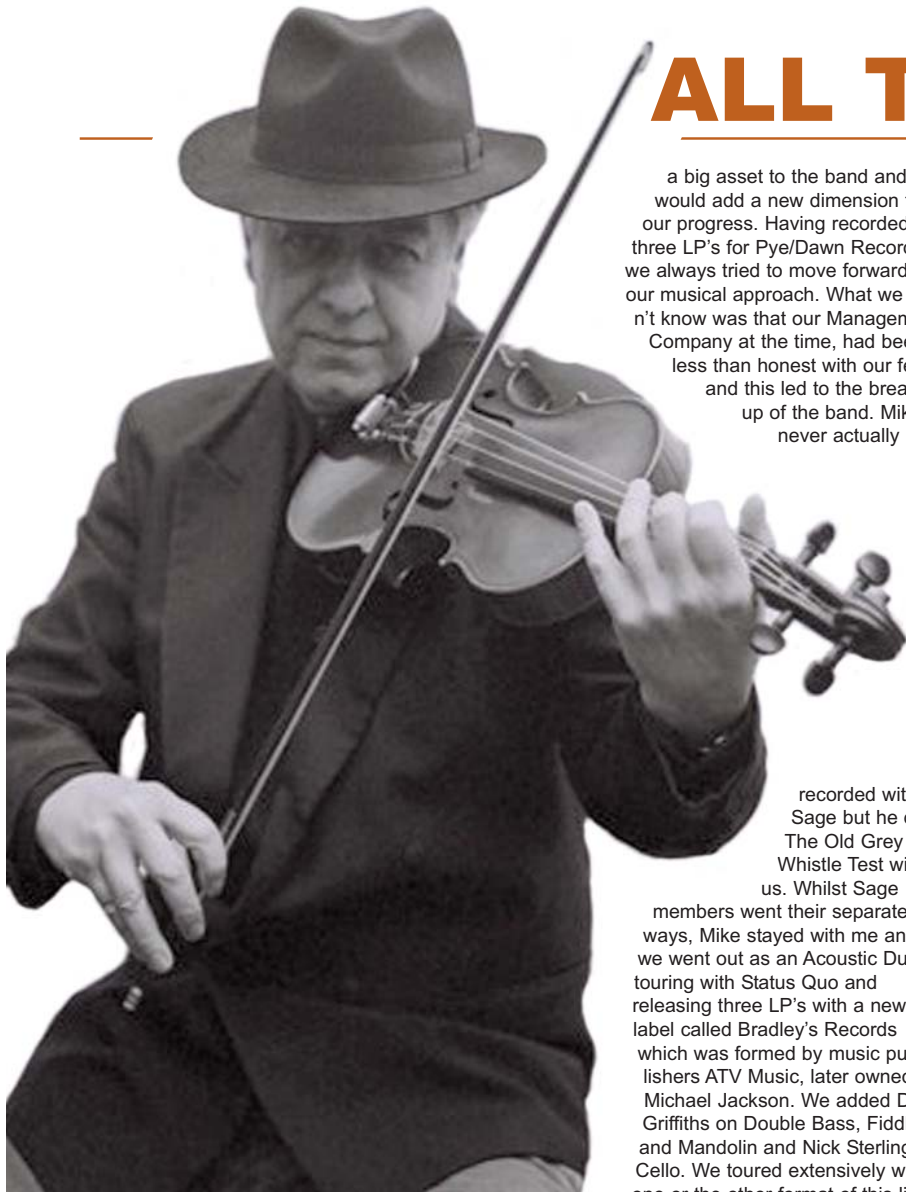


ALL THAT JAZZ



a big asset to the band and would add a new dimension to our progress. Having recorded three LP's for Pye/Dawn Records, we always tried to move forward in our musical approach. What we didn't know was that our Management Company at the time, had been less than honest with our fees and this led to the break up of the band. Mike never actually

recorded with Sage but he did The Old Grey Whistle Test with us. Whilst Sage

members went their separate ways, Mike stayed with me and we went out as an Acoustic Duo, touring with Status Quo and releasing three LP's with a new label called Bradley's Records which was formed by music publishers ATV Music, later owned by Michael Jackson. We added Dave Griffiths on Double Bass, Fiddle and Mandolin and Nick Sterling on Cello. We toured extensively with one or the other format of this line

up and recorded a live TV Show for BBC Bristol which went out as a half hour special in the 70's, although I didn't get to see it. Our final Tour was with Ralph McTell and Mike joined Ralph for awhile and I went solo after signing to RCA Records to make a series of instrumental LP's.

I lost touch with Mike for awhile on a personal basis but I had kept up with his career which saw his playing and his persona, develop across a wide spectrum of music and bands over the years. Mike recorded three LP's with Ralph McTell, two with Bert Jansch, one with Denny Laine and two LP's with the reformed Pentangle, where Mike replaced John Renbourn. He also worked with a host of musicians including Martin Taylor, Big Jim Sullivan, Diz Disley, John Joyce, Nils Solberg, Bob Kerr's Whoopee Band with whom he recorded three LP's and many others. He has appeared on TV and Radio and is currently playing jazz clubs and festivals both here in the UK and abroad including appearing as a member of Martin Taylor's "Spirit of Django" at the Xabia Festival in Spain. Mike is also currently working with Wheatley's Arcadians, a unique group of multi-instrumentalists playing early Jazz and Hawaiian music. Mike says " *The Arcadians*



Wheatley's Arcadians

have been playing Jazz festivals and Arts Centre tours - going down a storm ! You should hear Martin Wheatley's version of the Dambusters and Stars & Stripes on the ukulele! Also great slide/steel guitar. My role is violin, mandolin, strohviol and guitar. The material is from stuff like the Dallas String Band to Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys to Stuff Smith/Hot Club/Gypsy jazz/blues etc. Mike's also been writing his autobiography entitled 'Champagne & Catgut' *The Life of a Jobbing Fiddler*, which has just reached 13000 words." He says "I can't think who would read it but it's fun to do!" Mike's first CD release 'Blues for Steph' received excellent reviews across the media and 'Struttin' Stuff' a track from his recent CD 'Take a Walk', opened Humphrey Lyttleton's 'Best of Jazz' program on BBC Radio 2. Apart from his great work on Violin, Mike is also a very good guitarist. This was what he played in the Gas which also had Blues Hero, Peter Green as a regular guest. This side of his talent seems to have been submerged in favour of the fiddle. We recorded some nice jazzy, duo guitar pieces on the Bradley's LP's including 'The Ant' and 'Clocks'. I last saw Mike at John

Mike Piggott, Jazz Violinist supreme, has evolved over the years and is now recognised as one of the foremost exponents of the instrument in the UK today. I first met Mike in the 1970's when he was playing guitar with the soul band Gas. We were looking for a replacement member in Paul Brett Sage as Stuart Cowell was leaving. Mike seemed to be the ideal candidate. Playing both guitar and fiddle would be



John Joyce's humanist funeral in 2004 but have



John Joyce



been in touch with him recently about a new project I'm involved with.

At John's funeral, another doyen of the Jazz



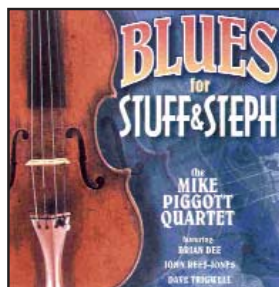
World, **Dick Charlesworth** played a New Orleans style shuffle to precede the funeral procession and later played a great set at John's wake. Dick himself passed away in May this year, leaving behind him a great legacy as one of the UK's for-

most Jazzmen. He was born in Sheffield and was smitten by the Jazz bug in his teens and reportedly sold his bike and fishing rods to buy his first Clarinet. Like many musicians, myself included, he was entirely self - taught. In 1956 he formed his first band which won the South London Jazz Band Competition a year later. Dick and his Band, The City Gents were climbing the ladder steadily and they had been signed to EMI and turned professional appearing at all kinds of Trad Jazz Clubs and functions, plus making regular appearances on TV in The Morecombe and Wise Show and Sunday Night at the London Palladium, two of the top rated shows at that time. However by the mid 60's, the Trad boom had waned to be replaced by Rhythm & Blues and of course the Beatles and Mersey Sound generation. Dick was never in the mainstream of commercial success's of the Trad boom. That was firmly in the realm of Acker Bilk and Kenny Ball. Bilk's recording of "Stranger on the Shore" must still rate as one of the best crossover recordings of all time. However, like the true professional he was, Dick morphed into other areas of the Music Business. He tried Management and Agency and booked the highly rated Graham Bond Organisation which featured the great Jack

Bruce and Ginger Baker, later of Cream fame in the line up. Like all agency's , they run out of steam and this led to Dick taking on the role of Bandleader for P&O Cruise line for a few years. He later opened a bar in Spain which he ran for around eight years from 1969 to 1977. Like Mike Piggott and John Joyce, he was a member of The Brothers, a musician based social group who meet at the 100 Club in London for regular exchanges of wit.

Dick came back to the UK on a permanent basis in 1982 and linked up with musicians such as trumpeters Keith Smith and Rod Mason, He also reformed his earlier,successful City Gents Group and was a regular on the Live Jazz circuit touring with the "Legends of British Trad" show. In his later years he settled in Thames Ditton and played regularly at The George & Dragon Pub there. Always the humorist and very fondly thought of by many, he died of a heart attack this year aged 76.

Mike Piggott adds this footnote "A couple of things re Dick - I went to his funeral which was attended by most of the jazz world from that era and ended with a massed parade down Thames Ditton High Street. One thing he used to say was "I'm fed up with having a good time!" Two guys I work with regularly Nils Solberg and bassist Gerry Higgins worked as a Trio with Dick a lot. They also went out to Spain and played with Dick when he owned a bar out there. Nils now sings a lot of the humorous songs that Dick used to sing. " So I guess with people like Nils keeping Dick's memory alive,



the age old metamorphosis of old and new is cloning itself once again and Dick's memory will live on far into the future.

Paul Brett