

JAZZ PICNIC 2008 WOODA



Once again, a Bude Jazz Club picnic worth remembering. How lucky we were with the weather too. As dawn broke, heavy showers of rain fell which left me wondering whether it would put a damper on things (pardon the pun). I need not have worried because it soon cleared and well before the picnic began, the skies had cleared and we were bathed in glorious sunshine for the rest of the day. The day after the picnic it resumed raining, so we timed it just right!

The picnickers attending were not as many as years past, but those who were there did enjoy themselves immensely. It was wonderful to see Anne back at another gig as cheerful as ever, with her brolly at the ready. I brought a couple of friends who had not seen a “proper” jazz band before and they commented afterwards on how much they enjoyed the day out. No doubt I shall encourage them to participate in more functions in the future.

The bar was run wonderfully well by our trusty band booker Jim who served up plenty of real ale so kindly donated by our good friends at St Austell Brewery. There’s nothing better than having your ale straight from the barrel! As those who were there could tell you, I was rather partial to the stronger brew HSD and was feeling it towards the end of this wonderful day.

The music was terrific also, supplied by one of the most popular bands around, The Dart Valley Stompers. They were led by the superb reedsman Jeremy Huggett who guested at the Fryer Barnhart gig a few weeks ago for a couple on numbers. On cornet was Graham Trevarton whose bouncing style served us all oh so well. The ripping tailgate work of Ron Milford on trombone completed the front line. Some great banjo work from John Whitlock drove the rhythm section along and Tony Mann alternating between double bass and tuba gave the band punch and finally the steady beat of stand-in drummer Roger Wells was excellent. It was Roger’s second visit here in as many gigs.

So onto the music, which began with a number which set the standard for the day, Stephen Foster’s 19th century piece Swanee River. A real fast paced stomp which had the dancers up and hoofing from the word go. Then came Louis Alter’s famous 1946 composition beloved by all Crescent City jazzers, Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans. Next up was Gerald Marks’ All of Me before the band featured an old American Civil War martial piece Marching Through Georgia. A foot tapper this one! Ford Dabney’s classic 1924 number Shine followed, before the band struck up with a really excellent version of Thornton Allen’s college song, Washington and Lee Swing. Jeremy Huggett really shone on one the best renditions of this number I have ever heard. Finally for the first set the boys slowed down a bit for a really

smooth version of Ada Rubin's Fair and Square.

We had barely time to start our picnics before the band was at it again. One table outside had enough food on it to feed the five thousand! They made a good attempt in demolishing it though! The Stompers began with a broolly parade with Moe Jaffe and Nat Bonx's piece from 1925 Collegiate. Not a number really associated with parade bands, but is served well here. The boys then slowed things up a tad with Arthur Johnson's classic Pennies from Heaven. Next was a number from the book of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, Paul Mares and Leon Roppolo's Golden Leaf Strut before another set closed out with a number from the pen of Mitchell Parish and co, Louisiana Fairytale. By this time the HSD was flowing well and there were a few numbers that I could not recall, but that's BJC picnics for you!

Another broolly parade ensued in the third set to the strains of Paul Barbarin's famous Bourbon Street Parade. Then Graham Trevarton did his party piece, an extremely funny vocal on a number called I Loved Her on the Back Porch, full of double entendre and risqué lyrics. Really entertaining! Rev Charlie Jackson's Candy Lips was next up before the band played the classic spiritual A Closer Walk With Thee, the usual very slow beginning was cut short and they played the swinging "return from the cemetery" style for the majority of the piece. Maceo Pinkard's old standard Sweet Georgia Brown was swung out in good style before the band wound up with one of my favourite numbers, Sam Stept's Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone.

Now, as I have already said, there were probably more numbers than these played that I failed to mention, but I was enjoying the day. I even shocked many of you dear picnickers by even daring to get up and dance. (What an awful, terrifying sight!). Anyway, I enjoyed myself and I hope you all did too at our annual Jazz Picnic.

I would like to end by thanking Liz, Jim and Tony who helped decorate the barn and for the Colwill Family for letting us use it. To Graeme and Gill who gave up a bit of their time to sell the raffle tickets and of course St Austell Breweries for their sponsoring of the event. I am already looking forward to next year!

See you around the gigs...

Paul