DANCE BANDS IN CHESTER :

AN EVOLVING PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

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An Evolving Professional Network

ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the live music scene in Chester in the mid-20th Century, and in particular jazz-based styles of dance music, played for the most part by local musicians. The basis of the study is a set of interviews with musicians, promoters and fans who were all active in the Chester area during the period between 1925 and 2008, in settings ranging from military bands and youth clubs to resident dance hall bands, touring concert parties, summer season shows and radio broadcasts. Thirty interviews were undertaken, and along with many hours of taped conversation, these yielded over 200 photographs and other pieces of evidence

In this thesis I have synthesised existing theoretical approaches from a number of fields to account for the large number of part-time dance-band musicians who were active in the Chester area, especially during World War II and in the decade that followed. Ideas from popular music studies and jazz studies were part of this framework, but were not sufficient, as both fields have historically had a tendency to concentrate on musicians and places considered to be highly significant or exceptionally influential, rather than routine and local. I have therefore turned to other disciplines in search of appropriate analytical approaches, and used ideas from geography, economics and sociology as alternative lenses through which to view the problem. In the process, I have shown that this dance band scene grew from the people and entertainment infrastructure of the previous, inter-war, period. In turn, the musicians, promoters and venues of the dance band scene, combined with changes in technology and society which fundamentally changed the economics of live entertainment, formed essential parts of the environment in which much better-known rock and pop musicians of the 1960s and 70s emerged and developed.

FOREWORD

… the work of local amateur musicians is not just haphazard or formless, the result of individual whim or circumstance. On the contrary, a consistent - if sometimes changing - structure lies behind these surface activities. The public events … are part of an invisible but organised system through which individuals make their contribution to both the changes and the continuities of English music today.

Finnegan (2007, p. 3)

By focusing upon the practice of music making rather than on its texts or theory, and on local 'amateur' musicians rather than on 'professionals', [*The Hidden Musicians*] challenges some of the assumptions made about music and how to study it. It contradicts views of 'the mass' as passive and deluded and questions class-based explanations of cultural activity by indicating the role and importance of factors such as kinship and gender. The final chapters are particularly illuminating. They point out that far from having a peripheral role in society, music is a central ritual that structures time and space and perpetuates and recreates cultural traditions and institutions. In addition, unlike other social activities music has a special value in society because of the way in which it relates to 'self and the emotions and to the rituals of life and the life cycle. It can also bind people together in shared experience.

Cohen (1990)

My original motivation for undertaking the research which forms the basis of this thesis goes back to my own extensive practical involvement in amateur and semi-professional music-making from the 1980s onwards, when I studied and performed in a variety of genres including classical, light classical, rock, and jazz. My formal musical education included a joint honours degree in Physics and Music, which I completed in 1988. However, the more recent catalyst for this work was an evening class in jazz improvisation which ran at the University of Liverpool a decade after that. As well as honing my practical skills, I made friends and contacts among the other students. These included a bass player called Fred Cooper, who introduced me to two other musicians that he played with regularly - Les Stevenson and Norman Frost (both of whom were later to be interviewees in this research project). I joined the Heswall Concert Band, a local amateur wind band formed by Stevenson which was at that time based at the Heswall British Legion club on the Wirral peninsula on Merseyside. In due course I also joined the Norman Roy Orchestra - a semi-professional dance band run by Frost, also based on the Wirral. It was in the course of rehearsals and performances with these two bands in particular that I gradually realised that there had apparently been a great deal of live dance band

activity in the Chester area, that it lasted for longer after World War II than I would have expected, and that tentacles from that live music scene reached well into local amateur music-making in the 21st Century. It also had not previously been documented, except tangentially (for instance as a small part of a historical exhibition on life in Chester during World War II, in a local museum).

My curiosity was aroused, on two levels. First, were the stories I was hearing about a busy live music scene in and around Chester actually true? Secondly, if they were true, how had that busy scene developed and sustained itself, and when and why did it dissipate? Like Finnegan (2007), I wanted to 'uncover and reflect on some of these little-questioned but fundamental dimensions of local music-making, and their place in both urban life and our cultural traditions more generally', but with a specific focus on Chester from the 1930s to the 1970s, rather than Milton Keynes in the 1980s.

I embarked on a part-time Ph.D. in 2005, submitting the first version of this thesis in 2013. I was aware of a substantial degree of urgency associated with collecting my data, as many of my interviewees were already elderly. The collection of a large amount of oral history material as quickly as possible - while working full-time as a lecturer in a different discipline - therefore preceded the production of any clearly defined analytical framework. This urgency also affected who I could collect data from, and a result of this was that most of my interviewees were musicians. There was certainly not a conscious decision to avoid any particular group, such as fans, but the network I tapped into, being composed mainly of a tightly-knit group of musicians, simply did not include many people who were fans but not musicians. The principle exceptions were Mary Kelly and S. Sweeney (both female dance fans, mentioned in Chapter 5), promoters Gordon Vickers (Chapters 7 and 8) and Paul Bridson (Chapter 8), and local historian Len Morgan (Chapter 3), all of whom provided important 'non-musician' perspectives. In addition, many of the musicians interviewed also talked about their experiences as fans and listeners; examples include Colin Gibson (Chapter 4) and Danny Morgan (Chapter 5).

Knowing about Chester's strategic location and history, I immediately started looking at geographical approaches focusing on route centres, which are addressed in Chapter 2. Finding relevant theoretical material which was directly related to the music was more difficult,

however, especially at first. Many of the sources which have turned out, in this final version, to be key texts, were not published until late in this project (for example, Frith et al (2013), Bennet (2013), and Baade (2012). If some of those publications had been available to me at an earlier stage, the course of this research and the writing of the theoretical aspects of this thesis might have been a great deal more straightforward! In the meantime, I looked at a very wide range of possible theoretical approaches, including looking at possible applications of theories relating to evolution, and the transmission of disease[1]. One quantitative analytical approach did prove useful, and that was the application of social network analysis theory and software tools to the data I collected. These helped me to locate and confirm the key players and institutions in the scene, such as bandleaders, promoters, musicians who were involved in many bands, and major venues or other employers of musicians. I also used some economic theory, from Ricardo, to help formulate my initial research questions. (For more on both of these, see Appendix C.)

Among the first sources which I did find very useful were *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Finnegan, 2007) and *Jazz Places* (Becker, 2002), both of which immediately resonated with my own experiences and those I found described in my interviewees' accounts. *Rock Culture in Liverpool : Popular Music in the Making* (Cohen, 1991) was also immediately useful; although the musical styles and social environment were different to those described by my interviewees, Cohen's interest in grass-roots music making coincided with my own intentions.

In the first submitted version of my thesis, I included background literature on Jazz History and Popular Music Studies, but analysed the data I had collected mainly with reference to the social networks of musicians and institutions, and Ricardian economic theory, referred to earlier. (See Appendix C for more on this.) The examiners accepted the data, but required that the social networks material be removed and replaced with more (and different) material and analysis specifically related to Popular Music Studies and Jazz Studies, as well as new material on music scenes, the built environment, and relevant work by Pierre Bourdieu. (This material is in Chapters 1 and 2.) In the course of this work, I discovered some sources which were to be crucial in reframing my theoretical approach. In particular, one of the examiners'

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[1] One particularly fascinating and ingenious example of the latter, which I have not - until now - been able to incorporate into my thesis, can be found in Munz et. al. (2009).

requirements was to integrate more material on genre, and a particular challenge at this point was defining to what genre the bands I was studying belonged. Finding *The Dancing Front: Dance Music, Dancing, and the BBC in World War II* (Baade, 2006) was important at this stage because it helped to confirm my idea that the bands I studied did not really play a pure form of 'jazz', but that what they performed and sold was 'dance band music'. This helped to focus my thoughts regarding the issue of genre itself, and also led me to *Victory through harmony : the BBC and popular music in World War II* (Baade, 2012). As well as providing more information on the dance band genre (and other related genres popular in Britain at the time), this text also filled in a great deal of useful detail on topics including wartime broadcasting, the BBC's relationship with jazz and popular music, and the role of the American Forces' Network (AFN). The majority of this material is now in Chapters 1, 3 and 5, although it is relevant and referred to throughout the thesis. The highly relevant works of Scott (2000a, 2000b), Quispel (2005) and Kloosterman (2005) on the creative industries in the built environment were also discovered at this late stage in the process; this material is introduced in Chapter 2, but again it is relevant and referred to throughout the rest of the thesis.

To conclude, this thesis had a somewhat unconventional genesis, in that the data was gathered first, and the theoretical work followed, with all of this taking place over quite a long period of time. This may not have been the easiest way to do the work, and were I to start writing again now, knowing what I know today, the layout and emphasis would be different in places (and especially in the theoretical sections). Even so, I hope that the unique and detailed data I have collected on this hidden musical history will be both interesting and valuable to future generations of scholars in the field.

Helen Southall

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INTRODUCTION

Explaining Wilf

"The secret of success is constancy of purpose."

Benjamin Disraeli,
quoted in Wilf Field's engagement diary (Field, 2006)

Wilf Field was a musician who played in and around Chester from the 1930s to the 1980s. There is a large amount of material covering his long career as a musician and bandleader in the area. For example, the collection of items donated by Gordon Field ranges in time from a photograph showing 'Wilf Field and His Collegians' at Clemences Restaurant in Chester in 1937, (Fig. 1) to the most recent item, which is an advertisement for 'Wilf Field and his Band' at the Northwich Memorial Hall in 1983 (Fig. 3)[1]. According to his son Gordon, Field's playing career lasted just short of seventy-five years, and was eventually ended by health problems and accidents:-

> [M]e dad wanted to play up to 2000, started 1925 and wanted to make it 2000 which was 75 years of playing. […] So he got to the 74 year and 75 would have been, and in the January I fell and broke a bone in the foot and me dad cancelled a couple of meetings got booked for then, and I got the all clear to say I could play [drums] again, wanted to go back to work, I went round to see me dad and found him behind the door. He'd fallen and damaged his pelvis and never really got over that. They're not sure why, he had to go back into hospital and died there unfortunately.

> Field (2006)

If Field had lived in a city with a more established musical reputation, such as London or Liverpool, it might arguably have been less necessary to do a new oral history study to discover details about how the local music scene worked. London and Liverpool are both strongly associated with bands and artists who recorded or broadcast regularly, made a full-time living from music, and in many cases boast noteworthy achievements in artistic or technological innovation, or commercial success (or in some cases, such as the Beatles, all three). Those

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[1] Unless otherwise stated, all Figures referred to in this thesis can be found in Appendix E.

achievements are often used to form boundaries or milestones in an era-based approach to musical history, and are therefore often written about. They also leave strong traces in public archives in the form of Top 10 hits, newspaper interviews, television documentaries, fanzines and so on. A town or city which is associated with such artists is therefore liable to be mentioned in major histories of relevant genres, and also to have its wider musical life examined in more detail than would have otherwise have been the case. However, Field lived in the city of Chester, which is well-known for its Roman ruins and medieval Rows, among other tourist attractions, but has rarely been brought to wider public notice for its musical output, apart from a fleeting association with the composer Handel (who passed through on his way to the premiere of *The Messiah* in Dublin in 1742), and more recently with the Indie rock band Mansun, some of whose members came originally from Chester. Apart from these isolated instances, it is quite rare to find even a passing mention of Chester or its surroundings in histories of music of any genre. This makes Field's long and apparently busy musical career in the area all the more interesting.

It is well documented that famous bands toured to 'the provinces' and many stories are recorded about their exploits. However, I am also interested in what happened in those dance halls between one name band leaving and the next arriving, and how venues survived if they were never visited by the likes of Joe Loss and Geraldo at all, as well as which local bands supported them by playing intermission sets. I am specifically interested in the musical economy of a city which had a lot of live music as an integral part of a busy evening entertainment scene, but apparently not enough to support a large community of full-time professional musicians as happened in London. In short, I am investigating Chester and its environs as an example of how the semi-professional dance band world operated in the provinces.

The Dependable Networking Craftsman

One way to begin is to look closely at Field's diary (Figs. 4 to 7). Many pages are occupied by the contact details of people or organisations who could have been useful to Field in his work as a musician, bandleader and contractor of musicians. Some of these, such as the Head Office and local branch details for the Musicians' Union and advertisements for music shops and publishers, are pre-printed. The rest are hand-written; these include the contact details of a great many local musicians, promoters and venues. Most are neatly copied in ink, and look as though they have all been written in at the same time – probably at the end of the previous

year when the diary arrived. Some have evidently been written in later, often in pencil, and squeezed in wherever room could be found before the detail was forgotten. The diary is an engagement diary rather than a journal, but even so it is possible to draw some conclusions about his character and approach to the business of music from its content. For example, the front inside page (overleaf) contains a neatly copied set of "Tempos by [the] Victor Sylvester Office", complete with ready-calculated conversions between dance tempi in bars-per-minute (as used by dancers) and beats-per-minute (as used by musicians). "Met" here is short for metronome. Elsewhere, there are brief notes, presumably reminders, for instance that "Low Pitch = 522" and the band must play accurately, that is: "1. In Tune 2. Tempo 3. No Mistakes". (Field, 2006)

Playing the right notes, in tune, and at the right pitch standard, were high priorities, and errors in these areas were directly connected to financial income, as indicated by this pencilled note: "I have no quarrel with bands that play for less. They should know what their playing is worth." (Field, 2006) No indication is given of the source of this quote; it could have been from a book or article, but it may equally have been said by a friend or colleague, and Wilf considered it useful and pithy enough to save for later use (for example. the next time a promoter or venue owner complained that they could get a similar service from other bands for a lower fee). Money is a recurring theme throughout the diary, mainly in the form of references to pay rates at particular venues for hours of playing, days of the week, and different sizes of band. Income tax is referred to both in pencilled notes, and in detailed regulations and advice from the Musicians' Union itself.

Wilf is realistic about the chances of always being treated with respect and politeness by promoters and employers, but reminds himself not to allow this to affect his demeanour, writing: "Be his condition rough or smooth, he can lose nothing by presenting an eversmiling and imperturbable front, a courteous and willing bearing in the face of all requests, rational or otherwise, a distinction and smartness of appe[a]rance and a never failing enjoyment in the work and a determination to adopt his music to suit the mood of the moment." (Field, 2006) On the page facing this (unattributed) quotation is a list of useful legal and business phrases. These are the sort of thing which today would be found in the template files of word processing programs. Whether Field usually hand-wrote or typed his correspondence is unclear, but the sample phrases are neatly hand-copied into his diary for easy access whenever required. For

example: "Soliciting your further esteemed favours and assuring you of my personal attention…", "I beg to call your attention to my account amounting to £__ which has been outstanding since?..." Will you let me have a cheque in settlement by return or an explanation as to why this account has not been previously dealt with?", and "This tender is open for acceptance within ___ days unless otherwise specifically arranged." (Field, 2006) Contracts were clearly an important issue for the Musicians' Union as well, if their choice of 'Extracts from Some Important Rules' on page 12 of the diary is anything to go by. For instance: "Rule XX, Series 2, states: "It shall be the duty of the member to give, and receive, a written contract, and a member or members claiming protection of the Union can only do so by producing the contract as hereinbefore specified." (Field, 2006)

Field's Musicians' Union pocket diaries from 1954 and 1955 are a particularly rich source of information. 1955 is just under halfway between the Collegians' 1937 photograph and the 1983 Memorial Hall advertisement; or to put this in a wider popular music context, just under halfway between Benny Goodman's 1935 recording of *King Porter Stomp* and *Live Aid* in 1985. During this period, popular music (and society in general) went through enormous changes, but Field and his colleagues soldiered on playing in much the same style that they had learned in the 1930s and 40s. This is interesting because much popular music history – indeed music history in general – is split for convenience of discussion into eras. For instance, Gunther Schuller effectively defined the swing era as running from 1930 – 1945 (Schuller, 1989); on that basis, only the first twenty years of Field's seventy-five year as a performing musician fall into the swing era, but he continued to play forms of jazz and swing right to the end of his career.

Negus (Negus, 2004, p. 139) discusses the problems caused by 'approaching musical genres as if they were living bodies which are born, grow and decay' – for example, the often narrated idea of the rock era as 'born around 1956 with Elvis Presley, peaking around 1967 with Sgt Pepper, dying around 1976 with The Sex Pistols' (Frith, 1988, p. 1).[2] He states that as well as presenting rock (or any other genre) in an unrealistic way as a single unified body, this approach

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[2] It should be noted that on the same page as giving this definition, Frith is already suggesting the possibility of an alternative view: "..to reabsorb rock into general pop history, to discount its belief that it is 'different', means listening afresh to other forms of mass-produced music – maybe they do not work in the way we thought, either." (Frith, 1988, p. 1)

privileges fans or musicians who happen to have been active during the period in question. It also leaves important questions unanswered about exactly what defines a given genre as unequivocally dead, officially signalling the end of that era – as well as what happens if people persist in playing or listening to it after that date. Negus's view is that the idea of a 'rock era' 'is based on a particular experience of rock (biographical, geographical, generational and social) which fails to allow for how musical forms are transformed and move on in different ways across the planet…'. Referring to Dave Harker's essay in Cultural *Revolution? The challenge of the arts in the 1960s* (Harker, 1992), Negus writes:-

> ..during the peak of the rock era, the top-selling albums included the film soundtrack The Sound of Music, classical recordings such as Carlos and Folkman's *Switched on Bach*, Van Cliburn's performance of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* and the easy listening soul of *Johnny Mathis Greatest Hits*. […] for many people the defining sound of this era was not rock.
>
> Negus (2004, p. 148)

Field's long career playing jazz and swing-based dance music, which lasted more than half a century after the Swing Era is said to have ended, shows that this statement doesn't just apply to rock, but to other genres as well. By 1955, rock 'n' roll was becoming popular in America, and its influence was starting to reach young people in Britain, but as Field's well-used engagement diary suggests, dance bands and big bands were still in the ascendancy. Other material obtained for this research shows that dance halls specifically designed for ballroom dancing and dance bands were still being opened in Chester right to the end of the 1950s, so there was clearly still a substantial market for this form of entertainment. The diary's main point of interest, however, is the sheer size of the network of dance band musicians working in and around Chester at this time (as shown in the number of contacts in Field's address list, and backed up by evidence from interviews and photographs). There was a healthy live music scene in Chester in the 1950s of which Field and his colleagues were a part, and judging by the evidence of the interviews and photographs, it was still there well into the late 1960s and beyond, even after dance bands and ballroom dancing had long since ceased to be the fashionable thing among the younger generation.

Research Questions

If era-based studies of popular music history do not entirely explain the vibrant music scene of which Field and his bands were a part, how should such scenes be studied? To answer this question, this study also looks to approaches based on oral history and cultural geography.[3] Without documentation, the craft skills, experience and social identities associated with communities such as the musicians studied here are as liable to be lost as those of any other group of people, and similar approaches can usefully be employed to rescue at least some of that data. The common thread joining all of these lines of enquiry is the question of how to model how groups of people interact with each other, and specifically groups who share a common interest – in this case playing in or dancing to jazz bands.

Oral history and thick description

The core of this research project has been fieldwork to collect personal memories and archive materials relating to jazz, dance bands and big bands in and around Chester between the 1930s and 1970s. I used this oral history approach to obtain a subjective 'players'-eye view' of a section of the Chester music scene during the period, put into context using local and published historical sources and other relevant literature. It quickly became evident that there had been a busy jazz and dance band scene in Chester, even though this had not previously been documented; its story was rapidly becoming a hidden history in itself.   My first priority therefore was to research and represent the scene described by my interviewees as thoroughly as I could. Following the example of Finnegan, Cohen and Brocken, I employed oral history research methods to obtain my data, written up using 'thick description', as defined by the distinguished anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who introduced the approach in an essay entitled 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture' (Geertz, 1973). Geertz maintained that his understanding of a people's culture was not adequately contained by definitions such as 'the total way of life of a people' … 'a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave' [or] 'a precipitate of history' (to quote a few from a long list). Instead, he wrote, "Believing … that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the

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[3] See 'Research Methodology' later in this chapter for more on 'oral history', and Chapter 2 for more on relevant aspects of human geography.

analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning." (Geertz, 1973, p.6)

Geertz himself took the term from the philosopher Gilbert Ryle (Geertz, 1973, p. 6). Ryle and Geertz both distinguished between a 'thin description', which merely described an event such as a physical action, and a 'thick description', which also included the context for the action. That context might include the time or place where the action occurred, information about who performed it, their intentions in doing so, and how the action might be perceived and understood by others. An interesting example of this approach is provided by 'Living Witchcraft: A Contemporary American Coven', a study in which the authors stated aim was to use thick description to present their data in a way which would allow a ''non-Witch, specifically a thinking, reflective, non-Witch' to understand what they 'would experience were s/he to participate in rituals and classes at Ravenwood'(Scarboro, Campbell, & Stave, 1994). While the specific topic is very different to Cestrian dance bands, I share Scarboro et al.'s goal of presenting the data in this study in such a way that the reader will be able to get a good understanding of what it was like to be involved in the jazz and dance band scene in the Chester area in the mid-twentieth century, and especially what it was like to be among those who provided the live entertainment in the area, rather than being primarily consumers of that entertainment.

Lines of enquiry

The overall goal for this project, therefore, is to locate appropriate theoretical models for understanding live music scenes like the dance band scene in and around Chester, to compare it with the evidence collected about that scene, and to draw conclusions about to what extent it would also apply to other styles, places and times. I have concentrated in particular on the following lines of enquiry:-

The city as a Jazz Place

Fundamental descriptive questions were required about how big the dance band scene was, why it occurred in and around Chester, how far afield musicians travelled from (and to) Chester, and when jazz and swing-influenced dance music dominated live popular music in Chester.

The city during and after World War II

<u>Economic questions</u> were also needed, such as what was the economic basis of the market for jazz and swing-influenced dance music in Chester, and what effect did the Total War of World War II have on this musical economy? I have investigated the particular conditions which led to the development of a live jazz and dance band scene in the Chester area, and the forces which made it evolve in the way that it did.

The city as the hub of a craft-based music scene

I have examined <u>what it meant to be a musician working in this scene.</u> How did Chester-based dance band musicians typically learn their craft? Were people from a particular background – or gender – more likely than others to become dance band musicians? How did they become involved in public performances, and then paid public performances? Where did they get their instruments and equipment? How many of them (if any) were full-time professional musicians, and how many were part-time semi-professionals?

The operation of the local dance band scene

Finally, I have examined specific questions about how the local dance band scene operated on a day-to-day basis. How did bandleaders locate and book the musicians they needed for a specific date? How did musicians find out that work was available, and persuade bandleaders to hire them?

In the course of dealing with these questions, I will be building on the work of Becker, Baade, Cohen, Finnegan, Brocken, Frith, Bennett, Longhurst, Straw, Shank, Northwick, Moy and others in the field of popular and live music history, and also Bourdieu, Soja, de Certeau, Ricardo, Granovetter, and others from sociology, geography, economics and elsewhere.

Research Methodology

Oral History, Ethnography and Social Anthropology

The majority of my data was not from publicly accessible archives. Although there was some archive information available, such as newspaper adverts for ballroom opening nights, changes of resident band and so on, my goal for this project was to record information which was *not* yet available in a single, academically accessible archive. I wanted to harvest memories, and find out how the Chester area live music scene operated from the point of view of its participants, rather than the listings pages of the local newspapers. Before moving on to the practical details of how the research for this thesis was done, this section looks at some of the issues raised by undertaking social and historical research in this way.

Defining 'History'

The first question to be addressed in the context of historical research is what is meant by 'history'. This is a topic of heated debate, and the more so since the 1960s, when a series of developments from European philosophy provided what the editors described in Jenkins (2004) as:

> an enormously critical challenge to .. the still influential but essentially nineteenth-century belief that some sort of empiricism was the only proper basis for the practice of professional historians … professional historians thought (and generally still think) that they possessed certain empirical methods by which they could have objective and demonstrable knowledge of 'the past' ... it is this belief ... that the coming of the 'postmodern' has rendered problematic.
>
> Jenkins & Munslow (2004, p. 1)

Jenkins et al go on to describe all historical writings as 'literary artefacts', and to group them into genres which they describe as Reconstructionism, Constructionism, and Deconstructionism (Jenkins & Munslow, 2004, p. 4), continuing by stating that:

> …every historian ... occupies a particular genre position, one that is clearly reflected in the nature of his or her historical narratives. The attitude that historians have towards empiricism, how they perceive the natures and status of facts and their description .... will lead to their particular genre choice.
>
> Jenkins & Munslow (2004, p. 5)

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They describe the three genres in more detail as follows:-

Reconstructionism is characterised by the belief that it is quite possible to know the past as it actually was, given only the right amount and type of source material and the correct methods for processing it. Reconstructionists believe that "the true story of the event can be rediscovered and cannot only be, but must be, narrated accurately". (Jenkins & Munslow, 2004, p. 7)

Constructionism is characterised also by the belief that it is possible, at least in theory, to fully know and understand a part of the past. However, there is more flexibility about the methods used to enable that reconstruction, with the use of explanatory concepts such as race, class, gender, nationalism and so on overlaid on top of the bare data. Unlike reconstructionists, constructionists do not view a detailed knowledge of the historical sources themselves as enough on its own; interpretation is required as well. (Jenkins & Munslow, 2004, pp. 9 - 11)

Deconstructionism is characterised by a deep suspicion of any and all attempts to reconstruct or construct a past which simply does not exist anymore, and cannot be brought back. Deconstructionists see 'history' and 'the past' as two related but separate entities: "the past has to be made into history by the work(s) of historians". (Jenkins & Munslow, 2004, pp. 12 - 13)

A similar approach can be found in earlier work by Hayden White, especially his influential book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe'*, which was first published in 1973[4]. White describes how continental European philosophers have 'challenged history's claims to a place among the sciences', while Anglo-American philosophers have

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[4] White begins his introduction by asking:
"What does it mean to think historically, and what are the unique characteristics of a specifically historical method of inquiry? These questions were debated throughout the nineteenth century by historians, philosophers, and social theorists, but usually within the context of assumption that unambiguous answers could be provided for them. [...] In the twentieth century, however, considerations of these questions have been undertaken in a somewhat less self-confident mood and in the face of an apprehension that definitive answers to them may not be possible." (White, 1973, p. 1)
See also Burke (2013)

examined the epistemological status and cultural function of historical thinking, leading to 'serious doubts about history's status as either a rigorous science or a genuine art'. Much of the rest of the book is devoted to the analysis of various types of historical writing in narrative terms, dividing them into categories such as Romance, Comedy, Tragedy and Satire.

I would add that whatever a person's training (or lack of it) in historical method, and regardless of their preferred narrative style, the past is automatically made into history by those who experience it. Trained historians may have technical advantages - not to mention the advantage of hindsight if they are working months or years later than the events in question - but everyone who is capable of remembering and retelling their experiences will produce histories of a sort, albeit histories which are laden with varying quantities of factual errors, confusions, and ideological or other forms of bias. Those biases and confusions have caused many historians - quite reasonably - to mistrust personal testimony in favour of apparently more objective archive material. However, avoiding the problems which come with personal testimony has an unfortunate side effect; the useful material is missed as well. This brings us to a form of historical enquiry which, rather than ignoring these issues, makes a positive virtue of them; that is, oral history.

Oral history

> The uncelebrated person - oh boy, how many of those have we missed? … What was it like to be a certain person then? What's it like to be a certain person now? That's what I'm trying to capture. I'm looking for the uniqueness in each person. And I'm not looking for some such abstraction as *the* truth, because it doesn't exist. What I'm looking for is what is the truth for *them*. … What's happening, what's going on, what's it like, what does it mean? They're big questions for everyone.
>
> Terkel & Parker (2006)

An alternative approach to the archive-based historical method which seems to underlie the descriptions in the previous section is oral history. This approach does acknowledge that everyone builds their own version of their own history in their memory as they go through life. In the introduction to the second edition of *The Oral History Reader*, Perks and Thomson (2006, p. ix) state that memories are living histories, referring to an African proverb that "Every old man that dies is a library that burns". They go on to describe how despite this historians have been wary of memory as a historical source, with fierce debates going on about how reliable memory can actually be as a source, the psychological aspects of the interviewer-interviewee relationship, and the general relationships between memory and history, past and present, or scholarship and politics. Despite these issues, oral history has been an important strand in historical research for at least the last sixty years. The main difference this has brought, as alluded to in the quotation from Studs Terkel at the start of this section, is bringing within the historical record the experiences of groups who might otherwise have been 'hidden from history'. Oral history has thus increased the historical visibility of less powerful groups in society, such as working class men and women, indigenous peoples and members of cultural minorities. It has also brought into the historical record aspects of historical experience which tend to be missing from other sources. Perks and Thomson give 'domestic work or family life' as examples of such missing aspects; I would add live popular music performance in the provinces.

Ethnography and Anthropology

> Above all else, what anthropologists do is ethnography. Ethnography is to the cultural or social anthropologist what lab research is to the biologist, what archival research is to the historian, or what survey research is to the biologist. Often called … 'participant observation', ethnography is based on the apparently simple idea that in order to understand what people are up to, it is best to observe them by interacting with them intimately and over an extended period.
>
> Monaghan & Just (2000, p. 13)

Ethnography is a close cousin to oral history, but based in the discipline of social anthropology rather than history. Ethnography focuses on understanding how people are living now, rather than how they lived and what happened to them in the past. Unlike other social scientists who may prefer to rely on more quantitative tools such as questionnaires and behavioural data, anthropologists feel that abstracted data is liable to give an incomplete and possibly misleading understanding of the people being studied, especially where foreign or unfamiliar societies are involved.

There is more to ethnography than simply living with one's research subjects for a length of time however. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state that 'ethnography is not just a set of methods but rather a particular mode of looking, listening and thinking about social phenomena'. This 'particular mode' includes not being too quick to jump to conclusions about what is going on, paying detailed attention to appearances without taking them at face value, seeking to understand the views of others without assuming them to be obviously true or obviously false, and being aware of surrounding circumstances without losing sight of what one's research subjects are attending to.

As will be discussed in later chapters, respected researchers such as Sara Cohen have reported a lack of literature on the subject of how musicians actually live and experience their lives, how they interact with each other and their employers and audiences, and how these real life experiences relate to theories about the ways that the music industry works, especially on a local level. Shuker (1994, p. 99) refers to Cohen's (1991) summary of the available literature, and states that there has been a "lack of ethnographic or participant observer study of the process of making music." He quotes Cohen (1991), where she writes that "...important

features have been omitted: the grassroots of the industry ... and the actual process of music making by rock bands." Ethnography (for studies of how scenes work in the present) and oral history (for finding out how they worked in the past) cannot and do not claim to produce "complete" accounts of those scenes. Both approaches do, however, provide the raw material from which analytical narratives can be formed.

Fieldwork
Interviews

The fieldwork for this research took the form of semi-structured interviews. All interviewees were asked broadly the same set of basic questions, starting with their name, year of birth, the nature of their involvement in music, what instrument they played (if any), how they first learned musical skills and theory, how they got involved in bands, places and events they played at, and particularly memorable events they had been involved in. These questions were followed by free-form discussion and reminiscences about the issues, people and events brought up in the answers to the initial questions. Ethical issues were considered, but full-scale ethical approval not considered necessary. All interviewees were given written and verbal information about the nature of the research and the possibility of future publication as part of a thesis, or more widely. All interviewees had the opportunity to withdraw from the project at any time of their choosing; none chose to withdraw. Interviewees were kept up-to-date with the progress of the project on approximately an annual basis (for example, through short duplicated letters at Christmas time).

Most of the events discussed in the interviews took place years, if not decades, ago, and the interviewees were all senior citizens. Therefore, fallible and fading memories were identified from the start as a potential problem. We are now too far from the original events to have access to even a representative sample of fresh, recent and reliable memories - insomuch as human beings can ever produce such things in any case - let alone enough information to 'recreate' the original situation completely. I have therefore aimed to obtain a comprehensive snapshot of the information which is available from this particular group of people, covering as wide a range as possible of social and musical backgrounds and experiences within that network. Interviews were treated as records of what people *said* they thought, did or believed,

and not as objective truth. They were cross-referenced with one another, with photographs and with other sources to identify as many inconsistencies or inaccuracies as possible.

In practice, the extent of overlap and consistency shown between different interviewees was often very high (for instance with regard to the changing memberships over time of the resident bands at the Majestic Ballroom and the River Park Ballroom in Chester). It was generally the case that while there might be identifiable errors or omissions in a single reminiscence, the evidence from a number of interviews, sets of photographs and newspaper cuttings gave a surprisingly clear picture of events relating to a particular band or venue. An important point to bear in mind is that even where the information in a given interview was vague, unreliable or incomplete, it was sometimes the *only* source of documented information on a particular venue, band or event; this was even truer when interviewees talked about what they themselves thought or felt about what they were doing.

Transcription

Draft transcriptions of all of the interviews were produced by a commercial audio-typing company. These drafts were not perfect in every detail; for instance, local place names such as Saighton (pronounced like 'Satan') and Hawarden (pronounced like 'harden') caused some confusion for the largely Essex-based typists, but working this way saved me a substantial amount of time. As I have lived in the Chester area for twenty years, the place names and so on were generally easy for me to identify. My experience of playing with working dance bands also helped when it came to identifying technical details such as makes of instruments or technical musical terms. Having the vast bulk of the transcription work done for me meant that I was able to devote more time to the analysis of the transcriptions, along with the upwards of 200 photographs, business cards, programmes and newspaper cuttings which were also loaned to me by interviewees. The photographs especially yielded a substantial amount of information about who played with whom and when, especially when cross-referenced with the interviews themselves. Taken as a whole, this ethnographic approach has helped me to develop a 'players'-eye view' of a section of the Chester music scene during the period, put into context using local historical sources and other relevant literature.

Technical Issues

Interviews

The interviews were recorded using a small portable cassette recorder. This device had the advantage of being inexpensive, user-friendly, convenient and not intimidating to interviewees. However, it did bring its own set of problems, for instance:-

- in a couple of cases, the tape ran out while interviewees were still talking
- interviewees sometimes spoke very quietly or indistinctly. Normally this wasn't an issue, as it is still possible to work out what they were saying even if concentration is required to do this. There are one or two very frustrating lacunae though!
- Interview conversation was occasionally masked by environmental background noise such as traffic, or other conversations
- the cassette recorder itself introduced hum / motor noise, and cassette recordings are always prone to background hiss due to the nature of the recording medium

Technology moved on while I was doing this project. When I first started planning the interviews in 2005, most audio-typing companies preferred to receive recordings on tape. By the time the interviews were finished, digital audio files (usually in .mp3 format) were fast becoming the de facto standard. This meant that the tape recordings had to be digitised, which was a slow and fiddly process. However, digital files are much easier to back up, duplicate and share. If planning a similar project in the future, I would use fully digital recording technology from the start of the process.

Images

Many interviewees chose to loan me photographs, newspaper clippings and other such items from their own personal collections[5]. I immediately digitised these using a flatbed scanner, so that I could return the originals as quickly as possible, while maintaining copies which could be backed up, included in digital presentations and documents, and filed in a computer

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[5] Please note that because of potential copyright issues, many of these images - such as professionally taken band photographs and dance hall programmes - have been removed from the open access version of this thesis. Researchers who would need to see these images can access the printed version of this thesis in the University of Chester library.

database. This was another slow and fiddly process, but was definitely well worth the time and effort required, as the photographs proved very useful for cross-referencing with the interviewees' spoken testimony, particularly to confirm who played with whom, in which band, and when. Once the images had been digitised, I named the files to make their origin clear (for example Wilf-01.jpg), and imported them into the Apple *iPhoto* application on my MacBook Pro. This enabled me to trim and divide up images where necessary (for example. if a number of press cuttings had been glued to the same scrapbook page). I also used the other capabilities of *iPhoto* to include further information about each photograph (for example. details about dates or venues, which were often written on the backs of photographs, or adjacent to them in scrapbooks), and to tag individuals in the photographs where I knew their names (Fig. 8). This made it easy for me to identify sets of photographs which all included a particular individual, which was a very useful first step in the analysis of the data I had obtained (Fig. 9).

Analysis

As a first step towards tracking and analysing the more than 30 interviews and associated images and recordings, I produced a table of the people interviewed or mentioned in interviews (Fig. 10). The amount of information I had collected soon overwhelmed the capacity of a single flat-file table however, and my next step was to produce a relational database, using the application *Bento*, again on my MacBook Pro. An advantage of working this way was that *Bento* has automatic access to files, tags and other information stored in *iPhoto* on the same machine, meaning that my earlier work was still useful. Using a relational database enabled me to store, query and view the same basic information set in many different ways – for example, focusing on musicians, bands or venues – without having to physically change or move any of the data to do so (Figs. 11 and 12).

Use of Computer Software

I am a lecturer in Computer Science rather than a full-time social scientist, so I chose to put together my own custom-built suite of data storage and analysis applications. This had the advantage that I could do exactly what I needed to do with my data, processing and presenting it in a way which suited both me and the requirements of this specific project.

I have been aware throughout the project of large-scale general-purpose social science data analysis packages, especially *NVivo* (NVivo 9 Features and Benefits, 2011). *NVivo* does have

some practical advantages over the setup which I have developed. Probably the most fundamental of these is that it is specifically designed to allow simultaneous multi-user working on shared data files (NVivo 9 Help, n.d; Richards, 2000). File sharing is possible using *Bento*, but is limited to a maximum of five users (How do I share my Bento database, 2011), so it would be unsuitable for a team of six or more researchers all working on the same project. *NVivo* also provides a large number of templates, customisable reports and standard sorting and filtering routines, all based on formats and techniques which are used frequently in social science research projects. For these reasons, *NVivo* would be the obvious choice for a project involving a large team of researchers or very complex sociological analysis. It would also have been a sensible choice if I already had experience of using *NVivo*. However, for a small-scale one-person project such as mine, it made more sense to use my knowledge of database creation and data analysis, and also of the strengths and weaknesses of the Mac and Windows OSs, to create a tailor-made database and data analysis set-up designed specifically for me to use for this single project. I have kept in mind the likelihood that I may want to extend my work on this data-set beyond the scope of this initial project, and am confident that should it be necessary, exporting the data currently held in my *Bento* and *iPhoto* databases into a general-purpose package such as *NVivo* (for example. via CSV files) would be technically quite straightforward.

Conferences, Presentations and Publications

Throughout the research process I took work in progress to a variety of research training events (both at the University of Chester and the University of Liverpool), as well as many seminars and conferences for presentation, feedback and discussion. A full list is given in Appendix D.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 – Theoretical Contexts: Jazz and Popular Music

Theoretical contexts are divided into two broad categories over the first two chapters. Chapter 1 covers arts and humanities perspectives on popular music and jazz, including genre, scenes, and hidden histories.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Contexts: Place, Culture, Environment, and Practice

Chapter 2 covers perspectives from wider areas of sociology and geography, including cultural industries in the built environment, Pierre Bourdieu's work on habitus, cultural capital and cultural fields, and Howard Becker's concept of 'jazz places'. Examples are given to indicate the effects of such factors on musical practice.

Chapter 3 – The Chester and North Wales Dance Band Scene in Context

Chapter 3 describes the context in which the live dance music scene of Chester and North Wales developed, discussing the city as a jazz place, and describing its changing built environment before and during the period. This chapter also looks at the history and influence of dance band broadcasting on the BBC during the period, including the role of gender stereotypes and the requirements of World War II.

Chapter 4 – The Early Development of the Local Dance Band Scene

This chapter concentrates on the earliest period described by my interviewees, from about 1920 to the outbreak of World War II, and includes background relating to how interviewees first became involved in music.

Chapter 5 – Dancing Through the War

Chapter 5 covers the duration of World War II (1939-45), and focuses on how young musicians in the area became involved in music and learned to play their instruments, as well as describing the ways in which the war affected musical activities, both locally and nationally.

Chapter 6 – Playing with the Military

Chapter 6 focuses on the role of the military as an employer of musicians, and a way for musicians to get experience and make contacts.

Chapter 7 – World War II to the Late 1950s

This chapter concentrates on the period from the end of World War II to the end of the 1950s. The focus in this chapter is on how the Chester area dance band scene was organised, and how it matured after the war, including some hints of what was to come in the 1960s and beyond.

Chapter 8 – The 1960s and Beyond

This chapter takes up the story at the start of the 1960s, with new forms of popular music starting to take hold, but a substantial amount of jazz and swing-influenced dance music still being played. It traces the changing scene from that period until the early years of this century.

Chapter 9 – Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis, relating the results and conclusions back to the original research questions.

CHAPTER 1
JAZZ, POPULAR MUSIC AND DANCE BANDS:
GENRES, SCENES AND HISTORIES

Introduction

In this chapter I will introduce some theoretical tools often used for examining commercial, popular music (as opposed to art music). This section will refer to academic studies of jazz & pop (including the idea of scenes), and genre histories in jazz & in pop. These all offer useful ideas and tools for thinking about some aspects of jazz and popular music. However, none of them really seem to deal with all of the issues which emerge from my interviews[6]. As we will see, on closer examination this is not surprising; in most cases the theories examined in this chapter are based on limited evidence from completely different times or places, or were never designed to address populist entertainment as it occurred away from the metropolis, or before the coming of rock n roll, in the first place.

This connects to the next topic in this chapter; in order to describe - or ask - what music people want to hear, it certainly helps to have a concise way of referring to different styles of music, and the environments or audiences with which they are most commonly associated. Definitions of musical genres are helpful in this respect. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, genre histories can be misleading, especially if they are based mainly on specific attributes of the genre, such as its periods of highest record sales. Overall, I will suggest that it is not helpful to try to analyse the information I have collected in terms of how it fits into separate genre categories such as 'jazz'', "pop", "classical" or "rock". It has been far more productive to look at the evidence in terms of how music from many genres was borrowed, adapted and used in order to entertain people, and in particular to provide music for dancing. Genre definitions have been very useful in this process, but genre histories generally have not.

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[6] As Baade (2012) describes in 'Victory Through Harmony', a similar difficulty, caused by applying inappropriate theoretical tools to the material in hand, is exemplified by the BBC's Dance Music Policy Committee, who 'in accordance with the high modernist notion that performers were conduits for compositional intentions, rather than shapers of musical meaning' worked from scores not recordings, trying to judge the 'work of art' itself. (Baade, 2012, p. 144) Baade describes in detail the conflicts within and around the BBC, especially during World War II, between aiming for 'uplift' and just 'giving the people what they want'. These conflicts and the resulting policy decisions did have an effect on the musical environment in which the local dance bands developed; this is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Academic disciplines in popular music studies

Popular Music Studies and Cultural Studies

Both Popular Music Studies and Jazz Studies are now well-established academic disciplines, with both undergraduate and advanced academic courses established in universities and colleges around the world, and a complementary introductory literature is available[7]. For popular music studies this literature includes Brian Longhurst's *Popular Music and Society* (Longhurst, 2007), and Roy Shuker's *Understanding Popular Music* (Shuker, 1994, 2002). Both books are general texts on the topic of popular music in society, from a cultural studies point of view, with a rock-era focus. Both books are founded on ideas from the field of 'cultural studies', a term which originated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and was at first associated with an institutional base within Birmingham University (UK) at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS).

In *Understanding Popular Music* (Shuker, 1994), the author describes the book as being situated in the general field of 'cultural studies'.[8] He then narrows his focus by quoting Grossberg's description of the goal, or 'project' of cultural studies, saying, "Popular culture is a significant and effective part of the material reality of history, effectively shaping the possibilities of our existence. It is this challenge - to understand what it means to 'live in popular culture' - that confronts contemporary cultural analysis". He goes on to describe the focus of Understanding Popular Music as being a "cultural studies text in search of such understanding", and in particular four interrelated concerns: "the nature and significance of popular culture, the societal reaction to various forms of the popular, the validity of distinctions

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[7] Scott (2009) provides an excellent overview.

[8] Shuker modified his approach on some of the issues discussed in this section between the publication of the first edition of the book in 1994, and the second edition in 2002. For instance, in the introduction to the second edition, he wrote: "In the first edition of this book, for convenience, I used the term 'rock' as a shorthand for the diverse range of popular music genres produced in commodity form for a mass, predominantly youth, market. This led to charges of my being 'rockist'. […] Recognising these points, but also conscious of the difficulty of finding any acceptable 'shorthand' signifier, I have used the term 'popular music' in this book." (Shuker, 2002, p. ix) Shuker's focus in the 2nd edition continued to be on popular music produced after the emergence of rock 'n' roll, so although it was widened to include non-rock genres such as rap, dance music of the 1930s to 1950s remains largely outside of the new book's scope.

between 'high' and 'low' or 'popular' culture, and pedagogic possibilities in the study of popular culture." All of these aspects are relevant to my research. However, we then come to the first difference of emphasis, as Shuker explores these concerns "through the detailed consideration of a central form of contemporary popular culture: rock music". Rock music does have some relevance to my research, but it is not the main focus. One of the reasons why such differences of emphasis matter is revealed later in the same preface, where Shuker states that his discussion centres (like much discussion of popular music) "predominantly on recorded music"; while recorded music had an influence on the events and people described in this thesis, for reasons described in more detail later in this chapter, this also is not my main focus. Shuker goes on to state that "music texts and performances are cultural commodities, produced largely by an international music industry - an Anglo-American hegemony - ultimately concerned with maximising profits." As will become clear throughout this thesis, I agree with much of this statement, but while the live music making I have investigated was undoubtedly part of an international phenomenon, I argue that it was not controlled by an international industry, but rather grew up as an emergent response to it. Shuker goes on to describe entire nations (for example. Canada and New Zealand) as being incorporated into this hegemony but "essentially on the periphery of the global market, [and therefore illustrative of] questions on the status of the local within the internationalisation of popular music." I would argue that it is not necessary to go that far afield to find the periphery; even within the UK and the US, provincial cities like Chester played a different role in the wider music industry to recording and broadcasting hubs such as London, but while that role may not have been as celebrated, it was nonetheless important to the structure and viability of the national and international music industry as a whole.

In Popular Music and Society, Brian Longhurst also produces an overview of popular music studies in a sociological context. Like Shuker, Longhurst also focuses on the relationship between the production, text and audience for cultural texts, and how these are interrelated Longhurst (2007, pp. 21 - 24). Longhurst devotes the entire second chapter to "The Social Production of Music". This includes a section on jazz musicians, including a study by Christian (1987: 238-9) based in the English Midlands, and one from the same year, also on jazz musicians but this time in Switzerland (White 1987: 199). These are much more similar to the musical and social environment which my interviewees described than to the recorded rock music referred to by Shuker. Longhurst describes the musicians studied by Christian as having

"avoided the pressures of commercialization by not becoming, or attempting to become, full-time jazz musicians. They earned small amounts of money, which were normally sufficient only to cover their costs and expenses (and in some cases not even those). The groups were subject to the market but mainly in the form of ensuring that they had a place to play." Where musicians that I studied did not become full-time professionals, this was not always a matter of choice on their part, as we will see throughout Chapters 4 to 8. However, the economic rewards they earned were often similar to those described by Christian and White. Christian is quoted by Longhurst as saying:

> [There is a] precarious and fluctuating balance between … efforts to maintain musical integrity as expressed in the values and conventions held by most jazz musicians - that their music is not primarily a commercial commodity but a creative artistic activity - and, on the other hand, the need to operate within a market situation in order to find opportunities to play [...] compromises have to be made, sometimes in terms of what they play but more often in terms of the level of payment they can expect [...] most semi-pro jazzmen would rather not play at all than completely sell out to popular taste.

> Christian, quoted in Longhurst (2007)

While the start of this quotation resonates with the testimony of my interviewees, their attitudes to this 'fluctuating balance' seem to have been very different. As we will see in chapters 4 to 8, the musicians I interviewed were much more pragmatic. None said they would "rather not play" than conform with popular taste to do so. Many stopped or reduced their musical activity in their middle years, but most cited reasons such as lack of commercial opportunities, conflicting work and family demands, or some combination of all of the above, rather than distaste for the prevailing popular musical styles, as their reasons for this.

Longhurst devotes the eighth chapter to "Fans, production and consumption". He quotes Dave Laing, who argued:-

> It is a commonplace that production and consumption are interdependent. Without production of material or cultural goods, there can be no consumption. Without a demand for, and consumption of, the use-values embedded in these goods, there is no impetus for continuing production. ...the relation between production and consumption has another aspect. ..the producers of today are frequently the consumers of yesterday.

> Through the experience of consuming music as a listener, many individuals are drawn into producing music of their own.
>
> Laing, quoted in Longhurst (2007)

This is undoubtedly the case for many of the musicians in this study, as will be seen frequently throughout chapters 4 to 8.

Longhurst points out in the same chapter that discussion about the production of cultural goods is often rather confused, and does not sufficiently recognise the differences between cultural and material goods. He continues by quoting Warde (1992), who says, "this is not to say that there may not be patterns in consumption, but that these are somewhat looser than some theorists have argued. One of the mistakes made by Adorno was to suggest this kind of continuity between the production and consumption of music."

Unlike commentators such as Adorno (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2007), Longhurst explicitly prefers to avoid the extremes of what he calls the 'critical and celebratory modes' of writing on popular music. Longhurst describes the 'critical mode' of discussion on popular music (or popular culture in general) as being characterised by viewing popular forms only in terms of their associated commercial activity and potential for profit, or focusing on regressive portrayals of 'race' or 'gender', or purely on how the products of popular culture fail to measure up to the standards of high art. He describes the 'celebratory mode' as being the 'mirror image of the critical', for instance by taking the position that established standards of art or dominant political powers should and can be resisted through the products of popular culture, and that this is a feature of popular culture which is so obvious that it barely requires discussion or justification. As Longhurst says, positions such as these are common, but they are limiting, as they do not encourage searching or critical engagement with the material. He continues: "I therefore seek neither to criticise popular music nor to celebrate it per se. ... In the end, it makes little sense to me to attempt to resolve those contradictions: we live them as human beings, researchers, students and fans." (Longhurst, 2007, pp. 1 - 2)

Shuker, similarly, describes one of the core questions addressed in *Understanding Popular Music* as being how meaning is produced in popular music. Referring back to one of the

founders of cultural studies, Stuart Hall (Hall, 1981), he states that this is not just a question of examining the producers, the cultural texts which they produce, or the appropriation / appreciation by their audience as separate entities, but rather looking at how these factors fit together and relate to one another. However, Popular Music Studies usually focuses on rock music and its variants rather than pre-rock 'n' roll dance band music, recorded music rather than live performance, and groundbreaking artists rather than their imitators. Jazz Studies covers slightly more relevant territory, in that the music referred to in this study is generally more closely related to jazz than rock, but there does again tend to be a focus on influential recordings rather than local live music making.

Popular Music Scenes and Histories

As Bennett and Peterson state in their book *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal and Virtual* (A. Bennett & Peterson, 2004), the music industry is global, but most music is made and enjoyed in situations which are not directly connected to these corporate worlds. They define the concept 'music scene' as used by academic researchers as designating "the contexts in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans collectively share their common musical tastes and collectively distinguish themselves from others." They state that the term dates back to the 1940s when it was used widely by journalists describing the 'demiworld of jazz', and the 'marginal and bohemian' lifestyle of those involved in it. Since then, journalists have continued to use the term to describe not just the artistic (or other) products of a scene, but also the related styles of dress, language and behaviour employed by the people involved.[9] These journalistic descriptions of scenes have in turn enabled fans of particular genres to develop their own collective identities around all of these aspects of the related scene, and not just the music or art itself. (A. Bennett & Peterson, 2004, pp. 1 - 2)

Longhurst (2007, pp. 251 - 253) also states that the concept of a 'scene' has increasingly been used in academic literature to refer to sites of (predominantly) local music production and consumption, building on common-sense understandings of the idea such as might be

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[9] Bennett and Peterson (2004) state that their understanding of the concept of a scene concept draws both on Pierre Bourdieu (1984) idea of "field" and Howard Becker (1982) idea of "art worlds", which they state "both make many of the same assumptions". Bourdieu and Becker will both be discussed further in Chapter 2, where it will become evident that while their areas of work, and some ideas, may have overlapped, they have disagreed on many issues as well.

associated with terms like 'the New York scene' or 'the Manchester scene'. He describes the academic concept of a musical scene as having many overlaps in the literature with terms such as subculture, credits (Finnegan, 2007) as an important resource for rethinking how local musical-making works, and refers to the important work on scenes by Will Straw, who defined a musical scene as "that cultural space in which a range of musical practices co-exists, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilisation"[10]. (Straw, 1991, p. 373) Straw goes on to emphasise the important link between how music is usually made in that place and time, and the musical heritage which underpins this current practice, that is, the roots of the contemporary scene in its immediate and more distant past.[11] He also mentions the importance of musical alliances and musical boundaries as a part of how participants talk about and view the scene to which they belong.[12]

Longhurst also refers to *Dissonant Identities* - a key study by Shank (1994) which examines live music in the city of Austin, Texas. This study built upon earlier work by Shank as well as the theories proposed by Will Straw. Shank traced the development of the music scene in Austin, Texas in detail, and used the information he collected to reveal the way in which different influences came together to produce a changing musical patchwork. Shank argued that the boundaries between producers and consumers break down in the sort of scene that is represented in Austin, writing that: "[s]pectators become fans, fans become musicians, musicians are always already fans..." (Shank, 1994, p. 131) Longhurst (2007) noted that this statement identified the way in which "participants in a scene can take on a number of different roles … within it". Both of these statements - about musicians also being fans, and about participants taking on a number of roles - describe phenomena which are frequently described

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[10] Bennett & Peterson (2004, p. 3) concur that scenes have often been called "subcultures". They also point out that the term subculture can be problematic in this context because it "presumes that a society has one commonly shared culture from which the subculture is deviant" (Gelder & Thornton, 1997), and also that "all of a participant's actions are governed by subcultural standards". The scene perspective does not make these presumptions. As we will see in later chapters, this makes the scene perspective more appropriate to the lifestyles of the people interviewed for this research.

[11] Academic work in the scenes perspective which builds on Straw's work focuses on "situations where performers, support facilities, and fans come together to collectively create music for their own enjoyment." (A. Bennett & Peterson, 2004, p. 3)

[12] These were aspects which were frequently referred to by my interviewees, and the concept of a musical scene will therefore be referred to frequently throughout this thesis.

by my interviewees as well, despite the substantial differences in time, place and musical environment. One way of understanding the activities of local musicians in context is to therefore to think in terms of local music scenes. In the next section I will start to look at some of the theoretical and practical problems associated with researching these musical scenes, especially those which existed in the past rather than being available to experience in the present.

Hidden Histories and the Measurement of Popularity

hidden histories
The histories that are hidden from or forgotten by the mainstream representations of past events.

absent history
Any part of history that was not recorded or that is missing. Not everything that happened in the past is accessible to us today, because only some voices were documented and only some perspectives were recorded.

Martin & Nakayama (2004)

Dance bands and the jobbing musicians who played in them have not gone completely unrecorded in print. As well as contemporary sources such as newspaper reports and advertisements, local historians, have a fairly catholic approach to collecting, collating and analysing evidence of pastimes, emphasising a clear and comprehensive picture of life as it was lived in a period, and there are many non-academic 'special interest' books which concentrate on performer biographies and the social position of jazz and jazz musicians (C. Colin, 1984; S. Colin, 1977; McCarthy, 1974; Parker, 1993; Tracy, 1995, 1997; Walker, 1964). These, however, tend to look back at the 'glory days' of the touring big bands when jazz-based dance music was popular and commercially successful, rather than the continuing activities of semi-professional dance bands, amateur rehearsal bands, jazz evening classes and so on in later years. Another problem with many of these publications is that while they often provide interesting or colourful ethnographic background to the people and musical styles concerned, they can be uncritical, incomplete or hard to substantiate, and therefore not really suitable as the sole basis of academic argument (Whyton, 2004).

However, the activities of musicians working in a variety of genres in uncelebrated local scenes may go unremarked because they do not fit neatly into an academic category, or simply because it is more difficult to find out about them, especially years after the event.[13]   As Oliver suggested in his article *History Begins Today*, to many young people popular music *is* the 'music of today', while their parents and those of older generations may think of popular music as the music of "their day", whenever their youth may have been:-

> Of course, these are sweeping generalisations, unsubstantiated by facts and figures or reasoned argument based upon research. And that is largely the issue: it is not too soon to be undertaking research into the popular music of the recent past, for the history of popular music is an ever-present challenge as the music of the present slips rapidly beyond our grasp…
>
> Oliver (2004, p. 15)

For a mixture of reasons, therefore, recorded music has often formed the basis of histories of pop and rock music (and also to a large extent of jazz). As Nott notes in *Music for the People* (Nott, 2002, pp. 4 - 5), 'popularity' is often conceived purely in terms of 'how many' copies of a piece of sheet music or a recording are sold; 'sales' become the main criteria for measuring popularity. Where local music making is mentioned at all, it is often in the context of a continuum of musical activities with 'superstars [surrounded by] servants and sycophants' at one extreme, and 'a local bar band … moving desperately and sporadically between welfare and squalid gig, sustained by dreams' at the other (Frith, 1983, pp. 63 - 64). While these extremes do exist, the real environment usually has more dimensions and more subtlety. In his recent study of hobbyist rock musicians in Brisbane, Australia, Rogers (2013) noted that contrary to the archetypal myths of musicians being motivated by the potential rewards of mainstream success, such as wealth and celebrity, and considering anything less to be irredeemable failure, most of his respondents did not regard turning away from a full-time music career as a defeatist attitude. Their revised idea of a musical career focuses on the immediate pleasures of playing and performing - 'the love of it'. (This is a very interesting

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[13] It is common practice for the names of all involved, from songwriter to tea-boy, to be printed on copies of an l.p. or c.d. sleeve, or at least recorded for posterity in the studio's logbooks. Such records are vanishingly rare for the kind of scratch ensembles Becker describes, as there is usually no commercial or practical reason for keeping public records of who played what, where and when in this context.

finding, as it coincides with the attitudes revealed by my interviewees, in spite of the local scenes they describe being on the opposite side of the planet, and separated in time by half a century or more.)[14]

Measuring the popularity of a genre or a song at a given time purely in terms of copies sold is therefore valid within its limits, but it *is* limited because of its focus on what Nott describes as the 'moment of exchange' (sales) rather than the 'moment of use' when the music is actually heard.[15] This can lead to inaccurate estimates of what people actually listen to most, and what musicians actually play most, as opposed to what is most frequently purchased. For example, a bandleader might buy a single copy of an arrangement of a popular song for his band to play. This would add one to the total of sales for that song in that week. However, if the band is busy and the arrangement proves popular, it might be played hundreds of times to audiences of between tens and hundreds of people each time. On the other hand, it might be played once, hated by band and audience alike, and never trouble the inside of a dance hall again. Sales figures give no inkling of subtleties like this, but bandleaders and musicians need to be very aware of them in order to provide what the audiences they play for prefer and pay them to provide.

In short, a major issue with recording-based histories is that they miss what most musicians actually do most of the time. Most professional musicians make their living as performers

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[14] It also coincides with Paul Williams' reading of Mark Knopfler's lyrics for the 1979 Dire Straits hit 'Sultans of Swing'. Williams, quoted in Sullivan (2013), notes that the small-time band in the half-empty jazz club described in the song is just a group of men with total love for what they do. "This band has no hope whatsoever of 'making it big' .... It is not a stepping-stone to someplace else. It is, take it or leave it, the meaning of their lives, and much of the record's greatness is in the tremendous respect it evokes in every listener for these persons (whether they happen to be great musicians or not) and the choices they've made. The ways they've chosen to live."

Incidentally, Dire Straits played a live set which included 'Sultans of Swing' in Chester in May 1978, probably at Chester College (now the University of Chester) (Can you help?, n.d). The gig was recorded, without the band's permission, and this bootleg recording was released in 1997 by the Italian label Mistral as 'Dire Straits - Live in Chester' (Dire Straits — Live in Chester., n.d.)

[15] This is another example of the problems caused by trying to analyse the production and consumption of cultural goods in the same way as for material goods, as noted by Longhurst / Warde earlier in this chapter.

rather than through record sales, and even those who do have success in the recording industry usually begin their careers long before then, and continue long after their records cease to appear in the charts (Frith, Brennan, Cloonan, & Webster, 2013; Rogers, 2013; Taylor, 2013). The Chester dance band scene that I have studied proved to be a good example of this issue; a lot of musicians were involved, and many were very busy making music for many years. However, very few (other than Tony Faulkner and Syd Lawrence) had their work recorded or broadcast to any significant extent, at least until the 21st century when changes in technology made recording cheaper & easier.[16] If music and musicians are selected for study based purely on how much they record or how many recordings they sell, it would be fair to dismiss the Chester dance band scene as unworthy of study. However, as well as being the closest thing to live jazz many people in the area experienced, this was part of the musical environment in which successful pop and rock bands such as the Beatles grew up. American jazz records were critically important & highly influential, but so were the local musicians that they influenced; in the UK, many of those local musicians lived in places like Chester and Wrexham. In fact, a remarkable variety of music was being played live in British towns and cities in the 1950s and 1960s, although as Frith et al. (2013) show this is not reflected in accounts such as Dave Harker in *One for the Money*, which includes the statement that: "The period 1959-62 was the deadest phase of British and American recorded song since at least 1956." (Harker, 1980, p. 73)

Harker goes on to describe this period as a '*bloody desert*' for adolescents interested in popular music who did not happen to live in a major city or coastal resort, or have access to amusement arcades or fairgrounds, or the inclination and opportunity to make their own music, the implication being that this excluded a large - or at least significant - proportion of young music fans in Britain at the time. It is therefore worth looking beyond the headline crazes to investigate the wide variety of different genres and musical forms which co-existed simultaneously, in live contexts as well as in recordings, and among all sections of society (Nott, 2002, pp. 4 - 5). For instance, Longhurst argues that to view the overlapping period 1955-63 as mere 'background' to later developments in pop and rock is to support a view which is "heavily distorted by an almost fetishistic attention to the charts". He continues by asserting that:-

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[16] See Chapters 7 and 8 for more details

there is an element of myth in the way rock histories skip from one commercial peak to another, or from one 'great artist' to another, ignoring almost totally the social roots of both the music-making and the listening, which ought to be among their objects of study.

Longhurst (2007, pp. 94 - 97)

Frith et al. recently took up this argument with reference specifically to live music during this period:-

Switch attention from 'recorded song' to live performance and 1959-62 becomes less a desert than a landscape covered with a mass of foliage, from gnarled old trees to newly planted seedlings. Not only were a significant number of adolescents making their own music in this period (including early versions of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones), but they also had a variety of local opportunities to serve musical apprenticeships.

Frith et al. (2013, p. 64)

However, vigorous local musical ecosystems of this sort have frequently been ignored in academic research, and not just because of the lack of audio evidence. The widespread tendency to attribute greater significance to artistic originality has also led to a lack of research interest in bands, like those described by my interviewees, which usually played music which was already popular - that is,, bands which would later become known as 'cover bands'.

Rock History, Rock Myth, and the role of 'cover bands'

With a few exceptions (such as *Let's Go Dancing: Dance Band Memories of 1930s Liverpool* (Jenkins, 1994) and *Sweeping the Blues Away: A Celebration of the Merseysippi Jazz Band* (Leigh, 2002)) musical histories of Liverpool and its environs have been prone to an excessively strong focus on the city's Merseybeat and rock heritage. *Other voices ...* (Brocken, 2010) therefore offers a helpful counterbalance by providing an excellent survey of the numerous hidden histories of music in Liverpool and Merseyside, which (among many other styles) covers dance bands and jazz. It's not possible to avoid what Brocken refers to at the 'myth of origin' of the Beatles if you're studying popular music on or around Merseyside, and arguably one shouldn't try to, but *Other Voices...* usefully fills in the local context from which

national and international stars like the Beatles emerged; a context of which my interviewees were a small but previously undocumented part.

Shuker (1994) has also described versions of the common myths and stories about how the rock music industry functions, such as Frith's 1988 description of a rock career process which he dubbed 'The Rock'.[17] In this model, musicians (who were assumed to be aiming for full-time professional status and / or international fame and fortune) started at the base of a pyramid by working local pubs and clubs and building up a regional following.[18] Their next steps up the pyramid, if achieved, would lead to a recording contract, national exposure, hit records, and major tours. At the highest level - and available only to a lucky few - were international hits, tours and media exposure, and 'superstar' status. "Frith regarded this model as underpinned by a dynamic and ideology emphasising 'a[n] account of success being *earned* by hard work, determination, and skills *honed* in practice." ((Frith, 1988, p. 112) quoted in Shuker (1994)) Clearly there are big problems with this over-simplification of the ingredients for commercial success. Nevertheless, are there not also problems with denying the positive role of hard work, determination, & practice? Hard work, determination & practice were mentioned frequently by my interviewees, generally in positive terms. Does this mean they were all deluded and in thrall to capitalist / wartime propaganda? To some extent that is quite plausible, as propaganda aimed at maximising civilian productivity was certainly a feature of UK media output during World War II, although it fails to explain why such attitudes would have been common not just during and after the war but before it as well. It also completely misses a craftsmanlike pride in a job well done.

Shuker also describes a status hierarchy among performers which he believes is a hierarchy endorsed by critics and fans, as well as by musicians themselves.

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[17] Note the contrast with Frith et al.'s 2013 work.

[18] This would have been a completely unrealistic aim for the vast majority of musicians - however accomplished - during World War II and for some years afterwards (Baade, 2012, p. 85), as employment options were tightly controlled by the government. This is a critical environmental difference to the conditions under which later generations of musicians grew up, and means that musicians of the 40s and 50s cannot fairly be judged by the same standards. See Chapters. 5, 6 and 7 for more on this.

> ..At the base of this hierarchy are cover bands which are generally accorded little critical artistic weight. The common view is that reliance on someone else's material concedes that you have nothing of your own to say. …[However] Cover songs are literally music to the ears of the managers of smaller venues like clubs and pubs, as they are tapping into a proven product that the audience can identify with.[19]

> Shuker (1994, pp. 106 - 111)

Most of the bands described in this research were essentially 'cover bands', before the term itself had been invented, who on this analysis would presumably also be accorded little critical artistic weight. I have not discovered artistic criticism (positive or negative) to confirm or deny this as regards the bands in this study, but there is plenty of evidence that venue managers welcomed dance bands who provided well-known popular songs as much as their modern counterparts do, albeit via different technologies. (More on this in Chapters 2 and 6.) As previously noted, there were substantial changes in employment possibilities between World War II and the immediate post-war period, and the 1960s. One practical result of this was that full-time musical experimentation was a luxury denied to most of my interviewees, whatever they did or did not have to say artistically. They were most active as musicians during the time of directed employment when it was difficult to get permission to work full-time as a professional musician even if one had the requisite skill and talent and an established audience base. This was also well before the era when social security benefits were available as a source of survival income while building up that audience.

Shuker goes on to broaden the discussion of cover bands to include what would now be known as tribute bands:-

> The extreme example of cover bands are those performers who not only directly model themselves on established bands, but actually copy them, presenting themselves as simulacra of the originals. Such tribute bands, as the industry prefers to call them, rate few plaudits artistically, but they have become big business. ... On the positive side,

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[19] They were also exactly what the BBC producers responsible for wartime entertainment such as 'Music While You Work', who did an unprecedented amount of research on what listeners actually wanted to hear in the early 1940s, discovered that they needed. (Baade, 2012, pp. 60 - 81)

the imitators are bringing the music to a new audience of under twenty-fives, opening it up to a generation who never saw the original performers…[20]

Shuker (1994)

However, to rate tribute bands purely on their original artistic contribution and to value them only for their ability to 'bring the music to a new audience' is missing much of the point of why such bands exist. They provide familiarity and (as time moves on) nostalgia, and they also keep performance traditions and craft skills relating to particular genres and artists alive. Ironically, similar practices in the classical music field are known as 'authentic performance', and are accorded critical respect. Like authentic performance ensembles, tribute bands also bring the experience of seeing and hearing something very close to the original performances to those who could be there at the time. This is not just a matter of chronology however; tribute bands bring their performances to people of all ages who didn't happen to have had tickets to the relevant artists' most iconic events, which were usually in places like London, New York or California, and thus not physically or financially accessible to the vast majority of people, regardless of when they happened to be alive.

The bands which my interviewees played in were not, for the most part, tribute bands (although many bands, including Frost's, would provide Glenn Miller style performances on request, including approximations to US forces uniforms and stock transcriptions of the relevant arrangements.) Most bands did however play what would now be known as 'covers', using arrangements written by band members or stock arrangements bought from music publishers. This was a major part of what promoters and audiences demanded of them.

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[20] This may be more especially the case in rock music, where there is more emphasis on the idea that to gain critical respect, the musician must be a composer, rather than an interpreter of someone else's creations.

Studying Genre

> A musical genre is 'a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is governed by a definite set of socially accepted rules'.
>
> Fabbri (1980)

Returning to the triad of production, texts and audiences described earlier in this chapter, the study of genre is one way of taking all three into account simultaneously. In this section I will present outlines of the main genres in rock and jazz, before looking at how they can be applied to the musical activities of the bands described by my interviewees. I will conclude by suggesting that the music they played usually did not fit comfortably into a single genre or sub-genre, but would be more effectively analysed by looking at the functions which the musical entertainment they provided performed.

In the introduction to their book *Popular Music Genres*, Borthwick and Moy (2004) use the term genre to "categorise musical styles within certain broad textual and extra-textual parameters". They also state that, although a few "overarching" metagenres such as rock or pop "transcend historical epochs", most are "intrinsically tied to an era, a mode of production, a Zeitgeist and a set of social circumstances".[21] This means that they have to change when their contexts change, usually becoming or giving way to a new genre. The dance bands described in this research typically played a wide variety of jazz genres, and as time went by many added versions of rock 'n' roll and pop songs to their repertoire as well. However, as will be described later in this section, trying to characterise what they did just by listing the musical genres they played misses an important point. From a commercial point of view, the genre of the songs as originally published or recorded was less important to the dance bands and their audiences than the way in which they performed them, and the circumstances in which they performed them - which usually meant playing for dancing.

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[21] Borthwick and Moy (2004) include technological changes among the external pressures which can affect the viability of a genre; this is significant in the context of the dance bands in this study, as will be shown in Chapters 6 and 7 especially.

Genre in rock and pop

A common application of genre information in popular music studies is to compare the chronological development and commercial success of different forms of artistic activity. An interesting example of a study which focuses explicitly on extreme commercial success is the *Genealogy of Pop / Rock Music* chart (Garofalo & Nicolazzo, 1979), originally published in the book *Rock 'n' Roll is Here to Pay* (Chapple & Garofalo, 1977). Creating this hand-drawn diagram must have taken a huge amount of painstaking work, as Garofalo and Nicolazzo have endeavoured to show visually the extent of a particular artist or genre's commercial success in a given time period, as measured by record sales recorded in album and singles charts for the relevant year. Given a magnifying glass (or electronic equivalent) his approach makes it easy to see that, for instance, Neil Sedaka's first hits preceded those of the Beach Boys. It also enables the reader to see who was having hits simultaneously in different genres, by reading vertically from top to bottom of the chart.

Obviously however this approach does have limitations, one of which Garofalo points out on the chart itself; deciding exactly which genre a specific artist belongs to can be a very subjective process, especially if they record in more than one style or format. There is however another problem, which is that focusing on commercial success, while a valid research approach in its own right, does have the effect of making commercially successful artists seem to appear from nowhere. The representation of the Beatles is a good example: they, along with the rest of the British Invasion, appear quite suddenly at the beginning of 1963, with no visible antecedents, and no connection to what was happening simultaneously in other sub-genres. In the context of the data used to create the chart that is entirely reasonable. Prior to 1963, these groups had yet to make an impact on the international record business, so there is no reason for them to be included in the chart before then. However, as discussed in the previous section on Hidden Histories, this avoids the fact that none of the entities on the chart actually appeared from nowhere; they all came from social and historical contexts which affected how they turned out. In the case of the Beatles, that context included venues in Chester and on the Wirral which were also regular employers of the bands and musicians I have studied.

Jazz Genres

Mark Gridley's book *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis* (Gridley, 2003) is a noticeably more practical, practitioner-oriented book than Borthwick & Moy's rock-oriented volume (Borthwick & Moy, 2004). It does address a canon of players and performances, but it doesn't stop there; it also includes music theory and detailed descriptions of instruments and how they are played in various styles, and would be useful to a novice player or someone exploring a new style by actually playing it. Borthwick & Moy - like much popular music scholarship focused on pop and rock - was much more recording-focused.[22]

After describing the origins of jazz and the mechanics of jazz improvisation, Gridley goes on to classify jazz in the following broad periods (Gridley, 2003, pp. 362 - 363):

'Premodern' jazz, including early jazz and swing, with Ellington and Basie as examples

This section is sub-divided into

- 1920s: Early Jazz
- 1930s: Swing
- Late 1930s: Transition to Bop

Modern Jazz (1940s - 60s), including bop, cool jazz and hard bop, with Miles Davis and John Coltrane as examples

This section is sub-divided into

- 1940s: Bop
- Late 1940s - Transition to Cool and West Coast
- 1950s - West Coast
- 1950s - Hard Bop
- Late 1950s - Transition to Modal Jazz & Free Jazz
- Modern & Contemporary Jazz (1960s - early 2000s), including avant-garde & 'free', with examples including Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett, and including hybrid genres such as Jazz-Rock

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[22] The impression I get from these two books is that their readers are expected to *do* jazz, but *observe / consume* pop.

These classifications are described in detail in the text of the book, and also illustrated in the chart "A Very Abbreviated Outline of Jazz Styles" (Gridley, 2003, pp. 362 - 363). Gridley does point out in a note at the top of the chart that it is 'not strictly chronological; many styles overlap the same time periods and most have continued long after their inception. Many innovators continued playing for decades after their style emerged." This still leaves the focus on recordings and innovators however, and does not take account of the time which it took for their innovations to spread to parts of the world outside the USA. For example, in the UK, the BBC broadcast very little jazz of any sort until the late 1930s (Baade, 2012, pp. 17 – 18), so while that may have been the period when the 'transition to bop' was occurring in metropolitan America, the same could not really be said in provincial Britain. Even in urban America, where musicians were able to access recordings (or even performances) of the latest in jazz innovation, they did not necessarily have the opportunity to play in those styles themselves; the preferences of non-specialist audiences still had an overwhelming influence on what was played, where and when.

Jazz Places, Standards, and the Mother of the Bar Mitzvah Boy

> Every night, all over the United States and in many other parts of the world as well, this scene takes place. Several musicians walk into a club, a bar, a restaurant, a place for a party. ... They play popular songs of some kind... [They] might never have met... But they do just fine, performing well enough for the occasion without noticeable difficulties.
>
> How do several people who haven't prepared a musical performance nevertheless give one? How can they play together competently enough to satisfy the manager of a bar or the bride at a wedding or the mother of the bar mitzvah boy?
>
> Faulkner & Becker (2009, pp. 1 - 2)

One of the major inspirations for this research was Howard Becker's essay *Jazz Places* (Becker, 2002, 2004) followed later by the book *Do You Know…?* (Faulkner & Becker, 2009) in which the essay's content was included. The book's focus is on how a group of musicians who may never have met before can use the sketchy information provided in a lead sheet or chord chart

to provide an acceptable joint performance, without the need for rehearsal.[23] It includes a lot of detailed information about how working musicians in the 50s in the US learned their trade. (Faulkner and Becker emphasise the importance of radio more than my interviewees did, and brass or military bands less, but the range of musical skills described is much the same.) It also includes good explanations of the musical technicalities. Despite being in a much smaller city on the other side of the Atlantic, it is interesting to note the similarities between Becker's description and the experiences reported in Chester. For instance, being prepared to play whatever style is required for the clients and environment at hand - rather than being strictly devoted to one particular style, come what may - was a feature of the Chester dance band scene which is very reminiscent of the situation among jobbing jazz musicians in Chicago in the 1950s.[24] Becker sums up the Chicago experience by saying that most of the music that he and his colleagues played was 'commercial' music, meant for dancing or as background noise in a bar or club. They did manage to play some jazz even so, by, as he puts it, "sneaking it into the performance"; this was possible, as while most venues were not explicitly hospitable to jazz, they were also not devoid of opportunities for playing it. However, the combination of the physical spaces where the bands played and the social and financial arrangements in those spaces meant that musicians always had to adapt their playing to the context, providing the genre required by the clients. This meant that most musicians played in a range of different venues, and in the process of doing so played in a "complex and varied repertoire of styles" which was influenced by jazz, because they considered themselves to be jazz musicians, but

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[23] This account suggests an interesting contrast with the process of 'song getting' for most rock musicians, as described by (H. S. Bennett, 1990, pp. 224 - 227) in Shuker (2004). For rock musicians, learning songs is a process of copying a recording by playing along with it, where necessary playing parts of it over and over until they are learned. According to one of Bennett's subjects, "It's so simple just to get things off the record, sheet music is just for people who can't hear".

This process would not work in the context described by Becker, where musicians might routinely be required to play songs they have never heard before 'at sight', without rehearsal or practice in advance. The importance of being able to perform from written music with little or no prior rehearsal was also frequently referred to by my interviewees. (Examples in Chapters 4 - 6)

[24] This is far from being Becker's first excursion into sociological description of Chicago dance bands. His first published paper described the same world, but with much more emphasis on the division between how musicians saw themselves, and how they viewed their audiences (Becker, 1951).

which was also a "variation on what the popular music of the day offered". Becker sums the situation up thus:-

> … it would be wise to guess, in trying to understand the output of any player or group, that what they did in one place affected what they did in another, so that the music of even a very serious jazz group might bear the traces of the less than pure music they had played in some other place on some other night.[25]

Becker (2004, p. 27)

This quote embodies an idea which I will refer to frequently throughout this thesis; professional and semi-professional musicians almost always require a substantial degree of versatility to become established in the profession, even if they subsequently become well-known for specialising in one particular sub-genre. As the discussions of genre and performance practice which follow in later in this chapter and in Chapter 2 (along with many examples in Chapters 4 to 8) will confirm, an eclectic approach to repertoire was common among the dance bands with which my interviewees were associated. It was also a feature of institutions ranging from brass and military bands to BBC radio programmes such as Music While You Work (Baade, 2012, pp. 60 – 81). Pioneering systematic research undertaken by the producers of Music While You Work, and the repertoire decisions of local bandleaders in Chester and North Wales, both suggest that this eclectic approach was popular with the public, even if that same public's record and sheet music buying habits at the time might have suggested somewhat different musical priorities. This is likely to be connected with the different demographics of casual radio listeners as opposed to record-buying enthusiasts, and also because of the different purposes to which they were actually putting the music they heard.

'Strict Tempo' and Music for Dancing

Looking at the music played and listened to by my interviewees, the dance bands at this time were certainly influenced by jazz, but they were playing what was then also popular music. Rather like the 'covers bands' of later eras, and the commercial musicians described by Becker, almost all of the music played by bands run by Gibbons, Field, Irving and colleagues was 'functional music' which was meant either to be danced to, or as 'background music' to be

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[25] For much more on this see 'Repertoire and Performance Practice' in Chapter 2.

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played while the clientele ate, drank and socialised. To examine their music in isolation from its environment, therefore, misunderstands its fundamental purpose.[26] It would in fact have been surprising if Chester musicians had played American-style jazz before World War II, as it would have been quite difficult for them to hear it in the first place (and, importantly, unlikely that their audiences would have been familiar enough with it to welcome it as entertainment). Wartime conditions and broadcasting were to change this, and slightly later generations of musicians might well have aspired to be 'jazz musicians' rather than 'dance club musicians', but interviewees and their colleagues who were already active at the start of WWII - such as Field - would for the most part have grown up with British-style dance band music, rather than American-style jazz.[27] It is therefore no surprise that British-style dance music is what they learned to play, and also what the majority of their customers demanded.

Before considering the musical styles played by Field and his colleagues in more detail, it will be useful to consider briefly the development of social dancing in Britain in the early 20th Century, since this was inextricably linked to the development of British dance music during that period. According to the account of ballroom dancing history given by the celebrated dance teacher and Strict Tempo bandleader Victor Silvester (Silvester, 2005, pp. 10 - 12), the inter-war years were a time of transition for social dancing in Britain. Prior to the arrival of the Waltz in Britain, social dancing usually entailed couples keeping a respectable distance from one another, in contact with one another (if at all) by the finger-tips at most. The 'modern hold' arrived in British ballrooms with the Waltz in the early nineteenth century, to the accompaniment of a predictable amount of scandal and moral panic. Other developments during the nineteenth century had started to prepare the ground for a new style of social dancing, with less emphasis being placed on 'decorative' steps derived from ballet, and the introduction of more new dances from Europe such as the Polka and the Mazurka. Towards the end of the Victorian era more new dances arrived, but this time from the USA; these included a type of Waltz called the Boston, the Barn Dance, the Rag and the Two-Step. The

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[26] Wall (2006) notes that there are few systematic methods available for studying dancing to popular music, and writes that this reflects a wider lack of attention to the topic in the literature of popular music studies which has also been noted by other authors including Sara Thornton. Wall attributes this situation to the dominance of a 'rock aesthetic' which tends to privilege analytical listening over hedonistic dancing, and points out that this misses the point that an awareness of the physical experience of dancing is essential to understanding genres of music made (or used) primarily for the purpose of being danced to.

[27] For more on this, see Chapter 2.

dances which would have been common in British ballrooms just before World War One all derive from this heritage, and make up what later became known as 'Old Time' dancing. As with many other facets of society however, the Great War had a significant effect on the history of social and ballroom dancing in Britain. Sylvester described the birth of the Modern style of ballroom dancing thus:-

> The younger generation … rebelled against the artificial technique of the old-time teachers with its five positions and 'pretty' movements. The coming of the First World War, when old institutions went by the board, encouraged this rebellion and there was introduced by the dancers themselves - not by the teachers, mark you - a free and easy go-as-you-please style based more or less on the natural movements used in walking. The coming of the Foxtrot in 1914 fanned this rebellion and killed the sway of the old-time technique.
>
> Silvester (2005, p. 12)

In 1920, an 'Informal Conference of Teachers' was called under the auspices of The Dancing Times, and it was there that the first successful attempts were made to standardise the basic steps of the Foxtrot and the One-Step. With the Waltz, these two dances formed the foundation of what was to become Modern Ballroom dancing. This was a very significant break with tradition; the ballet-derived 'turn-out' of the feet was abandoned completely, and replaced by a 'modern ballroom technique based on natural movement, with the feet in alignment'. Within a couple of decades, modern ballroom dance had been further standardised. The One-Step fell out of favour, but the Waltz and Foxtrot remained, to be joined by the Quickstep and the Tango (Silvester, 2005, p. 12). The Viennese Waltz (which was danced much faster than its modern variant) remained popular and part of the proficient ballroom dancer's skill set. Latin and American dances were not strictly speaking part of the modern ballroom canon to start with, but they increasingly became necessary skills among professional and keen amateur dancers and musicians alike, with the standard list of Latin-American dances as given by Silvester including the Rumba, the Samba, the Cha-cha-cha and the Paso Doble. (Silvester, 2005, back cover)

With this history in mind, it is instructive to analyse the dances listed on the Regimental Ball dance card shown in Figures 13 and 14, which is from the Annual Ball of the Cheshire Regiment at Chester Castle in February 1932. (See table overleaf for details.) If one were to assume that local dance bands and audiences completely updated their entertainment programmes every season in line with the hit parade or the latest dance fashions, the mixed contents of the programme for the evening might seem surprising. One might think that by 1932 'Old Time' dances would be so far out of fashion that they would hardly figure on the dance card at all, or that if they did they would make up a small part of the programme, and perhaps played at the start of the evening, for the benefit of older guests who wanted to go home earlier. It is likely that a Regimental Ball would have been attended by dancers of various ages from their early twenties to post-retirement age, so it makes sense that a variety of music would be played which would appeal to all of those age-groups. However, the situation is actually more nuanced even than this. Not only did the programme provide a carefully balanced mix of Old Time and Modern dance styles, but he programme is split almost exactly 50:50 between them, and the styles are mixed up throughout the evening. While this is a single example, it is of particular interest because, as will be shown in later chapters, the practice of mixing older and more recent genres in the course of an evening's entertainment from the same band is one which recurred in many examples described by my interviewees.

Dance Number and Type	Old Time or Modern?
1. Fox Trot	Modern
2. Waltz	Modern
3. One Step	Modern (but falling out of favour by this time)
4. Veleta	Old Time
5. Military Two Step	Old Time
6. Fox Trot	Modern
7. Lancers	Old Time
8. Waltz (Old Time)	Old Time
9. Veleta	Old Time
10. Quick Step (Paul Jones)	Modern
11. Boston Two Step	Old Time
12. Waltz	Modern
13. Grand March / Lancers	Old Time
14. Fox Trot	Modern
15. Waltz	Modern
16. One Step	Modern (but falling out of favour by this time)
17. Veleta	Old Time
18. Military Two Step	Old Time
19. Fox Trot	Modern
20. Waltz (Old Time)	Old Time
21. Fox Trot (Paul Jones)	Modern
22. Waltz	Modern
23. Boston Two Step	Old Time
24. Waltz	Modern

This dance card is just one example of the types and variety of musical genres which was required from a British dance band in the early 1930s, at the start of Field's career as a bandleader, and the findings from my research resonate with those of Baade (2012, p. 105), who states that it was not until well into World War II that swing began to enjoy anything like a mass audience in Britain. Even then, the BBC's own research suggested that the majority of British listeners still preferred more conservative forms of dance music, such as the sweet dance music broadcast from London's top hotels, or "the strict-tempo music that they heard at the palais". Baade continues by quoting Victor Silvester:-

> If you're a typical radio fan, then you consider first and foremost the entertainment value of a combination. If you're primarily a keen dancer, then you judge a band purely according to … its "danceability". And if you're not exactly a keen fan … you probably ask no more than a pleasing melody plus a nice rhythmic sort of "pom, pom, pom".
>
> Silvester (2005) quoted in Baade (2012, p. 32)

Of all of the varieties of functional background and dance music which were in vogue around the time of WWII, 'strict tempo' is probably the most important from the point of view of this research, even though (or maybe because) it is a vaguer category than it sounds (Pytlik, 2006). While dance bands such as those run by Gibbons, Field, Irving and (later, but in the same style) Frost were expected to provide a very wide range of musical genres, from a range of different band sizes, and in a great many different environments, one thing did remain constant most of the time; they were generally playing for dancing rather than for listening, and this meant the needs of the dancers took precedence over many musical considerations.[28] These needs included a predictable and unvarying tempo for each type of dance, and moreover a tempo which allowed the (mostly) amateur dancers to perform the necessary steps reasonably easily, by not being too fast or too slow. 'Strict tempo' is not just about the tempo as measured in bars-per-minute, however; to give the maximum assistance to the dancers, good strict tempo music also avoids more subtle problems such as the melody being too loud relative to the beat, or confusion being caused by singers or players applying too much rubato to the melody.[29] At

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[28] See examples in Chapters 5 and 7, and Appendix A.
[29] Note that the tempo is specified in 'bars-per-minute' and not 'beats-per-minute'. The latter unit of tempo is used more commonly among musicians (for example. as a metronome setting). Dancers, on the other hand, are more concerned about fitting movement patterns into complete bars of music. One of the many technical competencies required of a dance band leader playing

its worst, this approach can be unimaginative to the point of being robotic, so it is a real challenge to provide music which is both helpful to the dancers and also musically acceptable.

As will be described in Chapter 7, many dance bandleaders wrote their own arrangements of popular tunes to suit their own ensembles. However, this was a skilled and time-consuming task, so the majority also made extensive use of 'stock arrangements' purchased from commercial music publishers. An example of this type of arrangement is given by the version of the jazz standard 'Night and Day' (credited to 'Jimmy Lally') in Appendix A. This certainly meets Silvester's second and third requirements, providing a 'danceable' version of the song (designed to be played in 'strict tempo' throughout, and excluding musical embellishments such as rubato, tempo changes or time signature changes), with a clearly audible and very popular melody. Although the 'nice rhythmic sort of "pom, pom, pom"' is not explicitly written in, performance convention would generally have ensured - given a competent band and leader - that it would be present. The arrangement is cleverly constructed to ensure that these criteria would be met with any size of band 'from a trio to a 14-piece band'.[30] The first criterion, 'entertainment value', would be mainly dependent on the quality of the band (combined with the taste of the listener). This version of 'Night and Day' (like thousands of other in similar styles) was not primarily an 'artistic' or 'entertainment' arrangement; the primary goal was to attract and please the customers who danced and socialised at dance halls and at private functions such as weddings, anniversaries and birthdays. It is both an example of the context in which my interviewees made their music, and also an example of the demands made on them as musicians, which helped to form their collective sense of professional pride

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strict tempo music, therefore, would be the ability to convert from bars-per-minute to beats-per-minute, or vice versa, accurately.

[30] This versatility was commercially useful, as it enabled bandleaders to match the size of the band provided to the client's budget. Several of my interviewees also talk (for example. in Chapters 4 - 7) about the related practice of 'splitting' bands, where a bandleader such as Field would send out two or more bands on the same evening to different engagements. This same group of musicians (minus the extra rhythm section players) could also be combined into a single larger band for more remunerative work.

As will be described in chapters 2 and 3, bands and arrangements which were adaptable in size were also particularly important during World War II, when conscription led to a sudden and unpredictable loss of many semi-professional musicians to the Armed Forces (Baade, 2012, p. 85).

and identity. The next section begins to look more closely at how such professional identities can form, and how they fit in with local musical scenes and activities.

Hidden Histories of Musical Life in Britain : Ruth Finnegan and Sara Cohen

As Becker (2004) suggested (and Frith et al. (2013) confirm) professional musicians working in a commercial environment have to be extremely adaptable, and capable of working in a variety of genres both new and old in order to make a living. Frith et. al. & Longhurst (2007) also point out that describing the arrival of rock 'n' roll in Britain in the mid-1950s as 'revolutionary' - or a definitive change in musical generations - is problematic, as this arrival actually took place among a rich variety of other thriving musical entertainment scenes. Tosh (1984, p. 1) argues that history can serve as 'collective memory, the storehouse of experience through which people develop a sense of their social identity and future prospects'; this storehouse of experience and sense of social identity are put at risk if local musical histories are not collected and studied. I would argue that the infrastructure (including dance halls, jazz clubs, promoters and booking agents, as well as music shops, teachers and older musicians) which already existed for older genres was also essential for the development of the genres which followed. In arguing this I am partly inspired by Finnegan's idea of musical pathways, as described in her classic ethnographic account of local music-making in Milton Keynes, England, in the 1980s:-

> One way of looking at people's musical activities is therefore to see them as taking place along a series of pathways which provide familiar directions for both personal choices and collective actions. Such pathways form one important - often unstated - framework for people's participation in urban life, something overlapping with, but more permanent and structured than, the personal networks in which individuals also participate. They form broad routes set out, as it were, across and through the city. They tend to be invisible to others, but for those who follow them they constitute a clearly laid thoroughfare both for their activities and relationships and for the meaningful structuring of their actions in space and time.
>
> Finnegan (2007, p. 323)

Finnegan focused on the new town of Milton Keynes, which when she did the study in the 1980s was regarded by many as something of a cultural desert. Finnegan's findings (first published in 1989) show that this was far from being the truth. The importance of music-making as a way of forming and maintaining social networks is made clear, and issues such as

generational differences are shown to be important, but not by any means the sole determinants of musical activity. Finnegan deliberately looked at a very wide range of musical styles, traditions and types of activity, producing a series of interlaced 'hidden histories' of local music-making which was unusual for its time and which is still highly relevant and useful today. She demonstrated that while the vast majority of participants in a scene such as this do not record or become famous, they are still an essential part of the local musical network without which those who are aiming for musical success - as defined by recordings or celebrity - would find progress very much harder.

One of the interesting topics raised by Finnegan is the relationship between professional and amateur musicians.[31] She points out that the distinction can be difficult to pin down. In the context of dance bands and popular music in Chester, this is more important than it might seem. It might, for instance, be seen as preferable to be able to describe oneself as a professional musician, however thin the evidence. More significantly, interview evidence collected for this study (in common with Finnegan's evidence) suggests that many musicians who might be called 'professional', in that they regularly play for money, would not define themselves primarily as 'professional musicians' when filling in a census form. Most of those interviewed for this study followed a trade or profession which provided a more reliable source of income - or to which they were directed by government order as a result of World War II - as their primary occupation, even if they were highly accomplished musicians who also played professionally several nights of most weeks. From a historical point of view this means that sources such as census records are likely to under-estimate the number of commercially active musicians in a given time and place. This in turn could lead to under-estimates of the vitality of the live music scene in that place and time, and even of general economic well-being.

It is interesting to contrast Finnegan's Milton Keynes in the 1980s with Liverpool during the same period, as described by Sara Cohen in her book *Rock Culture in Liverpool : Popular Music in the Making* (Cohen, 1991), and both of these with Chester in earlier decades of the

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[31] Shuker (1994, p. 100) referred to Finnegan's analysis of this issue, stating that Finnegan found it difficult to distinguish 'amateur' from 'professional' musicians. He quotes Finnegan description that "the local musicians tended to use the term professional in an evaluative rather than an economic sense, to refer to a player's standard of performance, musical knowledge and qualifications, and regular appearances with musicians themselves regarded as professional." (Finnegan, 1989, p. 13)

twentieth century. Cohen's book is of particular interest because the geographical locations are much closer to Chester than Milton Keynes, but at the same time the book's focus on the contemporary popular music of the 1980s, the quest for fame and fortune through pop music, and Liverpool's heritage as a famous centre of the 1960s Beat Boom all provide a strong contrast to the context of my study. *Rock Culture in Liverpool* was researched during 1985 and published in 1991. Cohen chose Liverpool as the location for her study specifically because of its 'history of involvement and achievement in rock music'. (She used 'Liverpool' loosely to cover not just the city of Liverpool itself, but also wider Merseyside, because the music scene on Merseyside was focused on Liverpool. This included places such as Wallasey and Birkenhead at the north end of the Wirral, which are on the same side of the Mersey as Chester, but socially more closely connected to Liverpool.) Her research was focused on 'cultural production in a local context […] covering bands without a record contract that *therefore* functioned on the margins of the industry.' (My italics - this is not an assumption that I share.) She was interested in how these bands were 'influenced and affected by cultural production of a commercial nature at a national, mass media level.' (Cohen, 1991, pp. 1- 2)

Rock Culture in Liverpool was published less than two years after Ruth Finnegan's *The Hidden Musicians : Music Making in an English Town*, discussed previously. Cohen did see some of Finnegan's early chapter drafts, but the book was only published shortly before *Rock Culture…* went to press) (Cohen, 1991, p. 6). Cohen notes that at the time of her book's publication, 'apart from Finnegan and White, British anthropologists [had] rarely dealt with popular culture or even with music … often [considering music] only as a reflection of social structure, or in relation to the functioning of society as a whole.' She therefore focused on the 'process of music making and the complexity of social relationships involved', and stated that her work reflected the influence of ethnomusicology (although she decided not to use the 'ethnographic present' tense, because things changed so fast in the music scene studied). She also notes that 'ethnomusicologists [who] have studied Western musics … rarely looked at rock music. Nor have musicologists, who (with the exception of Adorno) have tended to avoid the study of popular music in general, often considering it not worthy of study.' (Cohen, 1991, pp. 7 – 8)

Cohen describes the 'social, cultural and artistic impact … of rock music' as 'outstanding', and notes that at that point in the mid-1980s and early 1990s academic study of the music had been 'slow to emerge in Britain', and where it was studied it tended to be as 'folk art', in opposition

to mass culture critics such as Adorno and Horkheimer, rather than as an art form worthy of study in its own right. (She does note that some writers, such as Simon Frith, had taken a more moderate line on this.) Cohen's account coincides with the discussion earlier in this chapter, saying that much of the literature on rock music up to that point had concentrated on lyrics, youth culture, stardom or the record industry, focusing on ideology and theory rather than the practical day-to-day experiences of the people involved. There was also a 'preoccupation with rock's origins and relatively short history'. Important factors which had been omitted included the 'grass roots of the industry' and the 'actual process of music making'; these were some of the gaps which Cohen hoped to fill (Cohen, 1991, pp. 5 – 6). Even so - and unlike Finnegan - Cohen chose to focus specifically on rock music, and in particular various types of 'rock' bands ranging from 'independent' to 'commercial'. However, she did not include all rock styles; heavy metal was excluded, for example. She also specifically excluded jazz, cabaret, folk, and Country & Western bands, although she acknowledged that many members of bands playing in these other genres also played in rock bands (Cohen, 1991, p. 4).

At the time when the research was done, Liverpool was being hit especially hard by the effects of a national economic recession. Unemployment in Liverpool in 1985 was 27%, which was double the national average. 53% of these had been unemployed for over a year, and the majority were young. A result of this was that many school leavers did not think at all in terms of getting a job, and instead relied on state benefits, government training schemes, and occasional low-skilled cash-in-hand work. A side effect of this otherwise grim situation was that 'being in a band' became seen as a much more legitimate career aspiration, rather than just a 'drop-out' adolescent phase. One of Cohen's interviewees said, "It's an alternative to walking around town all day. What else is there to do?" Music was seen as a potential means of 'escape', or at least an opportunity to indulge fantasies of escape. The quest for 'success' in the form of a record deal was a major motivation, even though the chances of actually getting such a deal were very remote. Cohen writes that her book 'discusses that struggle in detail'. Music also played an important cultural and social role, providing a creative outlet and a space for friendships to be made and maintained. Cohen writes 'Most people were in bands because of these social and cultural factors. They enjoyed it.' (Cohen, 1991, pp. 3 – 4)

Like Cohen and Finnegan I wanted to concentrate on the grass roots of the music industry, and on a 'hidden history' outside of the music industry mainstream. Like Cohen, I focused on 'cultural production in a local context', but I did not restrict myself to bands which had a recording contract or similar badge of 'industry insider' status. It quickly became obvious that there were a great many overlaps and links between local and national scenes, and I wanted to make these explicit. Even so, there were still parallels with the Liverpool scene as reported by Cohen. For instance, although unemployment was not a significant problem in 1940s Chester, the threat of invasion and hardships brought about by war meant that there was still plenty that people might feel the need to 'escape' from, even if only for an evening at a time. Governments recognised the important role which entertainment, music and dancing played in boosting public morale, and the combination of natural demand and official encouragement helped to keep the entertainment industry busy throughout and after the war. In addition, just as in Cohen's research, playing in a band played an important social and cultural role for the musicians at least as much as for the dancers and audiences. However, the musicians involved in the Chester dance band scene neither were nor viewed themselves as 'struggling artists', when compared with Cohen's sample. On the contrary, most seem to have enjoyed their musical experiences, regardless of the provincial nature of the activity and the relative lack of fame or celebrity it brought them. They also enjoyed bringing home a substantial side income which often compared very favourably with what they earned in their day jobs.

Finally, Cohen's recent article *Bubbles, Tracks, Borders and Lines: Mapping Music and Urban Landscape* (Cohen, 2012) again uses an ethnographic approach based in Liverpool, but this time looks at a wider range of genres, putting them into physical and geographical context. Cohen cites Finnegan in the conclusion, saying:

> Despite notable exceptions, such as the work of Finnegan, it is surprising that more research on amateur rock music-making and the practices and perspectives of the musicians involved has not been carried out. … Further research could deepen understanding of amateur music-making and urban landscape, and this article has argued for research that focuses on what people do when they engage in music-related practices and on the processes involved, and for an approach to music that is situated, relational and comparative. …when combined with ethnographic research, maps can provide a useful methodological and analytical research tools.
>
> Cohen (2012, p. 169)

Conclusion

Overall, apart from the fact that context is necessary in itself, sources such as Shuker, Longhurst, Moy et al usefully bring to light analytical tools such as the triad of producers, cultural texts & audiences, templates for studying genre, or canonical lists of great performers and performances. However, the focus on highly influential performers, and the high-level national or international view which goes with it (even in Baade (2012), though to a lesser extent, because of the focus on BBC broadcasting), means that the tools available are not always useful when dealing with people and places outside that canon - places such as the provincial dance halls and function rooms where my interviewees generally played. For that reason, I have looked elsewhere to fill some of these gaps.

CHAPTER 2: PLACE, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND PRACTICE

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, in addition to theories from Popular Music Studies and Jazz Studies, I need to look at geographical factors, and issues of place. In this chapter I will look at some of the theoretical tools available in these areas, and their advantages and disadvantages for this specific task. I will also consider the issues surrounding how a project such as this should be undertaken, taking into account theories about various types of historical inquiry and writing (including oral history), as well as ethnography and anthropology.

Cultural Geography - Studying Place and Culture

Foucault and Soja - Space, power and knowledge

Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power.

Foucault (2007, pp. 164 - 171)

The nineteenth-century obsession with history, as Foucault described it, did not die in the *fin de siècle*. … An essentially historical epistemology continues to pervade the critical consciousness of modern social theory. … So unbudgeably hegemonic has been this historicism of theoretical consciousness that it has tended to occlude a comparable critical sensibility to the spatiality of social life, a practical theoretical consciousness … social being actively emplaced in space *and* time in an explicitly historical *and* geographical contextualisation. … Space still tends to be treated as fixed, dead, undialectical; time as richness, life, dialectic, the revealing context for critical social theorisation.

Soja (1999, p. 114)

This research focuses on dance music in the regions, and suggests that it was related to, and influenced by, national influences such as the BBC, but not controlled solely by those national influences; local conditions were important too. This could be viewed as a type of human or cultural geography. I am interested in the music the musicians in my study played (that is, genres), and why they played it (for example. scenes, popularity), but also in how their choices were affected by *where* they were at the time. In this section I will look at ways of theorising

the influence of space and place on the dance music and musicians in this study, and the way in which that music was rooted in the context of that particular place.

In scientific research, taking the immediate physical surroundings into account when explaining observed phenomena is normal practice; in fact, it is an essential part of the experimental method, even where (as in much of biology) the researcher does not have total control over those surroundings. However, the construction of knowledge in the humanities has often worked differently; structuralists in particular prioritised history, time and social class as the main drivers of social change, rather than physical surroundings. Although human geography deals specifically with space and place, until the 1960s its main focus as a discipline was on the regions of the world, with regions generally being viewed as unique. This approach was criticised by some as overly descriptive and qualitative, and lacking in theoretical power. (Freeman, 1961; Schaefer, 1953) One reaction to these criticisms was a more quantitative approach to geography called spatial science, which aimed - but largely failed - to derive reliable and reproducible mathematical laws to explain how (for instance) communities established themselves in some places but not in others (Cloke, Philo, & Sadler, 1991). Other geographers tried to integrate Marxist thought on the influence of history and social class into their localised observations of societies and economies in action, while emphasising the importance of space in understanding social change (Harvey, 1973, 1982; Peet, 1975).

In the 1970s and early 1980s, structuralism came under attack from a number of prominent French sociologists and philosophers such as Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu who argued that it was not only possible but essential to study *where* things happened, as well as in what order. During (2007) explains that Foucault was saying that 'material changes' in people's living conditions could not be studied in isolation from how they thought or how they chose to live in those surroundings. He points to Foucault's use of the development of the chimney in explaining thus:-

> For instance, when, in the middle ages, chimneys were first walled and placed inside … houses, inter-personal relations were transformed. New interactions flourished around chimneys. But the building of chimneys is not enough to explain these changes - if, for instance, different discourses and values had been circulating at the time then chimneys would have produced different kinds of changes.
>
> Foucault (2007, p. 170)

In other words, if different cultural practices and beliefs had been in place when chimneys began to be built, people would have used the opportunities they presented differently. (It will be interesting to examine later whether this also applies to musical technology, such as the mechanical devices for the recording and reproduction of music which Sousa (1906) feared.) During explains that Foucault generalised this example to less tangible things than chimneys (or phonographs), stating that "Foucault argues that abstract (and in the West highly valued) words like 'liberty' and 'rationality' refer neither simply to ideas nor to practices - but to sets of complex exchanges between the two. … the 'practices' of liberty and reason … have been neglected by intellectual and cultural historians.')" (During, 2007, p. 164)

To understand a community, it is not enough to just know what technologies are used, what social classes its people belong to, or what system of government is nominally in control; it is also essential to look at how the people in that place and time respond to the situation they find themselves in, in terms of their everyday practices and behaviours. Unlike the structuralists, Foucault and his followers asserted that it could *not* be assumed that simply knowing about social class, history and political structure would be a sufficient basis to understand the current behaviour of a community; the space they live in and the practices they develop to live in that space are critically important too. Foucault's arguments on this topic have been much discussed and widely accepted (although as suggested by Soja's 1999 quote above, they did not immediately have the desired effect).[32] However, for this thesis it is the work of another French philosopher, who was influenced by Foucault, which is more relevant.

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[32] Edward Soja is a geographer who began working on what he called the sociospatial dialectic in 1980 in, as he puts it[, "an attempt to convince Marxist geographers to take more seriously the powers of spatial causality and the mutually shaping force of spatial and social relations, processes and forms". He aimed to persuade his readers that the geographical spaces where historical events took place were too important in shaping those events to be "stashed away … in some superstructural attic to gather the dust of discarded and somewhat tainted memories".

Pierre Bourdieu - Habitus, Cultural Capital, Cultural Field, and Market Places

Pierre Bourdieu (1930 - 2002) was a French sociologist and philosopher (Jeffries & Johnson, 2002). He was a prolific and highly influential author on anthropology and sociology over several decades, but for the purposes of this thesis, his most relevant contributions relate to his ideas on cultural fields, cultural capital, market places and habitus. I will begin with brief definitions of these terms (in the context of Bourdieu's work), then consider how they might be relevant to this study.

According to Jenkins (2002, p. 68) the importance of Bourdieu's research lies in 'his attempt to construct a *theoretical* model of social practice, to do more than simply take what people do in their daily lives for granted, and to do so without losing sight of the wider patterns of social life.' This included how those patterns exist in space as well as in time. One of the metaphors which Bourdieu uses is that of social life as a game (Jenkins, 2002, p. 71), and Bourdieu is concerned to work out the rules of that game (which includes understanding the nature of the 'field' it is played on), as well as how the participants learn and work with those rules. Literally, the Latin word habitus refers to a habitual or typical condition, especially of the body. Bourdieu extends this to include what, habitually, is going on inside a person's head, and also how they interact with their environment through their habitual practices, be that by talking, moving, or making things (or music) in a specific way (Jenkins, 2002, p. 75).

Habitus

A 'habitus', in the sense used by Bourdieu, is "an embodied socialised tendency to act, think or feel in a particular way" (Scott & Marshall, 2009b).   It is an important part of Bourdieu's concern with what individuals do in their daily lives. However, Bourdieu does not see social life as purely the aggregate of independent individual decisions, or just the result of collective 'structures'. Jenkins (2002, p. 85) therefore describes Bourdieu's concept of habitus as being a 'bridge-building exercise' between these two extremes. According to Jenkins (2002, p. 76), the importance of habitus as used by Bourdieu is that it refers to things which people do without

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(Soja, Graham, & Warf, 2006) He built on these ideas in his book *Postmodern Geographies* (Soja, 1989)

thinking much about them; things which are done as a matter of routine, rather than as a result of consciously following codified rules and procedures.

Cultural and Social Capital

Bourdieu introduced the term cultural capital to encompass the symbols, ideas, tastes and preferences which people can use to improve their chances of success in social interactions. The analogy is with economic capital; those who possess social capital (for example. high levels of education) can invest or accumulate it, or convert it into other forms (for example. employment opportunities). They can also endeavour to pass it on to their children. In this context, educational success is seen as necessary for access to respected, high-paying occupations, but this cultural capital is not equally accessible to all; high-status occupations also provide their practitioners with the financial and cultural capital to pass on similar advantages to the next generation of the family. Bourdieu also recognised a number of other related forms of capital, especially the social capital (Scott & Marshall, 2009a) of contacts and connections. High levels of social capital are also, in his analysis, more accessible to those from backgrounds which already have advantages in that respect.

The main idea underlying the concept of social capital is that relationships between individuals - whether they are based on kinship, friendship or business - are a valuable asset for the individuals concerned, and sometimes for others as well (for example. when the activities of a charity benefit people outside its membership) (Sander, 2012). Social capital is the actual and potential value of the networks a person or entity belongs to (Resnik, 2013). Social networks can give members access to resources they would not have access to as individuals, whether those resources are tangible (for example. food, water, shelter or money) or intangible (advice, encouragement, information, recommendations, or help). [33]

A related concept which applies more specifically to finding work opportunities is that of 'weak ties', as originally examined by Granovetter in his 1973 study on how men in a suburb of

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[33] For more on the theory of social capital and social networks, see Appendix C.

Boston found themselves jobs (Granovetter, 1973).[34] This study showed that while close relationships such as family and close friends are clearly important to people, they are not the relationships which are most useful when it comes to finding work, where the 'weak ties' among colleagues, club members and the like tend to be more influential. Similar results have been found in diverse areas such as women looking to obtain illegal abortions (Lee, 1969) and how doctors' choices of new medicines are affected by the actions of those in their professional networks (Coleman, Katz, & Menzel, 1957).

Cultural Fields and Market Places

Bourdieu defined a field as "a network … of objective relations between positions objectively defined … in the structure of the distribution of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions…" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1989), or as Jenkins puts it "a social arena within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them." (Jenkins, 2002, p. 85)

The results of these struggles are due to asymmetries or conflicts between the nature of the field and the habitus of the individuals involved, which in turn allow a dominant class to retain its dominance by enforcing rules about what is and is not acceptable. As Gopnik (2015) describes it, "those who have power decide what counts as art, and to enter that field at all is possible for outsiders only if they learn to repeat the words that construct its values." As arenas in which struggles take place over access to things of value, fields may be said to be regulated by market-like relationships of supply and demand, with various forms of capital - cultural and social as well as economic - acting as currency (Jenkins, 2002, p. 87).

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[34] Coincidentally, the same year of publication as Geertz's essay on 'thick description', discussed earlier, in which Geertz described man as "an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun", which Geertz took to constitute human culture. Looked at from that perspective, Granovetter's weak ties would form part of those webs, and part of that view of culture.

The Field of Cultural Production and the Rules of Art

Bourdieu's 1983 publication The Field of Cultural Production included the proposal that 'culture' can be understood as a set of relationships between cultural products, the processes of cultural production and social realities. As described above, Bourdieu visualised these relationships as existing in a 'field', and being intimately related to the distribution of social capital and the struggles going on between those who would transform the field of relationships, and those who would conserve it in its current form. He included a diagram to illustrate this approach. [35] (Bourdieu, 1993) quoted in (Little, 2011) This diagram is explicitly related to French literary activity in the second half of the nineteenth century, and refers not just to very specific genres of French literature, such as Symbolism, but also to specific writers, such as Mallarmé and Zola. Bourdieu portrays these authors and creative forms in a kind of matrix, with entities associated with large audiences, material riches and high degrees of 'institutionalised consecration' (that is,. respect from affluent but non-intellectual audiences) towards the top right corner of the diagram, and conversely entities associated with small or no audiences and little or no respectability at the bottom left. 'Art for art's sake' appears close to the top left corner of the diagram, attracting great respect from a small intellectual audience, but with its practitioners living in poverty. As well as associating artistic forms with specific sizes of audiences, financial prospects and degrees of intellectual respectability, Bourdieu also depicts in this diagram explicit linkages between the chronological ages and political leanings and degrees of social dominance of people involved with various art forms, implying, for instance, that someone of leftist political leanings who begins their career as a poor young Bohemian might as they age metamorphose into an elderly, powerful (but still relatively poor) intellectual critic or practitioner of non-commercial high art and poetry. It is not obvious whether it would be possible for a rich young person to end up in the same place. It is however

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[35] See also Little (2011) on the importance of relationships and relationality in Bourdieu's work.

As mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, there are overlaps between Bourdieu's work and that of Howard Becker, but there were also disagreements. Interviewed in 2014, Howard Becker said, "Bourdieu' s big idea was the *champs*, field, and mine was *monde*, world—what's the difference? … Bourdieu's idea of field is kind of mystical. It's a metaphor from physics. I always imagined it as a zero-sum game being played in a box. The box is full of little things that zing around. And he doesn't speak about people. He just speaks about forces. There aren't any people doing anything." (Gopnik, 2015)

implicit in the diagram that poets would not have rich, right-leaning mass audiences, and industrial art would not be favourably reviewed by poor, leftist intellectual audiences.

A similar diagram, *The field of cultural production in the field of power & social space* (Bourdieu, 1996; Hesmondhalgh, 2006), appears in Bourdieu's book 'The Rules of Art'. The 1993 version makes it much clearer that Bourdieu's analysis is rooted in nineteenth century France, with an explicit expectation that those playing to a 'mass audience' are 'rich'. Vaudeville alone persists in later diagram as a named genre; everything else is generalised, and specific references to bourgeois & intellectual audiences have now gone from the diagram, as have references to the political left and right. However, this diagram clearly still has its roots in Bourdieu's earlier work, with power and autonomy still important, and Bohemianism and vaudeville still putting in appearances. The division between artistic production for different sizes of audiences is still shown, but is now referred to as small- or large-scale production. There is now a very clear demarcation between non-professional producers - that is, amateurs or dilettantes - who are assumed to be socially powerful (for instance, as a result of having secure and well-remunerated professional employment in the law or government) but not direct contributors to the 'field of cultural production' where the real artistic work is done. Overall, although there are differences of detail between the two diagrams, the similarities are more important, in that the explicit divisions between professional and non-professional artists, and the explicit identity of specific genres with social power, age, political views and financial situation are more often than not unhelpful when analysing the testimony of my interviewees, who were all involved in the same set of musical genres, in spite of coming from or working in a variety of social backgrounds. Like Finnegan (2007) and Becker (2004), they emphasised versatility and eclecticism rather than an artistically compartmentalised and socially rigid view of musical activity.

This diagram is therefore useful, but it raises questions. To what extent would this map onto 1950s Chester, for instance? Dance bands are not mentioned explicitly, but of the genres mentioned seem most likely to sit close to 'vaudeville'. Printed, published, commercially produced Jimmy Lally arrangements were certainly published on a 'large scale'. However, the bands themselves were mostly local and small scale, usually not rich, and definitely not avant-garde. There were also complex relationships with the 'field of power', especially during

World War II.[36]   Other problems with Bourdieu's analysis, from the point of view of application to mid-twentieth century Chester, spring from assumptions regarding inflexible, predictable relationships between social class / occupation (sometimes conflated with race, especially in the USA (Doane, 2009)) and levels of 'cultural competence' without which enjoyment of highbrow art is apparently impossible.[37] The music and musicians of Chester's dance bands did not consistently represent either working-class rebellion or autonomous high art, but they existed and flourished for many years even so.

My evidence (with examples throughout Chapters 3 to 8) suggests that the musicians themselves were often less bothered about cultural capital than Bourdieu's model might suggest they should have been. Many also played and enjoyed classical or (literally) consecrated music (although 'consecrated' in this context was as likely to mean Stan Kenton or Louis Armstrong as Mahler or Beethoven). A key point to note in this context is that my evidence suggests that individual musicians can happily occupy different places on these 'fields' according to what they happen to be involved in at the time, & what opportunities come along. Being aware of or enjoying Schoenberg or Ornette Coleman doesn't (and didn't) preclude playing (and enjoying) Brahms with a local symphony orchestra, Gilbert & Sullivan scores in a theatre pit band, or Glenn Miller charts in what would now be referred to as a tribute band.[38] From the point of view of analysing live dance band music as reported by my interviewees, a major problem with Bourdieu's cultural fields approach is that 'non-professional cultural producers' are apparently a completely separate category to both those involved in 'art for art's sake' and those involved in 'large scale cultural production'; this does not fit with the cultural environment described by my interviewees, which was - for them, at

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[36] For more on this, see Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

[37] It has been argued that the situation is complicated further where Bourdieu applies different analytical approaches to different social classes. Dr. Paul Watts, for instance, states that "the problem with Bourdieu on the working class is that they are positioned, not positioning", and also characterised by that which they lack, such as social capital, rather than by positive characteristics. ('On the Street Where You Live', 2014)

[38] It also did not preclude a similar level of eclecticism among world-renowned professionals, for instance Louis Armstrong's enthusiasm for the sweet dance music of Guy Lombardo's band (Wald, 2007).

least - more fluid than this.[39] On the other hand, local musicians most certainly were concerned about the related concept of social capital. Live music in the Chester area was provided to a large extent by freelance musicians working on an ad hoc basis for bandleaders who acted as intermediaries between the clients and the musicians. There was little or no formal hierarchy and knowing (and being known by) the right people was critical for musicians looking for work, and also for bandleaders looking for competent, reliable musicians; there was social capital in knowing your craft and being a good musician. In other words, musicians were bound to each other by weak ties, and exercised social capital in their dealings with each other and with audiences.

In summarising Bourdieu's social model, Jenkins points out that power and authority flow from the top down. Struggle against existing patterns of domination may happen, but this occurs within an environment which is 'enduringly hierarchical'. It is, in Jenkins' words, a social universe 'in which things happen to people, rather than a world in which they can intervene in their individual and collective destinies' (Jenkins, 2002, p. 91). This makes it difficult to use Bourdieu's model to explain any social change other than by resort to outside factors newly introduced into a particular social arena; spontaneous change is highly unlikely to occur in Bourdieu's world. Applying Bourdieu's model to a different context is also made more difficult because, as Jenkins points out, Bourdieu does not make it clear how the existence of a field is to be determined or how fields are to be identified (Jenkins, 2002, p. 89). Bourdieu's concepts such as habitus and cultural fields are therefore useful benchmarks against which to examine the Chester area's live music industry in the mid-twentieth century, and his interest in habitual activities and the environment in which they take place, including the relationships between the people and institutions in that environment, has some similarities with the approach taken for this study. However, there are serious difficulties with trying to fit Bourdieu's model to the evidence produced for this study, because it suggests rigid relationships within and between social classes (and their musical preferences and practices) which do not fit the fine detail of the data I have uncovered. I will therefore now turn to other

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[39] It is interesting to contemplate the musicians who might have worked in the vaudeville venues referred to by Bourdieu. As will be illustrated in Chapters 4 to 8, if they were anything like Chester in the mid-20th century, the pit bands would have consisted mainly of local semi-professionals. This suggests that in at least one case a model based on C19th Paris doesn't reliably describe all fields of cultural production in all times and places, even when the separation is physically, historically and culturally relatively small.

approaches to modelling the social environment in which popular music exists, first by looking at ideas on the built environment and the cultural industries, before returning to the work of Sara Cohen and Howard Becker. Finally in this chapter, I will begin to deduce the 'rules of the game' for local dance bands, as evidenced by material provided by my interviewees.

The Cultural Industries in the Built Environment

A more empirically based approach to understanding the influence of physical and cultural environments on industrial and commercial activity is typified by Alan J. Scott's work on agglomeration economies, such as high technology industries in the greater Los Angeles area in the twentieth century (Scott, 2000b). Scott has done extensive work on geographical aspects of the cultural industries, which is of clear relevance to the topic of this thesis. In his book *The Cultural Economy of Cities* (Scott, 2000a), Scott provides a working definition of the phrase *cultural industries* in an urban context, which includes the following five elements:-

1) Human involvement is essential. The majority of the work cannot be - or at least, usually is not - automated. As Kloosterman (2005) puts it, human skills are the basis of the competitive edge.

2) Production is organised in dense networks of small- and medium-sized establishments, and these small companies or groups are highly dependent on each other for specialised inputs and services.

3) The wider local labour market affects and is affected by cultural industries in the area. (Scott quotes research by Zukin (1995) which highlights the importance of restaurants and cafes as both employers and meeting places for cultural industry workers.) Also, larger cities have some advantages over smaller cities because they can support both larger numbers and more diversity of cultural industry workers.

4) Agglomeration effects allow cultural enterprises to benefit from efficiencies due to shared resources, such as recording studios or rehearsal rooms, but also go beyond physical facilities to "mutual learning, cultural synergies, and creativity effects made possible by the presence of many interrelated firms and industries in one place."

5) Similarly, agglomeration facilitates the emergence of the institutional infrastructures required to support the local economy. Much of this infrastructure is intangible, but nonetheless essential, as it ensures that essential information flows where it is required, and that trust and cooperation among interlinked producers and workers is maintained.

All of these factors are relevant to the material discussed in this thesis. The dance band scene was very labour intensive, which explains both the number of musicians involved at its height, and also its vulnerability to technological changes which provided similar services without the need for so many workers. It was certainly organised in dense, overlapping networks of small and medium-sized groups. As we will see in Chapters 3 to 6 particularly, non-musical industries and institutions, such as armament factories and military bases, were critical in shaping the development of the local dance band scene, and - along with the aforementioned technological changes - its later decline. It may also be that Chester's relatively small size meant that when the military facilities were scaled down or closed, as described in Chapter 8, there were fewer alternative opportunities than there would have been in a larger city such as Manchester, Liverpool, or London. (This is supported by the stories of how some full-time professional musicians chose to move to London in the 1960s, also in Chapter 8.) Finally, various infrastructural elements were described by my interviewees, ranging from formal organisations such as the Musicians' Union, the Royal Military School of Music, the BBC and the AFN, to informal local networks of promoters, bandleaders, music teachers, and jazz enthusiasts.

Kloosterman (2005) builds on the definition described above as part of his introduction to a special issue of the journal Built Environment on *Music and the City*, which also includes a brief review of older literature relating to popular music in the built environment, as well as a case study of Nashville as a centre of popular music production. *Music and the City* also includes an article (Quispel, 2005) on Detroit, Tamla Motown and its interaction with the city's car industry. Quispel describes how Motown's founder, Berry Gordy, had worked at the Ford motor factory, and was inspired by the management techniques he saw there (known as Fordism), which included an 'assembly line' approach to song recording, but also, importantly, included a clear and deliberate focus on commercial aspects such as quality control, marketing, and public relations. This approach was phenomenally successful for over a decade. While Chester's dance band scene was clearly neither as lucrative nor as innovative as Motown, there

are likely to be parallels here too. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 to 6, it was difficult to become a full-time professional musician during World War II, at least without joining an Armed Forces band, so most of the musicians involved in the local dance band scene had jobs connected with the war effort as their main employment. Most of these jobs - for instance, in aircraft factories - were undoubtedly organised along Fordist lines. It is not surprising, therefore, that a similarly efficient and workmanlike approach was applied to the task of assembling bands and providing entertainment, as exemplified by the use of stock arrangements and flexible ensembles described in Chapter 1.

Whether described in terms of Bourdieusian fields and market places, or agglomeration economies as referred to by Scott and Kloosterman, geography and location are clearly important to the history and development of local cultural industries. Sara Cohen and Howard Becker have both done work on different aspects of this issue, as described next.

Cohen on the Geography of Popular Music

As well as her celebrated study of rock musicians in Liverpool in the 1980s, Sara Cohen has written extensively since then on applications of sociology and anthropology to the study of popular music:-

> "Much research on rock has been more influenced by linguistic, semiotic and musicological traditions than by the social sciences, and has relied upon textual sources and analysis. Tagg and Negus (1992) have noted that musicologists studying popular music still tend to ignore social context. Hence lyrical and musical texts may be deconstructed and their 'meaning' asserted, but the important question 'meaning for whom?' is often neglected."[40]

> Cohen (1993)

In 1993, she argued that within popular music studies (and cultural studies generally) at that time a shift was starting to occur from global concerns to more local, ethnographic studies and

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[40] 'Meaning' is important because, as Lipsitz (1990) put it, understandings of meaning are closely tied in to access to resources. He continued by saying that investigations into popular culture "are not merely good-hearted efforts to expand the knowledge-base of our field, they are also inevitably a part of the political process by which groups – including scholars – seek to reposition themselves in the present by reconstituting knowledge about culture and society in the past."

more of a focus on identity in the context of everyday life. Even so, she still expressed concern that not enough was known about how musicians actually lived their lives or made their musical choices, with too many assumptions still being made about popular music practices which were supported by little if any empirical evidence (Cohen, 1993).

Cohen's more recent writing continues this concern with how musicians and music making fit into the daily lives of communities, and especially urban communities. In *Live music and urban landscape: mapping the beat in Liverpool* (Cohen, 2012b), she refers to a mapping project undertaken as part of the *Popular Musicscapes* project conducted in partnership with National Museums Liverpool and English Heritage between 2007 and 2009. The paper focuses on examining the pathways along which musicians circulate around Liverpool's rehearsal and performance venues. This echoes Finnegan's ideas of 'musical pathways', and also Sarah Thornton's description of the seemingly chaotic - but actually remarkably routine - paths along which people move through the city. (1995, 91) Cohen also refers to Will Straw's observations about the importance of the pace, intensity and rhythms of movement on such circulating urban pathways (musical or otherwise), and mentions influential earlier studies by scholars such as Henri Lefebvre (2004) and Michel de Certeau (de Certeau, 1988). She describes how in Liverpool and other cities:-

> the circulations of live music have been similarly regulated by the circuits and conventions of music genre, institutional timetables, health and safety laws, cycles of shipping and trade, public transportation routes and provision, and so on. In particular, the pilot mapping project showed how circulations of live music are regulated by developments within the wider political economy and cycles of economic boom and bust, and by related policy and planning initiatives, including waves of local re-development, whether post-World War II reconstruction or regeneration initiatives of the 1990s.

> Cohen (2012b, p. 599)

The built environment of Chester and the surrounding regions where the musicians covered by this study performed was similarly subject to changes due to economic and political factors, particularly during wartime, although as will be described in later chapters, the effects and timing of those changes were different.

Also in 2012, Cohen published another map-based study of musical lives in Liverpool, also based on work done as part of the *Popular Musicscapes* project, and this time focusing more on the experiences of a small number individual musicians working in different genres and locations (Cohen, 2012a). *Bubbles, Tracks, Borders and Lines: Mapping Music and Urban Landscape* was based on research carried out using a mixture of methods including participant observation, interviews, archival research and the use of maps and mapping. This paper includes copies of some of the sketch maps (also known as cognitive maps) drawn by participants to show how they view and navigate their surroundings from a musical point of view. Cohen concludes the article by referring back to Finnegan's work, and commenting on the continuing lack of research on amateur rock music making focusing on the practices and perspectives of the musicians involved. She points out that Finnegan had illustrated the great breadth and diversity of urban music making, and encourages further research to deepen understanding of amateur music making in the urban landscape (Cohen, 2012a, p. 169), something to which it is hoped this research will contribute.

Becker's 'Jazz Places'

Returning to a more specifically jazz-oriented perspective, Howard Becker's essay *Jazz Places* (later published as part of the book *Do You Know…?*) focuses on how musicians and their performances are influenced by various aspects of their environments, such as geography and economics, and the way that these factors govern how the venues and clients come to be there to play for in the first place. As Becker describes the issue:-

> Every art work has to be someplace. Physical works, like paintings and sculptures, have to be someplace: a museum, a gallery, a home, a public square. Music and dance and theater have to be performed someplace; a court, a theater or concert hall, a private home, a public square or street. Books and similar materials take up space too--in bookstores and distributors' warehouses and people's homes. What places are available to exhibit or perform or keep and enjoy works in? Who is in charge of them and responsible for them? How does this organization of place constrain the work done there? What opportunities does it make available?
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> Becker (2002, 2004); Faulkner & Becker (2009)

Becker goes on to say that jazz has always been very dependent on the availability of particular types of performance venue. For at least the first five decades of its existence jazz was played

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largely in bars, night clubs and dance halls, that is, 'places where the money to support the entire enterprise came mostly from the sale of alcohol and secondarily from the sale of tickets'. The availability of venues for jazz was therefore inextricably linked to the viability and profitability of businesses of these types. A good example of a city where the political and economic environment had a strong influence on the local jazz scene - and ultimately, because of the musicians this attracted and fostered, much more widely - is Kansas City in the 1920s and 30s. Becker quotes the following description by Pearson (1987) of how political corruption in Kansas City helped to make nightlife profitable there:-

> Kansas City jazz prospered while most of America suffered the catastrophe of the Great Depression, largely because of the corrupt but economically stimulating administration of Boss Tom Pendergast. Through a combination of labor-intensive public works programs (many of which closely resembled later New Deal programs), deficit spending, and the tacit sanction of massive corruption, Pendergast created an economic oasis in Kansas City. Vice was a major part of this system and gave a strong, steady cash flow to the city. Jazz was the popular social music of the time, and the centers of vice--nightclubs and gambling halls--usually hired musicians to attract customers. The serendipitous result was plentiful, if low-paying, jobs for jazz musicians from throughout the Midwest and an outpouring of great new music.
>
> Pearson (1987, p. xvii)

Another reason why Kansas City was influential was its central position on overland routes across the United States. Kansas City forms the hub through which routes from Chicago to Los Angeles, Seattle to Georgia or New York to San Francisco all pass. In the days before air travel became relatively cheap and easy, this 'hub' position brought a constant flow of visitors through the city, many of whom broke their journeys there and enjoyed – or provided – the musical entertainment on offer. Geographically speaking, Kansas City is a 'route centre', and like such places everywhere benefited economically from its position on trade and transport routes.[41] Also, Kansas City and Liverpool (like London and New York) are major route centres as well as being celebrated musical centres. It is accepted that this is not a coincidence. Chester is a major regional route centre and had a thriving live music scene during the period covered by this research.[42] It seemed likely that this might be a manifestation of the same

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[41] For more on the role of transport and trade networks in the development of important urban centres, see Appendix C, including the extract from Krebs (1996) on *Visualising Human Networks*.

[42] This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

phenomenon, albeit on a smaller and more local scale. This is the environment in which those providing dance music and background music for paying customers operated. In the next section, I will look at how this combines with ideas about place and musical genre mentioned in previous sections to influence repertoire choices and performance practices.

Repertoire and Performance Practice

A DJ preparing to provide music for an evening's entertainment and dancing - such as at a wedding - will carry with them a selection of recordings, most likely categorised into musical genres along the lines discussed earlier in this chapter, or by their suitability for different occasions (such as birthdays, weddings or Christmas parties). The technology used to store and transport these recordings has changed over the years - from vinyl records to cds, minidisks and mp3 players, for instance - as have the most popular recordings in each genre, but the basic requirements do not change as fast. It is therefore not surprising that dance bands providing background and dance music for such functions faced a similar problem; that of how to make sure that the band could provide the music genres (and sometimes specific songs or arrangements) which would meet the requirements of the audience on any given occasion. The mixture of Old Time and Modern dances provided for the Cheshire Regiment Ball discussed in Chapter 1 was an example of how an earlier generation encountered and dealt with an aspect of this problem. Of course, it could be argued that the stylistic differences between the music required for an Old Time and a Modern Waltz in 1932 were quite small, even if dancers had quite precise (and different) requirements for each in terms of things such as tempo and beat stresses. However, the versatility required of dance band musicians in the mid-20th century went considerably further than this. Numerous examples of this eclecticism will be mentioned in the chapters which follow, but the advertisement shown on the next page, which features a number of my interviewees and their associates, is a particularly good illustration, and is therefore discussed in some detail.

Repertoire: 'The Band for Any Occasion"

One of the many artefacts loaned to the author by Field's son Gordon was an advertising flyer for *Billy Gibbons and his BBC Band* (Fig. 15), which is boldly emblazoned with the phrase 'The Band for Any Occasion'. The exact date of this document is not known, but judging by the inclusion of Rock 'n' Roll and Twist among the selection of musical styles on offer, it is likely to have been from the late 1950s or early 1960s. It is evidence that Gibbons ran this particular band in some form for at least a quarter of a century, and at some point during that period had an association of some sort with the BBC. The emphasis in Gibbons' advertising is on the quality of the music and technical competence of the musicians on offer, along with the versatility of the ensemble. It is interesting to look at the range of musical and dance styles on offer, from 'Old Tyme' to Twist and Rock 'n' Roll, via various forms of jazz and of course Strict Tempo for ballroom dancing. As discussed in Chapter 1, particularly with reference to Becker's *Jazz Places* (Becker, 2004), working dance band musicians had to be versatile, and this is a good example of that. All of the styles listed would have been played by the same musicians in the same band, and moreover as they are all advertised on the same flyer, by musicians who all played with that band at more or less the same time. It is quite likely that, as with a modern wedding disco, most or all of these genres might be required on the same night - or not, depending entirely on the whim of the customer.

As well as the versatility in terms of genre, it is important also to note the explicit reference to band sizes varying from a quintet to a 14-piece big band. As mentioned previously, as well as offering flexibility to the client in terms of space and financial requirements, this also meant that Gibbons could split his band into several smaller groups if there was a lot of demand on a particular date, or provide variety in the course of a single evening by featuring his 'bands within a band', for example. the 'Alec Garnett Group' or 'Stan Bowness and the Dixielanders'. I have analysed what the flyer says about the music offered by Gibbons and his band further in the table overleaf.

Billy Gibbons and his BBC Band – Styles, Genres and Ensembles				
	Dance style	Musical genre	Ensemble type	Example
'The best in Dance Music'				
Strict tempo		X	Any	
Sweet society		X	Any	
Modern (ballroom)	X		Any	
Old Tyme	X		Any	
Dixieland		X	Band within band	
Trad Jazz		X	Band within band	
Mainstream		X	Band within band (or big band)	
'Up to the minute repertoire'				
Rock 'n' Roll		X	Band within band (or big band)	
Twist	X		Band within band (or big band)	
'From a quintet to 14 players' (with the help of adaptable arrangements such as that shown in Appendix A)				
Small group			X	Quintet
Big band			X	14 players
Bands-within-a-band			X	Stan Bowness & the Dixielanders
Featured soloists			X	Stan Thomas, Wizard of the Clarinet, The Five Brass Bells, Reg Gizzi – Trumpet Virtuoso
Vocalists			X	

As well as providing a clear example of the range of musical styles dance bands were expected to encompass, this flyer also helps to show just how tight-knit the Chester and North Wales dance band scene was, as we will see when musicians such as Stan Bowness make repeated appearances in Chapter 7 (which also includes more information about Billy Gibbons and the musicians who played with his bands).

Performance Practice: Set Lists, Pads, and Numbered Libraries

As has been discussed in Chapter 1 regarding the Jimmy Lally arrangement of *Night and Day* (See Appendix A), dance band arrangements were quite complex, but not particularly memorable, and most of the musicians were more accustomed to reading music than playing purely by ear. In addition, personnel for a band changed from one gig to the next. Factors such as these (plus a lack of rehearsal time, due to band members usually having day jobs) meant that it would have been unrealistic to expect the band members to produce polished performances of the wide range of music required from memory. This in turn meant that bands had to carry large libraries of written arrangements to every gig, and musicians had to be able to find the arrangements they needed to play next as efficiently as possible, and ideally without having to learn a completely new system for doing this every time they played with a new band. While bands and musicians certainly varied a lot in exactly how they dealt with these issues, broad conventions did emerge. Band libraries were usually organised in a reasonably predictable way (such as alphabetically by song title, or numerically by order of acquisition). Someone within the band - usually but not always the bandleader - would act as official or unofficial band librarian, keeping some sort of catalogue of the arrangements in the band's collection (known usually as the band's 'pad').

Some occasions lent themselves to the prior selection of a programme, in which case the musicians (or the band librarian) might be expected to organise their music into order in advance. However, this process was rather inflexible, and did not allow for easy adjustments during performance if (say) the audience responded more enthusiastically to one musical or dance style than another. A way of dealing with this issue is exemplified in the dance pad listing shown in full in Appendix B.[43] Frost issued a new dance pad list two or three times a year. Individual musicians sorted their dance pad into the order shown in the list, finding items from the full library by looking for them by number, then sorting them into 'sets' according to what type of dance they were suitable for, as listed above.   It is important to note that at any given gig only a few items (if any) from each dance set would be played. If the audience were showing no interest in (say) Latin or Rock 'n' Roll numbers, these sets would be bypassed in favour of other dance styles. For each dance set which was used, Frost selected between two

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[43] This list is dated 2005, but is based on a system which Frost had not changed in forty years or more. The author is able describe in detail how it was used because she played in this band from 2000 to 2005, and regularly used earlier versions in rehearsal and performance.

and four songs and called out the order in which they were to be played (which was not necessarily the order on the list). There might also be special instructions such as 'bottom line only' (meaning that the first repeat - written on the top line of two in the front-line instrument parts - should not be played, effectively producing a shortened version of the song) or 'vocal chorus' (meaning that an optional saxophone or brass soli should be left out, and replaced by the melody being sung by a vocalist).   If the horn players particularly were looking tired, Frost might bring forward some 'trio / quartet waltzes', which as the name suggests were played only by the rhythm section, and gave the rest of the band a short rest from blowing. This approach allows the band leader substantial flexibility to respond to the audience's or promoter's requirements on the night, while reducing the amount of unprofessional-looking rummaging around in music pads required of individual musicians on the night. It does require a certain amount of discipline from musicians in terms of keeping pads in order, and also a high degree of alertness from all the musicians, since just playing the music exactly as written on the page would often be the wrong thing to do.

While this example is relatively recent, evidence from Field's 1955 diary (Fig. 16) also indicates the use of numbered dance pads, and the ability to provide music for a variety of dance styles. Like Frost, Field was primarily a provider of music for ballroom dancing, but this list of tunes neatly copied into the front cover of his Musicians' Union diary demonstrates that trad jazz numbers were an important part of his bands' repertoires as well. The numbers to the left of the song titles are library numbers; dance band music is usually arranged in 'pads' or sets of music for each musician. Individual pieces are numbered so that they can be found and extracted from the pad quickly and efficiently, ready to be played with minimum delay. Likewise, another of Field's neat and convenient lists relates to the specific tempi required for different ballroom dances, including Old Time dances such as the Veleta and the Viennese Waltz and Latin American dances such as the Rumba, in addition to the usual Waltz, Quickstep and Foxtrot (Fig. 17).   This methodical approach seems typical of Field's personality as revealed by his diary and accounts given by his colleagues, but it is also typical of how dance bands were usually organised, being a general response to the genres likely to be demanded, the audiences, contemporary economics, and the local and historical context. To summarise, when investigating the development of musical scenes and market places, it is important to examine the influence of economics, geography, and the requirements of performance venues

and occasions, since these influence size of the market, the musical genres required, and the way in which the network of musicians involved will evolve and organise itself.

Place, Culture, Environment, and Practice - Conclusion

The dance bands who worked in and around Chester from the 1930s to the 1970s and beyond played various forms of jazz-influenced dance music. One of my goals in this research has been to determine, based on the evidence collected, what people in the Chester area actually did to provide dance music as a form of musical entertainment. I am interested in what they enjoyed, what fans needed to do in order see, hear or dance to this music, and what musicians needed to do to become part of the bands which provided the music. In this chapter as a whole, I have looked at how theoretical frameworks from a range of disciplines from the humanities and social sciences can help when investigating these issues. In the next chapter, I will frame these approaches in the context of a specific place and time, that is, Chester and North Wales in the mid-20th century. This is followed in Chapters 4 to 8 by a detailed analysis of the data I have collected on the jazz and dance band scene in and around Chester, and how it relates to the theoretical and contextual background in Chapters 1 - 3.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHESTER AND NORTH WALES DANCE BAND SCENE IN CONTEXT

Introduction

I will now start to look at the reasons why the Chester area had a thriving dance band scene in the mid-twentieth century, and why it developed in the specific form it did.   In this chapter I will focus on the background in terms of both geographical factors and historical events and trends. In doing so, I will start to put my research into the context of the theoretical literature discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, beginning with the overall historical context and the important role of the BBC, before moving on to Chester's history, heritage and geographical location, and important places and entertainment venues both in the area and elsewhere. I will then move on to other factors which may have influenced the local live music scene, including economic and technological factors and the impact of World War II. Finally, there is a brief case study on the importance of large military installations to a local music scene.

Historical Context

　　　　The View from the Bandstand

The period covered by this study focuses on the early musical experiences and influences (mostly in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s) reported by my interviewees, and their own experiences of playing, hearing or dancing to live music (mostly in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, with some continuing to play regularly through the 1970s and 1980s and beyond). A number ceased or reduced their musical involvement while in their middle years, usually as a result of family and / or work commitments, then became involved again later, usually in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Some were still performing regularly in 2012.

The findings of this research fit into a historical context extending over a period of eighty years from shortly after the end of the First World War to just after the start of the twenty-first century. On a global scale, this period includes a number of major conflicts, including World War II, the Malayan Emergency, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, as well as international crises such as the Great Depression, the Berlin Airlift and the Cuban Missile Crisis. This period saw Britain's role as a major imperial power change substantially as most former colonies achieved independence and the importance of both Europe and the Far East as trading and

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political entities increased. It also encompasses almost the entire history of the Soviet Union and all of the Cold War.

Focusing specifically on Western popular culture, the period starts when American jazz was becoming established as an important popular art form worldwide, thanks partly to growing new technologies such as the gramophone and wireless. By the end of the period, those technologies are themselves being overtaken by digital and internet-based entertainment and distribution systems. Jazz-influenced dance bands had their heyday in terms of record sales and commercial success in the 1930s, 40s and early 1950s. The 1950s and 60s were a period of great technological and social upheaval, with changing social attitudes, greater affluence, and more freedom and influence for younger generations, which for many were represented and expressed by new styles of popular music such as skiffle, rock 'n' roll and Merseybeat. By the 1970s the global pop music industry was well established, and 'live' bands playing for dancing were much less common, having been replaced in most venues by recordings of international pop music stars. While the shifts in commercial success do fit this broad outline, especially as represented by sales of recordings, my research revealed that in Chester at least, the story was less linear and more complicated. While evidence relating to earlier dates does fit the Jazz Era / Dance Band Days profile that one might expect, it is also noticeable that Chester's dance halls were still thriving in the late 1950s, half a decade after Elvis Presley's first recordings announced the start of a rock 'n' roll revolution, and while local papers were publishing letters bemoaning the loss of traditional dance halls in the 1970s, this was not by any means the end of the local jazz / dance music scene. (This is discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8 particularly.) It is therefore worth examining in more detail the musical environment in which my interviewees grew up, learned, and performed, starting with the complex history of jazz and dance music as broadcast on BBC radio, which will give a historical overview which can then be focused more specifically on Chester in later sections.

Victory through Harmony: Dance Music on the BBC

An early milestone in the history of dance music on the BBC was a broadcast by the Savoy Havana Band in 1923 (Baade, 2012, p. 26).[44] The practice of broadcasting live dance music performed by the bands at exclusive London hotels on the BBC helped to establish a distinctive genre of British dance band music which was influenced by American jazz (and later swing), but had a distinctively British flavour, with a less fluid swing, and a tradition of including novelty songs and comedy inherited from British music hall. This tradition was already becoming established in the early 1920s, before recordings such as those by Louis Armstrong's Hot Five had been made.[45] As mentioned in Chapter 1, the BBC had grave concerns about broadcasting music which might be too American (or otherwise un-British) in flavour, so when the BBC set up its own contracted BBC Dance Orchestra in 1928, great emphasis was laid on explaining that the band was 'all British' (Baade, 2012, p. 26).[46] This was just as well, as by 1930 the British Musicians' Union had become sufficiently concerned about what they perceived as the threat to their members' livelihoods from American musicians that a virtual ban on visiting musicians working with M.U members was imposed (Baade, 2012, pp. 24 – 25). The combined pressure of these concerns about competition from American musicians, and about Americanisation of popular music generally, led in 1934 to the M.U ban being given official force in the form of regulations from the Ministry of Labour. This ban remained in place until 1954. For the next 20 years, visits by celebrated American jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Sidney Bechet, Benny Goodman and Charlie Parker were the only peacetime occasions when British jazz fans had the opportunity to see these luminaries in the flesh. Of course, in spite of the combined efforts of the M.U. and the Ministry of Labour, other major American artists did perform in Britain in some numbers during the period of the ban, as a result of the Second World War.

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[44] Baade (2012) is an excellent and very detailed source on the BBC and popular music in World War II, and was the source for much of this section.

[45] This is also the period when Field would have first become established as a dance band musician. He started his first band in his own name in 1925.

[46] The band was initially led by Jack Payne. Henry Hall took over as bandleader in 1932. For more on connections between Chester musicians and Henry Hall's bands, see Chapters 4 and 5.

In addition to the rare visits by American artists (such as those by Armstrong and Ellington in 1933), the 1930s saw the small but growing audience for jazz in Britain - as opposed to British dance music - begin to establish itself in other ways, including local Rhythm Clubs. American jazz records were hard to obtain, and Rhythm Clubs gave enthusiasts the opportunity to meet, hear records which they did not own themselves, and learn about the music from other members who were (or considered themselves to be) more knowledgeable. In the absence of American-style jazz on the radio, Rhythm Clubs were an important listening opportunity, as well as a social network and 'taste public' (Gans, 1999) of likeminded enthusiasts and would-be practitioners. These were the people who were most likely to have been aware almost immediately of important developments in American jazz, such as the growing importance of swing from the mid-1930s onwards. The BBC's Radio Rhythm Club was a World War II innovation, so it is likely that musicians who learned their trade in and around Chester before the 1940s - of whom there were many - would have gained what jazz knowledge they had from local Rhythm Clubs, if they existed, or from sheet music and stock arrangements, along with occasional magazine articles and even rarer records.[47]

Two contrasting but interesting threads develop in the fortunes of jazz-influenced dance music in Britain during this period. As has already been described, the BBC was against broadcasting music which was too American sounding. This manifested itself in many ways, including the BBC's first attempt to ban the 'crooning' style in 1935. However, at the same time, Hitler's Germany had begun openly rearming, and the BBC began discreet preparations for the possibility of another major war as early as 1936, when the BBC Listener Research Department was established; it was recognised that broadcasting was likely to have an important role in any future conflict, but at that time very little systematic research existed on what listeners wanted

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[47] Rhythm Clubs as such were not mentioned by interviewees; an informal local alternative, especially after World War II, seems to have evolved around the listening booths in Rushworth's record store, uniformed organisation bands (such as Boy Scout bands), and informal training bands run by older enthusiasts and musicians. (See Chapters 4, 5 and 6 for more on this.) Opportunities to see bands play live (for example bands from local military bases, and national touring bands) were also mentioned frequently as being influential and helpful. Interestingly, Melody Maker said in 1944 that there had been a noticeable improvement in the quality of UK bands due to direct contact with their US models (Baade, 2012, p. 193). The Melody Maker article was probably referring to London bands, but same principle seems to have been at work in Chester.

to hear or how they reacted to different types of broadcast. Other preparations for war made by the BBC were more technical in nature, but had at least as much impact on their listeners. By the late 1930s it was known that aircraft could use radio broadcasting transmitter stations as navigational aids, and it was feared that enemy bombers might use the BBC's transmitters to help them find targets in Britain. The BBC therefore planned that in the event of war, most of their broadcasting would be limited to a single wavelength. While this may have had the desired technical outcome, it also had some unplanned outcomes. Listeners who had previously gravitated to different types of programming on the channels previously available were effectively all squeezed into the same shared virtual venue, and forced to listen to the same output or switch off (Baade, 2012, p. 36). This exposed some listeners - including influential critics - to BBC output they had never heard before, helping to give fresh impetus to those who feared that crooning, sentimental ballads and Americanisation in general would be the downfall of the nation. The networks were divided again later in the war, but by then the opposing camps were well established.

According to Baade (2012), in spite of the prevailing anti-Americanisation sentiment at senior levels in the BBC, but based on the results of audience research, the BBC did start to broadcast more jazz, and even swing, in the late 1930s. In 1937-39 there were some ambitious (if not always technically successful) experiments with live relays of swing dance music from American ballrooms entitled 'America Dances'. Melody Maker praised the programmes as 'giving us something we cannot get in England, that is, Swing Music'. This period also saw the BBC's first forays into broadcast record recitals, on the Rhythm Club model. However, the same audience research which prompted the BBC to attempt these broadcasts also told them that the audience for American-style jazz and swing was still small in the UK, so the broadcasts were aimed at connoisseurs - for example. Rhythm Club members at home - rather than the broader public. In 1938, the BBC broadcast over 700 programmes of dance music, with a budget of over £30,000, but this was 'high quality British dance music' in the tradition of Jack Payne and Henry Hall, rather than up-to-the-minute American-style swing.[48] Therefore, there were still two - or more - threads running simultaneously in favour of and against various forms of jazz and dance music within the BBC. This fragmented picture was to persist as the onset of war approached, with swing remaining a minority interest in the UK. However, as war

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[48] It is interesting to note that this is the same year as Benny Goodman's first Carnegie Hall concert.

began to look inevitable, the BBC further enhanced its preparations; after the Munich crisis in 1938, the BBC began foreign-language news broadcasts in an effort to get Britain's version of events heard overseas. At the same time, there was concern that enemy powers would find it very easy to do the same thing, as many British listeners who did not enjoy the BBC's relatively straight-laced programming already preferred to listen to stations broadcasting from continental Europe, such as Radio Luxembourg.[49] This helped to strengthen the position of those in the BBC who wanted to relax the corporation's restrictions on American-style jazz, crooning, sentimentality and so on, as that was exactly what millions of listeners were defecting to Radio Luxembourg to hear.

When war was finally declared in 1939, the BBC immediately cancelled its television service and all outside broadcasts, and, as planned, reduced all radio programming to a single wavelength. For several months, this wavelength was dominated by news programmes and live light music; much of the latter was provided by the Scottish cinema organist Sandy MacPherson. In 1940, the Forces' Programme was introduced with the aim of providing programming which would appeal to members of the Armed Forces, who were typically younger than the average listener. (In a direct response to the perceived threat from Radio Luxembourg, the Forces' Programme did broadcast light music on Sundays.) Audience research had revealed that jazz and swing enthusiasts tended to be from a mixture of social classes, but also predominantly young and male - a very similar demographic profile to the young men being called up to join the Armed Forces. Therefore, one of the innovations which appeared on the Forces' Programme in 1940 was the Radio Rhythm Club, which was modelled on the Rhythm Clubs which had sprung up around the country since the mid-1930s, and featured live performance as well as record recitals and discussions. It should be noted though that while this was undoubtedly an important development in the history of broadcast jazz in Britain, the BBC still viewed American-style jazz as exemplified by the Radio Rhythm Club as a minority taste, even for their Forces audience, and Forces' Programme fare continued to include a range of musical output from variety and comedy to light music and various types of

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[49] Typical listening figures for Radio Luxembourg on Sundays, when BBC programming was especially conservative, were in the region of 4 million.

dance music, including from 1941 the strict tempo dance music of Victor Sylvester's *BBC Dancing Club*.[50]

The BBC's services were, not surprisingly, greatly affected by the Blitz of 1940. One of the results was the establishment of an underground broadcasting centre at the former Criterion Theatre in London for the Empire Entertainments Unit (Baade, 2012, p. 153). Substantial facilities were also established away from London, for instance in Bristol. The combination of logistical difficulties of getting dance bands to and from Bristol, and increasing loss of bandsmen to conscription, meant that in 1941 the BBC established the BBC Dance Band Scheme which gave long-term contracts to named bands and bandleaders (Baade, 2012, pp. 92 – 99). This scheme lasted until 1944. The Forces themselves also appreciated the importance of good dance music for morale, and took their own approach to trying to secure this. As mentioned previously, professional musicians were not in a reserved occupation, and could be called up if of military age. This lead to the establishment of a number of respected dance bands within the forces, such as the RAF Squadronaires, which was initially formed from a core of musicians from Ambrose's dance band who all joined up at the same time. [51]

By 1941, swing was beginning to become popular in Britain, to the point where there was a 'frenzied response' (with jitterbugging) to a visit of the Radio Rhythm Club Sextet to Cardiff in late 1941 (Baade, 2012, p. 109). This 'British Swing Boom' was lead in the UK by small bands - again, this had a lot to do with conscription depleting the ranks of local semi-professional musicians.[52] 1941 was also the year in which the bands of Benny Goodman,

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[50] Baade (2012, p. 99) quotes from Silvester's memoir in which he describes how *BBC Dancing Club* began: "In March 1941 Mike Meehan, … then assistant director of BBC Variety, asked me to meet him. He said he wanted to talk about a new sort of BBC programme. 'Victor,' he explained, 'there are thousands of Service men and girls stationed at camps and gun sites miles from anywhere. It occurred to me that if you gave dancing lessons on the air it would help them to pass the time.' (Silvester, 1958) Some of the 'Service men and girls' Meehan had in mind would have been stationed at the many bases and gun sites around Chester and North Wales.

[51] For general information about dance bands in the military, see Chapter 5. For more on the Squadronaires, see Chapters 4, 5 and 7.

[52] A local example is the small group originally led by Syd Lawrence (later to become the Dennis Williams Quintet), which is described in Chapter 7.

Glenn Miller, Duke Ellington and Artie Shaw were heard for the first time on BBC radio. It was not a coincidence that this was also the year in which the USA joined the war; BBC producers were now under instructions to broadcast programmes designed to make the public more (rather than less) positive about American influences. The first 4000 American troops arrived in the UK in January 1942; this number had increased to nearly 280,000 by May 1943. The American Forces' Network (Baade, 2012, pp. 178 – 180) was set up - on the insistence of the American generals in Britain - to serve US personnel based in the UK. The BBC agreed to this, but reluctantly; they were not happy about losing their monopoly over broadcasting in Britain. The AFN was therefore set up with low-powered transmitters which could not reach far beyond the geographical limits of the US bases they were designed to serve, and in practice this meant that AFN broadcasts were available to less than 10% of the British population. By 1944, there were nearly 1.67 million US troops in the UK, and even though the actual date of the invasion was obviously kept secret, it was clear that when it did occur, BBC and AFN programmes would effectively need to travel with it. Therefore, the 'Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme' (also known as the 'Invasion Wavelength') went on air in May 1944 (Baade, 2012, p. 189). This was available to far more British listeners than the AFN, and its output included top US service bands such as the Glenn Miller band, as well as bandleaders such as Robert Farnon and George Melachrino.[53] The AEFP was extremely popular. It was also quite short-lived. Soon after VE day in 1945, the General Forces Programme (a descendant of the Forces Programme from earlier in the war) and the AEFP were closed down, and replaced by the Light Programme.

Some things, however, continued just as they were for a long time after the war. The Dance Music Policy Committee, which vetted bands (and especially vocalists) to decide whether they were sufficiently 'robust' and 'British' to broadcast on the BBC was not disbanded until 1954, which also happened to be the year when the M.U / Ministry of Labour ban on American musicians playing in Britain was lifted. Between the end of World War II and 1954, the only major American jazz musicians to play in the UK were Duke Ellington and his Orchestra in 1948, and bands including (separately) Benny Goodman, Charlie Parker and Sidney Bechet in 1949. British jazz and dance music were therefore influenced by American exemplars, but also developed a distinctive accent and feel because of the various commercial and nationalistic

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[53] The Miller band also did a small number of broadcasts on the BBC Home Service.

factors which affected the extent to which British musicians and fans could actually get access to American music. As we will see in the next section, concerns about 'Britishness', and the morale of British fighting forces, also manifested themselves in attitudes to gender and sexuality as associated with popular music at that time.

Dance bands, BBC radio and wartime masculinity

> [In 1942] the BBC's new Dance Music Policy characterised crooners as weak, unmanly, and depressing, traits that echoed [the BBC's] external critics, who described [crooners] as "effeminate creatures," "sufferers from acute melancholia" and "girlish". These characteristics were antithetical to wartime hegemonic masculinity, which celebrated physical toughness, bravery, and the task of protecting women and the nation.
>
> Baade (2012, p. 138)

The BBC's dance music output is only mentioned occasionally by my interviewees, and then it is usually to express excitement at an unusual event such as an American swing band broadcasting on the BBC's civilian wavelengths.[54] In fact the BBC did broadcast a substantial amount of jazz-influenced dance music and swing during the war, but much of it was never heard in the UK as it was broadcast on low-power transmitters with limited reception areas, or directly to troops serving overseas. As the quote above suggests, those responsible for organising the BBC's popular music output during the war had to maintain a delicate balance between providing what their listeners in the Forces said they wanted, and reassuring older and more conservative listeners back home that their output was suitable listening for the troops. Baade describes this dilemma thus:-

> The BBC's study and regulation of dance music centred around two goals: pleasing important groups in national service and broadcasting morale-boosting music. The problem of whether these goals were congruent lay at the heart of the issue, for the youth active in national service emerged as the primary audience for the two genres - 'swing' and 'sentimentality' - about which the BBC felt most dubious.
>
> Baade (2006)

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[54] See Chapter 5 for examples.

It certainly was not just the BBC hierarchy who were concerned about the moral associations of dance music, or by association the musicians who provided it. In 1941, Paul Holt of the *Daily Express* newspaper implicitly questioned the patriotism and courage of those professional musicians who had yet to volunteer or be conscripted into the Forces, asking whether "As the couples revolved to *Amapola* or *It's Always You* in the West End restaurant or munitions towns last night they glanced, maybe, at the band, and noticed how many young men of military age there were handling the fiddle, lipping the saxophone, stroking the keys."[55] (Holt, 1941, quoted in Baade, 2012, p. 84) Melody Maker magazine issued a spirited response, but while this may have encouraged the musicians who read it, it is unlikely to have had as wide a readership as Holt's original article. By the following year (1942) however, British professional and semi-professional musicians might well have felt under attack from all sides. The war was not going well for Britain, and conservative voices both within and outside the BBC were putting forth the opinion that 'crooners and sloppy sentimental rubbish' of the type played by modern dance bands was to blame.[56] (This was in spite of the fact that BBC listener research was consistently showing that jazz and swing enthusiasts were young and male and in general an overlapping demographic with the average member of the Armed Forces, and also (not surprisingly) that the music preferred by members of the Armed Forces was, on average, more likely than not to be jazz-influenced dance music.) Even full-time professional musicians of fighting age were not in a reserved occupation; they were therefore eligible to be called up into the Armed Forces, as were most semi-professional musicians unless (like Field) their main occupation was exempt from conscription. This meant that both professional and semi-professional bands were liable to lose members to the Forces with very little warning, which made continuing to provide entertainment even more difficult than it would have been anyway under wartime conditions, and also made adaptable arrangements like those supplied under the name of Jimmy Lally particularly valuable.[57] However, in contrast to trades deemed

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[55] Chester was one of these 'munition towns'. There were a number of ammunition factories in the surrounding countryside, and in addition, aircraft parts were produced in the city centre, and complete aircraft were assembled just over the Welsh border at Hawarden (Lane, 2010).

[56] Vera Lynn, though hugely popular in both the Armed Forces and back home, was a frequent target of such criticism. (Baade, 2012)

[57] See Appendix A.

'essential', such as factory work or transportation, it was very rare for the gaps to be filled by female musicians. [58]

The results of these conflicting pressures had already resulted in the establishment of separate broadcasting services for the Services, especially those serving overseas, and closer control of the bands allowed to broadcast over the BBC in the UK. This included the establishment in July 1942 of a 'Dance Music Policy Committee', and a ban on 'crooning' by male singers. This ban apparently wasn't considered effective enough however, and had evolved by 1943 into a policy of auditioning all popular singers and rejecting those considered to be too sloppy and sentimental, or too Americanised (which seem to have been conflated into the same concept by many critics). [59] The effects of these decisions continued to be felt for years, as the DMPC was not finally disbanded until 1954. Things got even more complicated when the USA entered the war. The BBC was now under pressure to encourage friendly relationships with America, which made its previous anti-Americanisation stance harder to maintain, and as US Forces personnel started to arrive in the UK in 1943 and 1944, there was also a need to cater to their listening requirements. US generals such as Marshall and Eisenhower, who were familiar with the BBC's attitude to jazz and swing, insisted that they would require a separate radio station in the UK for their troops. The BBC reluctantly agreed, and, as described in the previous section, the American Forces Network was the result.

Another less celebrated, but much longer-lasting, result of the BBC's contribution to the war effort was *Music While You Work*, a series of live broadcasts of live, light music introduced three weeks after the retreat from Dunkirk in 1940. *Music While You Work* (*MWYW*) was designed specifically to improve the morale and thus the productivity of British factory workers engaged in war production; by this time, this included a large number of female volunteers and

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[58] A high-profile exception occurred when Ivy Benson and her all-female band were signed up to an important broadcasting contract with the BBC, famously bringing great resistance and protests from within the profession and the Musicians' Union. Benson's band's contract was, however, very much an exception. Most bands and promoters coped by using smaller numbers of musicians, rather than by employing women. (Baade, 2012)

[59] For example, see testimony of vocalist Roy Edwards regarding his BBC audition with the Oscar Rabin band in 1945, in Chapter 5. Although this is often remembered as an 'anti-Americanisation' campaign, Baade (2012) makes convincing case that it was also about the defence of a traditional British image of masculinity.

conscripts, many of whom were working full-time outside the home, or living away from home, for the first time in their lives. It was at this time still unusual for the BBC to think in terms of broadcasting to women; until then, 'the listener' was officially imagined as being male, at home, and concentrating his attention on the broadcast. Now for the first time, the target listener was female, at work, and concentrating on her work, with the broadcast designed purely as entertaining and encouraging background music. As well as being quietly innovative, *MWYW* was a very successful and popular series which continued for more than twenty years after the end of World War II, to 1967, and is described by Baade (2012) as ''arguably the BBC's most significant wartime export'.

Dance bands and acceptable roles for women

Women are noticeable mainly by their absence from the evidence I collected, and in that respect there is a superficial similarity with the situation of women as regards music making as reported in Cohen (Cohen, 1991). However, 1980s Liverpool was a very different place to 1950s Chester in many ways, not least among them the gender politics relating to popular music. Comments such as those reported in Cohen, or Shuker's account of 'the absent women' (below) therefore have some relevance, but do not tell the whole story.

First, it must be noted that even half a century later when *Understanding Popular Music* (Shuker, 1994) was published, women were still under-represented as performers (and especially instrumental performers) in popular music. Shuker refers to the work of Cohen and others in an effort to explain this:-

> …most mainstream women rock performers are 'packaged as traditional, stereotyped, male images of women' ((Cohen, 1991, p. 203); see also Steward and Garratt (1984)). Cohen found that, in the Liverpool scene she studied, women were not simply absent, but were actively excluded. All male bands tended to preserve the music as their domain, keeping the involvement of wives and girlfriends at a distance. '...Many complained that women were a distraction at rehearsals because they created tension within the band and pressurised the band's members to talk to them or take them home' (Cohen, 1991b: 209) Paradoxically, of course, the success of many bands depended upon their appeal to female consumers, and male band members appreciated the fact that band membership helped make them attractive to women.
>
> Shuker (1994, pp. 101 - 102)

It is tempting therefore to blame the absence of female musicians from Chester's dance band scene entirely on the social pressures described by Cohen and Shuker.[60] However it remains the case that during World War II women took on many non-traditional roles, such as working in aircraft and munitions factories, and in manual and technical trades on the railways. Their presence in these arenas during the war did not signal a lasting change in attitudes towards women's abilities and roles in general. Rather, it was a response to a situation of dire need. In Total War (Overy, 2000), describes how workers were needed to do those jobs in larger numbers than ever. The men who would normally have done them had been conscripted into the Armed Forces, and since women were actually capable of doing much of the work (even though it was not traditional for them to do so) they were taken on in new roles for the duration of the war (Nicholson, 2012). This suggests that there were other factors besides social attitudes to women's roles involved in preserving dance bands as almost entirely all-male organisations, even at the height of the conflict.

It certainly was not the case that women did not learn to play music at all; several of my interviewees mentioned female relatives who sang or played the piano, in some cases to a high standard. However, although conscription and wartime conditions did indeed make things difficult for dance bands and bandleaders during WWII, they rarely got so difficult that they *had to* employ women in order to carry on operating. (As described earlier, highly flexible arrangements such as the Lally example helped in this respect.) Also, in spite of the proven importance of dance music and dancing in the maintenance of public morale (Baade, 2012), keeping the factories, farms and households running while able-bodied young men were away fighting was a higher priority, and most women were already fully occupied in the latter roles. Nicholson (2012) makes it clear just how busy women were. On top of their traditional roles

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[60] Chester's live music industry was not in any way unusual for its time in being comprehensively male-dominated. Untangling all of the possible and provable reasons for this would be a very substantial research project in its own right, but I believe useful clues can be found in sources such as *Millions Like Us : Women's Lives during the Second World War* (Nicholson, 2012). This book focuses to a large extent on the Home Front, usefully including stories from Liverpool and the Wirral, as well as rural areas including mid-Wales. It also deals with the turmoil caused by people - including many young women - being shipped around the country for training, military service or war work in factories. It supports my idea local economies could be substantially affected by this factor alone, on top of all the other changes caused by war.

as wife, mother, cook, nurse & housekeeper, the war brought 'make-do-and-mend', long queues for rations, 'voluntary' war activities such as membership of the WRVS (which were often compulsory in all but name) (Nicholson, 2012). All of these were often in addition to long hours in offices or factories replacing men who were away fighting. It was just feasible for a young man to dash home from work, be given a meal by his mother, wife or landlady and dash out again to a gig (while she stayed at home and did the washing up and the laundry). It would have been nigh on impossible for both of them to go, and highly unusual if not inconceivable for the woman to go out and the man to stay at home. It would have been strange indeed if sexism had been absent from the dance band world, when it was well entrenched in other contemporary social environments. However, overtly sexist policies and behaviour, to whatever level they existed, were hardly necessary to keep women out of the bands. It would have taken quite extraordinary levels of luck and determination for most women to break through not just the social barriers, but also the practical barriers of just having too much unavoidable work to do, leaving them with insufficient spare time to develop a part-time musical career.

Baade (2012, p. 138) argues convincingly that this is not just a 'woman's issue', or just to do with who plays and who watches.[61] It is certainly not just about 'women not playing instruments' - it is also the other side of feminism: the effect of patriarchy on men. As described in the previous section, male musicians were often regarded with suspicion; playing music professionally was seen by some as suspiciously effète, arty and un-masculine.[62] Overall, it is necessary to draw a distinction between overt sexism in a specific sphere - for

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[61] See also *Frock Rock* (Bayton, 1998)

[62] In a way, maybe it is odd that more women did not play instruments, if to do so was often seen as feminine? However, as Total War bit, along with un-manly men, the 'good time girl' who focused more on her own enjoyment than her duties in the home (and factory), was also disapproved of (Baade, 2012); a woman committing to buying, learning and playing a saxophone or trumpet might arguably have been seen as at best dangerously selfish, and at worst as barely a step up from prostitution. However I am not entirely convinced that it was just a matter of a woman's social need to preserve her 'good reputation'. Physically strong women working in manual trades were not stereotypically feminine, but even so women were required to build aircraft, make munitions and operate railway signals, regardless of what their remaining male colleagues thought about it (Nicholson, 2012). I believe the key word here is 'required'. Unlike in other industries, necessity did not for the most part overwhelm tradition in the British live music industry. On top of this, necessity was overwhelming tradition in other more essential industries (so that women were employed there), but women were still expected to fulfil their traditional roles in addition.

instance, ideas such as 'women can't blow trumpets' or 'women shouldn't be out after dark' - and a lack of musical opportunities for women due to generalised sexism in society as a whole (which affects men as well as women, albeit in different ways). Although she did face sexist responses to her unusual role as a female bandleader, Ivy Benson drew her band - brass players especially - from Northern brass bands (C, 2014). Highly competent female brass players evidently did exist; Benson did not have to train them all from scratch. (It is interesting, although outside the scope of this study, that female musicians were apparently getting opportunities to learn and play with what were generally male-dominated brass bands in the first place.)[63] Prejudice among local dance bandleaders might have been an issue; it is impossible to tell for certain from my evidence as there is hardly any mention of women at all, even among the interviews done on my behalf by Donald Owens (a man of their own generation). There is certainly no evidence of widespread (or, indeed, any) overt misogyny. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence from many sources that men relied on wives, mothers and housekeepers to keep them on the road, but that female musicians could not usually rely on male partners or relatives to provide the same services for them.

Chester's History Beyond (and Within) the Dancehall

As noted above, young people growing up in the Chester area in the 1930s and 40s would have had the opportunity to hear substantial amounts of British-style dance band music and light music on the BBC, along with rarer glimpses of American-style jazz and swing via programmes such as the Radio Rhythm Club. Chester was within range of AFN transmitters (for those with

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[63] This could be a separate but interesting study in itself, as, like sexism in rock and pop, sexism in brass bands is not by any means a thing of the past. As recently as 2010, the Grimethorpe colliery band was noted for featuring a single female musician (Sheona White) in competition for the first time since 1950, despite having featured a number of women in its ranks in the 1940s (possibly because of wartime conscription of male band members) (Music teacher to play for Grimethorpe Colliery band, 2010). It is interesting that no women played with the band at the highest level between 1950 and 2010, suggesting that, as with many activities where women made inroads during the war, that progress was temporary at best.

While it is true that at the time of White's first performance with the Grimethorpe band, the Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band was the only major UK brass band which still did not feature any women in its competing band, change is still occurring at a slow pace; by late 2014, White had again broken new ground by was playing with the Brighouse and Rastrick band, along with just two other women. With a normal competing band size of up to 28 members, this is still a small proportion. The extent to which this is important - for example, for the overall health of brass playing in the UK, as well as broader aims such as equality of opportunity between the sexes - is yet another potential topic for future study.

fortunately-positioned aerials, at least), so there would also have been the opportunity for enthusiasts to hear much more American jazz and swing while the AFN was on the air. [64] These opportunities were briefly increased in the run up to D-Day via the AEFP. However, even the most enthusiastic young jazz fan could not have spent all their time listening to jazz records and broadcasts. Their personal and musical development took place in a physical environment which, like Liverpool as described by Cohen (2012b, p. 599), was shaped by its geography and history, as well as by contemporary events. In this section, I will look in more detail at that environment.

Chester today is a city which trades heavily on its past. Ancient buildings and sites such as the cathedral, the Roman walls and amphitheatre, and the black-and-white 'rows' are a major tourist attraction, and the architectural heritage and appearance of the city are important to local authorities and residents alike. It is therefore easy to forget that in spite of its 'historic' status, Chester has seen some dramatic changes to its layout and land use, even within the last century. These include slum clearance which moved many city-centre residents from crowded terraces in the city centre out to new estates at Blacon and the Lache. (Many of the terraces were originally built by the navvies who constructed the canals and railways which criss-cross the city, and brought it much of its wealth and importance in the 19th Century.) In the early 20th Century, the area around City Road and the railway station were dominated by factories, warehouses and workshops, including a large lead works. The area behind the Town Hall (opposite the cathedral), which is now occupied by council offices and a shopping mall, was filled by poor quality Victorian housing. What is now the public library was a factory producing motor vehicles. The site of the Gorse Stacks car park was a cattle market. The area between Chester Castle and the Roodee, which has since become a police headquarters, and later a hotel and restaurants, was an Army barracks, and without a ring road to take traffic around the city centre, the only way past Chester was either a very long way around the outside of the city on country roads, or straight through the middle on narrow, congested cobbled streets. The surrounding countryside in Cheshire and North Wales was dominated then by agriculture, as much of it still is today. However, it should be remembered that there was more heavy industry in North-East Wales and on the Wirral than there is now, including active coalmines at Neston on Deeside until 1927. Coal mines, slate and limestone quarries, and steel

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[64] See Chapter 5 more on this.

working (for example. at Shotton, about 5 miles down-river from Chester) continued to be large and important employers in North Wales until much later in the 20th Century (In pictures: Shotton Steelworks through the years, 2010). Coal mining near Wrexham was actually growing at this time, with the establishment of the new settlement and mines at Llay in the 1920s (Tyler-Jones, 2011).

All of this leads to the conclusion that in spite of modern Chester's 'preserved' appearance, it is actually very different to live or work in now, compared to how it was in the 1920s and 30s. This is confirmed by examples such as Figures 18 and 19, which were photographed from the same location, and epitomise some of the dramatic changes which have occurred in Chester within the last century. The black-and-white photograph was taken before the Gaumont Cinema building which dominates the centre-left of the 2012 photograph was opened in 1931. (The building now houses a bingo hall.) The heavily industrialised scene in the earlier photograph - featuring a scrap metal yard on the right, behind the posters, and a lead works in the far distance on the left - contrasts strongly with the same area after several decades of redevelopment. People have visited Chester for holidays and shopping trips for many years, but in contrast to the situation when the first photograph was taken, service industries such as finance, education and tourism are now Chester's major sources of income. However, the earlier photograph represents more accurately the environment in which the live music network covered by this study started to develop after World War I.

Geographical Context

As previously stated, Chester is a long-established route centre in the north-west of England.[65] It is in a strategically important location on the border with Wales, and is on major transportation routes connecting London, Scotland, Ireland (via Holyhead), and the Atlantic shipping routes. It has been a prosperous trading centre and garrison town since the location was fortified by the Romans nearly 2000 years ago; they recognised the importance of the location, both because of its proximity to the Welsh border, and because it offered a port on the River Dee which became a major embarkation point for Ireland. (It was several hundred years before the silting up of the Dee caused the port of Liverpool to become more important.)

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[65] For more on route centres and the importance of transport networks in their formation, see Valdis Krebs on Moscow as a route centre (Appendix C).

Chester has been an important market town and trading centre ever since, and later became a major junction for canals and railways as well as road and river travel. While it never became a busy metropolis like London or Manchester, Chester has always had many visitors passing through, both for business and for pleasure. As a result, by the early twentieth century it was unusually well endowed with public houses and hotels for a relatively small city. Chester entertainment venues such as the theatre and music hall - and later the dance halls - were also on the circuit for touring artists on their way up the west coast, forming a convenient stopping-off point between the Midlands and either the North Wales coast resorts, or English towns and cities further north on the way to Glasgow, including Liverpool, Manchester and Blackpool.

Figure 20 is a map which shows Chester in its regional context, with major national transportation routes indicated in green, and large towns and cities in red. North and mid-Wales lie to the west of the city, with important road and railway routes between London and Holyhead passing through Chester, then along the North Wales coast through towns such as Prestatyn and Bangor. Wrexham, an important large town in North-East Wales, lies a few miles south of Chester. Also to the south are the rural counties of Cheshire and Shropshire. Further southeast, main road and rail routes pass through Crewe, Stoke and Birmingham on their way to London and the Southeast of England. Crewe, which is one stop and twenty minutes by rail from Chester, was a small village until the mid-nineteenth century, but thanks to its location on the growing railway system, it grew very rapidly into a major railway junction and centre for the manufacture of railway machinery, including steam locomotives. Much of this industrial capacity was converted during World War II to the production of military aircraft and other machinery for the war effort. Warrington, which lies to Chester's north-east, is another town which gained in importance because of its location between the cities of Liverpool and Manchester on the West Coast main line rail route from London to Glasgow. To the east of Manchester lie the Pennine hills and industrial towns of West and South Yorkshire, and another route to Scotland via England's east coast.

The next map, Figure 21, shows Chester (marked by the red dot) in the context of the UK as a whole, with major UK cities which do not feature frequently in the interviews undertaken for this study marked by white dots. The green dots indicate some of the places which interviewees mentioned in the context of their own musical activities. The majority of these are within a seventy-five mile radius of Chester, which is not unexpected given that most of the

interviewees were talking about bands they were associated with while they lived in or near Chester. There are some obvious outliers though, ranging from Glasgow to Jersey on this map, and including other places around the world such as Ceylon, Denmark and Hawaii, as well as France and Germany.

Figure 22 gives a more detailed look at the towns mentioned by musicians based in and near Chester. The locations outlined in red are in Wales; the others are in England. Delamere and Warrington both featured because of WWII links to US forces. Working again from west to east, the places outlined in red are all towns in North Wales; those outlined in black are in England. As for the previous map, the green dots indicate places where interviewees said that they had played, with the regional focus allowing more detail. It is even more evident in this case that the frequently mentioned locations are clustered in a ring around Chester, and on both sides of the Welsh-English border. Thanks to Chester's location as a hub on the regional road and public transport network, all of these locations were easily accessible from Chester. Most (with the possible exception of Anglesey) were close enough that musicians could travel to the venue, play the gig, and be back home again in time for their next workday.

Chester Venues

The final map in this section (Fig. 23) is a detailed street map of the city of Chester in the 1950s, annotated to show major locations and entertainment venues mentioned by interviewees, and especially local historian Len Morgan who was particularly helpful in providing information of this type (Morgan, 2005, 2011). (A digital copy of this map is included in the disc attached with this thesis.) The major locations are indicated on the map, and more details are provided in the tables overleaf.

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	Table 1: Major locations in or near Chester city centre (highlighted in blue on Figure 23)
1	**River Dee** - What was once the Roman port is now the racecourse at the Roodee, which is itself one of the oldest racecourses in the country still operating as such. Race meetings at the Roodee continue to draw in large crowds of racegoers and revellers over several weekends every summer.
2	**Shropshire Union Canal -** The Chester branch of the Shropshire Union canal passes below the Roman city walls, with a lock (now disused) to allow canal traffic out onto the River Dee, as well as a large basin and series of transhipment warehouses nearby. The Shropshire Union canal system as a whole links the canal systems of the West Midlands with the Manchester Ship Canal at Ellesmere Port, crossing and linking the counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire in the process. There are also branches which lead to Llangollen and Montgomery in Wales.
3	**Chester General Railway Station -** Chester's main railway station, on the main line between Crewe and Holyhead, with direct connections to the Welsh Borders, Liverpool, Warrington and Manchester.
4	**Chester Northgate Railway Station -** Closed in the 1960s as part of the Beeching cuts, Chester Northgate station served the Cheshire Lines railway, which offered an alternative route to Manchester.
5	**Chester Cathedral -** Chester was an important centre for religious as well as secular government from medieval times. The cathedral buildings date back to 660 AD, and may have been preceded on the same site by druidic and Roman religious foundations (Chester Cathedral, n.d.).
6	**Chester Town Hall -** The Victorian town hall was opened in 1869. Many of its administrative functions have since moved to more modern buildings, but many of the formal and ceremonial spaces - such as the Assembly Room, Court Room and Council Chamber - retain their original functions and much of their original high Victorian decoration (Chester Town Hall, n.d.).
7	**Chester Castle -** The Roman and Saxon fortifications around Chester were augmented by the Norman invaders after 1066. The first Norman fortifications were of earth and wood, gradually being replaced by stone buildings from the eleventh century onwards. In the late eighteenth century much of the castle was demolished and replaced by new buildings to contain county courts, a prison and a barracks for the Cheshire Regiment (who still have a museum on the site). (Cheshire Military Museum, n.d; Northall, 2006)
8	**Army Barracks -** these were demolished in the 1960s to make way for the new Police Headquarters building, which was itself demolished in the early 2000s and replaced by a hotel and apartment complex.
9	**Western Command Headquarters -** The Western Command complex at Queen's Park near Handbridge was established at the start of the twentieth

	century, and was an administrative hub for regiments based in Wales, Lancashire, Cumberland, Westmorland, Herefordshire, and Cheshire, and the Isle of Man. From 1938 it was housed in impressive purpose-built neo-Georgian property on the banks of the River Dee. Not surprisingly, this was an important and very busy site during World War II.
10	**Hospitals -** both now demolished and replaced by other structures
11	**Diocesan Training College -** established in 1839 as a purpose-built teacher training college. Now the University of Chester.
12	Chester Racecourse at the Roodee
13	**Grosvenor Park -** site of the River Park Ballroom
14	Football Ground and Greyhound Stadium
15	**Steel works (Shotton)** and **Aircraft Factory (Hawarden)** (Lane, 2010) **-** both important industrial sites, especially during World War II

The next table gives more information about the entertainment venues (highlighted pink on the map, Fig. 23).   The Chapter / Strand column shows which chapters feature significant information about the venue, and also which research 'strand' (as described in Chapter 4) it was most associated with.

Table 2: Entertainment venues mentioned by interviewees
(highlighted in pink on map)

Location	Name	Chapter / Strand
a.	Deva Hospital	-
b.	"Ossie's" (St. Oswald's hall)	Chapter 5 / Strand 1
c.	Chester College Gym	Chapter 5 / Strand 1
d.	Majestic Ballroom	Chapter 7 / Strand 2
e.	The Queen Hotel	Chapter 5 / Strand 1
f.	Stafford Hotel	Chapter 5 / Strand 1
g.	Royalty Theatre	Chapters 4, 7 & 8 / Strands 0, 1, 2 & 3
h.	Clemences Restaurant	Chapters 5 & 7 / Strands 1 & 2

i.	Quaintways	Chapters 5, 7 & 8 / Strands 1, 2 & 3
j.	Bollands	-
k.	Grosvenor Hotel	Chapters 7 & 8 / Strands 0, 1 & 2
l.	Assembly Rooms	Chapters 7 & 8 / Strands 0, 1 & 2
m.	Bars Hotel	-
n.	NAAFI	-
o.	River Park Ballroom	Chapter 7 & 8 / Strands 2 & 3
p.	Drill Hall	Chapter 7 / Strand 2
q.	Bromfield Arms	Chapter 3
r.	Handbridge Parish Hall	-
s.	Flamingo Club	Chapter 8 / Strands 1, 2 & 3
t.	Vaughan Hall, Shotton	-
u.	Chester Castle & Barracks / Castle Gymnasium	Chapters 2 & 5 / Strands 0 & 1
v.	Western Command Headquarters	Chapter 5 / Strand 1
w.	Eaton Hall (used by the Navy during World War II, then by the Army until the mid-1960s)	Chapter 5 / Strand 1
x.	Hoole Hall (used by the Army during World War II)	-

Although it is lengthy, this is not a complete list of all of the entertainment venues in the city of Chester, and of course it does not include the previously mentioned venues outside Chester. This demonstrates the substantial demand for entertainment in the area. As previously discussed, Chester had (and has) substantial passing trade thanks to its location on transportation routes, which enables the city to support a relatively large entertainment industry relative to its physical size. Today, musical requirements at entertainment venues are usually fulfilled by recorded music, but in the days before reliable high quality amplification, when musical entertainment was required this almost always involved a live band. The length of this list of venues therefore implies a substantial demand for live bands. Another thing to note is that the long history of the city appears to have left its mark on the distribution of city centre entertainment venues in the 1940s and 50s, in that there is a dense cluster in the city centre inside the Roman walls, and close to the medieval centre of power and commerce around the

cathedral. (Although they do not appear on this list, as they are drinking establishments rather than music venues, there are some very old pubs on Northgate Street, close to the locations of Quaintways and Clemences. They help to place those music venues in the same long historical lineage.) Moving on to the effects of the industrial revolution and beyond, there is also a line of venues on and close to City Road, which is the main thoroughfare between the city centre and the main railway station, including the important River Park Ballroom which is shown in Figures 24, 25 and 49, and mentioned frequently by interviewees. (See Chapters 7 and 8 in particular.)

Outside the city centre (and for the most part beyond the range of Fig. 23) other types of venue dominated. While there were some purpose-built dance halls, there were also many general-purpose venues which were used as dance halls and music venues. These included hospital social facilities, church and parish halls, drill halls and gyms, including many halls on military bases. These out-of-town venues, and especially those associated with military activity, will be discussed further in the next section. The large air base at Burtonwood near Warrington is used as an example of the application of the theoretical model described in Chapter 1 to local circumstances in the Chester area.

Jazz Places in World War II, and beyond

> Warfare between 1939 and 1945 was thoroughly industrialized. The major combatants mobilized between a half and two-thirds of their industrial work force, and devoted up to three-quarters of their national product to waging war. This was war waged on an unprecedented scale. [...] The sheer scale, however, was dictated by the shared belief that in total war states should exert their economic strength to the limit consistent with the survival of a minimum living standard on the home front.
>
> Overy (2000, pp. 153 - 154)

Given the profound effect which World War II had on the economy of the UK as a whole (British War Production 1939 – 45 : A Record, 1945), it would be surprising if specific areas of that economy – such as live music in the provinces – were not affected as well. World War II had a huge effect on Chester, as on the whole of the UK; everyone was involved in some capacity, even if they were not directly involved in the conflict as combatants.

As described in previous sections, Chester has been a garrison town for centuries. This was still very much the case in the 1940s.[66] Many of the buildings or sites still exist, although most have changed use. Local historian Len Morgan listed some of the many military installations around Chester during and just after the war as part of one of the interviews I undertook with him. The Western Command Headquarters was close to the city centre at Handbridge. Although there was a large complex of buildings already on the site, during the war these were

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[66] Another very useful source on this topic is the book 'What Did You Do in the War Deva' (Stuart, 2005), which is an invaluable collection of photographs and information relating to Chester's role in the war, and especially the daily lives of ordinary Chester residents. (Len Morgan was a contributing author.) The book fills a gap in histories of Chester, which usually tend to focus on the Romans, or civil war sieges. It also contrasts with many accounts of the war which tend to focus more on either the combatants overseas, or large metropolitan areas like London and Liverpool. There are descriptions and pictures of places where the war workers mentioned by my interviewees actually worked, as well as information about Eaton Hall's time as an officer cadet school. There is, not surprisingly, a strong focus on war work and adaptations made to buildings and infrastructure to cope with the war, such as munitions factories, air force bases, anti-tank defences and air raid shelters. There are also some pictures of local military bands and dance bands, which again overlap with things mentioned by interviewees (especially as described in Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8).

augmented by wooden huts in the grounds to accommodate the extra staff.[67] There was an army garrison at Chester Castle, and also in the nearby barracks beside the racecourse. Other army units were based at camps off Liverpool Road, at Saighton Camp, at the Dale Camp, and just outside Hoole. There was a military hospital a couple of miles north of the city centre at Moston. Moving on to Air Force bases, there was a large RAF and USAF base at Sealand (see Fig. 26), again only a couple of miles from the city centre, as well as two large American bases situated at Vicars Cross (now the Rugby Club) and Hoole Bank (now the Hammond School). There were also many smaller bases dotted about the Cheshire countryside, including an RAF base at Hooton on the Wirral which was the base for the City of Chester fighter squadron. Even the Royal Navy had a base nearby, despite Chester's lack of a port for vessels larger than a pleasure boat or canal barge by this time. This was because the Naval College at Dartmouth was bombed during the war, and it was decided to move the entire institution to a safer location for the duration of the war. The Duke of Westminster's country house at Eaton Hall – again, just a couple of miles from the city centre – became the Royal Naval College in exile, as it were. After the war it became a college for British Army Officer Cadets doing their National Service.   In addition to these larger bases, there were lots of small searchlight and anti-aircraft batteries. While each of those might only have a handful of men (or sometimes women) to operate them, all of these people had to live – and be entertained – in the local area as well. Many rooms, and entire houses, were commandeered as billets for personnel stationed in the area, including U.S. Forces personnel and civilian migrant workers working in war factories such as the bomber factory(Lane, 2010) at Hawarden (now British Aerospace) or the munitions factories near Frodsham.

As previously noted, Chester in the mid-twentieth century boasted a large number of public houses for the relatively small size of the city, and according to (Len) Morgan these were very popular with service personnel and factory workers based in the area. Chester also offered entertainment in the form of cinemas and theatres, dancing venues such as Quaintways and Clemences in the city centre, and 'village hops' in local village halls and similar venues. For service personnel, there were clubs such as the NAAFI and the American Red Cross in the city centre. American servicemen also made use of the Chester College gym for dances, to which female ATS personnel billeted nearby were often invited. It was not always necessary for

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[67] This building and the site surrounding it subsequently housed a bank headquarters. It is now owned by the University of Chester.

service personnel to leave their bases for entertainment however. The NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institute) or their US equivalents organised dances and entertainments for service personnel on base (or at other locations such as hospitals, for example. Moston Hospital), from booking the bands to providing the catering. All of these venues offered opportunities for local entertainers, and the more so since non-essential travel (including band tours) was strictly limited. It is important to remember that in the midst of all the upheaval, life on the Home Front went on. People were shunted around the country (and the world) with scant thought for their personal preferences or burgeoning musical careers, but at the same time it is likely that local music scenes in some ways became even more local - or at least did not overlap as much as they might have done otherwise - because of practical factors like fuel rationing and directed employment. For all of these reasons, local musicians in Chester had plenty of local opportunities for part-time musical employment during this period, even if they were required to work in non-musical occupations by day. These opportunities will be examined in detail in succeeding chapters, but to give a taste of how the analysis will work, I will look specifically at the large US Air Base at Burtonwood near Warrington, showing how aspects of the local economic situation affected the live music business in the area.

Burtonwood Airbase

Burtonwood was built on farmland close to the industrial town of Warrington, and was in a convenient location for other important regional centres of population, being situated approximately 15 miles East of Liverpool, 20 miles west of Manchester, and 20 miles north-east of Chester. The base was originally built in 1939 as an aircraft repair depot for the RAF, but was taken over by the Ministry of Aircraft Production in 1940, before being operated by US Forces from 1942 (six months after the very first US troops arrived, as described earlier in this chapter). The base was occupied continuously by American and British units - in spite of being divided by the M62 motorway in the early 1970s - until its final closure, being used as a storage depot for the US Army in Europe from 1967 until 1993. Many of the storage buildings continued in civilian use until the early 2000s, by which time much of the land not already underneath the motorway was the site of a large out-of-town retail development, including stores such as the furniture warehouse IKEA (Granfield & Bushell, 2010).

Chester is evidently not the closest large settlement to Burtonwood, so why is Burtonwood a recurring theme in my interviewees' musical activities? A clue lies in the size of the base; by the 1950s, it had spread over a large area of Cheshire farmland, and comprised at least ten linked sub-sites. These sites all required people to run their operations, and those people, in turn, required entertainment. For almost all of Burtonwood's existence as a military base, musical entertainment meant live bands, and this is the reason why Burtonwood had a substantial effect on the local live music scene; in addition to its intended military role, Burtonwood hosted a substantial market for live music - so substantial, in fact, that although Chester was not the closest conurbation, its musicians still formed part of the workforce supplying that market.

Burtonwood played an important part in World War II, and also in the Berlin Airlift of 1948. The first US personnel arrived in June 1942. This was followed by the construction of six huge storage hangars with a combined area of 734,000 square feet, as well as hundreds of hastily-constructed huts to accommodate the US personnel at the base, which eventually grew in number from a few hundred in 1942 to more than 18,000 by the mid-1950s, effectively making it a small town in its own right. (By way of comparison, the town of Warrington today has a population of around 80,000, a figure which hasn't changed much since the 1950s, and Chester in 1951 had a population of approximately 45,000 (Census Reports, 2013). By that time it was the largest US military base outside the USA, with its own chapels, a hospital, schools and - importantly, from the point of view of this research - recreation facilities (Granfield & Bushell, 2010). Even at the height of the war, American celebrities such as James Cagney, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope travelled to the UK to entertain US Forces personnel stationed at military bases, including Burtonwood. Burtonwood was one of the venues where Glenn Miller's Army Air Force band played when it was in the UK in 1944.[68] Burtonwood is a good example of the influence of heightened military activity during and after World War II on the cultural geography and musical economy of the area. In effect, an ex-patriot American population

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[68] As Way (1996) points out, "Recollections fade, and almost every person who saw a 'big band' performing in American uniform during the war believes it was Glenn Miller", when in practice it was far more likely to have been another band entirely, such as the Western Base Sector Dance Orchestra mentioned by interviewee Tommy Jones. (See Chapter 5 for more details.) Way researched the Miller band's time in the UK, and established which venues they actually played at. He also compared contemporary photographs with the venues as they were when he visited them, and it is noticeable that even the venues are gradually - and literally - disappearing from sight with the passing years. What are now some rather undistinguished-looking tracts of farmland and motorway turn out to hide their own moments of musical history.

equal to nearly half the population of Chester lived at Burtonwood at its height - and Burtonwood was just one of many US military bases in the Chester area, along with even larger numbers of British military and civilian establishments associated with World War II or the Cold War. It's therefore not surprising that these bases had a significant effect on social, cultural and business life locally, although what is perhaps not so obvious is that this wasn't all one-way traffic; local musicians certainly benefitted from access to American Forces Network radio broadcasts, but they were themselves an integral part of the local live music business which brought entertainment *to* U.S (and other) personnel in the area.

After the war, some of the wartime venues, such as small airfields and armaments factories, began to shrink or close down altogether almost immediately. Others, such as including Burtonwood and the aircraft factory at Broughton, continued to perform much the same functions with similar numbers of staff for years or decades to come. Yet others were converted to completely new uses (such as the air bases at Vicars Cross near Chester and Padgate near Warrington, which became a Rugby Club and a college respectively), while still retaining the potential to act as entertainment venues from time to time. These changes will have affected the size and distribution of the market for musical entertainment in the area. The extent of this effect, and its overlap with changes in technology and musical fashions, will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I described theoretical frameworks from Popular Music Studies and Jazz Studies, and examined where they are appropriate for analysing the material I have collected, and also where there are theoretical gaps, which need filling from other disciplines. In Chapter 2, I introduced alternative theoretical tools from disciplines such as geography, sociology, history and anthropology. In this chapter, I have described the physical and social environment in which my interviewees would have grown up, learned their musical skills, and used them to entertain the dancing and listening public in the area. The BBC's music broadcasting would have been an important influence, both directly in terms of what the musicians themselves listened to, but also indirectly through what their older friends and relatives (and mentors such as teachers and conductors) listened to and encouraged them to emulate or avoid. The cultural attitudes to gender roles exemplified by the BBC's policies would also have been a factor

(although not the only one) in determining what Cestrian musicians and their audiences thought dance bands should sound and look like; from a Bourdieusian point of view, they would have been part of the 'rules of the game' of a dance band habitus. The exact form taken by the local music scene was also influenced by the requirements of local audiences, as described by Becker in 'Jazz Places', and the extent to which those audiences provided fertile ground for commercial dance bands was influenced by the size and nature of the audience, and also the amount and type of competition.

The next five chapters will be devoted to describing the world that these musicians and fans lived and worked in in more detail, and examining to what extent the theoretical tools and background information described thus far help to put it into context, and explain what was happening and why.

CHAPTER 4:

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL DANCE BAND SCENE

Introduction

The preceding chapters have outlined the theoretical and historical background to the study described in this thesis. It is now time to move on to the evidence collected during the project. I will present this in broadly chronological order, starting with the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s, which were critical to the development of the busy mid-century dance band scene in the Chester area which is the main focus of this study.

Network Strands

A core theme of this study is to explore the development of the network of musicians, customers and venues, which made Chester a thriving live music hub in the mid-twentieth century. By the 1920s, many of the ingredients were already either in place or starting to develop. Live music was already a popular and well-established pastime for both performers and listeners, and the foundations of the network which flourished during and after World War II were already there. For greater clarity in discussion, I will divide the interviewees up into four 'strands', depending on when they were born and / or started to take an interest in music. Many of these strands will converge again after the war in venues such as the River Park Ballroom (which already existed, but not under that name).

Strand 0 - already established by the 30s

Already established by the start of the 1930s, these musicians were important in the social and commercial network which was already in existence by 1930. That existing network was a critical part of the environment in which their younger colleagues, who were most active in the 1940s and 50s, learned their instruments and started to develop their skills, enthusiasm and understanding of how the local live music scene worked. This strand is described in detail in this chapter.

Strand 1 - old enough to be in the forces before 1946.... OR reserved occupation

These musicians had already started to play on a semi-professional basis before the start of World War II, and spent the war either serving in the Armed Forces, or (like Field) directed to stay in a civilian role in a 'reserved occupation' considered critical to the war effort. The development of this strand is described in towards the end of this chapter, with the story continuing throughout Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Strand 2 - did National Service in the very late 40s or 1950s - born c. 1930~45

Covered in Chapters 7 and 8, this younger group of dance band musicians were children or teenagers during World War II, and did their National Service in the Armed Forces after the end of World War II. Military life had a strong influence on the musical careers of many in this age group, as it did for those in Strand 1, although the circumstances and locations were different.

Strand 3 - too young for National Service - born after World War II

The final age group covered by this research includes musicians who were born late enough that National Service was no longer a requirement by the time they reached the relevant age. As young children they grew up among the austerity which followed the war, but by the time they reached their teenage years rock 'n' roll was beginning to get established among the younger generation. Its effects were far from uniform however. The development of Strand 3 is described in Chapters 7 and 8.

Context: Place, Economics, Evolution 1919 - 1939

This section describes the context in which the local dance band scene developed in the inter-war period, as described by my interviewees. This is the social, musical and economic network that musicians such as Field worked in at the start of their careers, and which also shaped the early development of younger musicians (that is,. those of Strands 1 and 2).

As discussed in previous chapters, Chester has a long history as a garrison town, with results including the presence in the city of a regimental band. The regiment itself (which required

entertainment for events such the regimental dance discussed in Chapter 1), had effects on the musical environment in which my interviewees and their colleagues grew up, and the number and type of Becker's 'jazz places' available for musicians in the area to operate in. Chester's important regional role as a route centre and market town also meant that it was large enough and commercially busy enough to have facilities such as cinemas and shops selling gramophone records, both of which were mentioned by interviewees as part of their musical development. Other important influences on young musicians were social institutions and networks such as schools, churches and uniformed organisations like the Boy Scouts, and of course their own families.[1] As well as providing practical support and encouragement, these social networks also acted as networks for the transmission of musical skills, knowledge and traditions, as well as new fashions and trends; many examples of all of these are given by interviewees.

Looking further afield, young Cestrians in the 1920s and 30s would have been exposed to the increasing influence of relatively new media such as radio, cinema and gramophone records, and new messages from established media such as newspaper advertisements. As well as new musical styles, new (or at least newly popular) instruments were starting to infiltrate British dance music. As discussed in Chapter 1, the exact details of how and when jazz as a style arrived in the UK are debated, but whatever the truth of that story, shifts in musical preferences were certainly reaching Chester by the 1930s. As elsewhere, dance bands which had previously featured stringed instruments such as violins, such as the Westminster Dance Band shown in Figures 27, 28 and 29, increasingly began to include various types of saxophone.

Saxophones were able to produce more sound volume with fewer musical compromises; the tone of the Stroh Violin (Fig. 27) was a pale imitation of a good quality unmodified violin, and it was also uncomfortable to play. The saxophone had been designed specifically to be able to produce a wide dynamic range with good tone and expressiveness throughout that range, and it was therefore better adapted to dance hall work (Cottrell, 2013, p. 174). Many

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[1] Family bands, both amateur and professional, produced some celebrated alumni in America, including (among many others) Rudy Wiedoeft, Lester Young and the Dorsey Brothers (Cottrell, 2013, pp. 136 - 139), and family musical traditions also show up frequently in the interviews collected for this research.

string players who wanted to continue working regularly as musicians took up the saxophone as a way of dealing with the increasing demand for the instrument (and decreasing demand for strings). A specific example was recounted by Field's son Gordon, who remembered a saxophonist called Ted Duckworth. Duckworth played for Field for many years, and was known for the beautiful sound he produced from his instrument. He had started his musical career as a cellist, before transferring to the saxophone. As well as playing regularly with Field, Duckworth also gave music lessons to many local clarinettists and sax players of Gordon's generation. The later invention of electrically amplified instruments took this technological search for simultaneous production of high volume and good sound quality to yet another level, and once again put musicians who could not or did not want to adapt out of work. This time, it was the turn of some brass or reed players, and many string bass players, to take up the new instruments in order to make themselves more employable in a changing musical environment.

There is another hidden - or at least, frequently misunderstood - history behind this section of the story: it's a commonplace that the saxophone became one of the iconic instruments of American jazz from the late 1920s, but the instrument's history goes back at least seventy years before that; it was actually invented by a Belgian instrument maker called Adolph Sax in the 1850s. Thanks initially to Sax's own efforts, saxophones quickly found a place in military bands both in Europe and in the USA.[2] J.P Sousa used saxophones in his bands in the 1880s, and various sizes of the saxophone family were well established in both military bands and vaudeville by the 1910s (Cottrell, 2013, pp. 116 – 131).[3] However, worldwide sales of the instrument increased dramatically in the 1910s and 1920s - a period which became known as the 'saxophone craze' (Cottrell, 2013, pp. 150 – 151 and p. 156). Sax's influence on the instruments of the jazz orchestra also includes significant improvements to the design and operation of the clarinet and bass clarinet, and the invention of a complete family of brass instruments known collectively as the Saxhorns. Saxhorns range from in size

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[2] See also the *Chart of Parallel Streams Distinguishing Jazz from Rock & Jazz-Rock* (Gridley, 2003, pp. 316 - 317) which shows European Military Music as an important contributor to Jazz, via Ragtime.

[3] Sousa used various combinations of saxophones in his bands, including the SATB (soprano, alto, tenor baritone) quartet which is the standard chamber music combination for the family. He also pioneered the 2A 2T B five saxophone section, which was to become the norm in dance bands and big bands fifty years later (Cottrell, 2013, p. 131).

from the cornet, which is the smallest, up to the bass tuba. They all share the same basic design principles, and like the saxophone family form a set of instruments which make a homogeneous sound, and which are relatively easy for players to transfer between. As well as being important in military bands, the Saxhorns form the basis of the standard brass band instrumentation. As will become clear from the interviews quoted below and in Chapter 4, both military bands and brass bands were important training grounds for young jazz musicians-to-be in and around Chester, as well as being a source of second-hand instruments for them to learn on.

Strand 0: Musicians of the Chester and North Wales dance band scene already established by the 1930s

The pianist and bandleader Wilf Field has emerged as an important figure in the Chester music scene, and achieved the impressive feat of leading dance bands of various sizes continuously for nearly three-quarters of a century. He started his first band in 1925 - coincidentally, the same year as Louis Armstrong made his first recordings as a bandleader, with his Hot Five in Chicago (Teachout, 2009, p. 92). To begin with, the band still featured stringed instruments such as the violin and cello, although these were soon superseded by the louder and more fashionable saxophones, as described in the previous section. According to his son, Field was already showing characteristic commercial acumen and single-mindedness at this early stage. Although the family name had been spelled FEILD, Field decided that 'no-one would ever find him in the phone book under that', and anglicised the name to the more familiar 'Field'. His early bands included Wilf Field's Collegians and Wilf Field's Ambassadors.

At the same time that Field was starting his first dance band, trumpeter Derek Mitchell's father was playing with a dance band who were already well established in the Chester area - The Westminster Dance Band. The Westminster Dance Band's instrumentation at that time included a fiddle (violin), a cornet, a banjo, a piano and a very basic drum kit - or set of 'traps' - consisting of little more than a bass drum and a cymbal or two. Occasionally a string bass was added. One of the band's regular employers was the large and luxurious Grosvenor Hotel in the city centre. (The Grosvenor Hotel is an example of the many local venues which owed their existence and prosperity to Chester's position on well-established national and

international transportation routes.) Mr Mitchell Senior was a self-taught musician. Born in 1903, his first experience of brass playing did not involve a complete instrument at all; he just had a hosepipe with a cornet mouthpiece stuck in one end. Eventually his father took him to Erskine's of Liverpool - a short journey away by train or bus - and bought him a cornet, which would have required a considerable outlay of cash relative to the family's modest income. Mitchell recalls his father as being a determined and methodical person, who bought himself a trumpet method book and taught himself to play from that. There was no space to practice in the house, so he used to go and sit in the communal toilets behind the house and practice there. (Fortunately he had a tolerant family and neighbours.) He continued to play with local dance bands and theatre pit bands for many years. However, like most of the musicians interviewed or referred to in this study, he never became a full-time professional musician; it appears that there was enough demand for live music in the area to *partially* support a substantial population of part-time musicians, but not to allow them to confidently rely on music for the entirety of their income. Mitchell's father, for instance, had a 'day job' at Bebington Sweets, who employed him as a confectionary salesman until he finally retired in his 70s. He also carried on playing his trumpet well into later life. From the dance bands he moved on to the pit band at the Chester Royalty Theatre, where he played as principal trumpet for over 20 years for operetta and opera as well as in popular styles (Mitchell, 2007).[4]

The influence of 'musical families' was a frequent theme when interviewees were describing how they first became involved in music. For instance, Ron Lovelady was to become a prominent local musician and bandleader in later decades, and had direct family links to both the Henry Hall band and the BBC Northern Dance Orchestra. Ron's father Joe was a professional musician who had played with Henry Hall at the Railway Hotels chain of venues, for which Henry Hall was the musical director. In the late 1930s, Joe Lovelady led the first band at another important Chester venue of later years - Quaintways.[5] (Figure 30 shows two local contemporaries of Joe Lovelady - Eric Evans and his Orchestra, and the Palm Beach Dance Band - in newspaper photographs from Wilf Field's collection.) Ron Lovelady remained in the Chester area as a semi-professional saxophone player, and played

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[4] This is an example of the flexibility with regard to Bourdieusian cultural fields first discussed in Chapter 2.
[5] Quaintways was one of Chester's most important Jazz Places in the 40s, 50s and 60s.

with local bands such as those of Tommy Gresty and R.I. ('Rip') Parkinson, before taking over leadership of the Deeside Dance Orchestra. His brother Les was also a saxophone player. After RAF service in World War II, Les Lovelady did turn professional; he toured the country's dance halls with big bands such as that led by Teddy Foster. He also played with Syd Lawrence, both in the BBC Northern Dance Orchestra and in Syd's own bands (Owens, 2007). Looking back to Granovetter's concept of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973), as described in Chapter 1, these musical families provide some interesting examples. The links within the family network - for example, between father and son, or between two brothers - would be described by Granovetter as strong ties, which may seem to negate the relationship with Granovetter's theory. However, being born into a musical family, as well as providing a musical environment for the child to grow up in, also provides access to a ready-established and potentially advantageous network of weak ties of the sort which Granovetter described as being important for finding work, such as those linking Les Lovelady to the national live music scene via his father's connections with Henry Hall.

Family Ties and the Development of Strands 1 and 2

Three of the musicians interviewed for this study were the drummers Doug Hall, Frank Fuller and Steve Lloyd. Hall was born in 1919 and spent the whole of World War II in the Army. Fuller was eight years younger, and was not called up until the end of the war. Lloyd was the youngest, born during the war in 1943 (and technically late Strand 2 according to my classification). All three of them were influenced by family members when it came to taking up music (Fuller, 2008; Hall, 2007; Lloyd, 2006). Lloyd's father was a dance band pianist in the 1930s, and worked around the Wrexham area with a band called the Havana Dance Band. 20 years later, Lloyd's older brother also took up the piano - it was a 'family thing' - and when he was about fifteen he started to bring his friends from the school dance band back to the house to practice. Lloyd initially wanted to take up the trumpet, but his father dissuaded him:-

> "No, go on the drums", he said, "You'll always get plenty of work", so I listened to what the drummer was doing and I thought, "Well if I can't do better than that I'd better forget all about music", so that's when it started, when I was about 12, 13.

> (Lloyd, 2006)

As we will see in Chapters 7 and 8, Lloyd's father turned out to be right, even when musical styles changed in subsequent decades. Strong ties in Lloyd's family social network made the weak ties of Lloyd's own social network, established in later years, that much more effective and long lasting.

Competition for gigs - or the lack of it - also had an influence on Doug Hall's choice of instrument. His brother was a drummer, and was asked to recommend a drummer when a local band found themselves without one. He recommended Doug, who had been teaching himself to play on his brother's kit, and the younger Hall rapidly found himself a member of the Adelphi Dance Band, starting with a gig at Tarporley. He continued to play with the band until he was called up for military service at the start of World War II. After the war, he returned to Chester and led his own bands from behind the drum kit.

Frank Fuller learned the rudiments of drumming from his father, who had been a band sergeant in the Army, and also played the violin. Fuller's sister was a good singer who performed with both the Chester Operatic Society and with local dance bands.[6] Fuller said that he was not really influenced by famous drummers, especially when he was learning, because he came from such a musical family. There were musical instruments in the house and regular musical evenings at home.[7] Pianist Harry Proctor and sax player Dennis Roscoe were also inspired to take up music by family influences. Proctor's father ran his own dance band - a quartet - in the 1920s. Proctor still had some of his father's old arrangements at home when these interviews were carried out, including a Two Step called 'Gypsy Blood'.

Dennis Roscoe was born in 1929, and was interested in music from a very young age (Roscoe, 2008). His older brother took up the trumpet, and Dennis started on woodwind instruments like the tin whistle, before moving on to clarinet and saxophone later. Both brothers dabbled with other instruments as well, including ukuleles and guitars, from the age of nine or ten. When the older Roscoe brother (name unknown) came out of the forces, both

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[6] As discussed in Chapter 3, Fuller's sister is one example of the very small number of female musicians mentioned by my interviewees.

[7] As mentioned previously, a musical family can provide a beneficial environment for a young musician to grow up in.

brothers resumed their interest in music together and in particular in traditional jazz. They collected the records as they became available one by one. Dennis's brother was inspired to learn the clarinet, but could not make progress with learning the instrument, so he took up the cornet instead and Dennis took over on the clarinet. They set up their own traditional jazz band, called the 'Sleepy Town Stompers'. This was right at the beginning of the trad jazz revival, in the late 1940s. Dennis's brother worked for the Post Office in Southport, and the Post Office had its own military band - the Southport Postal Military Band - which rehearsed on Sunday mornings. This was another band which was still using sharp pitch instruments. Dennis borrowed a clarinet from the band and started going to rehearsals. At this stage he knew the names of the written notes, but could not read music well on the clarinet, so the SPMB was something of a baptism of fire: as he described it, "…nobody waited for you so it was an ideal way of learning. I learned to read quite well." (Roscoe, 2008) The time came when the band had a spare saxophone which needed playing, and Dennis quickly discovered that the saxophone was in many ways quite a lot easier to play than the clarinet, so he stuck with the alto saxophone. (In this respect this story parallels that of the development of the saxophone itself as a 'jazz instrument'; Dennis, like many other dance band players, first learned to play the saxophone in the musical environment for which it was originally designed - a military band.) Along with some friends from a youth club and some trad jazz associates, Dennis and his brother formed a band which used to play for events such as youth club dances. This was his entry into the world of semi-professional jazz gigs, which would in turn lead to a busy semi-professional role in dance bands in the 1940s and 50s and beyond.

At this time, Southport was an interesting place for a musician to grow up, as there were often many professional musicians around who had come to Southport for the summer season.[8] Quite a few of these musicians chose to stay in Southport permanently, and the local

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[8] Southport is close to the even larger seaside resort of Blackpool, which was a major draw for nationally known dance bands and entertainers thanks to major venues in the town, such as the Tower Ballroom. Holiday resorts such as Blackpool and Southport had particularly strong entertainment markets fuelled by regular influxes of holidaymakers from other parts of the country. As discussed previously, until the advent of powerful, high quality amplification as used by discos from the 1970s and beyond, any entertainment venue wanting music generally had to employ musicians to provide it. It was usual for many venues to close during the winter when there were few visitors, and reopen for the 'summer season' when the majority of holidaymakers arrived in the resort, looking for (and paying for) entertainment. There was therefore extra work available for musicians at holiday resorts during the summer.

music scene was quite vibrant. In the summer, Southport had visits from big name bands like Joe Loss and Oscar Rabin who would play at the Floral Hall for dances. Roscoe and his contemporaries had plenty of exposure to good, professional bands, and there were many social events in Southport which needed bands to provide music. There was not a large number of permanent bands, but there was a big pool of musicians available for pick-up gigs, which were relatively plentiful at this time. Musicians from Merseyside made appearances in Southport from time to time. However, the Southport Musicians' Union had the local scene under tight control. They had an agreement with the Corporation that if the Corporation hired a band they had to pay full Musicians' Union rates, and because Southport was a 'resort' the standard rates were higher than in St. Helens or Liverpool - an example of the effect of local economic and commercial conditions on the way that this scene operated. Sometimes a band would be hired from outside the area and the Corporation would pay them 'resort' rates, but the bandleader only paid his musicians their regular rate, pocketing the difference for himself. This was against the rules, and a cause of great annoyance to all concerned - except the bandleader of course.

Pianist Colin Gibson and clarinettist Paul Blake both got their first musical grounding as a result of piano lessons, although it seems that Gibson was the keener of the two at the time (Blake, 2007; Gibson, 2006). Gibson noticed that a number of the other children who lived on his street and went to the same school had started to play the piano, and did not want to be left out. When he told his mother that everyone at school was learning to play the piano, she said he might as well learn on the Broadwood upright grand in the front room. Gibson was also influenced by his older brother, who in about 1938 or '39 used to rush home from his work at a nearby electrical switchgear factory to listen to Henry Hall on the wireless. His brother was also a fan of classical music, and Gibson can still see his brother's influence in his own choice of music to listen to in the car; a mixture of Shostakovich, Mahler, Mozart and the best modern big bands, such as Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, and also some Count Basie recordings. Blake started piano lessons in 1935 at the age of seven. He took to the instrument well, and was picked out to play a solo at a school performance. However he was not keen on practising, and eventually managed to persuade his parents that he did not have time to do piano practice and get his academic homework done, although with hindsight

he doubts if that was really true. However, he did continue to sing with the church choir at St. Mary's in Handbridge until he was 14 and at college.

Another musician who benefitted from choral training was trumpet player Don Owens. He joined the choir of St. Mary's Within the Walls, where his father and uncles had all sung as boys. He looks back on this as good fun, and also good preparation, as it introduced choristers to the discipline of going to church on time, including three times each Sunday and a rehearsal every Thursday. Owens also remembers being inspired to carry on with music by the bands which used to play in large department stores such as Lewis's in Liverpool, where a six-piece band used to play in the restaurant.[9] Just before World War II broke out, his aunt took him with her on the works' annual outing, which on this occasion was to Trentham Gardens near Stoke-on-Trent. The resident band there was led by a man called Doug Swallow (composer of the St. Bernard's Waltz), and Owens was so impressed with the music, behaviour and jolly demeanour of the band that he decided there and then that he wanted to become a musician himself (Owens, 2008).

All of the young musicians mentioned in this section, from Derek Mitchell's father to Don Owens, were or would become players in the large and complex network of semi-professional musicians based in and around Chester area in the mid-twentieth century. Some important influences - particularly existing family links with music-making, local musical opportunities for children (such as the church choir), and opportunities to see music played live in everyday settings - have already been highlighted as being important in their musical development, and therefore the development of the network itself. These and other factors will be explored further in the next chapter.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have shown that there was already a busy and well-established market for dance bands and live popular music in the Chester area at the start of the 1920s, and also a busy network of local musicians, many of whom had some connection with military music, brass bands, or the church. Venues ranged from youth club events and commercially run

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[9] It would be interesting to study whether young musicians of later generations have been inspired by hearing recorded music in similar environments.

dances to military band concerts and formal dances at the Cheshire Regiment headquarters at Chester Castle. Musically, this was a transitional period, and one which presents an interesting comparison with another transition which took place after World War II. The role of the electric guitar in the development of rock music is well documented (Yentob, 2011), and the saxophone is equally widely regarded as an icon of jazz, and particularly American jazz from the 1930s onwards. However, both the saxophone itself, and the classic jazz band line-up of trumpet, trombone, clarinet, drums and saxophones, have their roots in mid-nineteenth century European military bands, and later the celebrated wind bands of American conductors such as John Philip Sousa. Early jazz pioneers such as Louis Armstrong were influenced directly by the wind band music they played and listened to as youngsters (Teachout, 2009, pp. 36 - 37; Wald, 2007). In Chester, as elsewhere, louder instruments such as the trumpet and saxophone were replacing violins and cellos as the popular melodic instruments, and new stylistic trends such in jazz and swing were starting to reach local dance halls. As discussed in previous chapters however, formal events such as the Cheshire Regiment Annual Ball continued to feature 'Old Time' dances, such as the Veleta and the Military Two-Step.

Musical influences from within the family are also emerging as very important. As mentioned in Chapter 1, family ties are, in Granovetter's terms, strong ties rather than weak ones, and therefore might seem likely to contribute much to an individual's chance of getting work in a particular field.[10] However where music performance is concerned there are definite advantages to learning practical skills at a young age (including the social skills involved in playing with a group of other people, as well as actual playing techniques). Growing up in a musical family can help with this because the necessary knowledge and opportunities (and instruments where required) are often available to the child without even needing to leave the family home. Church groups are an interesting borderline example, usually encompassing both family and non-family contacts. Weak ties really come into their own for getting work opportunities once basic skills are in place, and at this point one might think there would be more of a level playing field for musicians with less of a strong family background in music. This is true to an extent, but as Doug Hall's example shows, having a family member who is already involved with the local live music network can help greatly

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[10] See the section on 'Social and Cultural Capital'

when it comes to getting important first opportunities. From then on, the individual is more responsible for their own destiny, and the ability to understand what is required by live music venues locally, and to understand the local network as it shifts and changes over time, are critical to maintaining one's standing in that network.

CHAPTER 5: DANCING THROUGH THE WAR

Introduction

The period 1939-59 covers the period when jazz-based dance bands were at the height of their popularity and commercial success, both locally and in the wider world. It also covers the beginning of the rock 'n' roll scene which followed. There was a very strong demand for dance music throughout this period, in spite (and also because) of the war and the subsequent period of austerity, and the state of sound reproduction technology combined with transportation issues meant that this music was almost always provided by local live bands. This was the period when the Chester area dance band network was at its busiest, and accordingly has also yielded the largest amount of research material for this project. This chapter will cover the period around World War II, from 1939 - 45.

As discussed in previous chapters, Chester had been a garrison town and route centre for centuries, and this had a direct effect on the musical opportunities available to both young and mature musicians in the area in the early years of the twentieth century. It was not an isolated cultural backwater; modern trends such as the saxophone craze seem to have swept through Chester at much the same time that they arrived elsewhere in the country. At the same time, older forms of music making - and musical instruments - still persisted (Nott, 2002). In this chapter, I will be looking at how the generation of musicians who played in the dance bands at the height of their popularity learned their trade, and found their place (and places) in the local live music network.[11] Using evidence from my interviewees' accounts, I will look at how the older and newer forms of music and music making co-existed at this time, and how this affected their musical development. This chapter focuses on how young musicians in the area became involved in music and learned to play their instruments. Succeeding chapters will look at the role of the military as an employer of musicians and a way for musicians to get experience, and how the Chester area dance band network matured after the war, including some hints of what was to come in the 1960s and beyond.

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[11] Note the constant echoes of de Certeau, Finnegan, and Cohen, as covered in Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Place, Economics, Evolution 1939 − 59

A topic of particular interest in this period is the effect of World War II on the local live music economy. The war most certainly did not put a stop to musical entertainment in the Chester area; as elsewhere in Britain, dancing and entertainment were seen as essential to both military and civilian morale, and therefore an important part of the war effort.[12] There was therefore a substantial demand for competent local musicians throughout the war and for some years afterwards. On the supply side, as described in the previous chapter, many young men (and a much smaller number of women) got unique musical opportunities as a result of the war, or compulsory National Service in the Armed Forces after the war, including playing in exotic locations overseas, meeting and playing with musicians from other countries, or gaining a professional-level training in music (including dance music) which would not otherwise have been available to them. As we will see in the later chapters, local semi-professional bands therefore included a high proportion of these often very experienced and highly trained ex-military musicians.

The Dance Band Network at its Commercial Height

The 1940s and 50s, which are covered in this chapter and also Chapters 5 and 6, were the heyday of the jazz-based dance bands and Palais bands. This helped to encourage local musicians to learn to play jazz, or at least the forms of jazz-influenced dance music required by local dancers and dance-hall managers (which isn't to imply that they weren't also enthusiasts of less commercial forms of the music - just that knowledge of commercial forms is what they needed if they wanted to play regularly in public). The musicians were growing up and developing contact networks of their own.[13] Male Voice Choirs, Ladies Choirs, Gilbert & Sullivan societies and so on sprang up in profusion after the war, and the brass bands, church choirs and orchestral societies were all still there, even when my interviewees had moved on into the jazz world. Taking the same pattern forward into later decades, many musicians from this network continued to play dance music and jazz for many years. Dennis Roscoe, for instance, was still playing in dance bands and big bands locally until shortly before his death in May 2013. The changes in popular music and culture which occurred in the 1960s undoubtedly had an impact on his musical activities, but they did not halt them.

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[12] See Baade (2012) as discussed in Chapter 3.

[13] In Granovetter's language, they were forming their own comprehensive sets of weak ties, which would help them to find work as musicians in the future.

The experiences and development of this group of musicians therefore provide a very interesting viewpoint for examining the popular music of the 1960s and beyond, by which time they were themselves the 'older generation' rather than the young apprentices. As we will see over the next four chapters, most are less bitter than one might expect them to have been, had they been motivated purely by the hope of a record contract and a full-time career in music. As part-timers, most had less to lose than they would have done as full-time professionals, when losing much or all of their dance band work to pop groups and discos would have had a far greater effect on their total income. The boundaries between jazz and popular music which have, historically at least, been so solidly defined when written about by theorists and critics of one genre or the other, look a lot more flexible and permeable from this perspective.

Strands 0, 1 and 2 in the 1940s and 50s: The Development of the Dance Band Networks

Chapter 4 focused on what I have called Strand 0 - the musicians mentioned by my interviewees who were already established and working with bands in the Chester area by the start of the 1930s, and the early musical development of some musicians from Strands 1 and 2. In this section I will focus on the next stage in the development of the local dance band network, bringing the Strand 1 and 2 musicians into paid gigs. Strand 1 people were old enough to have been called up into the Armed Forces in World War II, or to have been directed into a reserved occupation on the Home Front. Those in Strand 2 were born in the 1930s or very early 1940s, and did their National Service after the end of World War II (unless exempt for medical reasons). The musicians from these three groups formed the core of the local dance band scene during its busiest and most commercially successful period, from the 1940s through to the end of the 1950s. In this section I will focus on how these young musicians learned to play to a sufficient standard to perform regularly in public and for money, and how they established themselves as members of the necessary musical networks.

STRAND 0: already established by the 30s

As well as bandleaders like Field, other older musicians such as Ted Duckworth, Ernie Martin and Bill Bollard played important roles in the development of young musicians during

the war and in the immediate post-war period, by giving instrumental lessons, supplying instruments, or running practice bands for young musicians to learn the necessary skills in. In this chapter, it will be shown that the contributions of teachers, mentors and equipment dealers like these were crucial to the growing network's development.

STRAND 1: old enough to be in the forces before 1946.... OR reserved occupation

For some young musicians, the start of World War II put a temporary end to their playing careers. Doug Hall had just got established with the Adelphi Dance Band when his call-up papers arrived. He played his last gig with the Adelphi Dance Band at Tarporley on Saturday 1st September 1939, and on Monday morning he was marching to Chester station with the Cheshire Yeomanry, with the military band playing in front of the troops. He fought at Dunkirk and in Palestine, and did not return to the Chester music scene until after the end of the war (Hall, 2007).

Wilf Field was able to carry on playing and leading bands around Chester, however, because he was in a reserved occupation. His job at a company making aircraft components kept him out of the fighting, although he was required to do fire watching at night. His son Gordon remembers sitting high up with his father, watching the bombers over Liverpool.[14] Obviously the war had other effects on Field's band-leading activities. Clothes rationing meant that band uniforms weren't available, so he compromised by insisting that his musicians all wore the same tie emblazoned with his initials 'WF', and although the large numbers of service personnel stationed locally provided extra business for bands such as Field's, actually getting to and from the gigs could be challenging; Field's son recalls that his father found being driven fast along the dark Cheshire lanes in an American army jeep rather hair-raising, especially as the headlights had to be covered to show only narrow slits of light on the road ahead. The problems with uniforms, the musical opportunities provided by nearby American bases, and the blackout rules that led to the slit headlights, are all examples of the way in which size and form of a local music scene can be affected by the economic and political times in which it exists.

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[14] Unlike Liverpool, Chester did not suffer significant bombing during World War II, and was therefore a relatively stable and safe environment in which to live, work, and find (or provide) entertainment.

STRAND 2: National Service in the very late 40s or 1950s - born c. 1930~45

Meanwhile, over the water in Liverpool, a new generation of entertainers were growing up together, and being influenced by American films and forces radio stations.[15] One of them, Roy Edwards, went on to sing with nationally famous bands such as the Squadronaires and Geraldo (Edwards, 2005; Edwards & Azurdia, n.d).[16] Fellow pupils and contemporaries at the Granby Street School in Toxteth which Edwards attended included Frankie Vaughan, Mike Holliday, Lita Roza, Alma Warren and Leonard Rossiter. None of this group were directly connected to the Chester dance band scene at this stage (although Lita Roza does return in Chapter 8, accompanied by Chester musicians including Colin Gibson). However, Edwards' career included time with the Squadronnaires, who were mentioned as important influences by several interviewees, and also experience of aspects of British broadcasting from BBC vocal auditions to a later move to television. Like the history of BBC jazz and dance band broadcasting given in Chapter 2, Edwards' testimony therefore helps to describe the cultural context in which Chester dance band musicians lived and worked. Importantly, despite the fact that Edwards was a full-time professional musician for most of his life, and therefore occupied a different 'scene' or 'cultural field' than the local musicians interviewed for this study, many of his stories cover similar issues, including getting first performing opportunities, getting to know and be known by bandleaders with work to offer, earning more as a musician than he could have done in his 'day job', and finding new ways of putting his skills to use when cultural conditions changed.

As a youth, Edwards was an avid collector of Bing Crosby's records; as soon as one came out, he would order the next one. In 1944, he saw an item in the Liverpool Echo advertising a competition to find 'Liverpool's Bing Crosby'. He sang *Where the Blue of the Night*, and won the competition; the prize was a small pocket watch. His first opportunity to become a professional singer came when he was just 17 years old. Again the Liverpool Echo was to

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[15] For more information about American forces radio stations, see Baade (2012) as discussed in Chapter 3.

[16] Bands such as the Squadronaires and Geraldo's band were mentioned by several interviewees as having a great influence on them. For more on this, see Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7, as well as later in this chapter.

play an important part. Edwards' mother noticed that Oscar Rabin and his band were coming to the Tower Ballroom, New Brighton. As Edwards tells the story:-

> Unknown to me my mother wrote away to Oscar prior to coming to the ballroom and said, "Could my son possibly sing one song with the band? We'd like to bring our neighbours over and listen too," (laughs), and good enough he wrote back and he said, "Bring your son over the night that we're appearing."
>
> […] and I sang a song. I'll always remember it; it was *I'll Be Seeing You*.
>
> And he said, "Well bring your son next morning," so we had to go back again the next morning 'cause they were going back to London and they said, "We want your son as our male singer."
>
> Edwards & Azurdia (n.d.)

Edwards handed in his notice at the gents' outfitters where he worked, and joined Oscar Rabin and his band at the Dome Ballroom in Brighton. He was paid six pounds a week, which compared very well with the one pound ten shillings a week he had earned in the shop. He stayed with the Rabin band for a year, and his experiences included an audition at the BBC in London, where it was made clear that the BBC did not welcome American-influenced pronunciation, whatever the context. (As described in Chapter 3, this was partly due to a fear of 'Americanisation' in general, and partly because American-style crooning vocals were considered to be not just 'un-British', but also un-masculine. Singers who did not sound 'robust enough' were liable to be rejected and banned from broadcasting on the BBC (Baade, 2012).) He sang a song called *Coming Home*, which ended with the line 'Coming home to you'.

> they rapped the window of the glass cabinet and they said (bangs table), "Who are you saying yoo-hoo to Mr Edwards?"
> And I said, "I don't understand what you mean."
> "What's this yoo-hoo business, it says 'coming home to you' doesn't it?"
> and I said, "Yes."
> "Would you mind singing 'coming home to you'?"
> "Mr Rabin? Could we have that again?"
>
> Edwards & Azurdia (n.d.)

After a year or so back in Liverpool, where he sang with Harold Graham's band at the Rialto and Norman Woods at the Orrell Park Ballroom, Edwards moved on to the Felix Mendelssohn band. It was an opportunity to continuing singing professionally - even if it did involve wearing lightly disguised painters overalls and artificial flowers, and pretending to play the ukulele. His next move was to a well-known big band originally formed in 1939 by the RAF as the 'The Royal Air Force Dance Orchestra', but always known as the Squadronaires (Baade, 2012). By the time Edwards joined them, all the musicians had been demobbed from the RAF and the Squadronaires was a civilian band run on a commercial basis.[17] The band toured extensively up and down the UK, which could be difficult in the immediate post-war era. There were as yet no motorways, and the band travelled long distances in a battered and cold old bus. Trombonist George Chisholm always used to wear his pyjamas under his trousers to keep warm. Other famous Squadronaires musicians included trombone players Don Lusher and Eric Breeze. Edwards recorded with the Squadronaires at Decca. The producer was Dickie Rose - famously the man who did not sign the Beatles. The Squadronaires often topped Melody Maker polls, along with the bands led by Ted Heath and Victor Silvester.

Edwards left the Squadronaires to join Geraldo's band, staying with that band for four years until 1957. He was to be Geraldo's last singer before the band was broken up due to economic pressures; keeping a high-profile big band on the road full time was expensive, and increased competition which was both cheaper to hire and more popular with younger audiences made it uneconomic for many to continue. Like other full-time musicians, Edwards had to respond to this change in his economic environment. His next move was therefore off the road, and onto the small screen, specifically to ATV's *Lunch Box* programme, which was broadcast live each weekday lunchtime from Birmingham. What started off as a six-week trial run went on for six years, with 1255 45-minute programmes including Edwards singing five songs each day, backed by the Jerry Allen trio.

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[17] The Squadronaires' story thus encapsulates two important factors - the importance of social networks in the establishment and maintenance of musical organisations, and the influence of the military (described further in Chapter 6) on many musicians' careers.

One of the young Cestrians influenced by bands such as the Squadronaires was Reg Pritchard, who remembers being particularly impressed by them when they came to Chester on tour (Pritchard, 2008). During the war there he remembers a great deal of dance music on the radio, again from Geraldo, but also from the exciting, and in 1944, new, Ted Heath Band. Pritchard also remembers visits from other bands of the day, including Geraldo, Harry Gold and Edmundo Ross, and the US Army Western Base Band, which included celebrated reeds players such as Jackie Mondello.[18] In the late 1940s and early 1950s British bands such as those of Vic Lewis, Johnny Dankworth and Eric Winston visited the River Park Ballroom and other local dance halls.

Chester's proximity to Liverpool meant that relatives in the Merchant Navy would bring things back with them from trips to the USA. Initially these were mainly items like the fashionable drape suits, but they also brought back American records. Pritchard specifically remembers being introduced to the music of people like Woody Herman and Stan Kenton through this route. He also spent a lot of time listening to records in the booths at Rushworth and Dreaper's music shop, which seems to have fulfilled some of the functions of a very informal Rhythm Club, by allowing local jazz fans to meet and hear new music as it became available. Although Rushworth and Dreaper sold records and sheet music, anyone who decided that he wanted to become a musician needed to go elsewhere to get an instrument. Like all other non-essential goods, musical instruments of any age or condition were difficult to obtain during the war and for some years afterwards as well. Those that were available could cause unexpected problems for the unwary even if they seemed superficially to be in quite good condition.

> If you wanted a proper horn or percussion there was a shop in Frodsham Street [run by] Owen Parkinson, and I suppose they were the only sort of bona fide music shop in Chester, selling instruments that is, and of course there was Bowdler's Second Hand Emporium in Foregate Street, near the corner of City Road, who always had a good selection of band instruments in various conditions. But they were inevitably high pitch […] until the late 1930's all military band and brass bands used instruments

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[18] Several interviewees mentioned a Western Base Band, but there is disagreement over whether it was associated with the US Army or the US Air Force.

which were tuned a semitone above concert pitch, as distinct from concert pitch which had been the standard elsewhere.

Pritchard (2008)

This definition of 'high pitch' is not strictly accurate, as the difference between 'high pitch' and 'standard pitch' was not exactly a semi-tone. It would have been easier to deal with if it was; as things were, instruments built to the two different standards just sounded out of tune, and although a certain amount of adjustment was possible it made the instruments hard to play, and was never completely successful. Pitch 'standards', such as they were, had always been very variable from one time and place to another, but had tended to creep steadily upwards in the 19th Century - a phenomenon known as 'pitch inflation'. The current standard of A=440 Hz was actually agreed locally by a conference in Stuttgart in 1834, but took over 100 years, to 1939, to become enshrined as an international standard. In the meantime, a great many brass and woodwind instruments had been produced to a very wide range of standards (Cottrell, 2013, pp. 76 - 77). British brass and military bands had been working with a higher pitch standard than A=440 in the early twentieth century, and when they re-equipped with A=440 instruments, their cast-offs appeared on the second-hand market in large numbers. Aspiring young musicians often had no idea about these apparently trivial technicalities, and many bought high pitch instruments for what seemed to be a very good price, only to find out later that they could not get the instruments properly in tune with the modern standard when they tried to play with bands or orchestras.[19] The high pitch instruments were however perfectly serviceable for individual practice, and gave many young musicians a start in music which they might not otherwise have been able to have afford, especially at that stage in their lives. Thus, the environment for youngsters wanting to take up music was a little more welcoming during this period, and in this place, than it might otherwise have been, and especially if they wanted to take up and instrument which couldn't easily be adjusted to work with the new pitch standard; as previously explained, this conveniently happened to apply to the brass band and wind band instruments used by, for instance, local regimental bands. Stringed instruments however were not in this category, and were also falling out of favour for popular music. It would therefore have been relatively more expensive to buy a stringed instrument than a trumpet, clarinet or saxophone, with less

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[19] The note 'Pitch - Low 522' in Field's diary (Fig. 31) suggests that this was still a potential issue in the mid-1950s.

prospect of being able to make money by playing it locally. For parents or young music enthusiasts on a tight budget (as many of my interviewees were), such calculations were important.

Another reason why ex-military instruments found their way onto the second hand market in Chester was the proximity of the Cheshire Regiment barracks beside Chester Castle, which was home to the Regimental Band.

> Stan Masters, then the drum major of the Cheshire Regimental Band […] had a flat above the ladies and gents public convenience at the bottom of City Road from where he traded in drums and various accessories. Another supplier, [in] the late '40's maybe early '50's was Ernie Martin, ex-director of music of the Cheshire Regiment Band who set up a shop in Lower Bridge Street where he traded in musical instruments and fishing tackle - which was an interesting double I suppose you could say.
>
> Pritchard (2008)

Ernie Martin will return later, in his role as trumpet teacher to several other local musicians. Another man who had a big influence on the local music scene was Bill Bollard. He had a particularly strong influence on the life of one local musician - Syd Lawrence - who was eventually to become his son-in-law (Fig. 32), as well as a nationally known trumpet player and bandleader. Bill Bollard was a chartered accountant by day and a proficient jazz and dance band pianist by night. According to Pritchard, he 'claimed to be one of the few people in Chester who knew all the chords, as he put it'.[20] Bollard acted as mentor to many of the young musicians in the area.[21] Another essential part of the environment for these young musicians to develop in was a place to get together and practice, and there were a number of

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[20] See also 'Guitar George' who 'knew all the chords' in Mark Knopfler's 'Sultans of Swing' (Sullivan, 2013)

[21] In Bourdieusian terms, he and others like him taught them the rules of the game; Finnegan might say they showed them the pathways. This is an important role in the development and transmission of any musical genre. As Fabbri (1980) put it, "There are rules which have a written code … and others, no less important, which are passed on by oral tradition. […] The trumpet player in a classical orchestra and the one in a big band are certainly on the same level from the point of view of sight reading and memory, but from that of embouchure, extension and improvisation they are not in agreement and the interpretation of a rhythmical pattern … will find them in disagreement."

such places locally, including the Methodist Central Hall in City Road, the Handbridge Village Institute, and a club at the back of Chester market.

Uniformed organisations of various types provided musical opportunities for all ages. (The Southport Postal Military Band has already been mentioned.) During the war, Derek Mitchell's father was a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service in Chester, which had its own marching band (Fig. 33). The band was based in Liverpool, where they provided entertainment in places such as Stanley Park, and also had a cameo part in a film starring Tommy Trinder. A number of interviewees got early musical experience with bands associated with uniformed organisations for boys, which formed another part of an encouraging local environment for young bandsmen. Arrangers-to-be Harry Proctor and Tony Faulkner both started off playing a drum (each!) in marching bands associated with the Air Training Corps (ATC / air cadets) (Faulkner, 2007; Proctor, 2006). John Evans joined the Second Chester Boys' Brigade, and learned to play the bugle, which was good preparation for playing the trumpet later, when the firm he worked for decided they would like to have a band. They engaged a retired army bandmaster, Harry Ivor May, to conduct the band. Mr May obtained a set of surplus military band instruments, all in high pitch (Evans, 2006). (Playing a set of high pitch instruments together was not a problem, as they were all built to the same standard.)

Bert Cunningham was in the Scouts. His troop had ordered a band to play at a dance which they had sold tickets for, but on the night the band did not turn up. He and his friends - who were all about fourteen at the time - decided that they weren't going to let that happen again, and that they would buy some instruments and form their own band. Cunningham could already read music because he had had piano lessons. However for the band he chose the alto saxophone, because he would come across saxophones in a dance band and he had heard about one which was available for sale; it had previously belonged to the son of a work-mate of one of his cousins. He collected it from Liverpool during the Blitz of 1940, and was lucky to get home with both himself and his new acquisition in one piece (Cunningham, 2008).

Don Owens first started playing a brass instrument - initially the bugle - when he joined the Boy Scouts. He then joined the ATC Band as an honorary member (presumably without

actually joining the ATC as well). This was quite a sizeable band of drums and trumpets which went in for marching band competitions, and joined in with the VE Day celebrations in Chester towards the end of World War II. As Chester was a garrison town these celebrations were extensive, and for the whole of the day the market square was full of people being entertained by service bands. These included a very good band from RAF Sealand (with a WAAF vocalist), the Cheshire Regiment dance band, and the Western Command Dance Orchestra. This latter was made up of members of staff from the Western Command headquarters at Handbridge, and included the unusual sight of a Lieutenant Colonel in the front row of the band, playing the baritone saxophone (Owens, 2008).

World War II brought extra musical opportunities to established musicians like Wilf Field, but it was not always such a positive influence for youngsters just starting out, especially at the very start of the war. Trumpet player Tommy Jones was another local musician with family connections to local bands, in his case via a grandfather who played with the Railway Station Brass Band (Fig. 34). Jones had always been interested in music, and when he turned 10 years old in 1939 the plan was that the next time one of the band's cornets became available, it would be lent to Jones to learn on. However, the outbreak of war put paid to that idea; the band effectively closed down because so many of its older members were immediately called up into the forces, and all of the instruments were locked away in the band room. As a result, Jones's playing ambitions were put on hold for the duration of the war. However, he did have an uncle who was in the Navy who would bring records back with him from his trips abroad.[22] One of these records was Louis Armstrong's *I'm in the Mood for Love*, which Jones played over and over again on his wind-up gramophone, using a soft fibre needle which was supposed to wear the record out less quickly. Jones left school at the age of fourteen and went to work as an apprentice at Brooker Switchgear, where he met other young people who were interested in music, including a number from Wrexham and Mold on the far side of the Welsh border. When he did eventually get a trumpet to learn on at the age of 17, he initially had some lessons from Ernie Martin - the man previously mentioned by Reg Pritchard as running a shop selling both musical instruments and fishing tackle. However he spent far more time playing along with Louis Armstrong records than he

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[22] This is one of many examples of how the war helped to bring the influence of American musicians to places like Chester.

did playing the music which his teacher recommended, so the lessons didn't go on for very long:-

> …in the end Ernie Martin said to me "It's a waste of my bloody time."
> He said "You're just not doing it are you? You're going home and you're playing 'I'm in the Mood for Love' or something."
> I said, "Yeah, I probably am. In some ways it's so much easier for me to do that."
> "Well," he said, "fair enough, […] I think you'll do quite well, you play nice …"
> And that was the end of that.

> Jones (2007)

From that time on, he taught himself to play his preferred form of music - jazz. He soon realised that he could potentially make a useful side income from music. One night he was playing with an amateur band at the Cestrian Club when one of the local bandleaders invited him to come and play during the interval at a forthcoming youth club dance.[23] A scratch band was assembled while the main band were having their break, and proceeded to play three or four numbers together. At the end of the evening the bandleader, Johnny Hind, came up and said 'That was very well done Tommy. Keep up the good work.' Even better than the praise was the ten-shilling note which accompanied it. This was equivalent to half of Jones's weekly wage at that time. He immediately decided that music was a worthwhile activity to pursue.

Don Owens got his first cornet when his father brought him one back from Belgium after the war. Like Tommy Jones, he had lessons with Ernie Martin. Mr Martin suggested that Owens should join the Blue Coat Band - the post-war incarnation of the Chester Station Band. He did not particularly enjoy this though, not least because his cornet was 'continental pitch' (that is, A=440) and the Blue Coat Band were still playing on old sharp pitch instruments. However, he started to play with groups of friends, including Jones, at places like the Custom House pub in Chester, and Jones's aunt's pub (the Golden Lion) near Ruthin in North

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[23] The Cestrian Club was a pre-fabricated structure behind the Town Hall, which had originally been built as a club for war workers during World War II.   After the war, it was turned into a Youth Club. Other places where local young musicians used to gather included back rooms of pubs such as the Custom House, the Rising Sun, St. Oswald's, and the Methodist Youth Club at the Central Hall on City Road.

Wales.[24] (Reg Pritchard recalls that on a couple of occasions a coach was hired to take the aspiring young musicians, including Jones, Pritchard, Paul Blake, Alan Lewis, Peggy Dawson and others out to the Golden Lion, where they confused the locals - and themselves - with their attempts at bebop (Pritchard, 2008).)

Both Owens and Jones refer to the impact of the American forces on their musical development. Jones remembers hearing the Western Base Sector Dance Orchestra, who were based at Burtonwood near Warrington. He was too young to get to know any of them at the time, being only about fourteen, but he was very impressed by the band, which included ex-professionals who had toured with bandleaders such as Harry James and Tommy Dorsey before they were called up. In later years Jones played at Burtonwood with his own bands. This was after the war, but food rationing was, if anything, even tighter by then. He always enjoyed playing for the Americans because they were an appreciative audience, and also the food was always 'amazing'. Eggs were still strictly rationed, and egg sandwiches were still a luxury off base, but at Burtonwood they were easily obtained, and overflowing with two or three eggs each. Working as a musician thus had advantages beyond enjoyment and money payments, including access to food which could not easily (or legally) be obtained by other means. Hidden benefits like this were, for some, an important reason to keep the network in operation. This was another way in which the war and its aftermath affected the environment in which young musicians grew up.

Owens was a fan of the music played on the American Forces Network, including the Glenn Miller Army Air Force Band.[25] The Miller band arrived in Britain in June 1944 and played at numerous venues around the UK before leaving for France in December of that year. (Miller, famously, never arrived in France, although the rest of the band did.) One day Owens' mother came home from work and announced that Glenn Miller was going to be on the radio that evening. He was sceptical, but it was true; the band had arrived in Britain and were

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[24] Again, these could be seen as informal Rhythm Clubs. They were also the beginnings of the post-war dance band scene in the area.

[25] For more on the history and reach of the AFN, see Chapter 3. For more regarding the impact of Glenn Miller and his band in Britain, see Chapter 3 and Chapter 9.

broadcasting live that evening.[26]   The Miller band's closest visit to Chester was to Burtonwood on August 6th 1944 (Way, 1996).[27]   British big bands were also influential. Owens' aunt had a boarding house in Blackpool, which the family would visit every August. Blackpool was a Mecca for big bands, including Ted Heath who played at the Winter Gardens, and Geraldo at the Tower Ballroom. Owens and many of his friends were inspired by these bands:- "…they were absolutely super, very professional, beautifully turned out, and it was a great delight, especially in a period of austerity that we were living through then." (Owens, 2008)

Like Reg Pritchard, Owens would go with his friends to Rushworth and Dreaper to listen to the most recently released jazz records, and was encouraged by another local musician who mentored young learners, in this case Brian Cartwright, before progressing to local dance bands. Again, post-war austerity is very evident in the state of the facilities available and even more so the state and source of Owens' first dinner suit, but it's important to note the positive aspects of the environment too; opportunities to learn and develop as a dance band trumpet player were clearly available in the area:-

> …a chap called Brian Cartwright had a bit of a rehearsal for the learners as it were. It was at an old, beaten-up, wooden hut in Saltney Ferry. […] he provided the charts and we'd go through them bar by bar and try and make something out of it, which was very good. My first gigs of course, serious jobs, were with a chap called Ken Hudge. […] we had Saturday afternoon tea dances, or 'thé dansant' as they were called. In those days everyone had to wear dinner suits, even though the clothing was rationed in those days. I got this old, pre-war dinner suit, I think it was for 12/6d, and the silk facing had worn away and it was refaced with a sailor's scarf, which was really effective. [..] I also sat in with Al Powell. Now Al Powell's band was quite a progressive outfit for a dance band, by the standards of the day that is, and we got some very interesting charts to play.

> Owens (2008)

Clarinettist and saxophone player Danny Morgan had his first clarinet lessons from Ted Duckworth, a cellist-turned-woodwind player who played regularly with Wilf Field for many

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[26] Owens' sceptical response was reasonable, given the BBC's attitude to playing American Swing to domestic audiences up to that point (Baade, 2012).

[27] For more about Burtonwood, see Chapter 2.

years (Morgan, 2006). Morgan also mentions the Methodist Central Hall in City Road as a meeting place for aspiring young musicians, although he made more progress some years later after leaving the Navy with enough money to buy both a clarinet and a saxophone from the ubiquitous Ernie Martin, who also taught him the rudiments of the saxophone. He also took clarinet lessons from Bill Moulton, who was a Sid Phillips enthusiast, and sought advice from Dennis Williams (who returns later playing with Syd Lawrence) on jazz phrasing. Like Tommy Jones, he was attracted by the prospect of being able to make money from music, and took every opportunity to get experience by 'sitting in' with local dance bands. This sometimes took him well outside his musical comfort zone. 'Sitting in' was a common way of gaining (usually unpaid) experience with a working band. One evening Morgan was sitting in with Peter Deponio's band, playing second alto saxophone. The lead alto part was being played by Jimmy Makin, who he describes as a 'beautiful player'. However, problems arose after the interval, when Makin returned from the break too inebriated to continue.[28]

> Jimmy was a piss-head and at the interval he was so drunk, he went up, sat down back on his chair in front of the desk, put his sax on his sling […] and he fell off the stand…[into the audience]. […] He was absolutely out.
>
> So, of course, we tucked him at the back of the stage and [Deponio] said, "right, - first alto". I think I coped reasonably well!

<div align="right">Morgan (2006)</div>

The first or 'lead' alto player has similar responsibilities to the leader of first violins in an orchestra, being responsible for giving a lead to the section as a whole (Cottrell, 2013, p. 178). The first alto is also a much more noticeable musical line than that played by the second alto; it is therefore not the place for the faint-hearted or incompetent. Morgan also got experience by sitting in with Brian Cartwright, having borrowed Ray Cummin's tenor saxophone to do so. If Cartwright got two bookings on the same evening, he would split his

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[28] A lot of dance band work took place on premises which were licensed to serve alcohol, so quite heavy drinking - while by no means the rule - was fairly common among the musicians described by my interviewees. There was not even a requirement to stay sober enough to drive home; apart from the fact that cars, where available, were usually shared, this was before the advent of strict drink-driving laws and alcohol breath tests.

band up and send the sections out separately.[29] Cartwright's band (or bands) at this stage included other musicians we will hear about again later, including drummer Frank Fuller and pianist Eddie Heywood. One of their regular gigs was at the Co-op Hall in Queensferry, on the Welsh side of the River Dee. Wilf Field also used to split his musicians into several smaller bands when required. The diary pages in Figure 35 show some of the combinations he used (for example in the top right-hand corner - 'Piano, Drums, Tr/pt & Tenor'). The numbers refer to the library numbers of song arrangements which were appropriate to each instrumental combination.

Clarinettist Paul Blake may have given up piano lessons, but during the war he was inspired to take up music again by the bands he heard on the American Forces Network:-

> I was knocked out by the likes of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Woody Herman and people of that nature, and the big bands, particularly Duke Ellington, […] and his main clarinet player there was Jimmy Hamilton […] he's in the same sort of field as Goodman and Shaw as a clarinet player.

> Blake (2007)

When he was seventeen, Blake managed to obtain his first clarinet which cost him 30 shillings - the same amount as Roy Edwards had earned each week at the gents' outfitters a couple of years previously. Woodwind instrument technology was still progressing rapidly in the early twentieth century, and the instrument which Paul bought was an old 'simple system' clarinet, with less complex keywork and different fingering than more modern designs. Unfortunately it was also a sharp pitch instrument, which is why he got it relatively cheap. He replaced it with an Albert system clarinet which was built to the modern pitch standard, but whose keywork was also obsolescent. Eventually that too was replaced with a modern Boehm system clarinet, so during his musical career Blake has (unusually) played on three different basic designs of clarinet, as well as two different pitch standards. He took lessons from a Mr Clarke, who worked by day as a fishmonger. Mr Clarke played in various dance

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[29] See Chapters 1 and 2 (and Appendices A and B) for more on the practices of splitting bands, and playing the same arrangements with various sizes of bands.

bands locally. He was known for taking jobs on either tenor or alto saxophone, but doing all the actual playing on a C-melody saxophone and transposing on the fly (Cottrell, 2013, p. 158). Blake's career to this point therefore exemplifies many of the aspects of the local musical environment described so far, including influences from technological changes which helped him to afford to get started, World War II (and in particular the extra access to American music which came with it), and the way that many local musicians worked in full-time occupations which had little or nothing to do with music.

Pianist Colin Gibson had taken up the piano just before the war, and continued to have classical piano lessons locally with a retired member of staff from Trinity College of Music. Unlike Paul Blake, Gibson was upset to have to give up piano lessons to keep up with his school homework. As well as taking piano lessons, he was also a member of a church choir (where he occasionally played the organ, because so many older musicians were away due to the war). This took up his spare time on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, and his school marks were being affected, which meant that for a while music had to be shelved in favour of grammar school education.

The war did bring unexpected musical benefits and access to previously unavailable cultural capital however:-

> During the war my mother was by works order sent to Sealand Aerodrome. My father by works order went to the other side of Liverpool. My brother had joined the RAF and we had thrust on us two titled ladies. They were transport drivers at Sealand Aerodrome and one of them Joan Platt, Lady Platt, was a concert pianist and she used to play everything, all the popular classics on the piano and she also in those very early days encouraged me an awful lot to play piano.[30]
>
> Gibson (2006)

Later, Gibson's mother ran a boarding house which became popular with musicians who worked at local dance halls such as the River Park Ballroom. Guests included Sid Munson,

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[30] This is one of the very small number of mentions of women musicians made by my interviewees.

Roy Holiday, Denis Ackerman (Denny Mann) and Joe Ferrier. They even had a visit from an alumnus of the Henry Hall band:-

> …a chap turned up for about three weeks who had been a tenor player with Henry Hall […] and he was with us about three weeks, a very nice chap, tall, thin chap. […] when he was leaving he asked me if I'd give him a lift to the station […] with one of his cases. And he said, I'll just have a tinkle on this piano of yours and honestly, for those days, he was one of the finest pianists I've ever heard. He just knocked heck out of it and I'd never heard piano like it at that time.
>
> Gibson (2006)

Another advantage of Gibson's home was that it had three floors above ground level, which meant the radio reception was good. He had a shortwave radio which he used to use to listen to the American Forces Network, including 'Luncheon in Munchen' and the 'Mad Baron of Bounce'. He loved the American presenters' turns of phrase, such as "when the bed sergeant comes round for his late check-up, tell him you're temporary gone", "all those people who've gone had better come back so you can go some more", and "Yes it may be snowing in Garmisch, but it's cool in the hot house of jazz". This show featured the Charlie Barnet band with their signature tune 'Compton Turnpike'. Gibson also heard Stan Kenton's band playing 'Concerto to End all Concertos' for the first time on his shortwave wireless set - another example of the way in which World War II and its aftermath (including the Cold War, which entailed US Forces being stationed in Britain and Europe for decades after 1945) affected the development of young musicians.

However, becoming a dance band musician required more than just a second-hand instrument and an enthusiasm for American musical influences. For instance, Gibson's classical training helped him to get a foothold among the local dance band musicians. One night in about 1945 or '46 he was at the youth club with a friend, watching a table tennis match. His friend was struggling with some music homework, which involved transposing a passage up by a minor third. Gibson said 'Just give it to me, Charlie', and wrote it out in front of him. Charlie was mightily impressed, and invited Gibson along to the Custom House pub to meet other local musicians, including Tommy Jones, Eddie Heywood, Alan Lewis (a drummer) and Bill Harris (a trumpet player). So there were people around who were playing music, and opportunities to develop skills as a musician by playing with them. As with Danny Morgan,

another musician's excessive alcohol intake gave Colin one of his early gigging opportunities. As he described it, "I was aged about eighteen [c. 1950] and I played at the Sergeant's Mess at Chester Castle because a well-known pianist known as Drunken Eddie had fallen off the stool the night before and fractured his wrist."[31] (Gibson, 2006)

Slightly before this, Gibson decided to take up the trombone as well as the piano. In another combination of American cultural influences and locally focused practicality, this was partly because he was a Glenn Miller fan, and partly because he hoped that if he took up a brass instrument he might have the opportunity to become a bandsman when he did his National Service. He learned the rudiments of the instrument from George Knight, who played with Al Powell's band. He then joined the Chester Orchestral Society, playing trombone parts, and French horn parts on the trombone (presumably due to a lack of available French horn players). The orchestra was conducted by Ernie Martin, who as a former Kneller Hall bandmaster had a wide musical education and good conducting skills. Martin encouraged Gibson, and lent him tutor books and practice material.

Geoff Anderson was born eight years later than Paul Blake, in 1936, and had much less trouble in getting hold of instruments to learn on. However, post-war austerity still played a major part in his early career in a quite a variety of ways, including petrol rationing and housing shortages (Anderson, 2006). When Anderson was about sixteen, his father had a conversation with a friend about National Service, and how best to prepare his son for it. The friend advised that the boy should learn a musical instrument, as this would give him a chance of getting into a band. The first attempt was not successful; Anderson joined Tarporley Brass Band and attempted to learn the cornet, but he could not make progress with the instrument at all; he could not even get a note out of it. His father's friend came to the rescue again, advising that Anderson should try the clarinet next, as "if he can play the clarinet, he can play the saxophone, but it doesn't work the other way."

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[31] 'Drunken Eddie' Carmen continued to play in the area for some years after this. Ray Cummings remembers playing with him sometimes at Gordon Vickers' Flamingo Jazz Club in Boughton - of which more in Chapter 8.

Anderson's father brought him a top of the range clarinet. Anderson went into Chester to listen to some bands, and came across the Al Powell Orchestra at the River Park Ballroom, where he got talking to the lead alto player, Wally Robertson. Anderson was already acquainted with some of the other musicians in the band: Joe Roe (the drummer), Ray Cummings (second alto), Stan Bowness (tenor), and Dennis Pritchard (trumpet). He and the musicians got chatting, and Robertson mentioned that he was looking for somewhere to live as he had just got married. (Accommodation was a serious problem for some years after the war because of the quantity of bomb damage in urban areas.) By coincidence, Anderson knew a neighbour in Duddon who had a caravan for sale. Robertson and his wife looked at the caravan, liked it, and bought it. Now they needed somewhere to put it, and as it turned out, there was just room to get the caravan between buildings and onto some land behind Anderson's family's house. A shed was fixed up as an outside toilet, and Mr and Mrs Robertson moved in. Instead of paying rent, Robertson gave Anderson a clarinet lesson each week. He also helped him to work his way into some local bands that he knew about. Having Robertson living in the back garden could lead to some exciting musical experiences: "he was so enthusiastic that he used to get the five sax section sitting in this caravan with music on chairs and the sink and all this kind of thing. And he used to have the five sax section with guys out of the Northern Dance Orchestra." (Anderson, 2006) There are several examples in this story of the strength of weak ties outside of a person's own family and close friends, as described by Granovetter. Anderson's father's friend was in this sense a 'weak tie' who helped to introduce Anderson to music in general, and making contacts in the local dance band network by meeting Robertson, Cummings, Bowness and their associates was part of the process by which Anderson started to establish his own musical contact network.

Anderson's acquisition of a saxophone - and the opportunity to play it in public - came about through a similar set of weak tie interactions. By 1953 he had passed his driving test. Naturally Robertson knew about this, and happened to pass the information on to bandleader from Crewe called Lincoln Lee. Lee employed a regular drummer called Ted Whitley, who lived in Chester but did not have his own transport. Lee asked if Anderson could give Whitley a lift to a gig, and Anderson agreed. The gig was several weeks ahead at this point, and on the strength of this Anderson's father went out and bought him a saxophone - a Varsity - from Stock & Chapman's in Manchester. The reconditioned instrument cost £75, and although it was not ideal it was sufficient for Anderson's requirements then. Lee was

happy to allow him to sit in on second tenor - possibly because he was pleased that at last his drummer had some transport. Anderson did not make any money at this stage, as the money Whitley gave him towards petrol went straight to his father, but he got invaluable experience from sitting in with the band and doing gigs with them.

Wartime Entertainment: Visitors, Restrictions and Opportunities

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Chester in the 1940s was surrounded by numerous military bases. Some of these - like the air base at Hawarden - had been built for the purpose. Many others, such as Eaton Hall, were requisitioned and adapted. In both cases, the personnel involved had several types of impact on Chester itself. Some lived on base or in barracks, while others were billeted in family homes and commercial premises in the city itself. Wherever they lived, many came into the city when off duty to go to the pubs and entertainment venues. War workers at local factories likewise lived and socialised in or close to the city. One result of this influx, which included service personnel and war workers from elsewhere in the British Empire and Commonwealth as well as the USA, was that Chester temporarily became a more cosmopolitan place, and young musicians were able to get a broader range of musical experience without leaving home than would otherwise have been the case, as the examples in this section demonstrate.

Danny Morgan recalled being fascinated by the music the American servicemen played at their dances at places like the Chester College gym[32]:-

> I first started getting interested in dance music when I was about fifteen or sixteen but with neither money nor the nerve to go in unaccompanied, listen[ed] outside to these places. I was particularly interested because the Americans had just arrived with their great music and the place I used go mostly because it was the easiest place to get into was the College Gym in Parkgate Road and if you kept quiet the Americans would let you listen as long as you did not make a nuisance of yourselves. So that was really an open door for furthering my interest in music.

> Morgan (2006)

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[32] The Chester College gym is now part of University of Chester.

Morgan recalled that there was an ATS barracks at the top of Rocky Lane in a building which later became a maternity hospital, and ATS girls used to walk down the hill to the dances in the gym - another example of the many ways in which World War II influenced the musical development of young players in the area.[33]   Later, Morgan's sister used to let him into dances which were held at St. Oswald's church hall – also known as 'Ossie's' - a short distance away in Cheyney Road.   (This building was later replaced by what is now St. Oswald's Primary School.)   The band there was a British civilian dance band, 'but they played decent dance music, and at the interval they served tea, coffee and biscuits.'   Morgan's sister was helping with the refreshments, so she was able to get him in for free, provided that he behaved himself and kept out of the way.

Morgan and his contemporaries did not always behave themselves of course, particularly as they got older. Some venues in Chester were well known for reasons other than their beer or music. Regarding the Stafford Hotel on City Road, which Don Owens described as 'a bit of a blood-tub'.   Morgan said: "I took Mew Dykes there with Noddy and his girlfriend, I don't know who he was with at the time. And Noddy will probably deny this, we got into a potential fight and Noddy backed off because we could have eaten them. …We could have eaten them." (Morgan, 2006) This was not one of Morgan's regular haunts though. He preferred the Union Vaults on Egerton Street, and the place in Bridge Street (possibly the Oddfellows Arms) which later became the Royal Naval Club, where it was possible to get alcohol even if, like Morgan, you were obviously too young to drink legally. Stories such as this should be kept in mind when considering later anecdotes about the violent behaviour associated with (for instance) Teddy Boys; the violence was not an entirely new phenomenon, even if the clothing fashions were.

Confirming what has been discussed previously regarding the number of pubs and venues packed into a relatively small area in Chester, as well as (once again) the wartime influence of the American forces, Morgan listed a number of other venues in Chester city centre. These

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[33] The ATS was the Auxiliary Territorial Service - the women's branch of the British Army. The barracks referred to here later became the Plantation Hotel. The building now belongs to the University of Chester, and is used as student accommodation.

included the former Crosville Social Club, near the Eastgate Street clock, which was turned into a ballroom / billiard hall during the war, and became popular with American servicemen. Morgan's mother had recently had a major operation, and his father took him there and left him there for hours on end. Near what is now the Edinburgh Wool Shop was another American services venue, which was run by the American Red Cross.

In another example of the influence of the war on the local live music economy, when the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth was bombed in 1943, it was moved wholesale from the Devon coast to the Duke of Westminster's country house at Eaton Hall, a couple of miles outside Chester city centre. Regular officers for the Royal Navy were trained there until 1946. From then until 1958 it continued to be used as an officer training school, but largely to train Infantry National Service officers. The presence of the officer cadets was good for business at the dance halls they frequented. Local women went to those venues hoping to meet an eligible young officer, and local men went to the same venues because the local women were there. Mrs S. Sweeney reported that

> Officer Cadets […] used to go to Quaintways and Clemences, those were the two ballrooms […] they were perfect gentlemen and I was engaged to a couple of them - because they came for 16 weeks, you'd fall madly in love with them and then they'd be sent off and you'd be heart-broken and then there'd be another intake of course and so it was a wonderful time, a wonderful time.
>
> Sweeney (2006)

Mary Kelly was in the Land Army near Rhyl during the war. She did not do much dancing then – Land Army work was physically demanding, and she was usually too tired.[34] However, after the war she joined the WRNS, and had more time and energy for

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[34] Kelly was a keen dancer: her father was a dancing teacher and the whole family had gone to dances together when she was at home in Chester. This usually involved walking to and from the venue, which might be in Queensferry, or at the Vaughan Hall in Shotton, although as the latter venue had 'a bit of a name' for unruly behaviour, she wasn't allowed to go there until she was older.

entertainment. By that time she was based in the Southeast, initially in Reading, and later in Essex.[35] She said:

> [We went out] Most weeks. It was a question of "How much have we got this week?", you know, "How are we?". [..]we used to pool our resources. [...] From Reading I went to Essex - a place called Shotton Gate. A lovely place. Three years I was there. I didn't want to leave there. Super time! And there we danced. We had dances all the time.
>
> Kelly (2005)

Many of these dances were actually on the base, in either the Officers' Mess or the Sergeants' Mess. Similar situations will have occurred at bases in the Chester area, and indeed throughout the UK; many thousands of young people of both genders were posted miles from home for months or years at a time (Nicholson, 2012), and on-base entertainment was an important ingredient in keeping up their morale (Baade, 2012; McKay, 2011). This in turn had a significant positive effect on local live music economies, affecting local music market places in both Bourdieusian and Ricardian senses.

By the mid-40s, Harry Proctor was becoming established locally as a dance band pianist and saxophone player. He got together with sax player Dave Chassey, drummer Graham Siddall and bass player John Park (who played a double bass borrowed from one of Proctor's father's friends), and they started to practice together in Graham's house. At this stage they were doing what many local bands did and playing from 'bob copies' - sheet music parts costing a shilling each - usually all in unison without any attempt at making their own arrangements. Proctor decided he could do better than this, and started to write his own arrangements, inspired by the music of American big bands such as that of Glenn Miller. This was appreciated by younger audiences. The band called themselves the 'Swing Serenaders', and Proctor's father made some wooden music stands for them emblazoned with the letters 'SS'. (At this stage no one had heard of the Nazi SS in Northwich.) They also bought a small P.A. system with a carbon microphone for announcements and singers. Like Reg Pritchard, Proctor remembers that getting transport to and from gigs could be a challenge, as petrol was

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[35] The WRNS was the Women's Royal Naval Service, the women's branch of the Royal Navy.

severely rationed. However some taxi people could obtain fuel, and it was arranged that a local taxi driver called Charlie Barber would take the band's equipment to the venues. The musicians - still only fifteen or sixteen years old - got themselves there on foot or by bike.

The band grew, adding extra musicians including another saxophone, Dennis Tattle on trumpet and Geoff Cross on trombone, and played at some large venues around Cheshire, including the baths at Northwich, where a floor was built over the baths for dancing in the winter.[36] They also played a memorable gig at a school on Helsby Hill which was used during the war as a dormitory for migrant workers who had come over (mostly from Ireland) to work in the factories nearby. The gig was on a Saturday night, and getting there and back was difficult, so the band had to spend the night at the venue.

Proctor joined the forces himself in 1945 when he was 18, but just before that he and the Swing Serenaders had the experience of playing for General Patten's American Third Army headquarters staff, who were based in Cheshire. They played at the Delamere Park Camp officers' club. One of the Americans was a clarinettist called Danny Casale who sat in with their band quite often, and kept in touch by letter after returning home to Florida. The Delamere Camp gigs initially caused some consternation at Proctor's home, as an American Army lorry was sent to collect the band. The lorry's crew were very friendly and very loud, and Proctor's mother and grandmother were concerned about what the neighbours would think. However, after the gig the band were given gifts from the American larder stores to take home with them. When Proctor's mother saw the large basket of tinned food he brought back with him, she changed her mind about the noisy Americans. 'That's very nice dear,' she said. 'You can go there again.' (Proctor, 2006)

Proctor's story is a good example of the processes involved in getting established in the local live music scene, as well as including further examples of effects of World War II on the local musical economy and environment, from interaction with American servicemen and jazz musicians, to transport issues and rationing.

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[36] For more on dances at swimming baths, see Chapter 7 and Appendix B.

Conclusions

To sum up the examples introduced in this section, the main local factors in young musicians' development at this time, as reported by interviewees, included prior family involvement in music, the influence of established musical organisations such as brass bands, youth organisations such as the Boy Scouts and youth clubs, and the proximity of military bases such as Chester Castle. The latter was particularly important, as regimental bandmasters and bandsmen were important locally as music teachers and instrument dealers (including the supply of obsolete 'high pitch' instruments previously used by the regimental bands).

Wider influences on Chester's young dance band musicians included UK-based touring bands such as those led by Oscar Rabin and Geraldo, and bands which had their roots in the military such as the Squadronaires. From World War II onwards, American bands and musicians were also very important influences, partly through channels such as the American Forces' Network radio station, but at least as importantly, through direct contact at bases such as Burtonwood, and because of the large numbers of US personnel who lived far closer to Chester than that, including those billeted in the city itself.

World War II and the Cold War which followed had other effects on musicians who were already, or were to become, part of the local dance band scene. They were all affected by the increased levels of military mobilisation which resulted, either directly through being called up into the Armed Forces, or indirectly through being directed into specific civilian employment. In the next chapter, I will look at the role of military service in providing musical training and experience for dance band musicians, before returning to the local story in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 6: PLAYING WITH THE MILITARY

Introduction

There have been numerous examples so far of how interviewees benefitted musically from the presence of military bases in the local area, ranging from second-hand instruments from regimental bands and music lessons from ex-military bandsmen, to opportunities to play at US bases, and to hear American jazz records via the American Forces Network radio stations during and just after the war.[37] Military requirements for and provision of live music had a more direct effect on some musicians' development though, and that is what I will focus on in this chapter, starting with the role of the Armed Forces as direct employers of musicians, then moving on to the way in which music as an extra-curricular activity in the forces provided its own unique musical opportunities[38].

The Armed Forces as a Producer and Employer of Musicians

Ex-military bandsmen frequently formed the backbone of local dance bands, including (as later examples will show) those in the Chester area. The Armed Forces needed a lot of competent musicians who could be sent to all corners of the world to, literally, 'entertain the troops', often under very difficult conditions (Instructions for Army Bands, 1963; Royal Air Force Squadronaires, 2013). Because of this, they employed musicians and maintained full-time professional bands, and also trained large numbers of musicians. This was partly because the musicians were technically soldiers, sailors or airmen whose specialist trade skill happened to be music; they therefore had to undergo the relevant service's basic training, along with acquiring other skills for use in times of conflict (for instance, acting as stretcher-bearers or medical orderlies). The other reason why the military maintained its own institutions for musical training is that what they needed was not provided elsewhere. Military bandsmen had to be highly competent at providing music purely for entertainment, something which was emphatically not on the curriculum at civilian institutions such as the London music colleges at this time, or indeed for decades to come. The Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall (Music, 2013) in Twickenham provided training in

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[37] For more on the AFN, see Chapter 3.

[38] From a theoretical point of view, playing music in the Forces allowed the musicians to build up both cultural and social capital which continued to be valuable to them long after they returned to civilian life.

traditional classical harmony and instrumental technique to a very high standard, but they also positively encouraged students to learn all the skills required by jazz-based dance bands, including jazz arranging and composition as well as performance. Along with correspondence courses or learning on the job with a professional touring band, this was one of the very few ways for young British musicians to learn these skills to a high level. Military bandsmen - especially those who had had extra training at places like Kneller Hall - had a reputation for being well-trained, versatile, resilient performers with frighteningly good sight-reading skills. Not surprisingly, many found employment after leaving the military as session musicians in London recording studios, where this combination of attributes was highly valued. They were equally popular with dance bandleaders all over the country, for the same set of reasons. In this chapter I will focus on some more detailed examples of ways in which musicians acquired musical training and experience while in the Armed Forces, either as full-time musicians or in their spare time while employed in other military roles.

"I know you're an Army chap; you'll read everything that goes in front of you."
The story of how Norman Frost became involved in music as a boy is very much an example of how the economic environment of 'total war' in World War II (as referred to in Chapter 3) affected all aspects of daily life, including music education in schools. Frost's first forays into music making took place at school in Surrey, where a determined and industrious music teacher found ways to ensure that his charges were able to make a start with woodwind instruments in spite of shortages of money and materials. Mr Hart-Hawkins made bamboo pipes in four sizes - treble, alto, tenor and bass - which were very well made and in tune. He made enough of them for all 600 boys at the school to join in, and wrote arrangements for the band of pipers to play. Frost took to the instrument and quickly became very proficient on it. Mr Hart-Hawkins encouraged him by putting him in charge of testing the other boys' progress. Eventually Frost was able to by a real flute - although still a simple system one - and became proficient on that as well. After he left school he carried on playing as an amateur, before auditioning for a place in an Army band when he was seventeen, which was to lead him to playing with the 4th Queen's Own Hussars bands in cities all around Europe. He met many very good musicians in the Army. When he left after seven years he got a job straight away with the Bernie Weller Orchestra, playing for Billy Smart's Circus. (When Frost enquired about the job, Weller said 'I'm not going to give you an audition. I know you're an Army chap; you'll read everything that goes in front of you,' and gave him the job

on the spot.) This started with 12 well-paid weeks at the Liverpool Stadium, Orrell Park, playing six nights a week, with matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays, as well as regular television appearances.   (Frost, 2008)

When Don Owens was called up for his National Service he had decided that he wanted to join an Army band in order to get a good practical education in music. With the help of the ubiquitous Ernie Martin, who again acted as both mentor and important 'weak tie' to desired musical opportunities, Owens got a position in the 11th Hussars Band, first of all in Germany, and then in Malaya during the Malayan Emergency. This led to an association with the tune 'Caribbean Clipper' which persists in his memory to this day:-

> The dance band had an engagement to play, a very snooty colonial club called The Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur. Now, if you can imagine a 10 piece band, all armed with about 50 rounds of ammunition a piece, driving with an escort to the gig, unloading, chaining all the weapons together with a guard over them, and then setting up for the night, and as can only happen in the tropics, down came the rain. So we all went inside, set up again, and opened up with Glen Miller's Caribbean Clipper, which always reminds me of that day. Everyone was soaking wet of course, and with the heat of the atmosphere, a cloud appeared over the ceiling of the ballroom. Most extraordinary phenomenon, I've never seen anything like it before or since, but whenever I play Caribbean Clipper it always reminds me of those days.
>
> Owens (2008)

Les Stevenson hailed originally from Sheffield, and like Frost and Owens was to travel widely as a result of joining an Army band. Stevenson remembers passing dance halls as a teenager and hearing the sounds of bands playing inside, and even then wanted to be in a band, but other than some piano lessons as a child he did not play an instrument until he managed to get hold of his first saxophone when he was about seventeen. Saxophone teachers were very few and far between in Sheffield then, so he largely taught himself to make a sound and find the notes. About six weeks later he joined a small dance band which played at venues such as local Catholic clubs, and on V.E. night in 1945 he played out-of-doors with a small band.[39] Stevenson was also interested in jazz and dance band harmony,

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[39] According to Stevenson, the band "probably sounded horrendous", but provided him with very worthwhile early experience.

but local teachers for those subjects were even harder to find than saxophone teachers, so he enrolled on a correspondence course which he saw advertised in the Melody Maker.[40] The course, which was produced by Ray Noble's brother Bert Noble, who led the resident band at the Astoria in Leeds, was paid for in weekly instalments. This was a basic course in harmony which provided a solid foundation for further studies later on. Shortly after the end of the war, Stevenson was conscripted into the Army, where he grabbed at the opportunity to join an Army band with both hands:-

> I finished the initial 6 weeks training in Pontefract and at the end of that everyone […] would have to go in front of the person called the personnel selection officer and if you could make a cake he'd put you in the army catering corps sort of thing. And when it was my turn to go in he looked at my papers and he said "I see you're a musician?"
> I said, "Yes Sir."
> He said, "Well I'm going to send you into the Corps of Signals."
> So I said, "Why's that?"
> "Cause I suppose musicians can pick up the Morse code more quickly, you know […] So would you like that?"
> I said, "No!"
> I said, "I'd like to go into one of the bands."
> So he said, "Well you've got to pass an audition to get into the bands. You know, you can't just walk into a band." And he said, "Do you want me to put in for one?"
> So I said, "Yes."
> And so an audition was arranged for me and I remember the audition was with a person called Burt Rhodes who, when he left the Army, which was only a few weeks after my audition, he took over as the M.D. of the London Hippodrome. He was a brilliant musician. […] He [orchestrated] all the music for the 007 film called *Dr No*.

> Stevenson (2005)

Stevenson's first posting with the band was to Berlin in 1946. He was engaged to play the clarinet, but when he arrived the band needed a saxophone player more, so he drew a saxophone out of the stores and started playing the saxophone with the concert band. He stayed with that band for three years before returning to the UK to take a course at the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, Twickenham. One of the other students there was an ex-professional dance band player, and organised a school dance band to play for dances

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[40] John Barry, who later became a highly successful composer and arranger for films and pop records, played trumpet in the army during National Service. Like Les Stevenson and many others, Barry learned jazz arranging through a correspondence course. After leaving the Army he formed the John Barry Seven, partly from musicians he knew from the Army.

at Kneller Hall.[41] Stevenson auditioned, and got into the dance band playing alto saxophone, baritone saxophone and clarinet. For the rest of his year at Kneller, he rehearsed with the dance band for at least two afternoons every week, as well as playing for all of the students' dances. This was of course on top of the classical clarinet and saxophone training he had been sent there to do. However, unlike the academic conservatoires, the authorities at Kneller Hall positively encouraged their students to play dance music, as one of the major functions of all the military bands was to provide popular entertainment. Every regimental band had its own dance band, whose function was mainly to play for regimental dances. They also provided public entertainment, especially during the war when 'holidays at home' were encouraged. (As Stevenson put it, 'You couldn't really go abroad, could you?') Army concert bands and dance bands therefore provided plenty of entertainment in local parks during holiday periods. Army dance bands were also available for civilian functions, charging the Musicians' Union rate. Another important role for military bands was 'entertaining the troops' who were stationed for long periods in remote locations overseas, such as Egypt and the Sudan. In an era before satellite television and portable, high quality recorded music devices, regimental bands and dance bands were an essential component in the maintenance of morale away from home. Their important part in the war effort also made them a crucial part of the wider musical network, and a conduit not just for music but also for musicians between their homes, and far-flung locations all over the planet.

By the time Stevenson had finished his year at Kneller Hall, his regiment had moved to Hamburg. He was a much better musician as a result of his year in Twickenham, and was immediately enlisted in the regimental dance band as lead alto; he was soon put in charge of the band. He also continued to play alto saxophone in the concert band. Among the highlights of this period were broadcasting every Friday and Sunday on the British Forces Network, playing music requested by forces personnel and their families back in the UK. In

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[41] Kneller Hall, like many military establishments, had its own internal marketplace for dance music. In this case the opportunities to acquire both cultural and social capital it provided were particularly important (and particularly encouraged by the authorities), as the musicians concerned were in training to run bands of their own at far-flung military bases around the world. Many continued to draw on this social and cultural capital long after their return to civilian life.

1953, Stevenson returned to Kneller Hall, this time for a three-year conductor's course.[42] This began with what was called the probationary period, when students had to prove proficiency on their main instrument, and also pass exams in harmony, counterpoint, instrumentation, orchestration and arranging. A practical exam at the end of this period included playing a prepared piece, sight-reading, transposing at sight, and the usual scales and arpeggios. Reports were also received from each student's various professors. Stevenson passed this stage; those who did not were returned there and then to their regimental bands. Conductors were required not just to know about the various families of musical instruments used by military bands, but to be able to play a wide selection of them as well. As a reed instrument specialist, Stevenson was required to learn the rudiments of all the brass instruments. He started with six weeks or so of lessons and practice on the trumpet, culminating in a practical exam on that instrument. This process was then repeated with the trombone, then the French horn, and so on through the rest of the brass section. Brass players went through an equivalent process, steadily working their way through the woodwind section. (Presumably percussion instruments were included in this as well at some point, although Stevenson did not specify when.)

Concurrent with gaining instrumental proficiency and versatility, students continued with more advanced studies in harmony (which Stevenson learned from Dr. Norman Richardson) and counterpoint. They also learned instrumentation and orchestration - taught by the prominent military band arranger W J Duthoit - leading up to written exams. Questions included 'arrange the given melody for an orchestra of 35 which includes strings.' Students were required to sit in the exam room and write their arrangement direct to manuscript there and then. The exams also included questions to test the students' knowledge of the instruments available to them. Most of these questions were practical in nature, but some were more obscure: Stevenson particularly remembers one, which asked 'What is a marine trumpet?' (Bizarrely, it is not a brass instrument at all, but a type of one-string fiddle (Buehler-McWilliams, n.d.).) There were also 'aural tests', which many music students find very difficult. Stevenson however enjoyed them and did well at them. The formal training concentrated on classical harmony and orchestration for wind orchestra and symphony orchestra. However, it was also possible to arrange private lessons to cover dance band and

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[42] Ernie Martin, as a Kneller Hall bandmaster, would have received similar training, albeit several decades earlier.

jazz arranging. Stevenson took lessons from Edward Moon, Rodney Bashford and Cecil Ladds. This was particularly valuable to a young musician in Britain, as there were not many books available on dance band arranging at this time. (The ones that Stevenson remembers were all American.) (Stevenson, 2005)

National Service as an unofficial musical training ground

Although the Armed Forces employed many more musicians in the 1940s and 50s than they do today, clearly this number was still a very small percentage of their total personnel. The vast majority of those called up into the forces, during the war or later, were employed in roles which had nothing whatsoever to do with music or entertainment. As has been stated before, music was accepted as having an important role in maintaining morale, but this did not only mean listening to full-time professionals; music-making for relaxation was also encouraged, especially where personnel were posted to remote locations with few other spare-time activities to occupy them. Several interviewees spoke about how National Service in non-musical roles led to unique opportunities to develop as musicians, for instance through contact with musicians from different nationalities and backgrounds (including the USA and Germany, as well as other parts of the UK), opportunities to tour overseas with concert parties, and the time and opportunity to learn new instruments and hone performance skills and attitudes.[43]

Colin Gibson joined the RAF in about 1953, starting with basic training at the small RAF station at Padgate, near Warrington (and also not far from what is now the University of Chester's Warrington campus, which was a Canadian Air Force base during the war.) At Padgate, he played piano in the station dance band, and trombone in the military band. He was then posted to St. Athans in South Wales for engine training, and again was a member of the station military band, which played many local concerts. The trombone and piano chairs in the station dance band were both occupied by extremely good musicians, but Gibson did get the opportunity to play with local civilian dance bands, including one on Barry Island.

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[43] Again, from a theoretical point of view this was an opportunity to acquire cultural and social capital which might otherwise have been unavailable to them.

He did about eight dance band gigs in the twelve weeks he was at St. Athans - in addition to the military band rehearsals and concerts, and of course the engine training. (Gibson, 2006)

Drummer Don Aird was also in the RAF, and like Les Stevenson spent time in Germany. While in the forces, Aird got the opportunity to play with musicians from both the USA and Germany. He was initially posted to a base in Lincolnshire which also had American forces on site. Aird had filled in a form stating that one of his interests was music, and that he played the drums, and as a result was drafted into a joint American and British dance band on the camp. He remembers being told by the sergeant who delivered the news that 'whatever you do, you'd better be good!' The band played for dances in the mess and also for the officers. Aird's next posting was to Hanover. This was just after the war, and the destruction caused by Allied bombing was still all too evident. To try to cheer things up a bit it was decided to hold a dance in the Volkswagen works. The band consisted of a combination of Allied servicemen and German musicians. According to Aird, they all got along very well. After he was demobbed, he started playing for dances on the Wirral, playing with a quartet consisting of himself on drums, plus a guitarist, a pianist and a violinist - an unusual combination by that time. (Aird, 2005)

Jazz guitarist Frank Jeffes was also in the RAF during the war, but it was not until after the war had finished that his musical ability brought him the opportunity to travel as a professional musician: "The war had finished and they did not know what to do with us. They found out that I played at home…" Frank was directed to join the six-piece band backing a concert party which travelled around India and Ceylon for six months or more in a DC4 Dakota aircraft. There were about twenty men in the concert party, which included comedians and singers. (Jeffes, 2006)

When Tommy Jones joined the RAF in 1948, his personnel selection officer seems to have subscribed to the same theory about musicians and Signals work as the man who interviewed Les Stevenson, and Jones was assigned to work as a telephone operator. He did manage to carry on playing his trumpet while in the RAF, at first at least, although he had to make some choices about his priorities early on, as apart from music his other main enthusiasm at the time was boxing:-

> So I'm in the boxing team and the band […] About halfway through training I
> suppose, probably after about six weeks, and I'm boxing in a tournament and I got a
> bit of duffing up. We were only very light, you know, as you can imagine at our age,
> 19, so I wasn't damaged but I looked damaged. I had a black eye and swollen mouth
> and (laughs), and the bandmaster was a bloke called Flight Sergeant Fairhurst and he
> had the old wax moustache, you know, and I went in for band practice and he said
> "Oh no, so what have you been up to?"
> I said "Bit of boxing."
> "Boxing!"
> And he got a chair and made me stand up on this chair and he said, "This fool Jones
> thinks he's a musician or *wants* to be a musician and he's been boxing!" (interviewer
> laughs)
> He said, "Now," he said, "you've got the time it takes you to get off that chair when I
> say move, not until I say move, to make up your mind what you want to be, in the
> band or the boxing."
> So he said "Move!" so I jumped off there and I said "Band!"

> Jones (2007)

Jones was impressed by some of the other musicians in the band. One was a brilliant 18-year-old cornet player who was already earmarked for the RAF Regiment band. There were also a couple of ex-university students in their early twenties, and a bassoonist who had previously studied at the Royal College of Music. Jones describes the rest of the band (including himself at that stage) as 'mediocre' - but they could put on a band show for a concert, and play what was required for parades, which is what mattered. His next posting was to the code-breaking centre at Bletchley Park, and while there he joined the station band. This was followed by a posting to an isolated radar station near Sheringham in Norfolk. The station was too small to support a full band, but Jones did occasionally get the opportunity to sit in with dance bands from Norwich when they played at the camp. It was not until he was demobbed aged 21, and had returned to Chester, that Tommy got the opportunity to play regularly again.

Ken Morris was born and brought up in North Wales near the mining village of Llay, which is about 10 miles south-west of Chester. He did his National Service in the RAF, including a stint in Egypt (Fig. 36). Morris's local brass band was just re-starting after the war when he left school. He wanted to be a drummer, so he asked the conductor whether there was any chance of having lessons on the band's drums. The conductor, a trumpet player called Glyn

Edwards, responded by handing him a cornet and telling him to go and sit in the back row (that is, with the third cornets). Morris took to the instrument, and progressed forward through the band via second cornet to first cornet on the front row. By this time, he had been called up into the RAF for his National Service. He joined the camp band, but did not do much playing at that stage. In November 1956 he was sent to Suez, where he found himself in a remote location with nothing much to do. He asked whether there was a band around, and was told that there were two sergeants in a particular hut who were musicians. They turned out to both be brass players; when he asked them about the band, and said that he played the trumpet, they responded 'Oh, we want a sax player.' Morris was determined though. 'I know the scale of C on the sax,' he said. The sergeants found him a saxophone, and he got busy practising. Before long, they had put together a 20-piece big band in the desert. (Morris, 2008)

Conclusion

The role of the military in training and developing young musicians is another hidden history, which played an important part in defining the environment in which those musicians grew up. It offered opportunities which many would not otherwise have had to expand not just their musical skills, but also their cultural horizons and their musical contacts - or in Bourdieusian terms, their cultural and social capital. They brought this social and cultural capital back into civilian life with them, and this had an indirect but large effect on the music industry in general in the middle of the twentieth century, as skilled and experienced ex-military musicians went on to work in many areas of the industry from local dance bands to major recording and broadcasting studios. Some, such as the members of the Squadronaires, or film composer John Barry, capitalised on the contacts they had made by continuing to play with musicians they had first encountered while in the forces, and used this as a springboard to prestigious full-time careers. However, as will be shown in the next chapter, many more musicians trained by the military slotted back into local dance band scenes such as that in the Chester area, bringing their skills and experiences with them.

CHAPTER 7: WORLD WAR II TO THE LATE 1950s

Introduction: Back in Chester, Strands 0, 1 and 2 Converge

Although the threat of invasion was obviously lifted at the end of the war, in many ways life did not change particularly quickly after the fighting stopped. Rationing continued, as did compulsory National Service, and the BBC's Dance Music Policy Committee continued to vet potential bands and vocalists for excessive Americanisms and sentimentality. The post-war live music scene in and around Chester continued to be dominated by jazz-influenced dance bands until the early 1960s, and increasingly included musicians who had trained as military bandsmen, or gained musical experience while in the forces. They joined (or re-joined) musicians who had been too old to be called up, as well as those, like Wilf Field, who had stayed in civilian reserved occupations during the war. Focusing specifically on those local semi-professional bands back in Chester, it is important to note that the musicians who made up those bands were playing anything up to six nights a week in addition to holding down full-time jobs, usually in a completely different occupation. Some, like Colin Gibson and Don Owens, filled up the 'spare' night or nights by going to evening classes connected with their day jobs.[44] (Gibson, 2006; Owens, 2008)

Towards the end of the period covered by this chapter, in the late 1950s, the first signs of the social and musical changes which were to lead to the end of the dance bands' period of commercial dominance were appearing. However, as will be discussed both here and in Chapter 8, the effect was not immediate or absolute; the older and younger generations of musicians and promoters knew one another, and they worked together within the same infrastructure for some years after the Beat Boom had taken hold of the Hit Parade. In this chapter, I will start to examine that infrastructure in detail. In particular, I will focus on a selection of the venues, promoters, bandleaders, and bands that gave structure to the dance band scene in and around Chester in the period immediately following World War II.[45] Important venues, which recur in this account, include Clemences, Quaintways and the River

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[44] As mentioned in Chapter 3, this frenetic activity outside the home would not have been possible without the assistance of wives, mothers, land-ladies and house keepers who queued up for rationed provisions, made meals, lit fires, and generally ran the men's' domestic lives for them.

[45] For lists and maps of relevant venues, see Chapter 3 and Appendix E.

Park Ballroom, as well as the increasingly important dance hall chains such as those owned by the Rank Organisation.

Post-War People and Places: Wilf Field's Pocket Diary, 1955

Field's 1955 engagement diary (Fig. 37) has been central in enabling me to pull together the evidence provided by my other interviewees, so I will start by looking in more detail at his contact lists.   When cross-referenced with interviews and photographs from other participants, they provide good evidence of the social network which underpinned the local dance band scene, as well as tangible evidence of the social capital which Field relied upon in order to keep his bands functioning. (As a Musicians' Union document, the diary also includes commercial and regulatory information about the industry that Field and his colleagues worked in, both locally and nationally; this aspect is covered in more detail in the next section of this chapter.)

Figures 38 to 44 give an idea of the range and quantity of contact information which Field carried around with him in order to organise his part of the Chester dance band scene. In Figure 38, Field appears to have made use of the first few pages of his 1955 diary to keep a note of engagements booked for early in the New Year of 1956, including gigs at Clemences, the Grosvenor Hotel, Ambassadors Restaurant, the Assembly Rooms, and Leighton Court. Notes are included regarding which musicians will be playing at each venue, how the client paid (for example. cash or cheque), and a cryptic reminder regarding tax - probably on income. There is also an intriguing note in a different ink and handwriting to the effect that Sunday 8th January 1956 was 'Fred's last'; unfortunately no further information is available on this.

Figure 39 shows a list of local bands, including Field's own bands. Many of these were mentioned by my interviewees as being bands they had seen or played in, for instance Billy Brickland's band, the Al Powell Orchestra, the Denis Williams Quintet, Doug and Fred Hall's bands, Brian Cartwright's band, and Billy Gibbons' band. The Stan Roberts Jazzmen, along with clarinettist Paul Blake, formed the nucleus of the Wall City Jazz Band. Figure 40 shows part of Field's extensive contact list, with musicians classified according to their main instrument.   Again, a large proportion of these musicians have been mentioned by

interviewees, and many cases several times. Note the 'Reno Players', including Derek Mitchell, listed in pencil in the top and centre of the image. (See 'The Musical Labour Exchange' later this chapter for more details on this.) Although home telephones were not common at this time, Figure 41 shows that many of the musicians Field worked with were contactable by telephone. This particular list is a mixture of venues (for example. Lt. Astle at the Dale Army camp, and the Moston Hall) and musicians (for example. Joe and Ron Lovelady, Ray Cummings, Doug Hall, Denis Williams and Gordon Ballard - all of whom are mentioned by other interviewees). Figure 42 shows another list of names and telephone numbers, again including some for venues, in this case the Leighton Court hotel, the Coach and Horses pub, and the Town Hall. Musicians mentioned by other interviewees include [Derek] Mitchell, [Billy] Brickland, [Reg] Gorman, Reg Lowe, and [Dave] Glazzard. Field also stored postal addresses for his contacts in his pocket diary. Many, as in Figure 43, are all neatly copied out in the same ink. It is likely that these were contacts who were already known to Field by the end of the previous year, and all copied into the new pocket diary at the same time. On this page, there are a couple of later additions in pencil - for instance Don Owens, who arrived back in Chester during 1955 after National Service in the Army. On the pages shown in Figure 44, however, musicians' contact details have been added in various different colours and handwriting styles; again, these are likely to have been added to Field's personal network after the main contact list had been copied into the diary in late 1954 or early 1955.

In his capacity as bandleader, Field used this small paper database to enable him get the right people, playing the right instruments, to the right places, and at the right times. Once they arrived, however, they needed a specific set of skills to be able to provide the entertainment required by the client. In other words, part of the unofficial job description for the dance band musicians in this study was that they needed to know how to produce the style of performance required for a particular situation, and be able to adapt to the requirements of individual bandleaders – or in Bourdieusian terms, they needed to exhibit the appropriate habitus. As Faulkner and Becker (2009) described (and as discussed in previous chapters), musicians needed to be versatile, and to know what was required of them with a minimum of instruction or rehearsal. For their part, bandleaders needed to know as much as possible about the musical strengths and preferences of individual musicians. For instance, Field simply wrote 'Gibson' in the piano column of his list of musicians, but he knew an awful lot

more about Colin Gibson than just what instrument he played. He would have needed to know about Gibson's personality, especially regarding his reliability and conscientiousness. He will also have needed some idea whether Gibson was a good sight-reader, and if so whether he was most comfortable playing from 'dots' (that is, fully written-out music notation), or chords, or (better still) both. Was he a good improviser? Did he swing? Would he get bored and careless playing for Old Time Dancing ten Sunday afternoons in a row - or was he secretly in his element playing 'The Dashing White Sergeant' & 'The Veleta'?

Much of the written information used by musicians and bandleaders alike was incomplete; from sketchy drum or piano parts to Field's address list, these documents were *aides mémoires* rather than complete blueprints, and a substantial amount of background knowledge was required to make practical use of them. As described in previous chapters, some of this knowledge of what to do and how to behave was learned in formal settings such as instrumental lessons or choir rehearsals. Some was acquired informally through various kinds of informal apprenticeship with youth club bands, or through 'sitting in' with established bands. Some came about as a result of listening to records or radio broadcasts, reading about music and musicians, or working through tutor books and correspondence courses. One way or another, each musician or bandleader put together their own set of essential skills and knowledge which allowed them to work effectively in the local dance music scene. In the next section, I will look more closely at how that scene was organised.

Organising Music

At the start of the post-war period, the local dance band scene appears to have been more casually organised than it became in later years, with musicians and bandleaders congregating in places like the top floor of Quaintways or the Coach and Horses pub to organise who would play what at the following week's engagements. As the period wore on, casual work like this was still available, but national chains such as the Rank Organisation started to take over the larger dance halls; this put the employment of musicians at those venues on more formal, centrally controlled footing. As discussed in Chapter 3 with reference to the ban on visits to the UK by American musicians, the Musicians' Union still exerted a powerful hold over the employment of musicians, especially for longer-term engagements such as dance hall residencies and summer seasons, and it was normal for dance

band musicians to be union members. This had a direct effect on the musical economy, as the M.U. set minimum fees for specific types of gigs and provided support and advice to musicians in disputes with venue owners. They also set out what was expected of a musician in terms of attributes like reliability and professionalism, for instance as described in the following extracts from the numerous pages of small legal print in Field's 1955 M.U diary:-

BAND STEWARDS

All Orchestras and Dance Bands should elect a Steward.… [who must obey the following rules of conduct]
1. In no case must he regard himself as an official of the Union, authorised to speak on its behalf.
2. He is the intermediary between the Union's officials and the members of the Orchestra.
3. He should ask members, about whose membership he has any doubts, to produce their cards. If a musician refuses to produce the card, the name and instrument of such musician should be reported without delay to the Secretary.
4. He should carry a supply of M.U stamps, and should be prepared to supply any member who asks for same.
5. Any point of professional etiquette, terms and conditions, or matters arising out of the carrying out of the duties of the players in the Orchestra, are not to be dealt with or decided on by the Steward, but referred by him to the Secretary for official decision.

Musicians' Union Pocket Diary, 1955, p.11

Field (2006)

EXTRACTS FROM SOME IMPORTANT RULES

RULE XX
Section 3. Any member, before accepting a permanent, or season engagement of one or more weeks … shall communicate with the Branch Secretary concerned … to ascertain if any dispute exists, also the prices paid.
Section 13. A member shall produce his card of membership when asked to do so by an authorised official. …

CONTRACTS
RULE XX, Section 2, states: "It shall be the duty of the member to give, and receive, a written contract, and a member or members claiming protection of the Union can only do so by producing the contract as hereintofore specified."
RULE XX, Section 2, also states: "Members signing a contract must fulfil such contract, subject to the customs prevailing in the District."
Members who fail to fulfil an engagement after acceptance, or who substitute a deputy for their own personal service, without the permission of the engager, may be held to be guilty of conduct detrimental to the interests of the profession. (See Rule XX, Section 4.)

LEGAL ASSISTANCE
It is the duty of members:
(a) To insist on a written contract from the engager, and
(b) to submit such contract to the Branch Secretary or District Secretary concerned …
for approval (except casual engagements of less than one week.
Any member applying for legal assistance in regard to any breach of such contract
will receive consideration only if conditions (a) and (b) have been observed.

Musicians' Union Pocket Diary, 1955, p.12

Field (2006)

RULE XXVII, Section 7, states: "Any member twenty-six weeks' subscription in
arrears shall be excluded unless a satisfactory reason be assigned.
AVOID THIS BY BEING IN ADVANCE WITH YOUR "SUBS."

Musicians' Union Pocket Diary, 1955, p.15

Field (2006)

Field was evidently a member of the M.U; in fact, most dance band musicians were,
particularly if they played gigs where formal contracts were involved. Dance band music
was in general quite a strongly unionised industry. This helped to ensure reasonable working
conditions, and that musicians were at least paid as promised, and there were advantages
including discounts for insurance and for equipment from music stores. The disciplined top-
down approach did not appeal so much to the younger generation though; being non-
unionised increased their cost advantage to venue owners (as well as making them easier to
manipulate, which was an advantage to unscrupulous agents and venue owners, although not
to the musicians themselves in the longer term). The unionised approach only worked well
while the vast majority of musicians and employers accepted it. Once there were plenty of
other choices for musical entertainment (including discos as well as small amplified groups),
M.U minimum rates actually worked against the remaining big bands.

As the post-war period progressed, the first signs of the changes which really took hold in the
1960s began to be reported, with Teddy Boys, rock 'n' roll and early incarnations of the band
which would become the Beatles starting to appear. For the time being however this was still

very much what Frith, Brennan, Cloonan, and Webster (2013) described as a 'forest rather than a desert', albeit one whose exact composition was moving into a new phase.

The Musical Labour Exchange

Like Harry Proctor and many other local musicians, drummer Frank Fuller also played at American bases, including the air base at Burtonwood, which he played at with Peggy Dawson's band just after the war.[46] When Fuller left Dawson's band, Joe Rowe took over from him (Fig. 45), and Fuller moved on to Stan Roberts' band, and then Brian Cartwright's band. Fuller picked up numerous gigs in the Chester area by sitting upstairs in Quaintways and waiting for the work to come to him:-

> people knew I was a drummer and word spread. […] musicians used to go into Quaintways, at the top of Quaintways. You'd sit there on a Saturday night and someone would come in about five o'clock and say "Is there a drummer here?" "Yes" and you used to go back, get your drums or they'd pick you up because you did not have any transport of your own; there's always somebody got a big car. And they'd take you and then you'd go miles away to pick a sax player up, then you'd go the other way to pick a trumpet player up and you'd all form that just on the one night.
>
> Fuller (2008)

Quaintways was effectively a kind of musical labour exchange at this stage. This is not surprising, and fits in with previous discussions on route centres and musical pathways, as it was an important venue in a central location.[47] For musicians who were members of the

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[46] Peggy Dawson (mentioned in Chapter 5 learning to play bebop in a Welsh pub with a group of young musicians from Chester) is the only female bandleader reported by my interviewees as having been active in the Chester area. She and her husband apparently left the area suddenly in the late 1950s, and were not heard from again, so she remains a somewhat mysterious figure. Her band attracted some very competent musicians and played many engagements in the area over a period of several years. It would be an interesting project to find out more about her background and history.

[47] Quaintways' central location helped to ensure that it was - and remains - a popular part of Chester's entertainment scene, although it is now a nightclub (currently called "Rosie's") rather than a live music venue. In this respect it is a good example of the Ricardian argument proposed in Chapter 1. Northgate Street in Chester city centre is a desirable location for an entertainment venue, with good transport links and plenty of passing and local trade, and this remains true whatever the current trends are in music fashion or sound reproduction.

Musicians' Union, another favoured haunt was the Coach and Horses on a Sunday morning. This was another central location, just along Northgate Street from Quaintways, and next door to the Town Hall. According to Fuller, musicians and bandleaders would meet at these venues to compare diaries: "They'd say to me "So have you got a gig next Friday?". If Fuller replied "No", the next question would be "Can you do next Friday?" you see, and we'd swap." (Fuller, 2008)

Professional agents did exist in the region, for instance J. Reno and Co. Ltd. who were based in Manchester. According to their advertisement in Field's 1955 M.U diary (Fig. 46), Reno offered a comprehensive service, including matching musicians to bands and engagements, instrumental tuition, and rehearsal facilities. Field definitely employed some musicians who were registered with Reno; his address list includes a note that several players (including Derek Mitchell) were 'Reno Players' (Fig. 40).

Another way for bands to advertise the quality of their playing was by taking part in competitions. The resident band at Clemences Restaurant was particularly successful in this respect, even after its former leader Syd Lawrence had moved on to national success (Figs. 47 and 48). Lawrence was probably the best-known musician to emerge from the Chester jazz and dance band scene, and moved on in later years to play with Geraldo, Teddy Foster, Nat Temple, Sidney Lipton, Cyril Stapleton and the BBC Northern Dance Orchestra, before founding his own big band in 1967, which he led until his retirement in 1992 at the age of 74 (Gifford, 1998; Tracy, 1997). The Syd Lawrence Orchestra is still in existence, and now performs under the leadership of trombonist Chris Dean. Lawrence died in 1998.

Dance hall chains, residencies and rock 'n' roll
After Don Owens finished his National Service in the Army in the mid-1950s, he returned to Chester and started gigging with Billy Brickland, who he describes as 'a very charming, kindly man', as well as with Wilf Field and Billy Gibbons. One of the Billy Gibbons'

Quaintways stayed in business as a live music venue until the late 1970s, and had an interesting and varied history in the sixties and seventies. For more on Quaintways and the musicians who played there, see Chapter 8.

publicity leaflets is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, in the context of the musical versatility required of the band.   When combined with other evidence as described below, it also offers evidence of the tight-knit nature of the musical social network in the area; several of the musicians listed on the flyer (in addition to Owens) feature in various other notable local bands, and in some cases they moved from one band to another more or less as a single unit.

Billy Gibbons recommended Owens to the resident band at the River Park Ballroom, at that time led by Leon Sait.[48] All the arrangements for this band were written by Dave Pearce and Sait himself, and the band had an unusual line-up. The reed section consisted of two tenor saxes, an alto and a baritone, rather than the more common two altos, two tenors and baritone (usually reduced to two altos and one tenor for smaller gigs)[49]. The back row consisted of a trumpet / flugelhorn and three rhythm section players - that is, piano, string bass and drums. The band's unusual sound was well received, even by members of big touring bands who heard it. As well as the residency at the River Park, the band did regular Sunday gigs at the American air base at Burtonwood, which were interesting and very well paid. (Owens, 2008)

The River Park Ballroom (and beyond)

While playing at a local dance, Geoff Anderson met sax player Martin Gerrard, who at that time was playing baritone with Leon Sait at the River Park Ballroom.[50]   Gerrard mentioned that Sait was looking for a new second tenor player to replace a musician who was moving on to another band. Anderson went to an interview with Sait, who at the time was lodging with Ray Cummings. Sait took Anderson on as his new second tenor (Fig. 50); the job was five nights a week, every night except Sunday and Tuesday. This is good example of how 'weak

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[48] On the atmosphere in dancehalls, Owens said "Another thing too were the smells. People smoked cigarettes in those days, and you could guarantee that by the time you went home your hair would smell of tobacco and your clothes would absolutely reek of it. Also too there were some people who weren't very keen on their personal hygiene, and the smell of body odour could be quite grim at times. I'm talking about the big ballrooms of course, not the society gigs; there it would be cigars and very expensive perfumes." Owens (2008)

[49] This is another example of the practice of splitting and re-sizing bands according to clients' budgets and requirements, as described in Chapter 2 and Appendices A and B.

[50] The River Park Ballroom, on the edge of Grosvenor Park, was eventually demolished to make way for the inner ring road, when it was replaced by a bank building. Other venues such as St. Oswald's and the Assembly Rooms were accessible to younger folk, but the River Park Ballroom catered more to older clientele, in their 20s.

ties', as described in Chapter 2, could be very important in enabling musicians and bandleaders to navigate the musical pathways of the dance band scene.

Bands playing at the River Park Ballroom operated under the rules defined by the venue management. Pianist and arranger Jimmy Chadburn (who also played with the Dennis Williams Quintet, among many others) kept a copy of the typewritten rules issued to the ballroom's resident bands in the 1950s (Fig. 51). These rules give an idea of the conditions that resident bands worked under at this time; for instance, smoking was not permitted, and refreshments such as cakes and sandwiches were provided, but only in strictly limited quantities. They also give hints of the sort of issues which venue managers had to deal with when employing large live bands, from ensuring that the musicians were 'dressed to the satisfaction of the manager' and making sure that the venue's electrical equipment was not interfered with, to persuading musicians to arrive and leave on time, and attempting to make sure that they weren't distracted by (for instance) dancing with the customers when they were being paid to play.

Anderson stayed with the Leon Sait band until the opening of the Majestic Ballroom led to a shuffling of Chester's musical pack, and put yet more complex links in the area's musical social network:-

> I used to have come into Chester with my father's business, every Friday, and I remember stopping my van in Brook Street and looking straight through the doors and you could see inside the place and I thought 'What a fantastic place that is - I wonder where they're going to get the band from?'. And anyway, how it came about was apparently this guy, Roy Williams, from Birmingham was appointed to be the band leader. He made friends with Dave Pearce, who played with Leon Sait, and the upshot of it all was, there was a band rehearsal at a pub called The Market Tavern in George Street one Sunday morning and it would appear that Stan Bowness [previously of Billy Gibbons' band] and I were the only two tenor players to attend…. it was rather upsetting that we had to tell Leon Sait on the Monday that we were going to be leaving, I think the opening was sort of the following week on Thursday, something like that.

> Anderson (2006)

It is important to note that the Majestic Ballroom opened its doors in 1957 (Fig. 52), even as rock 'n' roll was starting to make serious inroads into British popular music and social life, and it is therefore interesting to consider why the chain which owned the ballroom - the Rank Organisation – considered even then that opening a new dance hall complete with resident dance band was a worthwhile investment. The answer seems to lie in a change in the national economic environment; specifically, the rising popularity of television.

Ballroom chains and resident bands

At this point in the mid- to late 1950s the growing popularity of television was starting to have an effect on cinema takings, and chains like the Rank Organisation found themselves in possession of a lot of cinema buildings which were becoming an unprofitable liability. They started to convert these large redundant buildings for more profitable activities, like bingo, bowling alleys and dancing. This is why new dance halls such as the Majestic Ballroom were actually opening their doors for the first time as late as 1957. This had an effect on the way that the local dance bands operated, going from a cottage industry to a more professional set-up with fewer pick-up bands. Thus, a change in the national (and international) economic environment had a substantial effect on the local live music industry in Chester, and on the musical careers of the people involved.

The resident band at the new Majestic Ballroom (Fig. 53) was led by Roy Williams, a former Royal Marines bandsman and representative for the Schillinger system of composition and harmony. (Schillinger House of Music was established in Boston in 1945, changing its name to Berklee College of Music in 1954 (Cottrell, 2013, p. 282; A Brief History, 2013; Simpson, 2008). Other members of the band included Stan Thomas (an alumnus of the Billy Gibbons band, and later the River Park Ballroom band), who had played professionally with Ken Mackintosh's band and the Royal Navy Blue Mariners. Thomas had been a prisoner-of-war in Japan in Nagasaki when the atomic bomb was dropped there, and suffered continuing health problems as a result. Arrangements were done by Dave Pearce (who like Thomas, was also formerly of the River Park Ballroom's resident band) and Roy Williams.

One of the alto saxophone players was Ralph Wilkes (who had previously played with Peggy Dawson's band). Wilkes owned an unusual model of alto saxophone, made in Britain by the

Grafton Company. The body of the instrument was made of a form of plastic called acrylic. Patented in 1948, the Grafton alto was lighter and much cheaper than an equivalent brass-bodied instrument. (The good quality copper and tin required to make brass were still expensive and hard to obtain in the post-war period, due to the heavy use of such metals in munitions during the war.) It also looked stylish and modern (Howard, 2005), and had the cachet of having been photographed being played by prominent American jazz musicians including Charlie Parker and Ornette Coleman, as well as by British bandleader John Dankworth (Cottrell, 2013, p. 89; Sir John Dankworth, 2010). Unfortunately it was both extremely fragile and almost impossible to repair once broken, so despite its visual appeal it did not become established as a viable alternative to conventional brass-bodied instruments (Howard, n.d).

Roy Williams moved on when the band was reduced in size due to increasing competition from rock 'n' roll bands (who weren't unionised and were therefore much cheaper to hire, as well as being popular with young audiences), and the band was taken over by Dave Pearce, and then by Peter Dee, who introduced a more popular modern repertoire. Dee moved on to a residency at a ballroom in Birkenhead (Fig. 54), and took several of the Chester Majestic band members, including Owens, with him. Owens later moved on to play with other resident bands, including Eric Latham's 18-piece big band at the Rank Ballroom in Crewe. (Owens, 2008)

There was still an active casual gig market for dance band musicians in the Chester area, which, like the dance hall chains, persisted into the 1960s. The main musical labour exchanges at this time were at the Commercial Hotel in St. Peter's Yard of Lower Northgate Street, and the Coach and Horses pub; the latter was still the headquarters of the Chester branch of the Musicians' Union. Owens continued to play gigs for local bandleaders including Wilf Field, Billy Gibbons, Barrington Griffiths, Bert Turner and Doug Hall. Hall's band had an interesting job at Reece's in Liverpool. There were four ballrooms at Reece's, with each floor having its own band. When the main band in the first ballroom went for its break, Hall's band stepped in to provide music for continuous dancing. They then packed up and moved to the next ballroom, and then the next, and then the last. Wilf Field, Billy Gibbons and Bert Turner all had good networks of connections among the 'Cheshire set', and

consequently got numerous well-paid gigs at events such as hunt balls, golf club banquets, Masonic ladies' nights, dinner dances for professional societies, and society weddings. In addition to playing for dance bands, Owens also did some pit work at the Royalty Theatre and other venues for amateur operatic societies, once again demonstrating the versatility typical of many dance band musicians, and especially those with a military background.

Colin Gibson, Peter Dee, Kathy Stobart, and The Cavern

After his National Service in the RAF, Colin Gibson returned to Chester. He had a full-time job and was also busy studying engineering theory at evening classes, but he did still manage to find time for music, including stints with Peter Dee's bands (Fig. 56).

> Peter Dee was good. He was a bit lazy, he never turned up before the interval. He'd start the first number off at the start of night and then go and start drinking with his ladies - he used to return at the interval. I gave him a George Shearing book and he wrote all the band arrangements off that George Shearing book and they were very, very good. They really were good. The band was okay while he wasn't on the stand but when he got on the stand he pulled everything together. He was a good musician.

> Gibson (2006)

Gibson eventually left Dee's band because of an opportunity which came up on his 'night off' from the Dee band, with whom he was playing six nights a week at the time. He got a phone call from vibes player Glyn Evans, who rang up early one week and said 'I've got a gig this Wednesday at the Cavern [in Liverpool]; I can't get a piano player and it's Kathy Stobart on tenor.'[51] Gibson jumped at the chance. He took the afternoon off work, did his

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[51] Kathy Stobart is a British jazz saxophonist, and one of a tiny number of female jazz saxophonists to have made a national reputation at this time.   In an interview in 1974, she made the following intriguing observations about her experiences as a female musician in the male-dominated jazz music scene:- "Yes, we've had some girl players... there aren't many about, you know. It's not really a very feminine thing. I wouldn't say I've been handicapped myself by being a woman. I mean, I'm sure there's prejudice there - there's bound to be. But I've never had to suffer in any shape or form; I've always found everybody marvellous to me. […] Oh, I would advise any girl to try and make it - but I would just hope that she'd get the chances that I did. Because opportunity was on my side, really. It was wartime, and

college lab work in the afternoon, and went to the Cavern to play the gig that evening - an example of the frequent overlap between nationally known professionals and local semi-professionals[52]. The gig was written up in the Liverpool Echo, and Peter Dee happened across the phrase 'and Kathy Stobart was backed by Colin Gibson on piano, Glyn Evans on vibes…'[53] Dee was not amused that 'his' pianist had done a side job, and they parted company. A month or so later, Colin joined the Dave Pierce Band at the Majestic Ballroom in Chester for about six months. After this, Gibson became absorbed in his engineering studies again and did not play much for a while, although he did deputise occasionally with various bands. (From a network point of view, he became less active as a musician, but he did not disappear; bandleaders and other pianists knew that although Gibson was busy with his studies, he was not committed to a specific band or venue, and might therefore be available for occasional one-off gigs.) (Gibson, 2006)

Dennis Roscoe on playing at pools and dodging the Teddy Boys

By the mid-1950s Dennis Roscoe was established in Southport playing alto saxophone and clarinet. In 1954 he was married and moved to Liverpool. He kept in contact with some of his old colleagues in Southport, but basically had to start again, making a new set of contacts in Liverpool. He found his first regular musical job in the area through an advert in the Liverpool Echo; a promoter was looking for an alto sax and clarinet player to play twice-weekly dances at Garston on the outskirts of Liverpool. Dennis auditioned and got the job. The band was led by Alan Musgrave from Widnes, who bought the music for the band and played the piano. In the summer they played at a hall in Garston, and in the winter they

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everybody was so hard up for players, they had to give me a job! Coupled with the fact that this was what I wanted to do." (Tomkins, 1974)

[52] Although the Cavern Club is most famous for its association with Merseybeat bands, and especially the Beatles, it was founded as a jazz club, and jazz and rock 'n' roll coexisted there - just about - for some time.

[53] Gibson and Evans are both shown in Figure 57.

played at the Garston Baths (Roscoe, 2008). This was a Victorian public swimming baths with the bath covered by a dance floor (Revill, n.d). [54]

A purpose-built dance hall called the Wilson Hall (Revill, n.d) opened in Garston in about 1955, by which point Teddy Boy culture was well established in Liverpool:-

> Rock and roll was just coming in and we had all these blokes there dressed in these extremely long jackets down sort of mid-calf, you know, and all dressed up. There was no drinking in the hall whatsoever, they weren't allowed to take any drink in but you got rival gangs in there […] the Park Lane gang and the Dingle gang […]   The promoter employed four or five bouncers to keep order there but they did have some terrific fights in there, you know. [..] as soon as the fight started the bouncers were in and chucked them out and the Police were waiting outside to pick them up when the bouncers had finished with them … but it sort of escalated over one winter season. It started out with one or two being thrown out and the final thing was they threw 30 out one night.
>
> Roscoe (2008)

A couple of years later, in 1957 and 1958, the Quarrymen played several gigs at the Wilson Hall; it is also reputed to be the venue where George Harrison first saw any of the other Beatles-to-be play (Live: Wilson Hall, 2008). As will become clear in the next section, change was coming; rock 'n' roll and Merseybeat would soon have a major impact on the local live music scene, as would the changes in music technology which arrived at the same time (although there was also a substantial amount of overlap, and it should be remembered that 1957 was also the year Majestic Ballroom in Chester opened.)   Before moving on, however, it is necessary to fill in some background on an important figure in the Chester live music scene: the promoter Gordon Vickers.

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[54] An account of dancing at the boarded-over swimming baths at Stirchley Baths, Birmingham, can be found in Summerfield (2013), and an event celebrating the practice of dancing at swimming pools was held as part of the 'Noise of Many Waters' event at the Victoria Baths in Manchester in 2011 (Noise of Many Waters – Music for the Victoria Baths, 2011). Some of Norman Frost's collection of dance band arrangements were used by an RNCM ensemble performing at this event. (See Appendix B for details.)

Gordon Vickers and the Business of Promoting Music

Gordon Vickers grew up in Chester, where he became interested in music while a member of local youth clubs. He remembers seeing big bands such as the Vic Lewis Band at the Drill Hall in Chester. He was also impressed by the Sid Phillips band. He was a keen dancer, and this led to one of his first direct encounters with a major bandleader.

Joe Loss and his band came to Chester and played at the Drill Hall. As Vickers tells the story:-

> In those days at the Drill Hall you weren't allowed to jive, but a few of us used to jive in the corners [until] we were told to stop. … [Joe Loss invited requests, so] I went up to the stage and said 'can you play "In The Mood" … and can you announce 'jiving only'?

<div align="right">Vickers (2007)</div>

To Vickers' surprise, Joe Loss did exactly that - including the announcement about 'jiving only'. [55] Experiences such as this fired Vickers' enthusiasm for getting involved in music, and he and his friend Derek Masters started to go to The Temple in Liverpool to watch the Merseysippi Jazz Band (Leigh, 2002). This inspired them to form their own jazz club in Chester.[56]

Vickers decided he'd like to be a promoter; he described it as 'a bit of a gamble', where the promoter agrees to pay a certain amount for a band, hires a hall and then advertises the event and hopes to make a profit. One of Vickers' first experiences as a promoter was also at the Drill Hall.   A concert in the area had been cancelled, and as a result Vickers was offered the opportunity to put on a gig featuring Mick Mulligan's Jazz Band with George Melly and Acker Bilk. He booked the Drill Hall, whose management informed him that he would have to provide six bouncers for the evening. Vickers duly booked the bouncers, but on the evening they did not arrive at the hall. Vickers therefore found himself stood outside the hall

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[55] Figure 55 shows a quintet including Peter Dee playing in Chester in the late 1940s. Behind them is a sign informing dancers that 'No Jive or Jitterbugging' was allowed at the venue, which was not far from the Drill Hall at the Forces' Club on Love Street.

[56] This was the genesis of the jazz club which, under various names and at various Chester venues, Vickers has run ever since, and which will return several times in the next section and in Chapters 8 and 9.

with no one else to assist him other than his cashier. He was therefore alarmed to see that the clientele for the evening was arriving in the form of 'a crowd of roughnecks … from Connah's Quay and a crowd of roughnecks … from Ellesmere Port'. If he did not take avoiding action quickly, he foresaw 'the biggest bloodbath ever'.

> So I used my discretion. I worked out who was the guy who ran the Connah's Quay crowd, and said to him, "Do you want your money back and a fiver apiece, the four of you?"
> He said, "Yeah. Why?"
> I said, "Put your white arm band on. You're my security - you're bouncers."
> He said yes, so I went over to the other crowd from Ellesmere Port and I did the same to them. We had … great bouncers; half from each side. There we are; discretion is the better part of valour.
>
> Vickers (2007)

Vickers' quick thinking, management skills and entrepreneurial instinct served him well that night and for decades to come. As will become clear over the next sections, this was to be a benefit to the local music scene as well as to him.

Strand 3 - Born after World War II

'Strand 3' is my designation for the last age group covered by this research. Strand 3 people were born after the end of World War II, that is, late enough that National Service did not affect them directly. They became young adults in a more permissive and prosperous social and economic environment than the age groups discussed previously. As they grew up, it was becoming obvious that the days of the dance hall chains and resident bands could not last. Both the dance band musicians and their audiences were getting older, getting married, having families, and getting deeper into careers that took up all their time, or moved them all around the world. The writing was starting to appear on the dance-hall walls, albeit very faintly at first.

Even so, the new generation of rock 'n' roll fans and beat bands used many of the same venues which had formed the infrastructure for the dance bands and their customers (as has already been suggested in the context of the Wilson Hall and the Cavern Club). Looked at

from the perspective of Becker's Jazz Places (Becker, 2004), the physical places were in many cases exactly the same, but the musical demands of the customers were starting to change. This was reflected in the output of many dance bands (such as the Billy Gibbons band discussed in detail in Chapter 2) who offered Twist and Rock 'n' Roll in addition to Strict Tempo, Dixieland and Mainstream Jazz. This was not always enough though. Apart from the somewhat dated image of the dance bands themselves, the beat groups had another important advantage - cost. This is where Ricardo's theory of rents and marginal fields, discussed in Chapter 2, becomes particularly relevant. A handful of non-unionised rock 'n' roll musicians playing amplified instruments certainly had a fresh young image, but they also charged a lot less than a ten-piece dance band charging the standard M.U. rate, and for venue operators trying to make a profit in the face of growing competition from alternative forms of entertainment (especially television), this was an important consideration. Not surprisingly, many young musicians were inspired by the new trends in popular music, and eager to take up the opportunities that went with them. However as this section will show, the story was still a complex one, with many overlaps between generations, styles and musical networks.

Ian Shaw on being a member of the Post-War Generation

Like many of the dance band musicians described earlier, Ian Shaw had been keen on music from a very young age, partly through the influence of older relatives (Shaw, 2008). In this case, however, his older brother introduced him to skiffle rather than jazz, and their uncles introduced both of them to the rock 'n' roll of Elvis Presley and Gene Vincent. This was the music that Shaw decided he wanted to learn to play. He also loved the rebellious image of the Teddy Boys with their distinctive outfits and slicked-back hair. In the late 1950s, when he was no more than ten years old, he was taken by his mother to see England's answer to Elvis, Cliff Richard, at the Gaumont Cinema in Chester. (This was one of the largest cinemas in the North of England at the time, with seats for almost 2000 people. It has since been converted to a bingo hall (Howe, n.d.). Cliff Richard and The Shadows were on at the end of the first half of a 'variety' bill, after the comedian and the juggler.

> The Shadows came up and it had a huge impact. I'd never heard a band play so loud before and this was The Shadows probably using 15 Watt Vox amps which are by today's standards practice amps, you know, tiny - but the sound that was coming out, I was just knocked over by it. [I thought] 'that's what I want to do […] have a red guitar like that man down there…

Shaw (2008)

Ian's father bought him a proper Spanish guitar and offered to send him for lessons, but he did not want to go. He just wanted to pick the instrument up and play it - not worry about lessons and reading music and so on. To start with he 'cheated' by tuning the guitar to open chords in the manner of the American bottleneck guitarists (although he did not know at the time that was what he was doing). Eventually he decided for himself that he was going to have to tune the guitar properly and learn a few chords. At that point, he managed to get hold of Bert Weedon's famous 'Play in a Day' guitar tutor book, and taught himself to play from that, starting with the chords of C and G7. (Play in a Day, n.d; Influential guitarist Bert Weedon dies, 2012)

The Bo-Lynx, The Cavern, Rufus Thomas and Peter Green

It wasn't until Shaw's school environment changed from boys-only to co-educational that his musical career started to make progress:-

> There was an influx of new teachers and one was a young music teacher, Miss Williams, very pleasant woman, very popular and she wanted to start a folk group at school and somebody said, "Oh Ian Shaw's got a guitar." It was a bit like the Chinese Whispers, you know, but by the time she approached me, [that had become] "somebody says you can play a guitar". […] So I was too embarrassed to say, no, I couldn't. So I quickly shot off home and started to seriously learn a few more chords, you know, and we started this small folk group and about this time The Beatles came out with their first record. And there was another lad in the folk group and we played together and together started learning more challenging chords.

Shaw (2008)

Before long, Shaw and some of his friends from school, including Brian Roberts and Dave Croft, had decided to form their own pop group. Shaw's father made him an electric guitar,

crafting the wooden body and neck by hand then fitting the hardware (Fig. 58).[57] His older brother Brian was keen on building electrical gadgets, and built amplifiers for the group (as well as buying them The Hollies' guide to 'How to Run a Beat Group' (Hollies Tell You How To Run a Beat Group, 2007)). The group's unusual name - the Bo-Lynx - was a compromise between 'Bo' Weevils' and 'Lynx'. It was chosen as being more unusual and memorable than either of those. Their models were Cliff Richard, the Rolling Stones and the Animals (Fig. 59). In due course the group's drummer decided that he needed a kit of his own, rather than the borrowed drums he had been using, and Rushworth and Dreaper were the chosen supplier. As all of the group were still under 18, one of their fathers had to stand guarantor for the hire purchase. The Bo-Lynx were now equipped and looking for places to play. Early gigs included the Crosville Social Club and St. Chad's church Hall in Blacon. They found themselves a manager in the form of Tony Stubbs, the son of a successful local builder, who also managed to acquire an old van in which to transport drive the group's equipment.

Gordon Vickers was acting as the booking agent for Quaintways by this time, and regularly booked the Bo-Lynx to play there on a Saturday evening.[58] Quaintways had two floors, and provided a classic example of Frith et al's vibrant musical forest: Ces Davis's dance band played on the middle floor, and beat groups like the Bo-Lynx played on the top floor. The main group each evening were paid £12 between them, with the supporting group getting £10. The Bo-Lynx also played at The Warren Club, which was run by Dennis Chritchley in rooms under the Royalty Theatre, and at venues such as the Memorial Hall in Northwich, where they were one of the support acts to visiting artists like Dave Berry and Cat Stevens. One of their most memorable performances - for the band, at least - was at the Cavern Club in Liverpool. Tony Stubbs managed to talk his (and the band's) way into the Cavern and onto the stage. As they finished their unscheduled set, the main act of the evening, Rufus Thomas, appeared - but his band did not. As a result, the Bo-Lynx briefly became Rufus

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[57] Rationing and post-war austerity continued to affect music making in Britain for many years after the end of World War II. Although Shaw's father was able to buy, rather than build (Making a Full-Sized Guitar, 1958), an acoustic guitar for him, like many goods considered to be luxuries, American-built instruments such as the Fender Stratocaster used by Hank Marvin with The Shadows were difficult to obtain in Britain prior to the 1960s (Davey, 2014). Since electric guitars were not (yet) used in military bands, in this case being close to a regimental band did not help.

[58] For more on both Gordon Vickers and Quaintways, see Chapter 8.

Thomas's backing band, playing 'Walking the Dog' and a few blues numbers with him at the Cavern. The Bo-Lynx played at the Cavern on about three other occasions, and have a brick in the Cavern Wall of Fame at the new Cavern Club on Matthew Street (Fig. 60).[59] Many of the performers named on these bricks, besides the Bo-Lynx, had cut their teeth in venues like Quaintways (Quaintways, 2012), promoted by people like Gordon Vickers, who had in turn honed their skills organising ballroom dances and traditional jazz concerts.

The Bo-Lynx lasted for about two and a half years before "running out of steam", as Shaw puts it. Shaw, who was still barely 17, moved on to a band called The Hands, which also played at Quaintways and the Royalty Theatre, where they played opposite the Black Abbots.[60] One of the highlights of this period, for Shaw, was a gig at Gordon Vickers' Chester Jazz Club which also featured Peter Green with an early incarnation of Fleetwood Mac.

> We played with quite a few known bands there like […] The Steam Packet, Brian Auger, Julie Driscoll, and Long John Baldry. [..] we played with Fleetwood Mac there when they'd done 'Albatross' and the founder members were there [including] Peter Green. […] One of the numbers Peter Green did was 'Someday After a While You'll be Sorry'. […]
>
> We were playing our spot and it got to this spot where we were supposed to play 'Someday After a While You'll be Sorry', and Ronnie said, "We can't do that, he's here, we can't do it". You know, I think we'd had a couple of Double Diamonds by then you know, and I said, "Course we can, we'll do it." So we played this 'Someday After a While You'll be Sorry', and I could not look at Fleetwood Mac while I was doing this, I just got on with it, and at the end I looked up and Peter Green's in the corner with his hands in the air clapping, and that's my claim to fame, Peter Green clapping me for playing one of his songs you know?
>
> Shaw (2008)

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[59] A plaque fixed to the wall explains "The "Wall of Fame" was unveiled by Gerry Marsden … to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Cavern Club. The wall highlights the names of all the bands who appeared at the club between 1957 – 1973. Also included are some of the contemporary bands who performed in the 90s (for example. Oasis and Dodgy). The Cavern Club situated on the opposite side of the road occupies fifty percent of the original site and proudly retains its original address of 10 MATHEW STREET. The Wall of Fame was conceived and financed by Cavern City Tours with support from the Beneficial Bank. Research by Phil and Peter Thompson."

[60] The Royalty Theatre also played host to rock 'n' roll bands such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

Shaw carried on playing with The Hands for the next four years or so, until he got married. (It was a pre-wedding condition that once he was married he would "pack in that music …so that was it".) Dave Crofts also joined another local group, called The Exceptions, although this only lasted for a few months as the rest of the band wanted to move down to London and go on the road. Crofts had just started an apprenticeship, and was not ready to give it up to play music full-time. He stayed in Chester, and joined a band called Cleo's Mood, who were based on Deeside, and, like many a dance band musician of the previous generation, carried on performing part-time (Crofts, 2008).

Beat Groups and Summer Fêtes

However, it did not automatically happen that younger musicians would all immediately desert the dance bands for the beat boom. Like Harry Proctor and Ron Lovelady, Steve Lloyd came from a musical family; his father had run a dance band, and his older brother was a fan of modern jazz (Lloyd, 2006). Lloyd had lessons on the drums from Alfie Williams, who was 'something of a legend around Wrexham', having played professionally in London with Leo Cortez and his Custard Pies, and appeared in a film called 'Calling All Stars' which also featured Larry Adler on harmonica. When Steve was about sixteen, he did his first gig - a New Year's Eve dance - with Des Hale's band at Coedpoeth Village Hall. Steve also played with a schoolboy 'beat group' called 'The Renegades' (Fig. 61), but he never enjoyed it very much, as he was desperate to get into a proper dance band. Given Lloyd's musical background, this is perhaps not so surprising; he was already a competent drummer with an enthusiasm for jazz which had been nurtured within his family. Playing the drums was not a rebellious statement on his part; in fact, he was advised to play drums by his father.[61] Therefore it's more likely that he was unimpressed by the musical opportunities which local rock 'n' roll bands at the time seemed to promise, and preferred the challenge of anchoring a big swing band, working with written arrangements, time signatures which weren't always 4/4, complex Latin American rhythms - even the most commercial dance bands needed those - and, some of the time at least, improvising soloists. In this context it is interesting to note that one of Lloyd's contemporaries, the bass player John Greaves, moved on from Wrexham rock 'n' roll to progressive rock, where he may well have been seeking similar challenges and

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[61] See Chapter 4 for more on this.

musical satisfaction. (John Greaves, 1996; McMahon, n.d.) By the age of 17, Lloyd was playing round Wrexham with the Johnny King Band. Soon after that, he was 'poached, if you like, by the great Ray Irving', which was the beginning of a professional and semi-professional career in jazz bands and dance bands which went on throughout the 1960s and beyond (Fig. 62); his story will be continued in Chapter 8. (Lloyd, 2006)

Meanwhile, Dennis Roscoe was still playing dance band gigs around Liverpool. At one of these, he happened to be present on the occasion when John Lennon and Paul McCartney first heard each other play. A band that Roscoe had been playing with lost a regular job because of their unreliable pianist. (He drank heavily during intervals, and repeatedly came back to the bandstand late.) Some of the remaining band members - without the beer-swilling pianist - formed a new band which included the pianist George Edwards. For Roscoe this was the start of a twenty-five year association with Edwards and his bands. Edwards was a good organiser and a good MC, and the band got lots of social gigs and Masonic work, as well as being engaged for many Jewish weddings and Bar Mitzvahs. When Edwards' band (including Roscoe) played at the Garden Fete at the Woolton Parish Hall on 6th July 1957, they were on a bill which included the Band of the Cheshire Yeomanry, as well as John Lennon and his skiffle group the Quarrymen. Paul McCartney was in the audience. (John Lennon meets Paul McCartney, 2008) It was to be a few years yet before this was recognised as a momentous event in the history of popular music however. To Roscoe and the rest of the George Edwards band at the time, it was just another gig. (Roscoe, 2008)

Conclusion

In Chapters 4 to 7, I have concentrated on the development of the Chester area dance band network, including how musicians got their early musical experiences and skills, how the local entertainment market was affected by World War II and the period of austerity which followed, and how the local dance band network actually operated during this period, which was the busiest and most commercially successful for this form of jazz-based dance music. I have also looked in detail at how time spent in the Armed Forces affected interviewees' musical development; although some were taken away from music altogether, many others benefitted in a variety of ways, from simply gaining a wider experience of life and the world, to intense musical training which was actually more useful to a dance band musician than that

on offer at that time at universities and music colleges at the time (and which would in any case have been available only to a far smaller number of people).

As discussed in Chapter 4, the late 1920s and early 1930s saw live dance music in transition from dance bands based on stringed instruments, to jazz-based bands featuring increasing numbers of saxophones and brass instruments. The 1920s saxophone craze and associated influx of new musical trends at that time meant that many dance band musicians found that they needed to learn new skills in order to carry on getting gigs; Field's saxophone player Ted Duckworth, who started his career as a cellist but moved on to not just playing but also giving lessons on clarinet and saxophone, is a good example of this phenomenon. There are many parallels with the way in which the electric guitar, and amplified music generally, began to dominate popular music in the 1960s. Like the saxophone, the electric guitar was not actually a brand new instrument at this stage, having been around in various forms since the 1930s, but it was an instrument whose moment had arrived. Even more than the saxophone, it offered versatility and high sound volumes for relatively low levels of effort and expense. Combined with the accessibility of the guitar to musical novices - and especially with the help of publications such as 'Play in a Day' - the economic advantages of amplified instruments were all but irresistible. Within the space of half a century, the instrumental melodic line of popular music had moved from keyboard and strings, to wind, and back again.

The next chapter will look at how the local entertainment scene and its network of musicians adapted to new economic and technological developments, and new musical fashions. There was in fact a lot of overlap between the jazz and rock 'n' roll scenes at this time, and neither the dance venues nor the dance bands themselves disappeared immediately when rock 'n' roll's influence reached the UK. However, the entertainment industry as a whole did have to adapt to new circumstances, and, as examples from interviewees will show in the next chapter, the existing infrastructure increasingly began to be used in different ways.

CHAPTER 8: THE 1960s AND BEYOND

Introduction

Chester, like the rest of the UK and much of the rest of the world, was at a cultural and social turning point at the end of the 1950s and the start of the 60s, and these changes were to affect the local dance music scene as they did many other facets of peoples' daily lives. It is therefore worth pausing at this point to summarise the developments which have been described in chapters 4 to 7, and consider how they provide the context for those which were about to occur.

Chapter 4 covered the early development of the Chester and North Wales dance band scene, focusing particularly on the period between the two world wars. This was when musicians such as Wilf Field began their careers. Recorded and broadcast music were beginning to exert an influence on young musicians and music fans, but it is important to note that recordings of American jazz musicians were generally quite difficult to obtain in Britain, and the BBC actively avoided playing anything which sounded too American, so although British dance band music was strongly influenced by jazz it retained a distinctive British sound and style. This is part of the reason why I have been careful to refer to the music played by the Chester scene bands as 'dance music' rather than 'jazz' or 'swing' unless a specific example suggested different treatment. Chapters 5 and 6 covered the effects of World War II on the local dance music scene, and the specific effects of heightened militarisation on opportunities for musical training and apprenticeships, both formal and informal. Chapter 7 looked at the Chester and North Wales dance band scene at its busiest and most commercially successful, focusing on aspects such as how the substantial numbers of semi-professional musicians who were required to populate this scene were organised, including the increase in centralisation which began to emerge with the growth of dance hall chains such as those owned by the Rank Organisation. Chapter 7 also covers evidence of the beginnings of a different scene which emerged in and around the same dance venues that were still home to the dance bands; the start of Chester's rock 'n' roll and pop scenes. In this chapter I will look at how the new musical styles and (importantly) changes in technology emerged in and around Chester. It was, without doubt, the start of a new era, but change was not instantaneous. Rather, this was a process of adaptation to new circumstances. A history of live music which focused on dance band, jazz, and rock genres separately might not see the overlaps between the people

and infrastructure involved in each. This chapter, in contrast, focuses on the ways in which the different genres and generations co-existed.

A changing landscape

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Frith et al described popular music in the UK in the late 1950s and early 1960s as 'less a desert than a landscape covered with a mass of foliage, from gnarled old trees to newly planted seedlings' (Frith, Brennan, Cloonan, & Webster, 2013), and that description certainly seems apt for the varied music-making in and around Chester at that time. Musicians of many ages and styles operated within a complex environment of changing audiences, technologies and social situations. Finnegan might describe these musicians, like those she studied in Milton Keynes, as navigating these complexities along well-used pathways from one venue or musical situation to another (Finnegan, 2007).[62]

As the fifties gave way to the sixties, rock 'n' roll, skiffle and Merseybeat increasingly made their impact on the pop charts, and employing small groups of non-unionised teenagers to provide a hall-full of entertainment became an increasingly practical option for venue operators seeking higher profit margins. The Beatles played at River Park Ballroom and the Royalty Theatre. (Joe Rowe recalls that the Beatles played during an interval at the River Park Ballroom, and were paid £5 between them. (Rowe, 2006)) At that point they were still called the Silver Beatles, with Pete Best playing drums. They returned to the River Park Ballroom with Gerry and the Pacemakers as part of a night of 'non-stop twist and jive' in August 1962, and played at the Royalty Theatre in May 1963 (Live: River Park Ballroom, 2008; Live: Royalty Theatre, 2008). In Bourdieusian terms, the rules of the game were

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[62] Some of these pathways still started within the family. Several more examples from my interviewees appear in this chapter, based this time in Wrexham. It is interesting to note that such family connections also appear regularly in the biographies of well-known musicians of this era and later, although they rarely formed part of the popular account of stars' biographies. (Examples include the Bee Gees, whose father was a dance bandleader (Cook, Hughes, & Bilyeu, 2009), as was Paul McCartney's father Jim (Brocken, 2010, p. 16). Similarly, Elvis Costello's father Ross McManus sang, played and recorded with Joe Loss's band (Leigh, 2011) and Pete Townshend's father Cliff was a saxophonist who played with the Squadronaires (Edwards & Azurdia, n.d). There was also a substantial overlap between dance bands at both national and local level and the London session scene. (For more on this see Appendix C.) In Bourdieusian terms, these are overlapping fields, where professionals involved in large-scale production of commercial music had links with non-professionals involved in much smaller-scale enterprises.

changing. A musician whose habitus had served well for decades may now have had to change their ways, or leave the field. As discussed in previous chapters (and especially Chapter 2), dance band repertoire was usually eclectic, to allow bands to cater for a wide range of audiences, and of necessity this eclecticism continued to increase during the era covered by this chapter.

Competition from young rock 'n' roll bands did not bring every dance band in the country crashing to a sudden halt, and individual musicians handled the changes in different ways, according to their own preferences and local circumstances. Some did give up music entirely and concentrated on doing 'real jobs', or spent more time with their families - for a while, at least. Some adapted to the new trends and markets and carried on playing, but in different styles or - recalling the flight from strings to saxophones thirty years previously - on different instruments, for instance by taking up the guitar or bass guitar instead of a wind instrument or string bass. Others carried on playing forties and fifties hits in forties and fifties-style dance bands, continuing to cater to the same generation of big band fans who had grown up with the music, but moving with them to different occasions and venues. Examples of nationally-known musicians who adapted to the changing market environment include John Dankworth (Sir John Dankworth, 2010; Fordham, 2010), John Barry (Bennun, 1999; John Barry – the original Bond maestro, n.d.), and Laurie Johnson (Johnson, 2007), all of whom found continued success in the film and television industries through the sixties and beyond, contributing to music to productions including *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Dankworth), *The Avengers* (Dankworth first, then Johnson), *Dr. Strangelove* (Johnson), *Lock Up Your Daughters* (Johnson), *Tomorrow's World* (Dankworth) - and of course the James Bond film series (Barry).

Film and television music in those days required orchestras and bands for its production, and this provided employment for many of the musicians who had previously worked as sidemen in the touring big bands of previous decades, as well as early studio experience for musicians who were to make an impact in later years. Generically speaking, they moved from dance music to background music. In the process many went from being barely noticeable by most of the public to being effectively invisible, even though the sounds they recorded entered television viewers' homes on a daily basis. It is important to note, however, that they

continued to earn a living through performing, and often in more comfortable circumstances than had previously been the case, putting the days of touring in draughty and unreliable buses behind them. Examples include the studio band for Laurie Johnson's background music to *The Avengers*, which included Kenny Baker, Stan Roderick, Lad Busby, Jackie Armstrong, Don Lusher and Frank Reidy from the dance band ranks, classical musicians Alan Civil, Barry Tuckwell and Maria Korchinska, and young keyboard players Rick Wakeman and Howard Blake. Sometimes when a particular effect was required, only one musician would do, as when Johnson hired former Victor Silvester violinist Oscar Grasso to give exactly the sound and atmosphere required for *The Avengers*' episode *Quick Slow Death*, which was set in an old-fashioned ballroom dancing academy (Johnson, 2007).

Television light entertainment shows over the next couple of decades required musical directors too. Composers, arrangers and band-leaders like John Dankworth, Jack Parnell, Ronnie Aldrich and Syd Lawrence all did well in these fields, organising the music for visiting artists such as Nat King Cole and Ella Fitzgerald (Dankworth) (Fordham, 2010), conducting the 'real' band for *The Muppet Show* (Parnell) (Barfe, 2006, February 1st), or providing background music for comedians such as Benny Hill (Aldrich) (Brown, 2002) and Les Dawson (Syd Lawrence) (Gifford, 1998). Vocalist Roy Edwards had already moved into television in the late 1950s. By the mid-70s, he was much in demand as a cabaret entertainer on cruise ships - something he greatly enjoyed. He carried on doing this for at least fifteen years, often backed by Polish rhythm sections who he described as very skilful and extremely professional (Edwards, 2005).

For all of these musicians, the commercial environment had changed, and if they wanted to continue to work as musicians, they had to adapt. 'Jazz Places' became 'Rock 'n' Roll Places,' or disappeared altogether, as a result of the economic and technological changes referred to in Chapter 7. The next section looks at Chester's live music scene through the eyes of someone who was particularly well placed to understand the interplay of musical fashions and economics which was so important at this time: the promoter Gordon Vickers.

Gordon Vickers, The Alpine & The Flamingo

By the start of the 1960s, Gordon Vickers was well established in the Chester area as a promoter and venue operator.[63] He ran a club called the Alpine Club (with the Monte Carlo upstairs) in Love Street, across the road from the River Park Ballroom, until 1974. The club had two floors, with a group playing on each floor. He also ran a jazz club called the Flamingo Club at premises on Christleton Road (subsequently a branch of Blockbuster Video; now occupied by Jewson's Builders Merchant). The Flamingo Club operated for about seven years from approximately 1964 (although the exact dates are not clear). By this time the beat boom was well under way. Vickers puts part of the success of the Flamingo club down to its being one of the only places in Chester, other than fish and chip shops, where it was possible to turn up and have a meal in the evening without booking in advance. (In true 'Jazz Places' style, Vickers kept a very close eye on the totality of what his customers wanted from their evening out, and not just the on music.) Most restaurants in the area were run on more formal lines, or were attached to hotels and required diners to be resident. The menu at the Flamingo included T-bone steaks, scampi and chips, hamburger and chips and spaghetti bolognese. Vickers did use recorded music at the Flamingo, but he also still booked local musicians, such as Doug Hall's band which played on Sunday evenings, with Ray Cummings on saxophone. "Ray used to have a microphone with an echo sound stuck in the bell [of his saxophone], so that when he played it sounded like three or four saxophones playing - a great thing at the time." [64] (Vickers, 2007)

Vickers retained his love of jazz and big bands, even if they were not the commercial draw they had once been, and continued to promote jazz-related events. He brought national and international jazz stars to his Wall City Jazz Club at Quaintways, including Kenny Baker, George Chisholm, Acker Bilk, Lenny Niehaus and Bud Freeman. (He turned down the opportunity to book the Beatles for any of his venues because they were 'just a bunch of scruffy Teddy Boys.' He did however book Billy J Kramer and Gerry and the Pacemakers.) (Vickers, 2007)

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[63] For more on Vickers' earlier experiences as a music fan and promoter, see Chapter 7.
[64] This is an interesting parallel with the Stroh Violin (Stroh Violin 1904-1942, n.d) mentioned in Chapter 4.

He also promoted 'A Concert of Chester Jazz' which took place at the Flamingo Club in 1964, and included many of the musicians already (or about to be) mentioned, including Colin Gibson, Tony Faulkner, Bryan Jones, Don Morris, Glynn Evans, Stan Thomas, (Harry) Dennis Jones, Ray Cummings, Pat Fields, Tommy Jones, Ian Ashworth, Alan Lewis, Don Owens, Rip Parkinson, Tony Harper, and Pete Wright (Figs. 62 and 63). Seen in a wider context, this fits in with a growing trend at this time for jazz and dance band musicians to take their music more seriously, and have an increasing focus on the artistic and cultural aspects of their playing, while placing less emphasis on the purely functional and financial. This is yet another hidden history, in this case of how jazz moved from a disreputable activity for which students could be ejected from London music colleges, to an accepted part of the music curriculum in both universities and conservatoires all over the UK. For instance in the following year (1965), Bill Ashton founded the National Youth Jazz Orchestra in London, and what was to become Leeds College of Music (and Tony Faulkner's future employer) opened its doors as the Leeds Music Centre (Faulkner, 2007).

The Exodus

The changes which were taking place in the live music business were of greater concern to full-time professionals, who were entirely reliant on income from playing their instruments, than they were for the larger number of semi-professionals. If a band folded or a venue closed the semi-pros involved had a little less money, and a bit more free time, but because they got their main income from their day jobs, they weren't in danger of losing their homes or their whole livelihoods, and they had the option of playing for reduced (or no) fee if they wanted to, or spending more (or all) of their time on their main career, or with their families. Full-time professionals however had to navigate a much more threatening situation, with less room for trial and error.

One of those professionals was Norman Frost, who by this time had moved from the circus band to play with Paul Vaughan at the Orrell Park Ballroom. The band included Alan Branscombe on tenor saxophone, and Red Carter on drums. (Red Carter had been something of a child prodigy on the drums, leading a professional band from the drums before he was old enough to leave school.) When the band was wound up, Frost asked one of the other musicians, Dave Hamer, what he was going to do next. Hamer replied that he was going to

join his brother Ian, who was already an established musician in London. (Ian Hamer was later a member of the *Top of the Pop* studio orchestra for more than 20 years, and also played trumpet on the original theme tune for *The Sweeney*.) Branscombe also moved to London, and joined John Dankworth's band. Frost however stayed in Liverpool, moving on to play with a band led by Hal Graham at El Rialto, before returning to Orrell Park with Johnny Jones. The gigs were still coming in, albeit with smaller bands. Frost's playing career was eventually curtailed when his wife became ill and died, leaving him with a young son to care for. He moved into teaching, gradually resuming part-time playing in later years. (Frost, 2008)

Paul Blake had already taken temporary leave of clarinet playing by this time, in his case as a result of his own serious illness which put him in hospital for seven months. He left the Wall City band in about 1962, to be replaced by Stan Thomas, and played very little for the next fourteen years or so, other than a spell at the Oaklands with Eddie Heywood and Al Farrow. (Blake, 2007) In contrast, Tony Faulkner became a full-time professional drummer in 1965, before moving to London in 1970 where he organised his own big band which included musicians including Henry Lowther, Kenny Wheeler, Stan Sulzman, Dave Gelly and Brian Priestley. The band recorded regularly for the BBC's Jazz Club programme from July 1971. A hundred or so of Faulkner's arrangements were recorded for the BBC, either by his own band or by the BBC Big Band. He also played, then and later, with big name jazz musicians including Art Farmer, James Moody, Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis, Nat Adderley, Bobby Wellins, Al Cohn and Harry Edison. While in London, Faulkner also worked with artists including Bob Monkhouse and Tony Hatch, and played at Ronnie Scott's club. When he married and started a family in 1973, he took up the offer of a teaching post at Leeds College of Music, and the family moved north. He stayed at the LCM until his retirement in 2007. (Faulkner, 2007)

While the outlook for full-time professional jazz musicians became more uncertain, and drew many of them into more reliable forms of income such as teaching, dance bands populated by local semi-professionals still had a niche for some decades to come. Here is another view from the promoter's desk, in this case that of Chester-based promoter (and former military bandsman) Paul Bridson. Even while he was booking more modern bands for many venues,

Bridson continued to book jazz-based dance bands, for instance into employees' social clubs at Ellesmere Port and Capenhurst. As he says, "The music scene was huge actually, everybody was catered for…" Talking about dance bands, he said:-

> I booked them, I certainly booked them, because obviously where I used to do venues, say such as the Shell Club in Ellesmere Port, I was fortunate enough to be the sole booking agency there, and in those days you used to do it for the different sections […] and they would all have probably monthly dances. […] the dance bands would be Les Peters Orchestra from Newton-le-Willows, Ralph Cowden Orchestra from Crewe, Billy Scales and his Dance Band, you know, Carl Blackmoor Band, although he was resident at Capenhurst Club for a long, long time, and then I would also put in the local bands to support and to take care of the needs of the youngsters. Then I would bring in people like Kenny Ball, Acker Bilk, the Temperance Seven, a lot of those sort of name bands - Terry Lightfoot and his Jazz Men, they would also come into the area.

<div align="right">Bridson (2008)</div>

The factory and firms' social clubs were usually partly or fully funded by the companies as part of the benefit and social structure for their employees. They provided a steady stream of work for both local and touring performers, and were an essential part of both the local and national musical environment.

Cabaret, Casino and Opportunity Knocks

Meanwhile, Joe Rowe was still in demand as a drummer, although in different contexts. He played regularly on Saturday nights with Billy Brickland's band at the Assembly Rooms in Chester. He also played with Tommy Gresty's band at venues including the original Cavern Club in Liverpool, and other venues as far afield as Manchester. In 1962, Rowe started to work regularly with theatre pit bands and cabaret bands, backing artists ranging from Frank Ifield and Dusty Springfield to Jimmy Clitheroe, Gladys Morgan "and the usual dog acts". He carried on doing that kind of variety work with a four-piece band until 1981. Both this and the examples which follow (from Colin Gibson) offer evidence of the continuing overlap and interaction between the local and national music scenes, as mentioned at the start of this chapter. (Rowe, 2006)

Colin Gibson returned to regular music making during the 1960s and 70s. Like Rowe, Gibson backed his share of 'dog acts'. He played for a while at the RAFA Club in Little Sutton, on the Wirral. This during the time that Hughie Green was hosting the television talent show 'Opportunity Knocks', and in another example of the way in which the increasing popularity of television was affecting the live music business, acts from the show would often appear at the club.[65] Gibson also recalls a stint of about three years of Saturday nights at the 'Country Club', a membership club on the site now occupied by the Abbots Well hotel on the outskirts of Chester near Christleton. Gibson played piano with a trio, usually with Pete Price on bass and either Tony Faulkner or Don Morris on drums. Frank Gordon, an organist who did broadcasts with the BBC, played solo piano downstairs in the gambling section, while Gibson and the trio played in the restaurant. Because of Gordon's connections at the BBC, the trio was occasionally joined by nationally known vocalists such as Dennis Lotis and Lita Roza.[66]

Around this time Gibson also started to play with Doug Hall, who ran a band which included Ray Cummings on alto saxophone, Ken Morgan on guitar, and Pete Price on bass, plus sometimes Tommy Jones or Joe Rose on trumpet. In another example of the versatility and eclecticism which were the norm among dance band musicians, Hall 'would take on absolutely anything', and with an expanded band agreed to back a show which featured all the stand-in artists from the London production of *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Community Centre Hall in Blacon, which held an audience of about five hundred. The show was not *Fiddler on the Roof* all evening however; the show material was broken up by sections from other artists, including a very inexperienced Tom O'Connor. It was his first paid job, and he was singing hillbilly music. His performance in the first half did not go well, and the event organiser asked Hall's quartet to fill in for him in the second half, then paid O'Connor and

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[65] Sometimes - as with the singing group the Vernon's Girls from Liverpool - the band enjoyed working with them. However, one week the act sent to Little Sutton was 'George and His Yodelling Dog'; the main challenge then was keeping a sufficiently straight face to get through to the end of the music.

[66] Gordon's use of his BBC connections in this way is another example of the role of weak ties and social capital among musicians. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Lita Roza was another former pupil (from the same period) of the same school that Roy Edwards attended in Liverpool, but in the interim she had enjoyed a highly successful singing career with major British bands including the Ted Heath Orchestra. Musical scenes form a tight-knit web. (For more on this, see Appendix C.)

told him not to come back. Fortunately he found much more success in later years as a comedian.

Steve Lloyd, Ray Irving and Quaintways

Ray Irving's band was formed in 1948, but still going strong in the sixties.[67] Geoff Anderson played tenor sax quite regularly with the band, starting in about 1959. At that time George Jones was playing lead alto, and Roy Huckridge was playing trumpet. Anderson remembers that two or three different drummers played with the band while he was there, and one of them was young Steve Lloyd (Anderson, 2006). Lloyd was not much older than Ian Shaw, but his interest remained firmly in playing for jazz and dance bands. In 1961 he joined Ray Irving's band:-

> When I was about 18 I was with Ray Irving's band which was you know, it felt quite an achievement you know, because just this young person to be with this band that was doing all the gigs…[And] he was certainly getting the gigs, I remember one December for example, doing 28 gigs - 28 nights out of the 31 in December.
>
> Lloyd (2006)

Lloyd played with Irving on and off until 1965. By this time he had been joined in the rhythm section by ex-Renegade Roy Mack on guitar, and a bass player called John Greaves (Fig. 66). John Greaves also grew up in Wrexham, and had been given a bass guitar for Christmas by his father (a bandleader) when he was twelve years old. He went on to play bass with progressive rock and jazz groups, including Henry Cow (Greaves, 1996) - an excellent example of the way in which the infrastructure and social networks associated with the dance bands contributed substantially to all kinds of musical developments in the next generation.[68]

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[67] By 1960, the band had its own minibus (Fig. 65).

[68] Other well-known rock musicians who gained early professional experience in dance bands include Robert Fripp of King Crimson, as well as Andy Summers and Sting of The Police. Summers had occupied the guitar chair of the resident band at the Majestic Hotel, Bournemouth. When he moved to London, Fripp took over as his replacement (Fripp, n.d). Sting's early career included time as a cruise ship musician, playing "rock 'n' roll, ballroom, cabaret, basically a working musician playing anything, just to earn a crust." (Brennan, 2014)

Lloyd was 22 by this time (1965). He was still set on working with jazz-influenced big bands and dance bands, and 'being young and fearless' had decided that he wanted to play drums full-time. He saw an advert in the Melody Maker for a drummer to play with a Palais band in Leicester, passed the audition and took the job. However, he was very nervous and unhappy at being away from home, so he returned to Wrexham. Before long though he was off on his travels again, this time to Newquay in Cornwall. His new bandleader was a 'very fine sax player' called Jimmy Brown, who had played on the liners with 'Geraldo's Navy', and prior to that (like Stan Thomas of the Chester Majestic Ballroom band) had played with Ken Mackintosh's band.[69] Lloyd next moved on to a band led by trumpet player Ronnie Caryl (Fig. 67), who he described as 'a very fine trumpet player and a very hard man'. Thanks to Caryl, Lloyd became a proficient sight-reader, which was relatively unusual for a drummer.

> Boy did he teach me how to read! I felt I could read till I worked with Ronnie Caryl […] he used to throw these arrangements at you which were fiendish and if you couldn't do them he used to shout. He would say the most terrible things about you and then you know, would be wonderful, so my reading improved by an incredible percentage,[…] he was such an incredibly good musician. …if anybody's responsible for me being a reasonable reader it's Ronnie Caryl because he did not put up with anything. You had to be really on the ball. He used to write these things in extremely fast tempos… the Trolley song - now that arrangement that was scary! We used to knock out all these phrases at the speed of light you know, and if you couldn't do it he was nasty…
>
> Lloyd (2006)

There was clearly still a substantial demand for Caryl's style of music, even in 1965; the work was very lucrative. While in Jersey with Caryl, Lloyd earned £22 per week. Accommodation (all in) cost him about £4 per week, so he had plenty of spending money. This compared very favourably with his former day job when he had earned just £7 per week,

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[69] Geraldo became musical director for Cunard after World War II, and according to Steve Voce "[p]laces in the bands in what became known as Geraldo's Navy were much sought after by young jazz musicians eager to hear the newly emerged modern jazz known as Bebop in its home city of New York. [John] Dankworth and Ronnie Scott were in their vanguard and joined Geraldo to play on the Queen Mary in 1947. To be paid to travel to New York once a fortnight and to hear their idols there was a miraculous windfall." (Voce, 2010)

but spite of the good pay, and although he improved as a musician while playing with Caryl, he was homesick. He discovered that he just was not cut out for living away from home in digs, and part of the way through the season he made up his mind that he was not going to continue as a touring musician. When Caryl told him that the band's next engagement was at the Latin Quarter in London - a big venue with topless dancers - Lloyd said:

> "Well, I'm not going."
>
> And he said, "Why?"
> I said, "Well I'm just not happy you know; it's just the way I am."
> He said, "You're doing a great job so we're going to the Latin Quarter."
> And I said, "No."
>
> So I left Jersey at the end of the season and fair play to him, he wrote to me because we did not have the telephone in those days, we're talking mid-60s, only posh people had telephones, so he wrote to me saying "We're starting at the Latin Quarter on such a date. I'd like you to come and be in the band."
>
> I didn't reply, which wasn't very nice of me.
>
> <div align="right">Lloyd (2006)</div>

After returning from Jersey, Lloyd re-joined the Ray Irving Band, before moving to the Quaintways band which, as mentioned in Chapter 7 by Ian Shaw, was led by Ces Davies at this time.[70] Davies had previously been the bass player with the Syd Lawrence / Dennis Williams quintet which had been resident at Quaintways in the 1950s. Lloyd felt honoured to be asked to join the Quaintways band.

> Ray Irving's band was busy but not very good. He had this way of convincing a punter, the people who're booking the bands, that they were getting the best band ever and we all know what most people are like. They haven't got a clue whether it's good, bad or what, as long as it's presented as being something good they cannot see anything that isn't so good. The Quaintways band was a much better band so I was very keen to go with it.
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> <div align="right">(Lloyd, 2006)</div>

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[70] Figure 68 shows Lloyd playing with the Ray Irving Showband in 1968. The band as set up in that photograph includes the musicians necessary to tackle both dance band genres and more modern styles.

Ballroom dancing was still very much a seasonal thing, even by this point in the late 1960s. The Quaintways band did a lot of work in the winter, and was kept together throughout the summer for the regular Saturday night dance. The band personnel at this time, in addition to Steve Lloyd on drums, included former Majestic Ballroom band musicians Stan Bowness (alto sax), and Geoff Anderson (second alto), as well as Harry Dennis Jones (tenor sax), Tony Harper (baritone sax), Roy Huckridge (trumpet), Mike Kaydon (electric guitar) and later also Sid Hanson from Wrexham on piano. This personnel formed the core of the Ces Davies Big Band which continued to operate as a rehearsal band on Sunday mornings into the 1970s. When Lloyd left the band Don Morris – a mentor and teacher to Tony Faulkner - took over on drums. Ces Davies's band was resident at Quaintways until the venue closed in the late 1970s.

One of Steve's fondest memories in music was connected with the Quaintways band:-

> Well on the 23rd of December 1967 my daughter was born. Where was I when she was being born? I was playing in The Quaintways band! It was a Friday night, so I went straight from playing with the band to hospital. Joanne had just been born, that was in the early hours of the 23rd of December […] [The next night] we had the Saturday gig with the Quaintways band [again] so I went to play. The theme tune of that band was *Girl Talk*. We always played that to open - but that night the entire band turned towards me and they played *Girl Talk* towards me you know - at me - because I'd just had a baby girl…

<div align="right">Lloyd (2006)</div>

Ken Morris on the North Wales dance band scene in the 1960s

After he was demobbed, Ken Morris returned to North Wales and started to play with bands in the Wrexham area. Clearly the time he had spent on saxophone practice while based in Egypt had been worthwhile, as indeed had his early experience with the local brass band, as Morris's music-reading and saxophone-playing skills were now up to the standard required to play lead alto in a semi-professional dance band run by local bandleader Derek Martin:-

I was dancing with a girl and he come and said, "I believe you play the saxophone?"
I said, "I'm not at the moment, I'm dancing", so he took me down in the interval and he showed me his pad.
 He says, "Can you play this?"
[I said] "Yes", so I went up to play with him on the Friday night at St. Mary's and I played second alto first half and he asked me to go on lead and that's where I stopped.

Morris (2008)

Morris played with this band for a few years before setting up a 13-piece band called the Skyliners with some friends from Wrexham. From there he moved on to Brian Jones's band, which was then playing two nights per week at The Plaza in Oxford Street in Wrexham, then to a quartet led by bass-player Jack Ellis. Morris did play occasionally with Ray Irving, but during the first half of the 1960s he spent much of his time away from his day job in Prestatyn. In 1960, a trumpet player from the band Morris was playing with saw an advert in the local paper saying that the Royal Lido at Prestatyn was holding auditions for a band to play their 16-week summer season. Thirteen bands auditioned, and Morris's band got the job. As it turned out they stayed for a lot longer than sixteen weeks. Initially their contract was renewed until the summer of 1962, when the management decided it was time for a change of band, and auditioned again. Once again Morris's band won, and stayed on at the Royal Lido until 1965. Morris feels that he was unusual in keeping on with dance band work at one venue for that long in the early sixties, when the music scene was changing rapidly all around him. The band did adapt to their surroundings, providing appropriate backing for Acker Bilk one week and The Bachelors the next; this probably helped them to survive for as long as they did. Again echoing Becker's Jazz Places (as well as the eclecticism evident in examples throughout this research), Morris still firmly believes "that you play to the crowd you've got. Even today I believe in the same thing. If you're out to please people you've got to play what they want, not what you want." (Morris, 2008)

Highlights of Morris's playing career during the sixties included playing in bands which backed Johnny Dankworth and Cleo Laine when they came to the area, and on another occasion in a band which backed Dudley Moore. The Prestatyn Lido band also shared the bill with the Beatles:-

> Well, I mean they [the Beatles] were a gigging band like we were, nobody bothered with each other did they […] you know, they'd come and do the gig and as far as we were concerned we turned up, opened the show and all that… then took the money and went home.
>
> Morris (2008)

At the time this interview was done, Morris was still playing regularly at the age of 77.[71]

By the end of the 1960s, rock 'n' roll-based pop music played on amplified instruments was in the ascendancy, especially with the commercially important market of teenage radio listeners and record-buyers. Amplified music - especially discos, which did not require any live musicians at all - certainly did cut into the work opportunities for musicians, especially for brass and reed players whose musical lines were appropriated by guitars, keyboards or voices, or left out of the music altogether. As we will see in the next section however, rhythm section musicians continued to find paid work, and even when big bands could no longer operate commercially at a profit, many musicians carried on playing the music together for enjoyment in what became known as 'rehearsal bands'.

The 1970s - Where have all the dance bands gone?

By the mid-seventies, many of the ballroom-focused 'dance halls' had gone, or at least changed drastically. Quaintways stayed open as a live music venue until the late 1970s (Quaintways, 2012). It is still a dance venue, now trading under the name of 'Rosie's', and frequented mainly by students from the University of Chester, tourists, and race-goers. Like many similar buildings, the Gaumont Cinema in Chester, where Ian Shaw saw the Shadows play, was converted into a bingo hall. The Majestic Ballroom eventually became a shop, although by that time the new inner ring road had sliced through the back of the building; the remaining structure is a fraction of its original size and shows no hint of its past in the entertainment industry. Other dance halls, such as the River Park Ballroom, had already been demolished, and in general it was much harder even for those who wanted to continue

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[71] See also Figure 76, from 2011.

dancing to live bands to find venues with suitable sprung floors, which had not already been converted to a disco or some other purpose entirely.

This did lead to some anguished letters to local newspapers, including one in Field's collection (unfortunately not dated, but after decimalisation in 1971) in which the writer A. E. Adswood said that they were 'bewildered' by what had happened to their home town in the previous decade. He or she complained "…there are now no dance halls in the city that I can find. …at the Northgate Arena … I was informed that it was solely "Disco". …What's happened to the dear old Town Hall dances and Wilf Field, the Riverpark [sic] and the Assembly Rooms?" (Field, 2006) Saxophonist Geoff Anderson rapidly dispatched a reply (also in Field's collection), assuring Adswood and other readers that although the Majestic Ballroom and Quaintways had by this time 'passed into oblivion', the same was definitely not true of Field and his band, or indeed the Deeside Dance Orchestra. He finished by saying "This form of entertainment is not extinct - far from it." This statement is backed up by advertisements such as the one shown in Figure 69, in which music is provided for customers to 'Come Dancing' to by bands led by Wilf Field and Wilf Rigby.[72] (Although there is again no date on the clipping, the presence on the bill of Lenny Henry and Tight Fit narrows down the timeframe to the early 1980s.)

Incidentally, the television show 'Come Dancing' ran from 1949 to 1998; second only to 'Panorama' for series longevity (Come Dancing (1949-1998), n.d). This 1980s namesake is right in the middle of that period. According to 'Strictly Come Dancing' judge Len Goodman's autobiography, the 1970s and 80s were a busy time for dance schools catering to ballroom dancing enthusiasts all over the country, ranging from amateur beginners to professional competitors, although these too broadened their generic range to include disco and street dance in order to continue to appeal to younger customers (Goodman & Havers, 2008). Although the original 'Come Dancing' ceased in 1998, its successor 'Strictly Come Dancing', which first aired in 2004, is very much still with us. Writing in 'The Musician', Simpson (2011) says that providing the music for the show is a challenge which continues to attract some of the UK's best session musicians. 'Strictly Come Dancing' is unique because

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[72] Wilf Rigby is another long-term member of the Chester dance band scene; his name is among those in Field's 1955 contact list.

it employs the last in-house band of its kind on UK television, providing a link to a tradition going back to the bands of Ronnie Hazlehurst and Jack Parnell in the 1960s and 70s. Simpson says that the band have to be constantly alert, as a show might require them to play "Argentine tango, cha-cha-cha, waltz time, Motown and modern rock". He quotes the bass player Trevor Barry who emphasises the camaraderie, skill and craft pride among the band: "..in this band every musician is the top of their tree. So to sit and play with these guys who just happen to be my mates is joy. To be part of getting the music out there and showing what real musicians can do. I feel blessed to be doing it. It's a real honour."

Returning to Chester in the 1970s, the picture was a complex one, with dance bands and their clientele moving to different venues as commercial pressures forced them out of the venues in more popular locations such as Quaintways. As has already been described in this chapter, rhythm section musicians such as pianists and drummers could still find a lot of work, although opportunities for brass and saxophone players did decline. In response, some big bands stopped working regularly on a commercial basis, but continued to meet and play as rehearsal bands. Many musicians in any case found themselves much busier with work and family commitments by this time, and bowed out of playing either permanently or until they retired from their day jobs. The indomitable Ray Irving was still keeping his show band busy into the 1970s, however. A newspaper article in Field's collection shows Irving and his band in 1973, celebrating 25 years in business (Fig. 70). In the article, Irving described his musical policy as 'to present popular music from the Thirties up to the present-day Top Twenty'. In another echo of both Becker's Jazz Places and Rogers' Brisbane hobbyists (Becker, 2004; Rogers, 2013), Irving said "Our job is to provide enjoyment; naturally we absorb some of the enjoyment ourselves, and it is rewarding."

In spite (or perhaps because) of the changing environment, the Chester branch of the Musicians' Union soldiered on, holding their 25th anniversary celebration at the Queen Hotel in November 1974. Figures 70 and 71, again from Field's collection of newspaper clippings, show many of the individuals mentioned in previous chapters, or about to appear in this one.

Wilf Field, Joe Rowe and Steve Lloyd in the Seventies

Wilf Field started leading bands in the mid-1920s, and was still busy fifty years later. Obviously, by the mid-seventies, he had seen many changes. Field liked to pay the full Musicians' Union rate, but this contributed to the shrinking of his bands, as clients were no longer prepared to pay so much for an evening's entertainment. By the 1970s he was leading a four-piece band, including himself on organ. As his son Gordon put it, "I don't think it was the groups that knocked Dad; it was to do with disco I think." (Field, 2006)

Gordon was not just referring to disco as a musical or dance genre; he was also referring to the effects of new technology. Field's band often played opposite pop groups, especially at social events such as weddings, where a wide age range had to be catered for. However, discos were "cheaper, and take up a lot less space". Venue operators started to see floor space as valuable, and one D.J. and his disco took up fewer square feet than even the most efficiently packaged four-piece band, whether playing jazz or rock. If anything, live bands with fewer personnel but more modern amplification equipment took up more floor space than their all-acoustic predecessors. Recorded music could now be used to provide background music with high sound quality and (if required) high volume, but without the need for musicians who needed facilities such as changing rooms, rest breaks, or just space to set up and play. Live music was therefore becoming something of a luxury, rather than the default option, and this change in economic parameters affected both the size of the bands and the circumstances (and places) in which they were likely to be employed. However, Field carried on in spite of all this, and as described in the Introduction to this thesis, was still performing regularly in the 1990s. (Field, 2006)

Steve Lloyd continued to play with jazz and big bands whenever he could, but as the 1970s wore on he increasingly found that his father's advice to take up the drums (rather than the trumpet), along with Ronnie Caryl's introduction to the art of sight-reading, were both important in keeping him in paid gigs. Bands kept shrinking until there wasn't much left other than the rhythm section; this meant that there was proportionately more competition between brass and reed players for the remaining work, while drummers, pianists and guitarists were less severely affected. As a drummer with good sight-reading skills, Lloyd

was a particularly rare beast, and much in demand in cabaret bands and theatre pit orchestras. He continued to do that sort of work until after the turn of the century. (Lloyd, 2006)

Joe Rowe had a period away from regular playing in 1968 when his first wife became ill and died. For a while he did odd gigs here and there, but nothing regular. In 1969 he met a pianist called Winston Barrowclough. Barrowclough had a friend who "played guitar and sang a bit". The three musicians got on well together, found a bass player (who had formerly played with the Black Abbots), and formed a cabaret close harmony group called 'Imagination'. They were quite successful, and did not confine themselves to playing only local gigs, travelling as far afield as Exeter and Leeds, as well as venues in Liverpool. They played for dancing as well as cabaret, and had an arrangement with the Grosvenor Hotel that they did all of the 'posh dos' in the ballroom there. A regular job for Imagination was an annual event for the McAlpine construction company at Borras Airfield (formerly RAF Wrexham) in North Wales. The company would hire three bands for the event, which took place in a huge marquee with a restaurant at one side, and dance floor at the other, and bars all the way round. There were around 2000 members of McAlpine staff and their friends and family there. They always employed a well-known big band, such as Syd Lawrence or Kenny Baker, in addition to Imagination and one other band. One year when the Syd Lawrence Orchestra was not available, the Ray McVay band (who provided the music for 'Come Dancing' on television at that time) were hired instead.[73] Imagination rarely worked for Gordon Vickers though, as he did not pay enough. (Rowe, 2006)

Rowe's story reintroduces a number of aspects referred to previously, including the importance of weak ties (such as Barrowclough and his friend) in procuring work opportunities, and of being willing and able to adapt to current commercial requirements, which might by this stage be called 'Cabaret Places' rather than Jazz Places, although the underlying concept is the same.[74] Imagination is also a good example of a band which operated in the space between the local and national live music scenes, in that much of its work took place in and around Chester, but the band also travelled much further afield, where

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[73] Ray McVay now leads the Glenn Miller Orchestra (UK), which is still touring in 2015. (McVay, 2013)

[74] As previously mentioned, the 'rules of the game' were changing, and a new habitus was required.

its members frequently interacted with well-known full-time bands such as those run by Syd Lawrence and Ray McVay. It is also notable that the McAlpine company chose to hire well-known big bands, rather than rock or pop groups, for the events, even at this stage in the 1970s when they would have been long out of fashion among young record buyers. The events still attracted a large audience every year, and this cannot be entirely explained by the fact that the event was promoted by the dancers' employer. On the contrary, it seems more likely that the audience were not, on average, very young themselves. Consequently, Syd Lawrence, Kenny Baker and Ray McVay would have been playing 'their kind of music' - that is, the music they remembered from their youth, and still enjoyed listening and dancing to.

Gordon Vickers meets Gary Glitter

Meanwhile, Gordon Vickers was still promoting bands and live music events in Chester, and by this time further afield in Cheshire as well. Although the Wall City club was still billed as a 'jazz club', Vickers' music policy was eclectic and always commercially aware. In the sixties and seventies he booked bands such as the Steampacket (including Long John Baldry, Julie Driscoll, Rod Stewart and Elton John), the Marmalade, and a young Leo Sayer, who was booked by Vickers as a favour to an agent he knew in London, just before Sayer achieved national success with a hit record. The tickets to that gig started to look very cheap indeed at that point, and sold out quickly. By the time the newly minted pop star arrived in Chester, Quaintways was full to overflowing, with queues going all along Werbergh Street. The police told Vickers that if he planned to book any more famous bands, he should let them know in advance. He replied that if he had known any sooner how popular the gig was going to be, he would have charged a lot more for the tickets. (Vickers, 2007)

As well as booking pop acts at the Wall City Jazz Club, Vickers also booked acts of various types into many other venues, including the Northwich Memorial Hall, where Field played in the 1980s. One memorable booking there involved Gary Glitter and his band.

> I had Gary Glitter on his first tour. I was promoting in those days at Northwich Memorial Hall on a Saturday, so I'd booked him for three nights, Saturday at Northwich, Sunday somewhere, and then I had him on the Monday night at Chester. On the Saturday night he played for 25 minutes and came off.

I said, "You only played three numbers."

He said, "We only know three numbers - we've just formed the band."

I said, "Weren't you on 'Top of the Pops' a fortnight ago?"

He said, "That was miming - that's all we know. We only started rehearsing this week."

So I said "Well if you come to Chester you've got to play more than three numbers otherwise you'll be lynched. […] I'll tell you what to do: play the three numbers which you know including 'Rock and Roll', go off as a false start and come in and play it again and spread it out."

And that's what they did - they spread it out for 40, 50 minutes. That was the scene in those days, yeah - a lot of groups like that who were fronted but they weren't on the recordings, you know? Sad. I used to complain about it."

Vickers (2007)

This story illustrates the strength of record company marketing channels, and in particular of television, by this point in the 1970s. Gary Glitter and his band simply did not need to be competent performers with a large, well-rehearsed repertoire in order to become popular and justify a national tour. At this stage, the majority of their target audience either did not know that most bands on *Top of the Pops* mimed to pre-recorded tracks, or perhaps they knew, but were not concerned, and were prepared to buy gig tickets anyway. The main requirements were that the band could look the part on *Top of the Pops*, do as they were told by their managers, and muddle through any tours when the time came. Those who survived this baptism of fire sometimes went on to have long and successful careers, and it cannot be assumed that (for instance) miming on *Top of the Pops* was proof of musical incompetence; often it was imposed on bands, rather than being requested by them. However, the contrast with the way in which earlier generations of musicians developed in the days before short cuts like miming were available is marked. This is therefore an excellent example of the way in which changes in technology caused fundamental changes in the operation of the music industry at all levels.

The 1980s and beyond

In the 1980s, Vickers was heavily involved in developing new hotels, starting with the Woodhey Hotel in Little Sutton at the start of the decade. He had, for many years, nurtured an ambition to convert the former Griffiths Furniture Warehouse (Fig. 72) in Chester into a hotel, and in 1986 he found his opportunity. The building came on the market, and by

October 1987 Vickers had had the building refurbished and converted into the new Mill Hotel (Fig. 73). He subsequently bought the land on the other side of the canal and doubled the size of the hotel by adding a new building in the same style, and linking the two buildings via a pedestrian bridge. The Mill Hotel is still the home of the Wall City Jazz Band in 2015.

Few of my interviewees mentioned notable musical occurrences from the 1980s or 90s, but again it should not be assumed that dance band music was completely absent from cultural life during this time. Much of it was now to be found on radio or television, in programmes such as 'Come Dancing' or 'Big Band Special', rather than in the local dance hall. A number of important jazz festivals were established during this period, including the Wigan Jazz Festival which ran for the first time in 1986. Even closer to Chester, the Llangollen Jazz Festival was thriving during the eighties, and featured musicians ranging from Nat Gonella, George Chisholm and Humphrey Lyttleton to Loose Tubes. Syd Lawrence's big band went from strength to strength at this time, and was now a focus for British big band fans who still wanted to see big band music live. This was of course all going on during the decade when Ruth Finnegan and Sara Cohen were doing the field research which led to their books, as discussed in Chapter 1.

In 1979, Geoff Anderson took over the leadership of the Deeside Dance Orchestra (Fig. 74) from Ron Lovelady, who had to retire due to failing eyesight (Anderson, 2006; Owens, 2007). Anderson was now a self-employed haulage contractor, and was finding it increasingly difficult to get away from work for Friday evening jobs. In addition to this, inflation and interest rates were high, so money was tight among potential bookers. Even so, the Musicians' Union continued to increase their standard fee rate every year. These economic factors combined meant that more and more 'annual bookings' weren't renewed when Anderson contacted the customers and - in accordance with the M.U's stipulated rates - asked them for 10% more than the band had charged in the previous year. In 1987, the Deeside Dance Orchestra disbanded permanently. (Anderson, 2006)

In 1989, Steve Lloyd's childhood friend from Wrexham, Godfrey Williams, happened to be running the local commercial radio station Marcher Sound. Williams noticed that Jazz FM was doing very well in London, and as he was always one to follow up a promising trend, he

asked Lloyd if he would like to do a jazz programme on Marcher Sound. Lloyd agreed to do one hour a week. This actually turned out to be three hours a week, but as he had a huge record collection along with a wide knowledge of music in general and jazz in particular, this was not a problem. He quickly found that although it required a lot of preparation, he enjoyed the work. Presenting the programme brought Lloyd the opportunity to interview guests, many of whom were local bands and musicians with gigs to promote. He also interviewed nationally known musicians including Acker Bilk and Kenny Ball, as well as Ted Heath's widow Moira. In 1993 Lloyd opened 'The Violin Shop' at Rufus Court on the city walls in Chester, and he found that running the shop and producing a three-hour radio programme every week was getting too much, so he gave up the radio programme. By this time the vogue for jazz on local radio had passed again, and he was not replaced. (Lloyd, 2006)

Wilf Field's long career ends at last

Wilf Field had hoped to clock up seventy-five years as a performing musician and bandleader, and he came tantalisingly close. As described in the Introduction to this thesis, he was frustrated by two broken bones, only one of which was his own. He may not - quite - have achieved that 75th anniversary, but even so this was an impressive achievement. When Field first started leading bands, saxophones were a modern craze and jazz was still in its infancy. By the time he was forced to give up, London music colleges were offering degrees in jazz performance, and the technology used to provide musical entertainment had changed out of all recognition, not just once but several times. "Constancy of purpose", indeed!

By the mid-1990s, many of the musicians featured in this research had retired from full-time work. With more free time available they were able to return to music making, or put even more time into it. Norman Frost and his band were still getting some good quality gigs in the early 2000s, such as St. George's Hall in Liverpool, Shrewsbury School, and the Burtonwood Association's 'Christmas at the Base' reunion dance in 2003. (A poster for the Buttonwood event is shown in Fig. 75.) Live jazz in public venues was however hard to find around Chester by this time. One of the main live music venues was Alexander's on Northgate Street, not far from where Quaintways had become Rosie's nightclub. It is indicative that the venue's name was changed from 'Alexander's Jazz Theatre' to just 'Alexander's' in the early 2000s, at around the same time that the proprietor gave up promoting annual jazz festivals

featuring well-known musicians because they usually made a substantial financial loss. Even so, there were regular appearances by local jazz groups such as the Bill Basey Big Band at this time, and a monthly jazz jam session which started in 2001 was still running in 2011 (Fig. 76). The former Quaintways band led by Bryan Jones continued to perform regularly until Jones was forced to retire due to ill health in 2012 (Fig. 77). As was the case when Finnegan (2007) investigated music making in Milton Keynes in the 1980s, Chester at the start of the 21st century still has a considerable amount of musical activity going on. The University of Chester has been offering a degree course in Popular Music Performance (Fig. 78) since the mid-2000s, and there is a substantial amount of classical and light classical musical activity in the city, as well as an annual music festival. However, the amount of paid work available for part-time semi-professional dance musicians has changed dramatically since the 1950s. Then, there was a lot; now, there is very little.

The Wall City Jazz Band blows on...

The Wall City Jazz Band as an entity is still going in 2015; the personnel varies from week to week, as it always has done, but the repertoire and the atmosphere at the Mill Hotel remain familiar. Many musicians, like Paul Blake and Colin Gibson, have found themselves drawn back into the Wall City network as family or work commitments wound down. When Len Morgan was interviewed in 2005, he said:

'Doug Hall still comes, he's about 85, 86 now and he still comes to the Mill on a Monday night. And when they have a bit of an interval he gets on the drums with his mates and, oh, it's great. One gets on the clarinet, Tommy gets on the trumpet, and it's marvellous, and you see the fans, you get a lot of the old faces from about 50 years back, I think.'

(Morgan, 2005)

The last word goes to Wall City trumpet player Tommy Jones, regarding 'Some Sunny Day' - a wartime play with music by local composer Matt Baker:-

it was set at the beginning of the war and through the war from a kid's viewpoint, and Pam and I gave him a lot of information because of course we were both kids during the war. They put it on [in Chester] …. And it was very good, it was a sell out. They were using bits and bobs of uniforms and clothing but they carried it off really well, you know, I thought they did very well…

Jones (2007)

No longer 'Pop', but Part of the Furniture…

Although Glenn Miller disappeared en route to France in 1944, his music is still frequently played - live, as well as in recorded form - today in 2015. Use of the 'Glenn Miller Orchestra' name is tightly controlled, with three fully professional bands working in different parts of the world (Licensed Territories, 2013). In addition, original Miller band arrangements and transcriptions are widely and legally available, and are played all over the world by a huge variety of ensembles, including school and conservatoire bands, military bands, including the modern incarnation of the Squadronaires, (Royal Air Force Squadronaires, 2013), and semi-professional big bands and dance bands. The music is now usually marketed as nostalgia, and often aimed at those old enough to remember it when it was popular dance music, or (to a lesser extent) younger people who have developed an interest in ballroom dancing as a result of television shows such as *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Between the time when big band jazz and swing were popular music, and recent years when they have been more likely to be categorised as nostalgia, live local dance bands were part of the musical furniture. Their activities overlapped with, influenced, and were influenced by their musical and cultural surroundings. World War II and its aftermath arguably produced the rock and pop revolutions of the 1960s and beyond, and not just because of factors such as the presence of American G.I.s in Europe, the post-war baby boom, post-war social changes, and wider adoption of technology developed for military purposes during the war, such as jet engines and tape recording. The war also shaped the musical and business infrastructure for in which new musical developments would grow.

Conclusion

As previously discussed, Chester today is better known for its shops and Roman ruins than its music. In this and previous chapters I have shown that despite this, there have been strong links between the local music scene in Chester and the wider national scene. These links occurred as a result of touring bands and artists who played in Chester, and also through musicians from the area who played elsewhere. It seems unlikely that Chester is unique in this respect, and that idea is confirmed by other studies, including those by Finnegan, Brocken, and Rogers (Brocken, 2010; Finnegan, 2007; Rogers, 2013).

Chester had not physically moved or become cut off from the national transport network, and its geographical status as a regional route centre remained as significant in the early 21st century as it was in 1960. We must therefore look elsewhere for explanations of what happened to Chester's live dance music scene. If Chester still had a thriving live rock and pop scene, it would be reasonable to blame the missing dance bands purely on changing musical fashions. However, although there are a still a few live music venues in and around Chester, the vast majority of music heard in the city today - whether for dancing or as background music – is provided in recorded form. Modern nightclub and restaurant owners have a cheaper and more space-efficient alternative to live music, which is accepted by their clients. It is therefore not surprising that they usually choose to use recorded music, rather than employing live bands.

Another important change which influenced the fate of local live music scenes was the increasing centralisation of the music industry from the 1960s onwards. Factors which had previously made all travel (including touring for bands) difficult, such as fuel rationing, ceased to be an issue. At the same time, the amount of popular music broadcast on radio and television increased steadily and dramatically[75]. The combination of increased availability of materials (thanks to the end of post-war austerity and rationing) and increased consumer

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[75] Going back to Baade's account of the BBC's uneasy relationship with popular music which was described in Chapter 3, one of the results of their extensive audience research during the war was the conclusion that musical preferences were more closely linked to age and generation than (as had previously been assumed) social class and gender. This led to first the Light Programme, which was on air from 1945, and then from 1967 its successors BBC Radio 1 and Radio 2. (Baade, 2012)

prosperity, especially among teenagers, also led to a large increase in the importance of gramophone record sales for the pop music industry. This set of circumstances increased the ability of recording companies to promote their own choice of bands and artists, and profit directly from their compositions and recordings, rather than having to rely at least partly on local dance bands to popularise new songs and arrangements, as had previously been the case. An extreme example of this more centralised approach to popular music was the successful promotion of Gary Glitter and his band via *Top of the Pops* before they were actually able to play 'their' songs live, as described earlier in this chapter. From the point of view of the musicians who were part of the Chester and North Wales dance band scene, this all added to the commercial pressures which were reducing their opportunities to play dance music on a paid basis. From the Devonian Dance Band's mix of Old Time and Modern at the Cheshire Regiment Ball, to Billy Gibbons and Ray Irving offering rock 'n' roll as well as strict tempo dance music, numerous examples in these chapters have shown that dance band musicians were extremely versatile, and routinely tackled a wide range of musical genres in order to provide the music the dancing public wanted. This habitus had stood them in good stead while local live bands were still an essential part of dancing and evening entertainment, but the social and technological changes which gathered pace through the 1960s and 70s meant that versatility alone was not enough to keep large numbers of function bands commercially viable. As has been shown in this chapter, this did not mean that the musicians or the music disappeared overnight; it did, however, slowly but surely lead to fundamental shifts in the way that entertainment was provided, and the way that those who wanted to continue to play in public found (or created) opportunities to do so.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

In Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this thesis, I introduced the theoretical background to my study, including relevant areas of Sociology, Jazz Studies, and Popular Music Studies, along with the historical and geographical context within which the Chester and North Wales dance band scene existed. The following five chapters focused on the evidence provided by interviewees, in the context of the theoretical models previously described.

In Chapter 4, I concentrated on the environment in which the dance band network which existed in the Chester area in the 1940s and 50s developed in the inter-war period, and looked at some of the influences which shaped it, including Chester's status as a garrison town, the saxophone craze of the 1920s, the effect of changes in pitch standards on the second-hand market for musical instruments, and the effect of both family networks and Granovetter's weak ties on the development of a musical scene.

In Chapter 5, I focused on the many effects which World War II had on the local live music industry. Along with Chapters 6 and 7, this chapter covers the period when jazz-based dance bands were at their most commercially successful, but in spite of this most dance band musicians in the area were part-time musicians, mainly because it was very difficult to become a full-time musician at a time when individual employment was strongly controlled and directed by the government. One way of getting around this restriction was to become a bandsman in the Armed Forces.

In Chapter 6, I looked at the important role played by the forces in the development of many musicians' careers at this time, both as a market for dance bands, and as a provider of training, musical opportunities, and contacts.

Chapters 7 and 8 described the way in which the (by this time) well-developed dance band network overlapped with the developing rock 'n' roll scene in the late 1950s and on into the 1960s, and brought the story up to the present day.

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Conclusions

The Hobbyist Majority and New Jazz Places

One constantly hears talk these days about a dance band revival. Well of course there isn't one. Nor could there be. And if there could be one, who would want it? The Glenn Miller necrophiliacs notwithstanding, those days are over. They are long gone and good riddance. Because if you are pining for those happy halcyon dance band days of the 'twenties, 'thirties and 'forties, it is well to remember what they were the musical accompaniment to; a lacerating economic depression, a second world war and the Nazi holocaust. May none of them ever return.

Colin (1977)

Towards the end of his article 'Jazz Places', Howard Becker wrote that shortly after he left Chicago in the early 1950s, television became the major form of entertainment in neighbourhood bars, and the places which had formed the backdrop to his brief career as a jazz pianist were no longer available as live music venues (Becker, 2004). As has already been described in Chapter 7, the growth of television in the UK did affect the dance band business in Chester as well, although demand for live jazz and dance bands seems to have persisted considerably longer in Chester than in Becker's Chicago, with dance bands, big bands and rock bands co-existing in the city throughout the 1960s.

It is however unquestionably the case that the live music business was on the verge of some dramatic changes in the late fifties, in Chester as elsewhere. The jazz and dance bands did not disappear completely or instantly, but youngsters who were drawn to the idea of a musical career were no longer so likely to covet trumpets, saxophones and clarinets, or a lead chair in the local resident dance band; electric guitars, rock 'n' roll bands and recording contracts gradually took over in many young musicians' plans and fantasies. A result of this shift - and others in succeeding decades - is exemplified by the issues which arise in the articles 'How to Develop Audiences for Jazz' (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre & Jazz Development Trust, 2001) and 'A Literature Review of Research on Jazz Audiences' (Warner, 2010). Both articles address a problem which scarcely existed for 1950s dance hall

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managers - that of persuading the public that a band playing jazz-derived music on acoustic instruments might be worth turning out (and paying) to see and hear live.

These reports also highlight the on-going trend for professional jazz musicians and jazz promoters to rely on state subsidies and support, much as classical musicians had already been doing for decades, and coincide with increasing opportunities to study jazz and pop musicology and performance in UK higher education institutions - an opportunity which in the 1950s was only available to military personnel, and even then only as part of a general musical training[1]. Young musicians of my interviewees' generation would probably have been delighted by the extra educational opportunities, but dismayed by the lack of opportunities for paid work as a jazz or dance band musician available to most graduates of these degree courses. This has resulted in a situation which would have seemed very odd sixty years ago: large numbers of highly trained young jazz, rock and pop musicians with skills and technology their predecessors would have been very envious of, but with much more limited opportunities to work as professional musicians.   (It is not a coincidence that the 2000s have seen a growth in emphasis on music business skills and self-promotion techniques in what are now routinely referred to as the creative industries.)

Some of the practicalities of making a living as a musician in the twenty-first century are represented by Coulson's recent paper on 'Collaborating in a Competitive Environment' (Coulson, 2012). This paper looks at how a small sample of young professional musicians based in the Northeast of England went about making a living in the first years of the twenty-first century. All of the interview subjects for the study defined themselves as 'professional musicians', although in a variety of different ways. This is a more complex picture again than in the decades covered by my research. Recorded music is now much cheaper, more varied & more accessible than it was in the mid-twentieth century. There is much less live

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[1] In 2011, British jazz saxophonist Julian Arguelles commented on the way in which music colleges and music degree courses have largely replaced dance bands as a training ground for young jazz musicians. He described colleges as an opportunity for networking as much as for developing as a musician; an opportunity to "learn together, listen to music together, play together, rehearse together and work things out together … colleges have replaced [dance bands and touring bands], and I think this is one of the quite healthy things about these places." (Upton, 2011)

music, and again it is evident that opportunities to play an acoustic instrument in public for money are greatly reduced.

In spite of these structural changes to the music industry, it is important to remember the 'Hobbyist Majority' described by Rogers (2013). There are - and always have been - many more people regularly active as musicians than a simple headcount of full-time professionals would reveal. While many of the graduates in jazz and popular music currently being produced by British higher education will not become full-time professional musicians on graduation, it is unlikely that they will all completely give up playing music as a result, or find that they are the only (or always the most skilled) musicians in their communities. As with the large numbers of young people who grasped the musical opportunities presented to them in the course of their military service or war work, many will combine a part-time or hobbyist involvement in music with some other way of making a living.

An Emergent Scene

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Frith, Brennan, Cloonan, and Webster (2013) described live music in the UK in the late 1950s and early 1960s as 'less a desert than a landscape covered with a mass of foliage, from gnarled old trees to newly planted seedlings', and that description certainly seems apt for the varied music-making in and around Chester at that time. The precise way in which that landscape developed in and around Chester was governed by changes in economic factors, including the economics of location and technology as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, and changes in the built environment of the area, especially those resulting from World War II (as discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6). It was affected by what audiences of various ages, types and sizes wanted to hear (or dance to), and the places and circumstances under which those audiences gathered; in other words the Jazz Places (or more often, Dance Band Places) discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Musicians of many ages and styles operated within a complex environment of changing audiences, technologies and social situations, including the national cultural environment as represented by institutions such as the BBC and the Armed Forces. Finnegan (2007) might describe these musicians, like those she studied in Milton Keynes, as navigating these complexities along well-used pathways from one venue or musical situation to another. Performing this navigation required a detailed practical knowledge of how the local and national music

scenes worked, and also of the music and dance genres required. In Bourdieusian terms, this means that young musicians had to acquire the appropriate habitus; with the help of an assortment of local and national institutions and mentors, they learned the 'rules of the game'. This continued to be the case as post-war austerity gave way to the new environment of prosperity and change in the 1960s, as described in Chapters 7 and 8. World War II had a profound effect on live popular music everywhere, which in turn contributed to the environment in which the upheavals of the 1960s took place. It is clear both from my data and also from the stories of well-known musicians like the Bee Gees and the Beatles that British beat and rock 'n' roll did not appear spontaneously, from nowhere; they were part of an interdependent network of musicians, promoters and public, which encompassed a range of age groups and musical styles simultaneously. While none of the above mentioned ways of conceptualising a music scene and the people involved in it is new in itself, it is hoped that combining them with a detailed oral history investigation of this specific local scene, as this work has done, will contribute to the further work on amateur music-making in an urban landscape called for by Cohen (2012).

The landscape analogy proposed by Frith et. al (2013) relates to the natural world, and I would like to conclude by adding another ecological analogy. It is common for tourists visiting Africa to want to see the 'big five' African game animals: the lion, African elephant, Cape buffalo, leopard and rhinoceros. Getting close to these rare and spectacular animals is an expensive and potentially dangerous business, even for the modern form of hunting (with a camera, from a jeep) as opposed to the traditional approach on foot with a rifle. However, top predators and large herbivores could not exist without the rest of the complex ecosystem they inhabit, many members of which are less spectacular, but much more numerous. Termites provide a good example: their colonies improve the fertility of the land, which in turn affects the success of the larger plants and animals they share it with (Eggleton, 2010). Without the rest of their environment – from termites to trees and ancestral track ways - the most impressive of big beasts cannot survive. This applies as much to internationally famous jazz musicians or rock stars as it does to leopards and elephants. All evolution, and all life, needs a congenial environment. For dance bands in the mid-twentieth century, Chester and North Wales provided just such an environment. In turn, the infrastructure, social networks and musical pathways that grew up around the dance bands contributed to the environment in which skiffle and Merseybeat developed. Natural ecosystems have no fixed borders between

large and small, or important and insignificant creatures. I argue that the same is true of musical ecosystems such as the ones examined here; hit parade data is important, but can never tell the whole story. Forget about the live music scene, and one risks mistaking a forest for a desert.

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APPENDIX A: JIMMY LALLY ARRANGEMENT OF 'NIGHT AND DAY' BY COLE PORTER

NIGHT AND DAY
from "THE GAY DIVORCE"

Arranged by
JIMMY LALLY

Words & Music by
COLE PORTER

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Analysis

A 'Stock Arrangement'

This analysis is based on a brand new copy purchased in 2014, which is a restored and industrially printed photocopy of the original. The song is a standard from 1932 and a jazz classic; it was probably a popular request in most every bands' repertoires. The arrangement is deceptively simple and routine in appearance. However, there is nothing simple about the harmonies, even in this stripped-down commercial arrangement (so rhythm section players who 'knew all the chords' would have been required to play arrangements like this accurately).[1] The song itself has an unusual structure. Rather than being a straightforward '32-bar standard', each verse consists of a 32 bar section followed by a 16 bar section, with an unconventional modulation in the middle.

A Flexible Ensemble

The front cover of the arrangement states that it is 'Specially arranged and made playable for any combination from a trio to a full dance band'. There is no full score (which implies no conductor). However, parts are included (& presented in this order) for:-

- Piano (incl. lyrics)
- Violins A, B & C (including lyrics) + 'Obb' (*obbligato*)
- Saxophones (1st & 2nd alto, 1st & 2nd tenor, baritone)
- Trumpets (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
- Trombones (1st, 2nd)
- Guitar
- Bass
- Drums

A 'Strict Tempo' Arrangement

The tempo marking is *moderato* (suitable for a slower dance such as a slow foxtrot). The key for most of the arrangement is Eb major, modulating to Ab major for the coda section.

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[1] For example, Mr Bollard, mentioned in Chapter 5, and 'Guitar George', mentioned in *The Sultans of Swing* by Mark Knopfler (Sullivan, 2013).

Arrangement Structure

Piano part

INTRODUCTION

The arrangement begins with five bars of octave leaps in the piano part which hint at the single-note melody of the Verse section of the original song, accompanied by a counter-melody in the saxophones. The Verse itself is not played. The vocal melody starts at the end of the sixth bar.

REFRAIN

The tune is played twice. The piano part contains jazz chord symbols with minimal notation (that is,. a single bass line, mostly on beats 1 & 3, in LH, plus three-note chords on off beats in the right hand, written at the bottom of the treble clef.) Actually playing this as written would sound pretty wooden though; it is a "lead sheet", not a finalised realisation. The piano part also has song lyrics and cues for the song melody. Even in the smallest possible ensemble this allows tune to be carried by either pianist or vocalist (who might be the same person). The first-time bar at end of first refrain loops back to start of refrain. The second-time bar lead to an (unlabelled)

CODA

The key changes. From this point, there is no vocal part; the band concludes with the final 16 bars of the melody (in the new key) followed by a two-bar extension to finish off. A single instrumental line is cued in on the piano part to indicate what should be happening in the rest of the band if they are there, or so that the the pianist can contribute the missing parts if the arrangement is being played by a much smaller ensemble. There is a hint of a more swinging approach in the syncopated rhythms of this final section, but this single line is again a hint for the desperate rather than complete realisation.

Other instrumental parts

Continuing with other members of the trio (that is, bass & drums), these parts are extremely minimalist. The bass part does begin with indications of *arco* (for string bass players with a bow available) before reverting to *pizzicato* for the rest of the arrangement. Neither the bass part nor the drum part contain lyrics or chords, & for the two repeats of the refrain the bass

part is written just as crotchets (the same notes as the piano left hand) on the first beat of bar. Just playing these notes would be just about sufficient, but again would sound wooden and mechanical; a more adventurous bass player who didn't know the arrangement might prefer to read from piano part, as the chord symbols (or a good ear) would be help to fill in some intermediate notes between the written crotchets if desired (although for true Strict Tempo performance, it would be important not to embellish the rhythm too much).[2] Then again, this is a standard - anyone that adventurous might well already know the chords and not need the extra information on the piano part.   As with the piano part, there are hints that the coda section should be swung more; the bass part goes from two notes in a bar to four in a bar for eight bars, and there are also hints about dynamics (mostly actually provided by brass and saxophones; this would probably be picked up by the drummer too, once he knows the arrangement by ear, as no dynamics are written on the drum part). The last two bars of the bass part have specific rhythm to match band tutti ending.

The drum part is even less informative than the bass part - but then as reported by Steve Lloyd in Chapter 8, most drummers did not read music, so extensive written parts would in most cases have been a waste of paper. The drum part does indicates that the drums should remain silent for the first four bars of the introduction. It confirms (32 + 16) x 2 structure for the refrain, as well as the change to a four-in-a-bar feel at start of the coda. The written part is just 'bass drum – tom / snare; bass drum – tom / snare' throughout, except for two very short & lonely rolls. Any drummer who just played this would be worse than useless however, even in a Strict Tempo band. Of all the musicians in a dance band, drummers had by far the most freedom to make their parts up as they went along, provided that they worked within largely unwritten conventions regarding volume, parts of the kit (and sticks) used, and rhythmic embellishments (or 'fills') employed in given performance contexts.

The final rhythm section part, which is entirely optional, is for guitar. As for drummers, it was uncommon for guitarists to read written music, so the the guitar part consists entirely of chord symbols, written four-to-the-bar throughout except for a small section of notated syncopations at the end.

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[2] See Chapter 1

Single line instruments
Strings

This is a truly flexible arrangement designed to work for everything from a small group of rhythm section musicians to a full dance band including trumpets, trombones and saxophones. It also included three violin parts (plus *obbligato* solo part) which could provide a lush Henry Hall-style dance band effect when combined with the wind and rhythm sections, or a more restrained Palm Court style with just the rhythm section (or rhythm section plus just one saxophone and one trumpet). To combine with wind parts, some prior organisation would be needed (which could be done on the bandstand) regarding either strings or wind leaving out some overlapping lines.

First repeat of refrain: the melody, harmonised in rhythmic unison.
Second repeat: a florid counter-melody from the *obbligato* part. Quite high and soloistic.

Saxophones

The counter-melody in the introduction is only written in the saxophone parts (although it is also cued in on the piano part). The arrangement would work without it if necessary.

First repeat of refrain: the 1st alto line is similar to vln C, but with extra movement at ends of phrases, and some phrases in unison with the solo violin line.

Second repeat: 1st alto line is mostly melody, except in the middle where 1st trumpet takes over.

2nd alto is in very tight overlapping harmony with 1st alto throughout.
1st tenor saxophone has 2nd tnr (1st time) line cued in in 2nd repeat.
The baritone saxophone is written an octave below the 1st alto almost all the way through, except for the unison soli section in the coda, & a few other unison phrases.

Trumpets

First repeat of refrain: 1st trumpet plays the melody, except in the middle section where it plays the tune with a special 'hat' mute, held over the bell rather than inserted into it. The first trumpet part doubles the Violin A part, an octave lower. Second trumpet doubles Violin C, playing guide tones in close harmony. The third trumpet part is an independent part which does not double violin C (possibly because of issues of range).

Second repeat: All trumpets use Harmon mutes, and play punctuating stabs for almost the whole chorus.

Coda: 1st trumpet part finishes on Bb above staff. This would not be unusually high for a dance band first trumpet part.

Trombones

1st trombone plays a sixth below 1st trumpet most of the time (depending on harmony).

2nd trombone doubles 1st trumpet an octave lower, in a similar relationship to the 1st also and baritone saxophones.

Summary

All the parts are designed to fit together in many different combinations, and still work harmonically & stylistically. The use of a repeated refrain (written out on two staves, one above the other, on the single-line parts) means that the arrangement can be shortened on the bandstand by playing 'top line only' or 'second line down', and then going straight to the coda. (This instruction would be given to the band at the start of the set or tune by the bandleader.)

The arrangement itself is formulaic, but quite complicated even so. Producing so many individual parts ready for printing would have been a labour-intensive and thus costly process in pre-digital days, when sheet music print templates had to be engraved by hand. This – along with the large number of 'Jimmy Lally' arrangements (and others in the same style) which were published - indicates that there was a large market for arrangements of this sort.

APPENDIX B: NORMAN ROY ORCHESTRA DANCE PAD

Set List

Roughly 40% of these arrangements were commercially produced printed arrangements such as the Jimmy Lally 'Night and Day' (See Appendix A). Most of the rest were transcribed from recordings or arranged from scratch by Frost himself, or by a colleague from within the band or from another band (for example. Les Stevenson or Cecil Ladds). It should be noted that Frost was an accomplished dancer, and this probably contributed substantially to how he organised set lists, and also how he read the moods and preferences of audiences.

Band members were expected to carry the full library to every gig, mainly to be used in case of special requests from the audience, but also for finding items which had not been put in the set list correctly. There was a separate pre-planned set list consisting entirely of Glenn Miller numbers (along with other similar swing numbers) which was always used if the band were specifically booked as (effectively) a Glenn Miller tribute band, complete with imitation AAF uniforms, but this music was occasionally used on other gigs as well, again usually at the request of the audience.

This particular set list is fairly typical in structure, and contains 30 'sets' of between three and six songs (selected from more than 800 in the band's library at the time), organised as follows:-

1. Quicksteps
2. Slow Foxtrots
3. Waltzes
4. Latin
5. Rock 'n' Roll / Beat
6. Waltzes
7. Beat
8. Slow Foxtrots
9. Quicksteps
10. Latin
11. Waltzes
12. Quicksteps
13. Rock 'n' Roll
14. Slow Foxtrots
15. Dixieland (Quicksteps - or sometimes jive, depending on audience)
16. Latin
17. Slow Foxtrot

18. Quickstep
19. Latin
20. Quickstep
21. Slow Foxtrot
22. Quickstep
23. 60s (& 70s)
24. -
25. Finales
26. Party songs (Quartet / trio only) (for example. 'Happy Birthday)
27. Old Tyme
28. 'Busker' waltzes (Quartet / trio only)
29. Extras
30. Special Occasions (full band) (for example. 'Happy Birthday', 'Auld Lang Syne')

1ST TPT.

NORMAN ROY BAND PROGRAMME
DATED 23·10·05

SET Nº
G.V. = GIRL VOCAL

SET Nº
N.R. = MALE VOCAL

BAND Nº

1.	QUICKS
33	THIS COULD BE THE START
118	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
486	YOU DO SOMETHING (N.R.) (G.V)
237/204	JEEPERS CREEPERS / BLUE SKIES
114	UNDECIDED
727	CRAZY RHYTHM
723	IDAHO
761	MAME

2.	S'FX
109	DAY BY DAY. (GV)
125	CALL ME IRRESPONSIBLE
22	LET'S GET AWAY (N.R.)
469	OH! LOOK AT ME NOW (N.R.)
725	GAL IN CALICO
24	CEST SI BON
264	I'M OLD FASHIONED (G.V)

3	WALTZES
743	A TASTE OF HONEY
697	FORGOTTEN DREAMS
10	MOON RIVER
297	THIS NEARLY WAS MINE
105	BEAUTIFUL LOVE
737	TOO SOON TO KNOW

4.	LATIN
607	WOMAN IN LOVE
108	PATRICIA
234	COCKTAILS FOR TWO
684	CLOSE YOUR EYES
661	SWAY
646	ENJOY YOURSELF
ALSO	ESSO BESO - COFFEE SONG.
	(AD·LIB VOCAL N·R· QUARTET)
	FURTHER. REFERENCE E.B.-C.S.
142	GIRL FROM IPANEMA
895	BRASILIA

5	ROCK + ROLL / BEAT.
730	WE'RE GONNA ROCK
742	THE HITCH~HIKER
728	CRADLE OF LOVE
162	HIPPY HIPPY SHAKE
71	MUSIC TO WATCH GIRLS BY
166	DOWNTOWN MEDLEY (G.V)

6.	WALTZES
802	MY SEPTEMBER LOVE
53	IF I SHOULD FALL IN LOVE
229	TOGETHER
623	LOLLIPOPS & ROSES
51	BOY NEXT DOOR. (G.V.)

7.	BEAT.
755	BABY BABY
617	DOWN BEAT
478	FRANKIE + JOHNNY
480	RIVER DEE FISHCAKE
613	BOUNCE BEAT

8	SFX
813	I HAD THE CRAZIEST DREAM. (N.R)
128	IT HAD TO BE YOU (GV)
536	SLOW BOAT TO CHINA (N.R.)
547	IT'S THAT SAME OLD DREAM (N.R)
494	I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU (GV)
541	LOVE IS THE SWEETEST THING
681	SPRING WILL BE A LITTLE LATE.
302	SATIN DOLL

NORMAN ROY BAND PROGRAMME

SET No   DATED _____

No No   BAND No

9	QUICKS		14	SFX
32	FOGGY DAY (G.V)		189	LOVE LETTERS.
581	LET'S FACE THE MUSIC (N.R)		373	NEVERTHELESS. (N.R)
216	JAZZ ME BLUES		862	SMALL HOTEL.
873	ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE		522	LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME. (G.V.)
77	GYPSY IN MY SOUL.		704	WHEN I FALL IN LOVE.
6	I LOVE PARIS		132	STRANGER ON THE SHORE
116	S'WONDERFUL.		157	PUT 'EM IN A BOX (G.V.)
464	LET YOURSELF GO (G.V)		897	EGGS IN THE MORNING.

10.	LATIN		15	DIXIE. (QUICKS)
423	KISS OF FIRE		795	I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING
773	SERENADE IN CHA-CHA		428	SHAKIN' THE BLUES AWAY (GV)
626	PERDIDO CHA-CHA		179	SOMEBODY LOVES ME (G.V.)
612	BESAME MUCHO		385	BRING BACK MY BONNIE
298	COPACABANA		386	SOMEBODY STOLE MY GIRL
379	ARRIVEDERCI ROMA.		391	JAZZ BAND BALL
713	WEDDING SAMBA		70	SWEET GEORGIA BROWN
ALSO: 510 899	E.B - C.S. (N.R) MAMBO ITALIANO. FEELINGS			

11.	WALTZES		16.	LATIN	
777	CHARMAINE		417	BLUE TANGO	MORE BOOK OF LOVE
781	HE'LL HAVE TO GO		240	SOMETHING STUPID	
799	A SHANTY IN OLD SHANTY TOWN		466	POR FAVOUR	
			349	CUBAN LOVE SONG	
			492	FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE	
			362	CHOW CHOW BAMBINO	

12.	QUICKS		378	I WANT TO BE HAPPY CHA-CHA.
604	DO, DO, DO, IT AGAIN.		ALSO:- 62	E.B. - C.S. (N.R) SUMMERTIME IN VENICE.
79	DAY IN DAY OUT (G.V)			

17.	SFX

202	TANGERINE		680	LOVELY WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING
583	THAT'S MY GIRL (N.R)		7	IT'S ALRIGHT WITH ME
107	MALAGUENIA		42	HERE'S THAT RAINY DAY
870	DANCING IN THE DARK		95	WITCHCRAFT (G.V)
620	GOODY GOODY		47	ALL THE WAY. (N.R)
238	LOVE FOR SALE. (G.V.)		489	THERE! I'VE SAID IT AGAIN (N.R)

13.	ROCK + ROLL = R+R.		524	YOU STEPPED OUT OF A DREAM. (G.V)
738	HOOK LINE + SINKER.		103	ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU
160	I ONLY WANT TO BE WITH YOU. (G.V.)			
739	DON'T KNOCK THE ROCK.			
754	ROCK, ROCK, ROCK.			
720	SAVE THE LAST DANCE.			

NORMAN ROY BAND PROGRAMME

SET Nº
BAND Nº   DATED _____

18 QUICKS
- But Not For Me
- Can't Buy Me Love
- Cherokee
- Too Marvelous / Almost Like Being (G.V)
- Diamonds Are A Girls Best Friend (G.V)
- Hawiian War Chant.

19. LATIN
- Golden Tango
- Cha-Cha For Two.
- Adios Cha-Cha
- Tea For Two Cha-Cha
- Señora Cha-Cha
- I Wish You Love
- Spanish Eyes
- Zena Zena
- E.B. - C.S. (N.R.)
- Manana.

20 QUICKS
- Perdido
- Heartaches
- This, Can't Be Love
- Lullaby Of Broadway (G.V.)
- Speak Low
- I've Found A New Baby
- Stepping Out With My Baby (G.V.)

21. SFX.
- Blue Moon
- Walkin' Shoes
- So Rare
- Stars Fell On Alabama
- I'll Never Smile Again.
- Walkin' My Baby. (N.R)
- He's My Guy.

22 QUICKS.
- 217 Twelvth St. Rag.
- 124 I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm.
- 34   Lady Is A Tramp. (G.V.)
- 187 Skyliner.
- 832 Bye - Bye Love.

23 60s MUSIC.
- 168 The Locomotion
- 220 Living Doll
- 865 I Feel Fine
- 843 Rock-A-Billy
- 603 Baker Street. (70's)

24 SPARE SET (NOT USED)

25 FINALES
- 72   Hey There!
- 98   Let's Take The Long Way Home (G.V.)
- 444 Small Talk
- 459 Rock Me To Sleep. (G.V.)
- 175 Woodchoppers Ball
- 438 Who's Taking You Home?

26 PARTY SONGS (QUARTET ONLY)

27 OLD TYME.
- 628 St Bernards Waltz
- 251 The Veleta.
- 250 Sydney Thomsons Barn Dance Nº 4
- 667   - " -   - " -   - " -   - " -   Nº 5
- 252 Gay Gordons
- 253 Saunter Medley Nº 1
- 254   - " -   - " -   Nº 2

28 BUSKER WALTZES. (ALL QUARTET)
29 EXTRA VOCALS (MALE) | 30 INSTANT EXTRAS.

31 SPECIAL OCCASIONS + FINALES
- N.B. 255 = STAGE BAND GIG KIT.
- 255 Auld Lang Syn.
- 259 Congratulations
- 255 Jolly Good Fellow
- 429 Land of My Fathers
- 255 National Anthem.

"Noise of Many Waters : Music for the Victoria Baths"

Norman Frost (the bandleader of the Norman Roy Orchestra) provided music and set list information to Mike Hall & the RNCM Big Band for the 'Noise of Many Waters : Music for the Victoria Baths' event in Manchester, in July 2011:-

| | |

From: Catherine Tackley <catherine@dr-jazz.co.uk>
To: Helen Southall <h.southall@chester.ac.uk>
Date: 03/18/11 2:35 PM
Subject: Fwd: 50s dance band

Hi Helen

Wondering if you might have any leads on this? (Mike is Head of Jazz at RNCM)

Cheers

Catherine

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Mike Hall <mike@mikehall.co.uk>
Date: Sun, Mar 13, 2011 at 3:24 PM
Subject: 50s dance band
To: catherine@dr-jazz.co.uk

Hi Catherine

I hope things are still good for you.

Toby Smith (my governor) has asked be to put together half an hour of 50s style dance band music to be played at Victoria Baths. Apparently they used to hold dances there then!

The Phil Moss band is the model. (before the Ritz)

I*m well out of my depth but wondered if you might know of anyone who
still has some old arrangements from this era?

All best

Mike

From: **Helen Southall** hjazz1@mac.com
Subject: Fwd: 50s dance band
Date: 19 March 2011 12:36
To: Dr Catherine Tackley catherine@dr-jazz.co.uk
Cc: mike@mikehall.co.uk

Hi Catherine

I've just spoken to Norman Frost, who runs the dance band I used to play with before I joined NCWO. He has a library of several hundred Palais Band arrangements mostly from the right period which he'd be happy to loan/ hire out. He remembers the dances at the Victoria baths and can advise on tune selection, set order etc. He's also always on the lookout for deps for his band, which would be good experience for RNCM students.

His phone number is 0151 342 6975. (He doesn't do e-mail.) I've told him Mike might ring and he now knows who Mike is!

Hope this helps,

Bfn

Helen.

Mike Hall
RE: 50s dance band
19 March 2011 12:59
Helen Southall   , Dr Catherine Tackley

Dear Catherine and Helen

This lead is absolutely priceless!! I will follow it through and see where it goes. Thank you both so much for your help.

Very best wishes

Mike

From: box.office@rncm.ac.uk

Date: 8 April 2011

Subject: Summer Highlights at the RNCM

Thursday 30 June - Saturday 2 July 7pm

Noise of Many Waters: Music for the Victoria Baths

Noise of Many Waters is the latest spectacular in a series of sell-out events created for Manchester landmarks, such as Shattered Sounds at the Imperial War Museum North, Art of Sound: Sound of Art at the Whitworth Art Gallery and The End of the Line (A Brief Encounter) at Manchester Piccadilly station.

Over 150 RNCM students will come together for this unique evening of poolside tales, featuring music by Handel, Debussy, Ravel, Palestrina, Lizst, Chopin, Schumann, Schubert, Britten, Barber, Gavin Bryars and George Crumb among many others, plus installations created for and new pieces commissioned and written in response to this unique building.

Music will fill every corner of the building, and we invite you to immerse yourself in sound and create your own unique journey.

Helen Southall
Fwd: 50s dance band
8 April 2011 16:39
Mike Hall

Hi Mike

Did Norman and Fred manage to sort out the music you were looking for?

regards,

Helen

Mike Hall
RE: 50s dance band
9 April 2011 11:49
Helen Southall

Hi Helen

Yes, thanks. Fred has promised to copy some charts for me ready for the start of next term.
Thanks again for helping me find these guys!

Cheers

Mike

APPENDIX C:

SOCIAL NETWORKS, SOCIOGRAMS, AND RICARDIAN ECONOMICS

Networks of Relationships: The Importance of Social Networks

As described in the main body of this thesis, commercial environments such as the Chester live music scene can be analysed using approaches from disciplines such as geography and economics. However, these approaches can mask the details of personal interactions which ultimately govern the fortunes of individual venues, and who is (or is not) hired to play with a particular band. It is therefore useful to look briefly at some concepts from sociology relating to employment, and how human interactions affect an individual's ability to find employment opportunities. Live music in the Chester area was provided to a large extent by freelance musicians working on an ad hoc basis for bandleaders who acted as intermediaries between the clients and the musicians. There was little or no formal hierarchy and knowing (and being known by) the right people was critical for musicians looking for work, and also for bandleaders looking for competent, reliable musicians. The concepts of social capital and weak ties are useful in analysing how these relationships worked.

As described in Chapter 2, the concept of social capital is the actual and potential value of the networks a person or entity belongs to (Resnik, 2013). Social networks can give members access to resources they would not have access to as individuals, whether those resources are tangible (for example. food, water, shelter or money) or intangible (advice, encouragement, information, recommendations, or help).

A related concept, which applies more specifically to finding work opportunities, is that of 'weak ties', as originally examined by Granovetter in his 1973 study on how men in a suburb of Boston found themselves jobs (Granovetter, 1973). This study showed that while close relationships such as family and close friends are clearly important to people, they are not the relationships which are most useful when it comes to finding work, where the 'weak ties' among colleagues, club members and the like tend to be more influential. Similar results have been found in diverse areas such as women looking to obtain illegal abortions (Lee, 1969) and how doctors' choices of new medicines are affected by the actions of those in their professional networks (Coleman, Katz, & Menzel, 1957).

Social Network Analysis in Theory

> "Social network theory is one of the few theories in social science that can be applied to a variety of levels of analysis from small groups to entire global systems. The same powerful concepts work with small groups, with organisations, nations, and international systems."

<div align="right">Kadushin (2012, p. 13)</div>

Given the extraordinary recent growth in the use and importance of systems for electronically-mediated social networking - such as Facebook - it comes as no surprise that there is currently a great deal of both commercial and academic interest in researching how human social networks operate. However, social network analysis is not a new academic discipline. It has been a speciality within the social and behavioural sciences for over thirty years, and the underlying mathematics, based on graph theory, dates back to the early eighteenth century. (Cellan-Jones, 2011a, 2011b; Christakis & Fowler, 2010; Donath, 2007; Dunbar, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c; Floating Facebook, 2012; Kadushin, 2012; Krotoski, 2010; Wasserman & Faust, 1994) The variety of uses to which network graph theory is applied is very broad and continues to grow; for instance research fields investigated at just one institute - the Interdisciplinary Center for Network Science & Applications at Notre Dame University, Indiana, USA - has teams applying network theory and technology to Biological Systems, Environment and Climate, Healthcare, Human Interaction, and Infrastructure / Transport (About iCeNSA, 2012).
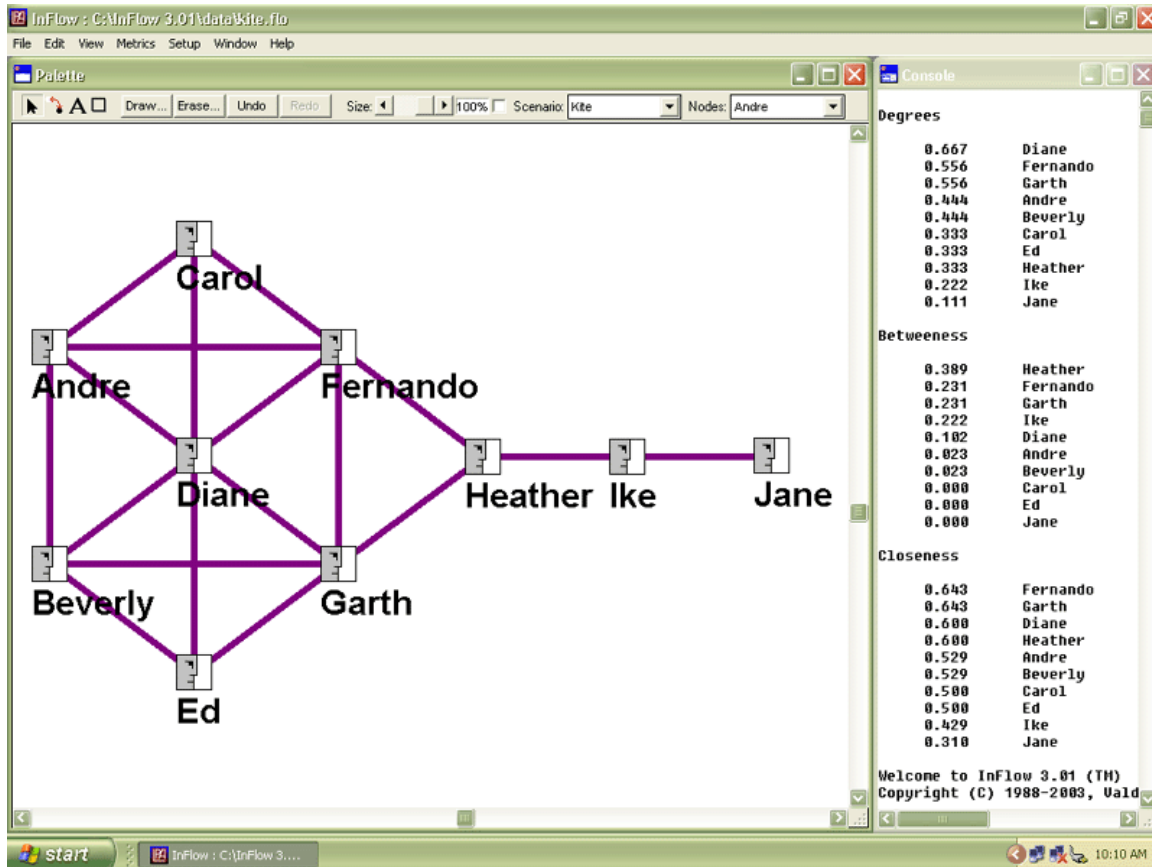
The 'Kite Network' shown above was developed by David Krackhardt, and is useful for demonstrating some of the fundamental concepts of social network analysis (SNA) (Krebs, n.d). In this diagram, individual people are represented as named 'nodes', and connected by links if they interact in some way (for example. regularly talking to each other.)

Diane has the largest number of *direct* connections in the network. She is a 'connector' or 'hub' in this network. However, her connections are only to those in her immediate neighbourhood - the other members of her 'clique'.

Heather has far fewer direct connections, but she has a very important place in the network, located *between* two important groups. She is a 'broker' - and also a single point of failure for communication between the two groups.

Fernando and **Garth** have fewer connections than Diane, but using a mixture of direct and indirect links can access all the nodes in the network in fewer 'hops' between nodes than anyone else. They are 'close' to everyone else, and in a good position to know what is going on throughout the network.

Fernando, **Garth** and **Heather** are all 'boundary spanners' whose connections form bridges between clusters or overlapping groups. Boundary spanners are in a good position to be innovators, as they have good access to all the ideas and information flowing within and between the various clusters in the network.

Ike and **Jane** appear to be relatively unimportant, as they are 'peripheral' to this network, with few connections binding them to the other network members. However it is important to remember that a network map focusing on one aspect of peoples' personal or professional lives may not tell the whole story; in this example, 'Ike and Jane may be contractors or vendors that have their own network outside of the company - making them very important resources for fresh information not available inside the company!'.

The contrasting network diagram below reinforces Krackhardt's point about the usefulness of network diagrams at many different scales.

Krebs (1996, p. 3)

248
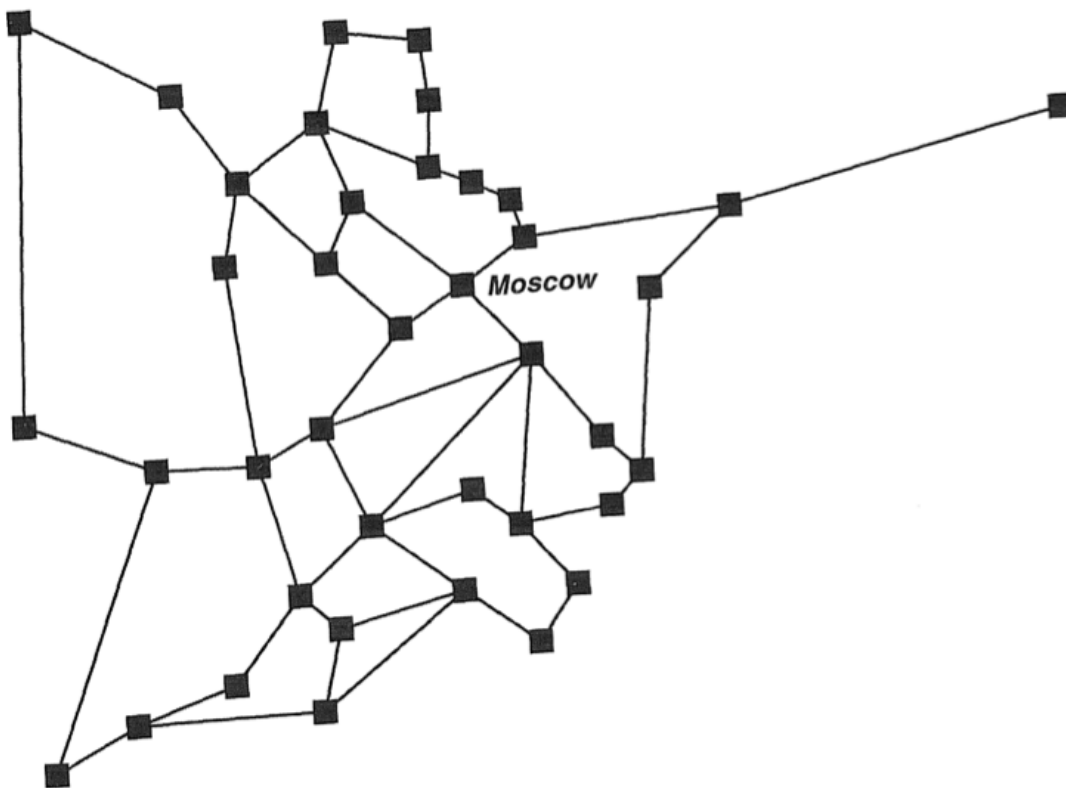
According to Krebs, 'By the fifteenth century, Moscow had emerged as the capital of Russian and the hub of trade in the region. From the diagram alone, it is hard to see Moscow's centrality on the graph. [However, network analysis techniques show that] Moscow is well placed because it connects two major river systems in the middle of the network, and it seems to be on the route between many cities. A structural advantage becomes a social and economic advantage.' (Krebs, 1996, p. 3)

Mapping Social Networks – Examples

At the time of writing, one of the largest and best-known electronic social networks in the world is the online social networking website Facebook. Facebook was founded in 2004 by a 23-year-old Harvard student named Mark Zuckerberg. Although it was initially only available internally within the university, it grew very quickly, expanding to include all Ivy League universities, then all U.S. universities, before spreading worldwide. From 1200 exclusively US-based users on its first day of operation, Facebook as at September 2013 has over 900 million active human users (as well as 100 million or so accounts maintained on behalf of 'pets, objects or brands'). The majority of these users are now based outside the USA (Kleinman, 2013).

Social networks can be very complex, and network graphs such as the Kite Network discussed earlier offer the opportunity to explore and clarify this complexity visually. For instance, it is possible to produce a social network diagram using the 'Friend Wheel' Facebook application. The 'Friend Wheel' shown below is a 'superdense' network of faculty members at Penn State University, who are all friends with one another on Facebook.
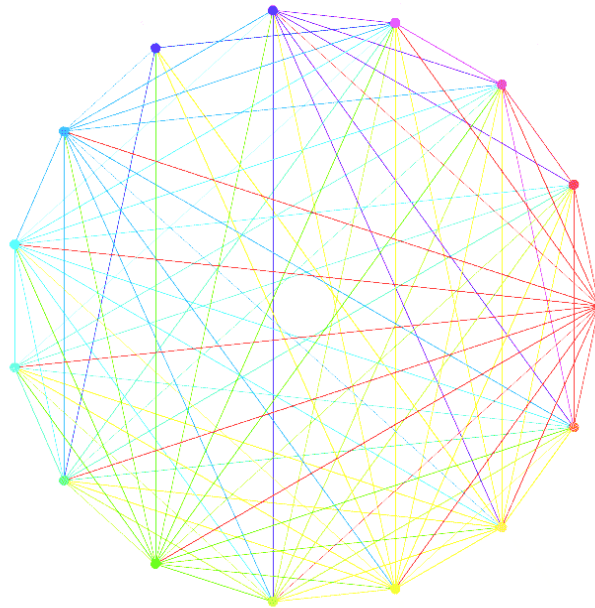
Penn State Faculty member's Facebook Friend Wheel – 2007 (Pyatt, 2007)

Clearly, Facebook is a 21st Century phenomenon which requires widespread computer use and access to the internet for its very existence, unlike Field's 1955 pocket diary, which was firmly rooted in the 'real' world of paper, ink and fountain pens, and was created when computers existed, but to most people were still largely the stuff of science fiction, rather than daily experience. However, both Field's diary and an individual user's Facebook records contain information about the people they interact with, the places they go to, the groups they belong to and the activities they take part in. There is nothing in Field's diary about his personal life, and most Facebook users are selective about what they tell their online 'friends' about themselves, so neither source gives a complete picture of the person concerned. With that limitation kept in mind, both can be used to construct maps of how people interact with one another in specific social or work situations. In the context of this research, I want to analyse the relationships between the musicians and their associates covered by my fieldwork, to see (for instance) whether the same techniques as are used today to analyse electronic social networks can also be usefully applied to musicians in Chester. Facebook friend wheels are based on data relating to mutually acknowledged relationships with one person. To know whether they would also be applicable to less complete datasets collected after the event, we can look at similar examples from other fields.

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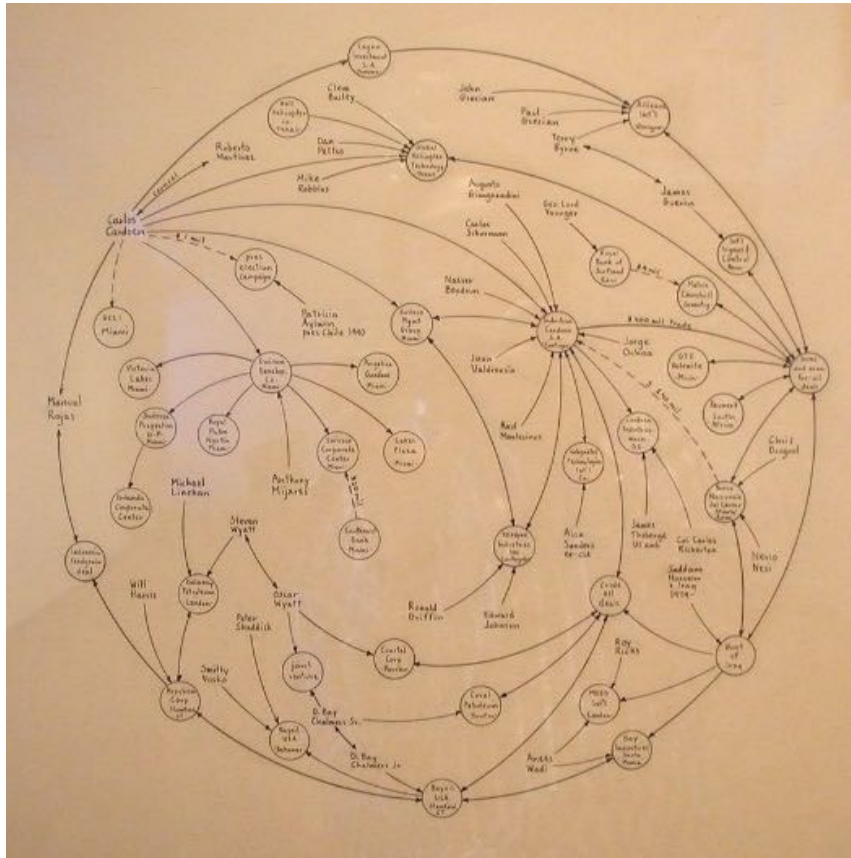
A criminal network as art: Mark Lombardi (1951-2000) (Mark Lombardi, n.d.)

This handcrafted engraving is by the artist Mark Lombardi, who drew on the major political and financial scandals of the day (for example. Whitewater and the Vatican Bank) to create his works of art. He produced intricate webs of connections to show the paths of illicit deals and laundered money between the people involved, keeping track of it all in a handwritten database of 12,000 index cards. The use of network diagrams similar to Lombardi's (although rarely so neatly-drawn) is well-established in the field of criminology, and increasingly cheap and user-friendly computing applications are making it much easier to both collect the data and analyse how human networks operate (Hansen, Schneiderman, & Smith, 2010). For instance, the sociogram below is based on a criminal conspiracy relating to housing. The original case (masked here) also made use of Krebs' InFlow SNA software (Krebs, 2010a, 2010b).
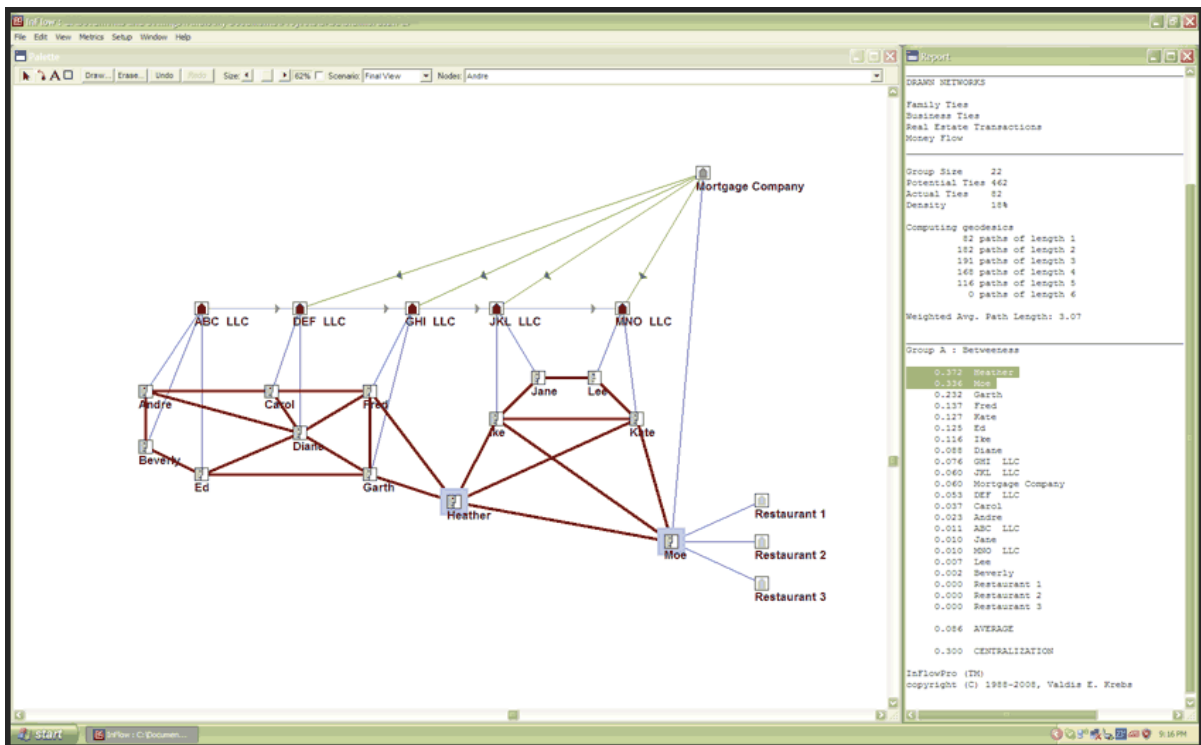
Hansen, Schneiderman, & Smith (2010).

These examples confirm Kadushin's statement that network graphs work at many different scales and in different situations. This is encouraging, although the examples are mostly generic, and have no obvious connections to the music industry. The next example, on the other hand, is focused not just on the music industry, but on a very specific sector relating to recordings involving the Hammond Organ.

Social Network Analysis Applied to the Music Industry
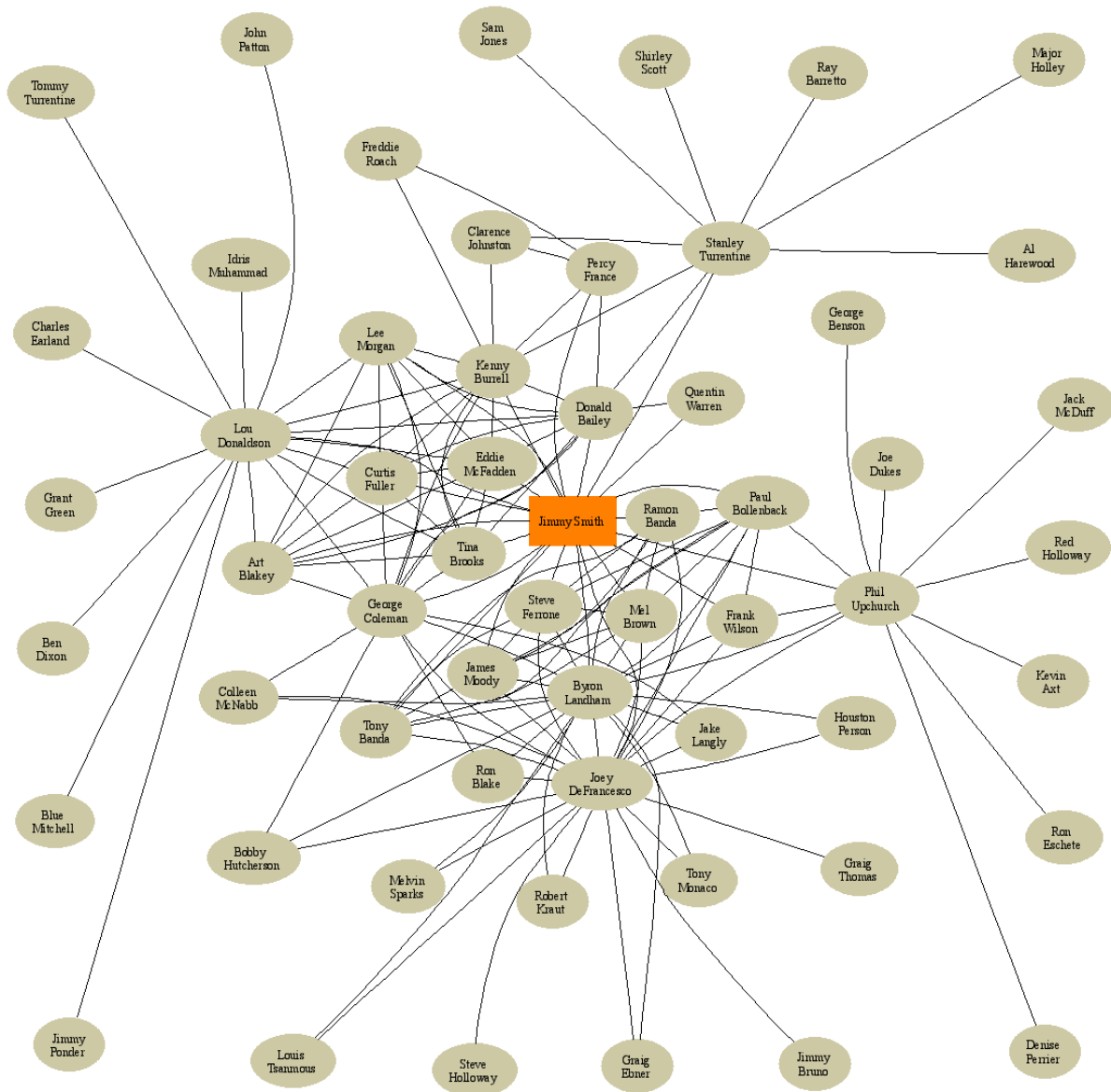
Orghammogram for Jimmy Smith (Level 2 Clickable Orghammogram for Jimmy Smith, n.d.)

The 'Orghammogram' above illustrates a musicians' social network as recorded and illustrated by the online resource the Hammond Jazz Inventory, which uses software based on JavaScript technology (Belmonte, 2010; The Hammond Jazz Inventory, n.d.) to display the contents of a discography database graphically. On the website, any of the nodes in the diagram can be clicked on to produce a similar network for that selected individual. Both the criminal networks shown earlier, and the Orghammograms discussed above, reveal facts about who has power, influence, or good sets of contacts in the relevant environment, which go beyond what would be obvious from looking at individuals in isolation. I have used data collected from interviews, photographs and other sources to produce sociograms illustrating

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the relationships which formed the basis of the Chester and North Wales dance band scene at various times during the mid-twentieth century. I have looked for features such as Granovetter's weak ties, people in specific roles - such as influencers and brokers - and metrics such as betweenness and closeness.

Krebs again:-

> Herbert Simon, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, was once asked by a colleague how he happened to know something about practically everything. He answered that it was real easy — he kept his vast knowledge in his network of friends and colleagues. He simply knew which expert to go to when. Remember, what you know depends on whom you know.
>
> Krebs (1996, p. 25)

Social Network Analysis applied to a Dance Band Scene

I became particularly interested in the complex network of relationships which existed between individual musicians, bandleaders and venues, and looked for ways to analyse and visualise this effectively. Recent developments in electronic social networking (such as Facebook and Twitter) have led to a great deal of research activity in the field of Social Network Analysis. One of the by-products of this increased interest has been the development of relatively simple and inexpensive software tools to help with SNA visualisation (Hansen et al., 2010; M. A. Smith, 2012; Tedesco, 2012). I chose to use NodeXL, a free add-on for Microsoft Excel, to produce network visualisations like the one shown overleaf.
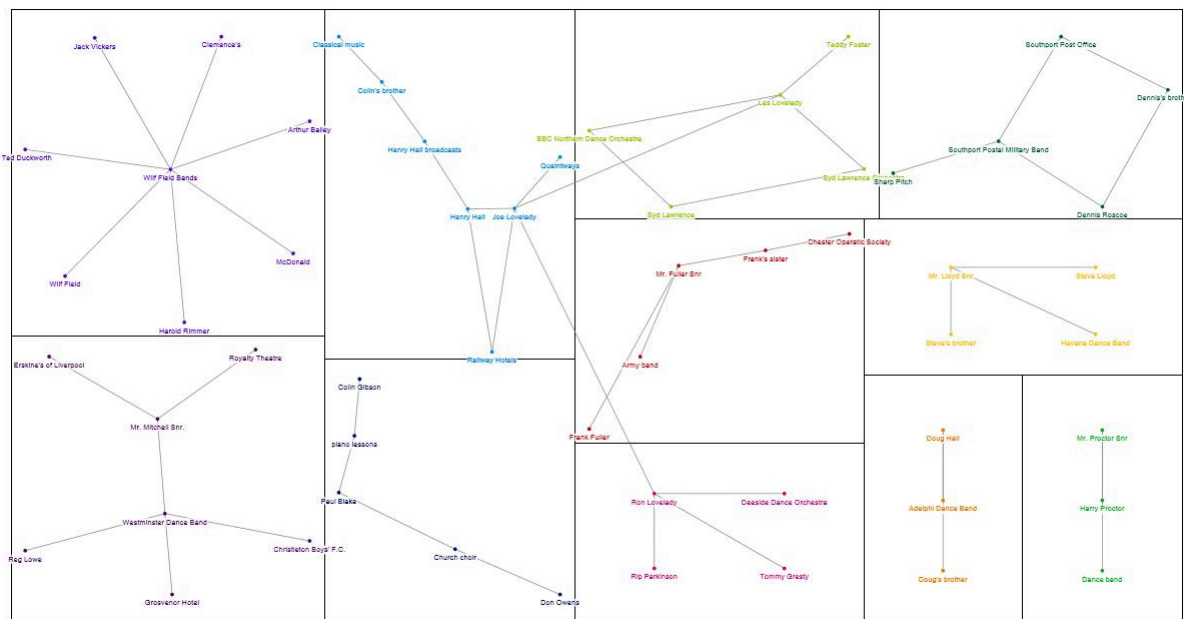
Example of a sociogram produced using NodeXL social network analysis software. (Digital copies of this and all other sociograms and maps included in this thesis are included on the attached disk.)

Doing a detailed oral history study of a specific group of people in a specific locality has enabled me to collect a substantial amount of information about which musicians knew one another, and who played with whom. This is exactly the sort of relational information required to prepare the sociograms referred to in this appendix. For instance, Graphs 1 and 2 (overleaf) are sociograms showing the network just starting to coalesce, at the end of the 1930s, and then again in its most complex form, in the early 1960s. The later version includes both the dance band musicians whose network had been forming over the previous forty years, and the young generation of rock and pop musicians starting to come through. It

is true that this later sociogram looks hideously complicated, as indeed the network it represents was. However, it should be emphasised that while certainly was complicated, it was not random. The dance band network had evolved to meet the requirements of the environment and the people involved in it, and the rock and pop network was, by the mid-1960s, on the way to evolving a different way of working to deal with changing social, economic and technological circumstances. Far from being entirely new, independent and unrelated to its predecessors, the rock and pop network, in fact grew organically from among the networks and infrastructure which already existed.
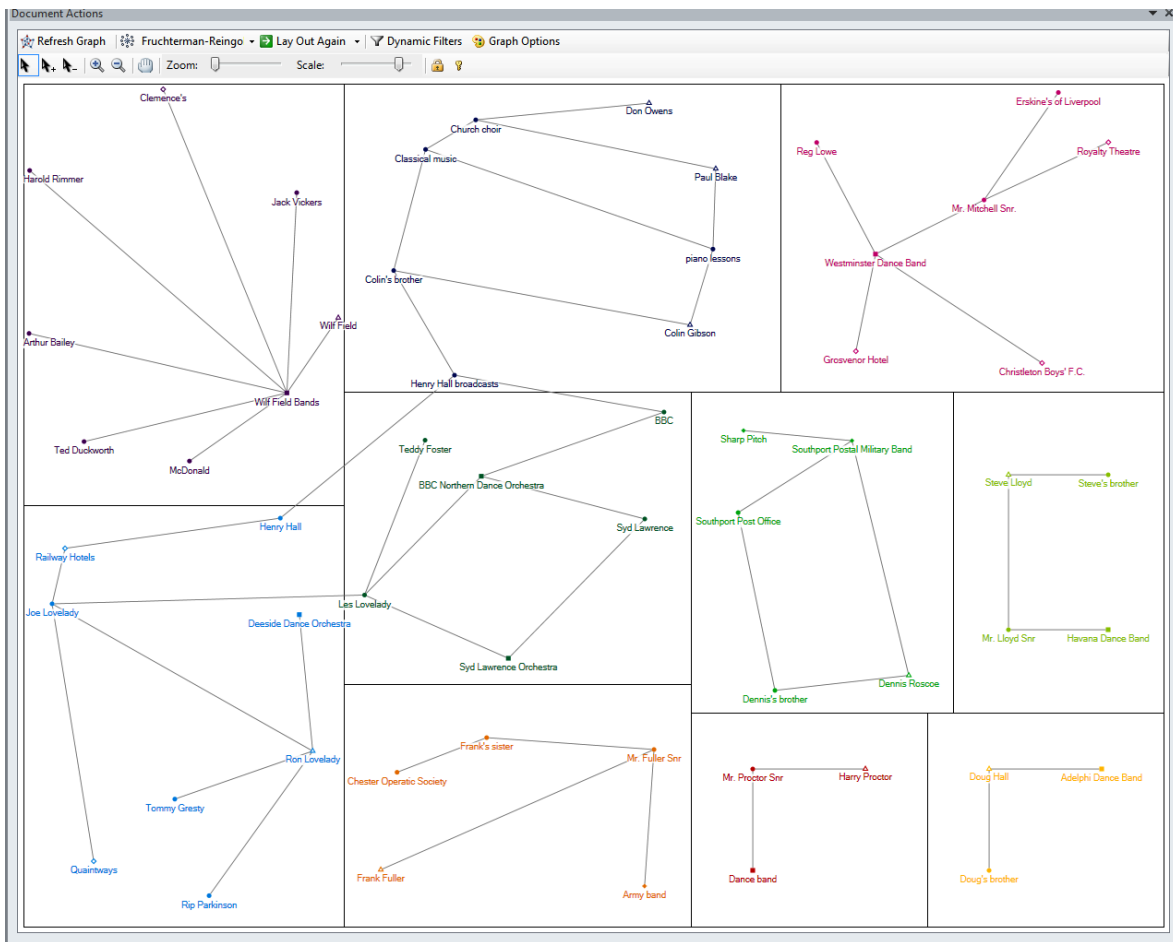
Graph 1: Sociogram of the Chester Live Music Scene (and beyond) : 1920s to World War II (Southall, 2012b)
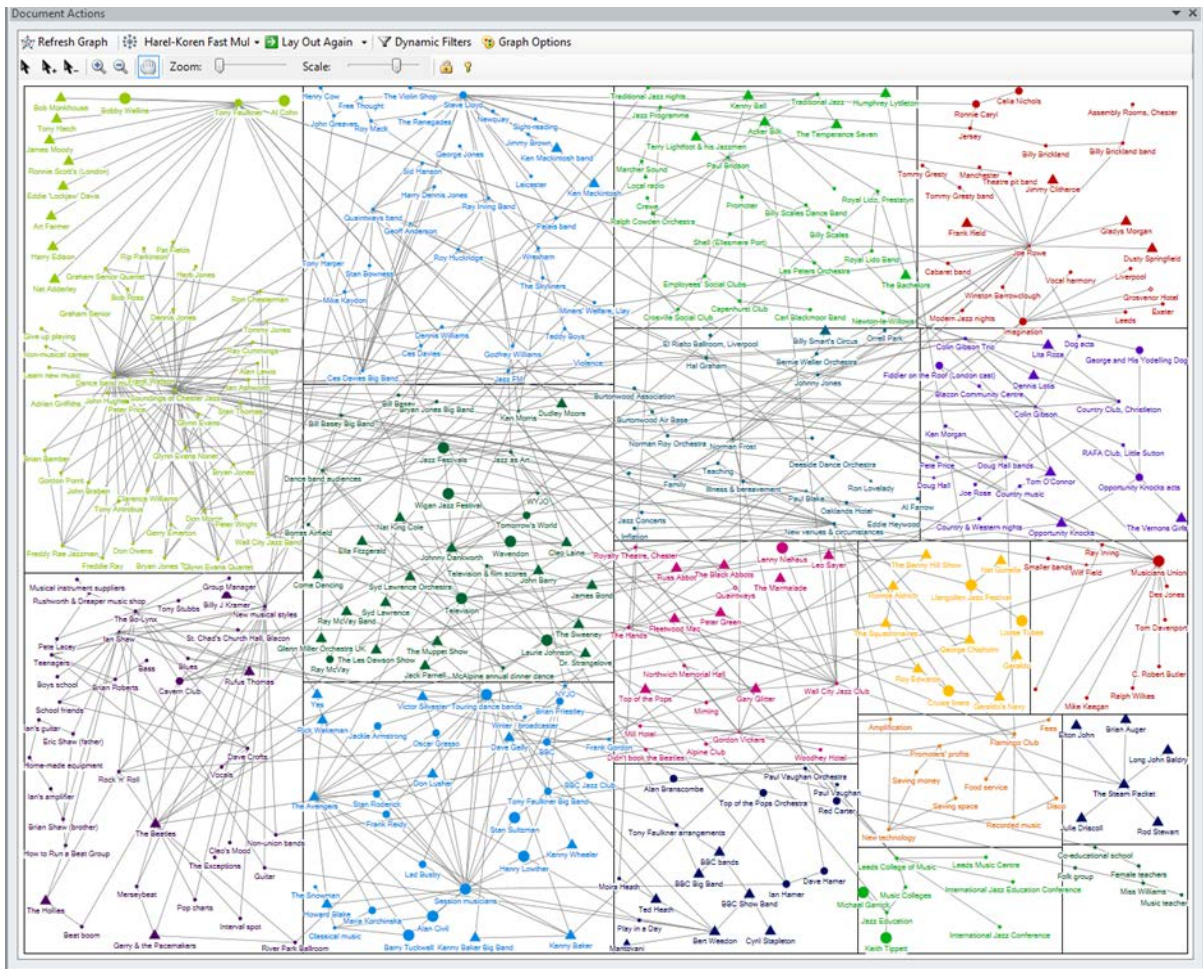
Graph 2: Sociogram of the Chester Live Music Scene (and beyond) in the 1960s (Southall, 2012c)

A common response when faced with the need to analyse a situation as complex as this is to simplify the task as much as possible by focusing on specific aspects of it; in the case of jazz or popular music history, that might mean breaking the story down by genre, by generation, or by era. As discussed in the main body of this thesis, however, there are problems with this approach; it tends to over-simplify the analysis, leading to conclusions which are of limited practical use, and likely to be incomplete or misleading as well.

I therefore chose to focus on a specific small geographic area, to interview as many participating musicians as I could contact, and to use methods based on social network analysis (SNA) to tease out as much relevant information as possible. One of the advantages of these techniques is that they are scaleable, that is, they work as well for large complex datasets as for small ones. Parts of the analyses, such as detection of degrees of connectivity and roles in the 'kite network' described in above, can be automated, making the process of analysis less labour-intensive and less prone to the sort of errors produced by human fatigue

or inattention. I used NodeXL to perform automated clustering on the data I entered for each chapter, and to produce an initial visualisation with the different clusters colour-coded and spatially separated. A small amount of manual rearrangement was then done for clarity (for example. to avoid overlapping labels or avoidable crossed links). Clear patterns immediately emerged in many sections, and some nodes (such as Tony Faulkner, the Beatles or the Quaintways Band) turned out to have 'high centrality', that is, a relatively high number of connections to other people or places mentioned in my sources. It should be emphasised that it does not take a big alteration to the underlying data to change the resulting visualisation quite profoundly. This diagram would look very different if, for instance, Tony Faulkner, the Beatles or the Quaintways Band were removed. This does not change how things really were at the time of course, although it does highlight one of the challenges of deciding who and what to include, or exclude, when setting the scope of a study such as this. In practice, high centrality nodes which involved many of the musicians involved in this study were also generally mentioned by several of them, reducing the likelihood of losing such evidence completely, and increasing the probability that the picture as a whole is reasonably accurate.

The sociogram overleaf (Graph 3), based on Field's diaries and other interview sources, shows the Chester and North Wales dance band network at its commercial height. Not surprisingly, it is considerably more complex than the version for the 1920s and 30s. The interlocking musical networks which were in place by the late 1950s were shaped initially by family, school and local musical institutions such as church choirs and brass bands, and then by the war, conscription and post-war National Service. Wartime and post-war employment conditions helped to ensure that this was almost entirely a semi-professional network, even though there was much more work available for dance band musicians than there would be in later decades. The physical extent of the network was shaped by factors such as wartime and post-war travel restrictions and petrol rationing; these may have limited how far Chester / Wrexham musicians could travel, but they also (along with tight MU rules) helped to keep the territory safe from Liverpool and Manchester musicians. National touring bands and solo artists did reach Chester though, on their way between (for instance) the industrial English Midlands and Liverpool, or Manchester and Blackpool.
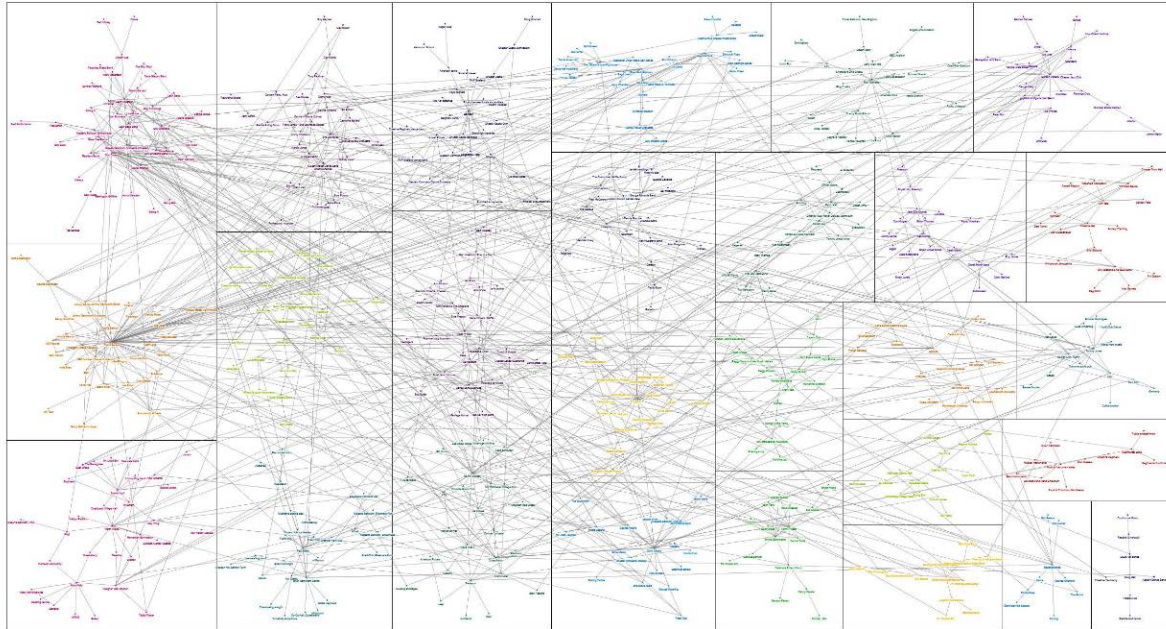
Graph 3: Sociogram of the Chester and North Wales dance band network at its commercial height in the 1940s and 1950s (Southall, 2012a)

Chester musicians therefore opened for and met nationally famous musicians that they admired on a regular basis - as did local bandsmen all over the country. (In this context, resident bands at local dance halls were a predecessor to the 'support band' phenomenon, which still exists at live music venues, festivals and stadium gigs.)
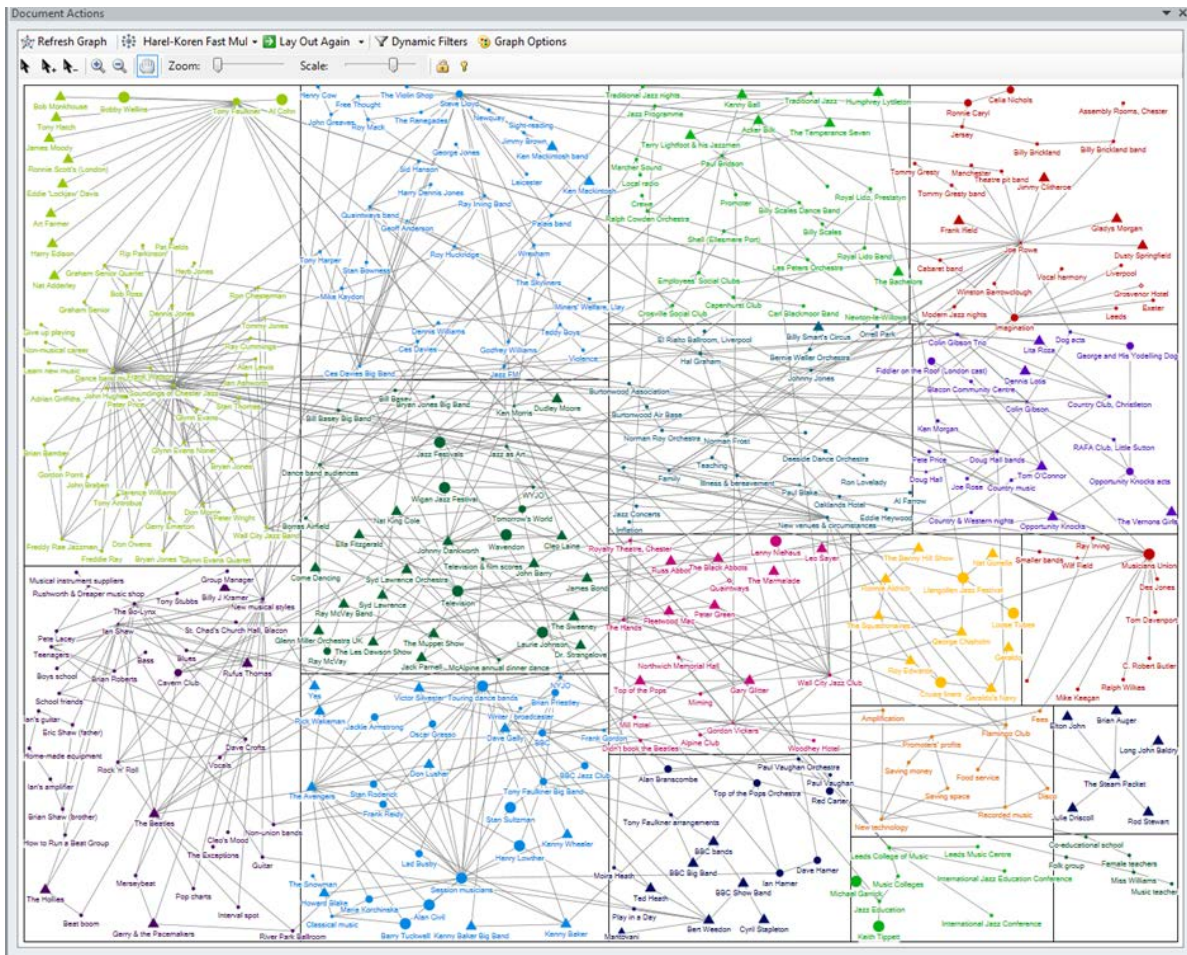
Graph 3: Sociogram of the Chester and North Wales dance band network at its commercial height in the 1940s and 1950s (Southall, 2012a) (A digital copy of this image is available on the disk attached to this thesis.)

Some of these otherwise unexpected links emerge in Graph 3, where they show up as links (technically, 'edges') which run between different clusters, such as the path which links Gary Glitter to Nat Gonella, via the Wall City Jazz Club, George Chisholm and the Llangollen Jazz Festival.[1] These links would be invisible to a study which focused exclusively on seventies glam rock, famous British dance bands or big bands of the thirties, forties and fifties (or even semi-professional jazz musicians in Chester in the early twenty-first century).

Musicians as Practical Autoethnographers

It is important to note that the musicians represented by nodes in my sociograms had an even more pressing need to understand the reality of the networks they existed in than I do, and

---

[1] Well after I created these clustered networks, using software which allows each node to be in only one cluster, Valdis Krebs published a blog article on dealing with overlapping communities such as these. I would definitely make use of this information before undertaking this sort of analysis in the future. (Krebs, 2013)

were just as likely to see things from a different perspective when someone turned out to be the bandleader's nephew, the venue-owner's daughter's fiancé, or a past or present member of the same (or a rival) regiment, band, school or church. A picture which shifts as you look at it and can look completely different with one piece added or removed or differently linked is very realistic – as any author of detective novels (or indeed any dramatic author at all) – would likely confirm. In this sense, they were practical autoethnographers, engaged in understanding and learning their own human and economic environment even as they worked within it. All social creatures do this, and human beings are notoriously highly evolved in this respect. For musicians, whether full-time or part-time, understanding the requirements of the people and organisations who can provide them with work is essential, even when those requirements are often not formally described or advertised. Being able to do this is part of the unofficial job description for musicians, and indeed for many types of freelance workers, both in the arts and elsewhere. I therefore propose that the complexity of this 'fully formed' sociogram demonstrates that well developed social understanding (which is not necessarily the same as charm, good manners, or even honesty) would be a distinct advantage to any musician working in this sort of context.

Economic Places: David Ricardo and the Economics of Location

David Ricardo (1772 – 1823) was influenced by Adam Smith's book *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith, 1776) to begin to study economics systematically. Between 1817 and 1821 he published three editions of his *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, and it is the second chapter of this book, which focused on the mechanisms controlling the rent landlords could charge for agricultural land, which in spite of its age is still relevant to my discussion. (Bloy, 2002; Ricardo, 1821)

In short, Ricardo proposed that the rent which can be charged on the best land in a locality is determined first of all by the number of farmers competing for access to it, relative to the amount of good land available. Rents tend to go up if land is scarce or farmers are numerous; they tend to go down if land is plentiful relative to the number of farmers. However, this is not the whole story. While there is still plenty of good quality "meadow" left, no-one would even consider using poor quality scrub land, so as well as being affected by supply and demand, rent is also determined by differences in productivity and profitability between the best land and marginal land. While there is meadow left, the "marginal land" is actually the edge of the meadow, and almost as productive as the very best land: it will be difficult for landlords to raise the rent above that required to cover their costs.
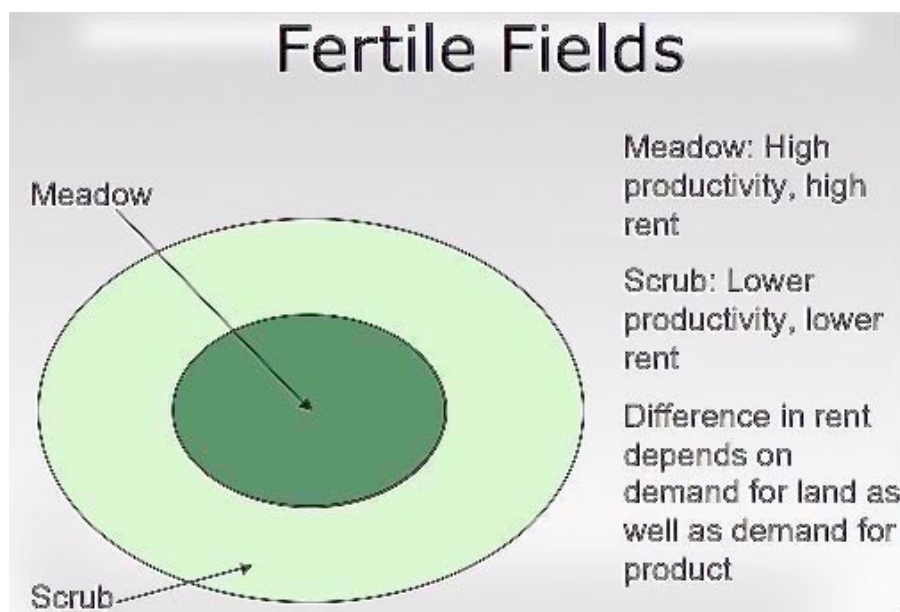
Simplified diagram showing areas of higher and lower agricultural productivity, as referred to by Ricardo and Harford
(Southall, 2010)

Once the "meadow" is full, and new farmers have to start using scrubland, there will be an appreciable difference in yield between plots in different areas - say 5 bushels an acre. To persuade farmers to rent "scrub", landlords have to charge the current price of 5 bushels an acre less for scrubland than for meadow. This also means that if the price of corn goes up or down, the value of the differential in yield (and therefore the rent) goes up or down in proportion. Once the scrubland is full, the critical difference is between the productivity of the meadow and that of the even less productive grassland plots; this again re-sets the rent which can be charged for meadow plots. (Harford, 2006)

Applying Ricardo's method to a contemporary example, Harford examined how location affects the economics of coffee kiosks in the twenty-first century. To charge high prices for coffee (for example at a major rail interchange, such as London Waterloo or Manchester Piccadilly), kiosk owners need large amounts of passing trade from "price blind" customers (that is,. people who do not care about the price – they just want the coffee, and quickly). Landlords of prime locations on desire lines of busy, caffeine-addicted commuters have the upper hand, especially once a number of coffee chains are competing for exclusive rights to use these locations. Would-be kiosk providers are common; worthwhile locations are scarce. Moving even a few hundred yards away from the desire lines puts the kiosk into marginal territory, yielding much less profit, or quite likely none at all; this drives up the rent for the good spots. Even kiosks in the best spots do not make huge profits, because much of their income goes straight to the landlord. The more competition there is, the more profit the landlord makes, and the tighter the kiosk-operators' margins. (Harford, 2006)

Popular Music in Ricardo's Marginal Fields

The concept can also be applied to live music scenes. People are willing to pay for music as part of the ambience of a place or event. Consciously or not, they value and respond to background music in shops, restaurants and other public spaces. They are demonstrably willing to pay to have dance music available for social occasions and musical heroes to idolise, but from an economic point of view what usually matters is the availability of the music, rather than the physical presence of the musicians. The musicians themselves are

equivalent in this model to agricultural labourers or baristas (or, according to bass-player Herbie Flowers, truck drivers). (Turner, 2002)

Interestingly, my field research revealed a strong "craft industry" ethos among musicians who worked in Chester in the 1950s. It is worth noting that the mechanisation of a craft industry is frequently blamed for the loss of traditional craft skills and their replacement by less skilled "operative" job roles. In this respect, the music industry appears to have gone the same way as watch making and motorcycle production. It is therefore proposed that the transition from dance bands to amplified pop groups and discos was, among many other things, a late stage of the industrial revolution, in which one of the few remaining craft industries was mechanised and automated. The landlords in this case are still, basically, landlords - but landlords as in landowners, not pub managers. The "farmers" (or would-be kiosk-owners) are the hotel proprietors, pub managers, NAAFI managers, or other entertainment venue operators. To them, music is one of the technologies they use in order to make their equivalent of a farm or kiosk more profitable, by encouraging people through the door in the first place, persuading them to linger and spend money on food and drinks once they arrive, and tempting them to return again in the future. All other things being equal, the amount a promoter can pay to employ musicians is affected by the profits s/he can make in that particular location. This is partly governed by how attractive the location is as an entertainment venue (for example. whether it has lots of passing trade and / or is a popular tourist destination). It is also affected by the relative scarcity of other profitable locations in the vicinity, competition from other promoters, and the difference in profitability between highly attractive and marginal locations in the area.

However, all other things are not equal. Hotels, restaurants and other entertainment venues need to be in places that people can get to easily or, if they are hard to get to, places that people really want to go to because of local features such as good weather, beautiful scenery or notable historical sites. Chester in the 1940s & 50s scored very highly as a potential entertainment location.[2] It had always been a route centre, and as will be discussed later in

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[2] See earlier sections on 'jazz places' and route centres, Chapter 3 on Chester's geographical context (and how this affected its potential as an entertainment location), detailed information regarding venues such as Quaintways in Chapters 6 and 7, and Appendix C on the application of network theory to social networks and transport networks.

this chapter (and also in chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7), wartime conditions increased the number of service personnel and war factory workers with no option but to live in or near Chester, thereby increasing the overall size of the local market. Wartime conditions also restricted things such as transport, free time and disposable income, producing a favourable environment for locally based live music in Chester during that period. The end of the war, followed later by the end of National Service, reduced this advantage. These changes would have reduced the opportunities for part-time professional musicians in the area by themselves from the mid-1950s onwards. Chester today still has good passing trade due to strong business activity and good transport links, as well as being very popular with tourists and having a substantial student population. The armed forces are much less in evidence now than in the 1950s, but is this enough on its own to explain why the live music industry was so much less active in Chester in 2005 than it was than in 1955?

Continuing to apply a Ricardian approach to this problem, it is important to note that the profitability of an entertainment venue providing music depends partly on how much providing that music actually costs. If a good proportion of the public are sufficiently affluent to be paying for musical entertainment at all, and live acoustic music is basically the only option other than silence, competent musicians should find it relatively easy to find work, especially as larger venues will require large groups of musicians in order to fill the venue with sound. Those musicians (or groups) who manage to attract a large following for their specific product may be able to charge a premium, or pick and choose where they work, but there will still be plenty of opportunities for those who are not individually famous. On the other hand, if a venue barely makes a profit and is employing musicians to provide background music or dance music rather than as the focal point of its activities, technology which makes it possible to use recordings instead (on a juke-box, or controlled by a DJ) changes the balance of power between promoters and musicians dramatically. Recordings of nationally famous or fashionable performers may be more attractive to customers than "unknown" local musicians playing live, as well as being cheaper to provide, taking up less space, and requiring less personal management. If the local musicians want to continue playing at such venues, they may end up having to pay for the privilege, or at least have to take on the financial risk themselves, via a "door takings only" arrangement. While some venues may still make a virtue of the "novelty" of having live musicians on stage, and attract

a dedicated audience for that reason, most will tend to go for the easier and more profitable approach of using recorded music.

APPENDIX D: PRESENTATIONS, POSTERS AND PUBLICATIONS

Format	Place	Title	Date
Conference Presentation	14th Leeds International Jazz Conference, Leeds College of Music	Jazz in Chester - History of an Unexpected Community	March 2008
Poster	University of Chester Postgraduate Research Conference 2009	Live Popular Music in Chester, 1930 - 1970: Inspirations: 'Jazz Places', Route Centres and Coffee Kiosks	May 2009
Conference Presentation	University of Chester Postgraduate Research Conference 2010	Darwin, Dawkins and Dance Band Economics - Popular Music History in Chester	May 2010
Conference Presentation	National Graduate Conference for Ethnomusicology, University College London	Locating Chester's Live Music Landscapes Across Disciplines	September 2010
Conference Presentation	World War II and the Media, University of Chester	'Total War' and its effects on the Live Music industry in Cheshire and North Wales	June 2011
Poster	Sites of Popular Music Heritage Symposium, University of Liverpool	Dance Bands in Chester (1930 - 1970) : An Evolving Professional Network	September 2011
Conference Presentation	7th International Conference on the Arts in Society, John Moores University, Liverpool (Audio-visual presentation available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAaglOYfg7o&feature=plcp)	Throwing Sheep in the Bandroom: Visualising a Social and Economic Network of Musicians in Cheshire and North Wales	July 2012
Journal Article	Jazz Research Journal	Jazz on the border: jazz and dance bands in Chester and North Wales in the mid-twentieth century	October 2014
Book Chapter	in "World War II and the Media" (ed. Hart, Hodgson & Roberts)	'Total War' and its effects on the Live Music Industry in Cheshire and North Wales	In press. (Publication expected late-2015)

APPENDIX E: ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Wilf Field and His Collegians at Clemences Restaurant, Chester, in 1937 (at 2:20 a.m. – packing up). l-r: Harold Rimmer (drums), Arthur Bailey (trumpet), Wilf Field (piano), unknown (sax), McDonald (sax), Jack Vickers (bass). Photo from Gordon Field (Field, 2006)

Figure 2: An advertisement for the bands run by Wilf Field from the Cheshire Show Catalogue, 1960 (Field, 2006)

Figure 3: An advertisement for bands playing for dancing at Northwich Memorial Hall in 1983, including Wilf Field (Field, 2006)
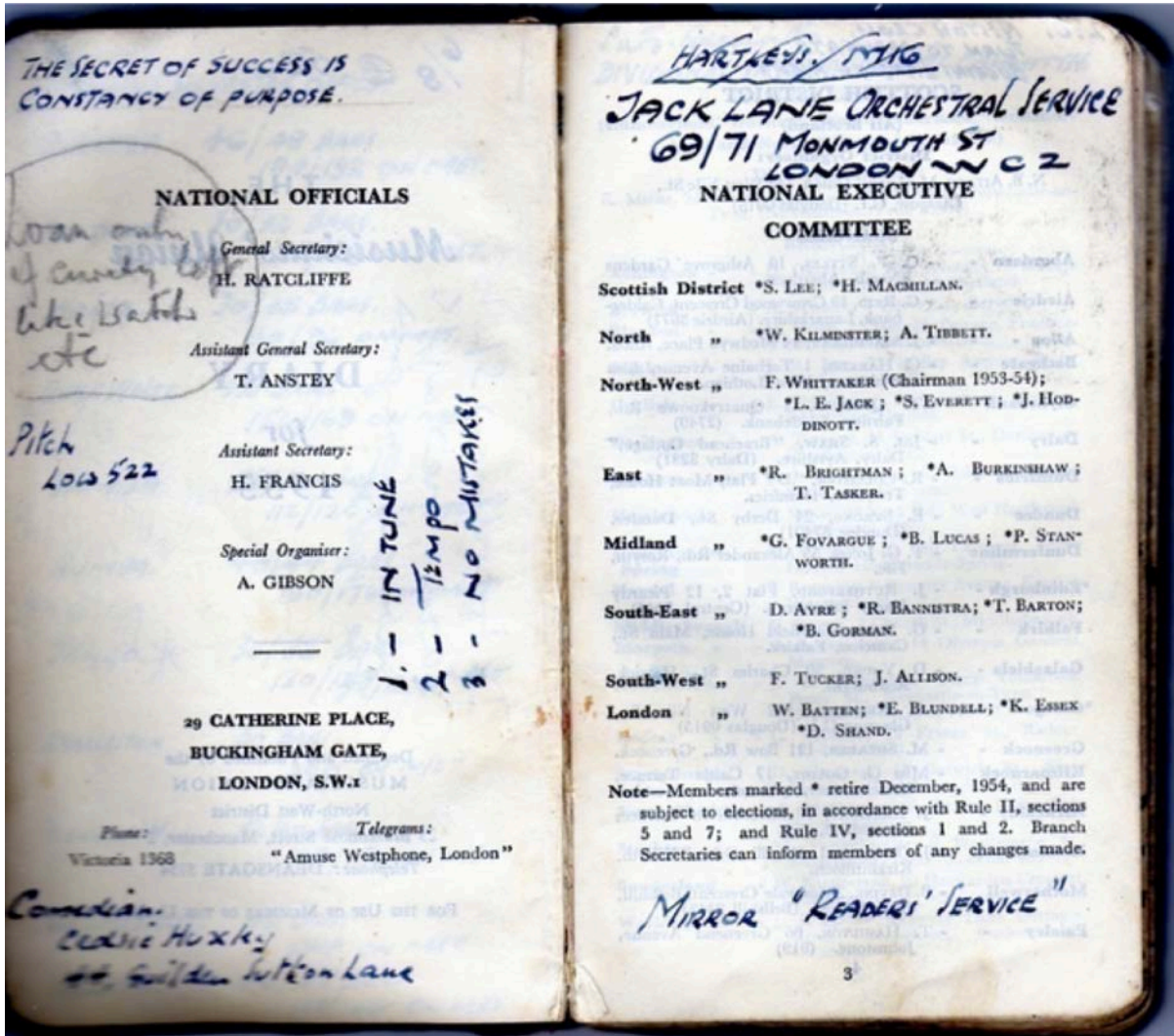
Figure 4: An inside page of Wilf Field's Musicians' Union pocket diary, 1955 (Field, 2006)
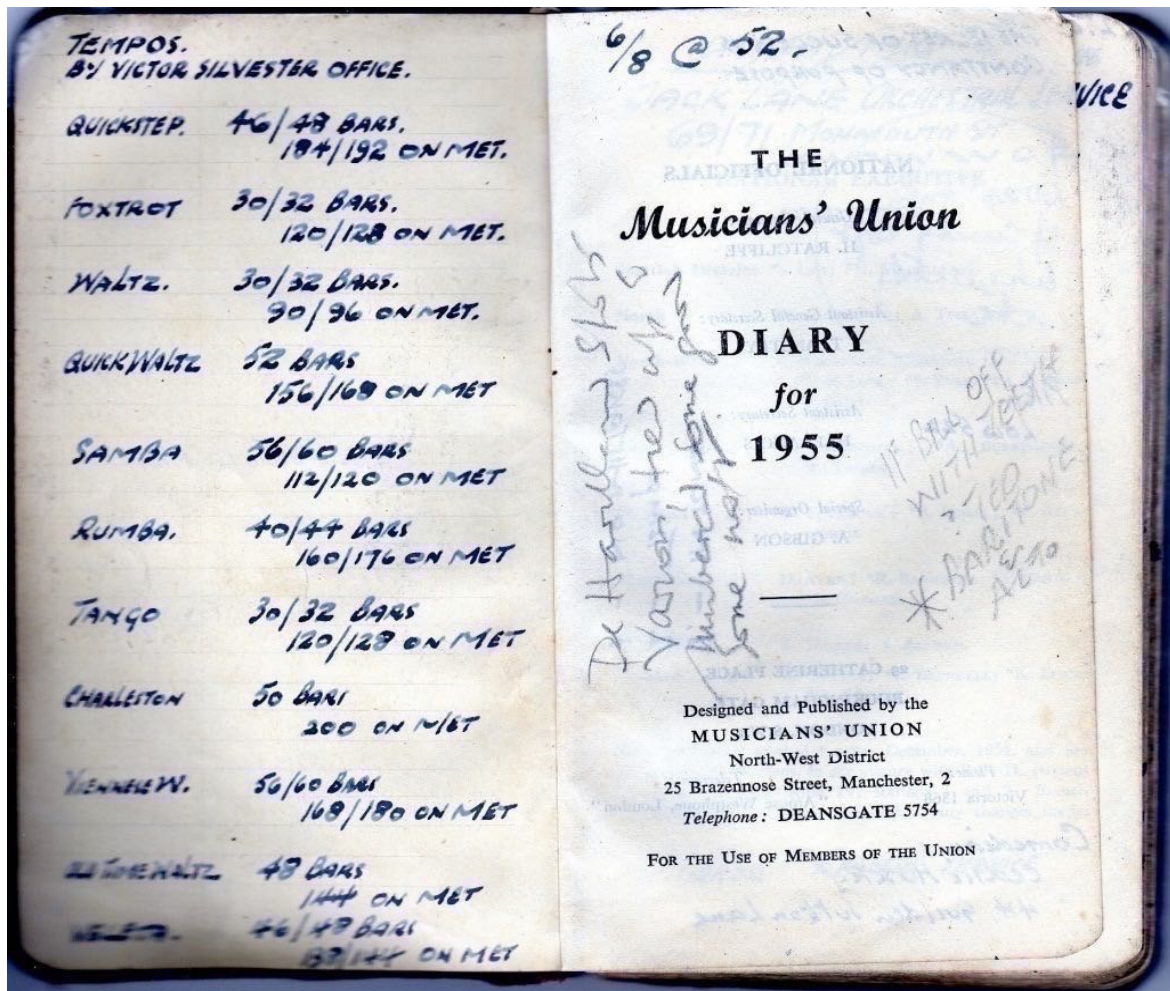
Figure 5: Inside front pages from Field's 1955 Musicians' Union pocket diary. Note the hand-written "If Bill off with teeth ?Ted *baritone & alto" (Field, 2006)

Figure 6: Rates of Pay at various venues (Field, 2006)
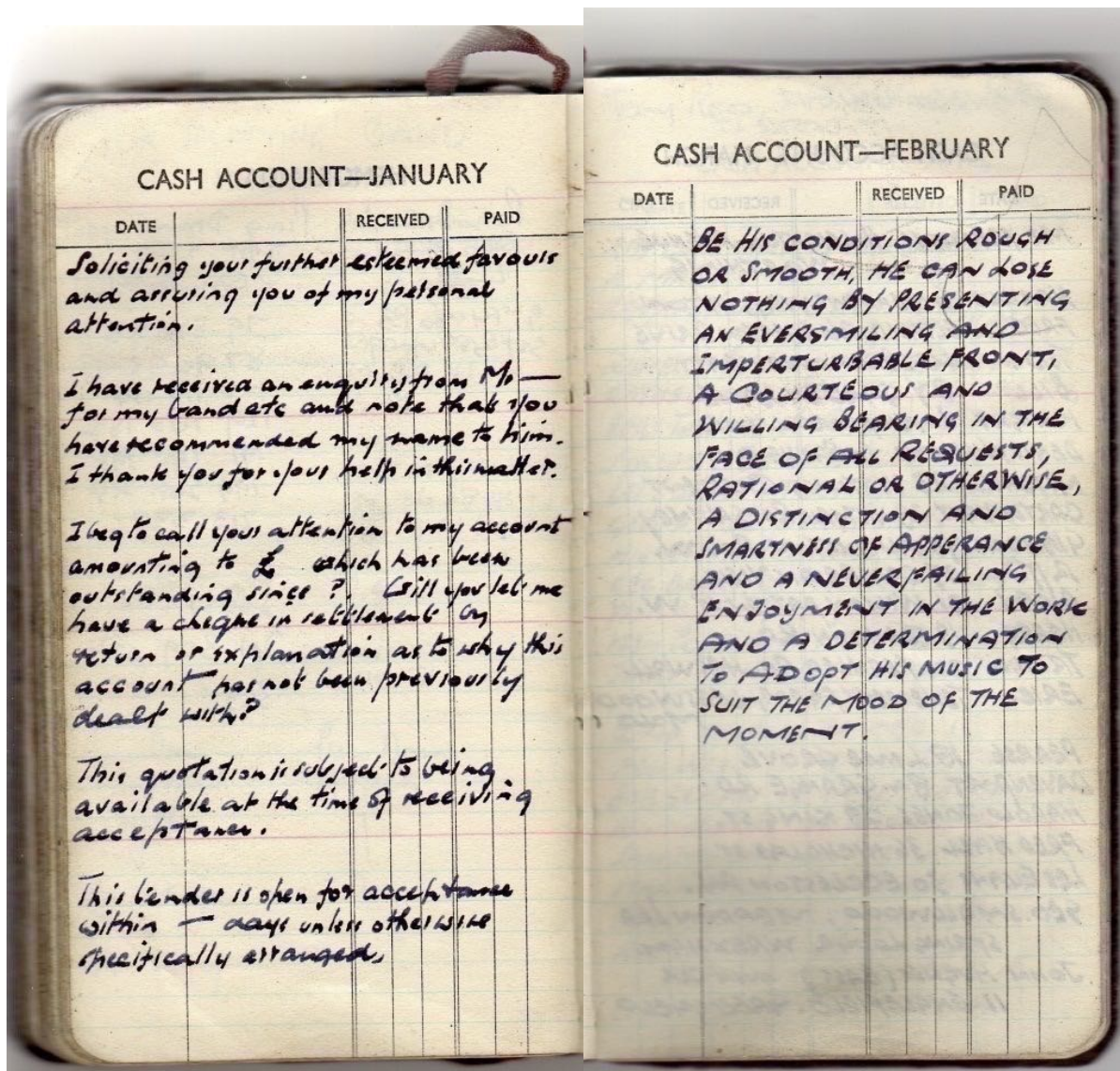
Figure 7: Legal phrases (left) and a quotation regarding working demeanour (right) from Wilf Field's 1955 Musicians' Union pocket diary. (Field, 2006)
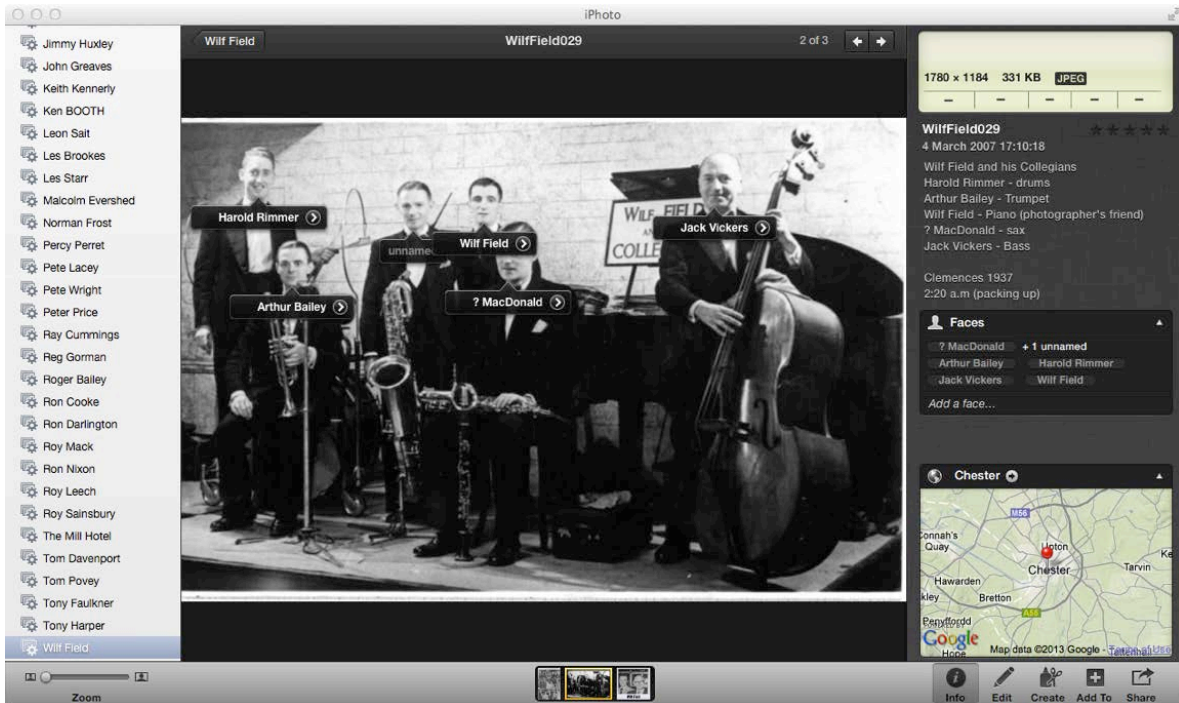
Figure 8: Screenshot from iPhoto showing photograph of Wilf Field and his Collegians at Clemences Restaurant. Note the filename which identifies where the photograph came from, the information taken from the back of the photograph (in the information panel in the top right hand corner) and the tags on each face, showing which individual is which. The list of names down the left hand side of the window are Smart Albums for each person (or venue) tagged as part of the project.
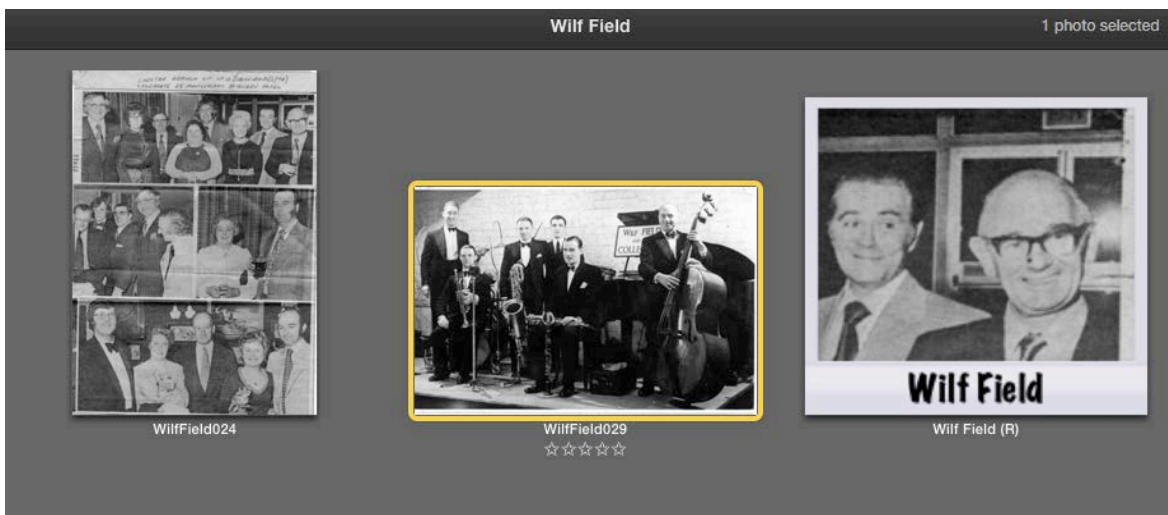
Figure 9: Screenshot from iPhoto showing the photographs in which Field has been tagged, automatically extracted using the iPhoto 'Smart Album' function.

Figure 10: Extract from table of people interviewed or mentioned in interviews
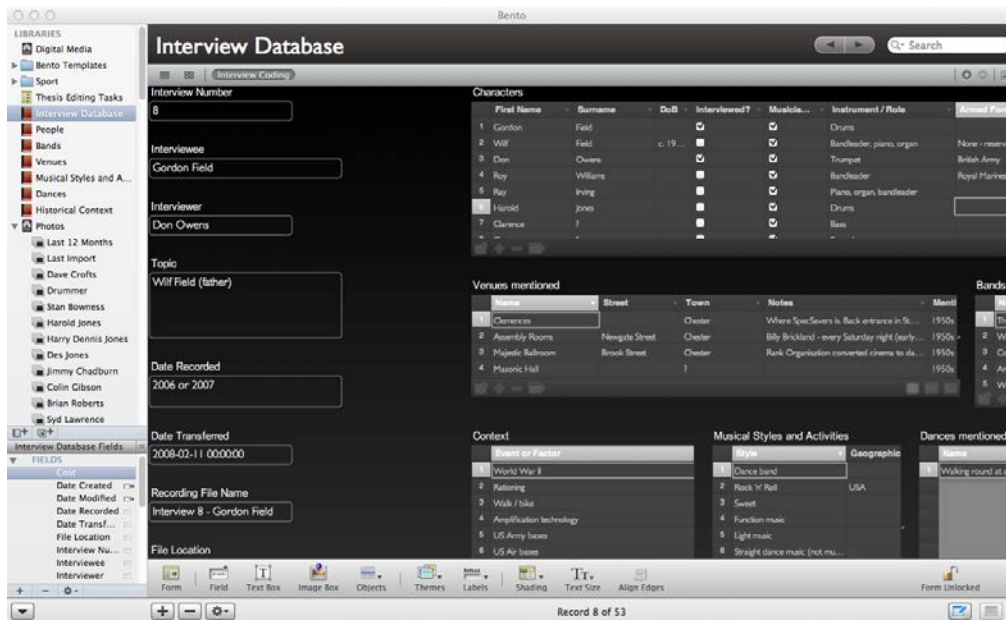
Figure 11: Screenshot of Bento database - input form for interview Information
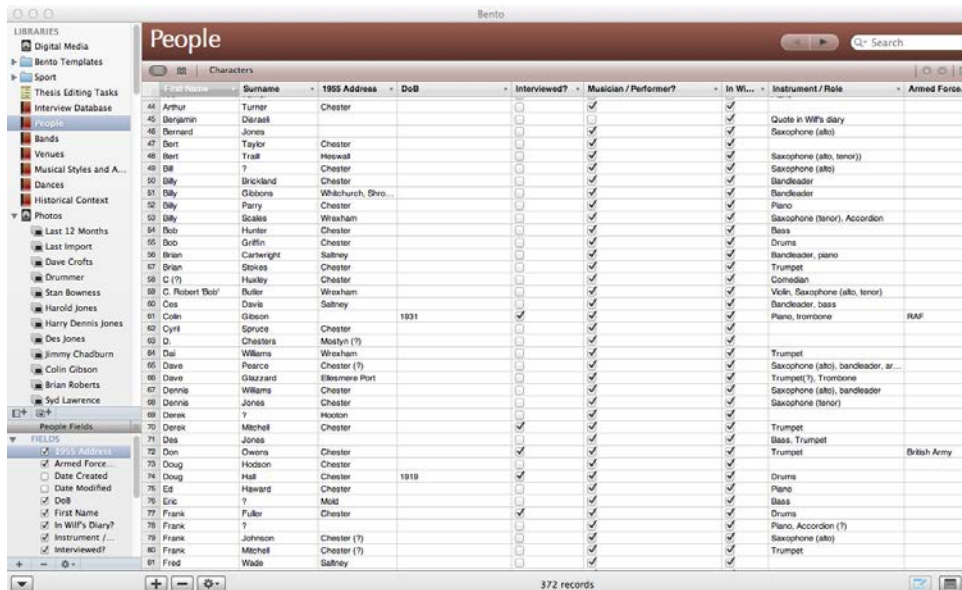
Figure 12: Screenshots of Bento database – part of the 'People' table

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Figure 13: Ticket and dance card for the Cheshire Regiment's Annual Ball, 1932, at Chester Castle, with music provided by the Devonian Dance Band. (Field, 2006)

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Figure 14: The dance card on the reverse of the ticket includes a pre-programmed listing of the dances for the evening (ranging from the Military Two Step and the Veleta to the Fox Trot) along with space for guests to write the names of their dance partners for each dance. (Field, 2006)

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Figure 15: Advertising leaflet for Billy Gibbons and his BBC Band (Field, 2006)
For more information on Billy Gibbons and the musicians who played with his band, see the section on *Dance hall chains, residencies and rock 'n' roll* in Chapter 7.
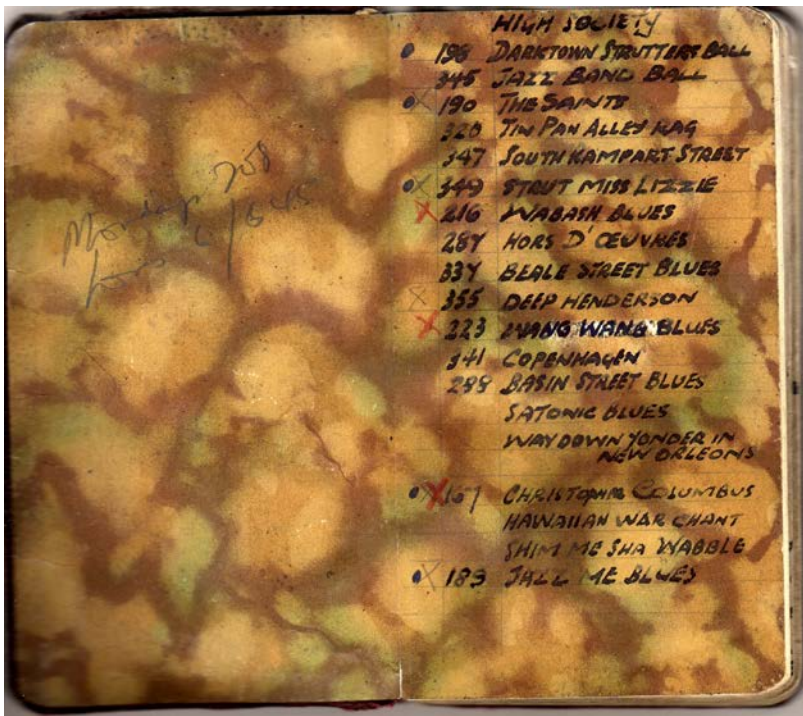
Figure 16: Selection of trad jazz songs (with library numbers) inside the front cover of Field's pocket diary. (Field, 2006)
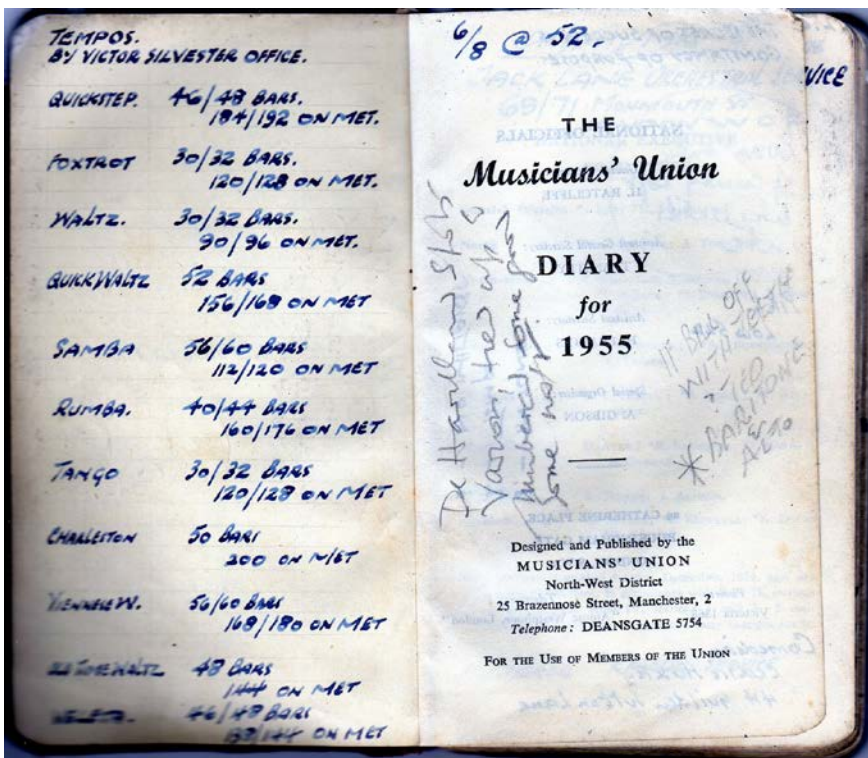
Figure 17: Pages from Field's Musicians' Union Diary for 1955, including 'Tempos by Victor Silvester Office for Quickstep, Foxtrot, Waltz, Quick Waltz, Samba, Rumba, Tango, Charleston, Viennese Waltz, Old Time Waltz, Veleta. (Scribbled in pencil: "If Bill off with teeth ? Ted * Baritone & Alto") (Field, 2006)

Chapter 3: The Local Dance Band Scene in Context

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Figure 18: Pre-1931 photograph showing the Shropshire Union Canal, Chester, looking east from Cow Lane Bridge. (Looking East from Cow Lane Bridge, n.d)

Figure 19: The same location in December 2012. (Southall, 2012d)
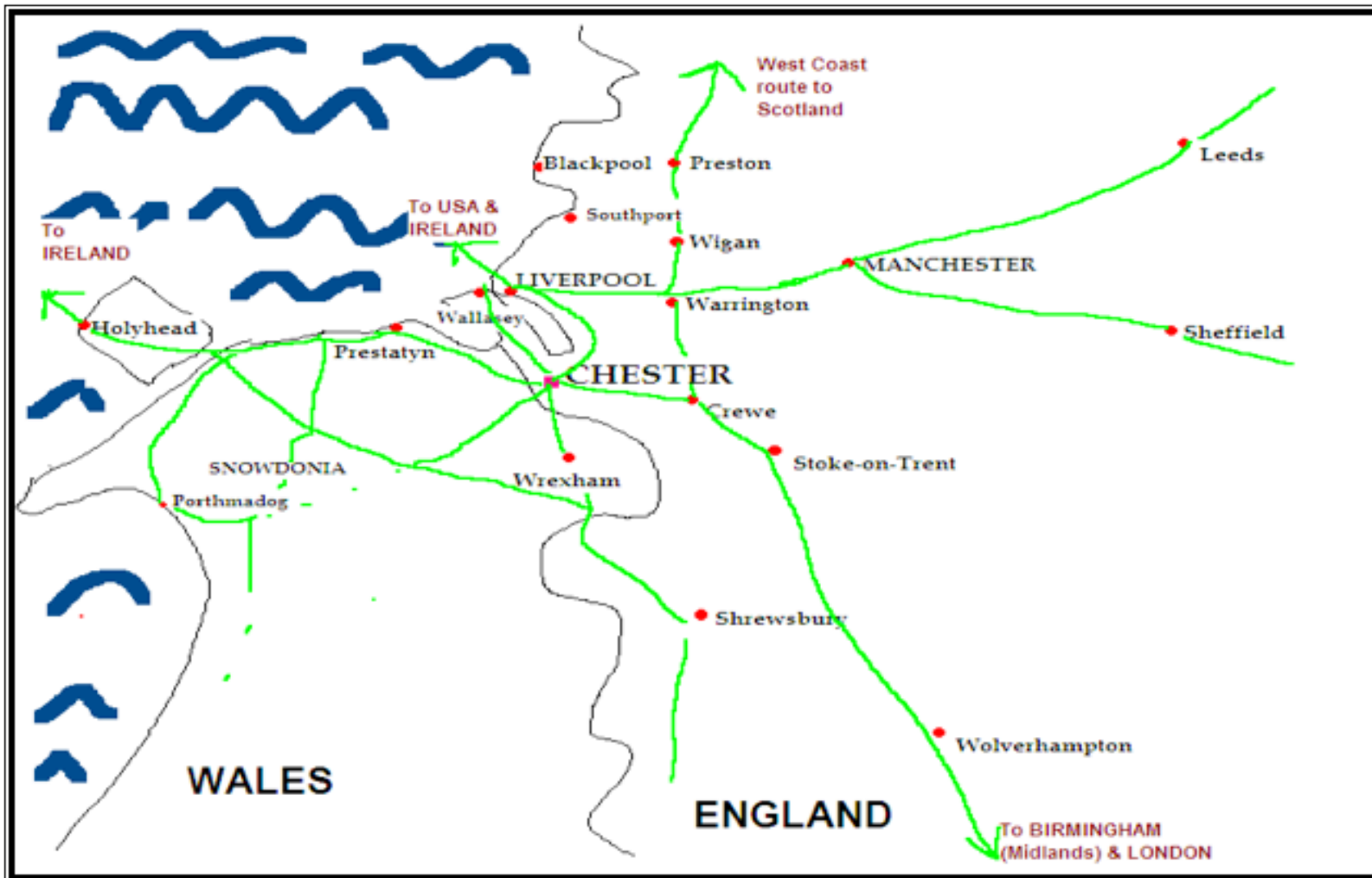
Figure 20: Chester as a Route Centre (Southall, 2008)
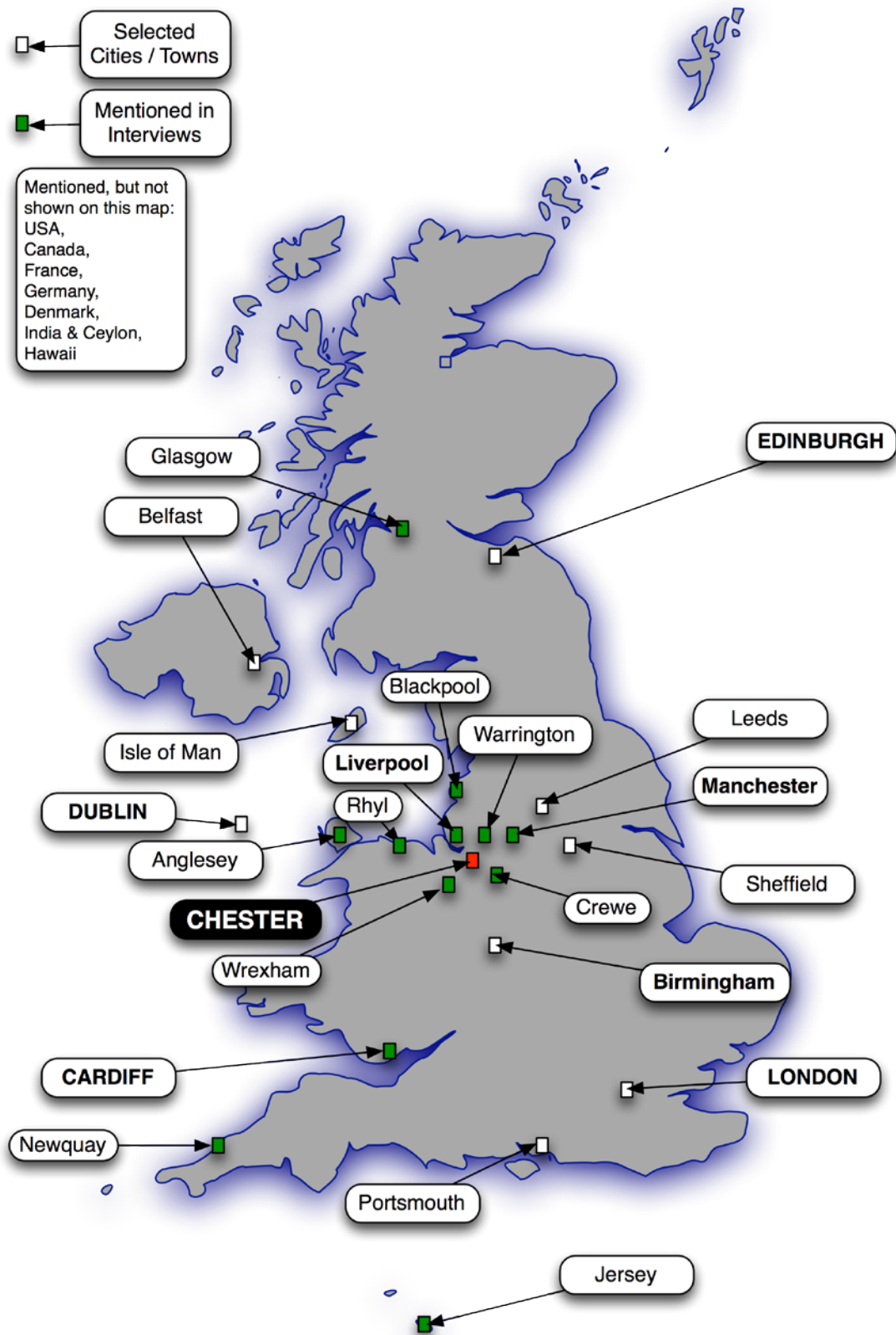
Figure 21: Towns and cities mentioned in interviews (Southall, 2012c)
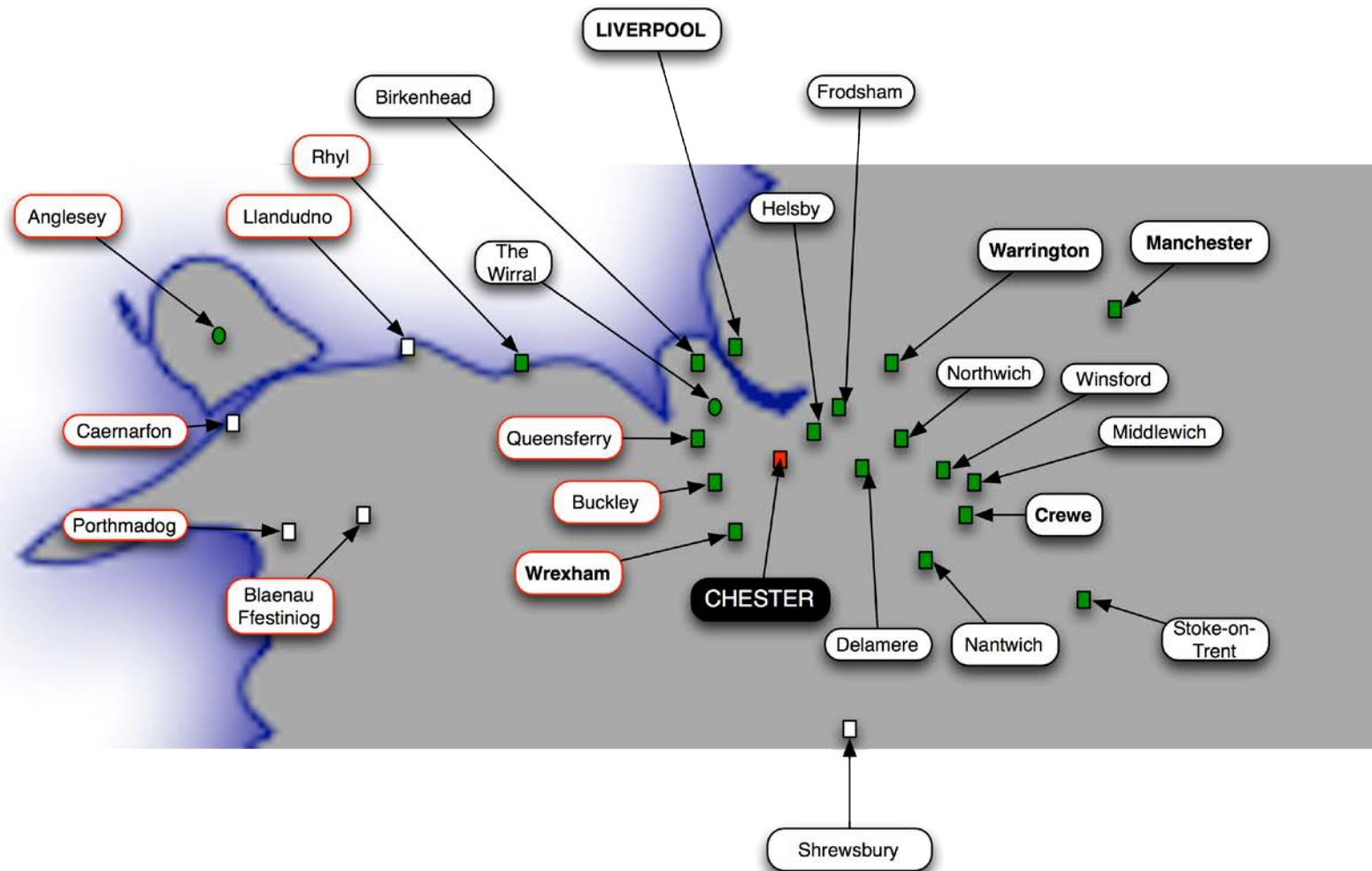
Figure 22: Local area view of towns mentioned in interviews (Southall, 2011)
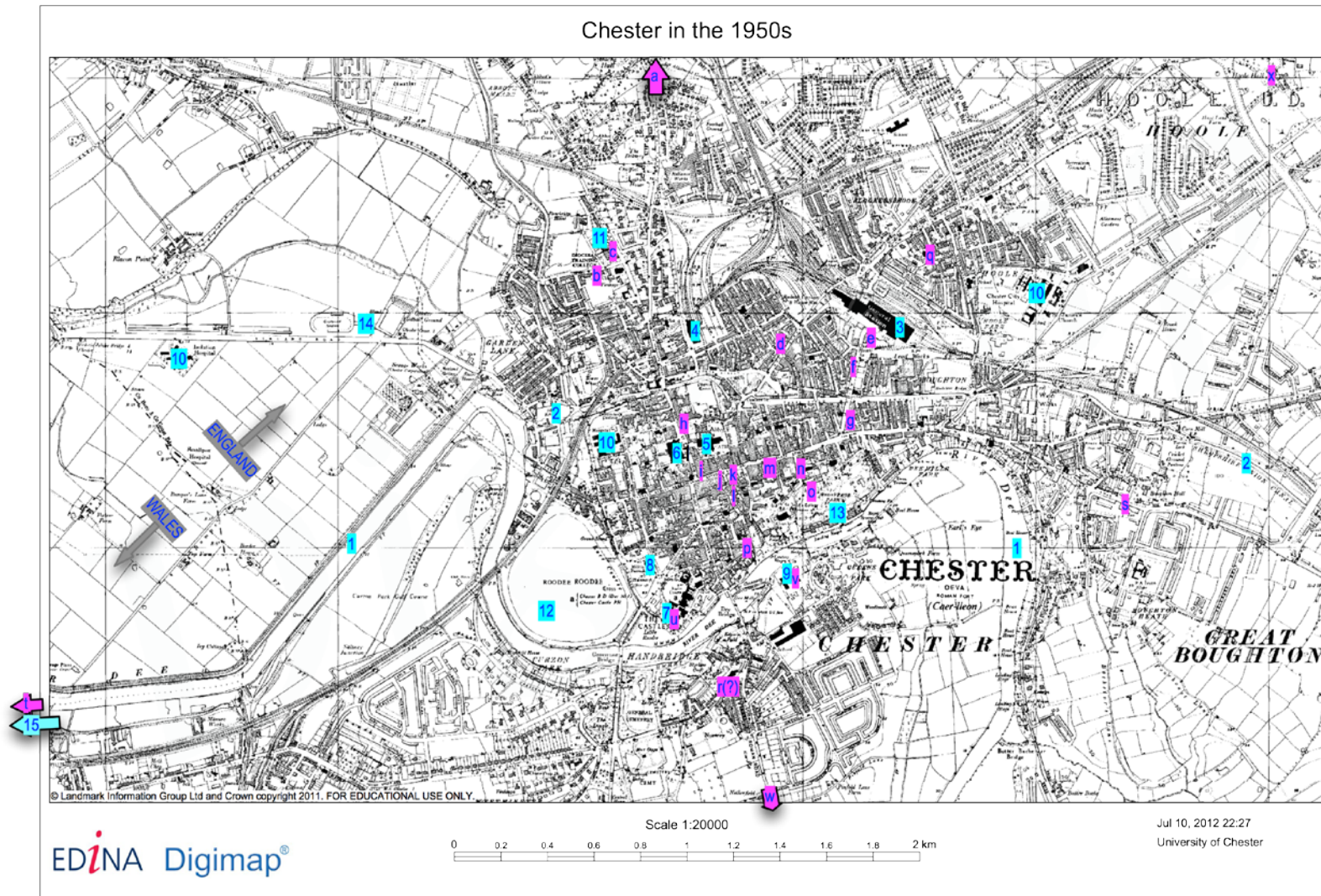
Figure 23: Historic map of Chester in the 1950s (Ordnance Survey, 2012), annotated to show major locations and entertainment venues. (See Chapter 3 for details)

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Figure 24: The River Park Ballroom was an important venue in central Chester throughout the 1940s, 50s and 60s. It was situated on the edge of Grosvenor Park, opposite Love Street. The site is now occupied by bank offices. (River Park Ballroom (exterior), n.d)

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Figure 25: Pre-1951 photograph of the interior of the River Park Ballroom, showing the bandstand (complete with grand piano, drum-kit and music stands), rows of folding chairs around the perimeter, and polished wooden dance floor. For more on the River Park Ballroom's place in Chester dance band and popular music history, see Chapters 5, 7 and 8. (River Park Ballroom (interior), n.d)

Bromfield Arms

The first mention, in the history of records, of a proprietor in the Bromfield Arms dates back to 1871, when Mr. Thomas Balshaw was at the pump. The landlords have changed many times over the years:- J. Jones 1876, J Moss 1893, W.J. Purkiss 1914. The Whitley family took charge of the pub around 1924 / 25 and it changed hands within the family until the late 1960's.

The name "Bromfield" seems to be a mystery, however, local people think it would have been named after one of the many fields that surrounded the rural hotel in the early years.

The "Bromfield" has always been a lively focal point to Hoole. During the war American officers were billeted here whilst based at Sealand U.S.A.F. Camp. Billiard tables were placed at the back of the pub for weekday entertainment but at the weekends the pub came alive with music and dancing as the billiard room would be transformed into a music hall.

Figure 26: "During the war American officers were billeted here whilst based at Sealand U.S.A.F. Camp." (Sign on the wall of the Bromfield Arms pub, Hoole. (Southall, 2012a))

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Figure 27: The Westminster Dance Band in 1925 / 26 (Mitchell, 2007). Note the 'Stroh Violin' used by the violinist. These were a pre-amplification attempt to project the quiet sound of the violin better in noisy dance hall environments. According to the Smithsonian Institution (who have one in their collection) Stroh Violins were advertised as having the 'rich resonant sound of several violins playing at the same time.' (Stroh Violin 1904-1942, n.d) (The idea of using technology to allow one musician to substitute for a whole section also appears in Chapter 8.)

Violins and other orchestral stringed instruments did of course continue to feature in some dance bands, although they became less common. In particular, they were essential for Palm Court ensembles, which usually played light classical music, and were popular with 'society' orchestras and other bands whose clients could afford to pay for the extra musicians required for a full string section. Violins also found a home in early jazz bands, and were played in that context by star performers such as Joe Venuti and Steffan Grapelli. Although their repertoire included Old Time dances such as the Quadrille, the instrumentation of the Westminster Dance Band as shown in this picture was closer to a jazz band than a Palm Court ensemble, as the latter did not usually include banjos and drum-kits.

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Figure 28: A later picture of drummer Reg Lowe's Westminster Dance Band (date unknown). Note the wide selection of instruments on the stand, including a violin as well as various sizes of saxophone. (Field, 2006)

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Figure 29: Reg Lowe was still running a band in the Chester area by the mid-1930s. (By this time the Westminster Dance Band had become an 'orchestra') (Field, 2006)

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Figure 30: Contemporaries of Joe Lovelady, as featured in local newspaper articles (Field, 2006)
Top: Eric Evans and his Orchestra and Bottom: the Palm Beach Dance Band
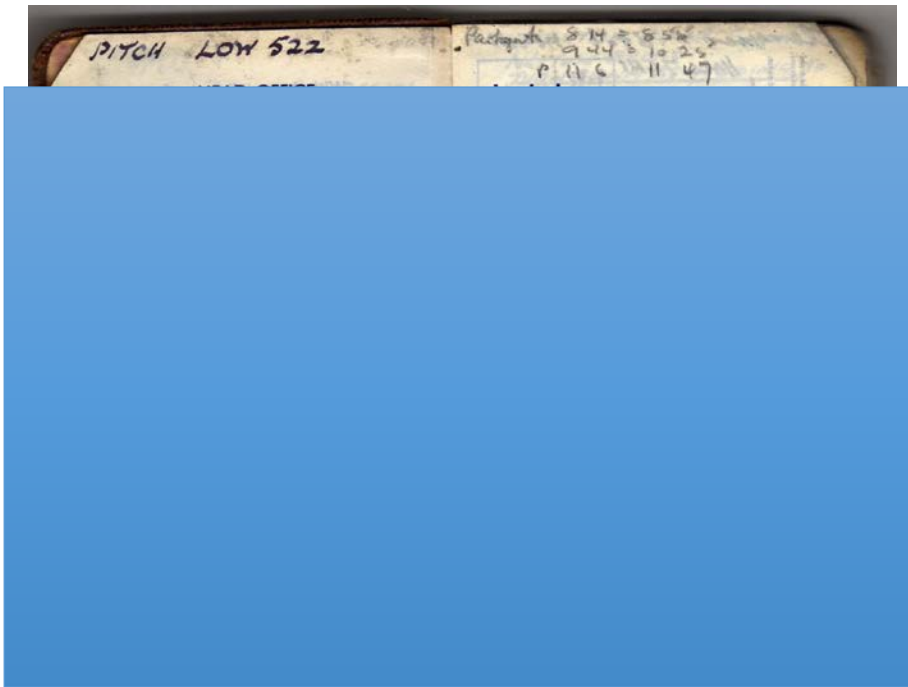
Figure 31: A reminder from Wilf Field's 1954 pocket diary about pitch standards: low [=] 522. This was evidently still a relevant issue fifteen years after the official acceptance of A = 440 Hz as an international standard. (Based on A=440 Hz, Middle C is actually 523.251 Hz, but 522 Hz may have been the closest available tuning fork or pitch pipe, or just an approximation (Sapp, 2002).)

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Figure 32: Newspaper photograph of Syd Lawrence's wedding at Chester Cathedral (Jeffes, 2006)

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Figure 33: St. John's Road Station Band, Part & full-time personnel, National Fire Service (Mitchell, 2007)

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Figure 34: Chester Station Brass Band in 1920 (Mitchell, 2007)
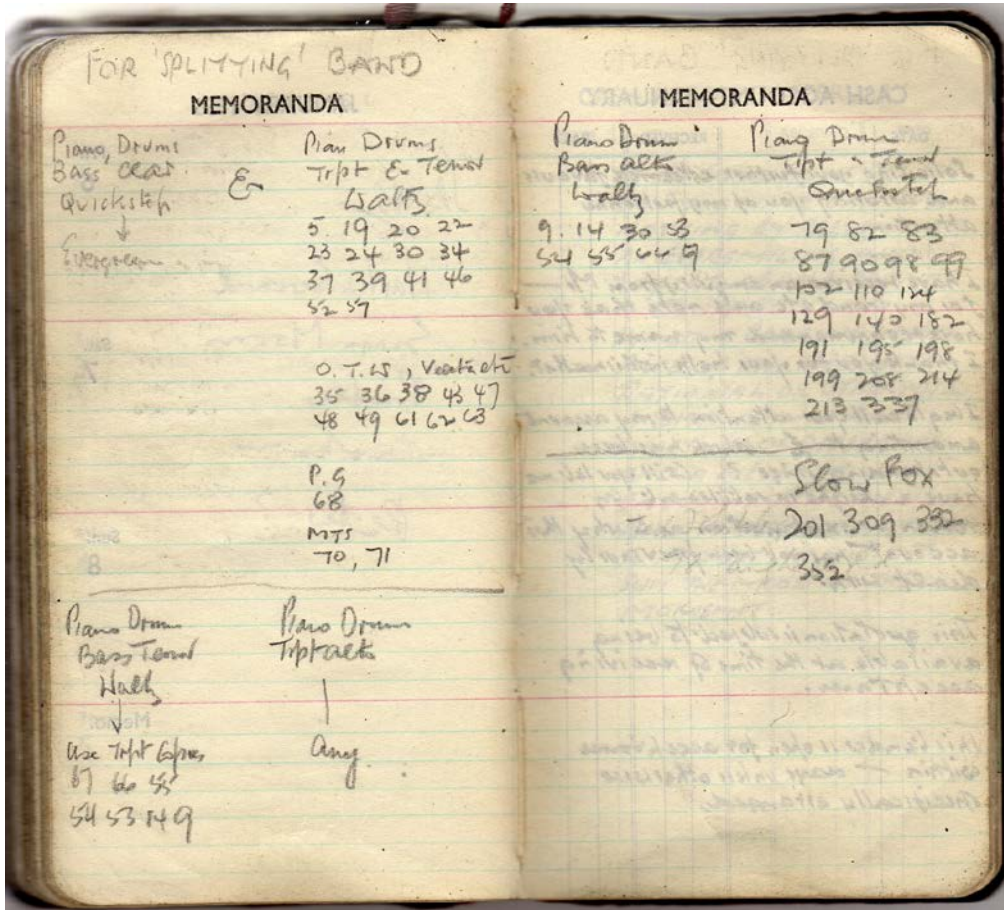
Figure 35: Pages from Field's 1955 pocket diary, showing lists of musicians and library numbers to be used when 'splitting bands' (Field, 2006).

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Figure 36: A Big Band in the Egyptian desert (Morris, 2008)

Chapter 7: World War II to the Late 1950s
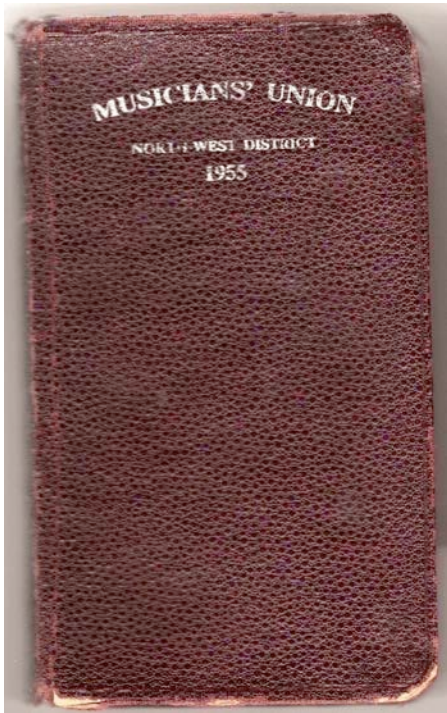
Figure 37: Wilf Field's Musicians' Union Diary 1955 (Field, 2006)
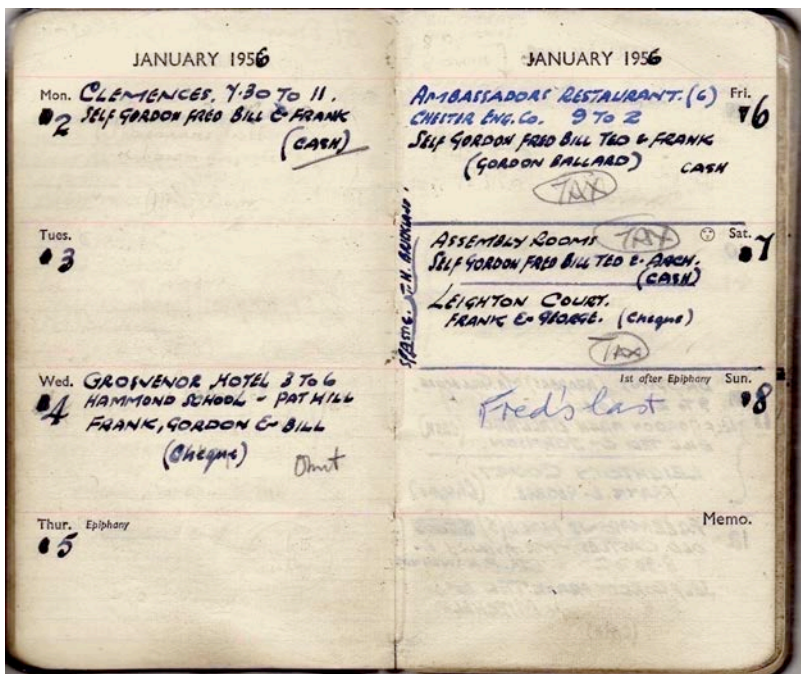
Figure 38: Diary pages for the first week of 1956 (Field, 2006)
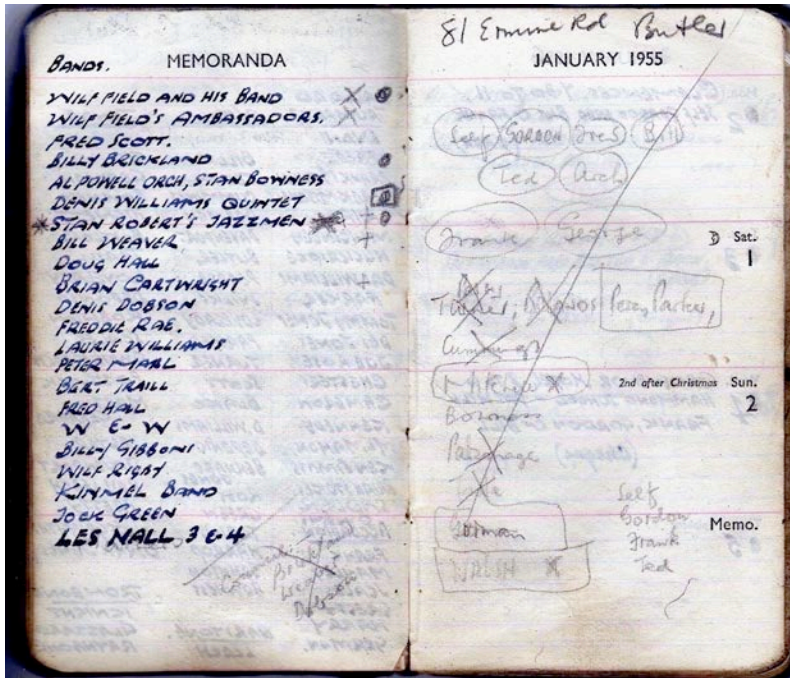
Figure 39; A list of some local bands, including Field's own bands (Wilf Field and his Band and Wilf Field's Ambassadors) (Field, 2006)

Figure 40: Part of Field's contact list, with musicians classified by instrument. (Field, 2006)
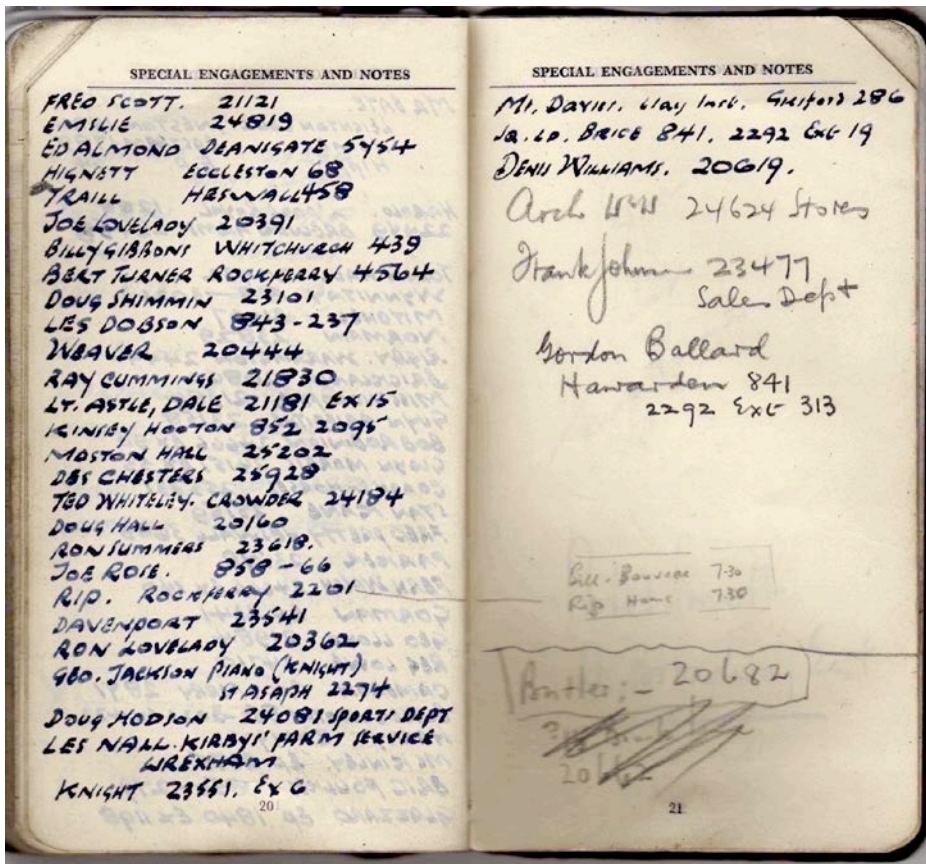
Figure 41: Part of Field's contact list, showing telephone numbers (Field, 2006)
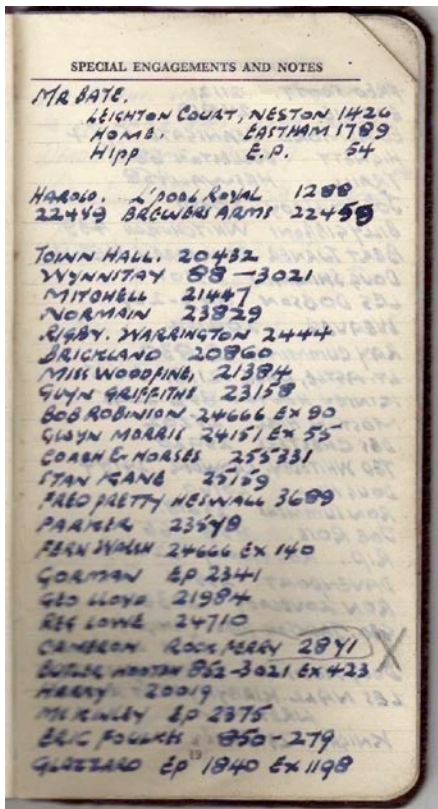
Figure 42: More phone numbers for venues and musicians (Field, 2006)

Figure 43: Part of Field's contact list, showing postal addresses. (Field, 2006)

Figure 44: More from Field's contact list, showing postal addresses. (Field, 2006)

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Figure 45: Peggy Dawson and Her Music Makers, including Joe Rowe (2nd from left) and Ralph Wilkes (2nd from right) (Rowe, 2006)

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Figure 46: Advertisement for J. Reno & Co. Ltd, Manchester (Field, 2006)

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Figure 47: The Dennis Williams Quintet after winning the National Dance Band Championship Finals in 1950 (Jeffes, 2006)

Figure 48: The same quintet earlier, under Syd Lawrence's leadership (Gibson, 2006)
l-r: Syd Lawrence (trumpet), Dennis Williams (alto), Harold Jones (drums), Frank Jeffes (guitar), Jimmy Chadburn (piano), Ces Davies (bass)

Figure 49: Leaflet advertising the return of Gene Mayo and his Music as the resident band at the River Park Ballroom in August 1951 (Jeffes, 2006)

Figure 50: Leon Sait's band at the River Park Ballroom, including Joe Rowe (drums), Geoff Anderson and Don Owens (trumpet). Sait is the alto player at the front of the band. (Owens, 2008)

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Figure 51: "Rules for Resident Bands at the River Park Ballroom" (Jeffes, 2006)

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Figure 52: Front and back covers of the programme for the Grand Opening Night of the Majestic Ballroom, Chester, on March 15th, 1957 (Rowe, 2006)

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Figure 53: The Majestic Ballroom Orchestra, 1957 (Owens, 2008)

Bandleader Roy Williams is in front of the band. Musicians include Joe Rowe (drums), Ralph Wilkes (alto saxophone – note the unusual Grafton acrylic model), Stan Thomas (alto), Stan Bowness (tenor), Geoff Anderson (tenor), Harry Marsden (trumpet), Don Owens (trumpet), Derek Mitchell (trumpet)

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Figure 54: Programme from the Top Rank ballroom in Birkenhead, Wirral, from 1962, including the following text about Peter Dee:-
"BANDLEADER – PETER DEE although only with the Rank Organisation for just over two years, he has, during the period of his engagement at the Majestic Ballroom, Chester, proved to be one of the most popular bands on the Top Rank Circuit. The band has played together for the past twelve years, and has enjoyed considerable success in the Midlands, Cheshire and the North Wales Coast. Peter leads the band on alto-sax [sic], clarinet and piano, and writes all the band's orchestrations himself." (Dee, n.d)

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Figure 55: A quintet including Peter Dee (saxophone and accordion) at the Forces' Club on Love Street dated 1948/9 (Dee, n.d). Note the sign on the door informing dancers that 'No Jive or Jitterbugging' were allowed in the venue.

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Figure 56: The Peter Dee Band, including Derek Mitchell (trumpet), Colin Gibson (piano), and Peter Dee (alto sax, standing) (Gibson, 2006)

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Figure 57: Jazz group including Steve Lloyd (drums), Glynn Evans (vibraphone) and Colin Gibson (piano). (1960s - Exact date unknown) (Gibson, 2006)

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Figure 58: Newspaper clippings showing Shaw's father, brother, and homemade equipment (Shaw, 2008)

Figure 59: Newspaper photograph from the Chester Courant, 2nd June 1964 (Shaw, 2008)
The caption gives the band members as 'Denis Buckhill (lead), Pete Lacey (drums), Dave Crofts (vocals), Ian Shaw (rhythm) and Brian Roberts (bass)', and states that the band, 'whose average age is 17 1/2, are becoming well known in Cheshire [and] will be appearing in the semi-final of the Cheshire Beat Championships at Northwich Memorial Hall this Saturday.'

Figure 60: Section of the Cavern Club Wall of Fame, including a brick for the Bo-Lynx (Shaw, 2008)

Figure 61: The Renegades on stage at the Hippodrome, Wrexham, with Steve Lloyd on drums (McMahon, n.d.)

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Figure 62: Steve Lloyd (drums) and George Jones (alto) (Lloyd, 2006)

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Figure 63: Programme for 'Soundings: A Concert of Chester Jazz' at the Flamingo Club on 22nd September 1964 (Gibson, 2006)

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Figure 64: Listing of band personnel for 'Soundings: A Concert of Chester Jazz' at the Flamingo Club on 22nd September 1964 (Gibson, 2006)

Figure 65: The Ray Irving Entertainments band bus in 1960 (Lloyd, 2006)

Figure 66: The rhythm section of the Ray Irving Showband in 1965. They also played a few gigs separately as 'Free Thought'. l-r: John Greaves (later of Henry Cow), plus two ex-Renegades: Steve Lloyd and Roy Mack (McMahon, n.d.)

Figure 67: The Ronnie Caryl Band in Jersey in 1965, including Steve Lloyd (drums) and Billy Brickland (piano) (Lloyd, 2006)

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Figure 68: The Ray Irving Showband at Wrexham Memorial Hall in 1966, including Steve Lloyd (drums), Ray Irving (organ), and George Jones (reeds) (Lloyd, 2006). The band as set up in this photograph includes the musicians necessary to tackle both dance band genres (lead by the trumpet and saxophone) and more modern styles (featuring the electric guitar, bass and organ).

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Figure 69: Newspaper advertisement for entertainment at the Civic Hall in Winsford and the Memorial Hall in Northwich in the early 1980s. Acts scheduled for Winsford include Tight Fit, Lenny Henry, the Krankies and Cilla Black, while Field and Rigby were to provide music for ballroom dancing in Northwich

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Figure 70; The Ray Irving band celebrating 25 years in business in 1973. George Jones still features on saxophone. (Field, 2006)

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Figure 71: 'Chester branch of MU celebrate 25th Anniversary at the Queen Hotel - (Observer, 29/11/74)' (Field, 2006) including: (top) Ray Irving, Billy Scales, Roy Huckridge, Tom Davenport and Wilf Field; (middle) C. Robert Butler, Ralph Wilkes, Ray Irving and Des Jones; (bottom) Mike Keegan, Geoff Anderson and Des Jones.

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Figure 72: Griffiths Furniture Warehouse before renovation, with the blank back wall of the Gaumont Cinema further along the canal, in the centre of the photograph. This picture was taken during the building of the inner ring road in the late 1960s; the supports for the bridge over the canal are on the left-hand bank, directly opposite the warehouse. (The Mill from Canal Side, n.d)

Figure 73: Gordon Vickers' Mill Hotel in 2012, incorporating the renovated Griffiths Furniture Warehouse. The cinema is now a bingo hall. The ring road is hidden behind the footbridge across the canal which connects the two sections of the hotel. The hotel's purpose-built restaurant barge is moored at the right-hand bank, outside the hotel's main restaurant. (Southall, 2012f)

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Figure 74: The Deeside Dance Orchestra (date unknown). Norman Frost at the right-hand end of the front row. (Owens, 2007)

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Figure 75: Poster advertising 'Christmas at the Base' – a reunion dance organised by the Burtonwood Association in November 2003 (The Burtonwood Association presents 'Christmas at the Base', 2003). Former Burtonwood personnel and guests from the UK were joined by ex-colleagues from the USA. The music (including Glenn Miller Orchestra repertoire) was provided by the Norman Roy Orchestra, led by Norman Frost, and including Don Owens (trumpet), Les Stevenson (tenor saxophone) and the author (lead alto).

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Figure 76: Ken Morris at the jazz jam session at Alexander's in 2011 (Greaney, 2012)

Figure 77: Dennis Roscoe (centre, playing clarinet) at the farewell performance of the Brian Jones Big Band in 2012. (Jones was by this time unable to play the piano, so his place in the band was taken by a substitute for the evening.) The Brian Jones band continued the dance band tradition of having several 'bands within a band' right to the end of its existence, including a traditional jazz band which allowed Roscoe to return to his jazz roots, as shown in this photograph. (Southall, 2012e)

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Figure 78: Students from the University of Chester's Popular Music degree course busking in Chester City Centre (2011) (Greaney, 2012)