing a riot, he called, "Duke, that's enough". But Ellington must have sensed that he had created show business magic and had no intention of stopping.

This performance, whose swing and energy reaffirmed the dance element in Ellington's music, caused a sensation not only among the crowd but also among the press. The word was out: Duke Ellington was back and he was hot. A new and successful recording contract with Columbia followed and the rest is history.

John Edward Hasse's book "Beyond Category" published in 1993 relates, in an easily readable way, the musical life of Duke Ellington from his birth in Washington in 1899 to his death in 1974.

"Beyond Category" is available for loan to members, along with other jazz-related books, from the Jilly Ward library at the VJA premises in Wantirna.

## Not so Wild about Harry

In a recent interview on the ABC program "Talking Heads" the following exchange occurred between Harry M. Miller and presenter Peter Thompson.

HARRY MILLER: I think most people remember Louis Armstrong always, always used to dab his face, when he was playing the trumpet, with a white handkerchief - like this

PETER THOMPSON: I thought that was because he was hot.

HARRY MILLER: **No, no. Sadly - well, not sadly - many years later a kid, or then kid, rang me up and said, "I was in charge - do you remember me - of Louis' trumpet case and it was laced with cocaine." And every time Louis dusted his face, he was actually snorting coke. Nobody knew, including me, in those days.**

This assertion flies in the face of well documented sources which dismiss any suggestion that Armstrong ever used hard drugs.

It is undisputed that he was a regular marijuana smoker and that he sought to have its use made legal by approaching the then President Dwight D. Eisenhower whilst abhorring narcotics <sup>(1)</sup>.

A quick check of the VJA library both makes clear his bemusement about marijuana and refutes any suggestion Armstrong used anything other than his beloved 'gag'. "There is no evidence that he ever used hard drugs." <sup>(2)</sup> Laurence Bergreen makes clear Louis' opinion of "dope addicts... heroin, cocaine, or some other ungodly shit." <sup>(3)</sup>

Furthermore, a request to the Louis Armstrong House Museum in New York elicited the following response:-

"While it's well known that Armstrong was a marijuana user, **there is no evidence that he used hard drugs.** In fact Armstrong wrote in an autobiographical manuscript that "it really puzzles me to see marijuana connected with narcotics, dope, and all that kind of crap. It is actually a shame" <sup>(4)</sup>

In answer to a 1955 survey on drug usage in the jazz world Louis responded, "To tell the truth - I have never witnessed anyone using 'dope' or 'narcotics' in my life" <sup>(5)</sup>

Therefore it would appear, from a review of the literature that Harry M. Miller's uncorroborated assertion has no basis

in fact and should accordingly be dismissed.

<sup>(1)</sup> *Louis Armstrong - An American Genius*; James Lincoln Collier

<sup>(2)</sup> *Louis Armstrong: A biography*; James Lincoln Collier p. 221

<sup>(3)</sup> *An extravagant life*; Laurence Bergreen p.283

<sup>(4)</sup> *Louis Armstrong Manuscripts 1/3*; Louis Armstrong House Museum

<sup>(5)</sup> *Satchmo Collection, Letters, 1997-35*; Louis Armstrong House Museum

**Ralph Powell - Assistant to the  
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**VJAZZ  
No 47 August 2010**

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**PLEASE NOTE  
DATE FOR COPY  
FOR THE NEXT MAGAZINE  
Mid September**

## **Rosstown Hotel May Fundraiser**

On Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> of May the Archive held their second fundraiser for the year. The **New Melbourne Jazz Band** provided the music with their new line up playing together for the first time, Peter Uppman on trumpet, Ron Trigg on reeds, Charley Farley on banjo/guitar, Ben Rushworth on drums and the leader Ross Anderson on double bass. The large crowd soon warmed up to the band and the dancers soon got into full swing. Four main raffle prizes and ten door prizes were drawn. It was a wonderful day of great food, drinks, jazz and dancing raising \$2000 for the archive funds.

Our next day of fun is on Sunday August 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Marina Pollard Visitor Services**



## **Welcome New Members**

N. J. Aslanides, T. Ayris, A. Barabas, J. H. Bartlett, M. Beare, J. Bennetts, W. & L. Binns, G. Block, A. Burney, S. Campbell, M. Clayton, L. & P. Cooper, R. Davis, A. Del Bianco, A. & R. Dinnar, B. Dow, P. Dowse, J. Dugdale, A. Edwards, P. Edwards, M. Elliot, L. Erenstrom, P. Fletcher, N. Gabriel, F. & M. Hannan, D. Hanson, D. Hildyard, C. Hill, L. Hultgren, B. Jeffrey, Mr. & Mrs. S. Jerrard, K. Johanson, G. Jordan, C. Karajas, D. Kwong, N. McInnes, C. J. Morton, A. Mott, T. Nikolsky, A. Peters, E. Rosser, P. Ryder, D. Schembri - Hardy, W. & J. Shields, M. Spencer, J. Stevenson, H. Van Leeuwen, W. Westmore, G. Young.

## **We thank the following for their generous cash donations.**

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You could join the following group visits booked in  
between August and November

August 12th Thursday

Tour 1.30pm, Music 2.15, Afternoon Tea 3pm.

August 19th Thursday

Tour 10 am, Music 10.45, Morning Tea 11.30.

September 2nd Thursday

Tour 1.30 pm, Music 2.15, Afternoon Tea 3pm.

September 16th Thursday

Tour 10am, Music 10.45, Morning Tea 11.30

September 24th Friday

Tour 10.30am, Music 11.15, Morning Tea 12.00

October 17th Sunday

Tour 10am, Music 10.45, Morning Tea 11.30

**For information and booking contact  
Marina 9781 4972**

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