

B&S Clubs & Disco Report

Wigan Casino celebrations

SO, ANOTHER year of Wigan Casino has passed and the usual sell-out Anniversary night went off without a hitch. It started quietly enough for me. Arriving about an hour before the 'nighter starts, as is my usual practice, I was roped in with **Mike Walker**, **Brian Rigby** and **Lesley McCartney** into putting free tickets into plastic bags with the Anniversary badges. So, instead of a nice quiet chat, by the time we'd finished a race against time people were coming in and getting their badges.

The event was a sell out of course, although three hundred tickets were held on the door for the inevitable people who'd not bought them in advance — and they went rather quickly as well!

Although I had some time to sit and talk with the guests invited to the Casino for the night — **John Abbey** and the lovely **Tamiko Jones**, almost straight from the plane after a trip from America, **Dave Godin** whom I so rarely meet these days as our visits to London so rarely coincide, **John Hassinger**, B&S' advertising manager making his first trip to the Casino, and **Paul Cook**, rapidly building up a great deal of support with his Soul show on Pennine Radio, being just a few of them — my main purpose as ever for being at the Casino was to get some work done.

Results therefore of the two main competitions, the draw for the trip to America had to be repeated as the first number drawn evoked no response — if I'd got a ticket I'd be standing at the front in hope of mine coming up — however the winner was **Alison Mitchell** of Dundee. Hope she has a nice time in the States.

Dance Competition winners provided yet again a clean sweep for the Midlands — it usually is a Midlander who wins. **Winston O'Meally** won it, with **Diane Mooney** and **Winston's brother Simon** coming second and third. All three are from Wolverhampton.

The place was so full that anyone actually attempting to dance has my sympathy. However, many people were dancing and some of the music they were dancing to was some of the best ever. New sounds coming up:-

Richard Searling: "Can't Turn You Loose", **Anthony White** (Salsoul) — one of the finest new releases for some time; **Montreal Sound**, "Music" (TK); **Prince/Princess**, "Stick Together" (Bell).

Russ Winstanley: **The Debutantes**, "Shake A Tail Feather" (Stand-out).

The Entertainers IV, "Getting Back Into Circulation" (Dore); **Beverley Bremers**, "Get Smart Girl" (Scepter); **Kennard Gardner**, "Do The Skin" (Dore).

Keith Minshall: **Jackie DeShannon**, "Find Me Love" (Liberty); **Jackie Trent**, "You Baby" (Pye);



Durham All-Nighter people:- (left to right) Tony Walker, Dave Dorries, Bill Swift, Alex Lowes, Dave Evison (just!), Alan Hayes and Richard Searling.

Checkin' It Out

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

Nita Rossi, "Something To Give" (Piccadilly); **Marie Knight**, "That's No Way To Treat A Girl" (Musicor); **Billy Harrell**, "Tough Girl" (Sound)

Dave Evison had twenty records to play — the top twenty oldies of the past year at Wigan, although I am not clear how they were arrived at. Anyway just a handful of the sounds he played included:- **Joe Tex** "Show Me" (Dial); **James and Bobby Purify**, "Shake A Tail Feather" (Bell); **Spiral Staircase**, "More Today Than Yesterday" (Columbia); **Wendy Renee**, "Bar-B-Que" (Stax); **Millionaires**, "Never For Me" (Phillips).

Up in Mr. M's, **Kenny Spence**, doing sterling work as ever, picked for me the currently most popular sounds in that room:- **Armada Orchestra**, "Band Of Gold" (Contempo); **Vibrations**, "Gotta Get Along Without You Now" (Okeh); **Skullsnaps**, "My Hang Up Is You" (GSF); **Mr. Floods Party**, "Compared To What" (Bulldog); **Four Tops**, "Shake Me Wake Me" (Motown); **Barbara Randolph**, "I've Got A feeling" (Motown).

Also doing a spot in Mr. M's was **Martyn Ellis**, back from the wilderness as it were to do a guest spot and, I understand, to start a regular spot again at the Casino. Martyn's reply to me when I told him that someone has asked me who the fat guy with glasses was is unprintable! Martyn has been away from Wigan and jocking for some

time now, so long in fact that many of today's oldies were new when he was last there. However, his cheery, irreverent chat before, during and after the records is still nice to hear — so welcome back Martyn.

As ever at Wigan, a great night, very enjoyable and I'm glad I was there.

Chrystals, Bury... revisited!

NOTHING gets me more annoyed than silly people who can write, or criticise but who can't, apparently, read. **Jim Masters**, otherwise known as Master James is just such a guy and off I went to Bury to put my points to him.

Some of you may remember his letter in B&S 235 on the subject of Funk All-Nighters pointing out that he would work at one however far it was and how he thinks one would go down well as "dedicated Funk Followers would travel just as far as Northern fans...." He also asked me to visit Chrystals."

Well, first things first. I went down to Chrystals and pointed out that Jim, and anyone else who could read should have noticed in my column frequent mentions in the past of the Timepiece in Liverpool where, apart from some incredible Funk nights starting and closing around the normal times they have held a Funk All-Nighter once a month for nearly three years

— oh and yes, dedicated Funk fans do travel from all over the country for the All-Nighter on the last Saturday of every month. I thought that everyone knew of this 'nighter but not apparently Jim Masters and the writer of the original letter on the subject.

On Jim's second point about me missing out — well, I had to point out that I was a regular visitor to Chrystal's Thursday Night Soul Train feature even before he was! I've written many words about it — almost as many as about the Timepiece! — in fact I was at Chrystals after Jim took over from **John Paul Dee** as short a time ago as June of this year!

The Thursday night scene at Chrystals is good (well you know what already — you read it in this column!), being packed out each week. Master James plays all sorts of music, from **New York Port Authority** to the **Emotions** although he doesn't feature as many imports as his predecessor. Open from 9pm-2am with admission 45p before 10pm, 65p between 10 and 11pm and 75p after 11pm.

The crowd isn't particularly purist with the Soul sounds and newer sounds take rather a while to get going but it's a friendly club with a regular crowd including people like **Pete Davidson**, a **Stevie Wonder** freak, **Scotland** supporter and who has delusions of being **Clint Eastwood** when he's as a newt. (which, I understand, is every week).

Master James and I parted as friendly as would be supposed with said gentleman promising to read before writing in the future and with some idea of just how many clubs I have to go to before popping back to visit a club again no matter how close it may be to home.

All I ask of anyone else out there in reader land is that if you want a visit to your club then first of all write me a letter telling me (or reminding me) about your club. I'm only human and have human frailties like anyone else.

I can also get my back up as well!

Durham All-Nighter: culmination of a dream...

ONCE UPON a time two geezers way up in the North East of England, **Bill Swift** and **Alex Lowes**, working hard as jocks in Northern Soul wherever they could and leading lights of the North East Soul Club, had a dream. They dreamed of putting on an All-Nighter actually in the North East. For one night they could see Northern Soul fans not having to travel to Yorkshire or Lancashire for what is the premier happening for a Northern Soul fan — an All-Nighter.

In February of this year they started on the long road by opening

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negotiations with Durham University for the hiring of Dunelm House, a student's sports and social building. On September 30th, all the effort, hiring jocks, equipment, staff, printing and publicity came to an end with the very satisfying objective of a full hall.

As I happen to know Bill very well, and Alex slightly, I know some of the effort they put into organising the North East Soul Club's first ever All-Nighter. I also know that the event succeeded beyond their wildest dreams and I offer them both, and their helpers — mostly unpaid, congratulations for a job well done.

I arrived at Bill's house, between Durham and Newcastle at about 9pm on the night and we were at the hall — huge and cavernous with Badminton court markings on the floor — before 11pm. Alex had been at the hall for most of the day, setting up the decks in both the main hall and the by-now obligatory odlies room, and catching up on the 1001 last minute touches.

Alex was as nervous as a cat on a hot tin roof with even the fact that a sizeable queue was outside at this early hour not helping much!

By the time the doors were open and the beginnings of more than 800 people started coming in, it was obvious that from the point of view of people the event was to be a success. By the time the evening was over it was obvious that where it mattered, on the dancefloor and in the corridors, it was a success.

There were some problems... two in fact. In the snack bar, used to coping with a couple of hundred students, glasses and cups ran out rather quickly and even with three people running their asses off behind the counter there were delays. And there was no cigarette machine or sales in the building.

If you didn't want to eat or drink or smoke that was no problem of course but Bill told me a few days afterwards that for the next All-Nighter, tentatively dated for



Very artistic! A dancer at Durham, the idea was a picture of her underwear but pictures of spinners aren't easy. Especially when you're hiding behind a speaker cabinet!

December 16th there will be cigarettes for sale and bottles of coke instead of a machine and glasses.

Those were the only problems that I came across in an evening featuring **Richard Searling, Soul Sam, Dave Evison, John Vincent, and Bill Swift** in the main room and **Phil Duckworth, Alan Hayes, Dave Dorries and Alex Lowes** in the smaller odlies room.

The nicest thing about the night was that the punters were not confined to the North East and Scotland although many people did come from there. There were people from as far away as the South Coast and many from the North West including probably the first people to arrive, **Karen Denwood and Lorriane Iddon**, whom Alex found wandering around Durham in the afternoon before the 'Nighter.

One of the happiest people there was local. **David Bell** was happy at

the birth of a daughter, **Hayley**, and happy because his wife **Janice** had Hayley the night before, giving him the chance to be at the 'Nighter!

Bits of news picked up in my wanderings that night:- **Tim Argument**, of Whitby told me that Shipyard Northern Night and his own at the Tropicana, both in Whitby, have closed down leaving Whitby without a Soul club of any kind. **Nick Richmond, Jon Le Salnt's** right hand man at Lytham St. Annes, tells me that the Lytham Football Cub Northern Nights, Thursday and Friday with **Jon, Dave Ward and Mick Whitehead** jocking are doing very well. 7pm-11.30pm both nights, admission 40p Thursdays and 50p Fridays.

A guy whose name I didn't get tells me of an All-Dayer on November 26th at the Barrow Catholic Youth Centre in aid of club funds featuring **Paul Edmondson, Phil Jackson** and local jocks — with possibly some other guests. Go to an All Dayer and help support a worthy cause can't be bad can it?

Sale Mecca's Blue Room Thursday night scene has changed to Wednesday nights... **Dave Evison, Richard Searling** and countless other people all told me that!

I didn't ask Richard or Dave for tips or popular sounds as it seemed silly going all that way when we live quite close to each other. However, Richard's "Can't Turn You Loose" by **Anthony White** on Salsoul (mentioned at Wigan) went down well and shows how even modern records can go down well as stompers.

Tony Walker, all the way over from Accrington, wouldn't give me any labels for his tips which I usually insist on but as he isn't featured in these pages very often I let him off — just makes the hunt for you lot a bit harder doesn't it?

Sounds included:- **Gary Ames**, "Keep On Going"; **Yvonne Verdee**, "Just Like You Did Me"; **Ron Willis**, "Teardrops"; **Jerry Ross**, "It Was Love"; **John Andrea**, "Let It Ride"... although I know some of the labels and may print them if given by another jock in the future I will respect Tony's wishes on this point.

Bill Swift had a pile of brand new releases which go further on proving my point about the **Anthony White** sound — there really is no point in Northern fans missing out on good modern sounds just because they are new, or happen to have some rhythm, leaning towards the funky sound.

Some of Bill's tips for the top — all of which went down well in this All Nighter atmosphere — include:- **Sovereign**, "Someway, Somehow"; (Millenium); **Jimmy Briscoe**, "Invitation To The World" (Wanderick); **Syreeta and G.C. Cameron**, "Let's Make A Deal" (Motown); **Lenny Williams**, "Shoo Doo Fu Fu Ooh" (ABC); **Larry Houston**, "I've Got To Start My Life" (Mobile); **Eastside Connection**, "You're So Right For Me" (Rampart); **Philly USA**, "Speak Well" (West End).

All in all, not just a good night but a truly fantastic night in which the North East, so long looked upon as the poor relations in the Northern Soul world, stood up to judgement and was not found wanting. And for all those people who like to dwell on how much money people are making on the scene the fact of the matter is that this event provided no profit for anyone — they only just broke even. However it wasn't put on for profit and the success of the night was all the thanks that Bill and Alex needed. They did well!

Bits and pieces

AMONGST lots of old faces I bumped into at Wigan were **Tony Petherbridge** and an old friend from Crewe, **Hodge**, who older readers may remember made a cobblers of one of my earliest columns nearly five years ago by looking over my shoulder. Tony has picked up the pieces after his business collapse and personal problems and confided in me that he's a lot happier to be poor again. He and Hodge are getting back into the promotion game however, with plans for All-Nighters at Whitchurch and Northwich and All-Dayers at Sandbach planned. I'll bring you news of those as soon as more details are available.

Having finally been able to get to grips with someone at the Brit in Nottingham, I will have visited the club by the time this column is in print. I'm rather more excited about the visit than usual as the Brit have a strong tradition of Northern Soul and can surely be looked upon as one of the oldest and most influential Soul clubs still running today. I'm sure I won't be disappointed.

B&S PLAYLISTS

JOHN ABBEY: single — "Somebody Told Me" Teddy Pendergrass; album — "Got To Have Your Love" Fantastic Four.

BOB KILLBOURN: single — "It Took A Woman Like You" Mystique; album — "Odyssey" Odyssey.

JOHN HASSINGER: single — "The New Killer Joe" Benny Golson; album — "Reach For It" George Duke.

FRANK ELSON: single — "The New Killer Joe" Benny — "I Can't Turn You Loose" Anthony White.

DAVE TOWRY-COKER: single — "Speak Well" Philly USA; album — "Show Some Emotion" Joan Armatrading.

DAVE HENDLEY: single — "Here Comes The Judge" Peter Tosh; album — "Dub Serial" Joe Gibbs & The Professionals.

GOF ABBEY: single — "Do Your Dance" Rose Royce; album — "Cosmic Wind" Mike Theodore Orch.