

Checkin' It Out:

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and in Funk clubs over the years. I owe him about thirty letters!

● Some snippets picked up at St. Ives include . . . from **Ginger Stewart**, The Wooden Bridge Pub, Guildford every Sunday night 90% Northern 10% current Funk; **Dave** jocking . . . Camberley Civic Hall All-Nighter 29th July he should have phoned with more details about that one but I've not heard at the time of writing . . . from **Ginger Taylor**: August 28th, All Dayer at Burnley Rose Room; **Ginger, Andy Ryding, Richard Searling, Sam** plus others, all for 50 pence admission! . . . from **Kevin Woods**; **Kevin, Nick Grainge and Mick Green** all jocking at Nelson Irish League Club on Fridays; they've moved from Barrowford RAOB club, in this column yonks ago; 8pm.-11.30pm. admission 10 nupes . . . from **Brian Rae**; **Brian, Colin Curtis and Keith Minshull** doing the All-Dayer at Whitchurch on August Bank Holiday.

Roper Hall, Preston

SUNDAY night might seem a strange night for a disco in a Church Social Club hall but the one in Roper Hall goes down well so who cares?

Guiding lights are **Paul James, Graham Halstead** and **Mick Finch**.

Paul runs the Spin-a-Disc shop in Preston and the other two are engineers but they're all Northern freaks.

After trying to get places separately, they banded together about three months ago and managed to hire Roper Hall. The Hall is in Friargate, Preston (just 'round the corner from Harris College where once an unhappy band of men attempted to teach me to become a journalist.

Club is open from 7.45pm. to 12 midnight and cost is 65 pence which sounds a lot until you realise that this just about pays for the hire of the Hall. The three heroes use their own records and play a mixture of oldies, new stompers and New York Disco music. The people are a mixture of devotees of all three types of music and as usual in a local club they all mix very well.

Roper Hall (upstairs from the Social Club) is an ideal situation for a disco with a huge dancefloor, really large, plenty of sitting space if you're bushed after a heavy Saturday night and a bar which is licensed until 10.30pm.

● Music played while I was there included:- **Tymes** "What Would I Do" (MGM); **G. Scott Heron**, "The Bottle" (Strata East); **New York Port Authority**, "I Got It" (Invictus); **Rufus Lunley**, "I'm Standing" (Stateside); **Bobby Paris**, "Night Owl" (Cameo); **Mood Mosaic**, "Touch Of Velvet The Sting Of Brass" (Columbia); **Patti & the Emblems**, "I'm Going To Love You a Long Long Time"



Tommy Hunt and three Tavares with Ann J. Batty at Fagins, Manchester, picture taken by Tiny Tavares. (See Bits & Pieces).

(Kapp); **Jimmy Cliff**, "Waterfall" (A&M). Nice mixture there.

Roper Hall is one of those nice local clubs that packs a lot of people in a friendly atmosphere and all having fun with the music we all love (if you don't what the hell are you reading this for?) well worth a visit folks.

Elson Gems

Real Thing, "4 from 8" (Pye):- No excuses for writing about this as it is quite simply the best Soul album I've had in the last two weeks. Maybe the fact that I know and like the group personally clouds my judgement but I like to think not.

This album is progressive Soul and sweet Soul. It's Disco and it's Ballad, it's just great! In the three or four years that I've known and heard the Real Thing, they've come from a highly professional group doing very accurate copies of American hits to a highly professional group of talented performers doing their own distinctive material in their own way.

All the tracks are self-penned by **Chris and Eddie Amoo**, except for the re-recording of "Plastic Man" which Eddie wrote on his own. The brothers produced the album themselves and although I've said it before and will no doubt say it again if this group came out of an industrial city in America suffering from high unemployment instead of an industrial city in Britain suffering from high unemployment then they would be accepted without question by British Soul fans.

I cannot praise this album too highly and I do ask that you all put aside your nationalistic prejudices and take the time to listen to this album — I think that an awful lot of you will buy it.

Bits and pieces

MY STORY in B&S 227 about **Tavares** and **Tommy Hunt** in Manchester was confirmed by a member of the party. **Ms. Ann J. Batty**, pictured somewhere on these pages with Tommy and members of the group. Ann writes, "I was a guest of the brothers that evening as we were spending a couple of days together — talking over old times — I used to live in the same neighbourhood in Boston for three years and we have been friends now for several years."

Ann goes on to say that they hadn't planned on going out that evening until someone mentioned that Tommy was in Manchester and as the Tavares hadn't met Tommy, an old friend, in ten years, they went out to surprise him!

Ann, currently living in North Humberstone is off back to the States again soon but takes with her a memory that she'll never forget. Tommy and Tavares on stage together is a memory I'd like to have had a part in. Thanks for the letter Ann, and the photo, taken by **Tiny** himself — let me know what the Stateside scene is like when you get back.

● Still on the subject of the U.S., **Chris Savory**, editor of Hot Buttered Soul Magazine has a problem he'd like B&S readers to help with if they can. A guy living in Los Angeles by name of **Lester Tipton** once made a record on the La Beat label and he's asked Chris if he could turn up a copy of the record, the only one he ever made. He didn't mention the title and Chris has so far failed in his attempts to trace the record. So can any B&S reader help in finding a copy? If so Chris' address is, 67, Albert Terrace, Wolstanton, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 8AY.

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Blackpool Mecca

WHAT CAN you say about the Mecca? An institution in our music, always leading where others follow — albeit in a direction some people may not wish to follow?

Anyway, it was about time I had another visit to the Mecca, and **Colin Bell**, now really getting into the Northern Soul thing, had been bothering me about explaining all he was reading and hearing about New York Disco Sounds etc. Rather than try to explain I decided to show him and so off we went.

Colin Curtis was his usual self, flip and full of Stoke-on-Trent humour but able to find it in himself to throw a crumb to a tired reporter. Space has meant that I've been unable to use this report for a few weeks so the records are nearly a month old by now but records Colin was playing about a month ago include: **Roy Ayers**, "Stranded In The Jungle" (Polydor album track); **John Tropea**, "The Funky See Is The Funky Do" (Marlin album track); **Ramsey Lewis**, "Spring High" (Columbia album track); **Lamont Dozier**, "Going Back To My Roots" (WB album track); **Hoodoo Rhythm Devils**, "Get Somebody New" (Fantasy); **Graham Central Station**, "Now Do You Wanna Dance" (WB).

● Enough has been written about the music played at the Mecca without my adding anything more. I know **Ian Levine** disagrees with me but the last time I printed that the New York Disco Scene is a natural progression from Northern Stompers I had many letters and people came to me in clubs to agree with me. I don't know where the present scene is going to end up but in the late sixties at the Wheel I could never have foreseen the "Stomper" days of the mid-Seventies either.

Blackpool Mecca will continue to be one of the best Soul discos in the country as far as I can see. Colin will continue to go his own way, Ian will continue to produce fine records (an achievement which no-one will ever be able to criticise him for) and the Mecca people will continue to do their own thing.

Unless they go for out and out Pop or Punk or something I can never foresee a time when a visit to the Blackpool Mecca Highland Room Soul/Disco Saturday night will not be a pleasure for anyone into the whole of Soul. Here endeth the lesson.

St. Ives: the end, or not...?

STILL hanging under the cloud of July 29th. The day that a council decision to allow the East Anglian Soul Club to continue with All-Nighters or not will be made, the St. Ives regulars seem to be working twice as hard to enjoy themselves just in case the worst happens. By the time you read this column of course the worst or not will have happened.

Being unable to get down for the (possibly) last Ail-Nighter, I visited St. Ives on the (possibly) next to last

CHECKIN' IT OUT



Frank Elson filed this report, donned his kilt and rushed to the Highlands to toss his caber for a week. He was also planning the visit some of Scotland's soul meccas on his trip and his report should follow next issue.

All-Nighter. The fact that it was on the same day as Drag Racing — one of my other passions in life — at nearby Northampton just helped make it a weekend to remember.

Bob Mills, an old friend who used to travel to many clubs with me went along and in Cambridge we met up with **Gary Mader** and

Max Rees, another couple of friends of ours.

Not having warned anyone that I was coming, it came as a shock to **Ken Cox** who runs the gaff — although I don't know whether it was pleasant or not! (for him!). Since I was last at St. Ives the scene down there has grown tremend-



Johnny Nash pictured with **John Young** and one quarter of the **Guys and Dolls** group in CBS Manchester office. **John** is Northern Sales Manager for CBS... it's a hard life working for a record company...!

ously with a real tradition of regulars from oop t'north as far as Edinburgh and down Souf as far as Portsmouth, Southampton and Bournemouth. For a long while St. Ives has been regarded in the North as somewhere for Southerners to go rather than facing the long haul North — a sort of alternative. But its now definitely become a place to visit in its own right.

● The night that we were there things weren't going according to plan... the guy who supplies the disco gear was **Brahms 'n' Liszt** at a wedding and only loaded half the van so that **Ken Cox** had to make a return journey for gear for the oldies room, although it got going eventually.

Musically New York Disco sounds are completely unwanted making oldies a necessity rather than an automatic choice. Jocks in the main room are **Ginger Taylor**, **Soul Sam**, **John Vincent** and **Hammy**. **Hammy** is an oldies jock who does the oldies room with **Brian Rae** and starts the main room off with oldies.

John Vincent, when I asked if he had any tips or popular current stompers replied that he hadn't got any — which leaves me to wonder why he is employed there, although **John**, being who he is, probably just had a cob on him. (N.B. that's a Northern expression meaning in a bad mood). **John Vincent** is too good a jock not to have some surprising sounds floating around somewhere but I was too tired to press the point.

Sam was rumoured to be fast asleep outside in his car and knowing how he needs his beauty sleep I didn't have the heart to wake him! **Ginger** meanwhile was his usual nice self and managed a few new sounds for me to list: **J.J. Caillier**, "Pusher Man" (Jay Cee); **Burning Bush**, "You Keep Putting The Burning On", (Mercury); **Magnificent Men**, "Keep On Climbing" (Capitol); **Flaming Emeralds**, "Have Some Everybody" (Fee); **Bobby Diamond**, "Stop" (Columbia).

With a deejay list like the above (not the records, the jocks I mean), there is no doubt that if the 'Nighter gets the second chance that **Ken Cox** seems confident of then this All-Nighter can only continue to improve. Definitely still worth a visit but first check to see that it is still open.

● A few faces that I feel were worth mentioning include **Ruth Smith** from Worcester, **Kath Whicker** from Rochdale, **Matchie** from Rotherham (or wherever he happens to be at the time!) and **Allan Todd** from Crewe — all with a hell of a lot of experience on the Northern Scene and all enjoying themselves as regulars. As **Bob** and I had agreed to give **Allan** a lift back to Crewe, I'd like to know where he got himself lost when we left. My apologies **Allan** but we did look for you.

Another visitor and a regular was my old mate from London **Ian "Ginger" Stewart**, a living proof that Funk and Northern do mix as he has jocked at Northern Clubs

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