

## The Eighth IAJRC UK Mini Conference

By Horace Meunier Harris

Laurel and Hardy - alias Derek Collier and George Hulme - have done it again! Organised a highly successful weekend function, on 20th and 21st September,



George Hulme and Derek Collier - the organisers

2014, at the usual very co-operative venue, the Holiday Inn Reading South, thirty miles west of London.

Twenty eight members and guests registered and as always it was a pleasure to meet again and chat with familiar faces from across England and Wales. As usual, Dr Michael Arie flew

in to Heathrow from Vienna, Austria, to be with us.

The proceedings commenced with a touching tribute by Brian Peerless to trumpet player Yank Lawson. Brian's career was much involved with booking jazz musicians to tour in the UK. He first met Yank in 1971 and they became firm friends for 24 years, until Yank died in 1995. Brian illuminated his tribute with many fine musical examples, starting with my own favourite featuring Yank, *Five Point Blues*, by Bob Crosby's Bob Cats.

This was followed by Nigel Haslewood's presentation entitled *Western Swing*, a subject about which we were glad to be enlightened. The names being mostly unknown to us, Nigel handed out his own detailed composition entitled



John Rear on the left and from Canada, Trevor Tolley

"Definition and History", illustrated with many record labels. It was very catchy, foot-tapping music. He even gave each of us a CD copy of his musical examples, to play on the way home!



Brian Peerless, Dan Simms and Nigel Haslewood

Bob Hitchens then gave us a talk entitled *Well Played Williams*. This was inspired by last year's session by Nigel Haslewood called *My Name is Johnson*. Bob researched a goodly number of so named jazz musicians, including Cootie, Clarence, Sandy, Fess and Mary Lou. Others

were much less well known, such as Sonny Boy, Paul (from Detroit), Douglas (from Memphis) and Harry on washboard. An entertaining selection, all illustrated by musical examples.

Tony Shoppee paid a well deserved eulogy to the trombone playing of Miff Mole, covering his long career, from Ross Gorman and Don Voorhees onwards. One especially impressive example of Miff's talent chosen by Tony was Red and Miff's Stompers 1927 recording, *Slippin' Around*.

After adjourning for the Conference dinner it was film time. Unfortunately Alf Keiles was indisposed, but fortuitously he forwarded the DVD of audio visual clips he had compiled, which we were able to enjoy, minus his mellifluous commentary. Highlights: a hilarious session with Keeley Smith and Louis Prima, the singing of Jack Teagarden, a duet between Oscar Peterson and Count Basie, and perhaps the biggest treat of all, the violin playing of Stephane Grappelly, embellishing *Tea For Two*.

Next morning opened with a presentation by John Stock entitled, *Perfect Performances - Small Masterpieces*. John gave a thoughtful dissertation on whether or not jazz should be categorised as an art form and supported it with a well chosen selection, ranging from Jelly Roll Morton singing *Mamie's Blues* in 1939, to Zoot Sims/Jimmy Rowles *Gypsy Sweetheart* in 1977.

Then our sound man, Roy Belson, left his controls, to present a follow up to his session last year on British small groups of the 1940s and 1950s. Again it was a very good sample and reminded one of the fine players who were active in those days, such as George Chisholm.



Dr Michael Arie from Vienna, Austria on the left pictured during his presentation entitled 'The V-Disc Label'. In the middle is Derek Collier, and on the right is Roy Belson, who was the sound engineer.

The morning ended with a very professional program by Michael Arie devoted to *The V Disc Label*. He gave us the history of its formation and provided us with photocopies of the various label designs. Michael is very much a specialist on his subject, possessing all but two of the 905 records that were



Vanessa and Bill Cornell

released. (He still seeks 25 and 57). Michael played many examples, two of which stood out - The V Disc All Stars on December 6, 1944, playing *Miss Martingale*, with Hot Lips Page, and *Jack-Armstrong Blues*, with Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden.

With all this heady music still ringing in our ears we adjourned for the Conference lunch. Pro-

found thanks were given to our organisers and then we said our goodbyes, having enjoyed two worthwhile days.