



Title: Bud Freeman

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## BUD FREEMAN

Glasgow-based Dundonian, the late Ken Gallacher, was a sports-writer for various newspapers over many years covering football in the winter and golf in the summer. The golf took him to the USA every year and he managed to fit in a few days in New York, usually at Eddie Condon's club where he became acquainted with some of the biggest names in Dixieland jazz. When I was doing the bookings for the Black Bull Jazz Club in Milngavie, he used to tip me off about forthcoming UK tours by his Condon pals. When we booked them, Ken would invite them to stay at his home for the weekend, so they'd usually arrive at the jazz club suitably relaxed and refreshed (make of that what you will!).

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 1976, veteran saxophonist Bud Freeman was the first of a large number of world-famous American jazz musicians to appear at the club. His career went back to mid-1920s Chicago (The Austin High School Gang) before he moved New York where he worked with Red Nichols, Eddie Condon among others. When big-bands were in vogue he worked with Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman. In the 1960s he played with the modestly-titled World's Greatest Jazz Band before moving to the UK in 1974, where he toured widely with Alex Welsh's Band.

The Black Bull gig was unrehearsed: he simply called Dixie standards and if the Trio knew them, we played them, so it was a relaxed night of swinging jazz which was privately recorded and not too shabby! The night after his appearance at the Black Bull, Bud was booked to play at the first-ever Ayr Jazz Festival, run by a local business man, hotel owner and semi-pro pianist called Donny MacIntyre. The venue was a local dance hall/night club called the Ayr Pavilion (known as 'The Piv' to locals) right on the sea front. Several local bands were also on the bill, but the truly memorable event of the evening happened just before we went onstage with Bud. Obviously, writing this 45 years after the event, I'm having to paraphrase most of the dialogue, but Bud's killer comment was so memorable it stuck in my memory and is a verbatim quote.

Bud and the trio had a pre-gig talk-through (just tunes and keys, no charts, no heads) and we were all waiting backstage for our slot when Donny appeared and asked "is everything OK, Bud?", to which Bud, ever the immaculately-dressed Anglophile, calmly replied (in his suave mid-Atlantic accent) "No, my friends and I haven't been paid yet". Donny said "no

problem, everything's OK, the money's in the safe upstairs", to which Bud calmly replied "well, if it's just upstairs, be a good chap and fetch it now". Donny (increasingly exasperated): "but you're due on stage at the end of this number." Bud, still calm and cool, replied without raising his voice "the audience will wait. We get paid, we play. We don't get paid, the audience will be waiting a long time!" Donny recognised he couldn't win and dashed off to fetch the bread and, once he was out of earshot, Bud let the mask slip briefly and, reverting to his Chicago upbringing and accent, said to us "When you've worked for Capone, you don't get taken by no two-bit schmuck like that!" (eyewitness report - Kenny Stewart & Tommy Evans can corroborate). We found him easy to work with, although his enthusiastic praise for our solos seemed over-the-top and unbelievable, given the top-quality people he'd worked with throughout his long and illustrious career.