

The very welcome return of those kings of swing

SIXTY years ago the Winter Gardens, Ventnor, was our most famous Saturday night dance hall. Hundreds travelled from all over the Island to bop to the latest dance crazes.

On a recent Saturday night it was just like old times when the cliff-top venue throbbed to the sounds of Ted Heath

and Benny Goodman music, thanks to a sensational 17-piece big band, whose line up included four legends of British dance music, who had almost 300 years of experience between them.

Put together by Kenny Martyn, a top musician with Island connections, the likes of Tony Fisher, Tommy Whittle, Roy Willocks and Bill Geldard brought screams of delight following their many big band classics.

The opening half featured arrangements from the Ted Heath Orchestra, America's favourite British band, and for the four ex-Heath members it was a musical trip down memory lane. They included many of the real favourites — *Heading North*, *Hot Toddy* and the *Swinging Shepherd Blues*. All four were given numerous solo opportunities, including the band within a band section.

Clarinetist Kenny Martyn fronted the band for the second half in a Benny Goodman tribute, featuring many of the famous 1930s' jazz, swing and be-bop numbers. *Bach Goes to Town*,

Benny's Bugle and *Autumn Leaves* were showstoppers. Lennon and McCartney's *Yesterday*, from a 1969 Goodman album, was a gem. The finale, featuring *Sing, Sing Sing*, brought the audience to their feet.

New Winter Gardens manager, Simon Leigh, did well to put on this superb entertainment within just three weeks. Once the word gets around, the proposed return of this big band should see a full house.

I only had one complaint. A troublesome microphone meant some of the names of the musicians were inaudible.

JOHN HANNAM



WICKED ROMAN STUFF

at Brading Roman