

Geoff Palser

15th Sept. 1939 - 10th Aug. 2001

We were all devastated by the sad news that Geoff passed away on Friday 10th August after a courageous battle against cancer, which he had fought, so bravely, for the last five years. If there were an award to be presented for bravery then Geoff would have gained first class honours.



Geoff first started playing trombone in the early sixties with the Saratoga Jazz Band. After a short spell in London he returned to Cardiff and joined the Icon Jazz band in 1969 at the notorious Quebec Hotel. The band moved to the Great Western Hotel and enjoyed a very successful residency for several years. Geoff's enthusiasm for the music endeared him to his many musical friends, who he encouraged to listen & play his style of music. He co-founded the Welsh Jazz Festival in 1975, which was the fore-runner to many more festivals, including Brecon, which is now in its 18th year. Geoff was always on the lookout for places to play. He formed the Old Arcadian and more lately the Viking Jazz Bands, and was principal trombonist with the Adamant New Orleans Marching Band

The late 1980's saw his involvement in the formation of the Preservation Jazz Society which was formed to present New Orleans and traditional jazz which had, sadly, been neglected by others. We were delighted when Geoff accepted the Presidency last year.

Geoff's final band was the Society Jazz Band, which performs in the Maltsters, in Whitchurch, on a Wednesday, which he and I formed a few years ago. It was this band in particular, that endeared him to everyone for his sheer guts and determination to overcome his illness - he last played on the 27th June which was just six weeks ago.

Geoff was a very special person, loved by everyone who knew him - I was very fortunate to have had him as a friend for the last 40 years - it has been my privilege & honour to have known such a kind and generous person - he is irreplaceable and will be greatly missed - by everyone

Alun Jones. - 15th August 2001

From Simon Palser.

To Alun and the musicians and friends of the P.J.S.

On behalf of my family I would like to express our heartfelt thanks for the love and support you have shown during Dad's long illness and following his death. As his son and a fellow jazzer I can testify what each of you meant to him. The musicians who play jazz and those who simply enjoy listening to it were indeed like an extended family to him and this has been borne out by the reaction to his passing. Somebody wrote in a card that Dad was a person who shunned materialism. Having shared some financially precarious times with him I can only agree! Honest friendship was worth more than anything to him and he was certainly a rich man in that respect.

Special thanks are due to the Adamant Band for your wonderful playing at the service, the emotions you conveyed touched everyone present, you did the old man proud. Also thanks to John Keen and Chris Hodgkins for the very apt "Sleepy time down South" which Dad had personally requested, to Tommy Edwards, Ceri, Keith and Clarence and everyone, who made a musical contribution that day. As Dad would have said, "marvellous".

I'll end on a happy note. My children Maja and Lucien are shaping up to be fine musicians. Lucien plays the violin and is an avid Jimmy Smith fan, something which delighted his grandfather. Maja plays the piano and the guitar and has a little band of her own, I know how much Dad would have loved to have seen and heard them perform. And as you probably know, Mike's son James is showing a great talent as a drummer. The music and the memories live on. Thank you all again!
Take care and keep swinging! Simon

A Tribute from fellow musician, Keith Little



Geoff Palser was a great personal friend over many years as well as being a musical colleague. In the 1980s, when I was living in Germany and making regular trips home to Cardiff, Geoff was always the first person I would call on my return. We would meet in many of the Brains pubs and Geoff would sit there with his mischievous grin and his pint of Brains Dark and say, "Come on Keith, confess all, you know you want to". He was a very loyal friend and was always there with his support in the bad times as well as the good.

Geoff's son, Simon, and I became close friends too when he joined Colin Dawson's Onward Band and during the following years on the road, Geoff was never long out of the conversation. Indeed, he and Edwin McGarr flew out for a special trip to Switzerland and played with the Band near Zurich. Geoff's life was the music and his enthusiasm inspired many others to play - and many of the Jazz musicians playing in Cardiff today (including myself) only do so as a result of his encouragement and help. I miss him terribly as do we all. He is a great loss to the Jazz scene and Cardiff will never seem quite the same.

From Jim Wood - Parade Marshall, Adamant Marching Band

I first met Geoff in 1972 when I was persuaded to go to Aberaeron by Eddie Williams. Since then, over the years, I have played with him, stayed with him and got extremely legless with him. A great friend and a most courageous one to fight a dreadful illness and still keep on playing to the end. Sadly he missed Brecon this year but there were many tributes paid to him. One notably, from London, Liz Rorison who was the BBC Sound Engineer in Llandaff many years ago and who set up many a gig, with microphones, in the BBC Club. We will always remember him. God Bless, Pal.

From Geoff Partridge - Treasurer P.J.S.

I first heard of Geoff when Harry Cuming told me of their trip to New Orleans together in the 1980s, and often wondered who led who astray - not that either needed much urging. Then followed Tuesday nights in the Old Arcade, Sunday nights in the Lions Den preceded by sessions in the Glendower, and Friday evening 'social sessions' with Harry in the Rose and Crown or the Wellington. Geoff was invariably cheerful and full of fun, as well as being a forceful trombone player (I once heard him playing outside the old Allders while I was standing in St Mary's Street!). He will be much missed by me, and by seemingly most of the population of Cardiff who greeted him every yard of the way when walking through the middle of town.

From Gwyn Lewis - Trumpet, Icon Jazz Band

Geoff was always my right hand man on and off the bandstand. If I was stuck for a melody line I would listen to Geoff he was there somewhere. In my personal life if I had a problem Geoff was the big brother who could always give me advice or constructive criticism. I am a better person for having known him and we had a load of fun. He had a wicked sense of humour and a chuckle to go with it. My thoughts go to Jill and his family as he has left a void in all our lives.

A few pictures from happier times



Geoff & Pete Dyne having "refreshments" at the Royal Welsh Show and Geoff with the Icon Band at Brecon 1999

Outside the George at the start of Brecon Jazz Festival

