

Jonathan Gee



By Our Wakefield Correspondent
Greg Carrick

In February 1989 the trio was on tour and Wakefield just happened to be one of the gigs. None of us had been there before – it took us ages to track it down. That first gig went really well ... and I don't think Alec lost too much money on us either. We've played there a few times since, and I'm sure he doesn't lose any money at all now!

Because I lived in London, Alec used to continually ring me up, asking me about what was happening on the 'scene', checking out who this person was, who that person was. I was working with a lot of these 'new' generation musicians and was able to help him out. If I liked a groups

work, I'd tell Alec to "Book 'em". If I'd never heard of them, I'd just tell Alec to listen to the demo tape again! I recommended people like Iain Ballamy, Julian Arguelles and Mornington Lockett – that represents quite a variety of jazz styles. As the years went by Alec began to work out what was good and didn't phone so much!

Personally, if I had a bad gig at Wakefield, I think I'd give up! It's a place where you just can't go wrong. There's only a handful of gigs like that around the country. I think it's because the people who run those venues – people like Alec – take so much time to keep their finger on the pulse. Every jazz club needs that sort of 'patron' figure – somebody who can focus the energy, week out, and say "You count, the musicians count, everyone counts". That's what makes a club work.