

Edwin McGarr

1929 - 2013

Edwin appeared on the world stage on 6th June 1929 at Durham, one of four boys he grew up in the area and developed an interest for music. He joined a brass band at an early age and caught the 'Jazz Bug'. He later formed the Edwin McGarr Orchestra which had the privilege of supporting international stars such as Louis Armstrong, Humphrey Lyttleton and others in the Co. Durham area. Like many people of Irish decent he was a born natural comic and had a second career as a stand-up comic around the clubs under the name Con Martin.

Edwin came to South Wales in the 1970's and worked at Avana Bakeries as a Health Inspector. Later he became tenant of the 'Cross Keys' in Llantrisant, where his passion for jazz allowed him to put on twice weekly sessions of jazz, both traditional and mainstream. He encouraged many young musicians and on his 50th birthday had the American Bee Bop trumpeter Red Rodney. Other International guests were also featured such as Kenny Davern and Digby Fairweather as well numerous local musicians.

The Cross Keys were also famous for Edwin's Curries and many a pleasant time was spent by musicians first playing and then sampling the delicious food.

Edwin was a member of the Adamant Marching band and later the Arcadian's. One memorable occasion was when the Adamant went to the Cross Keys, Geoff Palser, on opening his trombone case, to his horror, found it empty. It was later retrieved it from the Bosun Pub in Cardiff where Geoff had left it on the window ledge of the pub. -That wouldn't happen today - it would be on e-bay within the hour.

Edwin's career continued in Public Health alongside all of this and he became Chief Environmental Health Officer at Taff Ely Council.

Edwin retired in the 90's and lived in France for a few year looking after a chateau and making food for the guests and later living in Australia where he joined a local brass band before returning to the UK.

More recently Edwin would spend the winter months in Australia and it was on his visit this year that he died peacefully at his daughter's house.

We extend our sympathy to Edwin's family and friends at their sad loss.

Alun Jones./ Paul Dunleavy :- March 2013