

A HISTORY



BAND ON THE WALL

The story of a Manchester music landmark – from the George & Dragon public house to one of Britain's best-loved live music venues

1803 — PRESENT

Researched & written by Ian Croal

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CONTENTS

PART ONE: AN EVENTFUL CENTURY

Introduction

The PUB, the People, the Area and the Music in the 19th Century.

To 1820

On Swan Street

The Drinking Classes

Pub Entertainments

More Seriously

Smithfield Market

The Beer Act

Temperance

Sounds of the City

Instruments and Songs

Broadsides

Marx & Engels

Pubs with Music

New Owners, New Era

Italians

Scuttlers: Gangs and Knife Crime

Pickpockets in Swan Street

Pianos

Music Halls

Musicians Union

Brass Bands

Classical Music

Ancoats Brotherhood

The Mckennas Sell Out

The Publicans: 1803-1856

The Mckennas

A Pub Dynasty

Music on Oldham Road

Irish Culture

The First Mckenna Pub

The Buildings

Into the 19th Century

First Expansion: 1820s

Second Extension: 1850s

The Picturehouse Building

Alterations and Extensions

Cocozza Wood Building

Appendices

Sources

PART TWO: INTO THE NEW CENTURY

The Street Scene

PART THREE: THE TYSON ERA & AFTER

The Name's in the Window: 1950s – 1960s

USA: the Source

Footnotes

PART FOUR: REBIRTH OF THE BAND

Memories of the Band: Sheila Collier

Steve's Jazzy Selection

Jazz Centre Society

Manchester Musicians Collective

New Manchester Review

Lunchtime Theatre and Comedy

Personnel

Uk Reggae Bands That Played Band on the Wall, 1982-

Reggae

African Music

Some Memories of Band on the Wall By Alex Webb

Latin Music

Blues, Rhythm & Blues and Soul

Folk Roots

Memories of the Band: Steve Forster

New Programme, New Management

PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The story of Band on the Wall begins as a little corner pub, the George & Dragon, probably a converted dwelling, way beyond living memory. Our 19th century history of the venue is in four chapters; each is a continuous narrative, though for convenience, topic sub-headings are individually accessed in the index column.

Chapter 1 – An Eventful Century

The George & Dragon not only survived the vicissitudes of these times, but expanded to become an important market tavern. All of life was here, within the catchment area of the pub, at the centre of the Industrial Revolution – and of street and pub culture.

Chapter 2 – The Landlady and Landlords (1803-1856)

The first licensees of the George & Dragon.

Chapter 3 – The McKennas

The Irish entrepreneurs, brewers and inn-keepers who for half a century were vital to the operation and development of the George & Dragon.

Chapter 4 – The Building/s

Our attempt at piecing together the scant information to produce an account of the physical evolution of the buildings throughout the century.

There have been two previous research documents about the history of the venue, one, referred to above, by Brian Holmshaw and the other by Fergus Sutherland, of iCosse, in 2007. Both documents are referred to several times in this history. The current research (2012) also has accessed primary archives, including Census Records, Street & Trade Directories, Poor Rate Books, Ordnance Survey and other maps, Alehouse Recognizances and other sources, in an attempt to build upon this excellent prior work and to answer a number of questions posed by these researchers.

A rich mine of information about the songs of the street and the pub, of music hall and of official attitudes to musical entertainment was discovered in a 1997 PhD thesis by Manchester University graduate Philemon Eva, 'Popular Song and Social Identity in the Victorian City', from which we have quoted extensively. The books published by the late Neil Richardson have also been invaluable, as has the assistance of Mrs Susan Richardson. Acknowledgements also to: Alan Gall, Steve Little, Pete Martin, David Govier, Fatimah Ashrif, David Hilton, Chetham's Library, Manchester Central Library, Greater Manchester County Record Office, Manchester City Planning Department, Manchester Police Museum and Lancashire County Record Office, Preston.

PART ONE

AN EVENTFUL CENTURY

1803 – 1899

*The George & Dragon: pub, people and the birth of a
Swan Street institution*

AN EVENTFUL CENTURY

From the 'Introduction', through to the final sub-heading, 'The McKennas Sell Out', this chapter is a continuous narrative taking in many of the relevant (and some less relevant)

issues of the day. You can access any of the topics by clicking on the sub-headings in the right hand column. After the Introduction, these are arranged under three time periods, 'To 1820', '1820s-1850s' and '1860s- early 20th Century'.

INTRODUCTION

THE PUB, THE PEOPLE, THE AREA AND THE MUSIC IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

The story of Band on the Wall begins over 200 years ago.

It is the reign of the mentally unstable King George III. The Prime Minister is the unimpressive Henry Addington, in place between the two terms of William Pitt the Younger. War has broken out once more between Britain and France under Napoleon who has just crowned himself Emperor. In Vienna, a 33-year-old freelance composer Ludwig van Beethoven premieres his Second Symphony to mixed reviews.

Closer to home, cotton goods have just overtaken wool as Britain's biggest export, but there's trouble at the mills. An economic recession is on its way and soon riots break out in Manchester and elsewhere in Lancashire; Rochdale jail will be burned down, prisoners escape and a volunteer force will be deployed against desperate Stockport handloom weavers whose jobs are being lost to the factories.

The year is 1803, the first verifiable date for the George & Dragon public-house¹ – the historical name of Band on the Wall – in Swan Street, Manchester.

Less than 100 yards along the street from the nascent pub are the crossroads called New Cross, (for stories of New Cross, see Appendix 1) location of an early market shambles (mainly for meat and veg) and a kind of speakers' corner. This is a 'scene of riots and agitation', fuelled by starvation wages, rising costs of bread and unemployment. There are frequent conflicts between the military and the people; cannons are placed to command these crossroads, including Swan Street. From time to time 'shots are fired from cannon and small arms, thus wounding many of those assembled and other innocents thereabouts'².

If in this era Swan Street sometimes resembled a battlefield, most of the time it was a place where people lived, worked and (perhaps mainly the men) drank. Presumably identifying the potential for more of the latter activity, here Elizabeth Marsh, a publican of at least eight years' experience at another George & Dragon pub two miles away, opened the doors of what almost certainly previously was a dwelling, and traded as a pub. The lengthy and continuing story of the George & Dragon/Band on the Wall had begun.

In 1803 there was just one other pub in the street but others would follow, including those still thriving: The Smithfield Tavern (1823), The Grapes (1826) (now the Burton Arms Hotel) and the White Bear, now Fringe Bar.

This George & Dragon, Elizabeth Marsh's second of that name, is on the corner of Swan and Oak Streets and is small in scale, occupying around one-third of the footprint of the current main venue of Band on the Wall.

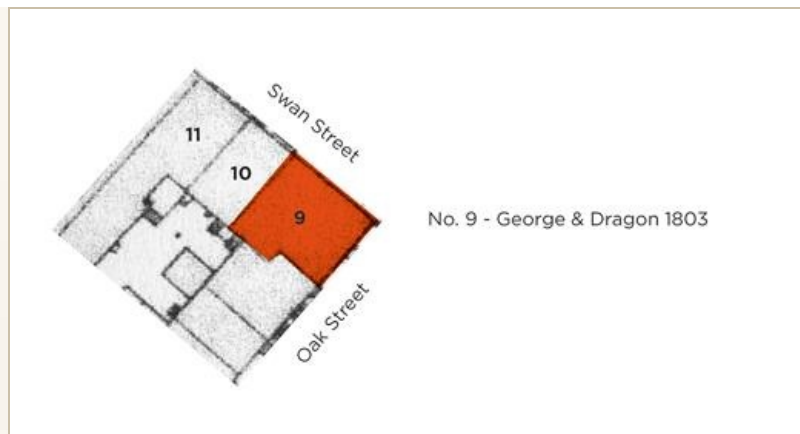
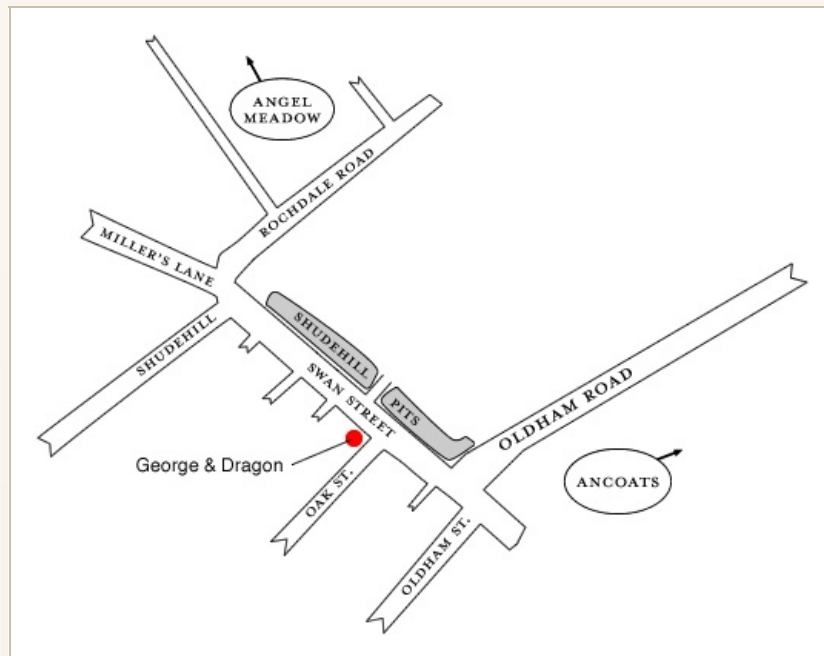


Figure 1 – The first George & Dragon

The pub is at an intersection of emergent communities that provide a large part of the labour force that would enable Manchester to become 'without challenge the first and greatest industrial city in the world' ³ but whose living conditions, famously studied by numerous social commentators, reformers and historians, would shock the civilised world.



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall

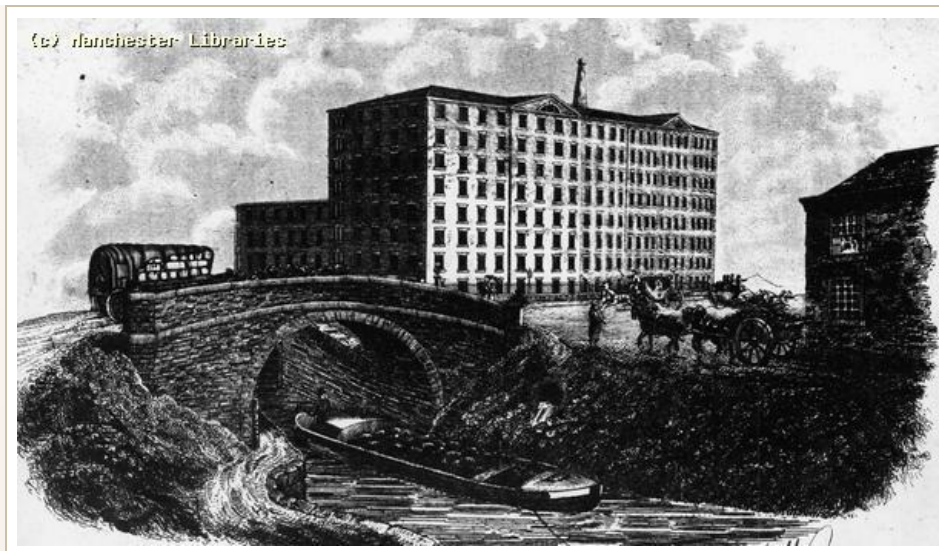


Figure 2 – Map of the area of George & Dragon.

Here the George & Dragon is on the doorstep of the Industrial Revolution that would steam- power modern Capitalism, while amongst the pub's customers are the workers whose squalid living conditions would be graphically described by reformers, including radicals who would seek to overthrow Capitalism. North, south and east, already by 1803, many of the towering structures of industry can be seen from outside the pub: already there are great, smoke- blackened mills just up the road in Ancoats and Miles Platting and down the road in Miller's Lane where Richard Arkwright had earlier erected the first steam-powered cotton mill in Manchester⁴. Many more mills are under construction. The population of Manchester, at around 80,000, has trebled in the previous 25 years and industrialism is creating 'the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world'⁵. The little George & Dragon pub is at the locus of that transformation.

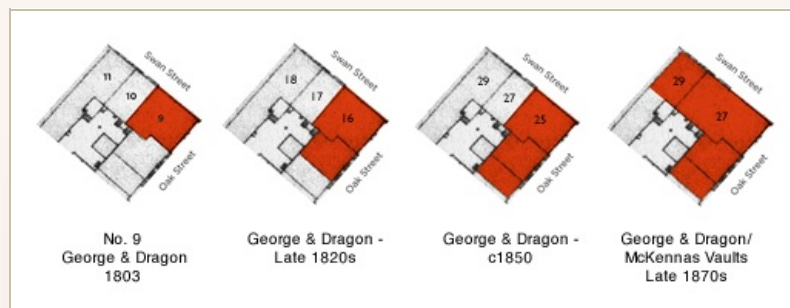


Figure 3: Mr Pollard's Cotton Twist Mill, Great Ancoats St, 1825 (Manchester Archives &

Local Studies) Immediately across the road from the George and Dragon, along much of the length of the rough-hewn road that is Swan Street, are the Shudehill Pits, small reservoirs that for many years supplied Arkwright's mill and other local mills with water from the River Medlock, via a series of pump engines⁶. A pall of smoke hangs almost permanently over the area.

The homes of the working folk are 'blocked up from light and air,' according to a visitor soon after Elizabeth Marsh opened the George and Dragon. 'Here in Manchester a great proportion of the poor lodge in cellars, damp and dark, where every kind of filth is suffered to accumulate...'⁷

If poverty was ever-present for many of the local residents, Swan Street in the 19th century, though far from immune from the periodic ravages of recession and disease, seems never to have slipped into slumland, as did the neighbouring areas of Angel Meadow and large parts of Ancoats. Despite multi-occupancy of many dwellings-cum-workshops/warehouses, Swan Street in the early 19th century can be seen as a place of progress and betterment, of business

and pleasure, its micro-economy characterised by its diversity. Throughout the century and beyond, the George &

Dragon would parallel the development of the area and reflect the endeavours of its owners and publicans. In progressive steps the pub, starting on a small corner plot, would be expanded to include adjacent properties, eventually creating both the large vault that would become the main venue of Band on the Wall and the complex of spaces that is now a hub of musical, social and learning activity.

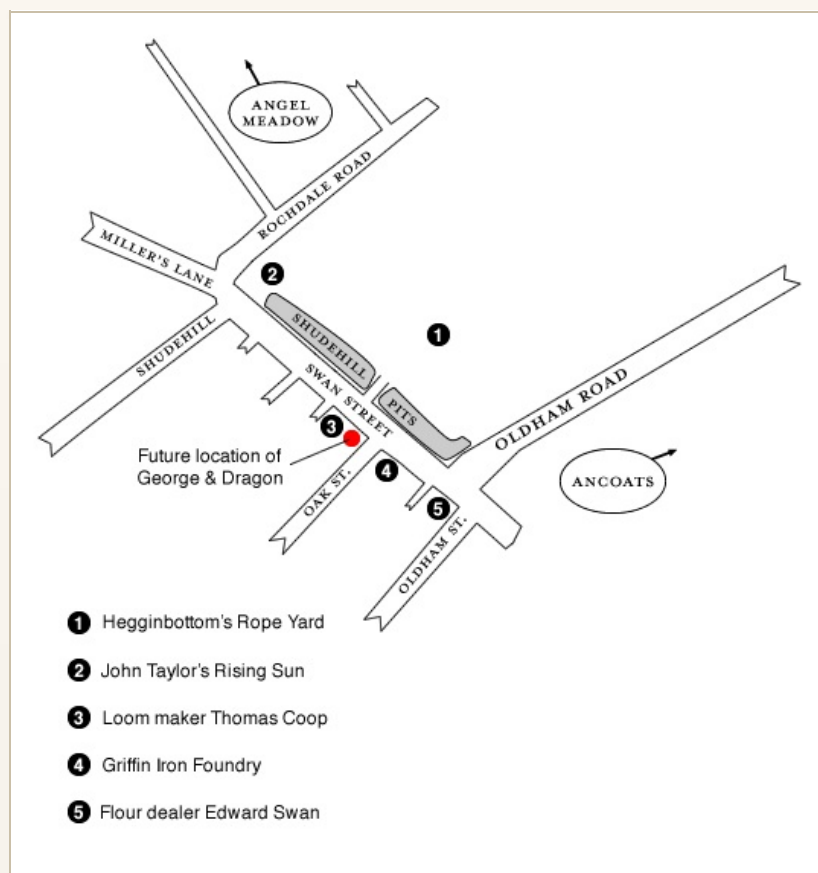


Figure 4 – The expansion and changing numbers of the George & Dragon

It is hoped also that this first part of the history, relating to the 19th century, conveys something of what life was like for the people of the area, of the issues affecting them and of the music that was part of their lives. This is not intended as an academic work; it touches briefly on many topics and, hopefully, provides some routes for readers who wish to explore these subjects in greater depth. The document also will be adapted over time in the light of fresh information and readers' comments and amendments.

Footnotes

1 Neil Richardson, letter to Brian Holmshaw, 28.6.2000; Alehouse Recognizances, County Record Office, Manchester.

2 'Memories of New Cross', article in Manchester City News, 2.10.1920.

3 Peter Hall, 'The First Industrial City: Manchester 1760-1830', 1998.

4 Manchester City Council website – 'Manchester Firsts'

5 Eric Hobsbawm. 'Industry and Empire, from 1750 to the present day'

6 Peter Maw, Terry Wyke & Alan Kidd, Economic History Review (2011) 'Canals, rivers, and the industrial city: Manchester's industrial waterfront, 1790-1850,'

7 Bristol-born, Oxford-educated poet and historian Robert Southey, 'Letters from England'

TO 1820

Four short sections – about Swan Street, drinking, pub entertainment and more serious topics.

ON SWAN STREET

It must have been with some trepidation that Elizabeth Marsh opened the doors of the George & Dragon to the public for the first time probably in 1803. After all, she was a newcomer to the area, having only recently moved from Ardwick where her first George & Dragon pub was located. The area may also have been gaining a reputation for trouble on the streets.

Of course, many of her potential customers also were new to the area that continued to experience an unprecedented influx of migrants seeking employment in this, the world's hot spot of industrialisation. It was an influx that would gather momentum throughout most of the 1800s.

Making rope, selling flour, casting iron & crafting looms and coffins.

Other local residents, close to the George & Dragon, were more established: several had been there for at least 15 years, from when the first properties were built in the street in 1788:

- Sam Heggibottom's rope yard just 20 paces or so across Swan Street, with the family home and workshop a few doors along from the George & Dragon
- Local landowner John Taylor, trading as a flour dealer in Tib Street, before moving in 1794 to what would be next door to the George & Dragon, and five years later opening the Rising Sun pub, that would become a Music Hall of some notoriety at the north corner of Swan Street and Rochdale Road
- The family firm of Smith & Co's Griffin Iron Foundry that would operate for many years on Swan Street – just across Oak Street from the George & Dragon

Even earlier, another corn & flour dealer, Edward Swain is recorded in 1773 in Shudehill and is probably the Edward Swan who towards the end of the 18th century is living and selling his flour at No 1 Swan Street, and the street was named after him.

At the turn of the century, the number of addresses in Swan Street, that is barely 300 yards long, was at least 26 and, in the area westwards towards the city centre, already there was a warren of homes and workplaces. These included many weavers' cottages. Swan Street was more geared towards distribution, retail and wholesale sales and small-scale manufacture: not a weaver in sight, although Thomas Coop at No 1 Coop Street (once more named after the occupant of the street's No1 residence) must have dealt with many. He worked as a loom-maker in his workshop on part of the site now occupied by the Smithfield Hotel. Some years later, a George Coop – probably Thomas's son – works next door and makes coffins, no doubt an expanding market in these pestilential times.

Figure 5 – Map showing the location of the above 5 residents.

THE DRINKING CLASSES

It is likely that the customers of the George & Dragon mainly comprised working men from the immediate vicinity, also visitors to the various shops and dealers' warehouses. Almost without exception the workplaces in the area were also the homes of the occupants and, in many cases, their extended families and boarders. Workers from the nearby Griffin Foundry alone might have contributed a fair proportion of the pub's income, as according to one authority,⁸ foundrymen and forgers working in temperatures of 90-140 deg F could each get through from eight to 24 pints of weak beer per shift. Perhaps just as well that it was not strong beer.

Beer probably would have been the big seller among working men at the George & Dragon in this period but the pub was also licensed to sell wines and spirits. Gin was a popular spirit, particularly with women, and 'gin palaces' and 'gin

vaults' grew in number following the Government's encouragement of gin production and restriction of imports of brandy in the mid-1700s.

'Little nips of whisky, little drops of gin, Make a lady wonder where on earth she's bin'

– Anon. Emigrants from Ireland and Scotland, brought with them their liking for whiskey/whisky, and, often through regional and kinship ties, channels of importation were developed, including those that later in the century would supply the George & Dragon.

We don't know from where the George & Dragon obtained its stock in this period, though it is likely that the beer would have been produced locally, perhaps even on the premises. It was common for pubs of the day to include a small brewhouse, often using water from a well dug in the cellar. The George & Dragon may have had its own micro-brewery: the remnants of an old well were uncovered in the cellar during the refurbishment of Band on the Wall in 2009. We know also that, round the corner in Tib Street in the early 19th century a professional 'well-sinker' resided. There was no effective water supply infrastructure in Manchester at the time, though the pits across the road in Swan Street provided a rudimentary supply to some households and workplaces. The city's first successful water company began the supply of water through iron pipes in 1816 – for those who could afford to be connected. These probably did not include the residents of Swan Street at this time.

Later in the century improved water supply and technological innovations in brewing would enable the shelf life of beer to be considerably extended. Until then, given the limitations of horse-drawn transport, and the uneven quality of the roads, long distance deliveries of beer would have been impracticable.

We can speculate that in its early years trade would have been modest at the George & Dragon, a small corner pub in a far from affluent part of the city. It was very much a 'local'. But it is likely that turnover would have grown steadily as more and more people came to live and work in the area.

8 Matthew Hilton, review of 'Liquid Pleasures: a Social History of Drinks in Modern

Britain,' by John Burnett.

PUB ENTERTAINMENTS

The public-house has been 'Britain's entertainment and social centre for hundreds of years'⁹ and there is little doubt that this description could be applied to the George & Dragon and other pubs in the area. In these days – long before cinema, radio, television or recorded music – the pub was the unrivalled focus of entertainment. Publicans often organised events

and shows or exhibited 'curiosities' and customers frequently also made their own entertainments.

At this time a writer described seeing 'step-dancing in perfection and the beat of a Lancashire clog seems an excellent accompaniment to the violins' at the Ring o'Bells near Manchester Cathedral. The pub was shut in 1833 as the place had been 'most infamously conducted for a long time'¹⁰. The same source describes an earlier exhibition of trained animals at a central Manchester pub: this included 'a pig that could tell the time by a watch, country dancing by six turkeys, and three cats which imitated the Italian manner of singing'.¹⁰

9 'A History of British Pub Games' – Public Servant Lifestyle website.

10 northmanchester.net – 'Manchester Pubs, a History'.

MORE SERIOUSLY

Some Manchester pubs also organised courses and discussions; for many pub customers the normal accompaniment to drinking was – and remains – conversation. At the George & Dragon in the first decades of the 19th century the serious

topics of chat may have included:

- 1807 – UK Act abolishing slavery – of particular relevance to a city whose wealth was in part based on slave-grown cotton.
- 1812 – the Luddites burning down of the West Houghton mill in Lancashire.
- The war with France & her allies.
 - The bread riots including an incident in 1812 at New Cross, 100 yards from the George & Dragon. A cart loaded with meal was stopped and its contents distributed by a crowd of hungry men and women... quiet was not restored until the Riot Act had been read and the cavalry marched down Oldham Street.
- The Anglo-American war of 1812-1815.
 - 1817 – Blanketeers March cruelly suppressed, especially in Ardwick & Stockport, by cavalry of the King's Dragoon Guards. The marchers, mainly spinners and weavers, were on their way to London to present a petition to the Prince Regent, calling for him to intervene to assist the Lancashire cotton trade.
 - The infamous Peterloo Massacre of 1819 when an estimated 12 people were killed and some 630 men, women & children injured, many with sabre wounds and trampling injuries. A peaceful meeting of 50,000 to 60,000 was attacked by Manchester Yeomanry and the 15th Regiment of Hussars. The public meeting had

been organised to demand the reform of parliament. At this time Manchester did not have an MP; throughout the country less than 2% of the adult population had a vote.

In the early years the only direct competition to the George & Dragon for the pub trade in Swan Street was the Rising Sun at the north end, a bigger enterprise, with its substantial stables for visitors' and residents' horses. At the other end, and only 100 yards away was the Crown & Kettle, still extant at the corner of Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road, and first mentioned in the 1800 directory 11. This pub had the distinct trade advantage of overlooking New Cross, an important meeting point for traders, travellers and carriers, as well as a 'rendezvous where all kinds of opinions could be ventilated: politics, socialism, religion, literature and multitudinous other subjects' 12. It also was an open market. By 1815, another pub across the road from the Crown & Kettle also overlooked New Cross. This was the St Vincent that was still in business into the late 1980s; now on the site is an office building – its façade not unlike the original pub – and appropriately called St Vincents House, built in 1991.

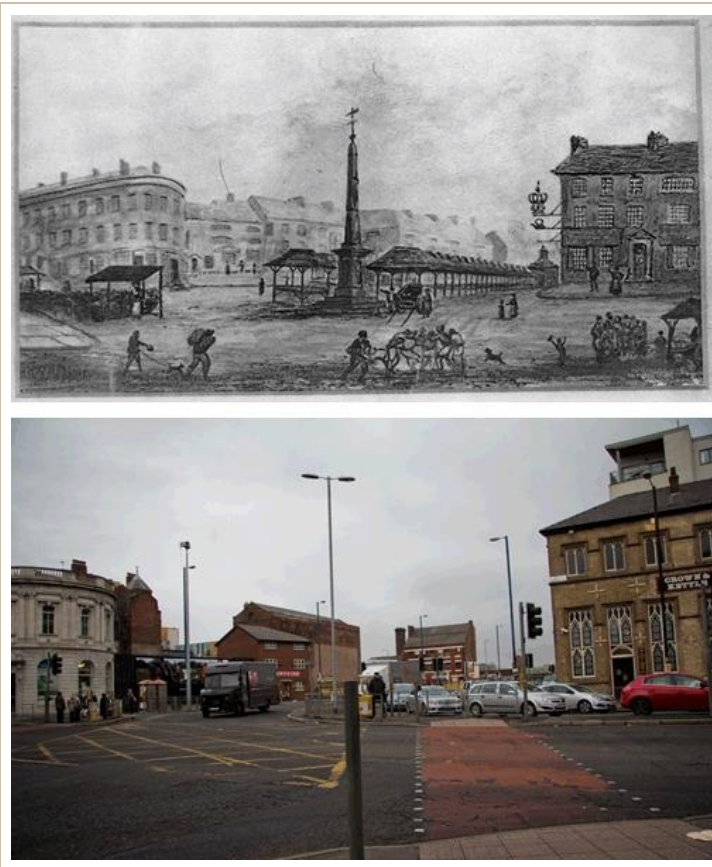


Figure 6 – New Cross: 1820 (top) and 2012 (bottom). On the right of both pictures is the

Crown & Kettle; the building on the left, in 2012 the HBL Bank retains a similar curved façade to the 1820 building; St Vincents House can be seen, just left of centre, in the location of the St Vincent pub in the 1820 picture. Photography by Rosanna Freedman

Into the 1820s, the trade advantage that the New Cross market gave to the Crown & Kettle and the St Vincent would be lost, and the loss would be to the George & Dragon's gain.

11Neil Richardson, 'The Old Pubs of Ancoats', p4

12Manchester City News. Memories of New Cross, 2.10.1920

SMITHFIELD MARKET

In 1820 came the single, most important development that in large measure would underpin the viability of the George & Dragon – and indeed the economy of the immediate area – for 150 years. This was the move of the markets to the gardens to the east of Shudehill and their subsequent expansion on a grand scale – eventually totalling over four acres – directly behind the pub. Virtually overnight the George & Dragon had become a market pub.

First came the potato market, then the stalls from Acres Fair – a farmers market that had been in existence for 650 years at Acresfield, now the site of St Ann's Square – followed by the butchers and greengrocers from the New Cross shambles and then the meal and flour market. Within two years it was officially given the title of Smithfield Market – and in the next three decades would become one of the biggest in Europe. A significant factor in its expansion was the completion in 1839 of the Rail Station, 400 yards away in Oldham Road – exclusively a goods station from 1844. Horse-drawn and hand carts took produce to and from the market, and several warehouses were constructed at the station for the storage of, for example, fruit, vegetables, fish, potatoes and grain. The station closed in 1968; the market would follow within five years.

For the George & Dragon and for many small businesses and individuals, directly or indirectly dependent on the textile

industry, the arrival of the markets must have done much to soften the impact of the slump in the textile industry of 1825 and, indeed, to survive the ravages of subsequent deep recessions, pestilence and plague.

A summary of the history of the Market, written by Fergus Sutherland, of iCosse, is provided in Appendix 2.



Figure 7 – Smithfield Market in 1880, drawing by Henry Edward Tidmarsh (Manchester

Archives & Local Studies). The ‘Cocozza Wood’ building is visible on the right, also the adjacent Burton Arms. No doubt all now vying for the drinks trade from the Market, there were other, old pubs in the immediate vicinity, including the Hare & Hounds, Shudehill, the Old Fleece, Oak Street – from 1791 that became the Wheatsheaf in 1858 – and the Swan with Two Necks, Withy Grove. The competition for this trade must have hotted up when, on the same Swan Street block as the George & Dragon, two more pubs opened for business and both are still operating: the Smithfield Market Tavern, in 1823 – now the Smithfield Hotel – and The Grapes (1826), now the Burton Arms Hotel, next door to Band on the Wall. As the Market grew in size and significance, other pubs had sprung up including the Man in the Moon on Coop Street and the Spread Eagle on Eagle Street – on part of the site now occupied by the Royal Exchange Theatre’s workshops, costume department and rehearsal rooms in Swan Street.

Figure 8 – The block as it currently stands

Despite the competition, or perhaps because of it, the landlord of the George & Dragon acquired the attached property in Oak Street and by 1828 it was listed as part of the pub, though it would be into the 20th century before the two properties were connected internally. This was the first of a number of expansionist moves by the George & Dragon over the years;

this history of the physical evolution of the building, leading to the development of Band on the Wall, is traced in more detail in Chapter 4, The Buildings.

It was not just the George & Dragon that looked to expand. In 1829 the Smithfield Market Tavern comprised a grocer’s shop on the Swan Street corner – probably originally occupied by loom-maker Thomas Coop – and the adjoining tavern and brewhouse in Coop Street. Licensee Isaac Middleton converted the shop into a vault and installed a bar counter some eight yards long¹³. The expansion might not have been entirely successful, as by 1850, the Smithfield Tavern shared the address with a fishmonger, presumably trading from the front shop.

¹³Neil Richardson, unpublished draft of History of Manchester Pubs, courtesy Susan

Richardson

1820S-1850S

Six sections that introduce the Smithfield Market, the proliferation of beerhouses, the temperance movement, the sounds and songs of the city and two famous visiting revolutionaries, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx.

THE BEER ACT

"Ah, beer. The cause of and the solution to all of life's problems" – Homer Simpson

Further competition for the drinks custom from the Smithfield Market came as a result of the Beer Act of 1830. This was 'designed to move the populace away from spirits such as gin' and 'entitled nearly anyone to manufacture, sell, and consume large amounts of beer and ale'¹⁴. This intended 'novel solution to solving the ruination of the working class'¹⁵ was to make beer cheap and very readily available. The beerhouses were only permitted to sell beer and cider.

'At this time beer was seen as a harmless and even nutritional drink – it was swigged by small children and the clergy alike'¹⁵. It is argued that:

'This legalization of beer as a national drug of choice resulted in some consequences that could not have been foreseen, most notably the rise in the number of the country's alcoholics.'¹⁴ But it also led to 'an unprecedented prosperity among Northern farmers' due to the consequential, booming demand for barley and, more surprisingly, also resulted in 'forestalling revolutionary activity' ¹⁴ – of which there was plenty in the area of the George & Dragon.

It is also argued that the Beer Act, turning homes into beerhouses, began to reduce the gender gap of alcohol consumption, at least in rural areas, but perhaps also in the towns:

'While the men were banding together at the pubs, many women were left often alone in well-stocked homes'.¹⁴ In Manchester and Salford, by 1850, the number of beerhouses exceeded 1000, almost double the number of taverns and public houses:¹⁶ an average of one new beerhouse a week for 20 years. By 1867 there were over 2000 beerhouses, outnumbering pubs by four to one¹⁷.

Many dwellings in the area of the Smithfield Market became beerhouses, in large numbers in Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road, but also a few in Turner Street, Tib Street, Oak Street and Coop Street. There were only two in Swan Street, reflecting not only the shortness of the street and the fact that it now had six public houses, but also that most of the properties were already thriving places of work, for dealers, shopkeepers, shoemakers, hatters – even the offices of two attorneys, including one next door to the George & Dragon who shared his premises with a flour dealer.

¹⁴Dr Gay Sibley, 'Good for England, Bad for Her Women: The Beer Act of 1830 and the Cornering of Rural Revolution'

¹⁵'The History of Public Houses in the UK', 2010. www.publichouses.org.uk

¹⁶Pigot's Directory of Manchester & Salford, 1850

¹⁷Alistair Mutch, 'Manchester & Liverpool Pubs compared, 1840-1914',

TEMPERANCE

In opposition to the rise in licensed premises – and indeed advocating total abstinence – the temperance movement gathered force in Manchester and nationally in the early decades of the 19th century. Manchester's first temperance society was formed in 1830 and three years later the Commercial Coffee House – a temperance establishment – opened in Oldham Street, 300 yards from the George & Dragon. So popular did this particular establishment prove that its proprietor, Sarah Brown, was 'able to move to larger premises at 22 Oldham Street only a year later'.¹⁸ The 19th century also saw the construction of many purpose-built temperance hotels and by 1889, the Band of Hope, a temperance organisation for working-class children, claimed to have around two million members.

Late in the 20th century:

*"The cause of temperance has almost completely vanished from view, yet for over a century, from 1830 to the outbreak of the Second World War, the control, or even the total abolition, of the liquor trade was a major political issue – one that split the country, brought thousands onto the streets in demonstrations and counter- demonstrations, and on more than one occasion significantly influenced the outcome of a general election"*¹⁸

Some temperance establishments are now pubs, such as the former Temperance Billiard Hall on Manchester Road, Chorlton – now a Wetherspoon's pub. However, it has not all been one-

way traffic: evidence the proliferation of cafes and coffee shops, including those on corner sites, favoured locations for public houses.

The temperance movement may also have encouraged the re-introduction of stricter controls enforced by the 1869 Wine and Beerhouse Act. Sellers of alcohol now had to obtain licenses from the local magistrates. Following the Act, there was a sustained purge on drinking houses in Manchester, hitting particularly hard at the pubs and beerhouses that presented music- of which more later.

¹⁸Andrew Davison, 'Try the Alternative: The Built Heritage of the Temperance Movement

SOUNDS OF THE CITY

Meantime, here in the lanes and back streets were heard the new sounds of the city, as described by a visitor in 1835:

*"The footsteps of a busy crowd, the crunching wheels of machines, the shriek of steam from boilers, the regular beat of looms, the heavy rumble of carts, these are the only noises from which you can never escape in these dark, half-lit streets. You will never hear the clatter of hoofs when the rich drive back home or are out on pleasure; never the happy shouts of people enjoying themselves nor the harmonious sounds of musical instruments heralding a holiday."*¹⁹

It is an irony of the times that soon the very sounds of music and people enjoying themselves would be the objects of condemnation of the predominantly educated, upper middle-class visitors and local worthies who, often with reformist zeal, would commit their outrage to print, pitying or vilifying the working class and their habits. But the music would go on:

*"The musical life of Manchester pubs was noted (and condemned) from the early 1830s; amateur and semi-professional singing in pub free-and-easies thrived throughout the Victorian period despite periods of official hostility."*²⁰

As the Century progresses, the ever-increasing influx of people to this, the world's first industrial society, would bring to the area their songs and their musical instruments. As is almost universal, people would use music as escape, as flags of identity, as entertainment and sometimes as vehicles of protest or seduction – or sedition. Perhaps not always harmonious, music would infiltrate many of the licensed premises that emerged in the area, catering to the new working class, traders, dealers, hawkers and travellers.

INSTRUMENTS AND SONGS

Singing was the most common musical entertainment in the pubs and streets of the area, and, though there are several accounts of bands playing, clues to their instrumentation are hard to find. But there are references to: fiddles, banjos, tambourines, accordions, bones, flutes, whistles and to German bands with clarinets. After around 1830, the piano – sometimes

combined with fiddle and harmonium – increasingly was the instrument of choice in Manchester pubs, usually as an accompaniment to singing.

We may never know for sure but it seems likely that the George & Dragon was one of these pubs where informal music

sessions took place in the first half of the 19th Century. It was at a centre of an evolving popular sub-culture, of musical production and conspicuous consumption: the changing culture of the city street and the pub. This was a new battleground, of 'risk and excitement', of good and evil, with alcohol frequently perceived as the latter and music fluctuating between the two.

Sing-songs – 'probably the karaoke of its day' – took place in local pubs, and 'in the 1830s landlords set aside back rooms in their pubs for what were termed saloon concerts' ²¹. Some of the pub nights and venues were advertised as 'free-and-easies', a term that would have a lengthy future life. It was a description that signified an informal approach to participant entertainment, and for some would suggest the loosening of morals.

The George & Dragon's newly acquired vaults in Oak Street – on the site of the existing middle section of the main venue of Band on the Wall, approximately between the dance floor and pillar behind the sound desk – would have many uses in the decades ahead, perhaps also as the pub back room for informal music and entertainments. Certainly the market attracted itinerant musicians and entertainers:

'At this time Swan Street was a bustling area with a well-established fruit and vegetable market at Smithfield, nearby textile factories, a Methodist Chapel and stage coaches running to Ashton-under-Lyne and Royton from the Lower Turks Head in Shudehill. Market pubs are well known for their musical connections and many writers of the time refer to buskers and musicians around the market' – Holmshaw, 2000

Sing-songs in pubs could on occasion turn nasty, none nastier than the incident at the Death of Nelson, Oldham Road (later The Nelson), less than 500 yards from the George & Dragon, described by historian, the late Neil Richardson:

*'The "Death of Nelson" was a popular patriotic ballad and the singing of another such song was the cause of a murder at the pub in June 1830. A dresser called Marshall, who worked in a Jersey Street cotton mill, was singing to a full taproom when three customers took offence at the anti-Catholic sentiments. Marshall was knocked down and a man called Trayner jumped on him and killed him.'*²²

Some religious or political content was often included in the pub songs of the day but the material available to singers would soon cover almost every conceivable topic, thanks in part to busy micro-industries close to the George & Dragon.

¹⁹Alexis de Tocqueville, French-born writer, historian & politician, who visited Manchester

in 1835. The extract is from his 'Oeuvres Completes'.

²⁰Philemon Eva, 'Popular Song and Social Identity in the Victorian City', PhD thesis,

Manchester University 1997, p 14

²¹Spinning the Web, The Story of the Cotton Industry: Music Hall & Theatre.

²²Neil Richardson, 'The Old Pubs of Ancoats'

BROADSIDES

The 19th century saw a tremendous surge in the popularity of broadside ballads,²³ a term that might suggest an esoteric collection of folk-songs. This could hardly be further from the truth: these 'broadsides' were at the very heart of the street and pub culture of the day.

'The best-selling works of English literature early in the nineteenth century were written not by such famous authors as Wordsworth or Byron or Austen or Scott, but by anonymous hacks, who often worked under time pressure at the counter of a local pub. There they wrote ballads, songs, and "news" reports that were sold on the streets to the urban poor, by impoverished hawkers, for a penny a sheet... The most sensational street ballads sold hundreds of thousands of copies.' ²⁴

Manchester was a national centre for the production of these popular song-sheets, and the George & Dragon could not

have been closer to three of the four main clusters of Manchester broadside printing in the 19th century — at Shudehill Market, Angel Meadow and Ancoats, including the ‘Cheap Song Mart’ in the Shudehill/Smithfield Market, c 1839-1850.²⁵

These cheap printed sheets included:

‘older rural songs (and their modern imitations), stage songs, minstrel songs from America, drawing room ballads and increasingly in the 1860s and 1870s, music hall songs...’²⁶

The broadsides were story-songs, often about current events, issues and developments:

‘a royal visit, a local boxing match, the census, the high price of meat, the invention of the bicycle and anything else – could be quickly written, adapted to a well-known tune, put into the press and out into the street.’²⁷

Occasionally these broadside sheets included musical notation or just the name of the melody, occasionally a hymn, to which the verses were to be sung, but much more often gave no guidance as to the tune, leaving it up to the interpreter to make his or her choice – or improvise.

The songs sung in the George & Dragon, and the other market pubs, would often have reflected the national and regional backgrounds and traditions of the inhabitants. In 1841, around half of the residents of Swan Street were born in Manchester or other parts of Lancashire, while about one in four was born in other English counties, and around one in five was Irish-born.²⁸ There were many families with children – under-18s comprised about one-third of the street’s population. We can speculate that the pubs surrounding the

Smithfield Market might include little enclaves of imported culture, from the rural parts of England and Ireland, and in the daytime numerous dialects could be heard from the groups of children playing (and often begging) in the streets and alleys.

The Irish presence was particularly strong nearby in the densely populated and deprived areas of Ancoats and Angel Meadow, the latter often referred to as ‘Irish Town’, where by 1851 50.4% of the recorded population were born in Ireland or were the offspring of two Irish-born parents, and ‘with Irish and non-Irish each concentrated in distinct areas’.²⁹ The same census showed a similar proportion of Irish in Ancoats: an estimated 44.6% of all two-parent families and 55.6% of single parent families.

As the Irish-born population steadily increased in Manchester, Irish voices and tunes became part of the local song culture.³⁰

In addition to being an outlet for their songs, the pubs of the area may have played a practical role for the newly-arrived Irish migrants, most of whom were impoverished and desperate to find work and a roof over their heads.

“One of the most useful venues for the exchange of information about accommodation and work was the public house which, as well as selling drink, must have played a significant part in the social and cultural life of Manchester’s Irish as it did in Liverpool and London”²⁹

One broadside from this era, written in premises on Oldham Road, suggests that lodging- house keepers touted for business at railway stations:

Slap Up Lodgings

When first to town I came, and at the railway landed, By a fat old dame a card to me was handed, Says she I’d have you know, my name is Mrs Podgings, I live down this row, and I let out slap up lodgings.³¹

The second half of the 19th century saw the rise of published, notated sheet music, heralding the emergence of the popular music industry, and of the ‘longsheets’ that included several songs and, being much better value for money, would also signal the decline of the broadside trade. Often these longsheets would be a mix of English and Irish songs.

Locals of the George & Dragon did not have far to go to obtain the new song sheets: they were sold at Abel Heywood's shop, along the road at 58 Oldham Street. There, in addition to items musical, were publications radical. Mr Heywood was a leading Chartist and published many of the movement's documents, including the Northern Star and various sectarian pamphlets, as well as 'cheap works most favoured by the poorer reading classes'.³² Supplying booksellers throughout the country, Mr Heywood (1810-1893) built up a substantial business, at times using his wealth to bail out Chartists, such as the Irish-born leader of the movement Feargus O'Connor. He also immersed himself in local politics, going on to two terms as Mayor of Manchester.

We don't know if the Chartists, seeking suffrage reforms, met at the George & Dragon, though this seems probable, given that a number of nearby locations have been confirmed as meeting places: the Griffin Inn, Great Ancoats Street;³³ the Sherwood Inn and the Fustian Cutters Hall, both in Tib Street.³⁴

Closer still was the open meeting place of New Cross, where 'the poison of discontent could flow freely, where wrongs were proclaimed and remedies suggested and hopes entertained of their realisation'³⁵.

²³'The Contemplator's Short History of Broadside Ballads'.

²⁴Michael Hancher, Junior-Senior Seminar 1997- Street Ballads.

²⁵Ibid, P Eva, Appendix

²⁶Ibid, P Eva, p11

²⁷Ibid, P Eva, p138

²⁸1841 Census records.

²⁹MA Busteed and RI Hodgson, 'Angel Meadow - A Study of The Geography of Irish Settlement in Mid-Nineteenth Century Manchester'

³⁰ Ibid, P Eva, p198

³¹GR Axon, Collection of Broadside Ballads, Chetham's Library, Manchester, quoted in Busteed & Hodgson's study of Angel Meadow, footnote 29, above.

³²Angus Reach, 'A Cotton Fibre Halo, Manchester & the Textile Districts in 1849', p71

³³Stuart Jeffries, 'On Your Marx,' article in The Guardian, 4 Feb 2006.

³⁴Sarah Irving, 'Manchester's Radical History, The 1842 Strike, Part II' 2011.

³⁵Manchester City News. 'Memories of New Cross,' 2.10.1920

MARX & ENGELS

Half a mile away in Chetham's School (now Chetham's College of Music), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels would meet in the library, consulting the works of the early English economists and formulating their revolutionary concepts, defining modern Capitalism and plotting its end. Famously, their writings were in part informed by Engels' in-depth studies of the living conditions of the mill and factory workers in the catchment area of the George and Dragon.



Figure 9 – Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx

Engels must have walked along Swan Street many times, past the George & Dragon and other hostelries in the street, with his secret wife Mary Burns and her sister Lizzy as they ‘guided him around the city, ensuring his safety in areas where a well-to-do foreigner was a rare sight and potential target’ ³⁶ – areas like nearby Angel Meadow, described as follows by a visitor in 1849:

*‘the lowest, most filthy, and the most wicked locality in Manchester ... inhabited by prostitutes, their bullies, thieves, cadgers, vagrants, tramps, and, in the very worst sties of filth and darkness, those unhappy wretches, the low Irish.’*³²

Engels, who spent many years in Manchester, also did not hold back in his description of people in the city’s industrial areas:

*‘these pale, lank, narrow-chested, hollow-eyed ghosts, whom one passes at every step, these languid, flabby faces, incapable of the slightest energetic expression’.*³⁷

Were these poor folk among the first customers of the George & Dragon? We may never know but we can say with certainty that it would be Irish entrepreneurialism, in the form of three generations of the McKenna family, which would revitalise and sustain the pub throughout the latter half of the 19th century and into the 20th. Of this more later: Chapter 3, The McKennas.

³²Angus Reach, ‘A Cotton Fibre Halo, Manchester & the Textile Districts in 1849’, p98

³⁶Sarah Irving, ‘Manchester’s Radical History (website) – Friedrich Engels and Mary and Lizzy Burns,’

³⁷Friedrich Engels, ‘The Condition of the Working Class in England’

1860S – EARLY 20TH C.

A wide range of 13 sections that refer to: the music of the streets, pubs and music halls; the new owners of the George & Dragon, the Cotton Famine and crime.

PUBS WITH MUSIC

THE RISE AND FALL (...AND RISE AGAIN) OF PUBS WITH MUSIC

In parallel with the rise in the number of beerhouses, by 1866 there was a big increase in the number of pubs and beerhouses with musical entertainment in Manchester: from 35 premises in 1844 to 158 in 1866. 38

Street singers and musicians would perform in pubs, as would out of work professionals or amateurs attempting to establish themselves.³⁹ Some of the street performers even may have been driven into the pubs by the police: the Manchester Police Regulations handbook of 1844 advised the local bobbies that a fine of up to 40 shillings (a considerable sum at this time) could be imposed by the magistrates if street musicians or singers refused to go away on request. (Courtesy Greater Manchester Police Museum, Newton Street, Northern Quarter, Manchester).

Whatever the catalysts, the rapid growth of the city, with its mix of migrants, had fostered a musical life centred on the pub and the broadside trade.⁴⁰ It was a trend that had to be purged. Voices of concern, on both moral and aesthetic grounds, were raised.

Singers and musicians, whose techniques were developed in the street, against the sonic backdrop of the industrial city, were not merely singing and playing: they were 'banging', 'grinding', 'roaring', 'jarring', 'screaming', 'bawling out' etc...

Writers likened them to animals: a hermit frog, croaking in the gutter or (in a Deansgate pub): 'a series of prolonged howls or groans, unanimous as the bleatings from a sheep pen' ⁴¹

Sounds from pub entertainments and street singers were roundly condemned in some of the local Press; identified as particular culprit locations were the immediate environs of the George & Dragon: the Smithfield Market, Oldham Road, Ancoats and Oldham Street that on a Sunday night was 'given up to the carnival revels of Manchester's vagabonds', with loud music from its pubs mixing with street singing.⁴²

The concern with loud noise and the sound quality of the performers often may have veiled deeper moral objections as music and drunkenness were seen as partners.

*'Drunkenness and the regulation of pubs, singing saloons and music halls became a recurring subject of Select Committee enquiry. An evil in itself, drink was felt to be at the root of the violence, disorder and the "intemperate indulgence" that characterised urban popular leisure...'*⁴³

Music, the Select Committee was told, could be the first stage in the moral degradation of women. They were 'tempted' into public houses by music, 'plied' with drink, and seduced, becoming prostitutes as a consequence, one witness averred.⁴⁴

Under moral suspicion were some of the songs sung in the pubs and in the street. Many were loaded with double entendre and frequently the content was man-woman relations, often comic, sometimes sentimental, frequently bawdy. Occasionally a song would claim, even advertise, much of the city centre as a naughty playground where the 'whole public space becomes a socially and sexually charged arena, vaguely resonant of excitement and risk, with the singer as its all-knowing guide'. Such a song was the popular broadside, 'The Streets of Manchester', printed by Thomas Pearson, of Angel Meadow, probably in 1865, and which made specific references to the area close to the George & Dragon: the Shudehill Market and 'the informal pub entertainments amongst the mills and houses of Oldham Road and Ancoats'. ⁴⁵

The big purge followed the 1869 Wine and Beerhouse Act that placed all drinks licenses under the control of the local magistrates who then asked Manchester's Chief Constable to prepare a list of 'disorderly' beerhouses, and those frequented by thieves, prostitutes or 'persons of bad character'.⁴⁶ As a result, in the first year alone, 300 licenses were refused.

Pubs that put on musical entertainments formed a high proportion of the 'disorderly' houses. The number of pubs providing music was reduced from 157 to 104 in two years; by 1877 there were only 88 such pubs. Pubs which were used for dancing as well as music came under particular pressure: in 1865 there were 48 pubs where dancing went on; by the mid 1870s there was only one'.⁴⁷

Additional curbs on the licensing of premises, including reducing opening hours, and creating the offence of being drunk in public (still in force today), were introduced by the Licensing Act of 1872. It was bitterly opposed, and was 'singled out in broadsides and music hall songs as a measure particularly aimed at the pleasures of working men'.⁴⁸

Old Bruce* has been trying to make us Teetotallers And rob the hard working man of his half-pint of beer!

If the rich can have clubs and drink at their pleasure Why should their supporters be robbed of their share

* Henry Bruce – Home Secretary who introduced the 1872 act

The brewers also were unhappy with the Act that they perceived as undermining their profitability. ‘Manchester brewers reacted to an over-zealous Bench by forming the Manchester Brewers’ Central Association to protect their outlets by giving legal assistance to the beerhouse keepers.’⁴⁹ Despite this measure, the number of licensed outlets continued to decline, but within a few years the resilient informal music scene of the city’s pubs had bounced back:

Number of Manchester pubs with music entertainments licenses:

1877 – 88 1885 – 340 1892 – 512

(Criminal & misc returns of the Manchester Police, 1877-1900),⁵⁰

It is not clear how this increase was achieved. The growing political influence and economic power of the emerging big breweries may have been contributing factors; perhaps the magistrates also discovered that music did not create disorderly pubs. And musicians and performers are not readily kept down.

38Ibid, P Eva, p 45; Criminal and Miscellaneous statistical returns of the Manchester police,

1843-1900;

39Ibid, P Eva, p49

40 Ibid, P Eva, p23

41Ibid, P Eva, p87; D Jerrold, The Ballad Singer; also Shadow, 23 April 1870

42‘Oldham Street on a Sunday night’, Freelance publication, 6 August 1870, p 253;Ibid, P

Eva p 43

43Ibid, P Eva, p69/70

44Select Committee on public houses PP1854, p334

45Ibid, P Eva, p32

46Manchester City Council Watch Committee Minutes, Vol 8(1869-1871) pp 58-9; Ibid, P

Eva p52/3

47Ibid, P Eva p 52/3; Criminal and Misc. statistical returns of the Manchester police, 1869 p

iv; 1870 p xi.

48 Ibid, P Eva, p374

49Neil Richardson, Introduction to ‘Manchester Breweries of Times Gone By,’ by Alan Gall,

1980

50Ibid, P Eva, p59; Criminal & misc returns of the Manchester Police, 1877-1900

NEW OWNERS, NEW ERA

For the George & Dragon the second half of the 19th century would be a time of development and expansion, driven along by the new owners, the ambitious McKenna brothers who had been raised since their early teenage years at the Briton’s Protection, just 400 yards away in Oldham Road. Not only did they remodel, adapt and enlarge the existing George & Dragon, they also took over, indeed probably built, what is now the Picturehouse part of the present Band on

the Wall and offices of music organisation Brighter Sound, with its several education and participation projects.

From this new building, after a long period in use by 'tobacco manufacturers', the McKennas would distribute their wines and spirits, by horse and cart, to pubs throughout the city, and later they would create a restaurant on the ground floor – currently The Picturehouse Café Bar. They may also have built the 'Cocozza Wood' building at the back of Band on the Wall; certainly by the end of the 19th century they owned it.

For the first time, the George & Dragon from 1856 would become part of a family-run commercial group that would include several pubs, most within the immediate area of East Manchester. All would soon to be served by the new and imposing McKenna Brewery in Harpurhey. What started as the little corner pub in Swan Street would soon be 'the head centre of the transactions of this well-known firm of spirit merchants and brewers'. 51

The story of the McKennas is told in Chapter 3 and further detail on the physical history of the building/s is provided in Chapter 4, The Building/s.

51 Momus publication, 2.6.1881

POSITIVE TRADING OUTLOOK?

At the start of the 1860s, the trading outlook for the George & Dragon appeared bright, as there were several favourable factors: the Smithfield Market had extended directly behind the pub and was thriving, with its new Market Hall, built on Swan Street in 1857/58; the population of the catchment area had grown almost exponentially – Ancoats alone had over 50,000 residents, far greater than the population of either Burnley, Bury, Blackburn, Wigan

or Rochdale; 52 and many of the local workers enjoyed increased leisure time following the introduction of the 60-hour working week, resulting from the Ten Hours Bill of 1847.

But soon there would be

'a great national calamity, the like whereof in modern times has never been witnessed in this favoured land... a calamity which, though shared by the nation at large, falls more peculiarly and with the heaviest weight upon this hitherto prosperous and wealthy district' – Earl of Derby, 1863, 53 between his second and third term as Prime Minister.

This was the Cotton Famine (1861-1865). The supply of raw cotton on which Lancashire's mills depended was cut off – a consequence of the American Civil War and the blockade of the southern ports by the Federal navy. By 1862, 60% of Lancashire's cotton workers were out of work. 54

'Many operatives, their savings exhausted, were forced to apply for charitable handouts or for relief from the despised poor law system. Such hardships, however, they endured calmly because they believed in the noble cause for which Lincoln was fighting, the freeing of the slaves of the southern plantation owners'. 54

The cotton crisis was the theme of a number of songs and poems of the day, not always reflecting the calm endurance of the workers. This is a verse from 'Th'Shurat* Weaver's Song' by Samuel Laycock (1826-1893) written in the kind of Lancashire dialect that commonly would be heard in Swan Street and area, where many of the residents were from rural Lancashire. According to the British Library, Lancashire dialect is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, form of spoken English in the world and developed from Anglo-Saxon. It featured in just a small proportion of the songs of the day.

Oh, dear! iv yon Yankees could only just see, Heaw they're clemmin' an' starvin' poor weavers loike me, Aw think they'd soon settle their bother, an' strive, To send us some cotton to keep us alive.

*Shurat – inferior cotton from India

In their struggle to keep alive, hundreds of unemployed workers and families came to the streets of Manchester to sing, a more acceptable form of begging. 55

The cotton famine must have adversely affected trade at the George & Dragon and many other businesses in the area, but the impact would have been less severe than in many other parts of Lancashire. The reasons included the considerable diversity of the local economy: in 1863, Swan Street, now with 70 addresses, had no fewer than 29 different

trades, services, shops and manufacturers,⁵⁶ few of which were dependent on the textile industry; even in Ancoats, with its massive cotton mills, the majority of workers were not employed in the mills. And, generally, in the Manchester mills, 'finer yarns were spun, a line little affected by the crisis'.⁵⁷

If some kind of recovery were required for the local economy of Swan Street, the street was geared for it. The George & Dragon, and many shops in the street, together offered local inhabitants much of their day-to-day needs. There were grocers, fishmongers, chemists, a cheesemonger, confectioner and pawnbroker, among many others. But increasingly it was the trade from the market folk and visitors to the market — the public, the traders and dealers — that kept the businesses afloat, and sometimes flourishing, even when buffeted by periodic recessions.

A visitor to the street in 1881 wrote:

'from its general appearance and nature of its traffic Swan Street might have been built for the special convenience of Shudehill Market. The publics, the eating-houses, the shoe shops all seem suited to the special requirements of that great emporium...' ⁵¹

The market also brought vitality, fun and entertainment to the area. The Shudehill/Smithfield Market area would frequently be the busiest place in Manchester. A visitor to the market in April 1870 described

'the sea of faces, the owners of which swarm in thousands, crushing, pushing, elbowing and swaying to and fro, whilst the general din proclaims that something is going on which is engrossing the minds of fifteen to twenty thousand men and women....'

'On a Saturday night Shudehill was "alive with animation, and amid a blaze of gas all [was] life and bustle." It had all the fun of the fair with sideshows and street entertainers galore'. ⁵⁸

⁵²Ancoats History, 'More than an Example': Ancoats in Historical Perspective

⁵³Extract from speech to Lancashire County Meeting, 2 December 1863, by the Earl of Derby (1799-1869)

⁵⁴Spinning the Web, The Story of the Cotton Industry, 1861-1865: Lancashire Cotton Famine

⁵⁵Ibid, P Eva, p365

⁵⁶Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1863

⁵⁷ The Lancashire Cotton 'Famine' 1861-65. Part of 'Our History' published by the Historians Group of the Communist Party.

⁵⁸A Kidd, 'Manchester' 2002; ref. iCosse, 'Band on the Wall, Historical Desk Assessment', 2007

ITALIANS

Among the entertainers and the market workers were recent arrivals from Italy who, according to one source, formed the largest part of the Smithfield Market labour force, and the majority of the city's street sellers and hawkers.⁵⁹ Mainly motivated by sheer poverty, thousands of Italians left their rural villages between 1865-1900 and large numbers came to Manchester, many of them settling in the old mill workers' cottages close to the Catholic churches in Ancoats, part of which would become known as Little Italy. Nearly one in every three of the Italian immigrants was a musician.⁶⁰

Little Italy would become 'well known for its entertainers and especially its street musicians' and

'During the summer nights in and around Little Italy, one could hear accordions, tambourines, and even the occasional mandolin, well into the small hours of the morning. Men and women danced the Tarantella, a dance full of expression, very popular in the southern regions of Italy'. ('Ancoats, Little Italy' by Anthony Rea)

During the day the music most commonly heard in the streets came from the barrel organs that were made by Italians in Ancoats. The operators 'would walk the streets of Manchester and surrounding districts playing their barrel organs and hurdy gurdies, some with monkeys in red waistcoats and hats, and a few with dancing bears'. The makers of the barrel organs were Domenico Antonelli who had his organ factory in Great Ancoats Street, and Simon Robino, a craftsman and musician who 'studied at the Marseilles College of Music and, though none but his family knew, he was a composer, too. Every day his waltzes were heard in the streets of Britain. But he never sought to have them published'.



Figure 10 – Marco Rea, grandfather of Anthony Rea, author of 'Ancoats, Little Italy', and

Marco's brother Antonio, with an Antonelli barrel organ, 1909 (Courtesy Anthony Rea)

Italian musicians and singers would perform in the pubs and coffee houses of the area. Into the 20th century, the famous Italian name of Mancini would become associated with music in the George & Dragon. The great Rudi Mancini, the finest accordionist to come out of Little Italy' and his brother Albert, also a talented musician, both were resident players at the George & Dragon in the late 1930s when the pub became known as the Band on the Wall.

Much of the above information on the Italian community is from the excellent website, 'Manchester's Ancoats, Little Italy' by Anthony Rea. www.ancoatslittleitaly.com

59Manchester UK – 19th Century Life in Manchester in Victorian Times

601881 Census, quoted by Anthony Rea in 'Manchester's Ancoats, Little Italy'

SCUTTLERS: GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

During the late 19th century Manchester was 'gripped by recurring panics over youth gangs and knife-crime'. Two of the notorious gangs of 'scuttlers' were based within 500 yards of the George & Dragon. These were the Angel Meadow gang and the 'Bengal Tigers' from Bengal Street and area, off Oldham Road. The two gangs frequently clashed 'with knives and buckle ends of their heavy leather belts in seemingly endless raids on street corners and pubs'.

We don't know if the George & Dragon was one of the pubs raided by the gangs, though the licensees in this period must have been constantly on their guard. Amongst the victims, 'serious woundings were commonplace and doctors at Ancoats Hospital complained of having to stitch up dozens of scuttlers per month when the Bengal Tigers were doing their worst'.

Jailing a member of the Angel Meadow gang for manslaughter in 1887, a judge said:

"Life in parts of Manchester is as unsafe and uncertain as it is amongst a race of savages."

Jailed for 20 years was 19-year-old Owen Callaghan; his victim, Joe Brady, 18, was a member of the Bengal Tigers. The above information on Scuttlers is from an article by Andrew Davies, guardian.co.uk, Sunday 21 August 2011.

PICKPOCKETS IN SWAN STREET

Less serious than the scuttlers but more pervasive were the pickpockets, thieves and tricksters who would operate in Swan Street. This drawing of a trio of 'guns', as these petty crooks were called, was made in Swan Street in 1881.



Figure 11 – MOMUS Sketch of Pickpockets

Surprisingly, in the year when this sketch was drawn, 1881, the census does not record a manager or publican living at the George & Dragon, but there are seven occupants, all under the age of 30. Eldest is housekeeper Elizabeth Richards (29) living with her 7-year-old daughter, a 22-year-old female servant and four 'waiters inn', aged 15-22, all Irish-born. The group in the sketch may have been an example of what, in academic circles in the 20th century, was identified as one of the classic types of criminal organisation to emerge in these times:

*'The craft organisation, typical of people performing skilled but small-scale thefts and confidence tricks, is a small, fairly permanent team, usually of two or three men, each of whom has a specific role to play in the routinised thefts in which the team specialises. It is a team of equals and the profits are shared equally at the end of each day.'*⁶¹

For many years in the 19th century there was a police station, with several cells, at the north end of Swan Street, next door to a hospital, referred to locally as the 'Cholera Hospital'. There was also a small police office attached to the Smithfield Market. Not until 1842 did Manchester have a proper, professional police force, organised on the lines of Robert Peel's Metropolitan Force. Nationally, the development of disciplined police forces, allied to a modernised criminal justice system, was a significant factor in the decline in crime from the end of the 1850s.⁶²

61Mary McIntosh, 1972, quoted in 'Crime & Industrialisation in England,' John Lea, 2004

62John Lea, 'Crime & Protest in 18th C England,' 2006

PIANOS

As pub entertainment took off in the second half of the 19th century, the George & Dragon may have been one of the many pubs to have pianos installed. The pub landlord would not have had far to travel to purchase one: by 1895 piano manufacturers Samuel Howard & Co were operating from 2 & 4 Swan St, currently the site of HBL (Habib Bank Ltd). By 1905 Howards' Ltd had moved to Oldham Street where they remained into the fifties. The 1911 Census also lists two 'pianoforte manufacturers' – F Weber (Berlin) and Callum & Best (London) – in Swan Buildings on the other side of the street from the George & Dragon.

The pioneers of piano sales in the North West were Rushworths of Liverpool who from the 1830s sold pianos and other instruments; in the early 1960s, their customers included Paul McCartney, John Lennon and George Harrison who bought guitars at the music store.

The job of pub pianist could have its risks. The pianist at the Custom House Hotel in Chapel Street, Salford, was knocked off her stool by a gang of 20 youths. When police arrived they found eight of them trying to play the piano – four were arrested for drunk and disorderly behaviour.⁶³

By 1886, annual piano production in England was estimated at 35,000, with a significant proportion going to pubs and music halls.⁶⁴

Slater's 1863 Directory for Manchester lists 27 piano tuners.

63Philip Gooderson, 'Terror on the Streets of Late Victorian Salford and Manchester: The Scuttling Menace'

64UK Piano page, A History of the Piano, 1157-2007 www.piano-tuners.org/history/history

MUSIC HALLS

At the close of the 19th century, Manchester had become a centre for music and of the evolution of the modern professional musician. In addition to the performing opportunities offered by the informal sessions in pubs like the George & Dragon, there were saloons and supper rooms but these could be rowdy places:

*'The taverns, saloons and supper rooms would have been noisy and difficult places in which to perform. The audiences chatted throughout the acts and could be very unruly often throwing things at the performers – bottles, old boots, even a dead cat. Industrial towns favoured hurling iron rivets.'*⁶⁵

Growing out of tavern entertainment, music halls became a focus of popular entertainment in the second half of the 19th century but the trend started much earlier:

*'As early as the 1830s a large number of publican entrepreneurs built concert rooms in their pubs, and these became more numerous in succeeding decades. Their expansion was so rapid that the temperance movement, always strong in Manchester, viewed the process with alarm.'*⁶⁶

One of these pubs with a 'music hall' was the Rising Sun at the north end of Swan Street, just 200 yards from the George & Dragon. In addition to many of these small concert rooms, by the 1860s, there were several much larger establishments, 'such as Burton's People's Concert Hall, the Alexandra, the Victoria and the London, each of which sat upwards of 1500 people and subordinated the sale of alcohol to the provision of entertainment'. Commonly, as in the Alexandra, the classes were segregated into separate seating areas.⁶⁶

A wide range of topics would provide the subjects of music hall songs and some of the songs no doubt would migrate to sing-songs in the pubs. Among those performed in Manchester in 1878 were those with topical, if less than thrilling, subjects, such as:

- The Manchester Town Hall Waltz,
- The Manchester Royal Exchange Gallop

(both by William J Young)

Presumably a good time was had by all when these songs were sung!



Figure 12 – Cover of ‘Town Hall Waltz’ by William J Young & ‘The Manchester Ship Canal’

by RH Kay, 1883

Somewhat racier topics would be more common: many ‘relied on the double entendre and performers could make seemingly innocent expressions very ‘blue’ with a simple wink or wriggle’.⁶⁷ Patriotic songs were also popular, such as ‘Oh What a Happy Land is England’, by Charles Godfrey, 1887.

‘Songs about leisure activities were popular and drinking was the one activity in which all levels of society could partake... People sat around tables drinking and eating; it wasn’t until the 1890’s that auditoriums were set up with rows of seats and food and drink was provided outside the auditorium in restaurants and bars’.⁶⁷

Accompaniment to the music acts was provided by small orchestras, and in Manchester, and elsewhere, music halls were ‘bringing plentiful work for the growing number of people trying to make a living through music’.⁶⁸

⁶⁵V&A Museum website, The Story of Music Hall www.vam.ac.uk/page/m/music-hall/

⁶⁶Chris Waters, ‘Manchester Morality and London Capital: The Battle over the Palace of Varieties’, from ‘Music Hall, The Business of Pleasure’, ed. Peter Bailey

⁶⁷British Library Online Gallery, Victorian popular music

www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/vicpopmus

⁶⁸ Musicians’ Union website www.musiciansunion.org.uk/about-us/

MUSICIANS UNION

The MU was born in Manchester.

It was a Manchester music hall musician, 21-year-old Joe Williams, a clarinetist at the Comedy Theatre, Peter Street, who in 1893 brought together like-minded musicians who were concerned about work conditions and pay. By the end of the year he had launched the Amalgamated Musicians' Union, signing up anyone who sought to earn a living from music. He went on to achieve a merger of the AMU with the London Orchestral Union of Professional Musicians in 1921, creating the modern MU of which he was the first General Secretary.

'Joe was now at the peak of his career in the trades union movement, although he had lost his seat as a Trades Council candidate on Manchester City Council after being declared bankrupt'.⁶⁸

By the late 20th century, Band on the Wall would be recognised by the MU as the biggest employer of their members in the North West, excepting the two symphony Orchestras, The Halle and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the oldest surviving professional symphony orchestra in the UK. The MU Music Promotions Fund also provided financial support at key times in the development of the venue in the 1980s.

For more information, see the MU website: www.musiciansunion.org.

⁶⁸Musicians' Union website www.musiciansunion.org.uk/about-us/

BRASS BANDS

"Brass bands are all very well in their place – outdoors and several miles away" – Sir Thomas Beecham

This quote from the famous conductor illustrated 'a schism between [brass] bands and elite art culture which many in the movement would argue has existed ever since.'⁶⁹ Among the bands that may have been heard in the vicinity of the George & Dragon were:

- Manchester Victoria Brass Band, active 1851
- Ancoats Perseverance Band, active 1882
- Manchester Police Band, active 1880

The first brass band British Open competition was held at Belle Vue in 1853. Bandsmen could earn fees for performing at social engagements and concerts. There were also cash prizes to be won at the contests. In the 1890s instrument manufacturers Silvani & Smith were offering a reward of £50 to the first band to win a first prize using a complete set of their instruments.⁶⁹ Brass band Competitions were also held at old Pomona Gardens, Trafford, Greater Manchester. First prize was £50.

Though the brass band movement stressed the virtues of diligence and discipline, occasionally the financial implications of the outcome of contests would lead to disharmony:

'it is likely that the unsavoury scenes that followed disputed results at contests in the latter part of the century were caused as much by injuries that the bandsmen felt to their wallets as to their pride'⁶⁹

In 1895 there were 222 brass band competitions held in Great Britain.

Into the 20th century, in Manchester and area, many of the region's best dance band, jazz and symphonic brass players received their musical grounding in brass bands.

⁶⁹Trevor Herbert, 'Nineteenth-Century Bands: Making a Movement'

CLASSICAL MUSIC

In the 19th century Manchester emerged as an important city for 'classical' music. In the first half of the century there were concert appearances by renowned musicians, such as Franz Liszt and Frederic Chopin; also Queen Victoria's favourite, Felix Mendelssohn, conducted a performance of his oratorio *Elijah* in 1847, months before the composer's death at the age of 38.

From around 1850, many emigrants came to Manchester from continental Europe and these included numbers of conservatory-trained musicians. There was a strong German community in the city whose cultural influence was felt in orchestras and ensembles, musical clubs and societies.⁷⁰

Further foundations for the future excellence of 'classical' music-making in Manchester were laid by the German-born pianist and conductor Sir Charles (formerly Karl) Halle who founded both the Halle Orchestra in 1858 and the Royal Manchester College of Music in 1893. Among other famous musicians of the day were: Carl Fuchs who settled in Manchester from Germany in 1888 and was principal cellist with the Halle and Professor of Cello at the RCM; Russian violinist Adolph Brodsky who was appointed Principal of the RCM in 1896; Austrian conductor Hans Richter who was director of the Halle for 12 years from 1899.

The Royal Manchester College of Music and the Northern School of Music (established in 1920) merged in 1973 to create the modern Royal Northern College of Music.

Charles Halle did much to popularise 'classical' music – by having low-priced concert tickets and taking his orchestra to district venues – but it seems likely that, prior to radio and the recording industry, the world of 'classical' music would have been unfamiliar to most of the inhabitants of Swan Street and area and the customers of the George & Dragon. This perhaps would also have been true of the musicians who performed in the streets, pubs and coffee houses. Into the 20th century, recordings and radio would bring a wide range of music into people's homes. In the last two decades of the 20th century it would be unexceptional to see RCM-trained musicians or members of the Halle Orchestra performing non-classical music at Band on the Wall.

⁷⁰Manchester City Council website: 'Manchester: Musical Metropolis'

ANCOATS BROTHERHOOD

A well-intentioned initiative to introduce 'serious' music to the streets of Ancoats – 'presumably to soothe the savage breasts'⁷¹ – was launched by the Ancoats Brotherhood, founded by Charles Rowley in 1878, with the aim of bringing art, music and literature to the working classes. Rowley, art dealer, philanthropist and a liberal councillor for Manchester, brought many leading intellectuals and artists to give lectures, including Ford Madox Brown, William Morris and George Bernard Shaw, who said that Rowley was 'the only man who could induce any sane man to go to Manchester'.⁷²

GBS, himself a noted music critic, was later to doubt the success of the Brotherhood, saying 'Ancoaters who are by nature recalcitrant to Bach and Beethoven simply do not join the Brotherhood'.⁷³

And a recent commentator stated:

'Local pubs and music halls had little to fear from activities of the Brotherhood' ⁷¹

At the end of the 19th century, it certainly was not the Brotherhood that was feared by the local pubs; rather it was legislative changes that made life difficult for the smaller brewers and their pubs and this included the McKenna empire including their flagship hostelry, the George & Dragon.

⁷¹'Ancoats History, an Introduction'

⁷²website of the Working Class Movement Library, The Crescent, Salford

⁷³George Bernard Shaw, quoted in C Rowley, *Fifty Years of Work without Wages* (1911) &

quoted in 'Ancoats History, an Introduction' p 11

THE MCKENNAS SELL OUT

Towards the end of the 19th century, commercial life became more difficult for the smaller brewers and their pubs. The 1880 Inland Revenue Act was having an effect, as it 'required brewers to pay tax on their raw materials, irrespective of the amount of beer they actually produced. As a result of this, 'many small, less-efficient breweries and home-brew pubs found they could not compete with their bigger neighbours and sold out'. The McKenna Brewery at Harpurhey was technically advanced when it was built in the 1860s but within a few decades other, newer breweries, incorporating latest technological innovations, were more productive. And later, 'more Manchester breweries, hit by increased taxation and further loss of outlets under the Compensation Act of 1904, closed'.

Whatever the reason, after over 80 years and three generations in the brewery and inn-keeping trade, the McKenna family decided to sell their entire estate, comprising the Harpurhey Brewery, the George & Dragon and around a dozen other pubs.⁷⁴ Their half-century ownership of the George & Dragon would soon come to an end, and for the next 80 years the George & Dragon would be in the hands of one or other of the big brewers, only to be rescued from their clutches by a tiny jazz organisation and its offspring charity, current owners Inner City Music.

The music would now be top of the agenda.

The story of the end of the McKenna era and of the many episodes in the evolution of Band on the Wall is told in the next part, the 20th Century History of 'The Band'.

⁷⁴Neil Richardson, Introduction to 'Manchester Breweries of times gone by,' by Alan Gall

THE PUBLICANS: 1803-1856

This continuous chapter traces the tenure of the first licensee of the George & Dragon, Elizabeth Marsh, and the subsequent licensees up to the half-century ownership of the pub by the McKennas. It also refers to the changing street numbers for the George & Dragon. 1803-1856 The first licensee of the George & Dragon The 2007 historical research by iCosse cast substantial doubts over earlier research that concluded that the first licence for a George and Dragon in Swan Street was granted to an Elizabeth Marsh in 1803. By revisiting primary records, our current research sets aside these doubts and positively confirms that Elizabeth Marsh was the first licensee of the George & Dragon in Swan Street. In the Poor Rate Books for the street for 1804 and 1806 she is recorded as the occupant of the premises, described as a public house. The prior uncertainty about this fact is understandable, as not only is Elizabeth Marsh's name missing from almost all the early records for Swan Street but she is also recorded from 1794 as the licensee of another George & Dragon, some two miles away in Ardwick, and she is still listed there in 1804 when – apparently in the Rate Book only – she is recorded as licensee of the George & Dragon in Swan Street. The question must remain as to whether or not she was simultaneously the licensee of two pubs, an unusual circumstance in Manchester in this period; we have been unable to find subsequent records of her tenancy of the George & Dragon in Chorlton Row, Ardwick. Certainly she was there for at least eight years but her occupancy of the Swan Street pub would be much shorter: she gave up the licence in 1807. It would be 117 years before a woman would once more be licensee of the George & Dragon on Swan Street, and then only on the death of her husband.



Figure 1 – On the right, The George and Dragon in Chorlton Row, Ardwick (1963,

Manchester Archives & Local Studies) We know nothing of why Elizabeth Marsh gave up the license, nor where she then went; the only subsequent, possibly relevant, record we have found for an Elizabeth Marsh at this time is a widow in King Street, Salford, in 1808/9.¹ The 2nd Landlord: John Roberts Elizabeth Marsh's three-year tenure at the George & Dragon came to an end on 28 January 1807 and the licence was transferred to a John Roberts.² Placing this in historical context, this was just two years after the battle of Trafalgar and more than a decade before the birth of Queen Victoria. John Roberts, victualler, George and Dragon, 9 Swan Street – Dean's Manchester Directory 1808/9 It is possible that this is the same John Roberts who in 1797 was the landlord of the Two Brothers inn at 30 Oldham Street, within a few hundred yards of the George & Dragon in Swan Street. Another possibility is that he was the John Roberts whose name appears in the Rate Books for Swan Street from 1796 to 1802. It is likely that his house was amongst a scattering of small dwellings on the opposite side of the street, beyond the Shudehill Pits, that were in a separate District from the George & Dragon. These dwellings appear to have been unnumbered but are recorded for convenience in the Poor Rate Books as being in Swan Street, close to where Cable Street would be subsequently laid out. This John Roberts must have known the George & Dragon, living as he did probably within 100 yards or so of

the pub. By 1804, the year after Elizabeth Marsh opened the George & Dragon, his name is no longer recorded in the Rate Book. Had he moved into accommodation at the pub and, within three years persuaded the landlady to transfer the licence to him? We may never know, though it is certain that by 1807 Elizabeth Marsh was no longer recorded at the address; John Roberts was, and he now held the licence. In his first year of tenure, perhaps surprisingly, Mr Roberts does not appear to have used the drinks licence: the property is just recorded as a house.³ Maybe he was making improvements to what was almost certainly built as a modest dwelling. Or perhaps the house was not yet obviously a pub and it was to his financial advantage in his first year as landlord that it be assessed as a house? Was he also related to a Joshua Roberts, victualler, Spread Eagle, 33 Church Street – also a few hundred yards away – who is listed in the records from 1814 to 1822. (Into the 1830s, an Elizabeth Roberts, presumably Joshua's widow, was the licensee of the Spread Eagle at this address). And did the same John Roberts expand his empire by taking over the license of The Griffin, 11 Griffin Court North, Salford, as is suggested by the listing for a victualler of this name at this address in 1819–20, and operate as a brewer at 13 New Street (probably at Miles Platting) where a John Roberts is listed in 1824–25? However, the surname Roberts and first name John were, and remain, very common names in Manchester and elsewhere in the UK, so there must be a high degree of uncertainty about these speculations. What is certain is that the reign of John Roberts at the George & Dragon in Swan Street was a long one: at least until 1825 and possibly until 1828 when the next licensee, a John Foster, is listed, to be followed by Thomas Scruton in 1836. But is this George and Dragon the same building or on the same site as the present Band on the Wall? The changing street numbers The answer to this question is far from straight forward, mainly because of the changing street numbers for the pub in this period when the Industrial

Revolution was almost literally gathering steam and there was intensive building construction work in the area. We have been unable to find any maps with the numbers of the addresses in Swan Street, nor any record of the re-numbering of the street which undoubtedly happened. But clues lie within the trade directories. The directories for this period reveal the following addresses for the George & Dragon in Swan Street between 1803 and 1836: 1803 No 9 1824 No 12 1828 No 16 1836 No 25 What are we to make of this? Was the public-house relocated every few years and on different sides of the street? What is much more likely is that all these numbers refer to the same site, the existing site of Band on the Wall (or at least part of that site), with the premises being re-numbered as more buildings were constructed in the early decades of the century. A significant change in the streetscape must have occurred when the Shudehill Pits, situated along the north side of Swan Street, were filled in. These pits are described by iCosse: 'Sometime in the late-1700s the lord of the manor, Sir Oswald Mosley, converted these ponds into reservoirs for the town water supply. The water was raised from the River Medlock at Holt Town by means of a pumping engine, and was conveyed by pipes to the

Shudehill Pits. Richard Arkwright's mill in Miller's Lane also relied on the water supply from these ponds.'

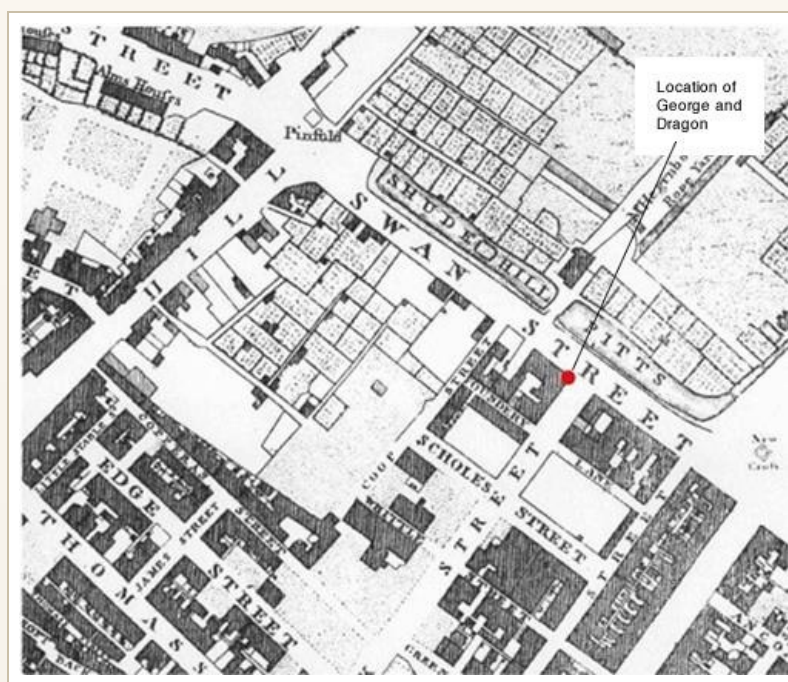


Figure 2 – Green's Map of Manchester, 1787-94, showing Swan Street and the Shudehill Pits

Inevitably the existence of these ponds prevented the construction of buildings on that side of the street – the opposite side from the existing Band on the Wall – apart perhaps from a few unnumbered dwellings north east of the pits. Thus in the early 19th century the buildings on Swan Street only existed along the south side, where the present Band on the Wall is located. Therefore at this time the street numbers followed a straight sequence – 1,2,3 etc – all on the south side of the street but after buildings were constructed on the opposite side, a re-numbering would have been required, with odd numbers on the south side and even numbers on the north side. It is evident from the street directories and maps that a significant re-numbering of Swan Street must have occurred between 1832 and 1836; hence, we understand, the street number (not the actual location) of the George and Dragon changed from No 16 to No 25. This is supported by the 1832 and the 1836 directories that show a similar change in street numbers at other addresses in the street, in particular we see that the 1832 directory lists a Patrick McKenna, warehouseman, at No 25 Swan Street whereas by 1836 he is listed at No 43. The surname McKenna would be vitally associated with the operation and development of the George and Dragon for over half a century and for this reason this listing in Swan Street received special attention from the previous researchers who assumed that the 1832 listing

for Patrick McKenna at No 25 was 'the first definitive evidence for the site' [of the present Band on the Wall] and that by 1836 McKenna had moved up the street to No 43. Our contention is that this is incorrect: that in 1832, 25 Swan Street was further up the street than at present, probably on the site that is now occupied by the Mayor Mackie Smithfield Market Hall (built 1857/58) and that Patrick McKenna, like the George and Dragon, did not physically relocate; rather the premises remained the same, only the numbers were updated, with the even numbers on the newly-built north side

of the street. This is more precisely supported by the fact that a James Slater, corn dealer, who in 1832 at No17 was next door to the George & Dragon at No16, was by 1836 at No27 — still next-door to the George & Dragon at No25. (Pigot's Directories for 1832 & 1836) So our current research suggests that Patrick McKenna's residence at 25 Swan Street was not at the corner of Swan Street and Oak Street (the Band on the Wall site) and he may have had no connection with the McKenna family who would be crucial to the future of the George and Dragon. But of this, more later: Chapter 3, The McKennas. Our research does suggest that the George & Dragon, from its inception in 1803, was at the corner of Swan and Oak Streets, with changing street numbers until 1836 when it was listed as No 25 Swan Street. Subsequent records present a complex picture of the configuration and development of the buildings that comprise the present Band on the Wall. For this reason, a separate section of this document is devoted to this subject. See Chapter 4, The Buildings.

Landlord No 3: John Foster The name that would take the George and Dragon into a new era was John Foster who by 1827, at the age of 35, had taken over the pub from John Roberts. It is not known if this was the same John Foster who in 1819/20 was a brewer at 19 Ashton Lane (Sale?), or related to a Susannah Foster who lived at 3 Swan Street in 1813. Neither is it known if he was related to a George Foster who ran the White Hart inn at 43 Long Millgate, Salford, around the same period. During John Foster's tenure at the George & Dragon, the town would at last have its own Member of Parliament. Though perhaps of more practical benefit to trade at the pub would be the introduction of horse-drawn omnibuses from 1825. Oak Street annexe? It was, indeed, a new era for the George & Dragon because for the first time the pub included nearby property in Oak Street. By 1828 the George & Dragon, with John Foster, as licensee, is listed at both 16 Swan Street and 20 Oak Street. It is probable that this Oak Street address was attached to the George & Dragon on part of the site of what was to become part of the main venue of Band on the Wall — the stage and dance floor area — though it would be many years before the two premises were interconnected. The licence for the George & Dragon applied to both the Swan Street and Oak Street addresses, with one the pub and the other wholesale and retail spirit vaults. The expansion of the George & Dragon into Oak Street paralleled the development of the adjacent Smithfield Market that grew rapidly following the move by the potato market to the gardens east of Shudehill in 1820 and its official titling as Smithfield Market two years later. By expanding the business into this building in Oak Street, John Foster was probably responding to the arrival of new customers: the visitors, traders and associated workers at the Market that in the next few years would become one of the biggest in Europe. As a pub that served the Market, the George & Dragon had extended opening hours. In the evening, the Market area became an attraction in its own right as musicians and entertainers arrived on the scene and customers looked for late bargains; Saturday night was a big night in the vicinity of the Market and in a single day in 1870 it was estimated that as many as 20,000 people were attracted to the area.⁴



Figure 3 – Smithfield Market, 1854 (Manchester Archives & Local Studies)

- Much later, this Oak Street annexe would have a more direct relationship with the Market as in 1910 it was described on plans as a 'Fruit etc Stall' (with public toilet accessed from the street) on the ground floor, with four store rooms on the upper floor.⁵ By 1836 John Foster's tenure at the George & Dragon had come to an end. He had steered the business through most difficult times, including during the cholera epidemic of 1832 when 924 people died in Manchester & Salford, including many from nearby Angel Meadow. In the Directory for 1836 he is recorded as a spirit merchant at 36 Oak Street and in 1843 as a fent* dealer at this address and a pawnbroker at 10 Foundry Lane. The Census records for 1841 show John Foster, aged 49, pawnbroker, living in Oak Street with his 50-year-old wife Mary and daughters 15-year-old Frances and Jane (12).

- fent – dyed or printed dress, curtain or upholstery fabric or remnant of cloth Landlord/s No 4: Thomas/William Scruton By 1836 a Thomas Scruton had taken over from Foster and is listed as wine & spirit merchant, 25 Swan Street, though the George & Dragon name is not used in this entry. However, the pub name reappears two years later when a William Scruton is recorded as victualler, George & Dragon, 25 Swan Street. We don't know if the Thomas and William Scruton are one and the same or perhaps related (father and son?). But by 1841, William Scruton, aged 30, whose home was in Great Ancoats Street, was still listed as victualler, as above, though a new name is also at the George & Dragon: John Schofield who is listed as the publican. Next door to the pub was a narrow, former dwelling at 27 Swan Street – on part of the site of the current Band on the Wall main venue – and in 1836 was in an unusual dual occupancy, Edward Heath, an attorney, whose offices would have been on the first floor, with John Slater, a corn dealer, on the ground floor. A James Slater, probably John's father, had traded also as a corn dealer from the same premises from the early 1820s. During the Scruton tenure at the pub, an 18-year-old Victoria, of the House of Hanover, would be crowned Queen, while the final vestiges of feudalism would be removed from the
- town when in 1838 the Borough of Manchester was formed with an elected town council for the first time. Previously the town was managed by a combination of manorial court, parish vestry and police commissioners established by act of parliament. 6 By 1843 William Scruton had moved to the Lord Duncan inn and spirits vaults at 59 Oldham Street (some 300 yards away) but his name – an uncommon one – does not appear in subsequent county records, nor indeed the entire 1851 UK Census. Perhaps this was the William Scruton who died in Manchester in 1845; if so, he would have been just 34 years old. Was he also related (husband?) to the Mary Ann Scruton who died in Manchester six months earlier? At this time, early deaths were common: 'life expectancy was so low in areas like central Manchester – about 40 on average if you survived childhood, not much more than 50 if you reached 21'.7 Landlord No5: John Schofield The 1841 Census shows John Schofield, aged 25, as publican of the George & Dragon, living there with his wife Elizabeth, aged 20. Also resident there were Frederick Taylor and Betsy Oaks, both 20-year-old servants who probably worked in the pub. He may have been related to (son of?) a John Schofield who earlier in the century 8 had his house and shop a few doors down, at 6 Swan Street. In 1843 Mr Schofield remained at the George & Dragon, while at No 27 attorney Edward Heath continued to do business but John Slater's trading place had been taken by another flour dealer, Abraham Eyre. No 31 Swan Street is the Glasgow Tavern, (later to become the Burton Arms) where Isabella Abercrombie is listed as publican. Unlike the George & Dragon that retained the same name from 1803 to 1975, The Burton Arms had three other names at different times in the 19th century, e.g. Burton Arms, 31 Swan Street 1843 – Glasgow Tavern* 1848 – John O'Groats Tavern 1863 – Grapes Inn 1895 – Burton Arms
- In 1847, the pub is listed as both the Glasgow Vaults AND The Grapes – probably the Vaults on Swan Street, with The Grapes at the rear entrance, facing the market at the back, on Goadsby Street. Landlord/s No6: Deacon/Deakin By 1845 the Schofields had left the George and Dragon and the new licensee is Thomas Deacon. Three years later the listing is James Deakin who also is listed at the Queen Adelaide Tavern, a few hundred yards away at 63 Great Ancoats Street. It is possible that Thomas Deacon and James Deakin were one and the same, and that the variation in names was due to a recording error. James Deakin had left the George and Dragon by 1850 and is probably the beer retailer at 71 Great Ancoats Street. Around this time, the Deakins were well on their way to becoming significant players in the Manchester pub scene: they were listed at six other houses, including another George & Dragon in Bridge Street. By 1863 a James Henry Deakin is listed as owner of the Britannia Brewery, Broadie Street, Ardwick, and the Deakin family formed the Manchester Brewery Company, owning no fewer than 133 licensed houses, malt kilns and the brewery. According to Gall, 'despite early prosperity, poor management combined with over-spending brought the firm close to bankruptcy. The Britannia Brewery closed in the 1920s'.9 Landlord No7: William Green

By 1850, 44-year-old William Green was the new landlord of the George and Dragon. The 1851 Census shows him as living with his wife Mary Ann, aged 36, their son Edwin, aged 17, a tailor, their baby son, William, and daughters Hannah, 12, and Mary, 10, as well as two servants. A total of nine people living in what probably was cramped accommodation above the pub. The Greens' tenure there lasted several years and by 1861 the family (with a new son, Caleb, aged 4) had moved to another pub, The Falstaff, at 21 or 26 Market Place, Manchester. It is in 1856 that we find the name of McKenna first listed at the George & Dragon, 10 though at this date the Greens remained in residence before their move to The Falstaff. The McKenna family – though they never lived at the George & Dragon – were to be of such significance to the

long-term operation of the pub that they deserve a Chapter of their own:

Chapter 3, The McKennas.

Footnotes 1 Dean's Directory of Manchester 1808/09 2Alehouse Recognizances for 1806/07, County Records Office, Preston 3Poor Rate book, 1808 4Dave Haslam, 'Manchester, England' 1999 (check) 5Plans submitted to Manchester City Council, 10 October 1911 6Alan Kidd, "Manchester/Liverpool: Timeline Manchester, 1750-2002, part of Shrinking Cities project 7Peter Rushton, 'Family Survival Strategies in Mid-Victorian Ancoats' 8Poor Rate books, 1807 & 1808 9Alan Gall, 'Manchester Breweries of Times Gone By', 1980 10Slater's Directory of Manchester and Salford 1856

THE MCKENNAS

"Recent studies of the Irish in nineteenth century Britain have provided necessary corrective to the common image of the poor unskilled Irish immigrants, for taken as a whole the community displayed a diversity both in occupational background before migration and in their subsequent achievements" – Family Survival Strategies in Mid-Victorian Ancoats, by Peter Rushton Signs of Former Times? When the old sign on the corner of Band on the Wall was removed during the renovations of the venue in 2009, the visible traces of a much older sign were revealed. Stained into the façade above the old doorway, it reads McKENNA. The lower portion of the sign is permanently obscured, but may have read VAULTS of WINE & SPIRITS. The sign may date from 1856, the first recorded date for the McKenna ownership of the George & Dragon, the historical name of Band on the Wall.



Figure 1 – Evidence of the McKenna ownership above the corner doorway, revealed during

renovations in 2009 Physical evidence of the McKenna connection is also visible high on the façade of The Picturehouse building at 29 Swan Street – part of the renovated Band on the Wall since 2009. Above the segmented oriel window is a stone shield or gablet that displays stylised initials, 'McK'. This monogram may date from c1865 when, according to the English Heritage Listing citation, it is thought that this Grade II listed building was built, though our research has been unable to confirm this date. There is very limited information available from the 19th Century about the construction and adaptation of the buildings that comprise the present Band on the Wall, though we have attempted in Chapter 4, The Building/s, to describe the rough patchwork of detail that exists and to present, at times speculatively, details of the physical evolution of the building.



Figure 2 – The McKennas' 'McK' monogram above the oriel window on The Picturehouse

building, part of Band on the Wall since 2009

A PUB DYNASTY

The McKenna name would dominate the history and development of the George and Dragon, aka Band on the Wall, for the latter half of the 19th Century and beyond; the McKennas would become a dynasty of publicans, inn owners and brewers in East Manchester, and the George & Dragon their showpiece and business hub, as this eye-witness description from 1881 affirms: 'The large vaults of Messrs B and J McKenna have a well-to-do look about them which resents the bare suggestion of the back seat. This establishment is, I believe, the head centre of the transactions of this well-known firm of spirit merchants and brewers. The pitch is a good one as the busy trade going on there fully testifies'. The extract is from the publication *Momus*, edition of June 2nd, 1881, that also includes sketches of some of the characters in Swan Street at the time.



Figure 3 – Drawings of scenes and characters in Swan Street, 1881

The Two Brothers The B & J McKenna were Bernard and John. The prior research into the history of Band on the Wall¹ suggests that these two McKenna brothers who were to become owners of the George and Dragon and other pubs in the area, might be the sons of a Bernard and

Ellen McKenna, who ran the nearby Briton's Protection on Oldham Road earlier in the 19th Century. Our research confirms this and adds to the story of the Manchester McKennas.

The Patriarch Bernard McKenna, senior, was born in Ireland in 1776 and by 1838, at the age of 62, was the publican of The Briton's Protection at 75 Oldham Road. The pub is no longer in existence (closed in 1942²) and was just 400 yards from the George & Dragon, Swan Street – on part of the site currently occupied (2019) by the massive Wing Yip Chinese market.



Figure 4 – Photograph of the Briton's Protection, Oldham Road, 1897, and 2012 photograph

by Rosanna Freedman of the same site, now occupied by Wing Yip. Bernard senior must have emigrated from Ireland towards the end of the 18th century or the early part of the 19th century, perhaps with his parents, well before the Great Famine (1845–52). Maybe, like many Irish emigrants, he was escaping harsh social conditions or sectarian conflicts in his home country, though escape would be far from complete amid the social conditions of his adopted city where the Irish were 'subjected to considerable prejudice'.³ Perhaps it was prejudice that motivated the following comment from a correspondent of the Manchester Chronicle in 1823, complaining of the dangers of taking an evening walk along Oldham Road with its numerous intersecting streets: 'At the ends of many streets stand groups of Irish ruffians who appear to feel no interest but in ill-treating the peaceable and unoffending inhabitants. This is particularly the case at the following places – near the Crown and Kettle, the Briton's Protection and the Death of Nelson... violence is common and many depredations are committed'.⁴ Certainly the comment affirmed the early association with the Irish and Oldham Road where the McKennas' Briton's Protection was one of several pubs. On occasion the road was the scene of sectarian disturbances. In the early 19th century Manchester was the principal centre for the Orange Order in Great Britain and, from 1807, there were a number of clashes between Orangemen and resident Irish Catholics, including a disturbance on 13 July 1834 'near the Briton's Protection public house on Oldham Road when the whole police force

had to turn out to stop the sexton of St George's Church on St George's Road from being killed'.⁵

¹ iCosse, Band on the Wall Historical Desk Assessment, 2007 ² Neil Richardson, 'The Old Pubs of Ancoats', p5 ³ From 'Manchester's Irish Story', manchesterirish.com – quoting historian John M Werly ⁴ Quoted in 'Manchester's Ancoats, Little Italy' by Anthony Rea www.ancoatslittleitaly.com ⁵ tbc

MUSIC ON OLDHAM ROAD

By 1841, Bernard, now aged 65, and Ellen, aged 55, resided at The Briton's Protection, Oldham Road, with sons Bernard, then aged 15, described as a pattern designer (perhaps in the adjacent mills), and John, aged 14, who was still at school.

Also living with them was Catherine Derr, a 15-year-old servant from Ireland. No doubt the two sons gained early experience assisting in the family pub, giving them the knowledge and skills that later would help them create the first edition of 'B & J McKenna', a brewing and inn-keeping business in Manchester that would last until the early 20th Century. In the mid-19th Century, the running of the The Briton's Protection, at the centre of an increasingly populous area, would have been full of challenges, as well as growing trade opportunities, despite the 'slump of unprecedented proportions' in the cotton industry in 1841/42.¹¹ These were rapidly-changing and, no doubt, tough times. Just 50 yards away were the busy Rail Goods Yard and the adjacent Potato Market, with up to 30 potato merchants. High density housing surrounded the mills on both sides of Oldham Road, a street that by 1849 had become, according to one observer, a focus for raucous music and wild drunkenness: 'In returning, last Sunday night, by the Oldham Road, from one of my tours, I was somewhat surprised to hear loud sounds of music and jollity which floated out of the public house windows. The street was swarming with drunken men and women and with young mill girls and boys shouting, hallooing and romping with each other. Now, I am not one of those who look upon the slightest degree of social indulgence as a downright evil, but I confess that last Sunday night in the Oldham Road astonished and grieved me. In no city have I ever witnessed a scene of more open, brutal and general intemperance. The public houses and gin shops were roaring full. Rows and fights and scuffles were every moment taking place within doors and in the streets. The whole street rung with shouting, screaming and swearing, mingled with the jarring music of half a dozen bands.'¹² The writer, Inverness-born Angus Reach, was no elderly disapproving prude but a 28-year-old journalist and author on the London-based Morning Chronicle and later a staff member of Punch. He died prematurely (aged 35) and, perhaps ironically, a contributory cause of death may have been alcohol consumption.¹³ Reach's description of the sounds of music and jollity floating out of public house windows has a parallel almost a century later that can be seen in this photograph of the George & Dragon/Band on the Wall in c1946. Note the open half-light window above the left side of the bandstand, allowing the music – now electronically amplified! – to float out to Oak Street. We will never know if the music then heard in the street was less 'jarring' than the music heard by Reach in nearby Oldham Road 95 years earlier.



Figure 7 – Musicians on stage at Band on the Wall probably just after the end of World War

II, possibly Rudi Mancini, accordion, and Jim Hart, drums, c1946

¹¹Chartists Ancestors – www.chartists.net ¹²Angus Reach, 'Manchester and the Textile Districts in 1849' ¹³Edwards, P.D., "Reach, Angus Bethune (1821–1856)", Oxford Dictionary of National

Biography, Oxford University Press

2ND & 3RD GENERATIONS Returning to the story of the McKennas, Bernard, senior, died in Manchester in 1847, aged 71, and his wife took over the licence of the Briton's Protection, certainly until 1856.¹⁴ Around this time her two sons, now in their late twenties/early thirties, created the partnership, B & J McKenna, and began their business acquisitions. After 18

busy years at the Briton's Protection, the business-minded McKennas had built up sufficient capital and knowledge of the industry to expand their pub portfolio. They had acquired the George & Dragon by 1856 and by 1863 had also purchased The Wellington, 97 Rochdale Road, later to be rebuilt by them in 1888 to designs by theatre architects Darbyshire & Smith¹⁵ and subsequently renamed The Marble Arch which remains (2019) one of the most distinctive of Manchester's public houses. The brothers also acquired The Balloon public-house, also on Rochdale Road. Other pub acquisitions would follow. Their purchase of the George & Dragon may have been motivated by anticipated increased trade at the pub following the expansion of the nearby Smithfield Market, roofed over with

four vast arcades of cast iron and glass in 1853-4, and construction of the Smithfield Market Hall on Swan Street in 1857/8 (The 'Mayor Mackie Building' just 50 yards from Band on the Wall). The move of the markets to the Smithfield site had begun in 1820 and originally operated as 'a largely open space with rows of curved shambles in one corner and a piazza along the southern edge'¹⁶. Bernard, junior, took the licence of the George & Dragon from 1856, though he never lived there. In his late 30s, he was now married and by 1861 he and his wife Mary Ann (38), from Chester, Cheshire, had moved from the McKenna family home of the Briton's Protection to the semi-rural setting of Booth Cottage, close to Boggart Hole Clough, in the grounds of Booth Hall, Blackley, less than three miles from the George & Dragon. Continuing the tradition of the McKenna family forenames, Bernard's and Mary Ann's two sons were named Bernard and John, then (1861) aged six and one respectively. Towards the end of the century, these two brothers would take the reins of the family business, which thus remained 'B & J McKenna'. We can speculate that the childhood environment of the two young McKenna boys, and their elder sister Mary, may have verged on the idyllic: at Booth Cottage, in the large grounds of Booth Hall, surrounded by various small farms. Their parents now had four live-in servants, including a 17-year-old stable boy from County Kilkenny, Ireland, and a groom.



Figure 8 – Booth Hall, in the grounds of which was the McKenna home, Booth Cottage (1892)

At the time of the 1861 Census the elderly matriarch Ellen McKenna continued to live at the Briton's Protection but the younger son John, now in his mid thirties, had taken the licence.

He was now married to Esther (30) and for a time they also lived at the pub with their daughter Eleanor, then aged six, and one servant/waiter and two house servants. In 1863, Bernard was listed¹⁷ as trading as wine and spirit merchant at the George & Dragon that had two addresses, 25 Swan Street and 23 or 25 Oak Street. Some light is thrown on the variety of addresses for the George & Dragon in Chapter 4, The Buildings. Bernard is also listed in the trade directory for 1863 at The Wellington, 97 Rochdale Road, and at his former home, the Briton's Protection where his brother John is also listed. Now with at least four pubs in the McKenna portfolio – The Briton's Protection, The Wellington, The Balloon and The George & Dragon – trade must have been good as in the 1860s the McKennas took their next big step in the expansion of their business: They built the imposing Harpurhey Brewery, Rochdale Road, employing the Salford building firm of Gregory & Haynes.¹⁸ In addition to brewing there... "A large part of the McKenna's trade was in wines and spirits.

Wines were bought in bulk and bottled on the premises and they also blended their own whisky, imported from Scottish and Irish distilleries” – (Gall, above)



Figure 9 – The McKenna Brewery in Brewery Street, Rochdale Road, Harpurhey, 1885

(Manchester Archives & Local Studies) The brewery, less than a mile from the McKennas' Blackley home, was described as 'an architectural ornament to Harpurhey' and erected 'at great expense, the object of the proprietors being to exemplify the various processes of the brewing industry upon the most improved and scientific principles'.¹⁹ Though the brewery 'had a very prosperous career from the first,' in the 20th century it was no longer owned by the McKennas and it ceased operations and was converted into smaller commercial units.²⁰ 'Although nothing of the brewery is still standing, it is remembered in the names of two roads flanking the old site – Bernard Street and Brewster Street (once Brewery Street).' (Gall, above)

¹⁴Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1863 ¹⁵iCosse, Band on the Wall Historical Desk Assessment, 2007, p20 ¹⁶Ibid, iCosse, p9 ¹⁷Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1863 ¹⁸Alan Gall, 'Manchester Breweries of Times Gone By, vol 2', p15 ¹⁹The Century's Progress, 1892, p12 ²⁰Ibid, Alan Gall

IRISH CULTURE

Long before the fashion for Irish-themed pubs, the McKenna pubs must surely have reflected Irish culture, perhaps with the songs, fiddles and bodhrain from across the water. After all, two of their pubs, The Balloon and The Wellington, were on the edge of the Angel Meadow area, frequently called 'Irish Town' because of the preponderance of Irish immigrants; the location of the Briton's Protection, Oldham Road, in particular was associated with the Irish,²¹ and the George & Dragon was adjacent to the newly-developed Smithfield Market which attracted large numbers of immigrant workers, including many Irish. Later in the century, the scale of Irish immigration to the area would be almost matched by the arrival of great numbers of Italians, many of whom would settle in the old mill workers' cottages in Ancoats that would become known as Manchester's Little Italy. Both the Irish and Italian influx are reflected in the lines of a song sung in Manchester pubs later in the century: Why do you wanna go to Wembley, Worra ya wanna go to Wembley for? Take a walk down Ancoats Lane, and you're in Italy so grand, Take a walk up Oldham Road and you're in Ire-land. – (from 'Manchester's Ancoats, Little Italy' – by Anthony Rea) Even into the 20th century, the managers and staff of the McKenna pubs often were Irish-born; for example, the manager at the George & Dragon in 1901 was Irishman Michael Kelly and five of the six barstaff/servants were Irish-born.²² Managed Houses A sign of their expanding business, the McKennas placed managers at all their pubs: for example, Irish-born Bridget Mooney at The Wellington, Rochdale Road and an Edmund Linsted, aged 57, at the George & Dragon, in 1871. These were live-in managers: at The George & Dragon in 1871 eight people lived in the upstairs accommodation that was but a fraction of the room space of the current Band on the Wall. With Mr Linsted were his wife Ann (52), their four children, aged 15 to 21, one 18-year-old servant and a six-year-

old, described as a boarder.²³ Upwardly Mobile By 1871 Bernard and family had moved from Booth Cottage to what was probably more prestigious accommodation close by, Lea Grange House, Blackley. There he lived with his wife, Mary, then aged 47, and their four children, Mary, 21, Bernard, 17, John, 11, and Mary Ann, 9, and a domestic servant. In their new home, set in over nine acres of land, Bernard was also able to have his elderly mother live with the family. She was now 84, though remarkably the census records show her age as 98. Perhaps after a hard life in the licensed

trade, including many years of pub life in Gravel Lane, Salford, and arduous times in Oldham Road, that was how old she felt. Bernard's brother John was now principally involved in the running of the brewery and had moved out of the Briton's Protection with his family, firstly to nearby Church Lane, Harpurhey, from where he went to work on horseback, and then by 1883 was living in the leafy Cheshire village of Bowdon, at The Woodlands, South Downs Road. We don't know if he retained the same mode of transport to work after moving 16 miles away to Bowdon. He still retained the licence of The Briton's Protection and with his brother had now acquired The Queens Hotel, 797 Rochdale Road.²⁴ There is evidence that the McKennas also owned the Queen Ann, Long Millgate, Manchester (Holmshaw/Richardson).

²¹Mervyn Busteed & Paul Hindle, 'The Irish and Cholera in Manchester' ²²Census Records, 1901 ²³Census Records, 1871 ²⁴Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1883

3RD GENERATION TAKEOVER John McKenna died in the district of Altrincham (where Bowdon is located) in 1890, aged 64, and his elder brother, Bernard, died at his home in Lea Grange on 27 August 1893, aged 69. The Manchester Times carried an obituary of Bernard; two months later his son John Harold McKenna, then living with his wife Amelia and daughter Norah (7) at Prospect House, Church Lane, Blackley, took over the licence of the George & Dragon on 19 October 1893. His other son, also called Bernard, was also involved in the family business. According to Gall, the two brothers, Bernard & John Harold, then formed the company B & J McKenna Ltd 'in 1895 with capital of £80,000...' and had also acquired The Osborne House on Rochdale Road, and in 1898 purchased at auction the Derby Inn on the corner of Rochdale Road and Factory Lane, Blackley²⁵. There were other acquisitions: Manchester historian Alan Gall has listed 14 former McKenna public houses, (see Appendix 3), in addition to the George & Dragon, 'the head centre of the transactions of this well-known firm of spirit merchants and brewers'.²⁶ With their substantial brewing and bottling base at their Harpurhey Brewery, by the end of the century the third generation McKenna brothers were on top of a sizeable business empire, mainly within a very manageable area of East Manchester. But it was soon to come to an end. It is into the next century that the remarkable story of the McKennas, brewers and pub owners, is concluded: see the 20th century history, Chapter 2.

²⁵Alan Gall, 'Manchester Breweries of Times Gone By, vol 2', p16 ²⁶Momus, article on Swan Street, June 2, 1881

THE FIRST MCKENNA PUB

There is little doubt that Bernard McKenna, senior, had lengthy experience of the licensed trade before moving to Oldham Road to become landlord in his autumn years. Almost certainly he is the beer retailer Bernard McCanna listed at 23 Gravel Lane in the directory for Salford for 1828/29.⁶ Variations in the spelling of names are common in the records for these times. Certainly there is a connection with Salford as the births of his two sons are registered there. The address in Gravel Lane is that of the Jolly Carter pub and it is likely that McKenna, or McCanna, operated a small-scale brewery in Salford at this time, probably

within the Jolly Carter⁷. A few years earlier this Gravel Lane address was a shoe warehouse⁸ and before that, in 1797, the home and workplace of a flour dealer. ⁹



Figure 6 – Photograph of the Jolly Carter in the 1890s from 'Salford Pubs', Vol 1, p35, by Neil

Richardson Early evidence of the McKenna entrepreneurialism is that Bernard was quick to take advantage of the new Beerhouse Act in 1830, as shown by this extract from a history of Salford pubs:¹⁰ 'The Jolly Carter was on the corner of Cable Street, near the ropeworks. In 1829 this was the home of a brewer called Bernard McKenna. At that time small-scale brewers could obtain retail licences to sell to the public, but not on the premises. Jugs of beer were sold either over the doorstep or through a window. When the Beerhouse Act became law in October 1830, retail brewers were among the first to obtain indoor beerhouse licences and Mr McKenna was one of the first in Salford.' Bernard had married Ellen, from Kirk Ireton, Derbyshire, and sons Bernard and John were born in 1825 and 1826 respectively – probably in the living accommodation at The Jolly Carter. There is an Irish connection with the name of Ellen's home village: it is believed to have evolved from 'Church of Irish Enclosure' following an ancient settlement by Celtic missionaries.

6 Pigot & Dean's Directory of Manchester, 1828/29 7Neil Richardson, 'Salford Pubs, Part One', p35 8Pigot & Dean's Directory of Manchester & Salford, 1821/22 9Schole's Directory of Manchester & Salford, 1797 10Ibid, Neil Richardson

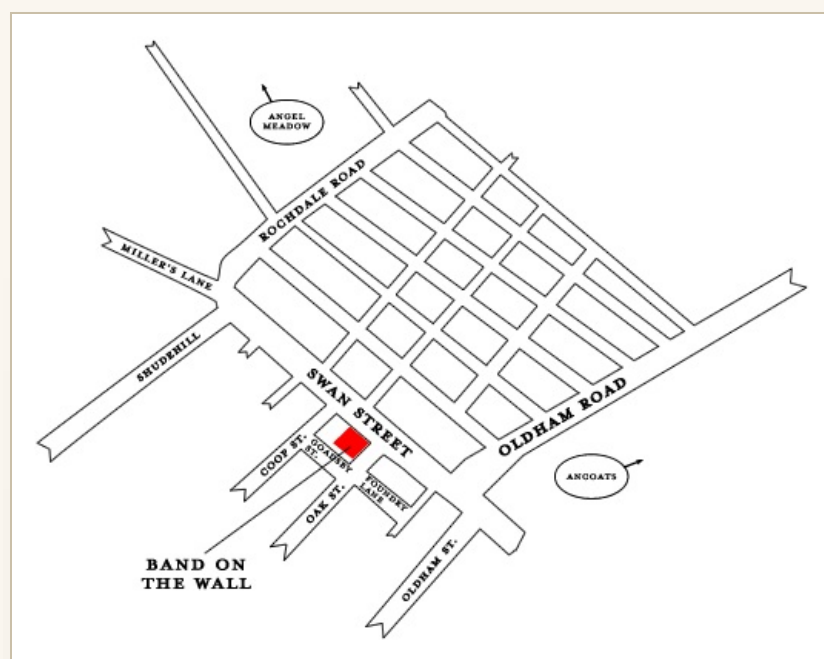
THE BUILDINGS

There is very little documentary evidence of the early history of the construction, adaptation and expansion of the George & Dragon – that led to its 20th century existence as

- a music venue, Band on the Wall. However, by reference to street and trade directories, census records, maps, Poor Rate Books and other sources, we have been able to assemble a record, at times tentative, of the evolution of the building and its annexed adjacent buildings that comprised the George & Dragon into the beginning of the 20th century. There is no simple answer to the question 'Who built Band on the Wall?' or even 'When was it built?' In fact, one could argue that it was not built, at least not in one phase: it evolved. In 1905, at a mid-point in its history so far, the George and Dragon, the music venue's historical name, simultaneously comprised several connected addresses: in Swan Street at the front, Oak Street at the side and Goadsby Street at the back. At various times in the prior 100 years these premises displayed a remarkable array of uses and trades, while almost continuously including a pub:
- Public house
- Wine & spirit vaults
- Grocer
- Attorney
- Corn dealer
- Flour dealer
- Fent* dealer

- Loom maker
 - Shoemaker
 - Auctioneer & valuer
 - Confectioner
 - Tea dealer
 - Engraver
 - Beer retailer
 - Smallware dealer
 - Tailor
 - Glass & china dealer
 - Tobacconist
 - Fruit dealer
 - Fish dealer
 - Restaurant
 - Picture house
 - Stationer
- fent – dyed or printed dress, curtain or upholstery fabric In addition to all of these trades, professions and services, many families lived a large part of their lives there; many children would have been born and brought up in the living accommodation on the premises: upstairs, downstairs and in the cellars. To say that the George & Dragon/Band on the Wall has its historic roots in the community would be something of an understatement. The venue's long history, its variety of owners, occupants and uses present something of a jig-saw puzzle for the researcher seeking to describe the construction, adaptation and evolution of the buildings. It is a puzzle with many missing pieces. As a result this chapter on the physical history of Band on the Wall can never be the full and finished story.

18TH CENTURY ORIGINS



The block of current buildings facing Swan Street, bookended by two licensed houses –

Band on the Wall at the Oak Street end and the Smithfield Hotel at the Coop Street end – has its origins in the late 18th century. For convenience we will call it ‘the Band on the Wall block’, though it would be well into the 20th Century

before the music venue's name was established by colloquial usage in place of its original name, the George and Dragon.

Illustrative map showing location of Band on the Wall The block – on the eastern edge of the area that in the late 20th century was named the Northern Quarter – does not yet exist in the 1770s: the eastward drift from the town centre of piecemeal and speculative building in the 1750s and 1760s had not yet reached that side of town.¹ A map of Manchester from c1772 shows that a few of the streets that comprise the present Northern Quarter have been laid out. This development was 'not to an overall plan', built as the need and opportunity grew, but at this time there is no building development close to the Band on the Wall block; the site was a field, possibly a 'patchwork of gardens', the description of the adjacent land that would become the site of the Smithfield Market.²

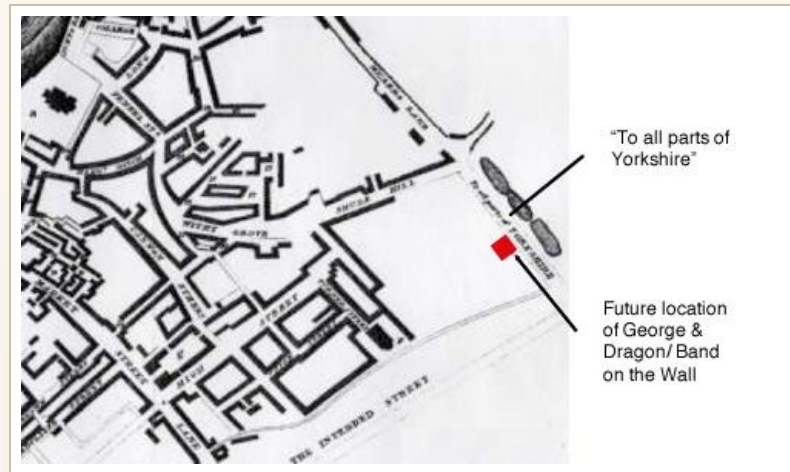


Figure 3 – Extract from 'A Plan of Manchester and Salford', T. Tinker, 1772 (Manchester

Archives & Local Studies). Pin-pointed at the edge of a field is where the George & Dragon/Band on the Wall would be developed. The path to Yorkshire On the map we can see Shude Hill that has existed since the 16th Century and also a number of other streets, including High Street and Market Street but what eventually would become Swan Street, is only shown as an unnamed rough pathway, labelled on the map: 'To all parts of YORKSHIRE'. Due to the massive industrial development nearby, the area was now 'attractive territory for housing the swelling numbers of mill workers and domestic weavers' ³, and building construction would soon follow its inexorable eastward drift from the town centre. The path to 'all parts of Yorkshire' would shortly deserve a name of its own. Prior research (iCosse 2007) stated: 'The Manchester and Salford Trade Directory for 1781 was the first to include the address of New Cross Street, the original name of Swan Street. The nascent nature of the community there is indicated by the fact that there were only four entries for the new thoroughfare, including one public house, the Boar's-head: Brown, James, carpenter & timberman, New cross Holt, Robert, Bookbinder, New cross Pickup, John, Boar's-head, New cross Shawcross, Edward, fustian manufacturer, New cross 'The lack of numbers for the addresses is another possible indication of how new the road was: the fact that at this time the Shudehill Pits [small reservoirs] were still in existence and so the northern side of the road was not inhabited may possibly have been a factor in this too.' In fact it is likely that New Cross was just a generic term for the area, not the street, and the four addresses above were at the historic meeting place of New Cross, the junction of Oldham Street, Oldham Road, Great Ancoats Street and what would become Swan Street. For example, from 1776 the Boar's Head is recorded at Oldham Road, with John Pickup the

- licensee from 1780-84. What is certain is that 'the decades after 1780 witnessed a building boom in Manchester'⁴ and that it would not be long before the 'Band on the Wall block' emerged on New Cross Street. Indeed, by 1788, the site is no longer a field but has been built on, as is shown on the rough map included in Lewis's Directory of this date. So the early form of the Band on the Wall block is first recorded in 1788. This accords with title deed and Land Registry documents, in possession of Band on the Wall's current owners, the charity Inner City Music, that record the conveyance in 1786 of land now occupied by Band on the Wall. The parties named in the documents are Josiah Birch, Thomas Coop and John Taylor. Mr Birch In 1781, Josiah Birch & Son were fustian*, silk & check manufacturers in High Street. Theirs was an established and expanding market and it would appear that Mr Birch might have invested in the undeveloped land nearby.
- fustian – coarse cloth of cotton/linen or cotton/wool mixture. Mr Coop Thomas Coop's name was given to Coop

Street, at the side of the current Smithfield Hotel. In the 1790s, he lived and traded as a loom maker at No 1 Coop Street 5 – on part of the site of the existing Smithfield Hotel – and by 1806 had a shop and warehouse on Swan Street, 6 probably on the site of the current Burton Arms. Mr Taylor John Taylor is the corn and flour dealer who in 1788 traded from premises in nearby Tib Street and by 17947 was living and working from Nos 10 & 11 Swan Street, part of the existing Band on the Wall site, subsequently renumbered. A significant local dealer, he may have been responsible for the development of the block on his land. He also had stables in Foundry Lane, no doubt providing the horse-power for the distribution by cart of his flour throughout the area. He may also have been the first licensee in 1799 of The Rising Sun, 8 at the corner of Swan Street & Rochdale Road, a public-house that had a long and at times notorious history, including as a music hall. At this time, a Peter Taylor, perhaps a relative, is the publican of The Fleece, round the corner at 24 Oak Street.

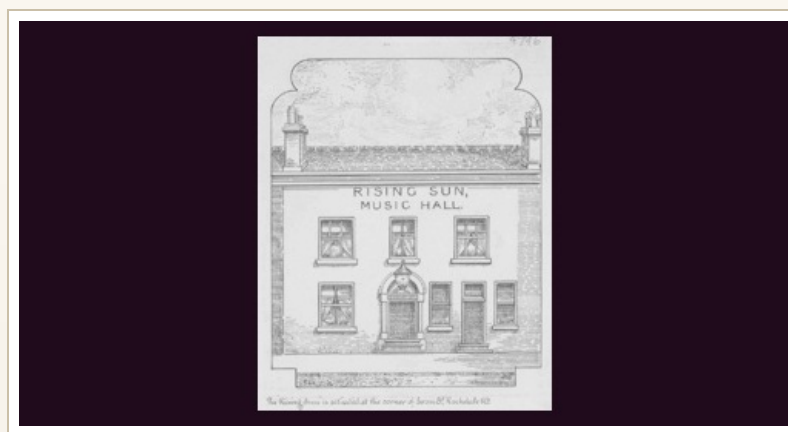


Figure 5 – The Rising Sun Music Hall, corner of Swan Street and Rochdale Road (Manchester

Archives & Local Studies)

Further detail of the Band on the Wall block is provided by Green's map of Manchester, 1787-94:



Figure 6 – Extract of Green's Map of Manchester, 1787-94 (Manchester Archives & Local

Studies) On this map New Cross Street is now named Swan Street and what was Aubery Lane at the back of the block is now Foundry Lane, later spelt Foundry Lane, part of which subsequently became Goadsby Street, named after one of the councillors on the Markets Committee, Thomas Goadsby, who would go on to become Mayor of Manchester (1861-

62). Ironworks next door The foundry, after which the lane was named in the early 1790s, was The Griffin Iron Foundry of John Smith & Co on Swan Street. This was almost certainly on the site at the corner with Oak Street, now opposite Band on the Wall, part of the larger site that has been developed by Workshop Properties Ltd and opened as 14 retail and office units in 2012. The foundry also was accessed from Foundry Lane where, appropriately, Mr Smith operated a smithy. In 1801 Mr Smith lived at 18 Oak Street; other members of the Smith family were involved in the business, the address of which originally was the Shudehill Pits in 1788. The ready supply of water from these small reservoirs on the north side of Swan Street no doubt was advantageous to the foundry that would have provided ironwork for the local and booming building industry, as well as for other local trades. Courtyard and atrium

The site of the Band on the Wall block broadly follows the building outline illustrated in the 1788 map, but Green's map also shows 'the eastern half filled with buildings that are arranged around a courtyard, the form of which appears to have survived to the present day'. (iCosse 2007) A passage, perhaps wide enough to take horse and cart, or at least a hand-cart, is shown linking the courtyard to Foundry Lane. The courtyard subsequently became a kind of atrium and this feature was reinstated in 2009 in the form of the refurbished, pitched, glazed roof above The Picturehouse bar in the current Band on the Wall. The ancient passage through to Foundry Lane/Goadsby Street from The Picturehouse site also is retained today, if in an adapted form and with its own 999-year lease. At the end of the 18th century, it would appear that the only parts of the block not built on are part of the site now occupied by the Smithfield Hotel and the Burton Arms.

1Simon Taylor & Julian Holder, 'Manchester's Northern Quarter',p11, English Heritage 2008 2'The Shudehill & NQ Area of Manchester', p22, English Heritage 3 Simon Taylor & Julian Holder, 'Manchester's Northern Quarter',p23, English Heritage 2008 4Ibid, Simon Taylor & Julian Holder,p20 5Scholes Directory of Manchester, 1794 & 1797 6Poor Rate Book, 1806 7Poor Rate Book, 1796 8Neil Richardson, unpublished notes on Manchester pubs, courtesy Susan Richardson

INTO THE 19TH CENTURY

Layout of the block Leap forward over half a century and the Ordnance Survey map of 1850 shows a very similar buildings footprint to the block, but now The Smithfield Market Tavern and the John O'Groats House public house (to be renamed on a few occasions, now The Burton Arms) have been constructed. Here we see that the site that is currently occupied by Band on the Wall, including The Picturehouse, comprises no fewer than five conjoined premises, two each on Swan Street and Oak Street and one on the corner of both. Most probably they had continuously built up frontages, but with separate entrances, and were of two or three storeys, with cellars. The evidence from the street directories suggests that this layout of 1850 was already in existence before the turn of the century.

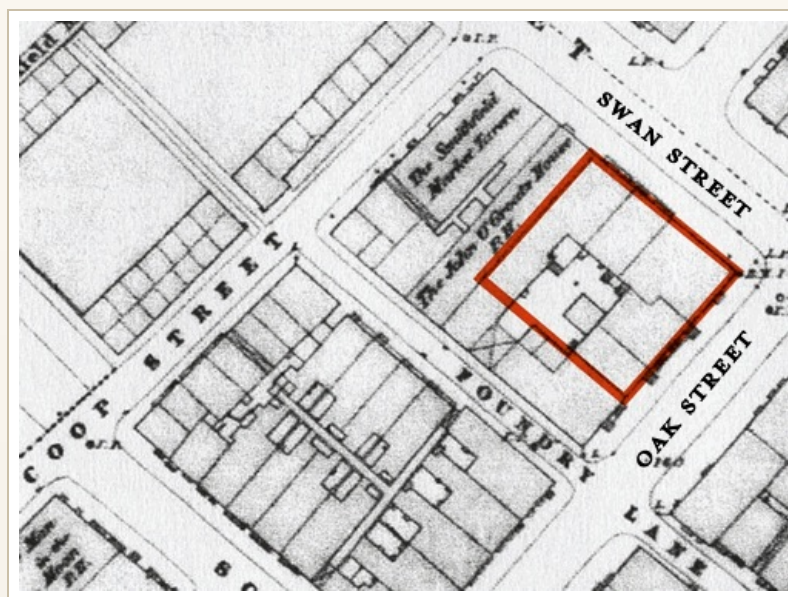


Figure 7 – Detail from Ordnance Survey Map 1850 (Manchester Archives & Local Studies).

Outlined in red is the site of the present Band on the Wall, including The Picturehouse. The first George and Dragon in Swan Street In 1803, publican Elizabeth Marsh who had run a George & Dragon pub in Ardwick for at least eight years, opened her second George & Dragon at No 9 Swan Street, later to be renumbered several times as new buildings were constructed in the street. This small corner plot would remain the site of the George & Dragon throughout its long history but at various stages in the 19th century the pub would be considerably expanded as adjacent properties were annexed. In its early years, it must have been a modest operation, as it was some years before it merited inclusion in the trade directories. (Apparently first recorded in Dean's Manchester Directory for 1808/09}

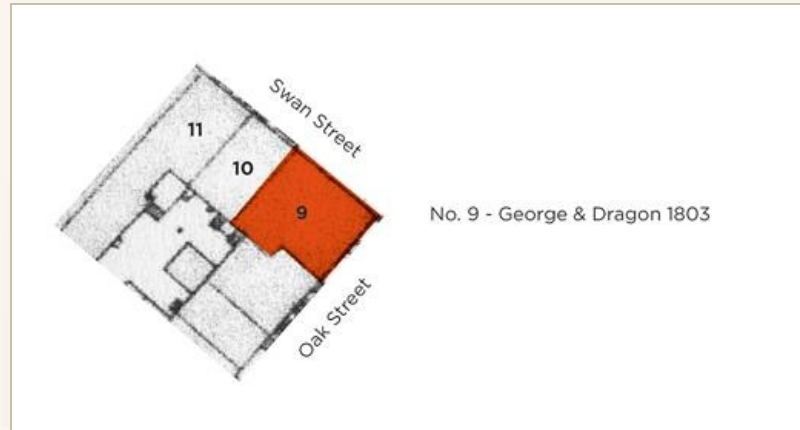


Figure 8 – The site of the first George & Dragon

Clearly No 9 Swan Street existed prior to its new life in 1803 as a public-house, but what was the building before that date? We cannot be certain but the street directories may throw some light on this. Generally, in these times these directories gave listings when a trade, profession or other occupation was being carried out at the address; also a few 'principal inhabitants' or 'gentlemen' might be listed but the ordinary occupants of ordinary dwellings were rarely included. A flour dealer, William Jefferson, was listed at 8 Swan Street in 1794 & 1797, on the other side of Oak Street, and in the same directories John Taylor is shown to have run his business as a corn dealer at No 10, next door to what would become the George & Dragon and later annexed as part of the pub. The absence of a listing in these directories for No 9 would suggest that at this time the small corner property that became the first George & Dragon was a dwelling, and the occupant was neither a 'principal inhabitant' nor a 'gentleman'. Elizabeth Marsh, though a publican with two properties, did not fit either category. Number 9 Swan Street is recorded in the Poor Law Rate Books and the details suggest that Mr Jefferson, the flour dealer, lived there in 1798 whereas by 1800 the rate for the premises was paid by John Smith, of the Griffin Iron Foundry, across Oak Street. At this time it would appear that No 11- probably on part of the site of The Picturehouse within the current, enlarged Band on the Wall – also was a dwelling, the home of the seemingly ubiquitous John Taylor, though a few years later it would also be a shop.⁹ At the start of the 19th century, Swan Street was already a busy little street, at the heart of an increasingly busy area. Though barely 300 yards long, already there were at least 26 addresses in the street, almost without exception all on the same side of the street. Mixed use and live-in occupants As stated, in the previous two decades much of the early speculative building in the Northern Quarter was in response to demand for housing for mill workers and domestic weavers. However, when Elizabeth Marsh opened the George & Dragon for business, Swan Street and its neighbouring streets were much more mixed use, at a level and diversity that no doubt would contravene health and safety regulations today. Houses, yes. Shops, yes. Warehouses, yes. But also trade and industry: the Griffin Ironworks, a coal yard, Heggibottom's Rope Yard, sawyers, joiners and chair makers – all on Swan Street. Just

round the corner in Oak Street another pub and a surprising dual occupancy: an attorney, sharing the address with a bread baker. Yards away were the stables and blacksmiths in Foundry Lane. At No 1 Swan Street, at the corner with Oldham Street, was corn dealer Edward Swan who, like Mr Coop at No 1 Coop Street, is immortalised in the name of his street. A grocer, Edward Walker, also had his shop at No1. Amid all of this industry and trade, hundreds of people lived – in Swan Street and adjacent streets at the beginning of the 19th century. While there were approximately as many dwellings as there were commercial premises, almost without exception the latter were also the homes of the traders, dealers, shopkeepers, etc; there were no lock-up shops or businesses in these days in this area: you lived on the premises,¹⁰ a practice that continued at the George & Dragon/Band on the Wall until 1979 and started there by

Elizabeth Marsh 175 years earlier. The last live-in occupants in the upstairs rooms of Band on the Wall – now the offices of Inner City Music – were former licensee and partner in the business Frank Cusick and his wife Anne who lived and worked there from 1975 to 1979. Both are now deceased.

9Poor Rate Books for 1800 & 1808 10'New Cross', article in Manchester Evening Chronicle, 13.10.1913

FIRST EXPANSION: 1820S

The first enlargement of the George & Dragon occurred in the late 1820s when what was then No 20 Oak Street was annexed, though not interconnected. Most probably it was part of the conjoined premises the footprint of which would be roughly that of the middle of the current Band on the Wall main venue, the public area where seats are laid out for seated events.

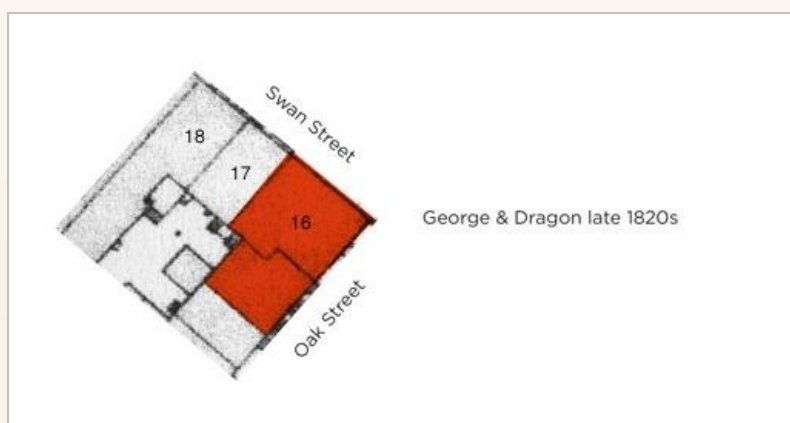


Figure 9 – The first expansion of the George & Dragon, annexing the adjacent vaults in Oak

Street A significant re-numbering of Swan Street must have occurred between 1832 and 1836 – probably the result of numbers being allocated to buildings on the North side of the street after the Shudehill Pits were filled in. A map of the period shows that in 1824 11 the infilling of the pits had not been completed – and part of the current Cross Keys Street, opposite the

present Picturehouse entrance to Band on the Wall, was named Pit Street – whereas by 1832 the pits had been completely filled in, and buildings were constructed along the length of the street. These buildings were then allocated the even numbers and the South side given only the odd numbers for the first time. Evidence for this can be seen in the street directories that, for example, show corn dealer James Slater's number changing from 17 in 1832 – next door to the George & Dragon, then at No. 16 – to 27 by 1836, remaining next door to the public-house, now listed for the first time at No 25. It is not clear if during this period and into the next decade the Oak Street annexe remained continuously part of the George & Dragon; it may have been rented out as living and workshop accommodation. For example, in 1843 it is the home and workplace of an engraver, Alexander Fraser,¹² and in the next few years that of beer retailers ¹³none of whom was the licensee of the George & Dragon.

¹¹Map in Pigot & Dean's Directory of Manchester, 1824 ¹²Pigot's Directory of Manchester, 1843 ¹³Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1845 & 1848

SECOND EXTENSION: 1850S

Around 1850, the next conjoined premises in Oak Street were annexed, probably on the site of the existing stage and dance floor of Band on the Wall and these enlarged vaults were then permanently part of the George & Dragon, but not interconnected until 1911.



Figure 10 – The second expansion of the George & Dragon, annexing the next adjacent

property in Oak Street. These vaults also from time to time doubled up as a shop and dining rooms as well as remaining as living accommodation, probably on the upper floor or floors, even into the early 20th century. Occupants and traders included an earthenware dealer, and family; 14a family of tailors from Ireland;¹⁵ and for the last quarter of the 19th century a tobacconist.¹⁶ Multi-occupancy: On the site of the present Picturehouse building, at No 29 Swan Street, a rope manufacturer with what sounds like an appropriate surname, E Hacking, is listed in the trade directory for 1836¹⁷ but by 1841¹⁸ it is the home and workplace of two families, Joseph Radcliffe, aged 55,

smallware dealer, his wife Lucy (50) and their two grown-up children, aged 20 & 25; also George Hickson, aged 30, earthenware dealer, his wife Mary (25) and two children, one aged two years, the other 2 months. The Radcliffes remain at No 29 until 1850 but by that time Mrs Radcliffe, alone, (perhaps now a widow) is listed as the smallware dealer. The Hickson family continued to live there at least until 1861 but by this date Mr Hickson was a widower, living with his three daughters and three sons, aged between 7 and 21, and one sister. Mrs Hickson had died in 1858, aged 42. It is evident that by the 1851 Census the cellars of 29 Swan Street also were occupied by a family of 7: John Trayner and his wife Margaret, both aged 32 and born in Ireland, with their 5 children, aged 2 to 13. The Trayners were shoemakers, employing 'five men', perhaps including some of their children. The 1851 census reveals the level of multi-occupancy that was common in this and many other parts of Manchester. At this date a total of 41 people are recorded as living in the block of buildings on the site of the present Band on the Wall, in addition to it functioning as the George & Dragon public house and including at least two shops, workshops and a warehouse. As well as those referred to in the paragraph above, the occupants included: the pub manager and his family with two servants; a fent dealer and his family; another family of shoemakers; five members of the Connors family, tailors; and three members of the Shirpley family, glass and china dealers, with two saleswomen and a house servant from Ireland. So at these adjoining premises, a customer could not only have a drink of beer, wine or spirits but also buy clothing, fabric, shoes, glassware and china, various small household items, and have a suit or dress made or repaired.

¹⁴Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1850 ¹⁵Census records, 1851 & 1861 ¹⁶Slater's Directories of Manchester, 1876-1903 ¹⁷Pigot's Directory of Manchester, 1836 ¹⁸Census records, 1841

THE PICTUREHOUSE BUILDING

A few years after acquiring the George and Dragon in 1856, it would appear that the new owners, the enterprising McKenna brothers, also acquired the adjacent late 18th century property at No 29 Swan Street and would soon embark on the next expansion of the George & Dragon, constructing what is now called The Picturehouse building that has been part of Band on the Wall since 2009. However, there are a few questions about the origins and early usage of this building.



Figure 11 – The Picturehouse building, 2016

The English Heritage citation for the Grade 2 listed building says that it was built in approximately 1865. The 2001 English Heritage report describes the building as ‘a remarkable three-storey building in the High Victorian Gothic style of the 1860s’ and suggests that originally it may have contained domestic accommodation in the upper floors.¹⁹ Yet from 1863 there appears to be no evidence from available documents of live-in residents at this address that had numerous occupants in previous decades. Also, following an entry in the trade directory as ‘McKenna’s Vaults’ in 1863²⁰ there appears to be no further reference in the directories to these new owners or to the George & Dragon at this address until, probably, 1886.²¹ Indeed in the 20 years from 1863, it would appear that the exclusive, continuous occupants were tobacco manufacturers Brooke & Waterworth. The company also traded from Park Villas, 742 Rochdale Road, Harpurhey. . A likely interpretation of the facts of its early origin is that it was built by the McKennas – their monogram is on the façade of the building – and let to the tobacco company on a 20- year lease and, from the expiry of the lease in 1883, and into the early 20th century, it was run by the McKennas as part of the George & Dragon and as a centre for distribution of their wines and spirits, with their offices in the upper floors. Alternatively, it is possible that the building was constructed by the tobacco company and taken over and re-branded by the McKennas in the 1880s. Yet another possibility is that it was built by the McKennas but considerably later than the 1860s, after the tobacco company vacated the premises in 1883. All three options fit the date of the first recorded drinks licence for this building granted to Bernard McKenna in 1884.²² It is hoped that future research will resolve this question. What is not in doubt is that by the 1880s the building had been constructed, was owned by the McKennas and later in the century would be the registered address of their limited company.

In place of the previous occupant’s stores of tobacco, the McKennas’ products – wines and spirits from the bottling plant attached to their brewery in Harpurhey – no doubt were stored in the basement and loaded to horse-drawn carts in Goadsby Street at the back via the access passageway through the building. The passage exists to this day in an adapted form as a fire escape and internal access route for performers from the basement dressings rooms to the stage of Band on the Wall. In the McKenna era, a similar access on the ground floor also enabled customers and thirsty workers from the Smithfield Market at the back to directly enter the George & Dragon from Goadsby Street. This could have been sizeable traffic: In 1909, for example, over 370 traders were listed at the Market, mainly fruit, vegetable and potato salesmen; many more assistants were employed; and hundreds of customers visited daily. Towards the end of the 19th century the McKennas turned the ground floor of this building into a restaurant and, as was fashionable at the time, by 1911, under new ownership, it was a billiard room prior to its conversion around 1915 to a picture house – of which

more in the 20th century section of this history. Now part of Band on the Wall, this remarkable building has the Picturehouse Café Bar on the ground floor, musicians dressing rooms, shower room, storage and public toilets in the basement, and, on the two upper floors, the offices of music organisation Brighter Sound that runs music education and participation projects both within Band on the Wall and elsewhere in the region.

19'The Shudehill & NQ Area of Manchester', p19, English Heritage 2001 20Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1863
21Slater's Directory of Manchester, 1886 22Register of Licensees, 1875-1890, Manchester Record Office

The in-between building By the 1860s, the McKennas owned the George & Dragon, then numbered 25 Swan Street and probably had constructed the Gothic style building at No 29. But the building sandwiched between these two premises remained in other occupancy: tea and coffee merchants, Cope & Co. However, by 1871²³ these merchants share the property with the McKennas' 'spirit vaults' and by the late 1870s, the tea dealers had gone. The McKennas had acquired this intervening property and, on a roll commercially, they then knocked together the two adjacent premises at Nos 25 & 27 Swan Street, creating a further enlarged George & Dragon to add to the vaults on Oak Street that were still not interconnected to the pub.

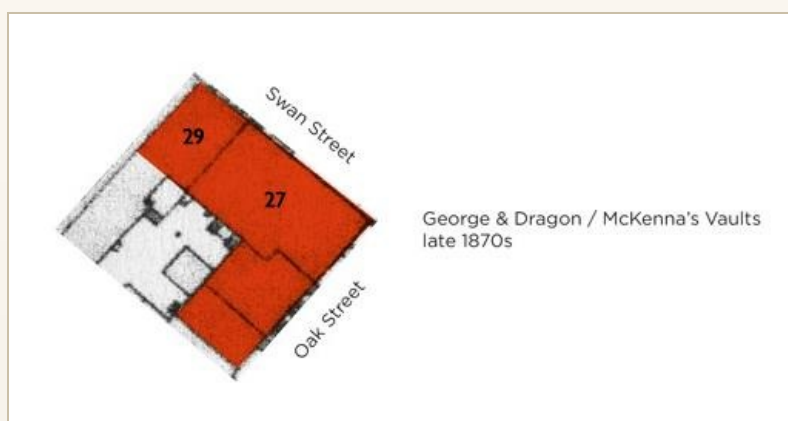


Figure 12 – The George & Dragon by the late 1870s

No plans or architectural details appear to exist from this time that would show the scope of the works carried out to create this enlarged George & Dragon. Prior research (Holmshaw 2000) took the advice of an architectural historian, concluding: 'The George and Dragon was substantially re-built – internal doors, pillars, plasterwork and mouldings exist from this period – particularly round the entrance way, in the upstairs offices and above the balcony. A new corner entrance was created...' The researcher suggested that this work was carried out shortly after, and prompted by, the 1858 major development of the adjacent Smithfield Market. Our research suggests that it might have been rather later, probably around 1870, and was more of a substantial adaptation of the existing 18th century properties, rather than a rebuild. But this is not conclusive. It is likely that at this time the distinctive, pillared façade with large arched bays that exist to this day was created along the Swan Street frontage and part, but not all, of the Oak Street façade. In the 21st century, the building, now Band on the Wall, is described as 'third quarter 19th century Italianate'.²⁴ At this time of the significant expansion of the pub, it is an apparent oddity that for the first time in its history No 25 is shown in the trade directories²⁵ as having two commercial occupants, the George & Dragon and Bratt & Hobson, grocers. Previous research (iCosse 2007) suggested that the pub might have occupied the ground and basement, while the grocers occupied one or more of the upper floors. This is contradicted by the street directories of the time that curiously show No 25 on both sides of Oak Street, with the grocers on one side and the George and Dragon on the other. Our contention is that when the McKennas brought together Nos 25 and 27 as one property in the 1870s, there was then some confusion about the street number for the property and for some time the collectors of the information for the directories listed No 25 on both sides of the street. To some extent this confusion exists to the present day: Band on the Wall's letterheads give the address as 25 Swan Street, though officially it is No 27. The building that from the 1870s was officially No 25, on the opposite corner of Oak Street and on part of the site of the old foundry, was demolished in the early 21st century and was last used in the 1980s as the glassware warehouse of Harry Howarth & Co. On this site now is part of the retail and office block constructed by Workshop Properties Ltd and completed in 2012.

The performance space Following the establishment of B & J McKenna as a limited company in 1895, this, the third

generation of the brewing and innkeeping family, surrendered the licence of one of their pubs, the Queen Ann on Long Millgate, Salford, in 1897 for permission to make 'alterations and extensions' to the George & Dragon.²⁶ It has been suggested that this was when the present form of the main venue of Band on the Wall was created by the amalgamation of the George & Dragon with the neighbouring building on Oak Street, resulting in the 'huge vault that now serves as the performance area'. (Holmshaw 2000)

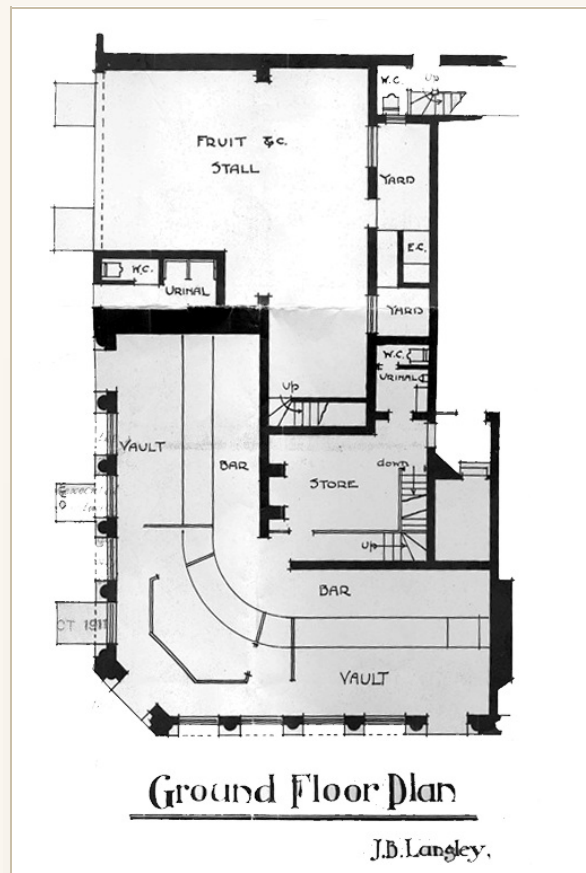


Figure 13 – 1911 architectural drawing, The George & Dragon, existing ground floor

This theory is contradicted by architectural drawings, courtesy of Manchester City Council Planning Department, showing that the two conjoined buildings were not yet inter-connected in 1911, when plans were approved by the licensing magistrates to make the internal connection, along with substantial other improvements. The 1911 existing ground floor plan shows an L-shaped public area and large bar counter in the George & Dragon, while the Oak Street premises is a 'Fruit etc Stall', with wide bays to the street, probably with moveable shutters and awnings. The public toilets for both premises were accessed directly from the street. The first floor plan shows the George & Dragon as it was in 1911, with four bedrooms, a kitchen and two storerooms, with access from behind the bar downstairs, while the Oak Street building has four storerooms and stairs to the downstairs fruit stall.

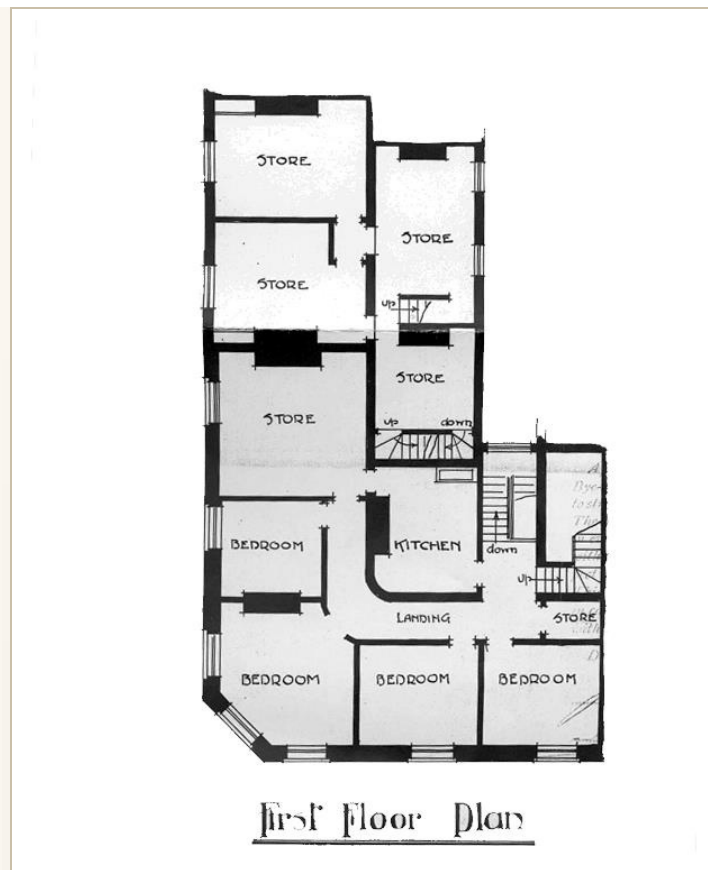


Figure 14 – 1911 architectural drawing, The George & Dragon, existing first floor

The proposed ground floor plan shows the creation of a large Smoke and Refreshment Room, in place of the fruit stall, in the area of the present stage and dance floor of Band on the Wall. Customers could enter this room via a vestibule, accessed from the pub vaults and from Oak Street. Banquette seating surrounds most of the public spaces and new public toilets are created – this time inside the building. Substantial structural work is indicated on the plan, with a network of steel joists at ceiling level and the introduction of supporting stanchions. When this scheme was carried out, probably in 1912, it is likely that the ornate plasterwork that already may have existed in

part of the vaults was replicated along the new joists above the pub section and a simpler dental pattern introduced above the smoke and refreshment room. The structural elements, including the two pillars at the edge of the dance floor and the elaborate stucco plasterwork, exist to this day, with some additions and adaptations carried out during refurbishments in 1987 and 2009.

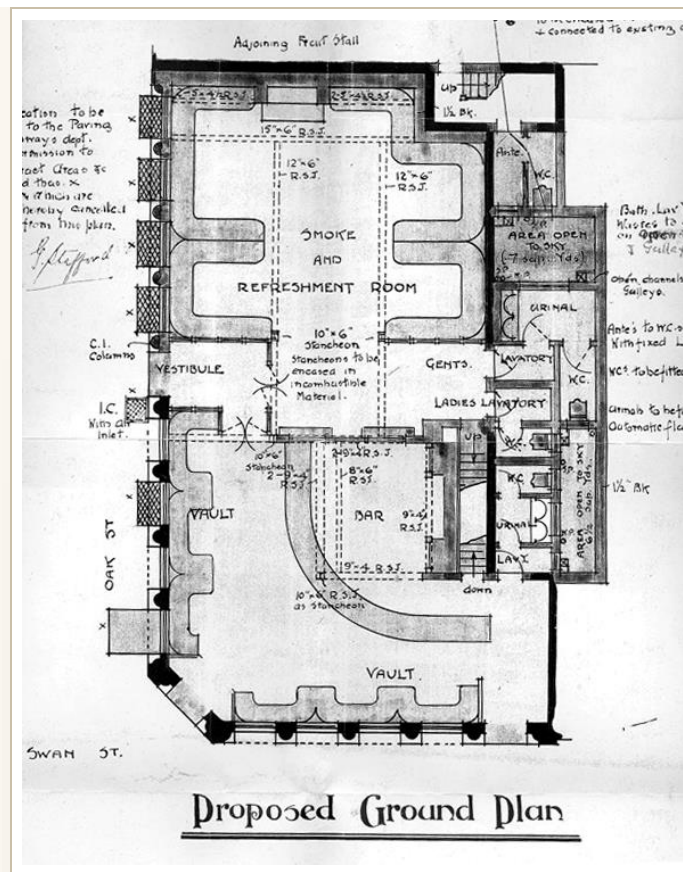


Figure 15 – 1911 architectural drawing, The George & Dragon, proposed ground floor

The proposed first floor plan also shows the inter-linking of the two premises for the first time and, in place of the storerooms in Oak Street, a dining room, sitting room, kitchen and

bathroom. This layout provided improved accommodation, now perhaps justifying the name George & Dragon Hotel, a label that was in use certainly since 1901 and can be seen on a photo of the building in 1959. (Photo: H W Beaumont, Manchester Archives & Local Studies) This first-floor layout remained essentially unaltered until the 2009 refurbishments. From the 1980s, what was the store became the band room, bedrooms became education rooms – and for a few years the offices of Minorities Arts Advisory Service (North West) and a recording studio – and the sitting and dining rooms were offices, firstly of Jazz Centre Society and then of its sibling company, the charity Inner City Music that now owns Band on the Wall.

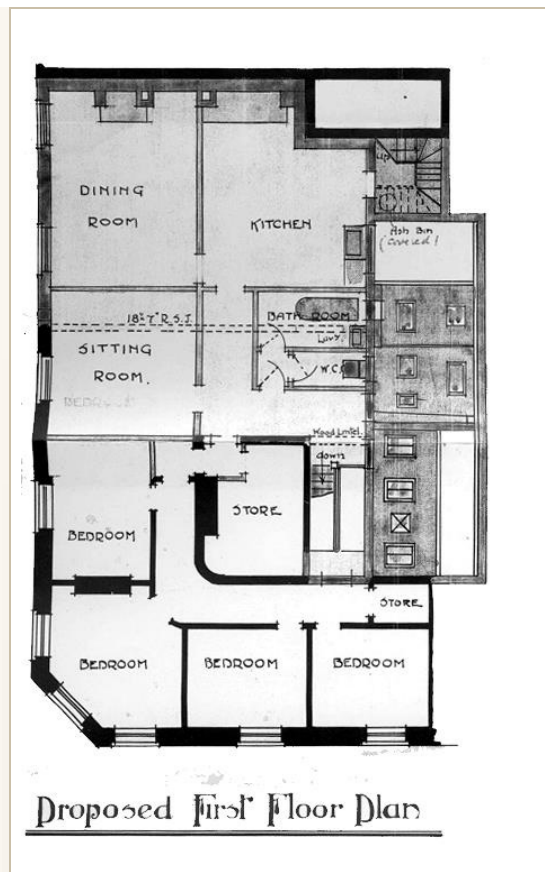


Figure 16 – 1911 architectural drawing, The George & Dragon, proposed first floor

It would be some years before the ‘huge vault’ that would become the performance area of Band on the Wall was created in full, but by 1912 the inter-connection had been made and the physical structures were in place to achieve this. Externally the new scheme included a complete remodelling of part of the Oak Street façade, introducing the pillared, arched window bays and replicating the existing façade of the George & Dragon. The Oak Street elevation now has eight identical bays; externally, the building today is largely unchanged.

ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

If, as now seems evident, it was not to create this huge vault that the permission was given in 1897 to make ‘alterations and extensions’ to the George & Dragon, what works were then planned? Firm evidence is absent but there are some pointers that it was No 29, now called The Picturehouse, that benefitted from this phase of improvements. Firstly, for one year only, in 1896, the McKennas did not apply to renew the drinks licence on 29 Swan Street,²⁷ while retaining the licence on the adjacent pub. Secondly, the Ordnance Survey map of a few years earlier²⁸ shows the courtyard at the back of this building as open ground: no sign of it being roofed over as was subsequently carried out. Thus the indications are that this was when this extension to the ground floor (and basement?) of ‘The Picturehouse’ was built, including the construction of a pitched, glazed roof, and the insertion of a large steel joist to support the rear wall. This ground-floor space was now big enough to be a restaurant or billiard room or picture house and indeed subsequently it would become all three, albeit not simultaneously.

²³Slater’s Directory of Manchester, 1871 ²⁴The Shudehill & NQ Area of Manchester’, p105, English Heritage 2001

²⁵Slater’s Directory of Manchester, 1871 & 1876 ²⁶Neil Richardson, letter to Brian Holmshaw, 28.6.2000 ²⁷Neil

Richardson, Report of Licensing Meeting, Manchester Licensing Records ²⁸Ordnance Survey Map of Manchester, 1871

COCOZZA WOOD BUILDING

The three-storey 'Cocozza Wood' building at 31-35 Goadsby Street adjoining the back of Band on the Wall and the Burton Arms Hotel is described as a highly ornamental 'tour de force of High Victorian Gothic'²⁹ and as the earliest surviving local example of commercial chambers, with shops on the ground floor, built in the 1860s, in place of the late 18th century building on the site. The building overlooked the Smithfield Market and, indeed, was integrated with and, as is now perhaps evident, dependent on the Market. Occupants in the latter part of the 19th century and into the 20th were provision dealers, fish curers, fruit, vegetable and potato sellers and glass and china dealers. The name Cocozza Wood refers to the fruit and vegetable dealers who were the last occupants of the building, prior to its closure following the demolition of the Market in 1973. Their sign remained on the building until the early 21st century.



Figure 17 – Smithfield Market in 1854 (Manchester Archives and Local Studies)

This 1880 drawing, looking northwards from Oak Street, shows the busy Smithfield Market, with the 'Cocozza Wood' building on the right hand side, and the rear façade of the adjacent Burton Arms just beyond. It is possible that the building was built by the McKennas; certainly by the end of the 19th century they owned it. By 1903³⁰ part of it was listed as McKennas restaurant while a few years later the listing for this section of the building was the George & Dragon, public house. These entries may refer to the access passageway through the building to the ground floor of No 29 Swan Street. The trade directories for the latter decades of the 19th century appear not to provide evidence of the use of this building as commercial chambers, as cited by English Heritage. Both the 1861 and 1871 censuses show that market dealers and sales people and their families were living at this address. Over a century later, in the 1980s, when access to the upper floors of this decaying building remained possible, building specialists on behalf of Inner City Music visited the site. The structural engineer reported that the building evidently had been built for heavy loads. Big metal hooks aligned the walls of one of the large upper rooms and were thought to be for the storage of bananas. In the cellar was a rusty contraption, identified as an onion-curing machine. A reference to onions in the street that abuts this building, is made by a writer in 1881: 'we come to Oak Street, which seems to have got itself somehow or other absorbed into the market. Up to the very corner of Swan Street, it is devoted to baskets of vegetables, which fringe the pavement invitingly. We found ourselves unaccountably moved to tears, and it was only on minute examination of the contents of these baskets that we discovered the cause – they contained onions'.³¹ The publication includes a sketch of the writer and the sketch artist:



Figure 18 – Moved to tears by the onions, a sketch from Momus, 2.6.1881

The building is now derelict, unoccupied and deteriorating since the closure of the Market in 1972, and is currently (2012) supported by retaining scaffolding since 2005; roofless and unloved, its future is most uncertain.



Figure 19 – The ‘Cocozza Wood’ building in Goadsby Street, at the back of Band on the Wall

(2012). Photography by Rosanna Freedman.

29Simon Taylor & Julian Holder, ‘Manchester’s Northern Quarter’,p73, English Heritage 2008 30Slater’s Directory of Manchester, 1903 31Momus publication, 2.6.1881

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – New Cross: Scene of Riots and Agitation

Appendix 2 – History of Smithfield Market

Appendix 3 – List of B & J McKenna Public Houses (19th Century)

APPENDIX 1

New Cross: Scene of Riots and Agitation The new cross was an important meeting point for traders, travellers and carriers, as well as a ‘rendezvous where all kinds of opinions could be ventilated: politics, socialism, religion, literature and multitudinous other subjects’.¹It also was an open market. By the late 18th century the District was called New Cross. “New Cross was a moderate open space, the centre of four important thoroughfares at the bottom of Oldham Road, with Oldham Street on the south, Ancoats Street on the east, and Swan Street on the west. It is ground sacred to the people, having been consecrated by their blood in times past, through the Bread, Weavers and Reform Riots that took place for the amelioration of the working-class conditions’.²

The above drawing of New Cross, drawn around 1820, apparently from close to the site of the present Frog & Bucket Comedy Store, shows the numerous stalls lining up Oldham Road and with goods and provisions for sale and distribution by cart throughout the town and beyond. This was a street market, mainly for meat and vegetables, that moved to the Smithfield Market shambles in 1821.² On the right can clearly be seen the Crown & Kettle pub, still extant in a modified form at 1 Great Ancoats Street, and the building on the left side in Swan Street displays the curved frontage the style of which is retained in the present HBL bank building on this site. Two groups of people are drawn: on the right perhaps a discussion group of some kind; more centrally in the picture, fisticuffs appear more to the fore; perhaps the participants had overdone it in the Crown & Kettle where in 1820 a Tom Richardson was publican. In 1823, a correspondent in the Manchester Chronicle referred to trouble outside the Crown & Kettle, and two pubs in Oldham

Road: 'At the ends of many streets stand groups of Irish ruffians who appear to feel no interest but in ill-treating the peaceable and unoffending inhabitants.'



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall

This is particularly the case at the following places – near the Crown and Kettle, the Briton's Protection and the Death of Nelson... violence is common and many depredations are committed'.³ The Manchester City News article¹ describes the lively group discussions at New Cross, 'a place where the poison of discontent could flow freely, where wrongs were proclaimed and remedies suggested, and hopes entertained of their realisation'. During Bread Riots in the early part of the 19th century, 'there were frequent conflicts between the military and the people. Cannons were placed so as to command the four thoroughfares, where shots were fired from cannon and small arms, thus wounding many of those assembled and other innocents thereabouts'. Another history article describes the bread riots: ⁴ 'The neighbourhood of New Cross had some exciting experiences in connection with the distress of 1795-8. War was raging on the Continent, food was scarce and dear, and little work was to be got. Hunger and misery were widespread, and bread riots resulted. On July 31 matters reached a climax and the Riot Act was read. All persons found in the streets were required to give an account of themselves, but in spite of all precautions a hungry crowd attacked several carts loaded with meal at New Cross, and it was only when mounted soldiers appeared on the scene that the crowd dispersed. 'History repeated itself in 1812, and on April 20 a cart loaded with meal was stopped at New Cross and the contents of sixteen sacks were distributed by a crowd of hungry men and women... quiet was not restored until the Riot Act had been read and the cavalry had been marched down Oldham Street'. The 'Cholera Riot' An article by John O'Dea in the Manchester City News of 18.2.1905 describes the New Cross Cholera Riot of 1832 that followed the death from cholera of a young boy who had died in the hospital in Swan Street. The child's grandfather opened the coffin in the graveyard and 'to his horror found that the child's head had been severed from its trunk and a brick put in its place!'. 'The rumour immediately spread that a child had been murdered at the Cholera Hospital. During the day a great crowd of frenzied men and women visited the cemetery. They took the coffin out of the grave, tore off the lid, and the mutilated corpse was exposed to the gaze of the horrified spectators. 'The Burke and Hare murders were still fresh in the memory of the public. A cry instantly arose, 'Burkers! Burn the Hospital!' The mob shouldered the corpse and made way to Swan Street. On arriving at New Cross the dimensions of the excited crowd had swollen ten-fold. They marched to the Hospital, forced the gates, and immediately set about demolishing the premises. Chairs, tables, beds and other articles of furniture were thrown into the street and broken to pieces. The Hospital van was dragged out, set on fire and destroyed. The doctors and attendants had warning of the coming of the mob, and thus were enabled to effect their retreat in safety. The patients, to the number of 28, were removed by their friends, but one man, who was in a state of collapse, died the same evening. The police at the adjoining Shudehill lock-ups – at this time numbering no more than 20 men – were powerless to cope with such an infuriated mass'. Eventually a young Irish priest intervened and addressed the

crowd, explaining that only one individual was to blame: a medical attendant who had removed the head with a view to selling it for dissection, without the knowledge of the medical board. The crowd took the priest's advice and returned to their homes. But 'the men, however, who had carried the

coffin from the graveyard had, in the meantime, decamped with their gruesome burden down Oldham Street, demanding money from those who wished to obtain a sight of it'. A 'strong force of special constables' eventually took the body to the Town Hall where a surgeon re-attached the head to the body and the following day a re-interment took place, attended by 'an immense concourse of people'. Evil Spirits Another gruesome fact about New Cross is that early in the 19th century excavation work at the site revealed numerous human remains. These were the bodies of suicides and hanged criminal from a previous era. It was the practice to bury the bodies of suicides and hanged criminals at the town or village cross, and with a wooden stake through each body. This ancient practice was believed to allow evil spirits to escape from the dead bodies, and the crossroads location providing four escape routes.

1'Memories of New Cross, The Scene of Riots and Agitation', Manchester City News,

2.10.1920 2'The Shudehill and Northern Quarter Area of Manchester", English Heritage, 2001 3Quoted in 'Manchester's Ancoats, Little Italy' by Anthony Rea 4Manchester Evening Chronicle, 13.10.1913

APPENDIX 2

History of Smithfield Market This document is a chapter from the 'Band on the Wall, Historical Desk Assessment', by Fergus Sutherland, of iCosse, January 2007. Permission to hold an annual fair in Manchester was first granted in 1222. Initially the grant was for a two day fair, but this was increased five years later to three. It was held between the 20th and the 22nd of September, on a piece of arable land next to the town known as Four Acres or Acresfield. In 1708, Lady Ann Bland was granted an Act of Parliament to enclose Acresfield and build a church there, but a condition was attached to the effect that she had to preserve an open space thirty yards wide in front of the church to enable the fair to continue. (Hylton, 2003, 12). While the animal traders moved their operations to open fields between the town and Aldport Park, the purveyors of wooden goods, cloth and smallware (tapes, laces, etc.) continued to meet at Acresfield into the early 1800s: By this time, St Ann's Square (as it now was), was surrounded by the homes of the well-to- do of Manchester, who had to endure the unwashed masses making merry outside their front doors for three days each year. – (Hylton, 2003, 68) The control of market rights were actually held by the lord of the manor who, on payment of a fee, gave permission to set up a market stall in the town: In 1808, well before the incorporation of the borough, there had been a proposal to buy out the manorial rights to run markets. Sir Oswald Mosley was earning about £2500 a year from his manorial rights and he offered to sell them to the town for £90,000. This was rejected as excessive and it was not until 1846, exactly 250 years after Mosley's ancestor Nicholas had bought them for £3,500, that the manorial rights were finally acquired by the borough. By this time, £3,500 also happened to be the income that they generated, and Mosley's price had gone up, to £200,000. This was paid to him in instalments, with £5,000 down and £4,000 a year paid to him and his descendants. Only in 1894 did this last vestige feudal

influence over the town's government end. – (Hylton, 2003, 142)

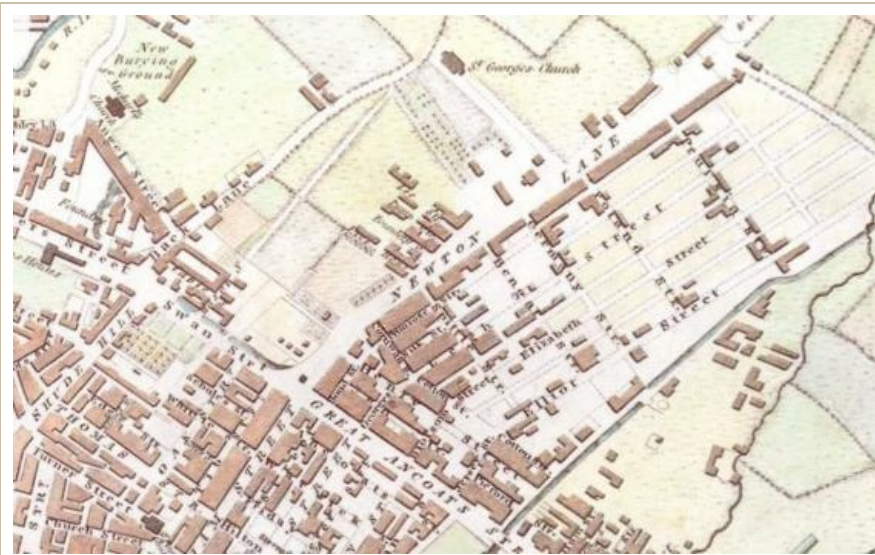


Figure 1 – Manchester, ca.1801, Cole and Roper (Manchester City Archives)

In 1820 the potato market was moved to the site of the gardens to the east of Shudehill. The land had been leased a few years earlier from the Earl of Derby by Sir Oswald Mosley who paid to have it levelled and drained. Acres Fair removed to the newmarket in 1821, followed by the butchers and greengrocers (from New Cross Shambles) and then the meal and flour market. It was officially given the title of Smithfield Market in May 1822 (Axon, 1886, 163). Originally the new market operated as a largely open space with rows of curved shambles in one corner and a piazza along the southern edge. The acquisition of the market rights by the incorporation in 1846 was followed in 1850 by the purchase of more land on the eastern side of the market between Coop Street and Oak Street which was used to reorganise the market traders into more clearly defined wholesale and retail sections.



Smithfield Market, 1854 (Manchester City Archives, m74771)

In 1853-4 the market area was roofed over with four vast arcades of cast iron and glass, erected by "Mr Wheeldon of Derbyshire" under the superintendence of William Fairbairn. In 1857-8 a new butchers' shambles was erected on the site of the earlier one at 39-45 Swan Street (Grade II listed). Designed by Isaac Holden as a square, classically styled, single-storey building, it originally had an open inner courtyard which was roofed over with cast iron trusses in 1868. In 1865 the first section of the Retail Fish Market was built on the south-east end of Smithfield, at 17 Oak Street. It has been demolished, but the extension (1888-9 and 1915), with its elegantly glazed end gable wall and wide arched opening to Oak Street, has survived. The Wholesale Fish Market on High Street was built next to the south-west side of the Smithfield Market in 1873: A large rectangular building, it retains its outer brick and stone walls but inside it is roofless, having lost everything but one row of cast iron columns. The elaboration of its High Street elevation, with its moulded brickwork and carved stone tableaux depicting scenes relating to fishing, reflects the fact that it faced then main approach to Smithfield Market. – (English Heritage, 2001, 22)



Long avenue, Smithfield Market. View from Oak Street (Manchester City Archives, m79034)

Smithfield Market continued to expand until by 1897 it covered four and half acres (Fig*6). It sustained an extended community of workers and customers, providing not just goods and services, but entertainment for the citizens of the area: For those who rose early enough, Smithfield provided one of the sights of Manchester as, around 6 a.m. each market day, the surrounding streets were congested with hundreds of horse-drawn 'lurries' and carts, heavy-laden with vegetables, coming to market. ...for those who had little or no wages to spend the city streets themselves provided free entertainment. Nowhere was this more evident than at the Saturday night markets which traditionally sold off food which would not keep till Monday and which were accompanied by a range of free or cheap amusements. Shudehill Market traded until ten o'clock on a Saturday. Alongside those looking for a cheap dinner for Sunday were others out to see the 'sights'; whole families, children in tow, courting couples and others alone or in small groups, but preponderantly young. On a Saturday night Shudehill was 'alive with animation, and amid a blaze of gas all (was) life and bustle'. It had all the fun of the fair with sideshows and street entertainers galore. Walking round the market was an entertainment in itself. Its historian has described it as a 'town within a town' for those 'who lived by economy rather than high fashion'. A contemporary who visited Shudehill at eight o'clock on a Saturday in April 1870 regarded Manchester's 'big market' as a 'great institution'; 'As we look upon the sea of faces, the owners of which swarm in thousands crushing, pushing, elbowing and swaying to and fro, whilst the general din proclaims that something is going on which is engrossing the minds of fifteen to twenty thousand men and women, we cannot help thinking how great is the subject of study before us. Life is here as it really is.' – (Kidd, 2002, 133)

At the end of the nineteenth century the favoured focus for a Saturday night in town was around the top end of Market Street along Oldham Street, and in Shudehill. The main Manchester Market in Shudehill traded all through Saturday, and provided plenty of entertainment and free amusement for families, couples, women and children. Shudehill – and also the Flat Iron and Cross Lane markets in Salford – came alive on a Saturday night, with crowds of shoppers and sightseers, and stallholders entertaining and cajoling with their spiel. Most shops were open, and the main street were lit up and packed, the town brightly gas-lit and bustling, and there was the added incentive that nearing closing time at midnight food became cheaper. And again the big crowd – in a single day in 1870 it was estimated that as many as twenty thousand people went to Shudehill – attracted beggars, musicians and entertainers seeking an audience. – (Haslam, 1999, 33) Smithfield Market closed in 1973 after a century and a half and its tenants moved to New Smithfield Market in the outer suburb of Gorton. It was by a considerable distance the major employer in the area and effectively the local economy collapsed and the heart was ripped out of the community when its doors closed for the last time.

APPENDIX 3

List of B&J McKenna Public Houses (19th Century)

Public House Ref. Source George & Dragon (now Band on the Wall), 27 Swan Street, Manchester – Balloon Inn, 79 Rochdale Road 5 Britain's/ Briton's Protection, 75 Oldham Road, Manchester 2 Derby Inn, 935 (late 3/5) Rochdale Road, Barnes Green, Manchester 3 Douglas Hotel, 63 Corporation Street, Manchester 1, 4 Fleece, 29 Bloom Street, Manchester 3 George & Dragon, 5 Ashton Old Road, Ardwick, Manchester 1, 4 Nelson Vaults (Hotel), 140 Oldham Road, Manchester 1,4 Napoleon, 275 Rochdale Road, Manchester 3 Osborne House, 360 Rochdale Road, Manchester 2 Queen's Vaults, 765 Rochdale Road, Harpurhey 2 Railway Hotel, Townley Street, Middleton 1,4 Shakespear Inn, 47/49 Stretford Road, Hulme, Manchester 1,4 Tatton Arms, Mill Lane, Northenden, Manchester 1,4 Wellington (now Marble Arch), 97 Rochdale Road, Manchester 1,2

SOURCES

1. Information from Wilson's Brewery Ltd 23/2/1982 2. Slater's Manchester & Salford Directory 1873 3. Manchester City Police Court licensing records 4. List of Properties owned, leased and rented by Walker & Homfrays Ltd and the Manchester Brewery Co Ltd on 28th February 1953 (Wilson's Brewery Ltd) 5. Manchester & Salford Directory 1877/8 B.McKenna Compiled by Alan Gall 18/09/2011

20TH CENTURY HISTORY "Band on the Wall is 'a heritage asset in itself and has significant resonance for the Manchester community" – Kate Dickson, Director, Ancoats Building Preservation Trust At the Turn of the Century



Photograph of Swan Street, 1900: Manchester City Libraries, local history unit

To be found on Swan Street at this time were William Catchpole's hatting firm; a herring and egg merchant; glass works; coopers; oyster dealer; banks; tobacconist; jewellers; Richardson the pawnbrokers, coffee shops and at number 20 – 22 Swan Street – musical instrument makers. There was also the Rising Sun on the corner of Rochdale Road – a well established public house and music hall, the Burton Arms – still at number 31, and the Smithfield Hotel at the end of the row. How Band on the Wall got its Name Almost everyone knows that 'The Band' got its name because of the small stage high up on the wall that musicians used to perform on. But finally we can reveal how this came about. Florence Flanagan and Jack Brannigan – who later married – and who played at the George and Dragon in the late 1930's, remember that the idea for a stage upon the wall came from Ernie Tyson, Flo's uncle – in 1937, and that he installed the stage.

A regular band of two accordionists, piano, drums, singer and sometimes saxophonist would play. Key performers were Flo Flanagan (accordion and singer), Jack Brannigan (accordion), Jim Hart on drums, Saxophone Mick the Pole and Albert Mancini on piano. Italian accordion wizard Rudi Mancini, and the 'Elvis of Ancoats' Dominic Rea also played accordion at the Band on the Wall. Lawrence Kelly a fish merchant in the market played cornet. Floor singers sang in front of the piano or in front of Flo. There was no amplification and contrary to rumour there were steps up to the stage, not a ladder! Bands played 7.30pm till closing time with a couple of breaks, six nights a week. Always known as a rough place Ernie Tyson ran it with a rod of iron. Jack Brannelli remembers that if there was any trouble 'one punch from Ernie and they'd be on the cabbages' – a reference to the vegetable stalls that lined Oak Street. The George and Dragon had table service and the waiters wore white aprons. It was immensely popular and known as a services pub during the war when Americans, Canadians, Australians, French as well as British soldiers, market traders, factory workers and shoppers all used it. Italian prisoners of war and deserters were rumoured to come in. Often the band carried on playing during air-raids 'especially when the raids became more common. Many boxers used the saloon bar at the back – Jack Brannigan

remembers Jackie Brown the world flyweight champion from Harpurhey. There were also the gangs 'the Hamilton gang from Angel Meadow including Jazzier Hamilton' considered a dangerous character to cross – but who once dueted on a love song with Flo Branagan



Photograph of Flo and Jack, circa 1942, credit: Flo, Jack and Gina Branelli

Rebirth

By the middle of the twentieth century Swan Street was in decline. Many textile factories had closed and people moved out of the area. Market trade was down and the buildings were demolished in the early 1970s. The fortunes of the George and Dragon – or Band on the Wall as it was increasingly becoming known – mirrored this slump. Drag acts such as Diamond Lil and Neville St Claire were popular in the late 1950s, but by the mid-1970s the George and Dragon was on its last legs.



Photograph of George and Dragon '1959' credit Manchester City Libraries, local history unit

PART TWO

INTO THE NEW CENTURY

1900 – 1936

*The street, the McKennas, and the buildings that became
Band on the Wall*

INTO THE NEW CENTURY: 1900 – 1936

Now that the early decades of the 20th century drift beyond living memory, the task of uncovering the specific history in these years of a local pub, The George & Dragon, on Manchester's Swan Street, is dependent on just a few documents and even fewer photographs, rather than fresh eye-witness accounts. There exists, however, a wealth of material about the surrounding area, the much-studied heartland of the Industrial Revolution – in the world's first industrial city. This part of the history seeks to set the scene by some brief references to this wealth of information and to trade directories, census records and registers of licensees. It also describes changes in ownership, usage and internal design that shaped the licensed buildings, now collectively known as Band on the Wall. Invaluable sources have been publications by historian, the late Neil Richardson. All available records suggest that the George & Dragon remained open throughout these years – through the 1914-18 War, through Manchester's post-industrial economic decline, the General Strike of 1926, the effects of the Great Depression and through much political and social change and upheaval. The period to 1936 leads to what we have called 'The Tyson Era' that forms the next part of this history – when the 'Band on the Wall' name began to be used, subsequently defeating, through popular use, both the George and the Dragon. There are four chapters to this section:

Chapter 1 – 'The Street Scene', gives a glimpse of life around the George & Dragon, in a

street loaded with human (and equine) activity, equidistant from both nearby 'Little Italy' and 'Irish Town', and with a remarkable diversity of occupants

Chapter 2 – 'The McKennas: The Conclusion', completes the three-generation story of The

McKennas, brewers and publicans who were owners of the George & Dragon for half a century and were vital to the development and expansion of the pub. The chapter also speculates on a continued Irishness at the George & Dragon after the departure of the McKenna brothers whose grandfather Bernard, born in 1776, emigrated from Ireland and established the first McKenna pub and micro-brewery, in Salford, in the early years of the 19th century.

Chapter 3 – 'An Expanding Space' – about the 1911/12 building development and further

improvements that led to the space for music, Band on the Wall's concert room.

Chapter 4 – 'The Story of The Picturehouse' – about the unusual change of use over a

century ago of No 29 Swan Street – now part of Band on the Wall – from public-house to cinema, operating throughout World War 1 and into the 1930s.

THE STREET SCENE

- In the early years of the 20th century, the George and Dragon remained at a nexus of human activity and endeavour, within an intensely populous area that also attracted visitors from throughout the city and beyond. Directly behind the pub was the massive, bustling Smithfield Market where in 1909 over 370 traders were listed: (1) fruit, vegetable, fish, meat and potato salesmen; many more assistants were employed; and hundreds of customers visited daily. Immediately to the south-east, were the great textile mills, works and foundries of Ancoats, aside row upon row of basic terraced dwellings, including many occupied by impoverished Italians, (2) giving rise to the colloquial name 'Little Italy'. And to the north and east, was the area that became known as 'Irish Town' following 'the great tidal wave of Irish arrivals in the last decades of the 19th Century'. (3) The pub in these years could not be confused with genteel: 'The George and Dragon at the corner of Swan Street and Oak Street, if it could speak, could tell some hair-raising tales. It had a reputation for being a rough 'dive' and I understand they had 'chuckers out' – big chaps who could adequately deal with trouble-makers'. (4) At the turn of the century Manchester was 'no longer primarily an industrial town but now a market for a vast number of different goods manufactured in surrounding Lancashire'. But the city was still 'swathed in a perpetual thundercloud, a noxious

vapour of industrial haze'.(5) The People and Places The smoke-blackened buildings of Swan Street were numerous and productive given the short length of the street: no fewer than 61 different shops, warehouses, trades and professions were listed in 1911.(6) They included: 3 banks, 4 estate agents, 3 physicians (one also a surgeon), a tax collector, solicitor Edward Heath*, auctioneers & valuers, the offices of the Amalgamated Union of Operative Bakers & Confectioners, and a Christadelphian Church meeting room. The Clothes Market, at The Mackie Mayor building, 30 yards from the George & Dragon, housed a toll collector and 21 clothes dealers.

- This is probably the son of Edward Heath, attorney/solicitor who from the 1830s is recorded at various addresses in the street, including at 27 Swan Street from 1836 to – 1843, sharing the property with a corn or flour dealer. The address was later part of Band on the Wall.

Visitors to Swan Street not only had the opportunity to get legal advice, but also could buy: fish, fruit, groceries, shoes and boots, leather goods, belt and braces, an umbrella, photographic material, a suit, a hat, sweets, stationery, tobacco, a saddle, curtains, jewelry, agricultural implements, ironmongery and, with a choice of two manufacturers over the road in Swan Buildings, a piano, from F Weber, of Berlin, or Cullum & Best, of London. And, of course, get a drink. The Pubs Though the George & Dragon was known to attract market workers and hawkers, no doubt the daily visitors, the workers and residents in the street helped keep the tills ringing at the pub. But there was stiff competition. In Swan Street alone, there were four other pubs, all but one still in business in 2019. Two were just yards away in the same block: the adjacent Burton Arms – former names included 'The Tam O' Shanter' and 'The John O'Groats' (perhaps a Scottish enclave?) – and The Smithfield Tavern, that used to share its space with a fishmonger, on the corner with Coop Street. Across in Ancoats by 1920 there were no fewer than 160 pubs. (7) The only Swan Street public house that did not survive the 20th century was the Rising Sun, on the Rochdale Road corner. It boasted a grand Concert Room but its reputation was far from grand. Ancoats resident Mick Burke gave a colourful account from those early years: (8) 'a notorious place... a pub that never shut – you could have a night's kip in there if you didn't mind the rats running under the forms and all over the place. The old-fashioned hawkers drank every penny they earned and their wives would come down to the market on a Monday morning. I'd say, 'I haven't seen him,' and the wife would shriek, 'The bastard, I'll kill him! I've never seen him all weekend! The kids is there! They've had nowt to eat!' He'd been in the Rising Sun all weekend, supping. I'd go in and say, 'Your wife's outside with a big knife,' and he'd get nervous and ask, 'Where is she? Where is she?' Sounds of the Street More constant than the shrieks of desperate wives or the cries of hung-over hawkers, were the clip-clop and clatter of dozens of horses and carts that served the Market and dominated the sounds of the street. The main access for these carts was via Oak Street, at the side of the George & Dragon. Further equine-driven sounds also came from the horse- drawn drays supplying the numerous pubs, and those going to and from the many shops, merchants, warehouses and manufacturers in the street. Another sound, arguably more musical, came from buskers and – made by Italians in Ancoats – barrel organs. The operators would 'walk the streets of Manchester and surrounding districts playing their barrel organs and hurdy gurdies, some with monkeys in red waistcoats and hats, and a few with dancing bears'. The makers of the barrel organs were Domenico Antonelli who had his organ factory in Great Ancoats Street, and Simon Robino, a craftsman and musician who 'studied at the Marseilles College of Music and, though none but his family knew, he was a composer, too. Every day his waltzes were heard in the streets of Britain. But he never sought to have them published'. (9) More sounds would emanate from the local pubs, most of which had pianos. Often the audiences could be noisier than the music or other entertainment. Though not specific to Manchester, the following is indicative of the tradition of noisy audience participation in the late 19th and early 20th century: 'The taverns, saloons and supper rooms would have been noisy and difficult places in which to perform. The audiences chatted throughout the acts and could be very unruly, often

- throwing things at the performers – bottles, old boots, even a dead cat. Industrial towns favoured hurling iron rivets'. (10) Into these early years of the 20th century, other sounds would have emanated from homes in the street, as late 19th century technology became commercially available: first the phonograph, with its cylinder system, then the disc-based gramophone. A 'phonograph expert' is listed in 1911 next-door to The Rising Sun at the north end of the street. By 1920, there were 80 recording companies in Britain, and also from that date radio broadcasting coverage grew extensively. Among the music hits of the period were: (11)
- Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home (1902) by Hughie Cannon
- How'd you Like to Spoon with Me (1905) Jerome Kern's first hit
- Alexander's Ragtime Band (1911) by Irving Berlin

- It's a Long Way to Tipperary*(1912) by Jack Judge & Harry Williams
- If you were The Only Girl in the World (1916) by Nat Ayer & Clifford Grey
- Don't Dilly Dally on the Way (1919) by Fred W Leigh & Charles Collins
- The Tipperary song was also the most popular at sing-alongs at the pub in the 1940s, according to Mrs Anne Garner, nee Tyson, born at Band on the Wall in 1941. The Licensees During the years 1900 to 1936, there was a series of six licence holders at the George & Dragon. Firstly, John Harold McKenna ended his licence tenure in 1910, having held it since 1893. He was one of the two McKenna brothers, of B & J McKenna Ltd that owned the brewery and portfolio of pubs sold to Walker & Homfray in 1905. He was never a live-in licensee. For many years the McKennas had placed managers in their pubs. In the first years of the century, their manager at the George & Dragon was 37- year-old Irish-born Michael Kelly who lived there with four barmen, aged 17 to 22, one cook (49) and a domestic servant (21) – all but one born in Ireland. (12) The first licensee that new owners Walker & Homfray placed at the George & Dragon was Patrick Morley who previously was employed by the McKennas as manager at The Balloon public house on Rochdale Road. His 12-year stint covered all the years of WW1 and four years each side. He handed over to Thomas O'Donoghue in 1922 whose tenure lasted barely 18 months before the licence was transferred to Beatrice O'Donoghue, probably his widow. Less than three years later, the licensee was Luke Mooney, perhaps a relative of Bridget Mooney who, more than half a century earlier was publican at the Wellington Inn, Rochdale Road (13) – a classic public house built by the McKennas and now named The Marble Arch.

Footnotes 1 Slater's Directory of Manchester & Salford 1909 2 Estimated 2000 Italians living in Ancoats by 1914 – Paul de Felici, 'Italians in Manchester 1841-1939' 3 Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland, address at University of Manchester, November 2012 4 Frank Pritchard 'My Manchester', Neil Richardson, 1986 5 Manchester Evening News, 6 November 2013 6 Slater's Directory of Manchester & Salford, 1911 7 'The Old Pubs of Ancoats', Neil Richardson, 1987 8 'Ancoats Lad: The Recollections of Mick Burke', Neil Richardson, 1985.!(Mick Burke, b 1898 in Ancoats of Irish parents. d. 1986, aged 88) 9 'Ancoats: Little Italy', Anthony Rea

10 'The Story of Music Hall', Victoria & Albert Museum website 11 'Chronicle of the Twentieth Century', Longmans 12 1901 Census 13 Slater's Directory of Manchester & Salford, 1877/78

PART THREE

THE TYSON ERA & AFTER

1937 – 1969

*Ernie Tyson, wartime Manchester, and a pub with a
fearsome reputation*

THE TYSON ERA: 1937 – 1949

The horse and trap jogged daintily out of the courtyard across the road from the George and Dragon pub that recently had acquired the curious colloquial name of “Band on the Wall,” often abbreviated to “The Band”. On board the trap: children, delighted once more to be going to school in some style. Holding the reins: the children’s father, the soon to be famous, even notorious, landlord of the pub, Ernie Tyson. After the school run, next task for animal lover Ernie was to feed his many pets, described later by daughter Anne as a menagerie, on the flat roof of the pub.[i] There were chickens, pigeons, rabbits, parrots and parakeets, and, inside the family’s living quarters on the first floor of the pub, his two German Shepherd guard dogs. This is Swan Street, Manchester, in the early years of World War 2. In 1937 ex soldier, labourer, miner and occasional boxer Ernie Tyson took over the tenancy of the market pub, adjacent to Smithfield Market, one of the biggest meat, fish, fruit and vegetable markets in Europe. The pub earned the name Band on the Wall after Ernie created a high platform on the far wall of the premises to accommodate a band of musicians. Every Christmas, including through the war years, big-hearted Ernie would throw a party at the pub for dozens of local children and he and the family would prepare gifts for all the children. Years later, Ernie’s daughter Anne, who was born at Band on the Wall during World War 2, would say of her dad: “He was lovely... a soft pudding he was”. Yet, in the 12 years that spanned his tenancies at Band on the Wall, Ernest Henry Tyson would generate a catalogue of stories that have given him almost legendary status. Some of these stories are still recounted a lifetime later and would rank him posthumously as a contender for Britain’s Toughest Pub Landlord: “Fighting Tyson WAS the Band on the Wall... A law unto himself... He would have been a match for Mike Tyson” – Les Kane, Manchester resident who visited Band on the Wall in the 30s and 40s.[ii] (Mike Tyson, undisputed world heavyweight boxing champion, 1985-90) “As rough and tough an individual as you would ever come across” – first hand account of retired Manchester police officer Dennis Wood.[iii] “Ernie Tyson is the toughest man I have ever met. He is an ex-boxer, knuckle-fighter and Coldstream Guardsman....Nobody would try anything on when Ernie was about” – London visitor to Band on the Wall who encountered Ernie during the war.[iv] “One punch and you’d be on the cabbages” – referring to the vegetable stalls in Oak Street outside the side door of Band on the Wall.[v]



Ernie Tyson, teenaged soldier, c1917, around 20 years prior to his tenure as licensee at Band on the Wall

Among the many stories about Tyson, two in particular underline his “fearsome reputation for violence”. The victims in both cases were overseas servicemen who frequented the pub in large numbers during WW2 and a few years after. Policeman Dennis Wood was on his beat in Swan Street one night in the 1940s. He wrote later:[vi] There was never a dull moment round the New Cross area, not least Swan Street where stood The Band on the Wall....During and immediately following World War 2 the hostelry had attracted thousands of soldiers, sailors and airmen from the USA and the Empire, and I have no doubt it is still discussed in far off lands today. When I had dealings with the place it was run by one of those characters whose way of life and antics were renowned. He went by the name of Ernie Tyson.... The first time I came into contact with him was one Saturday evening as I was passing the premises. He was at the front entrance and making use of every expletive known to man, in

an effort to explain to two enormous American paratroopers that they were no longer welcome on his premises and that

he wished them to go away. The two Yanks insisted that they were not interested in going away, and attempted to push past Ernie, and before I could intervene he struck the larger one a blow which sent him pedalling backwards across the street. He fastened his teeth into the nose of the other and began to deliver heavy blows to his stomach, until he too was released and joined his buddy in holding each other up as they staggered off along Oldham Street. Ernie nodded to me and with a grin went back into the premises. I mentioned the incident when I got back to Goulden Street station and an old copper told me I had done the right thing in not interfering. “Ernie handles all the problems at the Band. No need for us to bother,” he said. Another story was told by Mike Goodman who was brought up in Manchester and in the late 60s and early 70s was a taxi driver in the city: [vii] As children and young people we were always told never come anywhere near Swan Street or the Band on the Wall, because not only the Band on the Wall but the pub opposite, the White Bear, had terrible reputations for violence, they were rough places, and they were very tribal and the people in there knew each other and didn’t like strangers, so we always avoided it. Before I was born the Band on the Wall was a favourite hang out for Canadians and Americans... From some of his older taxi ‘fares’ Mr Goodman heard many stories about ‘hard-man Tyson’ and in 2016 he recounted perhaps the most shocking: The story goes like this: Tyson had a fearsome reputation for violence, nobody got the better of him and one day this huge Canadian sergeant who had some kind of a needle with Tyson, wasn’t going to be hanging around, wasn’t going to be put off, and he knocked the staff out of the way and came up the stairs to get Tyson in his living quarters, you know he was that angry, Tyson stayed at the top of the stairs watching him come up, saying things like don’t come up you can’t come up here, like pretending in a way to be frightened or discomfited and when this Yank got to the top of the stairs Tyson gave him one almighty kick that sent him, the story goes and I’m sure it’s apocryphal, that he didn’t hit a step ’til he got to the bottom and he had a broken neck. Don’t know if the guy lived or died but that was him out, completely out of action. That was Tyson. We didn’t come into Band on the Wall really until it started becoming gentrified, in the 60s and the 70s and 80s... Because its reputation was that fierce. Our research suggests that the venue in the 1960s may not quite have been gentrified although from 1975, under the benign and musicianly management of Steve Morris, Band on the Wall would establish a trouble-free reputation that continues to this day. In the Tyson era – 1937 to 1949 – trouble was never far away, including from some of the barrow lads from the adjacent Smithfield Market who lived in the slums of Angel Meadow, just half a mile from Band on the Wall. Norman Morrison, a waiter at the pub just before WW2, said that the waiters had to “look after themselves” and he thought that the Hamilton Gang of Barrow Boys “owned the place”[viii]. Leader of the gang Jazzer Hamilton was known to visit the pub and on at least one occasion sang a love duet with one of the resident accordionists, Florence “Flo” Flanagan, who also worked as a machinist in the Swan Buildings opposite Band on the Wall. According to Flo, the gang leader had a fine singing voice.[ix] Children’s Playground



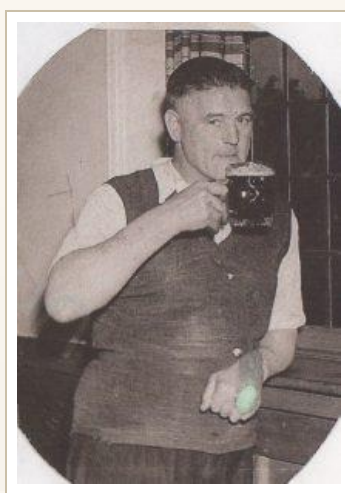
Despite the notorious gangs and frequent trouble, the immediate vicinity was an exciting place for the Tyson children, and the Band on the Wall a memorable home.

Daughter Anne:[x] “As a child it was just so fascinating” to be brought up at Band on the Wall. She would wake to the sounds of the Market, the bustle of the traders, the clip-clop of horses. She and her sisters used to play on the flat roof of the pub or in the Smithfield Market. Sometimes they would get into trouble in the Market, though nothing serious. But on one occasion her two sisters overstepped the mark in some way and were locked up in the police cell that was in the Market. A policeman came to Ernie and asked if they should be let out. He said No, he wanted them to learn their lesson, and they stayed imprisoned until the morning.

Part of the bustling Smithfield Market at the back of Band on the Wall, 1907 — courtesy Manchester Archives & Local Studies Born at Band on the Wall in February 1941 – in what is now Tuition Room 2 — Anne lived in the pub with her

parents, Ernie and his second wife Sarah-Anne, for most of her first eight years. On occasion, while her parents prepared the pub for opening, she would see the musicians rehearse but mostly she heard the music from the first-floor living accommodation. The family's living room was directly above the stage and dance-floor. From her bedroom overlooking Swan Street, Anne frequently heard more than music – the sound of smashing glasses and shouting as fights broke out downstairs. But the music went on: the musicians were under strict orders to continue playing, however fierce the fighting. Christmas Blitz The musicians also kept playing when air raids hit Manchester. The worst of these, known as the Christmas blitz, occurred in 22-24 December 1940 when a total of 443 bomb raids hit the city. More than 750 people were killed and extensive damage was caused. One bomb hit homes about 200 yards from Band on the Wall, killing two people. There was substantial

damage to the Smithfield Market buildings and a fire started on the roof of Band on the Wall when some incendiary material struck the building. At the time, Mrs Tyson was eight months pregnant with Anne. Throughout the war years, the pub normally opened at 5 am for the market people; it was “crammed” in these morning sessions, according to a young brewery employee who carried out repairs in the beer cellars of the pub from 1945 to 1949. The afternoons were much quieter and Ernie would often close up for a couple of hours in the afternoon to have a nap before opening for the busy late afternoon and evening session. On Sundays the pub was closed and from time to time Ernie and his wife went out for the evening. One Sunday, when they were at the cinema, Anne – who could have been no older than eight – heard heavy knocking at the side door. She went downstairs to the door and from outside heard “It’s the police”. She opened the door and policemen came in. They wanted a drink, not an unusual request in these days from the officers on the local beat. Anne recalls going behind the bar and, standing on a beer crate, served the policemen. When Ernie returned “He was furious, I had to run for it,” said Anne. Not for long was Anne the only child living at the Band on the Wall. Ernie’s two daughters by his first marriage, Rose and Ivy, came to live there in 1941, shortly after Anne was born. Rose was born in 1922, Ivy in 1924; both had been living with Ernie’s mother in the few years before moving to Band on the Wall. In the years that followed, the patter of tiny feet would crescendo at Band on the Wall as more Tysons were born: Monica, Catherine and Ged. Both Rose and Ivy got married in the war years and left home, so in 1949 at the end of the Tyson Era at The Band, the family numbered six. The Three Brothers Ernie was one of three Tyson brothers and all three held the licence for Band on the Wall at different times in this period. Ernie was the eldest and was licensee for nine of the 12 years of the Tyson era, with Henry stepping in for seven months and Matthew for two and a half years. On some busy nights, all three would work the pub. According to Ivy, the three stopped many fights. “The three brothers were all big men who stood back to back in settling fights” but on one occasion she saw her father brought to the ground by a Canadian serviceman who had jumped on his back: “I stood there and thought my dad would be mad, but no. He asked who had done it and when he found out he went over and shook the guy’s hand and said ‘You are the first guy to ever floor me’ and gave him a beer.



Henry, one of the three tough Tyson brothers Wartime romance

Ivy told this story in a transatlantic letter in 2007. Then, aged 83, married name Mrs Ivy Harper, from her home in Ottawa, Canada, she told of romance and tragedy in her 20s. Ivy was a teenager when she moved to Band on the Wall. It was there that she met Bill, a young Canadian soldier, and soon they married. But six months later, he was killed, not in

action but when the Jeep he was travelling in overturned in England. He was one of over 1.1 million Canadians who served in WW2; 44,000 died. Her letter was to the Manchester Evening News, in response to an article in the newspaper[xi] that she had been sent about the forthcoming reopening of Band on the

Wall. Accompanying the article was a photograph taken inside Band on the Wall – see below.

Band on the Wall c1946 Ivy was able to identify for the first time the stockily-built man standing in the above photo as her uncle Matt Tyson and also that she was the young woman standing nearby. She wrote that she would have been aged 23 in the photo. This would put the date at 1947, though in a subsequent letter she said she left for Canada in 1946. She also wrote that she was aged eight when she first “sang with the band”; but this would place that date at 1932 – several years before Ernie and family moved to Band on the Wall. After her young husband’s death, Ivy visited his family in Ottawa and stayed there. Subsequently, and apparently by chance, she met another Canadian serviceman, Gordon Harper whom she knew from Band on the Wall where he had worked part-time as a waiter. They married in Ottawa where Ivy stayed until her death in 2012. How Ernie ran ‘The Band’ Ernie Tyson was “a law unto himself”[xii] and the way he ran Band on the Wall was, at best, unorthodox. “He was the boss. Everybody had to do what Ernie said,” according to Stanley Foster who, as a teenaged apprentice bar fitter for the brewery Walker & Holmfray, encountered Ernie many times in the late 1940s. Speaking in 2017, Stanley, aged 85, remembers Ernie as a rough and tough character whose mother was also formidable; he described her as a very unpleasant woman who visited the pub regularly for dinner, prepared and silently brought to her by Ernie’s wife, Sarah-Anne. Stanley said she would then “gorge her meal, as though food was going out of fashion” and amble off without a word. She kept barrow carts in a nearby lock-up and hired them to the local barrow boys.[xiii] Ernie was “well in with the brewery,” added Stanley, partly because he regularly sent parcels of food to the brewery’s local bosses – well-received gifts in these years of strict rationing.



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall

During the War, in the extensive windowless cellars of the pub Ernie placed several beds. There he installed Canadian deserters who earned their keep working behind the bar, and as waiters and door staff. If any deserter was troublesome, Ernie would not hesitate to inform the authorities; it was unexceptional to see Military Police enter the pub and arrest servicemen. Ernie introduced his own, distinctive methods to speed up beer turnover in the busy pub. He kept a big tin bath of beer in the cellar from which numerous bottles were filled. Reports from that time say that piles of filled bottles were stacked in high pyramids, with plywood sheets between each tier. Customers, when first sitting at tables “were surprised to have six or a dozen bottles put before them and ‘Pay up or Leave’; Ernie gave you no choice”.[xiv] This brusque treatment seemed to work, with beer sales at times reaching prodigious levels: the pub’s record one Bank Holiday weekend was said to be 24 thousand bottles of beer consumed on the premises.[xv] Ernie bolstered his income in other ways: from time to time he would organise bare-knuckle boxing matches at Band on the Wall, charging admission, refereeing the fights himself and perhaps acting as illicit bookmaker. He also used to have “quite a good black market” operating from the pub, said daughter Anne and added that Ernie was “a wealthy man for these times,” with a stylish car as well as his horse and trap.[xvi] Ernie Hospitalised The low point in Ernie’s tenancy of Band on the Wall occurred one night in the mid-1940s. The details are sketchy but we know that a disturbance of some kind broke out among a small group of customers – not an unusual occurrence in the pub – and Ernie intervened and, as was his custom, forcefully ejected those he saw as the culprits. At the end of the night after customers had left, Ernie went outside to check that all was clear, and was jumped on by the men he had ejected. Daughter Anne who was probably just five at the time learned that her dad had been badly beaten. She said later: “It was very serious: he was nearly finished”[xvii]. She said he spent six to 12 months in hospital. That was when brother Matthew, who was also an

experienced publican, took over the licence of Band on the Wall. Eventually, after his hospital treatment, Ernie had stints as landlord of other, less troublesome pubs. One was The Swan, Crumpsall, which, we are told “had a beautiful bowling green. When the bowlers came to play they found that Ernie had installed three donkeys and three tons of sand for a kids playground causing uproar in crown green bowling circles”.[xviii] .In 1948 Ernie took back the licence of Band on the Wall from his brother Matthew. But “he was never the same,” according to Anne. And just 14 months later, he and his family left the pub for the last time. Anne said that the family then moved to a shoe shop “but it didn’t last very long” and he returned reluctantly to the licensed trade.



Ernie Tyson and wife Sarah-Anne behind the bar at Band on the Wall, late 1940s

Ernest Henry Tyson died suddenly on the morning of 22 October 1951 while landlord at the King’s Arms pub on Great Ancoats Street. He was aged just 51. His brothers, who both had been publicans in Salford, both died at age 54, Henry in 1956 and Matthew in 1962. In early 1940, during his short spell as licensee of Band on the Wall, Henry also held the licence at The Clowes Hotel, Trafford Road, Salford. At this time he was a member of the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) rescue squad but was fined £5 for “showing a light” during blackout. Ernie’s Legacy Almost without exception, the numerous stories of Ernie Tyson are about his fearsome reputation, of fisticuffs and tough-guy incidents. But there is much more to Ernie’s tenure at the pub than the subject of lurid stories: perhaps more than anyone he created Band on the Wall — a place open to all and renowned for music (and good times). It was Ernie who in 1937, shortly after he had taken the licence, created the high stage or shelf for the musicians that led to the renaming of the pub as Band on the Wall. Today this might be regarded as a marketing masterstroke: would the venue have captured peoples’ imaginations if it had retained the ubiquitous English pub name of the George and Dragon? Some say it was Ernie’s decision to call it Band on the Wall; others claim that customers gave it that nickname. Whichever, it permanently linked the venue’s name to the music. According to a musician who performed there in the late 1930s, it was Ernie who decided on a resident band of five musicians.[xix] This was a step up from the more ad hoc arrangements that applied to musicians at most other pubs, probably also in previous years at the George and Dragon. Without doubt music had been played there for decades. There is evidence that Leslie Stuart, composer of several musicals and famous songs such as ‘Lily of Laguna’ and ‘Soldiers of the Queen,’ played piano at the George and Dragon, probably in the late 19th century[xx]. Indeed in Victorian times the soundscape of the bustling surrounding area was frequently filled with the lively contributions of street musicians, barrel organs and of instrumental music and sing-alongs from many pubs. Nearby ‘Little Italy’ was the leading

centre of production of barrel organs and hurdy-gurdies; in Swan Street there were two piano manufacturers; one in every three of the hundreds of migrant Italians to the area was said to be a musician, many of them accordionists. One of them, the great Rudi Mancini, whose parents hired out barrel organs, got his first professional job at the George and Dragon in 1934 when he was just 14. Rudi was born in Ancoats in 1920, of Italian parents, and was employed by Ernie Tyson’s predecessor, Luke Mooney, who took over the licence on 23rd June 1932 and on the same date obtained a music license for the premises.

The band on stage at Band on the Wall c1937. The musicians probably include: Rudi Mancini, accordion; Jim Hart, drums; Albert Mancini, piano; one of the saxophonists known as “Mick the Pole” Rudi’s brother Albert, an accordionist and pianist, was also a long-term member of the resident band, much of the time as bandleader. A noted teacher in Ancoats, he and Rudi started a lineage of accordion playing, beginning with Albert’s pupils Florence Flanagan and Jack Brannigan who both played Band on the Wall during Ernie’s tenancy and met at Albert’s music school. Flo and Jack subsequently married and adopted the stage name Brannelli. Their daughter Gina Brannelli is a world-renowned accordionist, teacher and international adjudicator; on the Fylde coast she created a music school for young student accordionists that

continues today (2017). To date 57 UK Accordion Champions have graduated from her school.



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall



Flo and Jack, teenage accordion stars, late 1930s.

So Ernie inherited a tradition of music at the George and Dragon, in an area of Manchester where music of some kind flourished for over a century. Ernie not only physically elevated the musicians ‘on the wall’ but also, by introducing a resident five-piece band of skilled musicians, he raised the status of the pub to that of music venue. In the Tyson era, it became “unique... a famous place”. Writer and historian Walter Greenwood wrote in 1950 that “it is known, not only at home but in many other parts of the world”.^[xxi] This international reputation was created during, and a few years after, World War 2 when servicemen, billeted in England, frequented Band on the Wall. From 1939 there were the Canadians and, after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour in December 1941, the Americans. Many of them were based at the biggest airfield in Europe during the war, Burtonwood, near Warrington, that was transferred to the US Army Air Force in June 1942. Only 20 miles away, Manchester was the first choice for the US servicemen on their days off. And Band on the Wall a favourite night-spot. Visitors to the venue also included French and Australian servicemen, as well as British soldiers and airmen. Part of the attraction was the musical entertainment, also the presence of women, many from the nearby textile mills; contemporary reports also refer to it being a hang-out for ‘ladies of the night’. Ernie’s pub was open to all. “All sorts used to pack the place every night, including opera singers from the Opera House after their show.” – accordionist Jack Brannelli, interviewed 65 years after he last played the venue. It was also a favourite haunt of boxers, and on one occasion Ernie physically ejected former world champion Jackie Brown,^[xxii] who was on an alcohol-fuelled slide following loss of his title. Servicemen enjoyed the atmosphere of Band on the Wall, the interior of which was described by a regular as being “well-appointed”.^[xxiii] It is likely that many of them found a kindred spirit in ex-soldier Ernie Tyson who was discharged from the Army before the start of the First World War. The reason: under-age; on discharge he was just 13. Then, as soon as

he turned 16 he enrolled to the 5th Battalion East Lancs Regiment and subsequently served in the Coldstream Guards, reaching the rank of Lance Corporal less than a year later. On demobilization he was transferred to the Army Reserve and later spent some time in the Territorial Army. All who entered Band on the Wall in the Tyson era could have had little doubt about the publican’s allegiance to the armed forces: centrally placed on the wall above the bandstand was a mural, about two metres in width, depicting the three UK armed services. The mural can be seen above the piano in the photo on page.... By the date of this photo, probably 1945 or 1946, the ravages of war had caused an economic decline in the area, and elsewhere; this is reflected in the set-up at Band on the Wall: in place of the previous five-piece band, there are only two musicians, no longer in uniform; the decorative drapery that adorned the stage has gone and the

general décor looks tired. But the stories about Ernie had already entered Manchester folklore and, through a combination of his enterprise and the wartime circumstances, the fame of his unique music venue had spread to many lands. At its best it was a great place for musicians: “There wasn’t a musician I knew who didn’t want to be on the Band on the Wall” – Jack Brannelli (1921-2014) In the decades since Ernie’s premature demise, to retain the venue as a great place for musicians – and audiences – has been both aspiration and challenge for all those who follow in Ernie’s formidable footsteps.

Endnotes [i] Mrs Anne Garner, nee Tyson, video interview, 31/3/2005 [ii] Mr Les Kane, in letter to historian Brian Holmshaw, 2000 [iii] Mr Dennis Wood, extract from book ‘A Few Coppers More’ [iv] Quote from the London Express in the Ottawa Journal October 1944 [v] Mrs Pat Mancini, interviewed June 2000 [vi] See footnote iii above [vii] Mr Mike Goodman, audio recording, October 2016 [viii] Record held by Greater Manchester County Record Office (with Manchester Archives) [ix] Mrs Florence Brannelli, nee Flanagan, interviewed 23/3/2005. A renowned accordionist, Flo continued playing until she was 90. She died, aged 93, in 2014, in the same year as husband Jack [x] Mrs Anne Garner, nee Tyson, interviewed 9/12/ 2016 [xi] Manchester Evening News 29/8/2007 [xii] See footnote ii [xiii] Stanley Foster, interviewed 22/2/2017 [xiv] See footnote ii [xv] “Lancashire” by Walter Greenwood (1950) p171 [xvi] See footnote i [xvii] See footnote i [xviii] See footnote ii [xix] Accordionist Rudi Mancini, filmed by Granada TV, 1997 [xx] Mick Burke, ‘Ancoats Lad, The Recollections of Mick Burke’ [xxi] See footnote xiii [xxii] Mr Jack Brannelli, interviewed 23/3/2005 [xxiii] Mr Harry Beddows, to historian Brian Holmshaw, June 2000

THE NAME’S IN THE WINDOW: 1950S – 1960S

A sustained thread of notoriety continued to entwine Manchester’s Band on the Wall throughout the 1950s and 60s. Waiters were reputed to carry knives – of a non-cutlery variety!¹ There was a slick, Mafia- styled singer whose dark cloak was said to conceal a darker secret: a Luger pistol.² And the band was on the wall, the musicians believed, to protect them from trouble that frequently broke out in this boisterous market pub. Then there were the ladies of the night. But throughout this web of infamy, rumour and furtive fact, this big old pub on the corner of Swan Street and Oak Street, where the first drinks licence was recorded a century and a half earlier, clung to its reputation as a place for music – almost as a guilty secret. Small, hand- written, paper notices, at a side window and at the front door, declared ‘THE BAND ON THE WALL’ and were eclipsed by the formal, painted signage above the door arch of ‘GEORGE AND DRAGON’, the pub’s traditional name. And on the pub’s banner fascia was the giant lettering of ‘WILSONS ALES’, the main product of the pub’s new, corporate owners, Wilson’s Brewery, just two miles away in Newton Heath.

Close scrutiny of this 1959 photo reveals the hand-written notices in the window on the left and beside and above the entrance. It also shows the tired appearance of the façade that, according to some customers, was matched by cosmetic disrepair inside the pub. (photo courtesy Manchester Libraries and Local Studies)

USA: THE SOURCE

As to the music ‘on the wall’, apparently in the early 1950s, it was trad, Dad.



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall

- During World War Two, a revival of traditional jazz gained momentum in the UK and by 1950 the trad jazz boom was underway. Of course, USA was The Source. In Manchester, some local musicians were able to connect with that source by hearing the latest transatlantic sounds – traditional and modern – on records brought by American servicemen stationed at Burtonwood, near Warrington, including GI visitors to Band on the Wall during, and a few years after, the War. One young, aspiring jazz musician, Mart Rodger, did not have to rely on American servicemen for his transatlantic discs: Donald*, his elder brother by 13 years, was a Lancaster bomber pilot who returned from flights to Canada with records by the likes of Benny Goodman, Bob Crosby and his Bob Cats, Artie Shaw and Chicago jazz. These records were a big influence on clarinetist Mart as a jazz-struck teenager. Now in his eighties, he still has all the records and continues (2017) to front the renowned Mart Rodger Manchester Jazz.
- Donald Rodger was killed in action in 1944 Still at school, aged just 14, in 1950 Mart was invited to join Stan Reed's Mohawk Jazz Band, playing Band on the Wall. The gig took an unexpected turn. Mart recalled that 'the police raided the joint' [perhaps for a licensing contravention] and, because he was under-age, he 'made a swift exit and escaped unnoticed, with his clarinet, by climbing out through a sash window at the back of the stage'. He added: 'It was a somewhat rough joint, which attracted some dubious clientele'. Young Mart was in the habit of sneaking out unnoticed from home to play gigs but was found out one day when he walked with his father through Lewis's Arcade in the city centre. 'His father's eyebrows were raised when, "Hello Mart!" emerged from two ladies of ill repute who frequented that well-known arcade. Mart's secret escapes into the night were out, but Dad enjoyed re-telling the tale to his business colleagues and no harm was done'.³ Mart was not the only youngster to play Band on the Wall in those days. Pianist Mike Rogers, from Blackpool, was a schoolboy when he played a weekly gig at Band on the Wall in the early 1950s. In 2009 he wrote⁴ that the band had the late Alan Jackson on trumpet and sometimes featured 'Moondog' on drums and vocalist Ted Calvert.



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall

Ted Calvert was the vocalist who was reputed to carry a Luger pistol under his cloak. This photo and caption is from the Manchester Evening News. Ted died a few weeks after receiving terrible injuries when he was attacked by a man in Macclesfield. Mike described the venue at that time: 'It was still an ordinary pub called The George and Dragon and many of the customers were not jazz fans, but just regular pub clients, as there was no entry charge. Some of the customers were quite rough and I remember several fights. The theory amongst musicians was that the band was on the

wall to protect them from trouble'. Another traditional band to play Band on the Wall in the 1950s was The Southside Stompers, led by renowned Baby Dodds-style drummer Don Bridgewood (1931-2015).⁵ The band later took up a residency at The Black Lion, Salford. A Queer Turn Later in the 50s, the entertainment at Band on the Wall segued from Trad to Drag. The new programme and the post-war physical deterioration of the area are colourfully described by writer and DJ Greg Thorpe: '...things took a slightly queer turn in the years after the war. By the late 1950s, just as the building's Swan Street location was falling into decline, drag acts like Diamond Lil and Neville St Claire were popular performers at Band on the Wall. A history of showgirls and servicemen, rowdy wartime entertainment and drag, even the location of the venue at the crumbling fringes of the city, form a tantalising and inspiring feeling of hidden queer history'.⁶ Diamond Lil (James Stone) was one of Manchester's best-known drag acts for many years and 'was rumoured to have had a thing with Ronnie Kray back in the day'.⁷ By presenting Lil, Band on the Wall's landlord could have been risking the venue's entertainment licence. In Salford, the landlord of the Irwell Castle Hotel had his entertainment licence revoked and was fined £50 for presenting Diamond Lil. The court adjudged Lil a lewd and indecent act. Lil was also fined £50 and his piano accompanist, a Mr Taylor, was fined £20 for aiding and abetting.⁸ Other drag artists and comedians who played Band on the Wall were:⁹ Jackie Carlton, Billy Dennis, Eric Leroy, Cherise, Louise and most famous of all, Bunny Lewis who topped the bill at some of the biggest Northern clubs, including Talk of the North, the Golden Garter and Batley Varieties. He was highly regarded as a comedian by his peers. Bob Monkhouse, who worked with Bunny on several occasions, said of him:¹⁰ 'It's a brave comic who is willing to share the billing with Bunny Lewis as he is a hard act to follow, he's a terrific artist and a great comic, so don't let the frock fool you!.



Bunny Lewis, on the cover of 'The Drag Queens' publication, Vol 1 No 3

At times there were some extraordinary acts in the support slots at Band on the Wall. A customer in the late 50s and early 60s, George Drew:¹¹ 'Nightly live entertainment at that time consisted mainly of drag acts interspersed with such things as spoon and bone players, the occasional visits from a paper-burning act – I kid you not! – and a "Maestro of the Musical Saw"'. George also recalled that the main entrance to the pub was the side door on Oak Street, with the bar opposite and 'the acts performed on the "stage" which at that time appeared to be an old dining room table of strong construction. The large room had plenty of seating and tables with bench seating against the walls'. He added that it was 'a big, rough, busy pub, down to earth'. By the late 1950s and early 60s, it appears that music was relegated to a supporting role for the various performers on the makeshift stage at Band on the Wall. While it remained busy,

it could be a scary place for young, first-time visitors. In the early 60s, a young man, Allen Blakeley, paid his one and only visit to the venue and, in 2011, described the experience:¹² 'I only have one memory of the Band on the Wall.... A few of us went in on a Saturday night. It was a real spit and sawdust joint! It was also quite intimidating. We felt as if we would be mugged at any minute. Quick pint and we legged it down Lever Street for our bus. I have had a quick look at your site and see that now you are 100% music and it looks nothing like it did.' Live Music Returns Though perhaps not 100%, featured music did return to Band on the Wall after the arrival of a new tenant landlord and landlady in December 1963. Their son, Danny Young:¹³ 'My parents ran the place when it was the George & Dragon when I was a youngster. They took over when it was a pretty rough city centre pub in the early sixties and eventually put a 'band' back on show after many years without live music. Although this was just a local group or two it did help turn the pub around somewhat.' Danny's father Daniel Young senior was licensee from 2/12/1963 to 26/5/1966. The return of featured music in the 60s

was at times thunderous. One regular band, The New Religion, was wild, raging blues-rock with a psychedelic edge. Salford DJ and vocalist Mike Sweeney: 'Live The New Religion were anarchic but magnificent, way ahead of their time with a brilliant name and a stunning image (military jackets and really long hair)'.¹⁴ Another music professional who would become an influential record producer and engineer, Martin Hannett, had an unusual take on the long-haired wildmen: 'I used to go to the Band on the Wall in the sixties, every Friday, there was a band there called the New Religion, [that had] a foot-operated light show. I think they eventually turned into StackWaddy. They were good, fast and indifferent to musical values'.¹⁵ Record producer and engineer Martin Hannett (1948-1991) has been credited with creating The Manchester Sound. Among the albums he produced were those by Joy Division, John Cooper Clarke and Happy Mondays, In 1976 he played bass guitar in the Tom McMasters Band at Band on the Wall¹⁶. Stack Waddy were championed in the 60s by DJ John Peel who signed them to his record label, Dandelion Records. Their second album was titled 'Bugger Off'. Band on the Wall continued to live up to its name for the rest of the 60s as several local bands performed there, and by 1968 there was a young resident group playing Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, usually three sets a night. On guitar and drums respectively were brothers Steven and Robert Rowbotham and the bass player with the band was Jim Gabrielides¹who described a typical night's music: '... everywhere was wild, everybody wanted the popular music of the day. So it would be a mixture of the Beatles, a little bit of Motown – because Manchester was very strong even then as a Motown area. And then the vast majority of the "talent" singers would usually choose a country and western theme'. It was more like a Wild Western movie when fights broke out and the landlord's instruction to the band was the same as that given by legendary publican Ernie Tyson some 30 years earlier: 'the instruction from the landlord Mr Roberts was – it wasn't if, it was when – when the fighting starts, keep playing. There were lots of fights and you would have to keep playing. Because what he felt was: when the trouble started, if the music stopped, everyone gets involved. So his rule was: you kept playing. And very often we played through a few saloon scenes....' And, as was the case three decades before, the venue... 'was also frequented by the ladies of the night. They used the Band on the Wall as their base, so they would start off there, they'd probably have a couple of drinks, then they'd move off and they'd probably call in midway through for a couple of drinks and some of them would end up there at the end of the night. Of course the pimps would be in – it was a very colourful, very busy place.' 'To a lad of 17, touching 18, at the time it was quite an eye-opener.' Jim added: 'my dad used to wait up for when I got home not to see I was home safe, just for me to tell him what had been going on that night. He used to love the stories, you know, because there was always something happening....' And just as Jazzer Hamilton, leader of the Barrow Boys Gang, had frequented Band on the Wall around 30 years earlier, the new leader of the Barrow Boys visited in the late 60s and was an equally intimidating figure: 'There was a local guy, he ran the area, he was the head of the barrow boys, if you like, king of the gypsies. His name was Tex... he was an exact remake of Bill Sykes and that's the type of character he was. He came into the pub, he was a big, burly sallow-faced guy and... the head guy was in... and nobody would cross Tex...' But for Jim Gabrielides, despite its notoriety in the late 60s and early 70s: 'Band on the Wall was the most romantic venue'. The romance of the venue apparently was an insufficient attraction to retain the long-term loyalty and commitment of a succession of licensees in the 50s and 60s. Turnover of tenant landlords was considerable: no fewer than 12 in two decades, thus an average stay of just 20 months. Yet the reports we have from this period all refer to it being a very busy pub that, one would imagine, would be lucrative for the landlords as well as the brewery owners. So why the turnaround of landlords? Perhaps the accumulated stress of running a venue where fights were frequent took its toll on the beleaguered landlords? Perhaps much of the clientele was impoverished, choosing the warmth and comfort of a pub to their own homes and spending a minimum over the bar? Depopulation, Unemployment & Decay These post-war decades witnessed big changes in the physical and demographic environment of the area of Band on the Wall. The first multi-storey office blocks of the 1950s in what is now called the Northern Quarter were said to reflect a new mood as 'the nation was gripped by a new feeling of optimism and the nation looked forward, rather than back, to a brave new future'¹⁷. But that optimism may not have been shared by many of the local residents and workers in the immediate catchment area of Band on the Wall. In neighbouring Ancoats, that had been a crucible of the Industrial Revolution, the post-war population tumbled. In the previous century its population rivaled 'separate cotton towns such as Bolton or Oldham'¹⁸. Almost without exception, the cotton mills and allied works had closed, leaving thousands out of work. Glassworks and engineering companies folded. Many of Ancoats streets were subject to slum clearances: 'some houses were demolished; others were closed, bricked up and left to rot'.¹⁸ The part of Ancoats known as 'Little Italy' never quite recovered from the war years when, following Mussolini's decision to side with Hitler, Winston Churchill's instruction to 'collar the lot' led to Italian residents being arrested as enemy agents and detained in internment

camps. While many of the returning Italian men established successful businesses after the war and chose to move to the suburbs, others were compelled to move as a result of the slum clearances. For decades, 'Little Italy' had been an inspirational source of musical vitality. There were many musicians in the community, a number of whom performed at Band on the Wall, most notably in the 1930s accordionist Rudi Mancini and brother Albert (accordion and piano). Rudi Mancini's youthful stint at Band on the Wall may have given him a taste for the licensed trade. From 1958 to 1963, he was licensee and entertained on electric organ at The Cheshire Cheese, 200 yards from Band on the Wall, in Oldham Road. He also ran other pubs and clubs in the area and was a well-known, flamboyant character. With his second wife, Pat, he went on to own the 110-room Queens Hotel in Blackpool. Pat Mancini, in her book, *Queen of Blackpool*, described their first date: 'He arrived driving a massive big American car with yellow wheels. Rudi pressed the horn and it played a tune. I learned later it was a Chrysler Crown Imperial... it had a little record player in it. It was Frank Sinatra singing You Make Me Feel So Young'. Sinatra, famously of Italian parents (and temperament?), came close to Ancoats Little Italy in 1952 when, following a sparsely-attended concert at The Palace Theatre, Manchester, he got very drunk with a beat policeman and, having forgotten which hotel he was booked into, was put up for the night on the local bobby's sofa in Newton Heath, just along the Oldham Road from Ancoats¹⁹. Although Ancoats, including 'Little Italy' and neighbouring areas, suffered severe depopulation and increased unemployment in the 50s and 60s, the night time economy – not all of it legal – remained bouyant and Band on the Wall, probably the biggest pub in the area, remained busy. 'It was a very busy thoroughfare, that neck of the woods, the top of Oldham Street...'¹ At Band on the Wall: 'There was Irish in there but mainly northern Manchester ... and remnants of what was the Quality Street gang used to call in.... 'The client group, they were locals, it was a real local area pub... 'It was the number of local pubs that drew people to the area, also in Tib Street and down Shudehill. There was also the big club, The Osborne, in Rochdale Road'.¹ Even bigger, grander clubs emerged in the Manchester area in the 1960s, such as: Poco a Poco, Stockport; the Golden Garter, Wythenshawe – that opened in 1968 with Bruce Forsyth the star artist – and the Talk of the North, Eccles. Many other clubs, big and small, established Manchester in the 60s as a city with the most vibrant night-life. Band on the Wall was part of that vibrancy, if at the down-market corner of the city, and, it would appear, was unaffected by the competition from the huge, plush new clubs. Daytime trade could also be steady at 'The Band' mainly due to its proximity to 'the city's most important shopping street [Oldham Street] and its main market [Smithfield]'. But the physical fabric of the area was in decline and Band on the Wall was no exception. Reports from the 60s describe the deterioration of the building that had been subject to several adaptations over the years and was essentially in excess of 100 years old. Apparently there was little investment in the fabric of the building by the brewery, Wilsons of Newton Heath, that took ownership following a merger with Salford brewers Walker & Homfray in 1949. The new company had a combined total of 1100 licensed houses; Band on the Wall, then a somewhat notorious venue in a dubious area of the city, was not the priority for improvement. There was no change also when Wilsons was acquired by Watney

Mann in 1960. The priority for investment in the area by this London-based company was completion of a big, new bottling plant. '...bottled beers saw a surge in popularity after the war. There was a reaction against the uncertain qualities of traditional cask-conditioned beers and for a short time it was thought that the pubs of the future would be stocked with row upon row of bottled beers!'²⁰ At the close of the 1960s Band on the Wall had clung on to its customer base, despite the ongoing deprivation – close to destruction – of its immediate catchment area. And the venue continued to present regular live music. But the building, like the area, was deteriorating, with brewery neglect a contributing factor. Also, antithetical to the individuality of Band on the Wall was Watney Mann's 'standardisation programme', introduced in 1969, that aimed to phase out local branding. Sensibly, this was abandoned after the company was acquired by the Grand Metropolitan group in 1972. However, in the early 1970s the economic viability of the area of Band on the Wall was devastated when the Smithfield Market moved out, followed by the building of the Arndale Centre that sucked the vitality out of Oldham Street, for many years Manchester's prime retail thoroughfare. Band on the Wall – then highly dependent on local trade – was unable to withstand this double blow and, probably for the first time in a century, shut down. But only weeks later a Manchester former pro musician, with a business partner, would bravely take on the lease of the deserted and decaying venue. The story unfolds in the 70s section of this history.

FOOTNOTES

1 Interview with Jim Gabrielides, 6 April 2011 2 Harold Edwards, 'Alan Hare and Ted Calvert', jazznorthwest.co.uk 3 Information on Mart Rodger from a 'Profile of Mart Rodger' by Patricia O'Beirne 4 Mike Rogers quote,

jazznorthwest.co.uk, 28 September 2009 5 Article by Don Bridgewood, 'The Southside Stompers', jazznorthwest.co.uk 6 Journalist and DJ Greg Thorpe, Vada Magazine, Issue 12 2016 7 Danny Hurst, jobbing comedian and entertainer, chortle.co.uk 8 Salford Soapbox, 'From the Archives'. 9 Bodzy 3, Manmates.proboards.com, 23 May 2008 10 Bunny Lewis: obituary, The Stage, 8 December 2008. 11 Geo Drew, phone conversation with historian Brian Holmshaw, 2000 12 Allen Blakeley, email 3 September 2011 13 Danny Young, email 21 March 2007: 14 DJ/vocalist Mike Sweeney, manchesterbeat.com 15 Interview with Martin Hannett, 29 May 1989, 'Overload and Heaven Sent', Vagabond website 16 'Memories of The Band', Stephen Forster 17 The Northern Quarter, by Simon Taylor and Julian Holder, English Heritage publication, p67 18 Ancoats Cradle of industrialization by Michael E Rose with Keith Falconer and Julian Holder 19 Manchester Evening News, 12 July 2007 20 A History of Wilsons Brewery, 1834-1984, by Neil Richardson

PART FOUR

REBIRTH OF THE BAND

1970 – 1980s

*Steve Morris, jazz, punk, reggae – Band on the Wall
becomes a music venue*

REBIRTH OF THE BAND: 1970S

Diminutive, dapper and bespectacled, Steve Morris was a Benny Goodman look-alike who, like Goodman, played jazz clarinet. But, unlike the famous and reputedly arrogant Goodman, Steve was a modest and mild-mannered man, though he shared Goodman's love of music and his desire for a world without prejudice, whether of race, religion or class. More than a glimpse, a little capsule, of that ideal world was created by Steve when, like his old musician friend Ronnie Scott, he fulfilled his dream of running a jazz club, one that would become internationally renowned.



LEFT: Steve Morris, "King of The Band," born 1920, died 1991 RIGHT: Benny Goodman, "King of Swing, born 1909, died 1986

When Steve, with business partner Frank Cusick, took over Band on the Wall in 1975, the big old pub was closed and shuttered, almost derelict. The early 70s had seen the venue's decline. Whether cause or consequence of that decline, there had been no fewer than six different landlords in the first three years of the decade (1): never a good sign. The venue's reputation as a place for classy live music had already diminished when the almost-final tacit occurred following the closure of the nearby, vast Smithfield Market that for over 150 years had sustained the vitality and economy of the locality. Throughout all of those years, Band on the Wall, formerly the George & Dragon, had been a market pub. With the move of the Market out of the city centre in 1972 (2) the pub lost a substantial customer base – thirsty market traders, their suppliers and customers. Band on the Wall was now on the fringe of a fringe of the city: in 'an overlooked district, languishing in a state of economic inertia.' (3). By the early 70s, live music at the pub had become irregular and rarely notable and, in 1974, the music ceased, the venue was closed, perhaps for the first time in its 170-year history. (4) The troubled owners of the pub, Wilsons Brewery, offered the lease on the open market. But, given the loss of custom from the Market and the poor condition of the building, there was no bidding battle for the lease; not for the last time, the demise of the venue looked imminent. For Steve Morris this was the opportunity he had been looking for, and in 1975 he grabbed the chance, taking a lease on the building in Manchester's Swan Street. Steve had been brought up in the area – where his father had been an illegal bookmaker – and had worked as a musician in the city and abroad. Having helped run clubs for others, he had long cherished the idea of having his own jazz club. Frank Cusick, with his wife Anne, also had

- small business experience; the Cusicks moved into the living accommodation on the first floor of Band on the Wall, now the offices of Inner City Music. Frank was licensee in the early years and Anne worked the box-office. With limited funds, Steve and Frank carried out internal and external redecoration of the building, installed an aged grand piano and a sound system that, even for the period, was primitive. A drummer friend of Steve's, Allan Tattersall, built the stage, in place of the platform on the wall where the resident band had previously played and that, in the 1930s, had inspired the venue's name, colloquially further reduced to 'The Band.' On most weekend evenings for the next four years Allan would have a special place on the stage that he built – as drummer and leader of the resident band. The Music Band on the Wall reopened on 12 September 1975, and in the years to 1980, the music programme had four main strands:
- Steve Morris's jazzy selection
- Regular Thursdays booked by the Jazz Centre Society, from 1976
- New Manchester Review Monday Rock Club, 1977 to 1980
- Weekly promotions by the newly-formed Manchester Musicians' Collective, 1977 to 1979 There was also occasional lunchtime theatre and comedy, including by future stars Rik Mayall and Ade Edmondson. These programme strands are explored in more detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter. The programme occupied different music

territory from the pop hits of the day, late 70s songs such as David Bowie's 'Fame,' Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody,' ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' or 'YMCA' by the Village People. The venue was immune even to disco hits such as 'Stayin' Alive' by local boys The Bee Gees. Only with occasional punk rock and soul/funk bands on the New Manchester Review nights and those by Manchester Musicians Collective did the Band on the Wall programme in the 1970s encroach on the margins of the pop music of the day. 'The Band' was not about fashion.

MEMORIES OF THE BAND: SHEILA COLLIER



Sheila Collier photographed at Band on the Wall, late 1970s

When The Band on the Wall opened up its doors as a music venue in September 1975, Sheila Collier's Smoky City Jazzband took up a weekly residency that lasted for six years. It was every Wednesday from 9pm to midnight. Prior to that we had a weekly club at The Midland Hotel [now The Metropolitan] in West Didsbury which became very popular, and where we had a wonderful array of guests, including The Alex Welsh Band, George Melly and Joe Harriott. The Band on the Wall was very special for me. There was a real stage, good lighting and sound, a grand piano, and space to perform – a chance to dress up and 'do my thing'. I would dream up fantastic ensembles to wear – and be teased by the band for my efforts! At that time I was a freelance fashion designer and worked on vintage garments with my friend Carl Twigg who had a boutique on King Street. I created some great outfits which I teamed with stretch black trousers and stiletto heels, over-the-knee, black leather boots! Years later I was having afternoon tea alone in Buxton when a lady approached me, she said she and her friends loved anticipating what I would be wearing on Wednesday nights. Musically and artistically, it was a wonderful time for me. The Smoky City Jazzband was at its best. We had a great repertoire, and we were very creative in our choice of programme,

- varying it from week to week. We played New Orleans, Ellington, Gospel and Swing. We did not copy, but made our own arrangements. Entertaining too, with piano player Roger Godfrey's dry wit on the microphone, Terry Brunt's clowning [trombone] and John Hallam's great virtuosity on all reeds and flute. In 1978 we recorded our first album, using the studio at the Royal Northern College of Music. Bill Smith, leading on trumpet, kept it all together, plus: Brian Morrison on bass; Bob Jones, drums; and various banjo players, Tony West, Roy Tweedie, Charlie Bentley. We also invited great guests to join us from time to time; I remember George Chisholm and Buddy Tate. For me personally, it was a watershed. I said my week started on Wednesdays! I would get all dressed up and drive myself from my home in Bowdon, to my other life and self with my musician friends. Our long residency at The Band on the Wall established the band and myself both professionally and artistically. The venue was hugely popular and the

place to go for jazz fans, newspaper men, students, TV and radio people and visiting businessmen of all kinds. From our residency at 'The Band' came our first album, programmes for BBC and Granada TV, Piccadilly and BBC radio, and our first visit to a jazz festival abroad – at 'Jazz in Duketown' in Holland. I gained my Equity card by singing at the Contact Theatre in 'The Marvellous Magical Mystery Plays'. The traditional jazz scene was very active in the North of England in the 70s. As well as our Wednesday night residency at 'The Band', I started my own Monday night Jazz Club at Brahms and Liszt on Upper King Street. The first band to play there was The Ken Colyer Band. Then came the Peacock Club (1978?) where I presented a mix of jazz, blues and folk. That was at Mauldeth Hall in Chorlton-cum-Hardy. I presented Stephane Grappelli, Mike Harding, Danny Moss and Humphrey Lyttelton, among others. Other traditional jazz clubs I remember are:

- The Birch Hall Hotel, Lees, Oldham, where I sang with Wild Bill Davison
- The Grants Arms, Ramsbottom
- The Bamboo Club, Hazel Grove, Stockport
- Accrington Jazz Club
- Also venues in Southport, Chester, Rochdale & Wigan We did many of these as monthly residencies. For personal reasons I moved out of Manchester to live in the village of Hayfield in North Derbyshire and, regrettably, left my band. Three years later, in 1983, I brought the music to the hills and created the first Hayfield International Jazz Festival, which ran for eight glorious years – but that's another story. – Sheila Collier, 21 February 2013, Helsingborg, Sweden

STEVE'S JAZZY SELECTION

Steve Morris's approach to the music programme was old school. It came from his lengthy experience as a musician, and from his local contacts with other musicians of similar musical backgrounds. Aged 55 in 1975, Steve had been committed to music from an early age; as a 14-year-old he was reputed to have been a member of the 'Little Rascals' teenage jazz group in Manchester who were championed by a big-time agent and flown to New York's fabulous Cotton Club, at that time (1934) home to the Jimmy Lunceford Orchestra. Back in Manchester, for many years Steve lived the life of the freelance musician, playing in dance bands, big bands and jazz groups, picking up work wherever he could. From time to time he also ran small businesses and managed clubs for local owners, some with gangland



connections. He loved to tell the story about the day the London mafia came to Manchester to 'take over'. Arriving at Piccadilly Station, they were met on the platform by a well-known

Manchester club owner (who employed Steve from time to time to run his clubs). The clubland boss greeted the visitors by advising them to look up at the roof. There they saw several men, armed with machine guns and rifles, high up inside the roof of the station. The Mafiosi took the next train back to London, never to return. Steve also made several trans-Atlantic crossings aboard Cunard liners, as a member of the ships' dance bands, prior to his time at Band on the Wall. Also, for a number of years he was resident at a hotel in Bermuda where he played in the hotel band and also supplemented his musician's wage with accounting duties, using skills he had taught himself as a young man. One of his few boasts, quietly expressed, was that the hotel owner was so pleased with his work as a musician and bookkeeper that

he built a music practice outhouse in the grounds of the hotel for Steve's sole use. Happy days, no doubt. A Professional pool of musicians Manchester became a mecca for musicians in the post-World War II years. There were numerous dance bands, big bands and gigging groups but "perhaps the most prestigious dance band engagement in the 1950s was that of the BBC NDO – the Northern Dance Orchestra," according to bandleader/trumpeter Phil Moss, a good mate of Steve's. (5). The NDO was based at The Playhouse Theatre, Hulme, later to be the short-lived Nia Centre. The NDO was reorganised as the Northern Radio Orchestra in 1975 and then was disbanded in 1985. In the NDO's online archives Steve Morris is listed as a former member – possibly a founding member – and a featured artist with the prestigious orchestra. (6) When, in 1969, the NDO was threatened with disbandment, there was a successful national campaign to save it. The BBC's symphonic musicians joined the campaign, threatening to gather outside Broadcasting House to perform Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, using live ammunition.

Northern Dance Orchestra

Steve chose his guest soloists for Band on the Wall from the sizeable pool of experienced professionals and semi-professionals in the NDO and other Manchester-based bands, including those working in the studios of Granada Television. It was a rich pool of highly skilled players. Though the big band era was said to have long passed, there was no local shortage: "at least a dozen big bands [are] appearing regularly in the Manchester area at present," reported the New Manchester Review in 1978.(7) Steve already knew many of the musicians, having worked with them; others he got to know when 'The Band' soon became a hang-out for gigging musicians, after their evening engagements and on Friday lunchtimes for two years, 1978 & 79, when The Professionals big band took the stage. In addition to clarinet, Steve also played alto and soprano saxes and, like Ronnie Scott, he often chose saxophonists to be featured at his club. They included featured soloists from the NDO such as Gary Cox and Roger Fleetwood; also Norman Brown who can be seen on YouTube soloing with the Andy Prior big band. (insert link) Years later, Norman's wife, Maggie, would work the box-office at The Band. Other saxophonists booked by Steve in the late 70s included Julius Hasford, Harold Salisbury, Brian Crowther,(8) Steve Shaw and Ivor Deach who went on to form the Shades of Kenton Big Band. A particular favourite of Steve's was multi-instrumentalist Alan Fawkes (9) whose full-time job was in the studios of Alfasound, the successful UK jingle production company that he founded. All of the soloists that Steve selected had substantial local reputations, mainly amongst fellow musicians, but a few were much more widely known, such as trombonist Ken Wray – ex Ronnie Scott, Jack Parnell and Tubby Hayes bands, among others – who, after years in London and on the Continent, returned to Manchester in 1968 and played at Band on the Wall on at least seven occasions in 1976, the year before his premature, accidental death. (10) Other featured trombonists at The Band were Eddie Warburton (a frequent visitor), Paul Latham, David Horley, Pete McGuire and Harry Simons. Trumpet players included Julian Cowen, Doug Whalley and Max Bullock.



Ace trombonist Ken Wray

If many of Steve's chosen soloists were older, seasoned professionals, he also gave playing opportunities to younger, upcoming players, such as saxophonist Munch Manship – a pro musician since the age of 18 – and part-timers Chris Williams, alto sax, and Pete Martin,

trumpet, both then university lecturers, Chris in pure mathematics; Pete in sociology. Chris later became a mainstay of Band on the Wall's education programme, for several years running jazz courses and workshops at the club. Munch would follow him in this role, still continuing the Jazz Foundations classes in 2013. Having retired from University, Chris in 2013 was living with his American wife in San Diego, California. Doc Martin Some 20 years after his first trumpet gig at Band on the Wall, Dr Pete Martin became Head of Sociology (1996-8) at Manchester University and Dean of Undergraduate Studies (2000-3) in the former Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. An author specializing in the sociology of music, Pete is also a notable jazz journalist and continues to play trumpet. He has a wry sense of humour and one of his famous quips – on his becoming a Dean at the university – was: "I only ever wanted to be Dizzy Gillespie but now I'm Dean Martin." Steve was especially impressed by one young guitarist from Haslingden, Lancashire – perhaps an unlikely place from which to emerge a highly advanced virtuoso musician. This was Kenny Shaw. Between concerts with the ground-breaking UK jazz-rock group, Ian Carr's Nucleus, that he joined in 1974, Kenny was booked at The Band for a Saturday night in 1976 and so impressed was Steve that he booked him for several other weekend dates during the year; more importantly, he chose Kenny's own band with Harold Salisbury on saxes to take a weekly Tuesday night residency at the venue, from June 1976. This only ceased in April 1977 when the demands of session work took Kenny to London. Amongst those he recorded with were Elton John & Sting (11). Kenny had a lot of blues influence in his playing and often built his solos to a tremendous pitch of excitement, according to Geoff Castle, his keyboard colleague in Nucleus. The Kenny Shaw Band, a thrilling unit playing original material, with Ron Parry, then Dave Tyas, on drums and Barry Rickerby, bass, played many more times at The Band, and Kenny was also featured in other line-ups, including a guitar duo with Gary Boyle and guitar trio, Paws for Thought, with Richard Wright and Paul Mitchell Davidson. In the 60s, Gary Boyle gained an international reputation playing with high profile artists, Dusty Springfield and Lulu, and enjoyed cult success with his band, Isotope. Living in Lancashire, he continues to play. Another member of Nucleus at that time was saxophonist Bob Bertles who also played alongside Kenny at The Band in 1976 before his return to his native Australia that year. Geoff Castle described Bertles (12) as "a fluent and inspiring player... renowned for his ability to absorb vast quantities of pizza and booze without showing any ill effect. I made the mistake of challenging him to a drinking contest in the south of France. After we had 21 glasses of Pastis, I had to chuck in the towel. Bob's reaction was, Great, I can start drinking now." For the past 30 years Bertles has lived in the King's Cross area of Sydney and is still active as a musician. He also presents a regular programme on his local jazz station, Eastside Radio. There is a YouTube clip of him performing at his local club, the long-established El Rocco, Kings Cross, Sydney, on April 7 2012. Not all the soloists who appeared at The Band were Steve's specific choice: some just turned up and sat in. Steve never objected, particularly when the sitters-in were of the calibre of multi-reeds player George Galway (brother of the famous flautist James Galway) and violinist Nigel Kennedy, releasing inhibitions after negotiating a concerto or two as soloist with the Halle Orchestra at the Free Trade Hall. The Resident Band

Before Steve had even launched the club or considered which soloists would be featured, he needed to book an accompanying group. Steve travelled to Bury to see a band and during an interval at the gig at The Bridge Inn he asked the drummer Allan Tattersall about forming a resident group. Steve said, "We are thinking of opening the Band on the Wall again.... We are going to redo it, renovate it and open again, just for jazz." (13) Allan formed a trio with Dave Roberts on piano and Pete Briggs, electric bass, often with the addition of vocalist Al Baron. This was the resident group that performed regularly on Fridays and Saturdays, and occasionally on other nights of the week from 1975 to mid 1979. The billing in the local evening newspaper was: A Great Trio. A Great Singer and a Beautiful Atmosphere (14) (MEN advertisement, October 15, 1975).

Vocalist Al Baron



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall



Drummer Allan Tattersall at Band on the Wall, late 1970s

Allan Tattersall went on to become not only an established drummer but also a world- renowned martial arts exponent, with 26 Dan Grades in the arts of jujitsu, iaido, aikido, aikjitsu, bujutsu and karate. On weekend nights, Steve Morris could often be heard in the cellar of the club, warming up on clarinet or alto sax, after he had prepared staff wages, band fees and paperwork for the night. He would then emerge from the bowels of the building and, guarding his instrument, find his way through the audience and join the group on stage. With the resident group, he would play favourites such as 'Girl from Ipanema,' 'There is no Greater Love,' as well as a catchy, own composition by Steve, modestly titled 'C7,' the chord on which it was based. Often, on leaving the stage, Steve would be the recipient of kisses from women, young and old, as he crossed the dance-floor – the only exit route from stage prior to the improvement works of 2009. Mildly embarrassed but smiling broadly, he would return his precious



clarinet or saxophone to the cellar, ready for serious practice the following day, in between the many duties of managing the venue. Double Diamond Dave

Resident pianist Dave Roberts was known to enjoy a drink: “Double Diamond Dave, we called him,” said one of the musicians who worked with him. Another musician who played with him put it this way: “Sober, Dave was a lovely piano player but after he had a drink his notes became fewer and fewer. In fact I realised that the amount of notes that he played was in inverse proportion to the amount of drink he had – to the point that when he had a skinful he would get up and dance round the piano: no notes at all.” Others who occasionally took the piano seat were Pete Hernon, Andy Hickey, John Rotherham and Lithuanian-born virtuoso Balis Novak. Steve Forster, who was Assistant Manager from 1982 to 1988, tells a true story about Dave Roberts and Balis Novak. The following is an excerpt from his ‘Memories of The Band’. Anecdotes from this time include the time that the regular weekend piano player, Dave Roberts, famous for enjoying a drink or 20, was a bit beyond hitting the right notes (or at least hitting them in the right order). In the audience was his sometime stand in, tall Russian pianist Balis Novak who, seeing the problem, calmly walked onto the stage and, standing behind Dave, added his right hand to play the melody. Unaware of this Dave looked down, saw three hands playing, shook his head, got up and left the stage figuring that if he was so drunk that he appeared to have 3 hands he should stop playing there and then. Watch this 1982 video by bluesman Norman Beaker with Balis Novak.

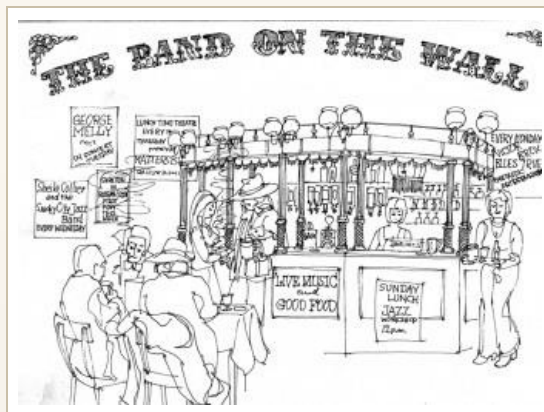
Steve Forster at the sound desk, Band on the Wall, early 1980s From the end of June 1979, Steve Morris booked a new resident trio, led by a young pianist Steve Jaffa, a prolific composer of attractive melodies. On double bass was Ian Croal and there were a few different drummers, including Geoff Brain, Dave Tyas and, returning occasionally, Allan Tattersall. With the regular addition of Julius Hasford on tenor

sax, the group began to intersperse the normal repertoire of jazz standards with Jaffa’s tunes. In 1975/76, the admission charge for the regular performances at weekends was 25p before 9pm and 50p after 9pm. The venue was open to 2 am at the weekends, and midnight or 1 am during the week. In this period, The Band was advertised in the Manchester Evening News as open for ‘Live Music Every night,’ though the Sunday night opening ceased after August 1976, until the Manchester Musicians Collective took that regular night from October 1977. Traditional Jazz The longest-running weekly residency at The Band was by Sheila Collier and the Smoky City Jazz Band on Wednesday nights – for over six years. From time to time this highly-rated traditional band was augmented by visiting stars, such as trombonist George Chisholm (September 24 1975). Sometimes The Smoky City supported entire visiting bands such as The Harbour Jazz Band, billed in the Manchester Evening News advert as ‘Dixie goes Dutch, including ex members of the Dutch Swing College.’ The concert on Friday October 10 1975 was recorded by Piccadilly Radio for Piccadilly Jazz Club and may have been the first radio broadcast from Band on the Wall.



Sheila Collier photographed at Band on the Wall, late 1970s

John Hallam, saxophonist with the Smoky City for several years, recalls: “It was one of the best residencies we had during my time with the band. It always had a good buzz and we had lots of musicians dropping in to see us and many of them sitting in.” The band’s last gig at The Band was on 8th July 1981. From 1982, The Smoky City Jazz Band, led by trumpeter Bill Smith – but without Sheila Collier – was active until 2007. In 2013, vocalist Sheila Collier was living in Sweden and still performing, including dates in Holland with the Big Chris Barber Band. Sheila’s ‘Memories of The Band’ can be found here.



Sketch of Band on the Wall, from 'Manchester Music' by Albin Trowski. Posters on the left display 'Sheila Collier and the Smoky City Jazz Band' also 'George Melly'

Steve was not a trad jazz musician; his style was more Swing-based. On clarinet he particularly admired Artie Shaw, also Ed Hall; on alto sax, he was in awe of Charlie Parker who he claimed to have seen in a 52nd Street club on one of his Cunard trips to New York in the early 50s. But he enjoyed traditional jazz bands and this is reflected in his bookings in the 70s. The local Dave Donohoe’s New Orleans Jazz Band was booked more than a dozen times in 1976/77, and other occasional bookings were: the Panama Jazz Band – “the West Country’s best choice for weddings, social events and corporate entertainment”;⁽¹⁵⁾ Max Collie’s Rhythm Aces and George Melly with John Chilton’s Footwarmers.

In March 1976 the London-based Jazz Centre Society (JCS) appointed Ian Croal as its first Regional Organiser. The post was based at North West Arts Association (NWAA) offices in King Street, Manchester, and, with a wide regional remit, was funded by the Arts Council and NWAA and the Regional Arts Associations of Merseyside, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire & Humberside. It was the first stage in a strategy to have jazz development workers covering the whole of England. The JCS would have a significant impact on the future of Band on the Wall. Ian Croal: I decided that we should have a weekly focus for our regular activities and reckoned that this should be in Manchester as this was where, outside of the London area, the largest number of musicians lived; also there appeared to be a gap – few of the best contemporary, touring jazz groups were visiting the area. I checked out numerous potential venues and finished up with a choice between Band on the Wall and The Midland Hotel in Burton Road, Didsbury (now The Metropolitan). At that

time, the big function room at The Midland was a significant jazz venue. I saw performances there by saxophonists Don Rendell and Gary Cox, as well as regular performances by the Alan Hare(16) Band and the Galloway/Backhouse Big Band. On balance I opted for Band on the Wall because of its atmosphere, more central location and good acoustic; also it was a big plus that the venue management included an ex professional musician and jazz enthusiast, Steve Morris. Launch The Northern Jazz Centre Society (NJCS) was launched in September 1976 at a one-off 'Jazz Sunday' at Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre, then just recently opened. The bill included: American trombonist Slide Hampton in a quartet with Peter Ind on bass and Al Levitt on drums; French virtuoso pianist Martial Solal who played a startling solo set; trumpeter Kenny Baker with the Eddie Thompson Trio, tap dancer Will Gaines with the Blue Magnolia Jazz Orchestra, the South Yorkshire Youth Jazz Orchestra and the innovative NW fusion band, Both Hands Free, comprising Phil Chapman (sax), Richie Close (keyboards) and Dave Hassell (drums) and Pete Glennon (bass guitar). The all-day event sold out. One of the reasons for booking world-class pianists, Solal and Thompson, was the availability of the new Steinway concert grand piano that had been purchased for the new theatre. However, shortly before the event, the theatre management said that, on the advice of their piano technician, they could not permit the instrument to be played by jazz players. For Croal, it was a familiar story: a few years earlier, he had faced a similar argument against the use of the concert grand at Edinburgh's Usher Hall. The pianist in this instance? Duke Ellington. In Manchester, heated exchanges then occurred between the Northern JCS (NJCS) and the Royal Exchange Theatre. After failing with routine arguments, Ian Croal claimed (falsely) that the contract with Solal specified a Steinway concert grand and this could not be hired elsewhere at short notice. The theatre management finally agreed an uncomfortable compromise, allowing Solal to play their Steinway, but not Eddie Thompson. The NJCS was forced to hire a separate instrument for Thompson's afternoon performance. The hired instrument was a good Bosendorfer chamber piano but it wasn't the Steinway concert instrument, said Croal. As it happened, Eddie Thompson* stayed on with friends in the theatre foyer that evening and would have heard something of the Solal performance. Blind from birth, Eddie obviously would not have seen the piano but, with his superb ear, he would have known straight away that this was not the instrument that he had played in the theatre a few hours earlier.

- Eddie Thompson
- Eddie Thompson was a consummate pianist who prior to becoming a full-time musician, was an expert piano tuner and technician. He was the first house pianist at Ronnie Scott's Club and played at the club's launch in 1959. For many years he held the piano residency at New York's famous Hickory House. Back in the UK, he had a BBC TV jazz show in the 70s when he also held residencies at The Warren Bulkeley, Stockport, and the Anchor Inn, Brighouse, Yorkshire. He died on 6 November 1986, aged 61. This event was followed by the club launch of the NJCS at Band on the Wall in October 1976: a packed house rocked to a thrilling performance by Don Weller's Major Surgery, a distinctive and creative jazz fusion group that featured Don's majestic yet witty sax playing, as well as his engaging compositions, with titles like 'Foul Group Practices,' 'Fred Bear the Threadbare Bear' and 'Shithotto Risotto.'



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall



Don Weller Photographer: Sefton Samuels

The New Jazz arrives (with some hostility) From then on, a new dimension was added to the jazz programme at the venue through the NJCS promotions. Prior to these Thursday promotions, there was no venue in the North West in the 70s that regularly presented the UK's best modern jazz groups. In the 50s and 60s, jazz fans in Manchester and area were spoilt for choice: there were the regular gigs at the famous Club 43, with appearances by some of the greatest modern jazz players, such as Sonny Rollins, the Horace Silver Quintet and the Tubby Hayes Quartet; also concerts in big halls, particularly the Free Trade Hall that in the 60s mainly featured American legends, such as Ella Fitzgerald (10/2/67), Buddy Rich and his Orchestra (4/4/67) the Modern Jazz Quartet (23/10/64 & 24/9/66), Thelonious Monk's Quartet (20/3/64) and the Miles Davis Quintet (27/9/60). Elsewhere there were numerous pubs where trad jazz could be heard and, at the tail-end of the trad boom, in the early 60s, Messrs Bilk, Barber and Ball had their own concerts at the Free Trade Hall: Acker Bilk and his Paramount Jazz Band (several times – and referred to by some disdainful musicians as 'Utter Bilge and his Pac-a-mac Jazz Band'), the Chris Barber Band (3/3/63) and Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen (10/9/61). (A colourful history of the era that he calls the golden age of jazz in Manchester is

told in text and pictures by Bill Birch in his 'Keeper of the Flame: Modern Jazz in Manchester 1946-72,' ISBN 978-0-9566670-0-7). In Manchester, by 1976, Club 43 had long ceased and jazz concerts were infrequent at the Free Trade Hall and other concert venues. There remained numerous trad sessions in pubs, usually free admission, and at a few venues presenting soloists with local rhythm sections. Locally big bands continued to thrive – mainly on enthusiasm rather than remuneration, though a few such as the Syd Lawrence Band have had commercial success and continues, led by trombonist Chris Dean, following the death of the founder, trumpeter Syd Lawrence, in 1998. The music – as it always does – was changing. Many of the new generation of jazz players in the 1970s were more interested in original repertoire

than jazz standards, rooted in the stage shows of the 1930s and 1940s; some had ceased playing tunes and abandoned fixed sequences and metre. Others were influenced by rock and funk rhythms; some by folk melodies and patterns. The new jazz, evolving in its various forms from the 60s, could rarely be performed effectively by a pick-up group; it required dedicated rehearsal and performance by a stable group. A few local bands, such as Both Hands Free, the Kenny Shaw Band and the Jim Galloway Quintet, chose this path and found gigs locally, but other modern UK groups – of economic necessity mainly based down South – rarely made the journey to Manchester and area. Travel and accommodation costs and lack of interest from broadcasters rendered these bands financial non-starters for local promoters and venues. An element of subsidy was needed, and this is what the NJCS brought to the scene. There was hostility from some local jazz promoters to the arrival of the JCS. Unwelcoming articles appeared in the Manchester Evening News and the New Manchester Review in 1976. Some of the promoters, usually amateur enthusiasts, seemed jealous that the JCS had obtained Arts Council/Arts Association funding where they had failed; others thought that the JCS represented unfair competition. The opposition was led by the Northern Jazz Federation of local promoters but it subsided when the NJCS fulfilled one of its original aims: to introduce a system of financial support to jazz promoters and venues throughout the North of England. At Band on the Wall for the first time in the 70s in Manchester and, indeed, the region there were now regular performances by complete groups led by the UK's leading modern jazz players. Those included: the Stan Tracey Octet, Jeff Clyne's Turning Point, Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia, Elton Dean's Ninesense, Harry Miller's Isipingo, Henry Lowther's Quarternity, the Kathy Stobart Quintet, Trevor Watts' Amalgam, the Mike Osborne Quintet, the Morrissey Mullen Band and the Don Weller/Bryan Spring Quartet. In all, some 70 of the UK's outstanding visiting jazz groups were presented by the NJCS at Band on the Wall in the 3 years at the tail-end of the 70s and this comprised about 50% of the Thursday programme. The remaining programme on those nights comprised performances by a total of more than 40 Manchester or Northern groups, and a number of visitors from the USA and Continental Europe. Piano and Films In September 1977, the NJCS presented a 'Jazz Piano Celebration' that ranged from boogie woogie and stride from Neville Dickie to more modern styles performed by the talented (and largely unrecognised) local pianist Dennis Freedman. For the first time at The Band the programme included short films – on Fats Waller, Meade Lux Lewis and others. The formula of music and films on music would be repeated several times in future years and would

- prompt the idea of a greater use of visual imagery that would gain momentum with the venue improvements of 2009, particularly the creation of The Picturehouse. Northern Groups Manchester/Northern area bands included: Semuta, led by the brilliant vibist Ian Ballantine, at that time a student at Leeds College of Music; the Gary Boyle Band; the Barry Whitworth Septet; the Chris Williams Quartet, the Blackpool Bebop Preservation Society; Loose Change; The Inversions and Munch ManShip with Stray Hat. There were also Northern area big bands: the Galloway/Backhouse Big Band, the Tony Faulkner Big Band, The Professionals Jazz Orchestra, directed by Bernard Herrmann (former leader of the Northern Dance Orchestra) and the Alan Hare Big Band. USA Visitors A wide stylistic range was covered by the visiting American musicians, from the New Orleans pianism and gentle vocals of Alton Purnell (ex Bunk Johnson, George Lewis) to the contemporary quartet led by drummer Andrew Cyrille (ex Cecil Taylor). There was also some classic blues, including guitarist/vocalist Jimmy Rogers, formerly Muddy Waters right-hand man, and harmonica player Sugar Blue, from New York, who had gained recent fame recording several tracks with The Rolling Stones. First choice to accompany the visiting bluesmen at The Band was Norman Beaker's No Mystery, and the No1 choice to accompany visiting jazz soloists, also on dates throughout the North, was the hugely talented pianist Joe Palin* and his trio, usually with Dave Lynne on double bass and Ron Parry, drums. Other Visiting Bands From the Netherlands: Gigs Hendriks Quartet and the Leo Cuypers Trio. From Poland: Zbigniew Namyslowski Band and Crash. Multi-national groups included MUMPS (Albert Mangelsdorff, Stu Martin, Barre Phillips & John Surman) and European Jazz Consensus.
- Joe Palin died 18 September 2007, aged 73. A not-so-Swinging Affair Most famous of all the Americans to play at The Band in the 70s was the great tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon who appeared on February 17, 1977. The previous year, he had made his triumphant homecoming to USA, after 15 years as a resident in Europe, and when he arrived in Manchester he had just completed a stint at Ronnie Scott's Club, London. Unfortunately, his performance at The Band was memorable only for his inebriation. Ian Croal: It was painful. He could hardly stand and was losing his way, even on a 12-bar blues. Somehow he managed to get through two sets without falling off the stage. He was a hero of mine. As a teenager, I hitch-hiked from Edinburgh to London to see him in the early 60s at Ronnie Scott's. He was magnificent. At the end of the gig at The Band, as promoter I had to face some choice remarks from members of the audience, including from one angry professional musician who was particularly abusive. I couldn't

get angry. I just felt very sad for this giant of jazz who year after year, night after night, since the 1940s was expected to perform at the highest level. In the following two days, I presented him at concerts in Preston and Sheffield;* he was a different person, sober and in control, he was superb.

- in association with promoters Hurlfield Jazz, subsequently to become Sheffield Jazz.



Dexter Gordon 1977 Northern Tours

Throughout the remainder of the 70s and into the early 80s, the Thursday promotions at Band on the Wall were the starting point for monthly regional and subsequently some national tours organised from the venue by the NJCS. The NJCS also produced a 'Jazz in the North' regular brochure with a free circulation of 40,000. The NJCS committee was an expert panel that encouraged a jazz touring network throughout the North of England through a system of grants and guarantees to local promoters and venues. Seeing the success of this scheme, Northern Arts Association soon joined, thus completing the inter-regional scope of the activities to the five Northern Regional Arts Associations, covering the entire North of England. The Band on the Wall Thursday nights formed the basis of a weekly three-day hub for the NJCS tours, along with direct promotions in Sheffield (on Wednesdays, in association with Hurlfield Jazz), and Fridays in Liverpool (various venues, including Eric's Club, formerly The Cavern). Other venues on the jazz touring circuit that was organised and financially supported by the NJCS included: York Arts Centre; Nuffield Theatre, Lancaster; Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal; Southport Arts Centre; Hebden Bridge New Arts Association; East Lancs Jazz Club; Huddersfield Big Band Society; Washington Jazz Club; Stephen Joseph Theatre-in-the-round, Scarborough; Leeds University; Darlington Arts Centre; Humberside Theatre, Hull; Grantham Jazz Society and Bury Metro Arts. Concerts & Festivals The Northern Jazz Centre Society in the 70s also presented concerts at larger venues. In Manchester, these included the Gil Evans Orchestra and Stan Tracey Octet at the Free

Trade Hall on 27 February 1978 and the Gary Burton Quartet at the Royal Northern College of Music, on 23 April 1978. The latter venue at that time was a jazz desert – unlike today when it has a high-profile and wide ranging contemporary programme – and perhaps then justified the following in the New Manchester Review: As far as I know, then, the RNCM has never taken responsibility for any jazz promotions. A pretty dismal record which can only add weight to the arguments of those who regard it as an elitist and somewhat philistine institution.⁽¹⁷⁾ In 1979, the NJCS secured its first entirely commercially sponsored and broadcast international jazz festival in Sheffield, centred on The Crucible Theatre. This would be the first of a dozen international jazz festivals organised by the NJCS from Band on the Wall.

MANCHESTER MUSICIANS COLLECTIVE

FROM THE ARCHIVE: ECHOES FROM THE ATTIC

Band on the Wall's own digital archive holds posters and flyers from this era of Manchester's music scene, including material relating to post-punk bands that grew out of the same circles as the Collective, such as A Certain Ratio, who debuted on Factory Records in 1979.

<https://attic.bandonthewall.org/exhibition/local-talent>

70s Programme: Manchester Musicians Collective When the idea of a Manchester Musicians Collective first emerged, it was expected that the participants would be from the exploratory end of the music spectrum, free improvisers perhaps and committed experimentalists, possibly mixing music with performance art. This expectation was based on the involvement with other collectives of the two original protagonists, music graduates Trevor Wishart and Dick Witts – Trevor in York, Dick in London. But soon after the Collective got going in April 1977 it was obvious that Manchester's version would be very different: much more rock'n'roll. We were shocked when rock-type bands turned up, looking to play. It was not what we had expected, – Louise Price (nee Alderman)(1). At that time, Louise, aged 21, was a member of Dick Witts's (2) contemporary ensemble the NorMedia Band that had recently performed compositions by Trevor Wishart – pieces that resembled happenings, including one that had Louise roaring on stage on a motor bike. Leather-clad in black, Louise and her motorbike – though not both on stage – would become constants at Collective events and she would soon be an operational centre-point and spokesperson for the Collective, as well as bass guitarist in The Manchester Mekon. Louise is now (2013) a maths lecturer.



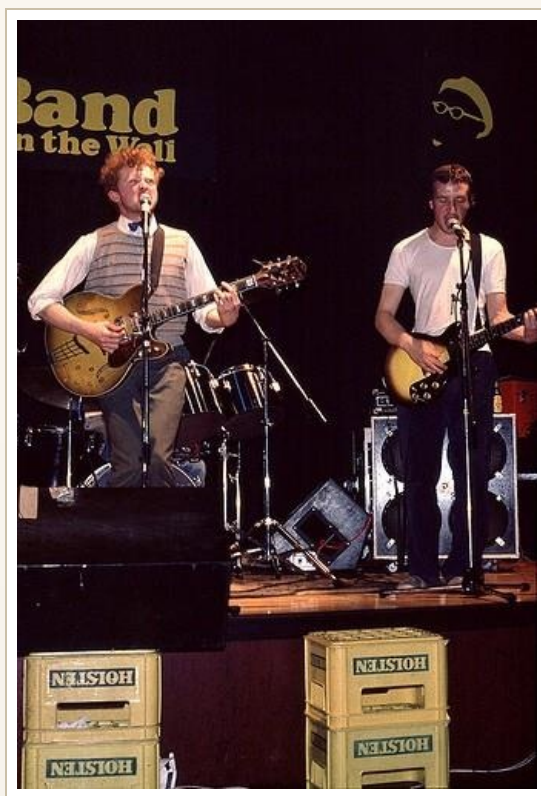
Louise Price (right) (nee Alderman), bass guitar, and Frank Ewart, guitar, (left. Manchester

Mekon at Band on the Wall, 1977. In 1977 Trevor Wishart, with BA & Masters Degrees and a Doctorate behind him, was composer-in-residence at North West Arts Association and he organised the first meeting place for the Collective, the white-washed basement of the Association's building in King Street. The basement, a twee restaurant during the day, would soon be bombarded with some remarkable sounds, including Trevor's extraordinary vocalisations(3) and Manchester band The Fall's raw, venomous first-ever gig. (4) The venue would soon prove too small for the Collective's growing promotional aspirations. North West Arts Association assisted in kick-starting the new Collective. The Association's Annual Report for 1977/78 confirms the award of a grant of £410 to the Collective for rehearsal room hire and transport. This was perhaps the first time that NWAA had supported rock bands, although, given the more arty expectations of the instigators of the Collective, this may have been an unforeseen outcome. Much of the grant might also have returned to the Association via room hire. Move to 'The Band' The Collective also met at the nearby Sawyer's Arms on Deansgate to discuss the future. There, "the motley bunch of assorted musicians planned a flawed strategy to take over the world – starting with the gorgeously atmospheric venue, The Band On The Wall," according to Collective member Mick Duffy (5) of the Blackburn band, IQ Zero. Duffy went on to become a northern correspondent of New Musical Express. Sunday was the only available regular weekly night at Band on the Wall. By August 1976, the Sunday night gigs at the venue had ceased after a six-week run by the Bruce Rogers Trio and prior to that a longer-term residency by the Harry S Quintgroup, sometimes described as a jazz workshop. The Sunday nights were taken by the Collective on a trial basis and the first

- promotion took place on Sunday October 30; admission was 50p and – as would be the continuing format – there were three acts; on this first night these were poet Dominic Rivron, and bands, The Elite and On The Rocks. The

trial promotions went well and included gigs by The Manchester Mekon, (November 6) and Trevor Wishart and The Fall (November 13). The Collective nights resumed in 1978, weekly on Sundays but switched to Tuesday nights from September of that year after the lengthy residency by Manchester jazz pianist Vinny Gorton's Trio, plus guest soloists, came to an end. Music critic and author Mick Middles described the venue and its adjacent area at that time: (6) Over on the chip-paper'n'beer-can strewn streets of Ancoats, on Swan Street, stood the true downbeat musicianly heart of Manchester, Band on the Wall. He described the Collective as a motley and expanding gang of strummers and blowers, some immersed in studenthood, although most would scatter about the dole queues of Prestwich, Hulme and Stockport, music being their hope, their passion and, if only for an evening, their form of escape.... It was a curious mixture of insular musical meanderings and stark, half-formulated rock. Mick Hucknall's Frantic Elevators** could often be found, noisily employing either the stage or the front row, as could Burnley's hilarious Not Sensibles, the dull, hippyish Manchester Mekon, the Buzzcockian Fast Cars, Blackburn's answer to Devo, IQ Zero and Joy Division. Joy Division enjoyed the Band on the Wall because it was a world away from the Manchester scene that – at least in their eyes – had so ostracised them.

- Hucknall went on to form Just Red, then Simply Red. His first band, Frantic Elevators, were members of the Collective and played at Band on the Wall several times, including on Collective nights, 18 June 1978 along with Dick Witts's band The Passage, and on 14 November 1978, along with Fast Cars and The Manchester Mekon. His Just Red and Simply Red also played some of their first dates at the venue.



Frantic Elevators at Band on the Wall

In Praise of The Collective At the time, Ian Curtis, troubled lead singer of Joy Division, was quick to praise the Collective, showing that experiment was indeed part of the ethos and not the preserve of the avant-garde: (7) The Collective was a really good thing for Joy Division. It gave us somewhere to play, we met other musicians, talked, swapped ideas. Also it gave us a chance to experiment in front of an audience. We were allowed to take risks – the Collective isn't about groups that need to draw an audience. Others have since joined in, praising the innovative Collective on their website: It was a very exciting time musically, the mix of musicians brought something to each camp giving everything an edge somehow previously lacking

The Collective changed the course of my life and I think also the lives of many others. With its DIY values and sexual inclusiveness it had an enormous influence on the Manchester music scene and of popular culture of the time with far reaching effects which have lasted until this day. – Louise Price Andy White, Picture Chords: My lasting image of what

the Collective was originally will be that of people applauding some of the most unrehearsed bands without any words of criticism and only encouragement. Maybe this was because they knew that in the coming weeks it would be their turn. Mick Duffy, IQ Zero: Looking back, I think the Manchester Collective was a master-stroke of DIY home-made culture, an emblem of its time. Aggro The Collective started in the punk rock era that in the UK had raged and splattered into existence in 1976, particularly with The Clash and the Sex Pistols. Two gigs by the Sex Pistols at the Lesser Free Trade Hall in June and July of 1976 are cited by pundits as having a big influence on Manchester bands. For example: There can be no denying that the whole modern Manchester music scene evolved from the Sex Pistols' appearances during that long hot summer. – John Robb, 'The North Will Rise Again' The statement can be denied; there are many participants in the modern Manchester music scene, then and now, who would evolve without the Sex Pistols aid or influence. Indeed, as the stellar drummer/percussionist Dave Hassell would later affirm, there is not, one, Manchester music scene: there are many. Video: In Conversation with Dave Hassell Much of the Sex Pistols' influence was behavioural or attitudinal, rather than musical, affecting audiences and bands (and writers and broadcasters). Violence erupted amongst the audience at the second of the Free Trade Hall concerts and was condemned by Johnny Rotten, leader of the Sex Pistols, yet it was The Pistols' guitarist Steve Jones who famously summarised the band's mission: "Actually, we're not into music, we're into chaos." And chaos would have been a fair description of the scene at the Free Trade Hall when fighting broke out, allegedly between "the Slaughter and the Dogs lot and the Sex Pistols lot." (8) Ed Garrity was a roadie for the Wythenshawe group Slaughter & The Dogs – also on the bill that night – and 'it all kicked off. I got hit on the head with a bottle. There was blood everywhere.... Someone said "there's that headbanger with the nosebleed" and that's where my name came from." Garrity was a member of the band Wild Ram; thereafter it was renamed Ed Banger and the Nosebleeds. For Garrity, his injury was a badge of initiation: After spilling our blood for the punk cause, damn right we regarded ourselves as true punks. But we still got labelled bandwagon jumpers. (9) The accounts of music gigs in Manchester around this time are littered with stories of violence, vandalism and (mostly) men behaving badly, for example: At the Mayflower club, Gorton, in July 1979, Adam and the Ants "played to a seriously antagonistic crowd who, though less than 50 in number, managed to smash every chair and every table into the band's PA stack before the lone bouncer bundled them on to the pavement". (10)

And now, the first line of the current (2013) website of Slaughter and the Dogs sounds almost like a macho boast, saying that they hail from "the notoriously tough Manchester suburb of Wythenshawe." Bands that played Band on the Wall in the 70s, such as Joy Division and Buzzcocks, had their moments of outrageous behaviour at other venues. Joy Division were in the support slot for the Buzzcocks tour in autumn 1979 and in a Glasgow hotel, "camaraderie boiled over into a veritable orgy of juvenilia, with a series of 'dare games' causing all band members to 'hurtle' around the corridors, banging on doors, crashing through chairs and sinking deeper and deeper into an alcoholic frenzy." (11) The closed hotel bar was raided, and police were called. "It was Richard Boon [Buzzcocks manager] who would bear most of the pain the next day, when the gargantuan bill was curtly handed to him." A few weeks later, according to Deborah Curtis – Ian Curtis's wife – after their final tour date, at London's Rainbow Theatre, Joy Division wrecked a toilet block in Guildford, "removing fluorescent light tubes and smearing the light switch and taps with excrement." (12) But they did not behave that way when they played as Collective members at Band on the Wall. Some band members of the Collective were intentionally intimidating. Stephen Murphy, of God's Gift, said the band's performances had a very belligerent, aggressive edge: "Several gigs ended early due to angry customers or in random violence. The lyrics were always of paramount importance despite the extreme volume we played at. I think the aim was to be disruptive, aggressive, and intimidating whilst keeping up this seamless bombardment of sound. I believe it created a feeling of unease." (13) Good Vibes But even if the occasional band, such as God's Gift, sought to intimidate at Band on the Wall, all was mellow on the Collective nights. There was always a good feeling. The bands supported one another, lent each other equipment; there was never any trouble. – Louise Price (14) ...it was a great atmosphere to make your first excursions into playing live and gave people the confidence to try out new ideas. There always seemed to be a sense of excitement and expectation. I remember even feeling nervous for other bands playing since you tended to know most of the bands there. – Andy White, Picture Chords (15) Musicians noted a distinct contrast between the atmosphere of the Collective nights and that of a number of the Factory gigs at The Russell Club, where from time to time there were squabbles between bands and fights in the audience, and unwelcome audience participation. John Bisset, of Spherical Objects, one of the Collective member bands: Oh, and there was The Russell Club. We were supporting Howard Devoto's post Buzzcocks band Magazine. A steady shower of spit bathed me throughout our set. (15) The Factory nights at the Russell in Hulme started in 1978 and in the same year Factory Records was launched. Though stopping short of spit, occasionally the audience at the Collective nights was abusive, though this was directed not at the stage but at a visiting member of the audience:

special treatment was reserved for a TV presenter and Factory co-founder who, four years later would be a co-founder of The Hacienda Club:

Once or twice Tony Wilson turned up and got nothing but abuse from everyone –Steve Coogan’s portrayal of him [20th Century Party People] really was the most accurate. (16) – Andy White The abuse hurled at Wilson may have been from band members who were aggrieved that he had not selected them to appear on one of the Granada TV programmes that he presented, nor invited them to join Factory Records artists’ roster. However, a performance at a Collective night at Band on the Wall could lead to a contract with Factory: We signed to Factory early on, not long after I joined the band. Rob Gretton saw us play with Joy Division at the Manchester Musicians’ Collective and he told Tony Wilson about us. Tony Wilson put us on at the Factory to come and see us. (17) – Martin Moscrop, A Certain Ratio And it was at Band on the Wall one night that the late Rob Gretton, Joy Division Manager, sitting at the back of the club and pondering the band’s recording future, scribbled on a beer mat his outline plan that would retain Joy Division with Factory Records, rather than sign with a major label. (18) There is an instance elsewhere of the audience venting their anger towards the stage when a Collective band was playing. The short-lived band Picture Chords was persuaded by an organizer to do an encore after a particularly unpopular set at the Deeply Vale Festival, near Bury, Lancashire, in the late 70s: “The problem was that we didn’t do encores and had nothing prepared so we made something up. The crowd’s reaction was not really positive and at one point I remember a whole potato narrowly missing me; why a potato was chosen to show their disgust I’ve no idea.”(19) Had the incident been at Band on the Wall there would have been some symbolic, historical relevance to the potato. After all, Band on the Wall was formerly the George and Dragon market pub, and was surrounded by potato dealers. Indeed, the very stage and dance floor area of the club was formerly a fruit and veg stall and store, no doubt well stocked with potatoes. A Collective Legacy At Band on the Wall the promotions by the Collective lasted continuously for less than two years. Yet in that time, over 50 bands and individual performers took to the stage, some several times, some for the first time. A few had to borrow equipment from others, sometimes even instruments, in order to perform. As well as performing, many Collective members helped with the organisation, publicity and presentation of the events. There was, yes, a collective spirit. In an era when the macho posturing of some bands could be accompanied by mayhem in the stalls or on the dance-floor, the Collective promotions were remarkably well-behaved affairs. This perhaps was the result of the cooperative ethos and demeanor of the organisers and the calming influence and mature reputation of Band on the Wall and its management, with its genial boss, Steve Morris. A few of the participants, such as Mick Hucknall, went on to fame and fortune. For some others the experience was life-changing in other ways, giving them confidence to pursue careers or hobbies, in music or in other fields. More than 30 years on, many of the musicians of the Collective are still writing, recording and playing in bands. On Record The first Collective album, ‘A Manchester Collection.’ was released in 1979. This was on Object Music, the record label of Steve Solamar, of Spherical Objects, who chose the line-

up for the album. The second album. ‘Unzipping The Abstract.’ was released in 1980, on the Collective’s own label.

“A Manchester Collection” Bands of the Manchester Musicians Collective. Cover Photo by Kevin Cummins.

NEW MANCHESTER REVIEW

FROM THE ARCHIVE: ECHOES FROM THE ATTIC

A New Manchester Review poster from a later incarnation of the Monday night series is held in the venue’s Echoes from the Attic collection, alongside other ephemera from Manchester’s home-grown talent nights.

<https://attic.bandonthewall.org/exhibition/local-talent>

- Monday Rock Club at Band on the Wall between 1977 and 1979 became “the hippest night in town... a showcase for up and coming Manchester bands, especially more leftfield and less poppy ones.”(1) These weekly sessions were presented by the fortnightly magazine New Manchester Review, “a sort of Manchester version of Time Out but with a more left- leaning political edge.” The NMR ‘Monday Club’ nights were truly seminal to the whole Manchester new music thing.... We hosted John Cooper Clarke doing a new poem/rant every interval between bands or sets,

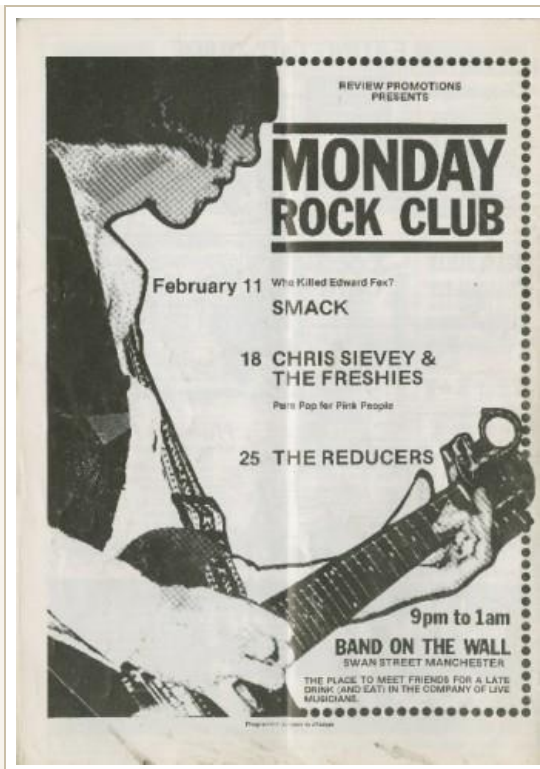
Joy Division performed there, as did virtually every band from the 1977–79 era, Buzzcocks etc., and I recall Sad Cafe did their music company signing there.

- Andrew Jaspan, former co-editor of the New Manchester Review and a founder of the Rock Club nights (2) John Cooper Clarke reputedly gained his first fee for a gig there – a fiver. According to Steve Forster (3) – Jaspan's Review colleague and co-organiser of the promotions – the Band on the Wall on Mondays became “the place to be at this time, where deals were done. Reasons for this were that it was early in the week – less pressured than on a weekend, more relaxed – also the NMR provided a reason, a focus for more than



Archival photograph, Band on the Wall

musicians to be there, for politicians, entrepreneurs and those who wanted to get their face known.” The Music The first event organized by the New Manchester Review at Band on the Wall was the publication's first birthday party, on 8 November 1976. The venue seemed an odd choice as it was exclusively run as a jazz club at that time (with the occasional blues aberration) and the headliners for the Review's birthday bash were something of a jazzier's nightmare: a brazen bunch of college boys from Bolton, the punk popsters, Buzzcocks. The programme also included singer-songwriter Tom McMasters whose band included future Joy Division producer Martin Hannett on bass. On witnessing the performance by the outrageous and musically naïve Buzzcocks, Steve Morris, Band on the Wall's genial venue manager, smiled paternally. A schooled musician who had devoted much of his life to mastering the intricacies of the clarinet, alto and soprano saxophones, Steve nonetheless would invariably encourage young musicians and performers to get up on stage, irrespective of their level of musical knowledge or technical abilities. The first advert for the NMR nights promised: A good times rock club...but also...All kinds of music and other diversions Many of the Rock Club posters and flyers used a distinctive design template:



Monday Night Rock Club

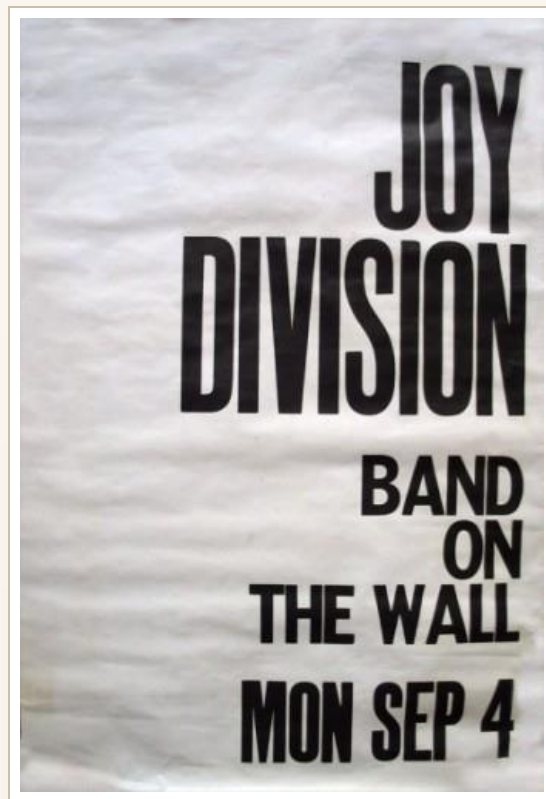
The Review Monday gigs were from 8pm to 1 or 2am and admission was usually 50p. The title of Rock Club did not constrain the programme bookers, Jaspan and Forster; from the outset there was much more than rock. The Grand Opening Night on 7 March 1977 included a country rock band, Pete Cowap with Country Rebel, also Cooper Clarke's ranting poetry and an all-women clog band, the Poynton Jemmers. On 3rd October 1977 the programme was devoted to poetry, including Liverpool poet Adrian Henri (4) and Carol Ann Duffy, 32 years before she became Poet Laureate. (5)



Carol Ann Duffy

The Rock Club programme, according to Forster, was able to adapt easily to changes in the musical climate because most of the people making those changes were in the audience most weeks, be they musicians, managers, agents, hairdressers, flyposters or just busybodies. Among the music people who would attend the Monday Rock Club nights were: Martin Hannett; Mark E Smith, leader of the post-punk band The Fall that played the Rock Club on October 30, 1978, and was said by Radio DJ John Peel to be "the band against which all others are judged" and continues to perform; CP Lee, then of the comedy rock group Alberto y Lost Trios Paranoias, and now (2013) Head of Film Studies at Salford University, an institution that, according to his website, he has "put on the world map;" and members of Joy Division

including the late Ian Curtis. The 'Albertos' would become regular entertainers at Band on the Wall in the 1980s. Joy Division played more frequently on the nights organised by Manchester Musicians' Collective at Band on the Wall but they made at least one Monday Rock Club appearance for NMR, September 4, 1978. This elementally simple, yet effective, poster for the date is reproduced courtesy of Manchester District Music Archive:



Joy Division A3 Poster

Steve's Forster's review of the gig reaches a puzzling conclusion: Lead singer Ian Curtis has started to stay sober on stage and thus has lost the habit of shouting at no-one in particular between numbers. Obviously influenced by Lou Reed, The Doors and Iggy Pop, Curtis's doom-laden vocals were effectively supported by the musicians – music for post-faschist take-over dissidents perhaps? (6) Big In Japan played on Monday 13 February 1978 – they included future well-known musicians and organisers, Jayne Casey, who later was co-founder of Cream nightclub, Liverpool, and was artistic co-director of Liverpool's opening weekend of Capital of Culture, Ian Broudie, of The Lightning Seeds, Holly Johnson, of Frankie Goes to Hollywood, and Bill Drummond, manager of Teardrop Explodes and later a member of KLF. A total of over 100 different bands – most from Manchester and area – performed at Band on the Wall during the four years of the NMR Rock Club's tenure at the venue. A few, such

as Bicycle Thieves, Spider Mike King, Gyro, Gaffa and Gags played several times. Musically advanced, members of Bicycle Thieves included, on drums, multi-instrumentalist Dave Adams who would later tour with such diverse artists as Andy Sheppard, George Russell, Michael Ball & Tony Christie, and in London's West End Shows has held keyboard and drum chairs, though, obviously, not simultaneously. Another member of the Bicycle Thieves was guitarist Richard Wright who would become a member of the resident weekend group at Band on the Wall in 1981 and subsequently embarked on a successful playing and teaching career in classical and contemporary music. From 2002-2004 he was Musical Director of the National Youth Guitar Ensemble and is now (2013) guitar tutor at the Yehudi Menuhin School of Music. The bassist with Bicycle Thieves, Ken Heggie, went on a similar career path, becoming a noted classical performer on guitar and mandolin, and guitar teacher. His orchestral commitments have included the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden and Glyndebourne Opera Touring. In the 1980s, he organised the music education programme at Band on the Wall and led its jazz-based outreach activities. A Manchester band that was strongly backed by the New Manchester Review was Gags. Describing their gig at Band on the Wall on 26 Sept 1977, the reviewer wrote: (7) Gags played a stunningly professional, tight set at BOTW enriched by the controlled dementia of Mr Bren Gore on keyboards, remember where you read it first. The band never gained fame or fortune sufficiently for them to give up

their day jobs but during a period of two decades they were the most popular Saturday night band at Band on the Wall, notching up a record 100 gigs at the venue and for five years, 1987-92, breaking all house records by averaging audiences of over 300. At the time, the capacity of the club was just 240 but in the 5 to 6 hours that the venue was open on weekend nights there was some turnover, with the door operating a one-out, one-in policy when queues formed in the street. This happened most nights when Gags were on the bill. NMR at Rafters Attendances at the NMR promotions were also generally good. But they were intended as fund-raisers for the magazine that often teetered on the edge of profitability and the limited attendance capacity at Band on the Wall restricted potential profits from the promotions. Consequently the organisers, Jaspan and Forster, looked for bigger premises for their promotions, while still retaining the Monday Club at The Band. They chose the 700-capacity Rafters in Oxford Road, creating Friday Club, and among the many artists they presented there were: Elvis Costello, Ian Dury, Magazine, Billy Idol, Generation X, Echo and the Bunnymen, Pere Ubu, The Clash, Wreckless Eric and John Martyn, described by Jaspan as "our biggest earner as he did three nights and sold out in a couple of hours." Closure of the Review Steve Forster continues the story: Money was always tight however at NMR and magazine and advertising sales struggled to keep up with rising costs and eventually it was decided to suspend publication.... The Monday gigs continued but, without the focus of the magazine, attendance gradually fell off, as they were doing on other nights at Band on the Wall. The Monday Rock Club staggered on through 1980, then folded, along with the other NMR promotions. For four years and for an admission price of 50p-70p, the magazine had presented a fascinating array of mainly local talent, from ranting poets to clog dancers, punk rockers to jazz funksters, reggae toasters to blues shouters. Much more than rock, it had raised awareness of Band on the Wall as a venue for much more than jazz.

LUNCHTIME THEATRE AND COMEDY

Steve Morris was a music man but, when it came to the bookings at Band on the Wall, he was open to suggestions for other programme content. Thus there were occasional lunchtime theatre performances and comedy gigs by then unknown local drama students, Rik Mayall and Ade Edmondson. In March 1976 the venue advertised 'Lunchtime Theatre: The Mattress Theatre Group' and in August of that year, 'The Erotic Hansel & Gretel.' In 2010, Rik Mayall described the start of his and Edmondson's careers in comedy in the 70s: (1) We formed a group called 20th Century Coyote, and the first thing we did was an improvised affair called 'Dead Funny'.... we would perform lunchtimes at the Band on the Wall and Monday evenings at the Studio Theatre at the University... we used to go and watch jazz. 20th Century Coyote went on to acknowledged success at The Comedy Store, London. Over 30 years later Ade Edmondson returned to Band on the Wall, not in a comedy role, but as musician and vocalist fronting his band The Bad Shepherds on 30 September 2009.

PERSONNEL

At the end of the 70s, Band on the Wall had only one full-time member of staff and the NJCS just two. Steve Morris continued to manage the venue alone after he bought out his business partner Frank Cusick in early 1979. The Cusicks then vacated the apartment on the first floor of Band on the Wall. The venue had a pool of part-time staff – bar, catering, box-office, cleaning and maintenance. The NJCS was staffed by Ian Croal and Andy Dodd, who had been persuaded by Ian in 1978 to switch from his job as Promotions Manager at Chester Art Centre. For the next 5 years, Andy would be a vital part of the NJCS/Band on the Wall team. After leaving the venue, he became manager of Simply Red and a successful businessman; and on a number of occasions in future years he would intervene to save the venue and its 21st century development plans. In 1980, the NJCS appointed an assistant administrator, Geneta Gibson, who, in the early 80s, would inherit property in Kingston, Jamaica, where she now lives. The NJCS committee was chaired in the 70s by Peter Bevan, Director of Merseyside Arts Association, and a knowledgeable jazz fan and broadcaster with a regular radio programme on Radio Merseyside. He went on to be Director of Darlington Arts Centre that was closed in early 2012, the result of local authority cuts. The Centre had an outstanding reputation across the art forms – and a notable jazz programme. 70S OVERVIEW A great deal of music, as well as occasional theatre and comedy, went on at Band on the Wall in the second half of the 1970s. The jazz-with-occasional-blues policy, established by ex professional musician Steve Morris in 1975, was given an injection of fresh blood by the Northern Jazz Centre Society's promotions from October 1976 that brought a succession of the UK's finest modern jazz groups to the venue for the first time, and would

continue for many years. In the following year, 1977, youthful programme initiatives arrived via the New Manchester Review's Rock Night and the DIY promotions of the newly-formed Manchester Musicians Collective. Together they introduced entirely new elements to the programme, local bands and aspiring musicians, many of whom chimed with the times of Punk Rock or New Wave, some with early experiments in electronica. They included bands and individual players who would be regarded as important influences on the so-called emerging Manchester music scene. There were the angry but witty Buzzcocks, the abrasive but long-

- lasting The Fall and the strangely musicianly The Passage; and also bands that later would be signed by Manchester's Factory Records: A Certain Ratio, The Distractions and Joy Division. It was a spawning ground for new talent: where poet John Cooper Clarke got his first paid gig and where singer Mick Hucknall would brave the stage with his Frantic Elevators, later morphing into Just Red, then on to massive commercial success with his Simply Red, all of which played Band on the Wall. These new programme strands at Band on the Wall began over a year before the launch of Factory nights at the Russell Club, Hulme, and the creation of Factory Records that so often are seen as the catalysts of the Manchester music scene. Perhaps the real catalyst was "the true downbeat musicianly heart of Manchester, Band on the Wall"? The story that emerges from the pages of Band on the Wall's archives in these years is quite different from what has become the standard version of the evolution of the Manchester music scene. There is a much more diverse picture, with big bands and trad bands, jazz-funk and jazz-rock bands; blues and folk music, punk and progressive, experimental and free improvisers.... It is clear that there was no, single Manchester music scene. The sheer number of local bands performing at Band on the Wall is staggering: certainly in excess of 200 individual bands between 1975 & 1979, and this excludes the numerous pick-up groups, jazz jams or soloists-with-rhythm-section. How puzzling, therefore, that Joy Division's Manager, the late Rob Gretton, should have said of the late 70s/early 80s: I often think back to the early Factory days and think how lucky we were. If we happened along in the nineties, even with Joy Division, we probably would never have got it off the ground. There was only a tiny few bands so all you had to do to get known was climb on to a stage a couple of times and you'd be an important part of the scene. (1) Of course, sheers numbers – and there were more than 1500 live performances at The Band in the second half of the 70s – are a crude measure of most things and, by the end of the decade, there were worrying signs at the venue:
- The Musicians Collective gigs had moved elsewhere
- New Manchester Review had ceased publication, so for how long would the NMR Rock Nights continue?
- Staff exhaustion and over-extension. Steve Morris, now without a business partner and with growing concerns about the finances of the venue, was not in the best of health but commonly worked a 15-hour day, 6 days a week. Ian Croal and Andy Dodd, of the NJCS, had committed themselves to an intense programme – of direct promotions, tours, festivals and to producing a jazz what's on publication – the totality of which seemed to be expanding exponentially and inevitably
- Uncertainties about future funding, including for the London capital project, the planned National Jazz Centre in Covent Garden, that, if unsuccessful, could destabilise the Jazz Centre Society, including its Northern branch
- The deteriorating physical condition of the venue Also the UK economy was in poor shape, with rising inflation and unemployment rising almost three-fold in the 70s. The Winter of Discontent of 1978/79 reflected the mood of the times – and Manchester felt the pinch. In the second half of the decade, the gloom had begun to affect attendances at music and entertainment events. In 1977, one critic noted a shrinkage in the number of jazz gigs and the size of the audiences in the city, though he added: The outstanding exception to the general pattern of decline and fall is the weekly JCS promotion at Band on the Wall. (2)

For the venue, the question for the next decade would be whether this "outstanding exception" would hold the key to its sustainable future.

- 1980S Band on the Wall in the early 1980s continued to be the hub of the Northern Jazz Centre Society's regular northern tours by visiting and local groups, and of their two annual international jazz festivals in Sheffield (6 consecutive years) and Bradford (4 consecutive years). These activities and events all ceased when the Arts Council enforced a split up of the JCS in 1983 and, in the following year, forced the severance of Band on the Wall from the reorganised national set-up for jazz. The organisational upheavals did not halt the advancement of a large number of outstanding North West players who had first appeared at the venue in the 70s, such as: guitarists Kenny Shaw and Gary Boyle; saxophonists Phil Chapman, Gary Cox, Harold Salisbury and Munch Manship; pianists Richie Close

and Joe Palin; bassists Pete Glennon and Dave Lynne; drummers Dave Hassell, Ron Parry and Dave Tyas. New creative musicians also emerged in performances at 'The Band,' such as guitarist Mike Walker, who now performs internationally and was first seen at the venue in the jazz group River People and African band Waduku. Before being signed to EMI, singer Helen Watson performed several times at The Band in different contexts, from her own band to backing the reggae vocalist Prince Far-I, in the global fusion collective Suns of Arqa. A number of the jazz musicians appearing at The Band would also develop careers as educators as well as performers and composers, such as Andy Scott, saxophone, and Steve Berry, double bass, both contributing to the creative transformation of teaching at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. Pianist Joe Palin continued to be the first choice at Band on the Wall as accompanist to visiting jazz soloists and he also eagerly accepted a commission from the venue to prepare and perform a 'history of jazz piano' programme that he titled 'Joplin to Jarrett'. In 1986, The Wire magazine, a national publication, held a readers' poll that included a jazz venue section, with two categories, Best London Venue and Best Regional Venue; the latter category was won by Band on the Wall. At the award event in London, the announcement of Band on the Wall's win was greeted by a surprising volume of cheers from the musicians and jazz fans in the audience. Many of the musicians had played Band on the Wall in the 70s and 80s and been on tours organised by the NJCS from the venue. During the 80s, a succession of groups led by the best-known names in jazz in the UK – such as Barbara Thompson, Bill Bruford, Dick Morrissey, Stan Tracey, Norma Winstone, Don Weller, Keith Tippett, Elton Dean, Bobby Wellins and Peter King – performed at the venue. There were also the revered masters of free improvisation, Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, Barry Guy and Howard Riley. Many of the new generation of jazz players also performed at The Band – before they were famous – including Andy Sheppard, Steve Williamson, Cleveland Watkiss and, in 1986, in his first excursion leading a band outside of London, the young saxophonist Courtney Pine. The programme was male-dominated, though a gesture towards a gender balance was made in March 1986 with a 'Women in Music' series that included The Holloway All-Stars, Jazawaki and Jennifer John. The unique improvising musician Lol Coxhill * enjoyed a week as featured artist, performing with distinctly varied line-ups, from jazz trio to reggae band, African group to saxophone quartet. (28 January-2 February 1985)

- Lol Coxhill died in London on 10 July 2012, aged 79. Americans

The lengthy list of USA jazz musicians who played Band on the Wall in the 80s includes many who are renowned in jazz circles throughout the world. Perhaps most notable were the two consecutive nights by The Leaders – Lester Bowie, Chico Freeman, Arthur Blythe, Kirk Lightsey, Cecil McBee & Famoudou Don Moye – and the three nights by the Sam Rivers Trio in January 1983 that were filmed and broadcast on Channel 4 TV, along with the Stan Tracey Sextet and the Gary Boyle Band. Among other visiting musicians were the Arild Anderson Group, Eberhard Weber's Colours, Nana Vasconcelos and Egberto Gismonti.

APPENDIX – REGGAE BANDS

UK REGGAE BANDS THAT PLAYED BAND ON THE WALL, 1982–

FROM THE ARCHIVE: ECHOES FROM THE ATTIC

The Attic's reggae collection includes posters for acts such as The Mighty Diamonds, Culture and Lee 'Scratch' Perry, spanning the decades that followed the era described here.

<https://attic.bandonthewall.org/tag/reggae>

89 (with number of performances) A Witness 1 Majestic 4 African Star 1 Mighty Lion 4 African Youth 1 Mystic Foundation 5 All Survivors Banned 2 Natural High 1 Almighty Dread 1 Natural Vibes 5 Amlack 1 Negus Nyahbyngi 1 Arize 2 One Force 5 Assignment 2 One Heart 6 Azzeta 4 Oshama 2 Badstone Band 11 Partecs 4 Bandyt 9 Popman & Raging Bull 3 Beshara 1 Prewax 2 Biby James 1 Prince Hammer 2 Black Knights 4 Progression 13 Black Roots 2 Reflection 1 Black Symbol 18 Restriction 1 Caribbean Serenaders 1 Revelation 2 Caribbean Sunset 1 Root Boot 1 City Dread 1 Saffari 5 Connecting Roots 3 Salem Foundation 13 Cornerstone 7 Sceptre 8 Country Culture 4 Search 1 Country Ranking 4 Second Nature 2 Crucial Music 4 Section B 8 Dagarti 1 Soldiers of Fortune 1 Dawn Zebullion 1 Spectre 2 Delado 1 Spliff Riff 1 Disciples 4 Split Image 1 Divine Inspiration 12 Star Quality 1 Dread & Dread 1 Stix 1 Exile Intact 2 Studio Two 1 Expertz 1 Survival 1 Farenji

Warriors 1 Sword of Jah Mouth 3 Foron Office 1 T-Dynamix 11

Fourth Generation 10 The Disciples 1 Gerald Love 3 The Equators 1 Harlem Spirit 2 The Islanders 9 Imperial Eye 6 The One Oshama 1 Inheritance 1 The Ring 3 Isis 1 The Word 1 Israel Movements 1 Tribal 13 Jah Warriors 5 Triumphants 1 Javelo/Jamitdown 10 Trixie Banton 1 Kabbala 1 Tropical Heatwave 3 Keith Gregory 2 Truth & Rights 2 Levi Tafari & The Ministry of Love 9 Unfinished Bizness 2 Life 8 X-pertz 1 Little Chief 1 Zephinia 2 Lovelight 1 M.C. International 1

REGGAE

When the idea of a weekly live reggae night was first proposed by Ian Croal in 1981 there were those in Manchester who said it was a recipe for trouble, and that, in any case, it would not be supported by the black community who, it was said, preferred to stick to 'their own territory', in Moss Side and Hulme. Both stereotypical predictions were proved wrong and the Friday reggae sessions continued, untroubled and with widely mixed audiences, throughout the 80s and well into the late 90s, with but a few variations to the programme. A list of 90+ bands who played the reggae nights in the 80s is provided in APPENDIX – REGGAE BANDS. Many of the reggae bands were from Manchester, including the Badstone Band, Divine Inspiration, Javelo, Sword of Jah Mouth, Islanders, T-Dynamix and Harlem Spirit, who had success with the single, 'Dem a Sus (in de Moss),' that railed against the police stop-and-search policy. Band on the Wall became known nationally as one of the few venues that regularly presented live reggae and, as a result, bands from various reggae hotspots throughout England began to call the venue. Bands from Ipswich, Bristol, Bradford and Brixton performed regularly at The Band; a rich source of new talent emerged from Wolverhampton and Birmingham, particularly bands and individual performers who were part of the 'Handsworth Explosion.' They included Sceptre, Black Symbol, Truth and Rights, Gerald Love and Benjamin Zephaniah. The Handsworth Explosion Vol 1 album, now a prized collector's item, was launched at Band on the Wall on 14 October 1983. Number One DJ on the reggae nights was the effervescent and popular Prince Tony who, in his late 70s, continued (2017) to DJ, live and on radio. Steve Morris, former leasehold owner and then General Manager of Band on the Wall – and ex pro musician – would often fetch his saxophone from the cellar and sit in with the reggae bands. The scene is described by former Band on the Wall employee, Alex Webb, who booked the reggae bands in the mid-80s: ...what a buzz it could be – quite literally, as you could get stoned just by breathing in, in those pre-smoking ban days. Steve Morris, then in his late 60s, had a soft spot for real Roots reggae and always sat in with his favourite bands. The sight of this small, bespectacled white man – who started playing as a kid for silent movies – wailing over the pounding rhythms of

reggae while tall rastas bounced around the stage is something I'll never forget. And a reminder that there was an important social cause advanced by the Band on the Wall – bringing people together. Another ex employee, Steve Forster, also describes the scene: Steve Morris... loved the relaxed enthusiasm of the reggae bands and often got up to play with them. I doubt the sight of white haired Steve with his smart sports jacket, neatly pressed trousers, collar and tie added much credibility to the young black reggae bands he performed with but they loved it and they loved him. Steve enjoyed it so much that when he ran out of reggae bands to play with I'd spin the dub version sides of reggae disco 45's and Steve would blow over them while I added as much delay and reverb to his sax as I could get away with. Audiences, black and white loved it. Nowadays sampling and musicians playing over loops and prepared beats is commonplace but the vision of this very 'straight' 60ish man playing along to dub records as though in Lee Perry's Black Arc studio had to be seen to be believed. The above are extracts from Alex Webb's recollections of his time at Band on the Wall and Steve Forster's 'Memories of The Band'.

AFRICAN MUSIC

Though there were Africans living in Manchester in the 18th century, it was not until perhaps the 1950s that there were significant numbers of African-born residents. The city was attractive to immigrant Africans not just because of job opportunities and inexpensive housing, but perhaps also because of its modern history of tolerance towards African nationalism; the city fathers endorsed the famous 1945 Fifth Pan-African Congress, held at Chorlton Town Hall and attended by numerous delegates, including future leaders of Ghana (Kwame Nkrumah), Kenya (Jomo Kenyatta) and Malawi (Dr Hastings Banda). Much of African history is retained and communicated through music, an integral part of

the cultures of many African countries. Though documentation is scarce, it is likely that there were enclaves of African music in Manchester going back many years. The Manchester Evening News reported in 1958 on the efforts of a Nigerian resident to open a “club for coloured people;”¹ and by 1960, The Nile club*, Moss Side, had a resident band that included African musicians.² The great Nigerian multi-instrumentalist Fela Kuti is reputed to have been a member of a Manchester-based band in the early 1960s. (BOTW interview with Victor Brox, 26 November 2012) But concerts in Manchester by African bands were most infrequent — until Band on the Wall launched its new programme in 1982. The Northern Jazz Centre Society had already broken new ground in the 1970s presenting groups of South African musicians, then resident in the UK: Jabula — in the opening month of the NJCS promotions; and in 1977 Chris McGregor’s Blue Notes and Harry Miller’s Isipingo. Now, with the NJCS takeover of Band on the Wall, there would be more performances by African bands. In the first week of the new programme in February 1982 there were sell-out performances by Julian Bahula’s Jazz Afrika and Oduduwa. Oduduwa was a pioneering Manchester-based band, led by Nigerian percussionist Tafa Onigbanjo*** and included Stanley Sackey,** saxophone & percussion, a former member of the London-based Afro-pop band Osibisa. Stanley was elected a Band on the Wall Board member in the 1980s. Oduduwa would play several times at Band on the Wall in the 1980s and Tafa would lead the African percussion course and open workshops at the venue, until his premature death in the early 1990s. Two other African master percussionists were

- resident in Manchester in the 80s, Ghanaian Kwasi Asari and Nigerian ‘Uncle Tommy’ Odueso; both performed at Band on the Wall, Asari leading his percussion band Kantamanto, and Odueso with one of the African drumming groups that he tutored. Asari also led workshops for Minorities Arts Advisory Service (North West) before returning home to Ghana. Tommy Odueso had a long career in music before settling in Manchester. He travelled to many countries with jazz big bands, Latin American and African groups. His own dance band, Tommy Odueso’s Akesan Highlifers, recorded for the Melodisc label in London in the 1950s.³ Many African bands, mainly from Nigeria and Ghana, were active in London in the 50s and 60s. These bands, often including musicians from different countries, created a new and distinctive style of highlife. Stanley Sackey led the band Kukurudu in Manchester in the early 80s and went on to lead the band, Waduku (Swahili for brotherhood). Both bands performed several times at Band on the Wall. Like Oduduwa, these bands brought together local African-born musicians but also attracted other musicians, such as jazz guitarist Mike Walker, from Salford, and Abina Likoya, Barbados-born vocalist and percussionist, who founded the Abasindi charity for the advancement of African and Caribbean culture in Manchester and led the Abasindi Drummers and Dancers who also performed at Band on the Wall. Waduku also included vocalist Debbie Mensah, a Manchester resident and daughter of the famous Ghanaian saxophonist, trumpeter and bandleader E.T. Mensah,*** acknowledged King of dance band highlife. Fela Kuti regarded Mensah as a mentor and visited him in his home in Accra before leaving for England in 1958. With the involvement in the first few years of Minorities Arts Advisory Service (NW), many African bands played Band on the Wall in the 80s, mainly those choosing to live in the UK rather than their own countries or in Paris that has the biggest African music scene in Europe. These included Dade Krama, performing deeply felt ancestral music, and Taxi Pata Pata, who would return to The Band on several occasions. Formed by vocalist Nsimba Foggis Bitendi shortly after he moved to England in the mid-80s, Taxi Pata Pata perform soukous, the dance music of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) and were described by BBC DJ Andy Kershaw as Britain’s best African band ever. Other popular African bands at Band on the Wall were Somo Somo, Orchestre Jazira, Super Combo, Abdul Tee Jay’s African Culture, from Sierra Leone, and Devera Ngwenya, from Zimbabwe, who play mbira-influenced rhumba,**** known as rhumbira. The 1980s was the decade when African music became established at Band on the Wall, through performances, percussion courses and open workshops, and continues to this day. Though no longer with us, the hugely-talented and committed musicians, Tafa Onigbanjo, Stanley Sackey and Tommy Odueso, were founders of that legacy.
- The Nile on Princess Road was demolished in 1986, along with The Reno club in the basement of the same building.
- Stanley Sackey died in 1993
- E.T. Mensah performed at Band the Wall on 8 July 1987. He returned to Ghana in 1988 and died in July 1996. .
- The Mbira, African thumb piano with an ancient heritage and particularly important in the music of the Shona people of Zimbabwe. Footnotes 1 Manchester Evening News, 24.6.1958) 2 Hughie Flint, The Beat Goes on ... Manchester, website. 3 Melodisc, No 1466 Ibadan Ni Pade/Kyo Mano Me, by Tommy Odueso’s Highlifers

SOME MEMORIES OF BAND ON THE WALL BY ALEX WEBB

It's quite hard now, looking back over a career largely spent in and around music venues, organizations and institutions, to remember just how exciting it was to find myself part of what was then a distinctly unglamorous Manchester venue, in a run-down part of town. Band on the Wall had been a lifeline for me as a student jazz fan, almost the music's sole refuge in Manchester. Then, one day in 1983, with a fresh Politics degree in my pocket and armed with precious little experience but a lot of nerve, I somehow managed to blag my way through an interview and find myself working for the Jazz Centre Society, based at Band on the Wall. What is rarely grasped by people who visit venues like 'The Band' is that for the people who work there it's like running a pub, a concert hall and a restaurant all in one go. Without the staff for any one of them. On top of which we were trying to put on jazz across the North of England and hang on to the extremely modest public funding that enabled this. It wasn't easy, and the hours were silly. But I was young and I was where I wanted to be – inside the music I loved. On my first week there we put on jazz trumpeter Art Farmer, a favourite who I only knew through records. In the three years I worked there I got to know some extraordinary and dedicated people – Ian Croal, whose dedication to the venue and to good music knew no bounds; the irreplaceable manager and veteran saxophonist Steve Morris; our good-humoured office manager-cum-secretary-cum-everything Lizzie Johnson; the hugely knowledgeable band booker Steve Forster; and a strange but lovable assortment of human types who ran the bar, catering, door and so on. A kind of family, in fact – an eccentric, extended and occasionally fractious family, but a family nonetheless. The Band was a place where you left your pretensions at the door. It was about good music and camaraderie; it was a standing rebuke against shallowness, shininess and all the money-driven madness that Thatcherism encouraged in that decade. We really programmed the best artists we could in very tough economic circumstances – across reggae, folk, blues and of course jazz. What's more, in my early 20s I found myself unexpectedly catching the end of an era – when great American jazz musicians from the 1940s and 1950s (sometimes even the 1930s) – were still available to play little club dates and you could see and feel their music close-up. I remember meeting and presenting the likes of Red Rodney, Joe Newman, Lee Konitz, George Coleman, Teddy Edwards, Sheila Jordan, Slim Gaillard and, one memorable night, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. The club also provided a lesson in the sometimes neglected greatness of British jazz musicians. Bobby Wellins, Stan Tracey, Don Weller, Tony Coe, John Surman and many others provided world-class performances that still live on in my memory and, surely, in many others'. We also pushed the boundaries. We frequently presented the edgier end of jazz – including Billy Bang, Maggie Nichols, Paul Dunmall, Keith Tippett, Johnny Dyan and many others whose work was not always an easy listen. It could be interesting to watch the audience when something at the stranger end was playing. Often print workers from the Daily Express presses up the road would pop in for a swift one between shifts ... one night they found themselves watching a drummer playing with lengths of privet, accompanying atonal explorations on an alpenhorn. In a pause, one of them called out, "Can you play Happy Birthday?" The musicians did not reply but the Avant Garde themselves could show a sly sense of humour. One night, during an evening of free duets between guitarist Derek Bailey and drummer Han Bennink, Bennink ran around the room with his drumsticks playing

- absolutely everything he could reach – impeccably – then sat down to watch Bailey doing his inimitable thing. And there he sat, and sat, visibly absorbed, until eventually Bailey lifted his head and said, "We're on the same money, you know." You learn a lot about live music by living so close to it. How some bands swing, how others groove, how yet others do neither. How some personalities project themselves from the stage, how some draw the audience in. How difficult some artists can be, how pleasant others are. And just how potent true professionalism is. Maria Muldaur's amazing country blues band started their show at a level of energy and polish which I've rarely heard in my life – right from the first note. Unforgettable. But presenting live music was tough, and it still is. In a small venue, you make money slowly but you can sure lose it quickly. We had a few disasters. But we had a good number of triumphs, too, when you know you'd helped curate a transformative experience for the audience. When US saxophonist Bobby Watson came to the Band as part of a Charlie Parker celebration week the gig sold out. And he rose to the occasion, playing like his life depended on it, blowing molten metal from his horn to the whoops and cheers of the crowd. It was like a scene from Kerouac come to life. And then there were the reggae nights. I ended up booking these and doing the sound, trying to coax the biggest sound I could from our creaking sound system. But what a buzz it could be – quite literally, as you could get stoned just by breathing in, in those pre-smoking ban days. Steve Morris, then in his late 60s, had a soft spot for real Roots reggae and always sat in with his favourite bands. The sight of this small, bespectacled white man – who started playing as a kid for silent movies – wailing over the pounding rhythms of reggae while tall rastas bounced around the stage is something I'll never forget. And

a reminder that there was an important social cause advanced by the Band on the Wall – bringing people together. There was a lot of love in that venue, a lot of great people. And a lot of great music. Shame about the beer*. Alex Webb, May 2011 Alex Webb was employed at Band on the Wall from 1983-86. He left to complete a Master's degree at the University of Connecticut, USA. He worked at The Bass Clef in 1988-89 and The Barbican Centre, 2003-11. He is a pianist and song-writer and has directed and performed in music and spoken word productions, including MD-ing the 'Café Society Swing' in New York. He has worked for the BBC World Service, BBC News Online and Radio 3. He is also a university lecturer in music and events management.

- Beernote: Now Band on the Wall is one of the few club venues that always has a selection of real ales and quality bottles beers.

LATIN MUSIC

According to composer Michael Nyman – who performed with his Band at Band on the Wall on 12 October 1982 – the person who single-handedly introduced Latin American music to English audiences, was Trinidadian Edmundo Ros. Hugely popular for decades from the 1940s, he introduced the cha-cha-cha and became one of the wealthiest musicians in the country. At the opposite end in terms of fame and wealth, was the jazz musician Kenny Graham* who formed his Afro-Cubists band in 1950, merging African and Cuban rhythms with bebop and modern harmonies, and produced “unique exciting jazz, breadline money, a pile of debts and a load of fun”. The long-lived Edmundo Ros (died in 2011, aged 100) and the short-lived Afro-Cubists (disbanded after two years) emerged from the dance band scene in London where, even

between the wars, there were Latino communities. These communities expanded considerably in the 60s and 70s when political refugees and economic migrants arrived in large numbers from the dictatorships of Latin America. Exiles to London for a few years included Brazilian musicians and political activists Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. The Latino sub-culture in London would soon have an impact throughout the country, including in Manchester, and would infiltrate many areas of popular music (and restaurants, bars and dance clubs). But by the 70s this movement had not yet reached Manchester: I was not aware of any Latin American community in Manchester in the 1970s. As for Latin American music, a band I played in, Both Hands Free, and Loose Change, that performed regularly in Manchester, played some Latin rhythms but there were no Latin music bands as such performing in the city at the time. – Manchester percussionist Dave Hassell That would change in the 1980s as Band on the Wall would become the focus for Latin live music. Dave Hassell, an inspired percussionist and inspiring educator, was an important catalyst whose influence extends far beyond the city and the North West. Author of four drum tutor books, Dave holds teaching posts at the Royal Academy of Music, London, the Royal Northern College of Music, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the University of Salford. He remains a passionate live performer – on kit drums and timbales. Dave's first drum heroes were American jazz players, Gene Krupa, Shelley Manne, Joe Morello, Tony Williams and Elvin Jones. In the 1970s, he discovered the giants of Latin percussion, including Tito Puente, the Cuban Mongo Santamaria and Ralph McDonald, from Trinidad & Tobago. In visits to New York and Cuba, he developed his own Latin percussion skills and in 1984 formed the Latin-jazz group Apitos that played its first-ever gig at Band on the Wall. For many of the Manchester session players who were members of Apitos, this was their first opportunity to play genuine Latin music charts. Apitos was – and is – part band, part academy. In the 80s, Dave also began Latin percussion classes at The Band, with regular performance/workshops in the main venue; subsequently the classes continued, led by percussionist Chris Manis. Apitos played Band on the Wall several times in the 80s, 90s and into the 21st century. For those seeking the first-hand, so-called 'authentic' Latin sounds, Band on the Wall in the 80s was the only place in the city to hear, and dance to, live bands from overseas. The visiting bands included Cubans, the Alfredo Rodriguez Band and Los Soles de Cuba; and, from Brazil, bands led by Hermeto Pascoal, Nana Vasconcelos and Egberto Gismonti, also the music of the Andes, by Bolivians Rummillajta. The phenomenal multi-instrumentalist Hermeto Pascoal e Grupo appeared twice at Band on the Wall in the 1980s. They performed Pascoal's music of staggering complexity and virtuosity yet maintained a joyful connection with the audience. Described by Miles Davis as “the most impressive musician in the world,” Pascoal delighted audiences at Band on the Wall by playing a solo by blowing on a half-empty wine bottle and – on one occasion, after an interval – playing a trumpet solo on a kettle he had found in the kitchen: novelty diversions, perhaps, but also remarkably convincing solos in their own right. The 80s programme at The Band also reflected the burgeoning Latin American scene in London with appearances by Roberto Pla's Latin Ensemble, El Sonido De Londres and the Latin-jazz of

Cayenne. The Latin tinge could also be detected amidst the repertoire of UK visitors The Guest Stars and Chucho Merchan's Macondo, as well as local upcomers, Kalima. In 1986, one of the early indoor performances by a new Manchester community band, Inner Sense Percussion, took place at Band on the Wall. More commonly, this large percussion

- group could be heard in the street – outside Marks & Spencer, Cross Street. The collective group was formed by percussionist and bassist, Colin Seddon, who was inspired by the London School of Samba. Inner Sense specialised in Brazilian samba batucada, toured extensively and was active until 2000. We did more samba workshops in schools and colleges than most people's ears could withstand. This was the beginning of a continuing legacy of community samba in the UK. In 1985 there was only us and the London School of Samba. Soon, samba groups began to crop up everywhere: Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Edinburgh....Colin Seddon² Latin American music by the close of the 80s was now firmly established, alive and well and living in Manchester.
- Kenny Graham died in London in 1997; his most recent job had been as caretaker of a block of flats in Putney. Footnote 1 Alfredo Rodriguez, pianist, born 1936 – not to be confused with the other Cuban pianist of the same name, born in 1985 2 Manchester & District Music Archive; Colin Seddon is now (2017) music lecturer and subject leader at City College, Plymouth.

BLUES, RHYTHM & BLUES AND SOUL

"In the States, it takes you a lifetime just to get from Chicago's South Side to the West Side." – Luther Allison, blues singer
Probably the first blues artist to perform at Band on the Wall is a man whose life constantly defies convention: the (very) bearded, eccentric, iconoclastic Victor Brox – Manchester's own blues legend, a richly rugged vocalist who, it seems, can turn his hand to any musical instrument. At short notice, Victor played in the first week when Steve Morris and Frank Cusick reopened the club in 1975; he also played in the final week before the venue's closure, for refurbishment, in 2004. In between these dates, the Victor Brox Blues Train played The Band more than 50 times, of which around 30 dates were in the 1980s and, almost invariably, Saturday night sell-outs. He also led many blues workshops at The Band. In a video interview in 2012, Victor, now in his 70s, describes how "I managed to escape commercial success by the skin of my teeth". He also recounted his times with Alexis Korner, Aynsley Dunbar, Jimi Hendrix, John Stevens, Janis Joplin, Nico, Peter Green and BB King, as well as revealing his concepts of the pre-history evolution of music and how he played cornet to golden eagles and was pronounced dead in an ambulance in California (but then came out of his yogic trance). As of now (2017), Victor continues to perform solo, also with his vocalist daughter Kyla and with his own band, at home and abroad. During the 80s, the Saturday night programme at Band on the Wall increasingly veered towards R'n'B and soul – and found a ready audience and an expanding number of local bands, including Gags, Soulfinger, No Mystery, Bare Wires, Yes-Sir, The Bamford Band, the Marauders and Ozzie and the Zappas. Then there was the classy, jazzy, instrumental soul of Snake Davis and his Alligator Shoes (later with The Suspicions, and Zoot and The Roots) and occasional UK-based visitors, such as The Groundhogs, Howlin' Wilf & the Vee-Jays, the Climax Blues Band, Blues'n'Trouble, Otis Grand & The Dance Kings and Brian Knight's Thin Line,* led by the vocalist, slide guitarist and harmonica player who was a founding member of The Rolling Stones (pre-Jagger and Richards).

- In a genre that is male-dominated, stand-out performances were by Jo Ann Kelly**, labeled British Queen of the Blues, and by Manchester's Helen Watson whose repertoire stretched the boundaries of blues, jazz, soul and country music. Helen was signed to EMI in the 80s but the company failed to promote this talented vocalist. Now based in Sussex, she continues to perform solo and with the a capella group The Lovenotes and with Burden of Paradise, a drummer-less quartet that includes Snake Davis, saxophone and flute.
- Brian Knight – died 25 Sept 2001, aged 61
- Jo Ann Kelly – died 21 Oct 1990, aged 46 A long line of USA bluesmen also came to The Band in the 80s: Memphis Slim, Big Joe Duskin, Lowell Fulson, Nappy Brown, Joe Louis Walker, Louisiana Red, Dr John, Charlie Musselwhite, Carey Bell, Johnny Mars, Phil Guy, Jimmy Rogers, Luther Allison, Eddie Kirkland, Little Willie Littlefield, Lucky Lopez Evans, Lefty Dizz, Rockin' Sydney and Lazy Lester. Some, like blues and boogie exponent, Joe Duskin, were living proof of the blurred borders between blues and jazz; Dr John's solo performance on piano encompassed much of 20th century American music, from zydeco to contemporary jazz, blues to pop and pointed forward to funk and Afro-beat; some, like Californian singer/guitarist Joe Louis Walker, came with their own – and in his case

superb – American band; others performed with UK musicians. At Band on the Wall, the band most frequently chosen to accompany visiting American bluesmen was the Norman Beaker Band, from Stockport, that also doubles as the touring backing band for London-born veteran vocalist Chris Farlowe. Norman and his band have also toured extensively with the Louisiana blues vocalist and guitarist Larry Garner. Though the harmonic basis of most blues is just three chords, many blues players pride themselves on more sophisticated musicianship. Norman Beaker's website makes a comparison with the punk scene: ... at the height of the Punk era Norman formed No Mystery, with a lineup of experienced and talented musicians who played the blues with a sense of humour. They stood out on the gig circuit at a time when bands prided themselves on their inability to play more than three chords and audience participation meant spitting at the band. The visiting Americans to Band on the Wall in the 1980s were part of a lineage going back to the origins of the blues, first described as an identifiable genre in the 1920s, though rooted much earlier than that. Some were part of the emergence in the 1940s of Rhythm and Blues that led to Rock 'n' Roll. Inevitably, with time, the opportunities for fans and musicians to connect directly with that lineage have diminished: of the 19 American bluesmen listed above,* only five were still alive in 2017: Joe Louis Walker, Dr John, Charlie Musselwhite, Johnny Mars and Lazy Lester. In the 1980s Band on the Wall was one of the few venues in Europe where there was a regular conduit with that lineage.

- Memphis Slim – died 24 Feb 1988; Big Joe Duskin – d 6 May 2007; Lowell Fulson – d 7 Mar 1999; Nappy Brown – d 20 Sept 2008; Louisiana Red – d 25 Feb 2012; Carey Bell – d 6 May 2007; Phil Guy – d 20 Aug 2008; Jimmy Rogers – d 19 Dec 1997; Ed Kirkland – d 27 Feb 2011; Luther Allison – d 17 Aug 1997; Lefty Dizz – d 7 Sept 1993; Rockin' Sydney – d 25 Feb 1988; Lucky Lopez Evans – d 28 Jan 2004

FOLK ROOTS

Surprisingly, before 1982 it appears that Band on the Wall had little, if any, connection with the folk music scene. However, the venue made up for it in subsequent years. In the period

- 1982 to 1989, over 100 solo artists, duos and bands, whose repertoires could be said to belong to the broad, multi-faith church of folk music, delivered their richly varied songs and instrumentals at 'The Band' (short name for Band on the Wall). These included several of the seminal figures in the earlier folk music revival in the UK, particularly current or former members of significant bands that had emerged in the 60s & 70s:
- Steeleye Span – Ashley Hutchings, Maddy Prior, Martin Carthy
- Fairport Convention – Ashley Hutchings, Martin Carthy, Ric Sanders, Maartin Allcock, Dave Swarbrick, Dan Ar Braz,
- Pentangle – John Renbourn, Bert Jansch
- Lindisfarne – Alan Hull
- Incredible String Band – Mike Heron, Robin Williamson, At the height of their popularity, these bands were capable of filling major venues; now individual band members were happy, or at least prepared, to play smaller venues. Some of them had never stopped doing so. Band on the Wall occupied a place between the big halls and the pub back- or upstairs rooms that were the usual locations of folk clubs, of which there were many in Manchester and throughout the country. Unlike the folk sing-arounds of many clubs, Band on the Wall presented the artists in concert-style, on stage, with proper PA system and stage lighting. But still close to 'point blank range' of the audience that Martin Carthy insists is folk music's preferred striking distance. 1 The 80s at Band on the Wall also saw performances by the most influential of folk artists in the UK, including Manchester-born Roy Harper and the substantial figures, musically and physically, of John Martyn* and singer, guitarist and story-teller Hamish Imlach,** himself an influence on Martyn and others such as Billy Connolly. It would be easy to describe the folk music programme at Band on the Wall in the 80s as essentially retrospective, perhaps even nostalgic: musicians growing old gracefully but artistically living in a previous era – the glory days of the folk music revival – when folk music gelled with more popular forms, and some performers almost became rock stars. In fact, few of the performers rested on their laurels: if less sensational than in the 60s, folk music in the 80s retained its restless, often progressive, spirit, and Band on the Wall reflected this. A senior figure on the folk scene, Hamish Imlach combined jolly humour with rebelliousness that had lent a cheer-leading quality to the anti-nuclear protests in Scotland. The Dirt Sisters, from Nottingham, communicated a sonically weird but persuasive message, much

inspired by their visits to Greenham Common where the women's peace camps had settled in 1981. Alan Hull, Geordie poet, songwriter, musician and socialist activist, played Band on the Wall in 1984, the year he organised many events in support of the miners' strike. An obituary of Hull called him "a champion of the people rather than a champion of rock star values".² The description could have been applied to many of the folk artists who performed at Band on the Wall in the 80s. In 1985 Assistant Manager Steve Forster organised an Irish series at The Band, book-ended by local band Curragh and a little-known London-based group, The Pogues. Curragh continues as the Curragh Sons today (2017) and in the 80s included members who would go on to found the Irish folk-rock band Toss the Feathers that would be featured at Band on the Wall on many occasions and continues to reunite for annual Christmas gigs in Manchester. Flautist and piper Michael McGoldrick and fiddler Dezi Donnelly both enthralled audiences at The Band and would subsequently create international fan bases,

particularly through McGoldrick's tours with Mark Knopfler and Bob Dylan, and Donnelly with Sharon Shannon. The Pogues went on to success and some notoriety due to the erratic behaviour of lead singer Shane McGowan, described as 'a man of many words but few teeth'. The original name of the band, Pogue Mahone, means 'kiss my arse'. However, we never saw their posteriors at The Band, as The Pogues cancelled, having found a more lucrative offer of a week in Ireland. Prevalence of the guitar There was a day when folk clubs showed a preference for unamplified, unaccompanied folk songs; singers with guitars were often viewed with suspicion. But by the 80s, almost without exception the guitar was the chosen instrument of accompaniment for the succession of singer-songwriters who took the stage at Band on the Wall. Few of them had an aversion to amplification; indeed, some were highly skilled in its use, such as American virtuoso Isaac Guillory,^{***} one of the first solo artists to travel with his own PA system. That he decided not to use it at Band on the Wall was a tribute to the quality of the venue's own system, though the current (2017) in-house system is a qualitative step up from the 80s installation. Increasingly through the 80s, the guitar was featured in its own right as many of the players honed their skills and achieved high standards of dexterity and musicianship. This was ably demonstrated by performances at The Band during the decade by: British musicians, John Renbourn, Bert Jansch, Martin Simpson, Martin Carthy, Adrian Legg and Gordon Giltrap; Dan Ar Bras, from Brittany, France; and several outstanding Americans, including Stefan Grossman and Guy Van Duser. Several of these players, such as Simpson, Carthy and Grossman, went on to make guitar instruction books & tutorial DVDs. Brilliant local guitarists Howard Lees and John Hobson performed their jazzy repertoire several times at Band on the Wall in the 80s. From the 60s, folk music was an expanding universe and, in England, the musician who caused a seismic shift was guitarist Davey Graham,^{****} who performed on two occasions at Band on the Wall in the 80s. Ian Croal, CEO of Band on the Wall at the time, recalls: I first met Davey Graham in Edinburgh in 1962 or 63. He walked into the newspaper office where I worked as a trainee journalist, writing the Youth Page that, then, was mainly about Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and canoeing expeditions, though I was more interested in music. Davey was looking for publicity for a solo guitar concert he was doing. I went to the gig and was deeply moved and astounded by his playing. He played blues and boogie, Irish jigs, Indian rags and Eastern European tunes. Then he played a Mingus tune I knew – and I could hear the whole band, bass, drums, saxophones, trumpet, etc...given that only a guitar was being played, it was uncanny. For me, this was where 'world music' began and I had been in the presence of a genius musician. When we booked Davey in the 80s, I knew of his well-documented problems with hard drugs, but thought that it was worth the risk. If he were only half as good as I recalled... that would be enough. In his first performance at Band on the Wall he shared the bill with the Indian tabla master Manikrao Poppatkar, who performed superbly, with musical illustrations of the different rhythms learnt on his travels throughout India. Graham, controlling his demons with obvious great effort, managed a passable performance. But the second time it was a sad story. Steve Forster, who was assistant manager of the venue, in his 'Memories of The Band' describes the occasion:

Upon arrival it was apparent that he was in an advanced stage of refreshment and was making little, if any, sense. He took to the stage, started a tune then started to giggle. He stopped playing and giggled some more, tried to tell a story, then to play some more but to no avail. After a few embarrassing minutes he seemed to be overcoming his incapacity, only to break down into giggles once more. Eventually he left the stage and, when we were sure he was fit enough, we put him in a cab and refunded the audience's ticket money. Davy did eventually clean up but the sadness of that night will stay with me forever. Graham has influenced a generation of guitar players at a technical level, but only up to a point, as inferred by Dave Swarbrick,^{*****} Fairport Convention's fiddle player, who played Band on the Wall several times: "There was nobody capable of doing what Davy Graham was doing, or even dreaming that it could be done."^{*****} An obituary of Davey Graham³ perceptively pointed out that his influence was more conceptual than technical. His

vision recognised no boundaries to the music that could be played on the guitar. An “Atlantic country” Actually, I think there probably is some kind of Atlantic country which connects the west coast of the British Isles and the American eastern seaboard – and, if there is, it certainly has its music – Martin Carthy The 80s folk music programme at Band on the Wall certainly emphasised the transatlantic connections. Not only were there numerous performances by Americans – such as Stefan Grossman, Maria Muldaur, Guy Van Duser, Country Joe McDonald, Guy Clark, Flaco Jiminez, Santiago Jiminez, Jesse Winchester, Isaac Guillory, Peter Rowan, Rattle Snake Annie, Butch Hancock, Kimmie Rhodes, Saul Brody, John Stewart & Hugh Moffatt – but also many performances by British musicians whose music derived, in part, from American sources. A common starting point, an early influence, for many of the British players who appeared at The Band was skiffle, the mid-50s craze whose origins lay in the jug bands of the USA earlier in the century and in recordings by Americans, particularly Lead Belly. These skiffle- inspired Brits included: Martin Carthy, John Renbourn, who performed at The Band with American Stefan Grossman and also with Pentangle, and Ashley Hutchings, founding member of Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span, who appeared with his Albion Band. The influential Scottish guitarist Bert Jansch appeared at The Band solo and with Pentangle; his cited influences were Big Bill Broonzy, Woody Guthrie, Brownie McGhee and Pete Seeger; the latter appeared at Manchester’s Free Trade Hall in the early 1960s. Sometimes the skiffle influence was indirect. Alan Hull, who performed at Band on the Wall in 1984, 1985 & 1988, cited as his inspiration John Lennon whose performing career started with his skiffle group, The Quarrymen. The Americanisation occasionally could be almost complete, if somewhat tongue-in-cheek; thus English medical doctor Sam Hutt became country singer/guitarist Hank Wangford and his band’s English vocalist Melanie Harrold became Irma Cetas from Mexico, introduced oddly as The Vera Lynn of the North Sea Oil Fields. At Band on the Wall in 1989, Melanie had regained her own identity and performed her acoustic roots show with her then partner, double bassist Olly Blanchflower. Few British musicians have been so steeped in American music as singer-songwriter and guitarist Wes McGhee who brought his Country All-Stars to The Band in 1986. Since the late 70’s, he has commuted between his English home and Texas, recording, producing and performing on both sides of the Atlantic. In Texas he is regarded as one of them.

- The music of the notional ‘Atlantic country’ that Martin Carthy envisaged perhaps could be best illustrated by another musician who performed at The Band in 1989 and whose parentage gave him a trans-Atlantic start in life: singer-songwriter & guitarist Ron Kavana, born of an Irish father and an American mother from Chicago with Cajun roots. His first solo album was called ‘Rollin’ and Coastin’ (In Search of America)’. Of course, some would argue that it was all started by a trans-Atlantic migration: the introduction of the guitar to North America by the Spanish. Crossovers Far from being a museum of ancient music, the folk programme at Band on the Wall in the 80s was very much alive. Almost all of the performers included their own songs and those by other contemporary composers. A few, like fiery Scot Dick Gaughan, would move seamlessly from a song of great antiquity to one of his own songs and to recent pieces by fellow musicians, such as Brian McNeill, founder of the Battlefield Band. Folk music was not a musical straightjacket or sacred tome; many of the musicians would comfortably switch genre. Two Manchester-born musicians would exemplify this: multi-instrumentalist Maartin Allcock for 11 years was lead guitarist with Fairport Convention, and concurrently four years as keyboardist with rock band Jethro Tull; guitarist Dominic Brown, who performed a folk- blues set with fellow singer/guitarist James Varda in 1989, later joined Duran Duran and co- wrote 13 of the 15 tracks on their 2011 album, All You Need is Now. Other examples include: violinist Ric Sanders who was a member of rock/jazz fusion band Soft Machine and also Fairport Convention; Liam Genocky, drummer with Steeleye Span, appeared at Band on the Wall in a contemporary jazz group led by alto saxophonist Trevor Watts. At Band on the Wall in the 80s, the broad, multi-faith church of folk music was well served by its prophets, disciples and devoted congregations.
- John Martyn died 29 January 2009, aged 60
- Hamish Imlach died 1 January 1996, aged 55
- Isaac Guillory died 31 December 2000, aged 53
- Davey Graham died on 15 December 2008, aged 68 .*****Dave Swarbrick died 3 June 2016, aged 75 Footnotes: 1 Article on Martin Carthy by Ed Vulliamy, The Observer, 17 April 2011 2 Obituary of Alan Hull, by Chris Welch, The Independent, 20 November 1995 3 Obituary of Davey Graham by John Pilgrim, The Independent, 17 December 2008.

MEMORIES OF THE BAND: STEVE FORSTER

Steve Forster became Assistant Manager of Band on the Wall in 1982 and later moved firstly to London where he managed The Woolwich Tramshed and then to Norwich where he was Director of The Waterfront venue. In 2013, he was running sfp communications, specialising in PR, marketing, and design for the arts practitioners and companies, working mostly in theatre, performance art, poetry and dance. In 2012 he won the Fringe Report Award as the best PR – Theatre. He is Chair of Norwich Arts Centre and also sits on the boards of The Voice Project, Escalator Arts and NIE Theatre company. – sfppr.co.uk Early Days I remember reading about the opening of the BOW in the Evening News but it was a few months later when I first visited, one Saturday night. In those days there was a resident trio with different instrumentalists as guests each weekend. This week it was guitarist Kenny

Shaw who thoroughly impressed a young man eager to explore various styles of jazz. But it was the venue itself that made the biggest impression, much more relaxed than anywhere I'd been to before, with people of all ages and many walks of life mixing freely and happily – and somehow the music, well it just belonged there! With a varying collection of friends we started visiting at weekends on a regular basis, often after rock gigs at the various college venues in Manchester – there weren't all that many places in Manchester city centre with a late bar that were welcoming to 'smart' dress (avoiding long hairs) in those days. As well as jazz soloists sometimes 'The Band' would throw a curveball our way too. I'd seen John Cooper Clarke perform occasionally unpaid in intervals between bands but as I remember Steve Morris gave him his first paid gig. John became so popular and was asked back so often that Steve had a lectern made for him that was stored for his frequent return appearances. This was well before he became the 'punk poet' of legend – indeed he had a shaved head and beard! New Manchester Review nights In 1976 I was at the birthday party at BOW for The New Manchester Review, a sort of Manchester version of Time Out but with a more left leaning political edge. Can't remember all the acts on the bill but it did include The Buzzcocks (first time I saw them) and The Tom Mcmasters Band, a singer songwriter whose band included future Joy Division producer Martin Hannett on bass. I had been an avid NMR reader and this time wrote to them with my thoughts on the event and the suggestion that I should write regularly for them. Eventually my way in was to contribute a column about 'clubs' – which at that time meant a curious blend of 'chicken in the basket' cabaret clubs, Catholic social clubs and sexist smutty comedians in working men's clubs. I knew nothing about this scene and had slightly less interest and quite why this ultra left wing fortnightly covered it I've no idea to this day – possibly a middle class misconception that if 'the workers' went to them they must be OK. It was however a way in at a time when the magazine was about to launch a regular Monday night fundraising gig. Andrew Jaspan, a member of the editorial board (the magazine was run as a workers co-op, all members were on the editorial board) was their promoter and resident music biz expert so I set about convincing him that he was way too busy to spend time booking bands for this and running the shows every week. After a while I succeeded and took over some of the responsibilities, filling in when he was away. As the Mondays became very successful we also began to book weekly gigs at the bigger Rafters (700 capacity) which allowed us to book bigger bands. Andrew and I shared the workload for the two weekly gigs and occasional others at bigger venues. Later Andrew decided to concentrate on journalism and although by this time I had also become the magazine's music editor I took overall control of the gig promotion. Since that time Andrew has been the editor of The Scotsman, Scotland On Sunday, The Observer, The Sunday Herald and Editor In Chief of The Age, one of Australia's leading dailies. I run a small pr agency with mostly impoverished arts organisations as clients so I guess he made the right decision. The main attraction of the Monday gigs at BOW though was the unique atmosphere of BOW, it was the hippest night in town for a few years and was able to adapt easily to changes in the musical climate because most of the people making those changes were in the audience most weeks, be they musicians, managers, agents, hairdressers, flyposters or just busybodies. The DJ, Mike Collins, played a seductive mix of streetwise reggae, soul, funk and just enough (then) current rock to justify being on record companies mailing lists. When

he gave his notice to become a mature student out of town I hired his equipment and took over from him myself. The great thing was that the audience trusted us, as long as we kept the standard up we could book anyone we wanted, known or not, people would come anyway. One time my birthday fell on a bank holiday Monday and I wanted to book someone easy to deal with to give me an easy night so I booked the amiable Manchester blues legend Victor Brox. When he arrived Victor asked me if I minded if he put his birthday cards up – unbeknown to me it was his birthday too. After that I booked him whenever possible on 5 May. I booked a night featuring various members of bands signed to Rabid Records and their associates. The Prime Time Suckers played a very improvisational freeform jazz based set with John Cooper Clarke guesting. By this time John was at least a local celebrity and signed to CBS records, but almost unnoticed amidst the cacophony a young drama student in an anorak played just one or two short songs as Jilted John, months

before his eponymous hit single. Money was always tight however at NMR and magazine and advertising sales struggled to keep up with rising costs and eventually it was decided to suspend publication while a fundraising operation was undertaken. The Monday gigs continued but without the focus of the magazine attendance gradually fell off, as they were doing on other nights at BOW. As times got hard and the music agency/management business I was partner in began to fail too I took casual bar shifts at BOW to help make ends meet. Anecdotes from this time include the time that the regular weekend piano player, Dave Roberts, famous for enjoying a drink or 20 was a bit beyond hitting the right notes (or at least hitting them in the right order). In the audience was his sometime stand in, tall Russian pianist Balis Novak who seeing the problem calmly walked onto the stage and, standing behind Dave, added his right hand to play the melody. Unaware of this Dave looked down, saw three hands playing, shook his head, got up and left the stage figuring that if he was so drunk that he appeared to have 3 hands he should stop playing there and then. Another time Granada TV filmed a live show by Alexei Sayle at BOW. As he was largely unknown outside the very small London comedy circuit, we and Granada had to work hard to get an audience in to see him. His surreal humour was a revelation. I can't remember the name of the band that included TV historian Michael Wood on guitar, various Manchester based journalists and media types and actor Robert Lindsay as co-lead singer. Yes I can, it was The Johnny Angel Band. Sometime in late 1980/early 1981 the Monday gigs folded. The last band to play were The Things, a 'psychedelic revival' band featuring John Maher of The Buzzcocks on drums and guitarist Dave Holmes playing a very unusual teardrop shaped Vox 'organ-guitar' – basically a 12 string guitar that could be made to sound like an organ, although so difficult to tune that it rarely sounded like a guitar (I believe it was later sold to New Order). Annoyingly the night was packed but that was down to the popularity of the band. By this time BOW was also in serious difficulties but inevitable closure was saved by takeover by The Jazz Centre Society. I'm sure this part of the story will be told elsewhere by others who know more about it, suffice to say that former owner Steve Morris was kept on as General Manager and I was more than happy to accept the offer of post of Assistant Manager. Reopening The venue was only closed for a month (literally – open Dec 31, reopen Feb 1) for the installation of a raised seating area at the back of the room, a new stage and PA and lighting systems.

It was a total mad rush to get everything ready in time to re-open on Monday 1st February 1982. It was that afternoon before the final pile of rubble was taken away and with less than half an hour to opening that night's band The Distractions were good natured enough to form part of a human chain passing tables and chairs up from the cellar at a time when they should have been soundchecking. As the doors opened there were a few minor teething problems but the place was packed, all the team were exhausted and it was an undoubted success. During the rest of the week the bold new programme continued to attract the crowds. Although the framework became more relaxed as time went by, basically Monday was 'rock' night, Tuesday for bold experimentation (a relatively unknown Michael Nyman Band played to an audience that was as minimal as the music was minimalistic), Wednesday got the blues, Thursday's were for jazz in all its many styles, Fridays began with alternate African and reggae events and Saturday operated an 'anything goes' policy. During that first week we had to reorder beer at least twice due to underestimating the thirsty crowds we attracted and, with combined door and bar takings, the safe, an old wall mounted type in Steve Morris's office, was full. After a Sunday off I arrived at the building with Steve early on Monday morning. He'd had a call at home from the cleaner to say she'd discovered a door open. We raced to his office to discover a hole in the wall where the safe used to be. Thieves had visited us on the closed Sunday, dug it out of the wall, taken it downstairs and removed the whole safe. The whole week's takings had gone. As far as I'm aware no-one was ever caught for this and the safe was never recovered. Needless to say a new intruder alarm system was fitted along with a new relocated safe in a much less obvious position. This setback aside though 'The Band' went from strength to strength, the small team was undeniably stretched but survived on commitment, energy and possibly a few too many drinks. The programme evolved with Mon-Weds establishing a looser pattern depending on artist availabilities, Thursday remained the prime jazz night, Fridays took on more of a reggae direction with African rhythms mixed in, Saturday was dance night, usually two sets from a blues or soul rooted band with a disco blending modern jazz funk, blues, motown and rare groove soul with classic rock and pop. My own role evolved, as well as being one of the programmers (band-bookers), I was sound and lighting operator, bar manager and cellarman and also DJ'd most nights when one was required (mostly weekends). Occasionally these different roles conflicted but mostly with a bit of ingenuity they rubbed along together fine. When the band were onstage and plugging in I could make my way to the sound and light boards in the centre of the room, leaving a record playing, and drop the faders when the musicians were ready. For the end of sets I had a selection of single tune tapes, each featuring an established floor filler that I would play while I made my way through the dancefloor to the stage to take over DJ duties. As the record decks were on the stage I could pack away microphones, stands and leads while the

records played. If a real ale barrel needed changing a longish 12inch single (relatively new then) was called for while I dashed down to the cellar. Later I also became involved in the marketing and press functions. The reggae vibe I truly believe an environment was created that supported local musicians. As well as giving local jazz musicians the opportunity to stretch themselves, reggae bands in particular seemed to blossom. Now that there was a regular place to play with a good sound system bands were forming all over Manchester, I recall a member of Divine Inspiration asking

about gigs as they only got together so that they could perform on a Friday at 'The Band'. All the local reggae bands used to come to see the others and there was a (mostly) friendly rivalry between them. When a band from Birmingham, Black Symbol, were booked they loved it to the extent that when not playing they would drive up to Manchester just to enjoy the vibes. The Friday night where black and white mixed freely to enjoy the music became so well known that bands from far and wide wanted to play. Jah Warriors drove all the way from Ipswich to play on more than one occasion for basic Union rate. At the time The Beat from Birmingham were a band of young white guys playing ska and reggae accompanied by Saxa, a black saxophone player much older than them. They thought it gave them credibility. Steve Morris, former owner and then General Manager of BOW loved the relaxed enthusiasm of the reggae bands and often got up to play with them. I doubt the sight of white haired Steve with his smart sports jacket, neatly pressed trousers, collar and tie added much credibility to the young black reggae bands he performed with but they loved it and they loved him. Steve enjoyed it so much that when he ran out of reggae bands to play with I'd spin the dub version sides of reggae disco 45's and Steve would blow over them while I added as much delay and reverb to his sax as I could get away with. Audiences, black and white loved it. Nowadays sampling and musicians playing over loops and prepared beats is commonplace but the vision of this very 'straight' 60ish man playing along to dub records as though in Lee Perry's Black Arc studio had to be seen to be believed. Memorable instances Anecdotes and memories from these years? Even if we draw a veil over the time some local gangsters turned up with carrier bags full of high denomination used notes asking to buy the club there are still plenty to go at. There was a quite extraordinary series of solo piano performances from brilliant musicians. One of the greatest was Keith Tippett who, in the words of Steve Morris 'made one solo piano sound like an orchestra'. As well as ranging from the lightest of touches to hammering the keys he threw pennies and other items onto the strings for percussive effects and sang onto the soundboard with eerie effect. At one point, there was an astonishing echo effect. Everyone in the room (including Keith) assumed I'd put some strange effect on the piano microphones to make the vocal effect continue long after he'd finished using his voice. Although he commented that it sounded good, I hadn't done anything, and can't explain it to this day other than it was the walls, drenched in music over the decades, or some musical ghosts resident in the building responding to Keith's inspiration. The one true international superstar to come out of this period was Mick Hucknall of Simply Red. At BOW we put on some of the last gigs by his old band, The Frantic Elevators. A year or so earlier they had been one of the less impressive punk bands but Mick was now obviously firmly in the driving seat. He'd trained the band to play quietly and he was eager to learn everything possible. With a new soulful sound with a generous Chicago blues influence the transformation was immense. Within a year he'd broken up the band and was establishing a new line up with an even more funk and soul orientated direction. Under the name Just Red the line up that would be largely disbanded just before recording the first album debuted at BOW and from the opening acapella line of Al Green's Love and Happiness it was apparent that Mick had truly grown into a new maturity. BOW's Andy Dodd obviously agreed, as shortly afterwards he joined the renamed Simply Red's management team.

Nico was a former international superstar. The former model who appeared in Fellini's La Dolce Vita and sang on one of the most influential rock records ever made, the first Velvet Underground album, was now living in North Manchester as a hopeless drug addict. She could still pull a crowd though and we booked her to play 3 successive nights, one night solo and the other two with different bands. She arrived mid afternoon in a taxi with no money to pay for it and her famous harmonium in her arms. After I'd paid the cab driver she strode into the club and asked to borrow a screwdriver. As she dropped the wooden instrument onto the stage it promptly fell apart, the sides spreading out as though in a cartoon. For the next 2 hours this former top catwalk model and musical inspiration to a generation sat cross legged and fumbled with a bag full of screws and a borrowed posidrive screwdriver to reassemble it. Steve Morris climbed onstage near the end of her set to play on a classic Lou Reed song that he'd never heard before, it went down so well that Nico asked him to join the band on a permanent basis for the tour that would be documented in keyboard player James Young's book 'Songs They Never Play On The Radio'. The thought of Steve amongst the chaos of the collection of junkies, incompetents and perverts that Young describes sends the imagination into freefall. Reggae witchdoctor Price Far I played his last ever UK show at BOW when he performed with a motley collection of Manchester rock, folk, jazz and

world music musicians who miraculously gelled to create a swampy voodoo blend of stoned rhythms. The shows were recorded and issued in France as a limited edition cassette on the ROIR label. Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias were a Manchester institution who brought back much of the spirit of the New Manchester Review nights when they undertook 2 ten week residencies. The B side of their Christmas single was recorded live at BOW by me and Dave Greatbanks. The Enid brought in the biggest PA ever seen in the venue and also, in those days before computers were reliable enough to use regularly, a whole bank of Betamax video players for backing tracks. They also recorded their fan club only album live at BOW. The Len Bright Combo, based in Kent, featured Wreckless Eric (Eric Goulden) on guitar and vocals. After their 1986 gig I took him down to the cellar to be paid, where Steve Morris kept a desk and a music stand for saxophone practice. When Eric commented that his grandfather used to play saxophone in the Manchester area, it transpired that Steve used to know him! In fact Steve had been a fan of Stanley Heap, sax player in The Black Diamonds Dance Band and grandfather of Wreckless Eric. The episode is recounted in Eric's book *A Dysfunctional Success*. Years later he turned up living in Norwich. We met up and he immediately asked after Steve, remembering that night 20 years earlier.

50 *A Dysfunctional Success*

wife in an ascetic bungalow. I was shown into the lounge. It was the sort of home that doesn't have a television and the focal point of the room was an upright piano.

He sat me in front of it and left me to my own devices while he attended to some domestic detail. I'd never really sat in front of a piano before.

My grandmother (the other one, not Grandma in Oldham) was a piano teacher. My sister had had lessons from her – she used to go round there on Saturday mornings. I went with her once. My sister wasn't very good at the piano so I decided to have a go myself. It was the only time my grandmother was ever angry with me. I don't think she wanted me to be musical because my grandfather used to play the tenor sax in a dance band in the 1940s. He got into bad ways – horse racing and womanising. She didn't want me to follow in his footsteps.

I never heard Grandad play the saxophone but years later I met a man who had. It was 1986 and I was in the Len Bright Combo. We played at the Band On The Wall in Manchester and afterwards the promoter said the boss wanted to see me. I had to go down into the cellar of the pub. Beyond the beer kegs and the tubes there was a pool of light – it was like a little sitting room – there was a music stand and next to it a table with a saxophone on it. The boss was a little grey-haired man in a tweed suit. He said the band was really good and paid me the money. I asked if he played the saxophone and told him that my grandfather had been a sax player too. 'He used to play around here after the war,' I said. 'But he gave it up and became a newsagent.' The boss looked at me a bit strangely. Then his eyes lit up and he said, 'Stanley Heap! – the Black Diamonds Dance Band! I used to follow them around. He was very good. That's what got me started.'

Page from Autobiography of Eric Goulden

One of the saddest occasions was when Davy Graham, a hugely talented acoustic guitar player appeared. Graham was a true innovator having pioneered a style of folk/raga/jazz playing that many tried to copy. He could do things with a guitar that no-one else could and invented a new tuning for guitar but by this time he had acquired a fairly well documented drug habit. Upon arrival it was apparent that he was in an advanced stage of refreshment and was making little, if any sense. He took to the stage, started a tune then started to

- giggle. He stopped playing and giggled some more, tried to tell a story, then to play some more but to no avail. After a few embarrassing minutes he seemed to be overcoming his incapacity, only to break down into giggles once more. Eventually he left the stage, and when we were sure he was fit enough, we put him in a cab and refunded the audience's ticket money. Davy did eventually clean up but the sadness of that night will stay with me forever.*
- Davy Graham died on 15 December 2008, aged 68. Around 1983 Ted Hawkins was a former Californian jailbird whose remarkably pure soulful voice was being championed by Radio 1's Andy Kershaw. When I heard he was coming to the UK for dates I was one of the first to call his UK record company (based in Leeds) to book a show. The only way the tour could be routed to accommodate Manchester was for us to do a show on Sunday lunchtime.

Hawkins, essentially a street busker, was booked to perform every day he was in the country. After just a few days he was 'exhausted' and cancelling dates up to and including the one in Birmingham on the Saturday night before our gig. Our gig was sold out, the phone rang constantly with guest list requests and we didn't know if he'd show. Fortuitously he was accompanied on tour by the owner of Leeds' Unamerican Activities Records and guitarist/singers Steve Phillips and Brendan Croker, all good friends of BOW. I tracked them all down by phone on the Saturday night (no mobiles then) and pleaded for them to get Ted to us, which thankfully they did. He arrived just before doors opened, did no soundcheck and appeared on stage with a white towel around his neck like a boxer. The audience and all those without tickets outside, many standing on the window sills trying to see in, loved it despite the brief, barely 45 minute set. Hawkins went on to settle in Yorkshire, tour with Billy Bragg amongst others but some years later his less savoury characteristics re-emerged and he ended his days in disgrace. Granada TV commissioned a documentary about Steve Phillips, the Leeds based oil painter, guitarist and guitar maker. Years earlier he had given guitar lessons to a young Mark Knopfler who had subsequently become a millionaire with his band Dire Straits. Knopfler had commissioned Phillips to build him a National style resonator steel guitar and agreed to travel up to Manchester to take delivery and perform with Steve at BOW for the documentary. For the filming they also invited their friend Brendan Croker along, thus beginning a sequence of events that led to them forming The Notting Hillbillies, recording a couple of albums and touring extensively. On the day of the filming Mark Knopfler arrived early and only Mary McKay the elderly cleaner was in the building. She made him a cup of tea and they enjoyed a chat about nothing in particular. It was the following weekend that The Sunday Times printed one of its Rich Lists and this one featured the Dire Straits man in a high position. When she saw it Mary was agog to see that 'the young lad with the guitar in a case that I served tea to in a cracked mug is a hugely rich man – and he was so nice and ordinary!' Stadium rock band The Cult began as tribal rock pretenders Southern Death Cult. They arrived from Bradford with a strong travelling following that certainly added to the atmosphere of the show. It wasn't until after they'd left that we noticed that all my DJ records, many of BOW's between band tapes and even the tea and coffee from the kitchen had left with them. There was no suspicion of the band themselves but they did admit that someone amongst their following had done this at other venues. The club handyman George built a wooden platform for the sound and lighting desks to sit on. I gaffer taped two beer crates together to provide a seat to sit on when operating them.

The base was hollow and, made a loud noise if kicked with my heel so was perfect for beating out a rhythm to assist audience crowds for an encore at the ends of sets. Repeated use of the same spot must have weakened the wood because one night my foot went straight through it. George dutifully repaired it and asked if I wanted a metal kick plate. Other celebs As well as local musicians of varying fame other celebrities would visit BOW. John Hurt was seen at the bar when filming in Manchester, Fish from Marillion often visited as did many TV and stage actors. On one memorable night the great tenor sax player Don Weller brought Georgie Fame with him following a concert elsewhere earlier in the night. It was a sparsely attended show on a bitterly cold night from students at Salford Tech and Don and Fame were persuaded to play a couple of numbers. After their brief set almost all the 20 or so audience members bought them a drink. By the time the audience had left Georgie Fame was standing at the bar, fast asleep with his head on the bar. When their taxi arrived Don Weller quickly downed the 5 or 6 drinks Georgie hadn't touched, polished off everything else in sight, threw the sleeping singer over his shoulder, bade us farewell and strode out to the waiting cab. On a few occasions BOW itself was the star. The new Channel 4 had launched a weekly jazz programme (possibly called simply Jazz Club?). One programme was filmed at BOW* and while the music was filmed at nighttime the links were done in the morning beginning at 8am. To provide the right background ambience for the presenter's introductions we had to recruit volunteer members of staff to chink glasses, murmur and generally make like it was 11pm in a dark smoky jazz club rather than a bright, eye watering (for us night owls) 8am. I had an acting role as barman, serving the same drinks to the same people repeatedly as shots were retaken. [Note from Ian Croal: We booked the Sam Rivers Trio, from USA, the Stan Tracey Sextet and the Gary Boyle Band for the Channel 4 programme] Another time the ITV detective series Bulman filmed at BOW. The series starred Don Henderson as George Bulman and a young Siobhan Redmond as his sidekick. For scenes set in a Jazz Club BOW was used both inside and out. For the fictional venue BOW was renamed The Paradise Club with, for a week, appropriate temporary external signage. We lost count of the number of phone calls asking if BOW had been taken over and renamed. Now of course I would seek to make maximum advantage by encouraging press interest, then it was all about the music and it didn't occur to me to seek press attention for anything other than our gigs. At http://www.mediagems.de/01filmtv/bulman_engl.html you can see stills of Henderson and Redmond in BOW. As with all shoots at the time a catering truck was on hand to supply the cast and crew with meals,

snacks, drinks etc. Many of the local chancers found they could simply join the queue and get free food and drinks. The most brazen even complained when it was late opening. Every one of these memories prompts yet more but I need to close somewhere. I've left out more than I've included and I'll kick myself when I remember things not here but that I wish I'd thought of earlier. It was tough to leave... Early in 1988 I left BOW to take over management of the Woolwich Tramshed in SE London, it was a huge wrench and I still love BOW, no other word for it. It taught me at least the basis of almost everything I know now. From London I went to Norwich to run a venue called The Waterfront and since 1999 have run a PR and marketing company specialising in

- the arts. I now work with performance artists, theatre companies, film-makers and poets as well as musicians but music is still my art form of preference. I also sit on the boards of Norwich Arts Centre, music education and performance charity The Voice Project and Cambridge/Norway based physical theatre company New International Encounter. I still meet people who speak in glowing terms about BOW, past and present. A few years ago I designed the CD packaging for a release by Ghanaian trumpet player Mac Tontoh,* amongst the images we used was one taken outside BOW. I recently researched the history of Norwich Arts Centre for their 30th anniversary and was astounded by the similarity of certain aspects of their early 80's programming with that at BOW. Amongst my current clients are Cipher, a jazz/electronica duo who feature Theo Travis on saxes. In the early 80's Theo was a student at RNCM whom I got to know as he regularly visited and occasionally played at BOW. Our paths didn't cross again until 2004 when he contacted my client Cinema City about a live score to a silent film but we've kept in touch since. BOW is like that, it brings people together in a way that they don't forget, and in a manner that they can always go back to. That makes it unique in a human way as well as a supernaturally musical one – just think of that sound Keith Tippett created.
- Mac Tontoh, trumpeter and a founding member of Osibisa, died 17 August 2010

NEW PROGRAMME, NEW MANAGEMENT

All was not well at Band on the Wall at the start of the 1980s. The venue, that a few years earlier presented live music 6 or 7 nights a week and frequently at lunchtimes, was often reduced to opening just 3 nights a week, Thursdays to Saturdays. And audiences at two out of the three were dwindling. These were the early years of the Thatcher government and the economy was in recession; UK unemployment would rise to 3 million by January 1982, with the North West shouldering more than its share: for Band on the Wall and its proprietor these were hard times. The proprietor was ex-pro musician Steve Morris who had bought out his partner in the venue in 1979 and thus was sole owner of the business, with unlimited liability. According to Steve, the increase in Value Added Tax in that year, from 8% to 15%, had a crippling effect on trade. Interviewed in 1985, he said[i]:1 The VAT increase was a disaster because it coincided with a worsening in unemployment. Drinks and admission charges had to go up, and many people who were worried about their jobs – or out of work already – just couldn't afford to pay. Falling Attendances By 1981 only the Thursday jazz nights promoted by the Northern Jazz Centre Society (NJCS) were attracting good attendances. The Musicians Collective weekly promotions, with their rota of young Manchester bands, had moved from The Band in 1979. The New Manchester Review's Monday Rock Club – that, with the Review's backing, had been so successful – had limped on after the demise of the magazine, and finally rocked to a halt in 1981, albeit with a sold-out final gig, by The Things, described as a 'psychedelic revival band' that included Buzzcocks drummer John Maher. Traditional jazz strutted out when the club's longest-running weekly residency, by the Smoky City Jazz Band with vocalist Sheila Collier, came to an end in July 1981. At the weekends, the policy of resident group-with-guests had gone out of fashion, despite the silky skills of many of the soloists, modern jazz players, many of them former playing partners of the boss, Steve Morris. Steve often tried to revitalise the weekend programme by booking bands along with the resident group. He also augmented the resident trio with additional players,

including Richard Wright, an RNCM guitar graduate who now (2017) is principal teacher of guitar at the Yehudi Menuhin School and is a former Musical Director of the National Youth Guitar Ensemble (2002-2004) and Julius Hasford, an almost-legendary Manchester saxophonist. Increasingly this quintet played original material by the leader, Steve Jaffa, a talented young pianist and tunesmith. The music was interesting but perhaps in the economically chilly early 80s, weekend customers were seeking more familiar, goodtime or rock-based music. By booking bands in addition to the resident quintet, Steve Morris had increased his costs on these weekend nights but had failed to increase income. He

was also not in the best of health. By 1980, Steve had accumulated business debts of £30,000 and, with few business assets (the building freehold was owned by Wilsons Brewery), he faced possible bankruptcy and the venue faced closure, or a new era as a strip joint! Reluctantly, he had tried to sell the lease and business but the only interest at a good price was from a potential purchaser who came bearing a suitcase full of cash. He intended to turn the venue into a strip club. Though it was financially attractive, Steve declined the offer; he hoped for a more wholesome future for his cherished jazz club. Jokingly he claimed not to worry: Fortunately I'm not the worrying type. I've always had a one-way ticket to South America in my back pocket.¹ Jazz Society to the Rescue The jazz connection came to the aid of the club. The NJCS had promoted weekly gigs at Band on the Wall since October 1976, presenting local, national and international bands, and was looking for offices. The NJCS staff of three, Ian Croal, Andy Dodd and Geneta Gibson, had worked from an attic room in the offices of North West Arts Association (NWAA) in King Street, Manchester, and had been promised office space when the Association relocated elsewhere in the city. When the promised space did not materialise, Steve Morris, no doubt with a hopeful eye to the future, offered the offices on the first floor of Band on the Wall, previously living accommodation and unoccupied since the departure of his ex business partner Frank Cusick and wife Anne. The offer was readily accepted. Not only did this solve an immediate problem for the NJCS – and the rent was low – but it also held the exciting prospect of new promotions and education activities at 'The Band' (the colloquial name for Band on the Wall). Also in the move from the NWAA offices to Band on the Wall was Minority Arts Advisory Service NW (MAAS-NW), with one full-time employee, Dr Gordon Geekie, an anthropologist, musician and musicologist, who had been left in a similar predicament in the NWAA building. MAAS-NW was a creation of the Arts Association and for some years had also been given an office in the King Street building but, like the NJCS, was unexpectedly excluded from the Association's expansion plans at their new location in Harter Street. Once installed in the Band on the Wall offices in early 1981, the NJCS became aware of the precarious financial state of the venue and began an urgent campaign to save it. The rescue plan involved raising funds to purchase the lease and business (incidentally paying off most of Steve Morris's debts) and making improvements to the building. At times the implementation of parts of the plan would prove tortuous. The main thrust of the plan was towards a music programme of a new kind. Fresh Programme Ideas The programme plan hatched by the new occupants of the offices at Band on the Wall sought to reverse the downward trend of attendances, though it had grander aspirations. It was based on ideas previously aired, before the opportunity arose to carry them out. In

- 1980, Ian Croal and Gordon Geekie discussed the possibility of a fresh approach, merging both the NJCS and MAAS-NW to form a single jazz and world music organisation. But the idea did not find favour with the Arts Association, a funder of both organisations. However, now their idea of a broad-based, challenging and culturally diverse music programme might be realised at Band on the Wall. Documents from this period show that a number of considerations were driving the new concept for Band on the Wall:
- Recognition of the neglect, particularly by funding bodies, of many areas of music that lay between Western 'straight music' and pop music, particularly those vital 20th century genres that emerged from African-American culture (e.g. jazz, blues, etc) and Afro-Caribbean culture (e.g. ska, reggae, etc)
- The ghettoisation of those musics and, indeed, also of much of the folk music of the world
- The shortage of venues that presented these areas of music
- The recognition that considerable local, national and international talent existed and that there were shared requirements for the proper presentation of these groups and soloists: venues with good acoustics, sound & lighting and committed promoters
- The need for music programmes to be freshly marketed and with integrated education activities These considerations were reinforced by Ian Croal's work with the Platform organisation that he and drummer Bill Kyle had founded a decade earlier and which created touring networks and regional promoting groups throughout Scotland in the 1970s and 80s, also by his work for the Scottish Arts Council with the Borders Regional Planning Unit in the mid- 1970s and by Gordon Geekie's research with MAAS (NW). A need and potential demand were identified for a venue that embraced a world view of music, providing enjoyment particularly of musics that had a strong social component and incidentally contributed to social harmony and racial well-being. The NJCS's fund-raising appeal document of 1981 promised: a wide range of current music of many cultures, presented in a socially convivial setting.... Underlying the project is the object of creating a music programme of a kind and diversity that is quite new in this country. The plan put jazz at the centre: Jazz – arguably the mainstream and biggest influence worldwide in music this century – will be the central theme. So there will be jazz, traditional and modern, plus its related fields of blues, jazz-rock and rock. Integrated with this will be Afro-Caribbean music.... There are also other

areas of music that we intend to gradually introduce into the regular programme. The document also refers to promoting Asian artists, such as the Manchester resident Manikrao Poppatkar, an internationally-renowned tabla player resident in the area, and to presenting folk musicians, big bands, regular educational workshops and tuition programmes. Dr Basil Deane, *the kindly and supportive Music Director of the Arts Council (1980-83), conveyed his “own warm-hearted support for the project” and added: The value of jazz and improvised music has again been recognized by the high priority attached to it by our Music Panel over the last two years. It is my own personal belief that British jazz musicians are amongst the finest in the world and I hope that projects such as the Band on the Wall enterprise will provide new opportunities for performers and listeners alike.²

- While resident in Manchester, Dr Deane, former Professor of Music at Manchester University, attended performances at Band on the Wall on several occasions. He subsequently became the first Principal of the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and afterwards Professor of Music at Birmingham University. He died, aged 78, on September 23 2006. Themed Programme The new programme was launched in February 1982. Entirely directly promoted, ie no external hires, it introduced broad themes, partly genre-based, of live music six nights a week. These were described as follows in the new monthly publicity leaflet:
- Mondays – Dance Moderne
- Tuesdays – Possible Musics
- Wednesdays – Occasional Blues
- Thursdays – Jazz Towards 2000
- Fridays – Reggae & Afro Caribbean
- Saturdays – Pick of the Week The thematic labelling of different nights of the week – with changes from time to time – remained a feature of the music programme at Band on the Wall for around 20 years. This structured approach to the programme had the perceived advantages of building loyal audiences for each night of the week and assisting the marketing of an unwieldy number and variety of gigs; disadvantages were that it imposed an additional layer of difficulty on the programmer and could restrict choice, particularly in the selection of touring bands whose available dates might not fit the programme pattern. The impact of the new programme was immediate and, after the first two years, the Chair of the Jazz Centre Society in London reported to the then Chair of the Arts Council, Sir William Rees-Mogg, that turnover at Band on the Wall had more than trebled, with the “wide-ranging programme attracting a large and culturally-mixed audience. This is a continuing trend which bodes extremely well for the future”.³ Paradoxically, it was at this time that the Arts Council – or at least one or two of its London- based officers, who at that time had never attended a performance at the venue – verbally criticised the new programme at Band on the Wall and, unwittingly or otherwise, pushed through organisational changes that threatened the future of the venue, and diminished its key role in the development of tours throughout the North of England. For readers with an interest in the history of the Arts Council and its support of non-classical music, information on this remarkable episode is included in ChapterXXXX. To read more about the programme at Band on the Wall in the 1980s, click on the titles on the Right, under the various genre headings. 1 Manchester Evening News, Article by Bernard Silk, 6.11.85 2 Letter from Dr Basil Deane, Music Director, Arts Council of GB, to Ian Croal, Acting Director, Jazz Centre Society, 2 November 1981. 3 Letter from Geoff Wright, Chair of Jazz Centre Society, to Sir William Rees-Mogg, Chair of the Arts Council of GB, 22 October 1984