



## A GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL JAZZ ARCHIVE

This note outlines the main holdings of the National Jazz Archive and explains how visitors to the Archive in Loughton and to our website can explore our collections and find materials for their research and interest.



### PART ONE: THE NJA COLLECTIONS

#### Introduction

The Archive holds the UK's finest collection of written, printed and visual material on jazz, blues and related music, from the 1920s to the present day, including:

- more than 4,000 books
- runs of around 700 journals and periodicals
- photographs, drawings, paintings, concert and festival posters and programmes
- letters, memorabilia and personal papers donated by musicians, writers, journalists and collectors
- oral histories from our Heritage Lottery Fund intergenerational jazz reminiscence project.

Part of our Heritage Lottery Fund project 'The Story of British Jazz' was devoted to conserving and cataloguing the collection, and digitising some of the most interesting material. As a result, many photographs, journals, documents and learning resources are now freely available on our website.

The starting point for exploring the Archive's collections is the [Search the Archive](http://www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/research) page of our website. [<http://www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/research>] Here, you can search the NJA catalogue, the digitised collections, and the website itself. The best ways to do this are explained later.

Many of our holdings have not yet been digitised or fully catalogued so a visit to the Archive or enquiry by email or phone may be the best way to find what you are looking for. Our research archivist David Nathan and volunteers are always pleased to help visitors explore the Archive to answer questions about jazz and our collections. If you are planning to visit, especially from a distance, check first that the archive will be open.

Please note that the materials in the Archive are available for reference only. You are welcome to read or examine any item that we hold, but these may not be taken out of the Archive.

#### Books

Over 4300 books on jazz and related subjects are available for reference in the Archive. These are broadly classified as:

- biographies and autobiographies
- reference books
- discographies
- critical works, reviews and histories
- record guides.

Most sections are arranged alphabetically by author, but the reference books are arranged by topic. Some specialist discographies and other books are kept in a store at the Archive.

The book catalogue can be searched or browsed [here](http://www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/catalogue).  
[<http://www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/catalogue>]

**HIGHLIGHTS:** The Appeal of Jazz by RWS Mendl, 1927, is the earliest book about jazz in the Archive. Hilton Schleman's 'Rhythm on Record' from 1936 was a pioneer in the art of discography.

We aim to acquire all new books on jazz and blues that are published in the UK, and we are very grateful to the many authors and publishers who donate copies of their new titles to us.

### Journals, magazines and newsletters

The Archive holds full or partial runs of some 700 journals, magazines and newsletters on jazz, blues and related music. We have all the key English language journals, such as *Melody Maker*, *Downbeat*, *Jazz Journal*, *Blues Unlimited*, *Blues World*, *JazzWise* and *Crescendo*, copies of many foreign language journals, as well as a huge range of rare newsletters and specialist magazines.



**HIGHLIGHT:** *Melody Maker*, one of the most widely read magazines covering jazz and popular music, was published from 1926 to 2000. Copies up to 1981 can be read in the Archive in digitised form. The Archive also holds the remarkable Dance Band Diaries, compiled by *Melody Maker* journalist Chris Hayes, which provides an index to MM between 1926 and 1955.

The best way to discover our journals is through the [online catalogue](http://www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/catalogue).

[<http://www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/catalogue>]

Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund grant that we received in 2011 we have scanned and digitised 30 journals and magazines, 23 of which are fully accessible on our website in both fully searchable pdf and OCR-text format. These include long-running titles such as *Jazz News*, *Crescendo*, *Jazz UK* and *Storyville*, and also

rare, short-lived titles such as *Swing Music* (1935–6) and *Jazz Illustrated* (1949–50). The other seven titles can be accessed in printed form or online in the Archive.

Current journals and those most frequently consulted are shelved in the main Archive room for easy access. Less frequently used ones are in our reserve store at Loughton. Most of our foreign language journals are kept at the National Jazz Centre in Southend.

### Photographs, concert programmes and posters

The Archive holds extensive collections of photos taken by musicians, professional photographers and enthusiasts, of musicians performing in clubs, festivals and concerts, and offstage. The collections are summarised in the Archive [catalogue](http://nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/catalogue). [<http://nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/catalogue>]

Several hundred photos were scanned and digitised as part of the HLF project 'The Story of British Jazz', and can be viewed [here](http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/photographs).  
[<http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/photographs>]

### Concert programmes and posters

Programmes and posters are evocative records of events and performances, reflecting as they do the designs and fashions of the period. Many of the copies in the Archive were donated by jazz enthusiasts who saved them at the time they attended the event.



**HIGHLIGHTS:** Among the most interesting photo collections are those of:

- Pianist and bandleader George Webb – photos taken between the mid-1940s and 1961
- Press photographer Denis Williams – American and UK musicians between 1955 and 2004
- Professional photographer Terry Cryer – starting with Louis Armstrong's visit to the UK in 1956.



**HIGHLIGHT:** *The Original Dixieland Jazz Band played at the London Palladium in April 1919. The programme for the concert can be seen [here](http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/programmes/the-palladium).*

*[<http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/programmes/the-palladium>]*

**Programmes** for hundreds of concerts and festivals are held in the Archive, arranged alphabetically by performer. Some 36 of the most interesting have been scanned and digitised and can be viewed [here](http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/programmes).

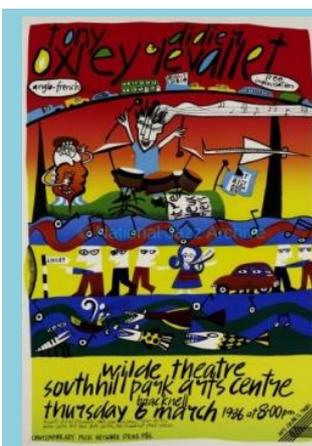
*[<http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/programmes>]*

Around 125 **posters** for festivals and concerts are held at Loughton. These have been catalogued and digitised, and details can be seen [here](http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/posters-top).

*[<http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/posters-top>]*

### Personal papers

The Archive holds collections of personal papers from about 40 musicians, bandleaders, writers, journalists, broadcasters, club and festival organisers. These are enormously varied, and commonly include photographs, personal papers, letters, diaries, scrapbooks, cashbooks, family history documents, publicity material, brochures, cuttings, contracts, scripts and press releases. They vary greatly in extent, from a series of letters between artist and illustrator James Hall Thomson and American clarinettist Pee Wee Russell, up to the collected papers of Charles Fox, who wrote and broadcast about jazz for more than 50 years, and extensive material donated by composer, pianist and bandleader Mike Westbrook.



**HIGHLIGHT:** *The visually exciting posters for a series of Arts Council-supported concerts for the Contemporary Music Network between 1968 and 1989 can be viewed [here](http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/posters-top/arts-council).*

*[<http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive/posters-top/arts-council>]*

The main personal collections are listed [here](http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive) *[<http://archive.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/archive>]* and further



**HIGHLIGHT:** *The Chris Hayes collection consists of the 'Dance Band Diaries' – a history of dance music from 1926–55 based on stories in Melody Maker. It also includes cuttings, notes and biographical details of jazz and popular musicians compiled during his 60 years as an author and journalist.*

information on the content of some of the collections is available. They are stored in several locations in the Archive at Loughton, and can be consulted by arrangement.

### Letters

Personal correspondence forms part of many of the collections of personal papers noted above.

### Oral history

The Intergenerational Jazz Reminiscence project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, runs until mid-2017. It explores the investments that different generations make in promoting, performing, supporting and documenting our jazz heritage. Interviews and reminiscences are being recorded and will be made available on our website and as part of an exhibition 'Investment in musical heritage across the generations'.

**HIGHLIGHT:** *The Johnny Simmen collection, a Swiss jazz historian and critic, consists of over 3000 letters written by 160 jazz musicians to Johnny over a period of 40 years, starting in the late 1940s. A catalogue of these is available in the Archive.*

## PART TWO: FINDING ITEMS IN THE NATIONAL JAZZ ARCHIVE

### Introduction

There are three main ways of searching the resources of the Archive:

- Search the NJA catalogue, which has details of the materials stored at the Archive in Loughton
- Search the digitised collections – online copies of jazz journals, posters, programmes, photos etc.
- Search the NJA website to find news teaching resources, events and stories.

The [Search the Archive](http://nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/research) page has links to these three options. [<http://nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/research>]

### Searching the NJA catalogue

On the Research Page, click the blue panel

**Go to the Catalogue >**

This brings you to the Catalogue page (<http://nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/catalogue>)

From here you can explore the catalogue by searching for a particular word or phrase, or browsing through the full catalogue. Two types of search are possible – simple and advanced.

**Simple search:** If looking for a particular word or phrase, simply type it in the 'search term(s)' box. Type as many words as you want; clicking on 'Submit search' will find entries in the catalogue which contain all the words you have entered. You can adjust the search by using the drop-down lists provided, but these are optional; to search as simply as possible, just enter your word or phrase and click 'Submit search'.

Search results appear in a list just below the search panels. A search yielding no results appears as 'Search results – 0 records'. A successful search shows the number of records found.

Items in the catalogue are in the following categories. The search results show the category of each item:

- NJA/AUD - Audio
- NJA/B - Bibliographic Materials
- NJA/B/BOO - Books
- NJA/PHO/MAS - Bryan J Mason Collection
- NJA/EPH - Ephemera
- NJA/B/JOU - Journals, Magazines and Newsletters
- NJA/OBJ - Objects
- NJA/C - Personal Collections
- NJA/PHO - Photographs
- NJA/POS - Posters and Flyers
- NJA/PRO - Programmes
- NJA/VID - Video

For example, type 'Ellington' in the search panel and click 'Submit search': a list of 98 records appears just below. Most of these entries are for books – shown by the abbreviation 'BOO' in the record number – but there are also journals ('JOU'), programmes ('PRO') and a few items in other categories. Items that contain 'WEB' are digitised and can be viewed elsewhere on the website.

Clicking any of these entries opens a panel with the catalogue record for the item within the list. Click the **X** to the right of the panel to close it.

**Advanced search:** To use the Advanced search tool, simply click on **Advanced Search** at the right hand side of the search panel. When using this tool, you must **tick at least one of the categories listed on the right**.

To refine your search, type your word or phrase in the optional search term(s) boxes next to your field of choice, eg, 'Title' and 'Date'. You can further specify your search by using the drop-down lists and even select which section of the catalogue you wish to explore, such as 'Bibliographic Materials'. The more fields

you use, the more specific your search will be. Clicking 'Submit search' will find entries in the catalogue that contain all the words and options you have selected in specific fields.

To return to the simple search screen, click on **Simple Search** on the right of the search panel.

### **Browse through the full catalogue**

Another way to explore the catalogue is to browse through it. Scrolling down to the foot of the Search page reveals a yellow folder 'NJA: National Jazz Archive', below which are nine folders:

- NJA/AUD - Audio
- NJA/B - Bibliographic Materials
- NJA/EPH - Ephemera
- NJA/OBJ - Objects
- NJA/C - Personal Collections
- NJA/PHO - Photographs
- NJA/POS - Posters and Flyers
- NJA/PRO - Programmes
- NJA/VID – Video

Where small grey horizontal arrows appear next to text, clicking on these reveals further information about each collection. Many folders have multiple levels of entries below. At the lowest level, where no arrow is present, clicking the entry opens up the catalogue record for the item.

To close an opened folder, click the black downward-pointing arrow.

## PART THREE: SEARCHING THE DIGITISED COLLECTIONS

Click the blue panel. [Go to the Digitised Collections >](#)

This takes you to a page showing thumbnail images of five collections of photos, four collections of posters, 48 posters, two items of ephemera, and 30 journals.

Click any of these to go to more detailed information about the item. Where this is a single item, click on the image to bring up a high resolution image of the item itself. Sometimes, as with a collection of photos, you are taken to the first item in a group, which you can then explore. Similarly, with journals, thumbnails of the covers of the available issues appear: click each one to load that issue, and you can then look at each page/spread individually.

If there are more than 18 items in a collection, as with several of the journals, a red numbered list appears at the top and bottom of the display: click on the numbers to go to the appropriate page to show issues.

To view an item at a larger size, click on the image so the whole page/spread is visible. To view it at high-resolution, click '[View larger image](#)' just below the image itself. To close this full screen image, click **X** in the bottom right hand corner.

To move to the previous or next page, click **< Prev Next >** at the top right of the page. Return to the next higher level by clicking '[Back to ...](#)' at the top.

Some digitised items cannot be viewed remotely from the Archive, due to copyright restrictions. These can be viewed online in the Archive: call 0208 502 4701 to arrange a visit.

### Optical character recognition (OCR)

Below items containing text that have been digitised (eg journals, not photographs) is a panel above which is this message: '***This text has been generated by computer from the image and may contain typographical and/or grammatical errors.***' During the digitising of these items, the text was scanned using optical character recognition (OCR) software. This means that, subject to the limitations of the scanning process, and the quality of the original, the whole text of every document can be searched. This is an extremely powerful tool for finding every occurrence of a name or word of interest.

You can search within each page by clicking on the OCR text, clicking Cntl-F and typing the word of interest. Each occurrence is highlighted.

At the foot of the panel is '[Show more...](#)'. Click this to reveal the OCR text for the whole page. '[Show less...](#)' appears at the foot of the panel once it has been expanded.

### Searching the digitised collections

The facility for searching within the digitised collections is very powerful. A Search panel appears at the top right of every page within this section of the website. This is not context-specific, and simply searches for the terms you enter. The results of a search can be refined and narrowed down, but this process is not very intuitive.

For example, searching for 'Selsey' brings up just three occurrences. The results show a thumbnail of the item, its title (including the journal details if relevant), and the occurrence of the word(s) in the OCR column alongside.

Searching for 'Ellington', however, produces no fewer than 3847 records! Twenty items are displayed on a page: at the foot of these 20 items is 'Show all 3847 results'.

Clicking on 'Show all results' may appear to make no difference to the page. This is because the first 20 items are shown again, but there is now a row of red numbers for the pages of results that can be viewed, each of which holds 20 items.

In principle, your search can be narrowed down by using the 'Collection' panel at the top of the page, and selecting the collection of interest. Unfortunately, this tool has not been set up in a way that enables it to be used easily.

Entering all the search terms of interest can sometimes be an effective way of narrowing your search. Thus, searching for 'Ellington Sacred Concert' yields 53 results, and it is then simple to scroll down to find the programme for the Concert in Westminster Abbey on 24 October 1971.

The search results appear in order of the collections. Usually, journals produce by far the largest number of results so if you do **not** want to look for journal entries, it can often be best to click on the **last** page number in the list, in order to find other items, particularly photographs. So, for example, searching for Tubby Hayes produces 646 hits. Clicking on the final number in the red list (33) shows six photos taken by Denis Williams and Terry Cryer. And there are also two more photos on page 32.

## **PART FOUR: SEARCHING THE NJA WEBSITE**

Searching the website is straightforward: in the right-hand panel of the Research Page is a search area where you can type the words or phrase of interest.

Click 'Search' and the results appear in a list in order of the sections of the website:

- News
- Events
- Jazz Stories
- Videos
- Photos
- Resources
- Blogs

Searches for musicians' names will often produce many results from the 'Jazz Stories' section of the website. This rich resource holds more than 340 interviews, many of which were conducted originally by Les Tomkins for *Crescendo* magazine, and republished subsequently on the *Jazz Professional* website.