

## Beachcomber, Liverpool

IT IS sometime since I've featured **Mike Davidson**, one of Liverpool's finest Soul jocks and a personal friend in these pages but I'm glad to report that he's back in harness and turning it on at the Beachcomber in Steel Street, Liverpool.

Nights are Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, times 9-2 am with admission prices varying. Friday and Saturday are the packed out nights and I can attest to Friday at least which was standing room only when I got over there. Tuesdays feature topless go-go dancing and in my role as tireless worker for you lot, reporting on all the bare facts so-to-speak I suppose I'll have to go over there one week. It really is a hard life!

The club itself is very smart and roomy with lots of alcoves, stairs and seating areas to give you that intimate club feeling. Clean and neat and two quite large dance areas make it a very nice place to be in without the music which can't be bad.

However, as a club without music would be silly Mike does play records as well and although he firmly resists pop and Roxy etc., he does find it necessary to feature some chart Soul.

Liverpool being what it is, a town full of clubs, they do get a few silly people in as well as the Soul fans and one young lady had us in fits of laughter when, during **Earth, Wind and Fire**, and just after **Delegation** and **Sex O'Clock USA**, she came up and asked Mike to play some Soul! As the saying goes, "There's no answer to that!"

Although open at 9 pm hardly anyone is in the club before 10 pm and that goes for Mike as well. However by 11 pm the place is full and when I say full I mean it. Considering Liverpool is supposed to be a town of out-of-work people they seem to have plenty of money for club going. Mike has been back there (he worked at the Beachcomber ages ago) since October and has managed to get round to playing less and less commercial records although he still mixes them in. Some current favourites when I visited the place (about three weeks ago or more by the time you read this) include: "Nighttime Boogie", **Fat Larry's Band** (WMOT album track); **Slave**, "You And Me" (Cotillion); **Rigor Mortis**, "Cameo" (Chocolate City); **Isley Brothers**, "The Pride" (Epic); **Sex O'Clock USA**, "Baby Come On" (Decca).

As well as the commercial stuff he has to play Mike also features some of the more way out stuff but I can't in all honesty say it is as popular as the records I've listed because of the numbers of non-dedicated people in the place. One nice thing is that most of the clubs patrons to tend to follow Mike's lead which enables him to gradually move them on to less well-known sounds.

I have noticed over a couple of years of travelling to Liverpool that people tend to be followers of jocks

# CHECKIN' IT OUT



**Frank Elson, Shaw's favourite son and B&S's answer to Fleet Scribble, files another penetrating report on the why's and wherefor's of the U.K. Soul scene.**

rather than a particular brand of music so that in the long run it is down to the jock to what is played. I find that people I talk to will not know the name of the artist or the song although they will admit to having followed the jock from club to club.

While this may be good the jock I wonder if it is necessarily good for the music as it doesn't lead to increased sales in many cases, just increased bar and door takings at a particular club.

What I like about Mike, and the city's other two jocks with whom I have had dealings, **Les Spaine** and **Terry Lennaine**, is that they do their bit with frequent announcements of labels and artists so that people can go out and buy the things.

As far as I am concerned the most important part of a jock's job — and my own, if it comes to that — is to encourage sales of Soul product for it is only with sales that Soul music can stay alive. I'm pleased to see that Mike and the Beachcomber does its bit.

## Carolines

HAVING become what is known in the trade as a "goody-goody" and got myself half-organised into getting my copy out on time for the printers to do their bit I now find myself rather behind where up-to-date lists of sounds are concerned. Consequently the following list of current popular sounds from one **Richard Searling** is something like three or four weeks old by the time you read it.

Do not be disheartened though as the main reason for these lists is to get the good 'uns down on paper so that you lot can go out and buy them (hopefully).

By the way, before the list I'd just like to mention the fact that a half set of false teeth was found on the floor at Carolines which prompted from your scribe the remark, "Bite On, Soul Brother" — I will now hang my head in shame for a few seconds . . . what do you expect anyway — humour?



**Group of revelers at Carolines . . . included somewhere are Richard Searling, Dave Evison, Colin Bell music librarian at Granada Telly and rapidly becoming a Northern Soul fan, Dave's lady friend, Evy From Bolton, Julie Bebb, Siz, Northern jock at Pips, and some other people . . . we had a good night that night . . .**

The list, current popular sounds at Carolines the last time I was there . . . **Laso**, "Laso Square Are You Ready" (MCA album track) — a modern sound with a traditional stomping beat rather in the same vein, musically, as the **Eddie Holman** single this reinforces the opinion many jocks have that the traditional stomping beat is not dead and when allied to a modern rhythmic backing brings sounds that can happily bridge the gap between New York Disco and Northern Stompers. Oldies fans may not like or understand this position but in a few years time all will be revealed in a new "Rare Soul" scene based almost exclusively on sounds from 1975 through 1977 — the Elson Oracle has spoken!

To continue: **Caroline Cook**, "I Don't Mind" (RCA); **Dean Courtney**, "We Have A Good Thing" (RCA); **Billy Floyd**, "My Oh My" (Frantic — wot, not on RCA Richard?); and **Twans**, "I Can't See Him Again" (Dade).

I make no excuses for featuring Carolines again as it is close to my home and still as much as ever one of those scenes where a high old time can be had by all — now that Spurs and Stoke are going down and Port Vale (lissen, I can support who I like can't I?) are safe from relegation Elson is all smiles and **Richard** and **Dave Evison** are resigned to a gloomy year in division two. So long as Lancashire don't completely screw up the cricket games Richard and I should be happy for a few months!

## Wakefield: change of scones

**John Green's** mum's friend no longer bakes the scones for sale at the Wakefield Unity All Nighter but she buys them from a home-bake shop so that's all right. With **Florence Nightingale**, **Sandra Gooding**, making the salad sandwiches all is well with the world.

Actually if Friday the 13th is supposed to be unlucky All-nighters started during that time could well contain the seeds of their own destruction. Luckily nothing terrible happened but the following made it an eventful night.

1. Elson locks himself out of his car en route to All-Nighter. Nice RAC knocked on pub door some hours later and did the job (well I had to shelter somewhere didn't I?)
2. Amp in the big room at the Unity Hall blew fuses and things and some time passed before replacements could be arranged. Nice to see rivalry forgotten as **Terry Samson** of the Northern Soul Scene provided the replacement gear.
3. Embarrassingly positioned zip broke on a Blues and Soul magazine writer's jeans. Safety pins not being what they were, needle and cotton did the trick eventually.
4. Fire alarm bell was activated showing us that were there to be an actual fire anytime we would all be burned to a crisp as nobody at all made the slightest move to leave

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the building — not even the immature s-o-b who thought it a good idea to set it off.

Apart from those small items the evening went off well as is usual with Wakefield All Nighters.

A few bits of information culled from the night: Victoria's Wednesday night scene at Sowerby Bridge had died through apathy which is a shame; Ian "Frank" Dewhurst is now working for Decca on promotion which must be a mistake for Decca to actually hire someone who knows about records but which is nevertheless good news for record buying people. Ian, who has been well known as a Northern Soul jock for some years confessed to me that he doesn't particularly enjoy Northern Soul clubs anymore except for the Ritz which would put him in a minority if letters to B&S are to be believed. In fact I find from talking to people that there are still a great many people who enjoy the Ritz and in particular like the mixture of old and new types of music. It would seem that the silent minority was never shown as such a good example.

Brian Rae informs me that the Carlton over in Warrington is still doing well on Thursday nights and is in fact actually picking up a bit these days. Must have a trip over there soon.

As to Wakefield itself their first Saturday All Nighter is on June 25th from 1 am to 9 am featuring mainly oldies. The Silver Jubilee excuse for making money, sorry, celebrations, at Wakefield include a Sunday night All Nighter from 12 midnight to 8 am.

As to the regular Friday night scene Jon Green informs me that figures at the door are still rising slightly each time which would appear to be good news. In fact having read that sentence again I'll say that it is good news.

## Druffies

DUKINGFIELD'S Rugby Club do on Mondays and Fridays is still ticking over nicely thank you with Dave Stubbs, Dave Griff and Ged Gibbons spinning the sounds. Mainly oldies of course current popular sounds too late to get into this ish's oldies section include: Jimmy Raye, "Philly Dog Around The World"; Darrow Fletcher, "Gotta Draw The Line" (Groovy); Kittens, "Ain't No More Room" (Chess); Phil Flowers, "Discontented" (Dot); Gwen and Ray, "Build Your House On A Good Foundation" (Bee Bee); nice still to see so many young faces at this oldies type session. I may be in favour of the newer sounds but I'd hate oldies to die off — anyone agree with me that a nice mixture of the two would be favourite?

Dave Griff off soon to seek his fortune for the summer on the continent of Europe. Starting off in France he's going to travel around looking for fame, fortune and a bit of fun. This column extends its best wishes for the future.

## Primo's again

BACK TO Leeds to end a heavy type week for another look at Primo's scene I took to right from the start. Things as before when my last write-up was something on the pro-side. Some of the sounds I enjoyed included George Duke, "Seuse Me Miss" (Epic. "From Me To You" album track); Brecker Brothers "Don't Stop The Music" (Arista album track); and Instant Funk, "It Ain't Reggae (But Its Funky)" (TSOP) ... a night of mainly oldies which served to make me realise that good funk and disco music has been around for a long long time.

## Elson gems

Maze, "Maze", (Capitol): featuring guitarist, singer and composer Frankie Beverly (as revealed in this column), this album is a lovely mixture of semi-funk and disco stuff with more straight Soul — very much in the "traditional" bag of Soul music it has been off my turntable since I got it only for the playing of the other albums about to be mentioned.

First Cosins Jazz Ensemble, "For The Cos Of Jazz" (Capitol): Capitol keeps getting it on and here is a surprising album for those of you who are into real modern jazz. Its straight jazz with just the odd hint of rhythms which will probably preclude most Funk deejays from featuring it. However some very brave jock indeed will feature at least one track and have a winner on his hands. I'm very optimistic where good music is concerned. I happen to believe that British fans have more intelligence than they are often granted — I think you lot will like this album — I love it.

Brainstorm, "Stormin'" (RCA): Yet another Funk/Disco/rock album but with a difference for me in that musically it is streets ahead of much of the stuff available I wish I had more space for this section but as I haven't I'll just say that the well-known track, "Lovin' Is Really My Game" is not the standout track just typical of the quality.

Parliament, "The Clones of Doctor Funkenstein" (Casablanca):

Couldn't let this pass without at least a mention. Number one group of straight Funk today. Parliament stand little or no chance of a hit 'cos of import sales. However they are the best there is and if you haven't yet bought it on import then you've no excuse for not getting it now. Maybe it is too much to ask that British sales should one day reflect the class of this band but I can hope can't I? Take your Funk to Heaven and Back Mr. Clinton. sir!

Dexter Gordon, "Homecoming, Live At The Village Vanguard" (CBS): If you like your jazz straight and to the point, without Funk at all, as I often do, then this album from a master saxophonist is for you. Special priced double album is not just a bargain — its a steal. Great for sitting back at night after a heavy evening at the disco. WARNING: This album is for real Jazz fans, not dabblers.

## Bits and pieces

THE Central Soul club in Leeds, very close to closing recently has received a shot in the arm with Richard Searing and Phil Rowan jocking on Fridays, 8.30 pm to 12 midnight ... they still need the support though ... Phil's regular date at Raquel's Wakefield has Ginger Taylor as guest once a fortnight on the Saturday when the St. Ives All Nighter is not on and Male Burton guesting when St. Ives is on ...

Barnsley's Monday night thing at the Londoner has a change of personnel with Glen and Snowy "retiring" in favour of Pat Fisher, described by Bub as "the best up and coming D.J." (18 years old) he has ever heard ...

I'm not sure if it is funny or not but Bub tells me he has returned Russ' records but kept the boxes as good wood is hard to find ... The Manifesto Soul Club at the Kellingly Social Centre, Knottingly is back in business on a monthly Friday basis ... more details on actual dates when I have them ... more details of the next Halifax Tiffs All-dayer for Whit Monday will be in adverts in this mag somewhere ...

CBS disco promotions are not to be missed if you see one advertised in your area as they now have films of Joe Tex, Deniece Williams and Ronnie Spector to show ... more CBS news: Jacksons touring Britain later this year ... Deniece Williams recording second album with Maurice White in July ... Realistics, making lotta friends with one-nighters at the moment are featured on the Jacksons Tour ... their (Realistics) single is "Someone Oughta Write A Song About You Baby" ... Archie Bell and the Drells tour in June ... Emotions single out in June. Maurice White producing them for an album right now and they've added sister number four to the line-up ... her name is Pamela, but it is not my wife ... Verdine White, brother of Maurice producing group called Pockets, I leave the puns to you ... Muddy Waters concert New Vic Theatre July 8th features backing band of Luther Johnson, guitar; Calvin W. Jones, bass; Bob Margolin, guitar; Pinetop Perkins, piano; Jerry Protroy, harmonica, and Willie Smith, drums ... Joe Tex to appear in a film with Melba Moore ...

June singles releases: Eloise Laws, "Love Goes Deeper Than That"/"Camouflage" (Invictus); Marlena Shaw, "Pictures and Memories"/"No Deposit No Return" (CBS); and albums: Marlena Shaw, "Sweet Beginnings" and O'Jays, "Faster Than The Speed Of Thought".

After reputedly one of the biggest cheque waving sessions in years, EMI International finally won the "Bo And Ruth" album for British release with the album due out in June.

Unconfirmed this but I hear that Tommy Hunt's recent week at Fagin's Manchester got off to a fine start when Tavares, in the audience ended up on stage doing a double

act with Tommy ... I wouldn't mind but Monday is one of the free ticket nights at Fagin's ...

Difficulties over double booking of Junior Walker at Cats Whiskers, Burnley and Northern Soul Scene All Dayer in Leeds led to Mecca cancelling the Burnley gig ... Burnley's Silver Jubilee celebrations include closing Rose Room as normal on 5th June at 11 pm then re-opening on 6th June one hour later at midnight (5th June if you see what I mean) with bar and staying open until 4 am ... I understand pubs are open all day on the 6th so should be lotsa opportunity to raise you glasses to whatsername in Buck house ...

Ginger Taylor and Andy Riding starting at the Spinning Jenny Pub/Disco on 20th May and every Friday ... Accrington just has to have somewhere as it must be one of the heaviest populated areas of Northern fans in the country ... meanwhile Ginger's erstwhile partner, Eddie Antimes, still doing Thursday nights at the House That Jack Built at Todmorden ... commercial funk and album tracks, proper report in this col. soon ...

Tony Petherbridge celebrates five years of Whitechurch All-dayers on you-know-who's Silver Jubilee with a 12-12 All-Dayer on June 6th ... Richard Searing, Colin Curtis, Dave Evison booked so far — others to follow ... Tony tells me the Raven opening up again soon.

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