

# Tribute to Brian Boles

*trumpet, flugal horn, vocals (age 77)*

by Dave Brennan

I first met Brian Boles in the early 1960s. My band had a residency at the New Broom Hotel in Rotherham when I walked Brian, trumpet case in hand and said; "I'd like to speak to Mike Brennan." I said my name's Dave Brennan and could I help? He said the Musicians' Union had sent him, he played trumpet and wanted to play with a band. He said he played like Louis Armstrong. I said you're in luck. Our trumpeter Bugs Burgon has got to have six weeks off for extensive dental treatment.

Our young band was on a Kid Thomas kick then, with Terry Kennedy doing a brilliant Sammy Penn, Pat O'Brien an immaculate Louis Nelson and Eric Gilchrist riding like Ruben Roddy. Brian Boles took the stand and blew! Out poured pure Kid Thomas!

When we all clamoured; "You sound just like Kid Thomas" he said; "Who's Kid Thomas? Never heard of him!" I lent him all my Thomas LPs to learn the tunes.

A few weeks later, Barry Martyn led his band into the New Broom while we were playing as support band for him. He stared, his eyes bulging out of his head and said; "God damn it! We have to come a hundred miles out of London to find a real New Orleans band!" A few weeks later, Brian Boles had joined Barry's band.

I have endless stories about Brian, but I'll just mention a couple. It was when we were together in the Chris Blount Band doing a fortnightly residence when Brian won the raffle, 10lbs of sausages! A fortnight later, when Brian opened his bag of mutes there was this horrendous smell and he pulled out these green, forgotten sausages!

During the New Broom years, Brian had taken over a general groceries shop in Aston, near Rotherham. On the Friday night, I had won a prize as the best tramp at a Tramps Ball. On Saturday morning, I proposed to give Brian a visit in my tramp's gear. Terry Kennedy and my then wife Dot came along for a laugh. I got out of the car out of sight of Brian and hobbled towards his shop. Outside the window was a rubbish bin, the contents of which I threw out all over his frontage. I saw him watching me with cold eyes. I walked into the shop and Brian immediately turned off the Kid Thomas record that was playing. "Bread, Bread!" I demanded pointing towards my opened mouth.

He passed me a large loaf and without paying for it I ripped it apart and stuffed it in my mouth. "Butter, Butter!" I demanded again. Brian had the butter in his hand when he caught sight

of Terry Kennedy rolling about laughing outside. He suddenly twigged and hurled the butter as hard as he could at my stomach. By that time a nosy crowd had gathered in the shop and Brian added to their interest by calling me "dad". As I walked out I said; "farewell son" and Brian "give my love to mum." For someone who had just taken over the shop, he must have been the talking point of the village for years!

Brian told jokes to everyone he met. He had hundreds of tales. My favourite is the one about the blind match seller, standing on the street corner selling matches at three pence a box. He had a customer who, everyday for years, left the three pence and never took any matches. One day when this happened, the match seller hooked him round the ankle with his white stick and said; "Hey are you the guy who comes everyday, puts three pence down and doesn't take any matches?" "I am" said the man.

"Well" said the match seller, "they've gone up to four pence!"

Brian was born in Worksop, North Nottinghamshire, but he moved round a bit. One of his many jobs included being a croupier in a casino. Apart from the shop in Aston, he had a café in Chapel St. Leonard's on the Lincolnshire coast. The first time I stayed over there, I had no idea it was a café. It was very quiet one morning, so I stripped down to my underpants to have a wash and shave in the kitchen sink. I was in the middle of all this when suddenly the front doors opened and about twenty holidaymakers filled the café and I was in full view!

Brian then moved to Sleaford, Lincs where he met the love of his life, Val. He bought 'The Old School House' and a patch of adjoining land which he kindly donated to the local village for community use. He started playing in bands in Lincolnshire and Nottingham where his style gradually evolved and broadened. Astoundingly, he'd make a hundred and fifty mile round trip to play with my band at the Three Horse Shoes in Wickersley to play on our Wednesday night sessions. He kept us all entertained all evening.

Latterly Brian developed Parkinson's Disease which he battled cheerfully and manfully and he continued to play in spite of the disease.

Brian's funeral was held at St. Denys' Church, Sleaford on 26 November. The music included the 'Memories' Parade band and Roger Bird's Omega Band.

He will be remembered with affection by all who met him. ■



By courtesy of the Boles Family