

## Sale Blue Rooms

I POPPED in to the Blue Rooms where **Richard Searling** has replaced **Colin Curtis** in recent times to team up with **Dave Evison**. Sale is always a venue I've had a lot of time for when **Ian** and **Colin** did it and, although it's dropped off attendance-wise in recent months, I still enjoy it today.

When I say that attendance has dropped off I mean from its heyday of a couple of years ago. It must be remembered that Sale on a bad week is equal to some clubs on a good week. There is a nice atmosphere in the place and with **Richard** and **Dave** I always find a fairly wide selection of music to suit all tastes. I've stopped obtaining lists of tips as such in order to concentrate on records that are actually popular (or just good-popularity doesn't always follow) and so here is a short list of records **Richard** was featuring that are going down well... **Fat Larry's Band**, "Centre City" (WB) — from the album only recently released in Britain —; "Play The Game Of Love," **John Madara**, (ABC); "The Age Of The Wolf", **Susan Coleman** (Remmix); "If Only You Were Mine", **Rose Batiste** (Solid Hit); "Take My Love", **Wonderettes**, (Veep); "You Can't Mean It", **Chapter 5** (CBS — British release and a stormer!); "Lovin' Is Really My Game", **Brainstorm** (Tabu album track).

Still a nice club Sale Blue Rooms, and well worth a visit on a Thursday night.

## Wigan Casino

THIS COLUMN is absolutely in no kind of order or anything like that so it may be that I was at Wigan before Sale etc. You lot don't mind, do you? Well, hard cheese.

As ever at Wigan, I had a nice time with nice people and nice music. Some of **Russ'** popular sounds (which he says are the same as tips anyway) include: "Thank You", **Martha Reeves** (Arista); "Merry Go Round", **Art Gentry** (Phad); "Love For My Girl", **Crown Four** (Lee John); "Hostage", **Harold Melvin** (ABC — album track) and the **Susan Coleman** side that **Richard** was having success with at Sale.

**Russ** thought it might be about time for the second mention in two years in this column for his Wednesday and Friday night scenes at the Casino, and why not — two years is about par for the course! Wednesdays are 7.30-11 pm and only 15p entry; Fridays are 7.30-12 midnight at 45pees to get in.

I used to be a regular visitor on both nights a couple of years ago and **Russ** assures me that they're still doing the business. Same music as he plays Saturday nights of course although you have to go home in the dark instead of in the morning!

Wigan news is that **Junior Walker** is on the way there and **Major Lance** — it is rumoured that he isn't doing "My Sweet Lord" on this tour, but you know what rumours are! **Edwin Starr** didn't make it, unfortunately having

# CHECKIN' IT OUT



**A fortnightly mystery excursion wherein Frank 'Scarface' Elson files his report on Soul capers in downtown U.K. These then are the continuing adventures of B & S's own consumer watchdog, the poor man's answer to Serpico...**

trouble with his backing group at the last moment which is a shame. April 16th, "by popular demand" is an Oldies All-dayer... I think that is Easter Monday.

Some sad news now... many of you will have read in the National Press of the murder of a young lady, **Jean Taylor** of Preston. Jean was a regular on the Northern Scene, Wigan and other places and will be sadly missed. The circumstances of her death should make everyone stop to think about where our world is going to.

Another popular person on the scene was **George Ellson**. His death is a car crash has hit a great many people very hard indeed. **George** and I had many a joke over our names and he was one of those "crazy" in the nicest possible way people who made the Northern Scene more than just a collection of people with music in their minds.

**George** from Hull, as he was better known, will be greatly missed and I send condolences to his family from this column and the entire Northern Soul Scene which he loved so well.

## Jingles, Chesterfield

AFTER a successful experiment with a Funk night on Wednesdays during the month of February, the news when I got up there was that the idea is to be extended into March and hopefully to be continued.

**Steve Martell**, one of Manchester's better jocks, jock at the club as well as promotions manager has always been into Soul and, more lately, into Funk. As readers may remember I did a report on the club some time ago when **Steve** was featuring 90% Soul with ten per cent

for the divs. Wednesdays however are Funk and Funk alone and although it's been a bit of a fight — even while I was there we got the odd requests for **Bowie** and **Roxy** etc — **Steve's** perseverance has paid off with an entertaining night.

At the moment there is still a little struggle with the more way out types of Funk-Chesterfield people prefer what they know which is in the main chart Funk like **Fatback Band** and **Brass Construction** but knowing **Steve** he'll have them boogieing to Jazz-Funk in the twinkling of an eye.

As I wrote when I visited the club last summer, it's got all the right amenities — dance floor, eating places, bar and plenty of comfort — and, as I said to **Steve** recently, if the club was in Manchester it would go down a storm. As it is, I can highly recommend it for Funk fans.

The business details are: 60 pence entry (with lots of comps floating around the town) and 9 pm-12 am opening. The **JALN** band are due to make their second appearance the day before this column goes to bed so I hope to tag a report of the show onto the end of this column.

## Exit 21, Rochdale

YOU CAN'T keep a good club down and after lotts troubles with venues it would appear that the **Exit 21** Soul club at Rochdale is settled once again at the Kingsway, Rochdale. As reported in this column last ish, the club is fortnightly (work it out from February 24th).

I was over there on the 24th which was a night we had a hell of a lot of snow in our area. **John Grant**, jock and prop. of the club, told me that figures were down on the previous fortnight but even so there was a goodly number. **Pete Thorpe**, who

usually works the club with **John**, was away and so **Colin Alderson** did a spot.

Music followed the usual **Exit 21** mixture of some new and a lot of old sounds — local **Rochdale** and **Oldham** people being mainly supporters of the traditional sounds and the usual silly time was had by all including a young lady by the name of **Glynis** who stole my pieces of paper and wrote the following... "a gorgeous chick who looked like **Raquel Welch** was there with a striped jumper on..." I wonder who she meant?

Another person there was a guy known as **Chuck**, a local **Rochdale** lad, who was experiencing his first night out after two years in one of those places where they have bars on the windows. Those people who still think that shoveling little pills inside themselves is a fun thing to do could get an argument off **Chuck** who reckons that two years of his life is nothing like a fair trade for a bit of fun.

**Exit 21** is 40p to get in and is open from 7.30pm to 11pm. As ever it is highly recommended for a good night out.

## Funky fun at Carolines

YES it is *the* Carolines club. The selfsame club where every Tuesday **Richard** and **Dave** play the Northern Sounds reverberates to a totally different sound and people on Sunday nights when **Johnny Silk** and **Dave Golley** present a Funk and Reggae night. While Tuesday nights is building up all the time, **Sunday** is so full that a recent purge on under 18s while cutting out about a 100 youngsters has still meant that they're operating a capacity.

In common with many Funk and commercial clubs, **Johnny** and **Dave** are not interested in scoring points ego-wise and stick to playing the records that the people want. Thus at the moment **EMF**, **Brass Construction** and **James Brown** rule the roost with not a great call for the more way out stuff which pleases the mainly Black audience and as they are the people ultimately paying the jocks wages then that is about it.

A couple of less well-known releases which are doing well include a Dutch band, **The Chaplin Band**, "Let's Have A Party" (EMI) and "Uptown Festival" by **Shalamar** on the *Soultrain* label.

**Funk** seems to be on the up and up in Manchester these days and for a Sunday night Carolines is worth a visit.

## Ritz All-Dayer

THE LAST time I visited the **Ritz** I mentioned that it was going down in figures. This was based on my own observations but only on the fact that I rarely get to the **Ritz** till well after teatime (Sunday afternoons is cleaning - the - car - and - resting - time for me).

As I had to be there a little earlier than usual this time I noticed the large number of people in the place

and when I mentioned this to **Neil Rushton** he said that contrary to many All-dayers the Ritz always does better earlier on while the drift home starts earlier on in the evening. As it has always been my experience that Alldayers pick up later on this explains my erroneous (nice word that) belief.

Keeping right to form I arrived in time to just miss the **Moments** who apparently went down well. I'm getting better though cos I at least saw their bus driving down the road whereas with **Tavares** they were all tucked up in beddiebys by the time I arrived.

An interesting thing was that a coloured guy was there apparently calling himself **Les Spaine** and, apart from the fact that Les himself usually denies it, when I called him to ask if he had been there, he hasn't. His reply to the fact that someone was passing himself off as himself was a request for me to inform the said imposter that if Les catches him he'll break his neck.

If you were at the Ritz and talking to Les Spaine, believe me — you weren't! **Chris Savory** was there doing a not very good impression of himself and during our chat he mentioned that people would climb over each other to pay him silly prices for rare Northern records while totally ignoring the boxful of 20p Deep Soul greats he had along. I don't mind that myself; it just means I can get good records cheaper!

Chris tells me that Tiffany's All-dayers in Newcastle are doing very well these days and I remember many happy times I had there when they first started. I'll have to get over there one Sunday.

Easter Sunday sees the Anniversary of All-dayers at the Ritz although I'm not sure if that's one or two, it seems more than one year anyway. Neil tells me that through March and April All-dayers at the Ritz go fortnightly which is good news unless like me you need your Sundays for other things!

## Pips/Rufus/ Tramps

I THOUGHT it was about time I had another look at Pips' Northern Soul Room on a Friday night and mixed in with a visit to Rufus and Tramps it made an enjoyable, and different, evening.

Starting at Pips, where **Chris Priestley** and **Siz** have been doing a Northern Soul disco in one of Pips many rooms for about 5 months. I did a piece on them when they first started and since then they've built up a nice regular scene which Pips director **John Kingdom** told me he's pleased to have in the club.

Just in case any of you don't know, Pips, in Fennel Street, Manchester, is a disco complex with different rooms devoted to different types of music, from disco/commercial to a Roxy Room complete with '40s style clothes and more Woolworths jewellery than the audience at the Royal Command Performance.

They do a lot of business and make a lot of money and so the

decision to allow Northern Soul into the club is a nice gesture as it can hardly be described as a huge commercial success can it?

However, the small band of Northern fans who go to Pips every Friday are dedicated, friendly and almost without question excellent dancers. One young lady that I spoke to danced almost constantly all night and even accustomed as I am to Northern Soul dancing I had to remark on how good she was. All I know about her is that she is from Wythenshawe and works in a nursery and if she would contact me I have some news which may be to her advantage. (Now *that's* got you lot wondering hasn't it? All will be revealed in due course guys and gals!)

Chris and Siz feature a nice mixture of new and used sounds including current favourites: — **Al Kent**, "The Way You've Been Acting Lately" (*Ric Tic*); **Edwin Starr**, "Don't Tell Me I'm Crazy" (*Soul*); **Smith Brothers**, "Payback's A Drag" (*Soul Dimension*); **Otis Blackwell**, "It's All Over Me" (*Epic*); **Thelma Houston**, "Don't Leave Me This Way" (*Motown*). Great place to spend a Friday night with good company and good music — and the drinks prices aren't as outrageous as most places these days.

Next stop was Rufus, where they don't specialise in pleasant door staff anymore (apart from my friend who used to be at Tramps — nice head of hair he's got) but they do play some of the finest Funk music around. **Mike Shaft** has his critics as far as his personality goes (although I've always got on well with him), but no-one can honestly criticise his music.

The last time I was at Rufus, **Ultrafunk's** version of "Sunrise" on the flip of the 12 ins version of "Gotham City Boogie" was going down well — it's now got to monster proportions with a special dance invented just for it. I lost count of the people who came to tell me that we should have put it out on the seven inch as well and I have passed the info. on to the Contempo Record people.

Other biggies in Rufus at the moment include: — **Enchantment** "Dance To The Music". (*UA*); **Memphis Horns**, "Get Up And Dance" (*RCA*); **Johnny Hammond**, "Shifting Gears" (*Milestone* album track); **Bo Kirkland and Ruth Davis**, "You're Gonna Get Next To Me" (*Claridge*); **Crown Heights Affair**, "Dancin'" (*Delite*).

Three young ladies who came to say hello were **Julie Alloway**, **Erica Golding** and **Spider**. They go to Rufus every Friday and Saturday which is unremarkable until you know that they live in *Bristol*! Every weekend they travel up to Manchester for the Friday and Saturday night scene and then go home on Sundays. They tell me that there is nowhere to compare with Rufus in Bristol.

I had a chat with **Ricky**, latest addition to **Sweet Sensation**, the Manchester group, and he told me that their next release, "You're My Sweet Sensation", a mid-tempo Philly type number, is the best thing they've ever done. Watch out for

them on the British heat for the Eurovision Song Contest song. The guy **Ricky** replaced, **Marcel**, has teamed up with the former **Sweet Sensation** backing band and called themselves **New Birth** (have to change *that* name, I think). They are due out on the road soon and will appear at Rufus.

Next stop before returning to Pips to finish the night off was to Tramps where **Allan Harvey** is still turning out the Commercial Soul and packing them in. The interesting thing about that night is that once upon a time I could have gone to all three venues, Northern, Funk and Commercial and not heard a similar record all night. Nowadays the barriers are down so much that I could hear some of the same sounds in all three places — this can only be good for the music.

## Bits and pieces

**Ian "Frank" Dewhurst** is back in Britain after a great time in the States accompanied by a charming young lady who's name I'm afraid I forget. Ian can talk all night about the great records lying around unwanted and unused and is firmly of the opinion that US jocks (particularly in L.A.) are so chart-orientated that they miss records that we pick up on over here — I've always said that the North leads the world but America...?

Since he's been back Ian's been a regular at **Primo's** in Leeds, above the Pentagon building. He tells me that Saturday nights are knockout with jock **Paul Scholfield** (that rings a bell) playing very up to date Funk and Disco Soul.

**Morecambe Stateside Soul Club** All-dayers doing very well at the moment ... next one on 27th March moved to **Dixieland Showbar** just up the road from the Central Pier and finer facilities I am told ... **Doncaster's** 24-hour went well with steady turnover during the whole time although few people could last the entire distance...

**Druffies** at **Dukinfield Rugby Club** is six years old on March 12th ... in that time they've had only one closure for a few months ... it's still 30p in 7.30-10.45 pm Mondays and 7.30-11.30 pm Fridays with **Dave Stubbs**, **Dave Griff**, **Hovis** and **Jed Gibbons** spinning the sounds.

**Francis T. Thomas**, turning out some rather nice badges with record labels (**Four Brothers**; **Sam And Kitty**; **Ashford**, **Eddie Parker**; **Golden World**, **Edwin Starr** etc.) costing 25p each or five all different for a quid. Francis is at Flat 2, Springfield House, 71, Stourbridge Road, Kidderminster, Worcs.

**Rick Cooper** has left **Cream Records** and **Global** after policy disagreements. Rick has extensive record knowledge and a HND in Business studies and is after another job in the record industry — any company sensible enough to offer the guy a job should contact him at 20, Athol Road, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire...

**Nick Richmond**, and others, tells me that **Lytham Football Club** is on again, with **Jon Le Saint** and others jocking...

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\*Don't forget to include your own name and address, printed clearly.