

Moseley Hall Grammar School Jazz Band

I became a member of the Jazz Band three days into my time at the School. I was a snotty-nosed, short-panted first year when a tall figure loomed over me (I think it was Jon 'Woody' Wood) and demanded to know if I played the trumpet. Colour draining from face, I replied in the affirmative.

Could I play 'The Saints Go Marching In' without music?

"In F concert?" I queried.

"Room 20, 12-30 tomorrow!" came the reply.

So that was the beginning of my Jazz Band career at Moseley Hall.

W. Ifor Jones, the Music master was not amused by the jazz band though he allowed us the room for rehearsals. Terry Brunt (trombone) and I were forced into the school orchestra under threat that unless we did, the Jazz Band would cease to be. It took a while to establish a repertoire and W. Ifor actually purchased a music book of Chris Barber tunes out of school funds for us!

So we rehearsed 'Bobby Shaftoe', 'How Long Blues' and 'Merrydown Rag'.

At the famous 'Garden Party' in 1959 that Mike Perry mentions, the tune that brought the house down in the gym was 'Royal Garden Blues'. By this time, I was playing with semi-professional dance bands in Stockport and Terry was 'sitting in' on a fairly regular basis with the 'Zenith 6' in Manchester so we had a pretty useful band. I must admit that it was somewhat dampening to play the second half of the concert with the school orchestra with a glowering W. Ifor grunting as he slashed his baton through 'Clowns Dance'!

After a spell with an engineering company after leaving school I became first trumpet player at the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool, played with the Syd Lawrence, New Millionaires and New Squadronnaires orchestras plus BBC broadcasts. I also taught brass at various schools for twenty odd years (including Cheadle Broadway!) and am now semi-retired although I still do occasional recording sessions for TV commercials and play with Jazz Bands and Big Bands.

My son Tony has carried on the trumpet tradition and is now a member of 'Scratch the Cat', a hard-working rock band in Norwich. You can look up Tony (Scratch the Cat site) and his old man (Ian Royle - trumpet player) on Google.

The MHGS jazz band was an absolutely wonderful kick-start to my career as a musician and I was so lucky to have been at the School at just the right time.