

B&S Clubs & Disco Report

Great Stone Hotel: Stretford rules, OK?

JUST down the road from the greatest football ground on earth there's an hotel named the Great Stone Hotel. Just thought you'd like to know...

Oh Yes! There's a Soul disco on there as well. On Fridays it is, 'cos I've been there. Jocking are **Budgie, Ross, Steve and Siz** and it's a sort of takeover from when Siz and the other feller did the Northern night at Pips — much the same people in fact.

The disco is set downstairs in the cellar, a very nicely furnished room which sent my antique dealer's head spinning. Although there's a great deal of room in the place, the walls and furniture give it a very close and friendly atmosphere and the very regular crowd help in that department as well.

Open from 8pm-2am nobody much gets there until 11'ish when the place fills up rather rapidly. Admission is £1 which seems steep until you realise that it includes a meal. That is chicken and chips or goulash and things, but if, like me, you don't happen to get a buzz out of eating flesh, they may be nice enough to proffer a plate of chips on their own.

There is a dancefloor but not a lot of dancing. The atmosphere lends itself to sitting around drinking and listening to the sounds which range from the latest Funk to oldie stompers. Rather than make four lists of the jocks favourite sounds I just listed some of the sounds I heard that seemed to go down well... in fact it was nice to see that everybody liked most of the music...

Sounds hear ranged between, **Jackie Beavers**, "Got To Get Back To You Girl" (Jay Boy); **Luther**, "If Its Good For The Body Its Good For The Soul" (Cottillon); **Sister Sledge**, "Love Has Found Me" (Atlantic); **Frankie And The Classics**, "What Shall I Do" (Pye Disco Demand); **Drifters**, "Pay My Dues" (Atlantic); **Martha Reeves And The Vandellas**, "One Way Out" (Motown); **Dean Parrish**, "I'm On My Way" (Laurie); **Barbara Mills**, "Queen Of Fools" (Hickory); **Donald Heiglit**, "Talk

Checkin' It Out

Frank Elson's
consumer report on
Soul happenings in the
Midlands and the North

Of The Grapevine" (Jay Boy) — one of my all time favourites and a record I've been after for years, didn't help to find that **Budgie** bought it for only £1; **Bobby Diamond**, "Stop" (Columbia).

Certainly a great night out at the Great Stone, full of nice people and nice music — so what else could you want? Highly recommended.

Chaplins, Brum

THE LAST time I visited Chaplins, about a year ago I was following BRMB's **Nicky Steel** around Birmingham's streets at something approaching the speed of light. So trying to find it on my own was something else. All I can say to anyone wanting to find it (and you should want, believe me) is to find the area known as Fiveways, then Broad Street and you're there.

For those of you who don't remember my first write-up it doesn't really matter cos things have changed. During the week, the Club is a night spot for visiting business men who are doing things at the Brum National Exhibition Centre. As might be expected most exhibitions are mid week leaving the club rather empty at weekends.

Now **Pete Sherratt**, the club's owner likes funk so he, rather naturally, decided to have a Funk night on a Friday. To do the playing of records bit he picked **Graham Warr**, formerly one of the countries top Northern jocks when he worked at Wolverhampton's wonderful Catacombs.

Graham, and his beautiful wife

Julie (I'm not just being well mannered there—she really IS beautiful), run **Graham Warr's** records in the Oasis Market in Birmingham, and **Graham** is well into the latest US releases.

If you add all that up. — An owner who likes the music; a guy who is a good jock and likes the music; a very nice club and a city without another Funk club (so I am informed) it's all got to add up to a rather enjoyable night... and it does.

The details are 10pm-2am with £1 admission. It was only the fifth week since opening when I was there and the previous four had been free entry as a taster.

To me, the place was packed out and heaving but **Graham** said that figures were down due to charging for entry. I myself doubt that it could be any better but I've promised **Graham** I'll go along again when the locals have had time to get used to paying (mean lot they are).

Did I say locals? Well if **Steve Brain** from Hereford travels up each week with a crowd of mates, it may show you just how starved of good music they are down that way. I had a long chat with **Steve** who jocks in Hereford at a Rugby Club who won't let him advertise it even locally (so I'm not giving the name for his sake) and he was over the moon about Chaplins.

I can understand why as well, **Graham's** music policy is strictly Funk, 99% imports and 99.99% brand new that week. He very rarely plays a record more than once in a night and such is the enthusiasm of the crowd that he rarely plays a record more than a

couple of weeks.

Some of the popular re-played sounds when I was there included: **El Coco**, "Cocomotion" (Avi); **Ramp**, "The American Promise" (ABC); **Attitudes**, "In A Stranger's Arms" (Dark Horse); and **The Meters**, "No More Okey Dokey" (WB).

Brand new (and very tasty) that night included: **Leon Haywood**, "Super Sexy" (MNCA); **Mastermind**, "Jam Murie" (Prelude album); **Herbie Mann**, "Rhythmations", (Atlantic album); **9th Creation**, "Reaching For The Top" (Prelude album); **Mike Theodore Orchestra**, "Cosmic Wind"/"I Love The Way You Move", (Westbound).

If that isn't good news, and I think it is, more good news is that **Peter** is now seriously considering the same thing on Saturday nights as well as the weekend is the slackest time for him... mind you the week that I was there there was a slightly different exhibition which went over the weekend and brought a lot of foreign businessmen into Birmingham... some of the French and German gentlemen who came to Chaplins on the Friday were bemused to say the least at what was going on!

As I mentioned earlier I shall be going down again next month to see if it can possibly be better than it was. The place has a Grade One Elson Recommendation so maybe I'll see you there....

The Drum, revisited

LAST TIME I visited the Drum, otherwise known as the Bentley Hotel, Bentley near Doncaster, it resulted in a falling out between **Reg Williams** and myself (well, Reg fell out with me) 'cos I truthfully said that there were only three people in the place. Well since then a couple of new guys have started and got it really going strong. **Paul White**, he of the itchy writing finger, wrote and told me about it so I went along.

From being almost completely empty (and I accept Reg's explanation of it being the wrong week to visit — I have to accept it if not he'll tell me more jokes and I can only take so many) it is now almost completely full!

Two new jocks, **Waggy**, who used to do it for a short time before, and **Alex**, have been doing it for about six weeks, and they say its been packed out ever since.

The night I was there they had their problems, like every bulb in the place except one dim red one had been half-inched and the microphone wasn't working. However, Northern Soul people have never been terribly bothered by record announcements and what they get up to round the back of many clubs I've been to means they can all see in the dark anyway! All I could make out peering into the

Rochdale Tiffs: Wheel & Torch revival

ALRIGHT so I know this belongs in the oldies column, but I've only got so many nights in a fortnight you know...!

When I used to be a regular at Rochdale Tiffs, there weren't a great many people in the place but on this night, with **Dave Evison** and **Richard Searling**, the place was close to being packed out. Very gratifying, especially for **Dave** who's plugged away at this club without great success for a long time now.

Just a few of the records which show that oldies can never die include: **Mary Wells**, "My Guy" (Motown); **Four Larks**, "Groovin' At The Go Go" (Canterbury); **Chuck Woods**, "Seven Days Too Long" (Big T); **Nolan Chance**, "Just Like The Weather" (tut tut Dave — Out Of The Past label!); **Ad Libs**, "Nothing Worse Than Being Alone" (Share); **Jackie Lee**, "The Duck" (Mirwood); ain't that some kind of music then? Course it is!

Now I'm the last person to put down the modern sounds 'cos I like the modern sounds — but even so I would hate to see records like those above be allowed to fall away and gather dust in someone's box.

Lots of people there but I'd just like to send this column's congrats. to **Karen** and **Collin Taylor**, two people who've been on the scene for some time, on the birth of a son they've named **Lance Curtis** (after you-know-who and you-know-who!).

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room was a mass of people all apparently dancing.

Waggy, as I mentioned earlier has done some jocking before but this venture marks his first time as an owner of decks. Alex has been jocking for precisely six weeks and not doing too bad either.

Both are collectors first and jocks second although they have plans to get Doncaster going again in the Northern Scene.

I was surprised myself at the lack of people the last time I was there as Doncaster people have always been around the scene. Very friendly people they are as well, that little Welsh Yorkshire Terrier **Bron Wozencroft** threatened to rearrange my teeth if I wrote anything funny about her again so I won't. Waggy asked me to mention **Ann** and **Carol** on the door for the good work they do... mind you I walked in without paying so they couldn't have been working very well!

One thing about Doncaster people is that they aren't afraid to mix it and if some people on this scene could have heard the conversation I had with **Waggy**, **Frank Baxter**, **Terry Lorrman** and **David Perry** we'd all be up on slander writs by now!

I always steer clear of controversy in this column as I don't believe it belongs here, but it is heartening to know that some of the tin gods on this scene, setting themselves up as number one jock, writer or whatever are fooling no-one but themselves. They're certainly not fooling the ordinary Northern fan that I talk to in the clubs.

To return to music: while Waggy is into New York Disco, and plays a lot at the beginning of the night, the mass of punters are solid stompers fans. Most popular sounds are therefore all oldies:-

Virginia Wolves "Stay" (Amy); **Walter Jackson**, "Where Have All The Flowers Gone" (Okeh); **Dee Dee Phillips**, "Hey Little Girl" (Evolution); **Tony Middleton**, "Paris Blues" (Mala); **Martha Reeves**, "One Way Out" (Motown); **Lou Ragland**, "I Travel Alone" (Amy).

Marvelous place the Drum — well worth a visit!

Painted Wagon, Manchester

ITS A WHILE since I've seen me old mate **John Grant** and having a free Wednesday I popped in to the Painted Wagon on Brown Street, Manchester to his Wednesday night Soul night.

Wednesdays are still going strong as per my last write up, Northern Stompers and New York Disco all doing well and mixing rather nicely. Just straight pub hours of course and free admission.

John's big news is that the Sunday night scene, some sort of mixture is going down very well indeed, especially when the Ritz is on. Some of the popular newer sounds include:- **War**, "War Is Coming" (Blue Note); **Montreal Sounds**, "Music" (TK); **Impact**, "Rainy Days, Stormy Nights" (Fantasy); **Larry Houston**, "I've Got To Start My Life All Over Again" (Mobile) — a great sound to which absolutely no-one was dancing, they will though, they will!; **Linda Clifford**, "One Thing On My Mind" (Curtom);... all that and **The Emotions** as well!

John mentions that Exit 21 Soul club every other Thursday at the Kingsway Hotel, Rochdale is still going strong as well... if you want to go work it out as every two weeks from 29th September....

Portcullis, Barnsley

FROM the Bentley Hotel, which is pub hours, **Mick Cook** mentioned he was off to the Portcullis in Barnsley so I gave him a lift in return for directions. The Portcullis with **Bob**, and **Derek Greenhoff** jocking, is an extension of the popular scene these two had at the Stables in the same town. Older readers may remember my visit there rather a long time ago.

Quite a while since I've seen, **Bub**, **Derek** and **Derek's** lovely wife **Sue**, to whom I had a rather overdue apology as my visit to the Stables was the last night I was on the Guinness and directly responsible for my becoming teetotal! Actually **Sue** was talking to **Derek** for ten minutes and I didn't even recognise her which goes some way to show what a state I was in when we last met. Still I manage to put up with the soft drink routine these days.

Anyone reading this who doesn't know of **Derek** and **Bub** doesn't really matter 'cos it either means you live south of Watford or are dead. **Bub** is not only the largest jock on the scene (with **Derek** coming up fast — they brew good ale up there) he's also one of the friendliest and funniest.

Barnsley is rather like **Doncaster** in its Yorkshire sense of humour and friendliness and the togetherness feeling is something I can't write about, you have to feel it. The Portcullis is just a very big room with a bar on the side and a stage with the decks on but no-one is looking for decorations. The South Yorkshire people are very typical of Northern Soul people in their enthusiasm for having a good time and in their enthusiasm for the sort

of music they like best.

Music is almost completely oldies with music from **Lou Ragland** to **Kim Weston**, the Portcullis is open from 10.30pm — 1am, cost is 50 pence admission and well worth a visit.

Bub and **Derek** still do the Londoner in **Barnsley** on Monday nights by the way. 7.30-11pm, 20 pence admission and still good I hear.

Bits and pieces

LOOKING BACK over my reports on clubs for this ish, I do rather seem to have enjoyed myself somewhat and the whole point about it is that I have. We all have off days, or months and I'm sure some of you will realise that even for a Soul fan the continual round of new clubs, travelling and meeting new people all the time sometimes can start to pall somewhat.

However, when I can go to clubs as far apart musically and geographically as **Rochdale**, **Chaplins**, **Brum**, **Doncaster** and **Barnsley**, meet really nice and friendly people (not people who want to know me for what I am) and hear some damn fine music, then I know that I have one of the best jobs on this earth.... this last two weeks has been one of the best since I started this job and I'd like to personally thank everyone who's helped to make it so good.

On a much sadder note I must mention my own personal sense of loss at the tragic death of **Mike Rolo** recently. At 24, **Mike** was a pleasant and interesting personality and someone I thought I could call a friend. I consider myself to be a Christian of sorts but after such a tragic and senseless death I really have to question the sense of it all.