

Halsowen: where is Tiffany's?

VERY EASY to get lost when trying to find Halesowen Tiffany's where, on Thursday nights, **Colin Curtis** and **Keith Minshull** handle the musical side of things. To start with Halesowen isn't signposted on the motorway, it's exit three on the M5 and is signposted Kidderminster.

When you leave the motorway, Halesowen is signposted and if, like me — and it seems everyone else at first — you follow these signs you'll land up in the town centre which is miles away from Tiffany's!

What you have to do is to turn right at the first set of lights after the motorway and follow the road to a roundabout where you turn left. Follow that road to another roundabout, go straight on and there is Tiffs. When you get there don't go to the wrong door 'cos there's two doors leading to different rooms — I went to the wrong door!

Apart from Wigan's one-way system which enables you to see the Casino without getting to it, I reckon Halesowen Tiffs is the hardest club to find in the country. But I hear those voices raised already — "Is it worth finding?" I hear you cry. "Yes", is the answer!

Colin and Keith have been doing the Thursday night Soul disco for a couple of months with Colin playing the new released disco sounds, Keith handling the Wigan sounds and a couple of young geezers whose names I didn't get ('cos I couldn't find them) handling the oldies.

Despite some good-natured heckling, the two types of music are getting along quite well which is as it should be of course. Unlike **Ian Levine**, whose unbending attitude is responsible for much of the bad feeling over the new music, Colin is prepared to argue his point sensibly and quietly with anyone who disagrees with his choice of music. Consequently I found that those people who still don't particularly like the new stuff accept Colin's reasons for playing it and the right of people to enjoy and dance to it if they wish.

Colin's view, quite simply, is that the music of the Northern Soul Scene has always changed and will continue to change — and to resist change is to bury one's head in the sand.

Numbers on a Thursday night vary from 200-300 "souls", which is good going although the assistant manager told me that he'd be happier with another 150 or so people and I accept that there is room for a great many more people. It is a rather typical mid-week scene in that everyone seems to know everyone else and a happy atmosphere of belonging helps the night to pass nicely thank you.

Popular sounds from Colin vary a great deal of course as he is constantly getting new releases from the States. In fact he mentioned that buying the new releases so often (each week) costs about the same as buying rare sounds less

CHECKIN' IT OUT



Soul fax and info from hither and thither by **Frank Elson**, about whom **Angela Rippon** once said: "He does have nice legs, but Frank who...?"



I said smile please and they nearly did...a bunch of people at Halesowen.

often. Sounds going down well from him included: "Got To Give It Up", **Marvin Gaye** (on import single and also on the British released "Live" album — although on the album it says it is a studio cut); "You And Me", **Slave** (Cotillion album track); "Let's Groove", **Players Association** (Vanguard album tracks); "Body Vibes" and "Ohio" **Ohio Players** (Mercury album tracks); "You Can't Hide From Yourself", **Teddy Pendergrass** (Philly Int. album track); "Feel Like Dancing", **Oliver Sain** (Abet).

Keith Minshull seems to have been around for a long time. It isn't generally known around the scene that he was responsible for the Golden Torch Ballroom jocking before it became the Torch. We grew up only a few miles from each other and although we didn't know each other well I do remember Keith as having the biggest record

collection around while we were still at school.

Like me, Keith was a regular at the Torch in the pre-All-nighter days and was directly responsible, once he started jocking, for the swing away from a commercial "pop" music format to Northern Soul.

Never having been much of a conversationalist and seeming to be completely uninterested in furthering his own ego, Keith has taken a back seat to many other deejays with no greater contribution to the scene than his own. Today he works at Wigan Casino and elsewhere, but not discovering many records particularly but always doing his utmost to obtain all the top sounds and succeeding better than some.

At Halesowen, he plays the Wigan sounds and popular sounds of the moment at Tiffs include: "I Belong To You", **Milton Wright**

(Satiron); "I Was Born To Love You", **Herbert Hunter** (Spar); "Ever Again", **Bernie Williams** (Bell); "Don't You Ever Care", **Lesley Uggans** (Atlantic); "We Go Together", **August and Denine** (ABC).

Halesowen Tiffany's Thursday night Soul Scene is open from 8 pm to 11.30 pm and admission is 30pees. Highly recommended evening!

Bentley Hotel, Doncaster: shouldn't bother

THIS column, B&S 222, gave a mench to a Friday night disco at the Bentley Hotel, Bentley near Doncaster. **Reg Williams** gave me the info and said that they'd had as little as six people in and also that he ran it. Well, I went over one Friday recently and found one guy playing records and two girls talking to him and nobody else. Not even Reg Williams!

In view of this and to save other people making the sort of journey that I had (a long one), I have to say that I shouldn't bother going along if I were you. It seems that no-one locally bothers anyway.

Primo's, Leeds: lotsa fun

IAN "FRANK" DEWHURST mentioned Primo's to me the last time we met at the Ritz. Saturday night is the night Frank said so off I toddled. A Funk club I was told. After first of all finding out that it is a shirt and tie place (yes, another one), I went in to have one of the best nights I've had in a long, long time.

The first people I met were a load of "converted" Northern fans who have got into modern Disco music and Funk through Blackpool Mecca and in the words of one young man, "Why go all the way to Blackpool on a Saturday night when we can stay here in Leeds and hear the same thing."

Jock is **Paul Schofield**, recently started at the Ritz all-dayers. Isn't a jumper on the bandwagon either. It appears that the scene has caught up with him rather than the other way around. Paul plays Funk and "disco" music. Soul only, on Fridays and Saturdays at Primo's and has done so for the past four years (with one short break of six months).

He's delighted to be of interest to others outside his usual circle of regulars of course, but he does find it just a little amusing!

Primo's is part of the Pentagon complex of clubs in Briggate Street, Leeds, and while all are interconnecting the door for Primo's is round the corner from the main entrance. General Manager **Dave**

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used to run the Hypnotique, in York, in the good days of Soul there and does rather a nice job of looking after the Pentagon now.

Open Friday and Saturdays, entrance 50p Fridays and £1.20 Saturdays with lots of comps and reduced price tickets floating around town, Primo's features Funk and disco music with a short Reggae spot and Paul reckons on playing about 90% imports.

The night I was there Paul's warm-up/stand-in, **Peter Binks**, was saying farewell as he was off to Benidorm to start jocking at Dick Turpin's. Paul is a travel agent during the day and as he supplies many clubs in Benidorm with records and will be supplying Pete with them it would seem that those of you who are going to Benidorm will find a nice scene at the Dick Turpin disco.

Pete's place is to be taken by **Steve Ceasar**, a geezer well known to many people on the Northern scene since winning a dancing competition at Wigan Casino. Steve informed me that he's always been into Funk as well as Northern Soul so he doesn't mind the swing towards Funk on the Northern Scene.

Paul has been jocking for ten years (told you he was no beginner) and has always been into the disco/funk type of music which is why he finds his sudden popularity via the Ritz, the Primo's "newcomers" and Soul magazines, so amusing. He it is who actually discovered the **French Fries**, "Dance To The Music" instrumental and gave it to Frank who turned it into one of the top Northern Sounds ever.

Considering the fact that the Primo's crowd is 50% Black and 50% White and everyone gets on so very well, it is also amusing to note that the club was fined once for a breach of the Race Relations Act!

This came about when Paul stopped playing Reggae himself (as I mentioned earlier, another guy handles a Reggae spot). To the many Black regulars at the club that I spoke to, this is the biggest joke of all time! They rarely let Paul forget it! However, to anyone in the Leeds area who doesn't know the club very well and is wary of going in I can put them at rest. There is NO colour problem in the club, at all!

With it being Peter's last night, nostalgia was the name of the game with sounds leaning towards the oldies but popular sounds of the moment at the club include, **Players Association**, "Let's Groove (Vanguard); **Gap Band**, "Out Of The Blue (Can You Feel It)", (Tattoo); **Slave**, "You And Me" (Cotillion); **The Nights**, "Love Knock Me Down", (Little Star); and the reactivated **Eddie Harris** "Is It In" (Atlantic) which Paul feels didn't get a proper look in on release.

One of the former Wigan Casino/Blackpool Mecca people was **Steve Overend** who I haven't seen



Pete Binks (now in Spain) and Paul Schofield at Primo's in Leeds. Paul is holding an album sleeve featuring, "Mrs Mills...?". My notes don't seem to be right!

for nearly two years and, during a long chat about the old days and newer days, Steve mentioned that he and some mates had a trip to London recently where they called in at the Lacy Lady, in Ilford where our old mate **Chris Hill** spins the sounds. Steve found the place great although he didn't like the numbers of punk-rockers in the club and apart from that he would recommend it to anyone who is into Funk or disco.

Primo's is highly recommended both Fridays and Saturdays for a good Funky time — and Northern Fans interested in the Disco thing will find many old frinds there. It is certainly one of the finest nights I've had in a long, long time, and is a new addition to may personel list of favourite clubs.

Timepiece goes up in flames!

I'VE ALWAYS said that the club was hot stuff but a fire with £40,000 worth of damage is taking it a little too far.

The fire happened on March 30th and destroyed part of the club damaging the disco part with smoke. I spoke to **Les Spaine** the week after and he told me that although the club had been closed for that weekend the damaged section, mainly offices and store rooms, had been partitioned off, the rest cleaned up and plans were to open up the following Friday (April 8th).

Les lost a hell of a lot of records in the fire and he told me that help from people in the music business in replacing his gear was tremendous. The best response was from Timepiece regulars, however, as Les told me that they turned up in droves to give their time to cleaning up and washing smoke marks away. "They've been really terrific", he told me, "and if you're writing about it, Frank, tell them that it is really appreciated. I don't know any other club where that would have happened."

I, for one, am not the least bit surprised at the response for one thing that the Timepiece is known for is the friendliness of the people who go there. Well done you lot!

Wigan Casino: shine a light

SO THE cameras finally got to Wigan. Granada Television it was that finally broke through the barrier that Northern Soul fans have built around themselves and it couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of people as **Alan Wright**, a researcher from Granada in Manchester has been interested in Wigan for at least a year that I know of.

In the event it was **Tony Palmer**, director of the "All You Need Is Love" series on the telly who was persuaded to direct the film for Granada, and, without giving away any secrets about the film, the bit that everyone knows about is that the cameras, or more importantly the lights were, at Wigan on a Saturday night followed by the oldies all-nighter at the beginning of April.

I didn't go to the latter event but I was at the Saturday night thing. The only thing to say really is that the lights were a bit bright . . . and were they bright? I lost count of the people who asked for a loan of my shaded spectacles. I have never seen anything so bright in my life.

Whether it is a good thing — the film I mean — or a bad thing is not for me to say. There have been arguments for and against it before the cameras arrived and since. On the night the lights didn't help to persuade those who were against it but in the event the dance floor was pretty full for most of the night although it was certainly a blessed relief when the lights went out.

As to the oldies night, well I don't know how that went down. As with every issue on the Northern Scene I bow to popular opinion — it is after all the punters (perhaps a horrible word but what better description is available?) who make the Scene so it is up to them to decide. I would say a pretty even split myself.

After the first evening's filming, all I got out of Tony Palmer was that it had been "a good beginning" so we must wait for transmission before final verdicts may be arrived at.

Taking the opportunity while I was there, I got a list of current popular sounds from the **Russ Winstanley** record box: **San Remo Orchestra**, "Jealousy" (Epic); **Trick Shot**, "Sexy Soul" (Chess); **Herman Hitson**, "Yes You Did" (Minit); **Danny Williams**, "Whose Little Girl Are You" (Deram); **Fli-tations**, "Little Darlin'" (Polydor) — a reactivation, or is the oldie?; **Bobby Jay McCarthy**, "Spoon Me Up Your Honey" (123).

Bits and pieces

ELSON'S getting better, I've at last learned how to spell 'Pieces' . . . in this crazy world of Northern Soul I sometimes despair of a little bit of sense . . . **Russ** has been playing a track entitled "The Shocker" on Peachtree . . . it is by an artist called **Peg Leg Moffatt** but he has received so many disbelieving

stares and comments on cover-ups that he's started to announce it as by **Wilson Pickett** — now all is smiles and everyone believes him!

● **Martin Brown** deejays at Tiff's in Ainsdale near Southport . . . just as soon as I find out when I'll be over there . . . something new at Wakefield Unity . . . for the next Oldies all-nighter on April 22nd instead of Oldies in both big and little rooms the usual oldies room will contain **Colin Curtis** playing the new disco sounds . . . by the time you read this, the 15th April 'Nighter will be over with . . . don't despair although they've not been able to get the all-nighters on a fortnightly basis they will still have two per month (two weeks running with a couple for a break) watch adverts in B&S for exact dates . . . Another **Colin Curtis** regular gig is Newcastle Tiffs every Wednesday . . . more support needed Colin tells me . . .

● April 28th sees Chrystals, Bury, Thursday night Soul Train show celebrating one year . . . congrats to jock **Johan Paul Dee** and everyone else concerned . . . April is a good month for some people . . . some people have birthdays on April 4th and have presents and things . . . those of you who didn't send me a present on April 4th are forgiven (that means all of you — mean lot) . . . J.C.'s Disco, featuring **Jimmy Conners**, is a mobile operating around the Warrington area. Jimmy is in the U.S. Army, based at Burtonwood, near Warrington and if you want a really up-to-date real live Soul Brother from the States playing the sounds call him at Warrington 36611, ext. 262, during the day or Warrington 55081 evenings . . .

● Thanx everyone at RCA for a great reception to introduce T.K. Records to Britain . . . the **Latimore** album, "It Ain't Where You Been" is hereby called an "Elsons Gem", cos it's a fine piece of vinyl . . . with RCA behind him this just might be Latimore's year at long last . . . thanks especially to **Richard Searling** for a nice car drive to London, even if his gear lever did come away in his hand — we only got lost once . . .

● Thanks, thanks, thanks, to everyone who has written in with details of their local Soul club, but there still ain't a lot of you . . . I'm not telepathic you know and I can't come to your local club unless I know about it. Those of you who do intend to write about your club should remember a few useful details . . . 1. What it is called (don't laugh — someone forgot that recently); 2. When it is open; 3. What times. 4. Exactly where it is (street address). 5. If possible phone number or address of manager / promoter / deejay so I can arrange a visit. Get all those details and I'll be over just as soon as I work my way down the list. Let's be hearing from you.

● In this column B&S 222 anyone spot the deliberate mistake? For BMI read BPI (British Phonographic Industries) — the mistake was silly but nobody noticing was sillier.