

CHECKIN' IT OUT



Frank Elson's fortnightly shock 'n' horror probe into all that's good and bad around the U.K. Soul scene. Righto son, dip your pen in venom an' off you go...

100 Hours of Motown

SO THERE I was, looking forward to a Jubilee Holiday of doing just about nothing, when I noticed a small section in the local Oldham paper advertising a marathon 100 Hours of Motown to be played at the Richmond Club (now Candy Peel), Heywood . . . so on my way to Wigan for the Oldies All-nighter I called in . . . I ended up calling in every day from the Friday to the following Tuesday!

It all starts with **Ben Murphy** the jock at the Richmond/Candy Peel who thought that a Marathon Four day stint might be fun (!). He started to contact various record companies and Motown suggested he stuck to just their label and they'd help out with freebies . . . all money by the way was to go to the Silver Jubilee Appeal which is a fund to help the youth of today.

The idea started about three months ago and the reason you've not heard about it earlier is that my telephone answering service sprang a leak . . . somebody at Motown told Ben they'd advertise it in the Pop press and they didn't . . . and a change in manager and ownership meant that the former manager didn't bother to advertise it.

With just about a week to go and not a twinkle of a plug from Piccadilly Radio despite Ben's writing three letters and phoning constantly, he phoned **Phil Easton** at Radio City in Liverpool, who put him on to **Mark Joenz**, who plugged the thing immediately . . . Ben is of course pleased and grateful to Mark and Phil and not pleased with Piccadilly. He also wrote 100 letters to local firms asking for sponsorship — and received one reply which turned him down anyway. He did manage to get sponsorship, and Motown sent

loads of badges and 100 albums which made up for them not advertising.

I spoke to **Bill Tyler** the new manager at the Candy Peel (well, it is now) who told me some more details . . . Ben was to play nothing but Tamla Motown records from 7.30 pm on the Friday until 11.30 pm the following Tuesday . . . admission to the club was free before 10 pm and £1 after that with pass outs for a one day period only — anything over that and you'd to pay again. He had only 6 staff working rotas and food was to be on for most of the time — so long as there was a cook around!

During ordinary club hours there was to be another room playing Funk and commercial stuff just in case anyone got fed up with the Motown stuff.

Although I missed the actual beginning, the Mayor of Oldham kicked off by playing **Shorty Long's**, "Night Fo' Last" and then Ben got into the hot seat. As I mentioned earlier I popped in each day and here goes with my disconnected jottings throughout that period . . .

Friday night: very slow start, not many people in but lots of phone calls from people who had heard Mark Joenz's show that night on Radio City. One deck started to give trouble and for a while Ben was working on one deck! Good start after only a couple of hours . . .

Saturday afternoon: very quiet. Ben playing mostly albums to a handful of people. Apparently several hundred turned up later on the Friday night.

Saturday night: fullest Saturday night for ages. I learned later that a sizeable chunk stayed until about 7 am the next morning. After 24 hours Ben still cheerful and bright.

Sunday: a large Wigan crowd turned up around 10 am and stayed until teatime. At normal club hours the place was seething. Ben "a bit

fed up with Scampi and Chips and Chicken and Chips"!

Monday: people still drifting in and out during the day. Due to a mix up in the morning when cleaners were in and Bill Tyler was out a group of Northern Soul fans refused admission . . . some of them got in later. Ben has aching eyes but still cheerful.

Tuesday: zero hour approaches . . . and passes as the Mayor stands at the bar having a drink instead of going up to end it all. Ben plays Motown for 100½ hours and then stays on jocking until the club's normal closing hour of 2 am . . . didn't play too much Motown after midnight though! He's tired and it shows but he's still quite bright.

Considering the lack of real planning (all blamed on the old manager) everyone is quite surprised that they managed it. Ben couldn't let go even for the statutory 40 minutes break he's allowed and washing, changing, eating and sh . . . going to the toilet he did all during albums. I think he's crazy to do it but offer my congratulations.

So now they're talking about an entire weekend when they have the grand official re-opening in a couple of months time . . .

Painted Wagon, Manchester

I POPPED in to **John Grant's** New York Disco night at the Painted Wagon, Brown Street, Manchester, Wednesday nights, pub hours admission free the other night.

It's not actually all New York Disco but a mixture of that and oldies and usual Northern. As it was only the first week there weren't too many people in but those that were there had a good time it appeared. The funniest part of the evening was to watch people acting like yo-yos as they danced to "their" sounds and then stood while the "other" music was played.

New York sounds played included: **LaSo**, "LaSo Square (Are You Ready)", (RCA); **Garnet Mims**, "What It Is" (Arista); **Little Beaver**, "Listen To My Heart Beat" (Cats); **Claudja Barry**, "Sweet Dynamite" (Salsoul); **Slave**, "You and Me" (Cotillion).

Northern sounds included, **Tony Middleton**, "Paris Blues" (Mala); **Lesley Uggams'** fine piece of wax and **Brainstorm**, which some Northern fans call a modern sound but which attracted the Northern dancers while the New Yorkers sat down . . . isn't it confusing and silly?

The music, of whatever kind is good stuff, the dance floor is adequate for a pub and the Painted Wagon on Wednesday nights is therefore recommended.

Placemate 3

SOMEWHERE in Manchester there used to be a club some of us will always remember with affection called the Twisted Wheel. As is history now the place was

taken over when it closed down and became the Placemate.

Within this club there are about twenty seven different discos (well, about 7 really, but it seems like 27!). One of these, number three to be exact, features Funk' and Commercial Soul so I decided eventually to check it out which is what this column is all about folks . . .

The whole club is smart, clean and barely recognisable as the place where I happily mis-spent a chunk of my youth. Number 3 has a long but thin dance floor and appears to be full for most of the night which means they have to be doing something right doesn't it?

Jock nowadays is one **Noel M. Turner** and his current list of top five sounds reads like this: **The Jacksons**, "Show You The Way To Go" (Epic); **Gladys Knight And The Pips**, "Baby Don't Change Your Mind" (Buddah); **Lamont Dozier**, "Going Back To My Roots" (WB); **Brass Construction**, "What's On Your Mind" (UA); **Wild Cherry**, "Hot To Trot" (Epic) . . . not a very inspiring list but Noel misinterpreted my instructions — it later transpired as these were the current favourites that night.

The point is that the club as a whole is a City Centre club and attracts all sorts of people. Although there are Soul fans who regularly spend all night in Placemate 3 there is a sizeable group of "pop" fans who request the commercial stuff on Fridays. Noel tells me that Thursdays are the best nights for straight Funk as he can play almost everything, including imports to a regular crowd of Funk fans who turn up on that night.

He doesn't play any pop at all, only Soul, and the type of Soul varies with different nights.

Placemate is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9 pm-2 am and well, worth a visit is number three.

Rufus

WHILE in Manchester for the Placemate. I popped into Rufus to see how **Mike Shaft** is going on these days. The club was really jumping, packed out and great . . . it's certainly come on since the rather hesitant beginning and Mike is getting into some very good sounds these days . . . example of some of the sounds he's featuring starts right about now: **Peter Brown**, "Burning Love Breakdown" (Drive); **J.B.s** "Music For The People" (Polydor); **New York Port Authority**, "I Got It" (Invictus); **Detours**, "Cheeky" (MCA); **Charlie Whitehead**, "People Tell Me I'm Losing My Baby" (for the smooch spot, flipside of Contempo single, "I Was Dancing When I Fell In Love"); **Cameo**, "Funk Funk" (careful printer), and "Post Mortem" (from album "Cardiac Arrest" on Chocolate City); and anything from **The Parliament** "Live" album (Casablanca).

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Soul Time

IT'S NEW, improved! Washes whiter, and all that! What's happened is that "Soul Time" the magazine devoted to Northern Soul only is no longer edited by **Dave McCadden** and is now edited by **Siz**, first brought to the attention of an admiring world by this column when jocking in the Northern Soul room at Pips.

As Siz cares more about Northern Soul than the furtherance of his own personal opinions, the magazine suddenly becomes not only readable but interesting and good value for money as well.

Almost required reading for Northern fans so if you want it (the mag, stupid) write to Siz enclosing postal order or cheque made payable to New Soul Time, at 10 Portland Road, Stretford, Manchester. Send 30p and a stamp for the current issue as he isn't doing subscriptions yet. Keep it up Siz . . . good work.

All-Dayer mania

I STAYED away from clubs during the Jubilee Holidays because I always try to keep Bank Holidays for Holidays — one exception in recent years was that trip to Matlock when I got wrapped up in the traffic. But holiday traffic apart may I just send out a plea for reason to some of you who are into the promotion game . . . estimates of all-dayers on the Monday and Tuesday vary between 11 and 15 different promotions — some within a few miles of each other.

This cannot make sense as it is just too many for people to visit. I have no doubt that most of those promotions lost money or struggled to break even where, had some of you got together and thought it out, a lot less all dayers could have been held, with more people at each of them.

I'm all for freedom of choice but such choice isn't good for the scene as it merely leads to money difficulties which once started can carry on until even a successful mid-week or weekend scene can fold up — then the promoter has no money and the Soul fans have nowhere to go. Please some of you, use a little thought and see if it isn't possible to combine with someone close to for the next Bank Holiday.

Another difficulty from so many promotions is that of jocks travelling between them. I've had many complaints from paying customers (the fans who keep the jocks in business) of jocks who turn up late, struggle through a short spot and then dash off immediately. And when someone goes along to an All Dayer to see a top jock who has been on an hour beforehand as far as I am concerned they are within their rights to ask for their money back.

The writing is on the wall, I foresee a time quite soon when promoters will have to insist on jocks either arriving on time or

working an exclusive engagement. It will happen.

Bits and pieces

WHEN YOU'RE next in New York and fancy a night out (yes, I am serious . . .) you're sure of a welcome at "Environmental Fantasies" a club with a difference in that the owners are no less than **Herb and Brenda Rooney**, otherwise known as the **Exciters** . . . the club is in the Queens district of New York . . .

Dunno if its still open but a gaff called Crossroads at Ceargwle, near Wrexham (had to be in Wales didn't it?) features a Soul night on Thursdays with **Wuffer** and **Joe** jocking between the hours of 8-12 midnight . . . entrance is free before 9 pm and 50 nupes after . . . Carolines Club in Manchester now to be known as **Nocturn** . . . I don't know why, but there it is . . .

Duke Ozzie is currently in the States but when he comes back he'll be back at the Tower Club, Oldham on Monday nights where he plays a Funk and Reggae night . . . the address is Bower Street, Oldham, its open from 9.30 pm-2 am and admission is 35p . . . its Funk as heavy as you like it . . .

Chrystals in Bury, as mentioned before in this column, has a change of jock for the Thursday and Sunday night Soul nights . . . **John Paul Dee** has left to be replaced by **Master James** who has been the jock on other nights at the club . . .

Derek Cooper tells me that Leigh Casino is the place to be on Sundays . . . two sessions, 2 pm-6 pm and 8 pm-11 pm with **Paddy Shaw** and **Dave Somebody** jocking . . . its mostly oldies and gets packed out, I'm told . . .

Chris Powers, the jock who did a Motown night at Bees Knees, Bolton some time ago turned up at the 100 Hours of Motown thing . . . he tells me he does Rochdale Rugby Union Club, Moorgate Avenue, Bamford, Rochdale (near Dog and Partridge Pub) on alternate Saturdays . . . work it out from the 11th June — every two weeks from then . . . times 8-12 midnight, admission 35p members, 50 pees non-members . . . getting quite a few in for a mixture of all sorts of Soul from Funk to Commercial to oldies . . .

Jimmy Bo Horne's, "Get Happy" (TK) is terrific! I first heard it through headphones in Oldham's Golden Disc record shop and I flipped . . . the production is tremendous although I accept it loses a little atmosphere through speakers . . . best single I've heard in a long time . . . certainly best since **Marvin Gaye's** current hit . . .

Ginger Taylor informs me that he and **Andy Riding** are starting a new Northern night in Bury at the Blazes club, in the Shopping Precinct (just round the corner from Chrystals) on 20th July and for every Wednesday after . . . times 8-12 prices not known at the moment . . . **Ginger and Andy's** Friday night thing at the "Spinning Jenny" in Accrington is doing very well so I hear . . .