

## Sheffield Samantha's

A VISIT to Samantha's in Sheffield is always a pleasure and a good night is more or less certain. This visit happened to coincide with a bus crew's go-slow which didn't help figures a great deal but nevertheless those people that did manage to get there seemed to enjoy themselves as much as I did.

It's still **John Vincent** with the new sounds and **Howard** with the oldies which makes for a very well balanced night. I've said it before and no doubt I'll say it again in the future but it is true that the Northern Soul Scene depends very heavily on these mid-week discos for its existence. In the near future I predict many discos closing down — the scene is overstretched now — but Samantha's on a Wednesday night just looks like going on and on.

Musically, John finds that sounds take longer to break big and seem to last longer as well these days. Probably because there are more jocks and more clubs featuring more sounds, but he did, after a little cajoling give me the list of a few of the more popular current sounds at Sheffield: **5 Jays**, "Hey Hey Girl", (Chant); **Freddie Hughes**, "Take Me As I Am" (Hip Star); **Danny Harrison**, "Girl" (Coral); **Sherry And The Inverts**, "I'm Lost" (Tower); **The Soul City**, "Who Do You Think You Are" (Goodtime); **Ronnie Savoy**, "Pitfall" (Tuff).

Howard's current list of oldies will be featured in the oldies section which, with a little bit of luck may just be featured in this ish. or there again it might be in the next one. Those of you who are a little confused by the infrequency of my oldies section should join the club — so am I!

## Jingles: still doin' it...

FROM Sheffield, I took my life in my hands and stayed that side of

# CHECKIN' IT OUT



**This issue's gospel according to Frank Elson, reporting, chapter and verse, on the Soul scene around the U.K. No malicious rumours or tasty scandal — just news for your edification . . .**

the border and nipped down to Chesterfield where **Steve Martell** is still doing the Wednesday night Funk night at Chesterfield, Jingles. Contrary to a silly letter I had some time ago saying that Steve doesn't play Soul he does play Funk and disco stuff which is what the night is all about. The letter writer obviously meant he doesn't play Northern which doesn't mean the whole thing as far as Soul music goes.

As I've mentioned before, Steve used to be one of the "main men" on the Northern Scene many years ago, going under the name of **Boogaloo** (he isn't particularly interested in that any more) and if he chooses to leave Northern behind then that is his prerogative.

Although I still love Northern Soul and always will do, as it represents a great part of my life and my youth (the formative years doncha know), I can and do appreciate other forms of Soul and

can only feel pity for those people who can't.

Many people at Jingles dig what Steve is doing and so do I. In the few months since he started the Funk night he's managed to move from Chart stuff like **The Fatback Band** to more way out stuff on import. It's all good for Soul music generally.

## The Greyhound: struggling in Ashton

HAVING HAD a not too pleasing telephone call from **Tommy Smith** in Ashton — the gist of it was that if I can write about the Cavern why can't I write about his disco — I went down to have a look at it. I pointed out to Tommy, as I would do to anyone, that I can't write about any disco if I don't know of

its existence and its down to you jocks and fans alike — to let me know about them.

Tommy teams up with **Carl Lee** to jock at the Greyhound pub in Burlington Road, Ashton-under-Lyne on Sunday nights. It used to be on Wednesday nights but the clashed with **Billy Paul**'s Motown/Oldies night at the Cavern and changed it.

I went down on the first night to find attendance pretty bad but it's only the beginning of course. Tommy and Carl play mainly oldies but with a few of the more popular modern sounds thrown in.

The disco is in an upstairs room which is clean and very nicely laid out with a very large dance floor for a pub. It's 25 pence to get in and lasts from 7.30-10.30 pm on Sunday nights and I fully expect it to carry on. At the moment they are on a three months trial and need all the support they can get.

## Soul Train: one year old in Bury

CRYSTALS, Bury, Thursday night "Soul Train" was one year old a few weeks ago — and they definitely don't need any more support! Featuring the regular jock **John Paul Dee** (I've mentioned this night before), it just has to qualify as one of the best supported mid-week scenes that I've ever been to.

Standing room only isn't quite the word for it! In fact the Thursday night scene actually packs more people in than the weekend commercial nights so I'm told.

I forgot to take along, as I had planned, a stale bun with a candle stuck in it but it would hardly have been noticed in the place anyway. It was the original good time being had by all — in fact a typical Thursday night. I've been down a few times in the last year and never found it anything less than packed solid.

It's hard to specify the appeal of the club; there is nothing special about it really. Unless that be the

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reason for the appeal. The fact that an ordinary club, with a good jock and nice, well-mannered door staff and bar staff and good music packs a hell of a lot of people in shouldn't really surprise me all that much should it?

Musically John plays anything as long as it is Soul. Obviously he isn't into Northern Soul but many of the British released Northern sounds, **Alfie Kahn's** "Law Of The Land" on Atlantic being an example, get an airing.

Since I was last there though the place has got a bit Funkier with many of the latest sounds getting played. There is no rivalry either — by a fluke perhaps it would seem that the people of Bury are into Soul music of all kinds. Not that the clientele is strictly from Bury either, people come from all over the Manchester area and further North into Lancashire.

A handful of the more popular sounds that I noted include, **Marvin Gaye's** superb "Got To Give It Up", surely the number one disco record of the moment and destined for the top of the pop charts I'm certain; **Deniece Williams**, "Cos You Love Me Baby" (CBS — flipside of "Free"); **Cerrone**, "Love In C Minor" (Atlantic album track); **K.C.**, "I'm Your Boogie Man" (TK) and **Sex O'Clock USA**, "Baby Come On" (Decca).

Great Birthday night at a great club . . . well worth a visit if your taste is as free as it should be. John mentions, by the way, that he's started a new Sunday night Club featuring Soul as well, 9 pm-12.30 am.

## Wigan: where was Major Lance?

I ARRIVED at Wigan Casino with a friend of mine, **Colin Bell**, a music librarian at Granada Television and someone who is very interested in Soul music, the two of us ready and in high spirits expecting to see **Major Lance**, to find a dejected and somewhat puzzled **Mike Walker**.

Not only had Major Lance not arrived but Mike didn't know where on earth he was, although nothing to do with the tour, Mike happens to know some members of the backing band booked to play behind Major on the tour and he knew that they had been sitting around for two days waiting for Major to arrive to begin rehearsals.

**Chris Burton**, who was organising the tour has put his name to contracts for the tour and Mike tells me that the last Chris knew Major was preparing to leave America for Britain. He just never turned up. At the time of writing, I've been unable to contact Chris to find out if he's heard anything but so far the story seems to be that Major Lance is missing.



Pic shows Jimmy Connors watched by Colin Bell, Music Librarian at Granada Television.

## Leigh Squash Club

HAVING a liking for jeans and denim shirt (they're comfy and hard wearing), I often find myself in the situation where I feel a little out of place. At Leigh Squash club with cocktail dresses and bow ties abounding I found myself wondering if I was in the right place!

My reason for being there was to check out **Jimmy Connors**, a US Army geezer running a mobile disco in the Warrington area. (See this column B&S 224). Jimmy features mainly import sounds (he gets them cheap on the base) but the Squash club scene meant some watering down of his usual show.

In common with most mobile jocks Jimmy has to play what the audience wants (just 'cos you're Black and American you can't insist on playing imported Soul when they want **Abba**) but even so he did enough to show me that if you want a good Soul jock in the Warrington area then Jimmy's able to supply it.

## Please adjust your dress

STAYING on the subject of dress I personally am becoming increasingly impatient with the archaic rules insisted on by many club managements with regard to how you may dress before you can get into a club.

I fail to see why a woman can go into a club showing rather more of her chest than old mother Whitehouse would consider decent (although as a male chauvinist pig I enjoy it) and yet a feller will be refused admission without a tie. I will pay £5 to charity to anyone who makes sense out of that situation — and my money is safe because the situation is nonsensical.

The lesser problem of jeans, "Sorry sir, can't come in wearing jeans", or jackets, "Sorry sir, can't come in without a jacket on" pales into significance.

Surely in this day and age jeans do not denote a hooligan mentality? Is it really true that outward appearances show that someone not wearing a jacket or without a tie is destined to smash the place

up? Come on club owners and managers, use a little sense and leave the 19th century for the 20th — you know it makes sense!

## Tavares, Heatwave and Geno in Liverpool

HAVING refused the offer of tickets for the Tavares show at the Appollo, Manchester as I am now boycotting the place, I went instead to see the show at Liverpool Empire Theatre, certainly, to my mind, the North West's foremost theatre for live shows.

With comfortable seats, realistic and helpful staffing and the little things that matter — like being able to find seat numbers and row letters in the dark — the Empire actually helps you to enjoy a show.

And what a show! The first time in eight years since I've seen **Geno Washington** and his current upsurge in popularity will continue after a short but powerful warming up spot. I don't know where you've been all these years **Geno** but welcome back!

**Heatwave** managed to improve on the impression I got at Bailey's in Oldham a few weeks back with a stage act incorporating a dancing troupe, light show, and costumes with stripes that glow in the dark as well as their undoubtedly high class of musicianship and singing. In a great evening one thing that will stick in my mind for a long time was the way in which they performed **Blue Magic's** "Sideshow" accompanied by a single acoustic guitar — an act of pure bravery on their part which came off admirably.

My limited vocabulary just cannot grasp everything that I'd like to say about Tavares who more than ever reinforced my own opinion that they are the foremost Soul group of today. In a word they were just superb. Certainly the greatest performance on stage that I have ever seen and one that I will remember for ever with delight and enjoyment.

A wonderful show, three great acts and a marvellous evening all round. It was nice to see again after such a while **Mike Davidson** and his wife of only a month the lovely **Jill** who both enjoyed the show every bit as much as my wife and myself.

## Pips Funky Room

DOWN AT Pips with a BBC film crew to cover the **Roxy Music** room (well I've got to earn a living haven't I?) I wandered into the Funky Room there to find an old friend — we practically grew up together in Stoke — **Frankie Mack**, handling the jocking.

Frankie has been mentioned in these pages before at various places but it was a surprise to find that since we last met he's spent some time working in San Francisco.

Frank was getting it together in a nice way and current sounds going down well I noted as including, **Marvin Gaye** (of course); **Morning Noon And Night**, "Bite Your Granny" and "The Thought Of Love" (both from M, N & N's UA album); **Jimmy McGriff**, "Mean Machine" (Groove Merchant album track); **Little Beaver**, "We Three" (Cat) and **Universal Robot Band**, "Dance And Shake Your Tambourine" (Reg Grey).

## Bits and pieces

THE SUBJECT of mailing lists and free records for jocks has been a sore point around the Soul scene for many years. I've grown used to the fact that many companies don't send me records — if they don't want me to write about their product then that is fair enough, it allows me to write about what I like with a clear conscience — although I must admit to my disappointment at not being invited to the **Detroit Spinners/Brass Construction** tour.

It is difficult to reconcile the way one's company is sought after when groups are trying to make it with the way one is ignored when they've got a few hit records under their belts. The really incredible situation comes about when I hear from **Duke Ozzie** how he struggles to get new material to play on his "Beat Is Black" Radio Show on the BBC World Service. Ozzie was never one to hide away and wait for them to come to him and yet despite phone calls and letters to companies he still finds it hard to obtain many records.

This question is difficult and a touchy point as it's easy for complainants to be put down as suffering from sour grapes but the fact that some club jocks playing to a few hundred people per week get more records than a jock playing to millions (or journalists writing to thousands) is more than just a talking point in this country today. Some people wonder if it is more than just inefficiency. As I've already said, this is a delicate subject but one to which I will be returning.

● If anyone is wondering why I'm not writing about the All-dayer at Chester-le-Street like I said I would then the reason is something to do with petrol and water not mixing in somebody's car. **Dave Evison** didn't get there because his car broke down — like somebody else, somebody who writes . . . However we weren't missed as **Bill Swift** tells me things went really well . . .

● That BBC film thing I mentioned earlier by the way is for an "Omnibus" documentary dealing with three types of modern dancing, **Rock and Roll** (the dance is called the Wank-a-dog, I kid you not) **Roxy** and **Northern Soul**. Due for screening in the Autumn I certainly had a lot of fun going round with the crew and watching the filming and I hope I may have given the producer **Tim Wood** and director **Dave Richardson** at least some insight into Northern Soul — and maybe helped them to appreciate the music.

**B&S HAS THE BEST CLUB COVERAGE...**