



Pubs, clubs and coffee shops

Transcription of excerpts from interviews with
Alan Hoida, Bill Pritchard, Cath Shinton, Liz Burton, Roger Morton and Will Stone,
talking about music venues and social life in Malvern in their youth

Alan: We were running the Phoenix Club in The Lamb at the time, and that was probably about 197--, early '70s anyway. It was kind of the equivalent of the open mic night that you have now, but it kind of had an element of cabaret in it 'cause people could come and do anything. We charged people to come in the door, and the profits from that were ploughed back in, so once a month we could get a professional band to come and do something. And I used, I used to book, I used an agent for a lot of these sort of modern folk bands. And he would tell me when he had a band that was about to start a tour, and they would come and do a warm up gig for us, much cheaper, we could afford them to come and do a cheaper warm up gig. We moved to the Nag's Tail eventually, I can't remember why, but we did. But we had some very good artists come.

Bill: We used to go to a place called Sonia Keats on Barnards Green. I remember there was a little flower shop and you used to walk through the flower shop and there used to be like a little café bar at the back, and there always used to be a jukebox. And I remember going in there and putting my money in there and playing a few songs on the jukebox and having a glass of milk [laughs]. But yeah, old Sonia Keats, bless her, nice lady.

Cath: We would go to coffee bars, just a general getting together in town. Near the cross roads, the traffic lights, 'cause Woolworths and the record shop were in that region. And then right up at the top of town there was a coffee bar, so we used to go there, and of course, you know we're 13, 14, with a packet of Peter Stuyvesant, and we didn't care [laughs]. Because we all looked so much older than our actual years.

Liz: Well we had our haunts. On a Saturday there was a café, it was known as Barb's, I think it was run by a lady called Barbara, but it was known as Barb's. And that was next to Newport Street Bus Station, which is no longer there. So we'd hang out there probably in the morning. They had a jukebox there. We'd play the jukebox and drink coffee or tea, or whatever we drank in those days. Then we'd probably head for the record shops. One of the main haunts was Russell and Dorrell's, had a record department down in their basement. Well we used to hang out at The Swan with Two Nicks in Worcester, and I can still remember that a vodka and lime was 17 and a half p. And that was our hangout, that was our sort of, sort of almost like a youth club, that's where we used to go every weekend. So we may well have been in there on the Saturday afternoon before we headed off to Malvern. Probably head off sort of five, six-ish, then we'd probably go to The Unicorn, which was a real sort of hippy pub in those days. And maybe have a drink in The Unicorn and then head off down to the Winter Gardens. Oh, the other place where we used to hang out in Worcester was The Pudding Bowl. It sold a few hippy clothes, but it was mainly a café, sort of brown rice and lentils. And then upstairs you could sit on cushions and people had stuck silver stars all over the ceiling, and it was just a great hangout.

Roger: I used to go to the Blue Note Jazz Club at the Foley Arms. And I used to go there every week. But because prior to 1967 I wasn't really into jazz music, I can only remember one person who came there, and that was, erm--, oh, there was the Perdido Street Jazz group band there,

played every week, they were the house band. And, er, oh, Monty Sunshine, he came. And I have a feeling Chris Barber was there as well, but you know I can't remember. And, well there were quite a few others, big, you know important performers. Every other week they'd have them, or every three weeks. And I did like the Perdido Street Jazz Band, you know were great. And that was that. And the other one I went, we used to go to was the, er, Nag's Tail Folk Club. But I can't remember any of the acts except Robin and Barry Dransfield.

Will: The Nag's Head at Link Top, they used to have a shed on the side, which was where the Phoenix Music Club was, which was run by Phil Webb, who I vaguely knew through Fernside's Art Shop because he used to work at the art shop, and was--, he had a little side line selling kind of second hand records, and I used to go up there and buy a lot of records. So I vaguely knew him. You know it was a mixture of things, it wasn't just kind of, I think they started off doing mainly folk stuff, and then it kind of went into folk and poetry, and then sort of Phil started putting on kind of more sort of jazz, they used to get bands coming. I think some probably quite well known bands in their very early incarnation.

*Transcripts of the full interviews are available from Rock Around the Hills
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