

## Pennine Radio's Paul Cooke

AS PART of my seemingly never-ending series of interviews with radio Soul jocks, it suddenly struck me one day that although I've mentioned Paul many times and guested on his show when he did it with **Duke Ozzie** I've never actually done a profile on the feller. Particularly now is a good time as he's just about settled down to doing the show on his own. I therefore hot-tyred it up to Bradford where we began, thus:

**Me:** Hello Paul.

**Paul:** Hello Frank . . . (really gripping this, isn't it?).

The show is still called "Soul On Pennine" and the times are still 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday nights, 235 metres med wave and 96 mega thingys VHF.

The story of Paul's involvement with the show is as follows: The first Soul jock on Pennine wasn't, so programme director Steve Merrick took it over in November 1975. As Stever freely admitted his lack of knowledge he brought Paul, a news reporter on the station, in to advise on what to play and to do record reviews and interviews.

Ozzie started on the show in Steve's place about a month later with the exception that he knew more about Soul the relationship continued the same way. The show then developed, as Paul's technique got better, into a double-header with the two sharing equal time on the

# CHECKIN' IT OUT



**Just too big to be a Muppet, too slight for all-in wrestling, he settled for a career in soul. Yes folks, it's that man again...Frank Elson and his fortnightly Soul roustabout.**

air.

At this time I guested on the show about three times and I said then in this column that the two really had something going together.

Paul's comment, "It was good experience for me as a presenter and I think it also enabled us both

to broaden our ideas a bit. Ozzie was almost totally into Funk and I was totally into Northern. I think it ended up opening both our eyes musically, and of course we enjoyed working together."

Since Ozzie left, Paul has been handling the show on his own and I for one, being able to remember

him in the early days can say that he has changed with an assurance that he didn't have at one time.

He's radically changed the show, tried to speed it up to get more music in and worked out a regular format which was impossible when two people were doing the show.

The format now is roughly: 1st 30 mins., virtually back to back new British releases; 2nd 30, Interview with music; 3rd 30. Soul Pick, chart, three imports and "What The People Say", club jocks records of the week and competition. Last 30 mins., Oldies feature on one artist again virtually back to back music.

Paul describes the show now as "an attempt to cover the entire spectrum of Soul, not just my own ideas but others."

In reply to a question from me he said, "Yes, I do feel strongly enough to play a record I can't personally stand. It is the listeners' show not mine even if that does sound a bit cliché ridden."

Paul is a dedicated Soul man who enjoys working on a Soul show, unlike many jocks though he isn't a career jock. He describes himself as a Radio reporter which is his full time job and describes the show as a hobby, albeit one that he cares about deeply.

Because of this, and because of the fact that he really passionately cares about Soul music ('cos he likes it, not as a stepping stone to other things). The feeling that comes through the speakers is one

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of pleasure rather than the boredom one can detect often these days.

However, I did counsel him not to lose hope when things don't go perfectly right as I know from my experience as a professional journalist who slipped into this column by accident though being a Soul fan that when ones hobby and work coincide there are sometimes moments when you wonder if it is worth it — my point was that in the long run it always is worth it no matter how down you might be at any one time!

Paul's comment that the show belongs to the listeners is a cliché trotted out by everyone and cynics can't be blamed for dismissing it but I feel I know Paul well enough to know that he means it and from what I've heard of his work I would say that he actively puts it into practice.

Another area where I agree with Paul — I practice it myself, is in the fact that he isn't afraid to ask other people's advice and draw on knowledge of people like **Richard Searling** and **Graham Slater**. In this business a position such as columnist or jock seems to make most people thing that we are immediate founts of knowledge well I'm not sure about Paul but I'm no expert and never have claimed to be, just a Soul fan, and Paul's policy of asking the experts is one which I have followed since. I began the column.

On to the personal details about the lad. He's a Jubilee baby, 25 this year (bless 'im) although I don't think he's got a telegram from the Queen yet. Bradford born and bred he's been into Soul from the age of 14 when he started going to the "Spinning Disc" club in Leeds.

His first Soul favourite was "My Girl" from the "Otis Blue" album which establishes his credentials right away. He's still got the album by the way. A couple of trips to the Wheel and a Harrogate club known as "Cheltenham" meant that he was lost to "our" music.

Another way in which he stands out is that he's never been a deejay but a Soul fan developing into Northern as Northern developed in the late sixties early 70's. As I mentioned before he has the show to thank for developing his Soul fanaticism into a more all round Soul fan. He's also always been into Commercial Soul not being able to see anything wrong with a Soul record getting into the charts.

Favourite records are: "Come To Me Softly", by **Jimmy James** (from the "New Religion album) and "What's Wrong With Me Baby". **The Invitations**. Likes are: Soul records getting into the Pop Charts, as he says, "we always tried to get Soul into the charts years ago and I can't understand why anyone should moan when they get there." Dislikes: People not supporting concerts of Soul artists; using him as an image, not as a person (I've been that trip too Paul); and people who consider Soul music to be

beneath their intelligence.

Basically I think the best thing about Paul is that he is so ordinary in the nicest possible way. He's an ordinary Soul fan who's had the opportunity to do something which no Soul fan in his right mind would turn down and that is to play lots of Soul to other people. He obviously enjoys his show and for my money at least he puts together an entertaining and interesting show. Long may he continue to do so.

## Blue Room, Sale

NOT BEEN down for a while so **Colin Bell** and myself popped over to find the Blue Room ticking over as ever with **Richard Searling** and **Dave Evison** spinning the sounds as usual. Dave's still with the oldies and Richard is fitting a few more of the modern sounds in. Most people seem to enjoy the mixture.

First news is of an all-dayer at the Blue Room on August Bank Holiday. Starting at 11 am. and ending at 7 pm. Richard wandered off before I could get more details but he did murmur something about a five a side football competition from 10 am. onwards. Second bit of news is that "Dave's Bird" was christened **Gail** following a recent picture when I mentioned her minus the name.

Rather than ask for tips or things, I just looked over Richard's shoulder for a while and noted down a few of the sounds he played that I particularly liked — taking no account of popularity or whether Richard himself likes them! **David Ruffin**, "You're My Peace Of Mind" (from the "In My Stride" album on Motown); **Idris Muhammed**, "Could Heaven ever Be Like This" (Kudu); **Sun**, "We're So Hot" (Capitol); three that I really took to.

Nice to see Richard getting more into the Funky thing.

## Spinning Jenny, Accrington

SO I STOPPED to ask these young ladies the way and they were on their way there. They even told me off for asking at the top of the hill instead of the bottom, my reply was that I wasn't lost at the bottom!

There is something about Soul discos in the Accrington area that I like. They are really into their music in that part of the world and the current Friday night scene at the Spinning Jenny (don't ask me how to get there) is no exception.

There has been a steady supply of Accy area nutters for the four weeks the place had been open at the time that I visited it. **Tommy Balmer** had a scene going there last year but this one features **Ginger** and **Andy Riding** who seem to be doing very well together these days.

Andy plays the oldies of course so with a bit of luck some of the more popular oldies at the club will appear in the oldies section of this ish. **Ginger** is into the new "discoveries" of course, although he's now getting into some of the New York Disco music as well.

A list of some of his sounds that

are going down well at the moment includes: **Ilusions**, "You Didn't Have To Leave" (Laman); **Yvonne Vernee**, "Just Like You Did Me" (Sonbert); **Flamma Sherman**, "Where Is He" (SnB); **Paula Parfitt**, "Love Is Wonderful" (Beacon); **Eddie Regan**, "Playin' Hide And Seek" (ABC); **Teddy Pendergrass**, "You Can't Hide From Me" (Philly Int. album track); **California Playboys**, "Just a 4 Letter Word" (Lodestone).

Except for St. Ives and Wakefield, **Ginger** plays a mixture of one third oldies, one third stompers and one third New York Disco nowadays. I'm pleased to see that the Accrington crowd seem able to enjoy all the different kinds of music which is only to be expected in such an area. I only wish a mixture went down well everywhere.

Bits and pieces picked up in the Spinning Jenny include a snippet from **Marie Walker**, formerly **Marie Nolan** (she's married to jock **Tony Walker** and they have a baby — cries of aaaah!), about an All Nighter at Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham on Friday 30th September, 11 pm. to 8 am. Featuring **Soul Sam**, **Richard Searling**, **John Vincent**, **Johnny Manship**, **Dave Evison** and **Tony Walker** plus local jocks. Done by the North Eastern Soul club it sounds like a good night.

**Andy Ryding** tells me that the Queens Hotel, Rawtenstall on Saturday nights features **Ged Collins** playing Funk until 11.30 when the drunks come in after Bowie etc. Up to that time its a good scene **Andy** says.

**Tony Walker** (with wife and baby — all say aaah again) tells me of a Thursday night scene at the Tower Room, Darwen (part of the Swimming baths — the mind boggles) 7.30 pm.-12 midnight featuring himself, **Paul Shenton**, **Carlo** and **John Lewis** playing top sounds and oldies. Struggling a little and in need of support so get along there Central Lancashire Soul freaks . . .

## Lainy Raves

SPENT A few hours waiting for **Colin Bell** (who was in the boozier) and my missus (who was spending my money) in the Spin Inn in Cross Street, Manchester. **Gary Laine** was, as ever, raving about something or other so to keep him quiet I wrote it down . . . **Love and Kisses**, "Love And Kisses" (Rei-Ver) a French import recorded in London and sold only in France so that it has to be imported to Britain via America believe it or not. **Donna Summer** — smooth Funk and selling like crazy at the moment. **Morning Noon and Night**, "Morning Noon And Night" (Roadshow); Funky disco album selling well to Manchester club jocks but better than sales to soul fans would have us believe.

At last that's shut him up . . . only joking of course. **Gary** was really into these albums and I have to admit they're rather tasty pieces of music. Well worth getting your hands on if you can find them.

## Elson Gems

**David Ruffin**, "In My Stride" (Motown) . . . as mentioned above in **Richard Searling's** bit. I'm going to say nothing about this album except for the fact that I believe it to be quite simply the album of the year already. (Nearly as good as "Black Bach" in fact).

**Mandre**, "Mandre" (Motown): If you're into real Jazz-Funk (as opposed to Funk-Jazz that is) then get it. Don't know anything about them and I'm too lazy to ask Motown. It'll not be a hit by a million miles but thoroughly deserves to be. My kind of music. **Thelma Houston & Jerry Butler**, "Thelma And Jerry" (Motown): lack of space isn't as bad as it sometimes seems as I could write for hours about this and still say the same thing. It's two of the best singers ever getting together and enjoying themselves making beautiful music together.

Hey, I've just noticed that my three current favourite records are all on Motown . . . wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for the fact that they're the only three decent albums I've heard in a fortnight.

## Bits & Pieces . . .

JULY 29th is the important day for the St. Ives All-Nighter for that is the day when the local Council make a decision as to whether to allow the "Nighter to continue or not. The issue at stake is, as usual, drugs and more specifically a raid some time ago when many people were arrested on drugs offences.

**Ken Cox**, of the East Anglian Soul Club is optimistic at the outcome but it is a worrying time for all concerned particularly as the "Nighter has only recently broke the 1,000 mark after a period when figures have been rising continuously. It looks as though St. Ives has really become a force to be reckoned with (as I said it would long ago) and the cloud hanging over its head hasn't come at a good time (as if anytime would be).

With St. Ives, Wigan and Wakefield all running well organised "Nighters with top jocks and well planned facilities the All Nighter Scene has never been better.

**Candi Staton's** latest album, "Music Speaks Louder Than Words" may contain good music but that cover picture looks like something out of a punk rockers nightmare! Totally horrible to the gaze . . .

Not so horrible is the film "Car Wash" which I am going to see after this column is written although I understand from the manager of the ABC Cinema in Manchester it has done fairly good business despite its specialised appeal. Those people that I know who have already seen it have come away raving and one guy I know has seen it four times already!

Strange isn't it how **John Miles** on the radio some time ago dismissed "One Minute Every Hour" as "a nothing sort of disco thing" and his latest release is aimed directly at the disco market .