

B&S Clubs & Disco Report

Oval Ball, York

AFTER actually achieving one of my lifetime's ambitions to catch a particular type of fish (anglers may like to know it was a Barbel and I caught two of them). I had mixed feelings of elation and depression when I arrived at the Oval Ball in beautiful downtown York. To start off on the gory details, to find it you head for the District Hospital and it's alongside the Rugby Ground) and it's 8 pm-1 am, 35pees before 9 pm and 65 nupes afterwards.

In fact the Oval Ball, as its name may imply, is a sort of Social Club attached to the Rugby Club although it was never made clear whether this was League or Union.

It may not matter to you lot but in the circles I once moved in BT — before back trouble — I could have lost my shorts with pockets in and lace fastening just by entering a League club! Enough of this . . . the club itself is très smart. Large building, large dancefloor, lotta chairs and that bar business at one end. Oh, yes, and a dart board at the back of the room!

There's a short history to the Oval Ball Northern nights. **Alan Rhodes** was jocking there with two guys who promoted it, hiring it from the club. It lasted about six months, moved into Funk and started to lose regular people. It then closed down and after a period of a couple of months the people who run the club approached Alan and asked him to run a Northern night but directly for them.

This he did and in fact the day of my visit was only the second week of the re-vamped Northern night. The first week was packed out and the second week, with the added attraction of guest **Soul Sam** was about the same.

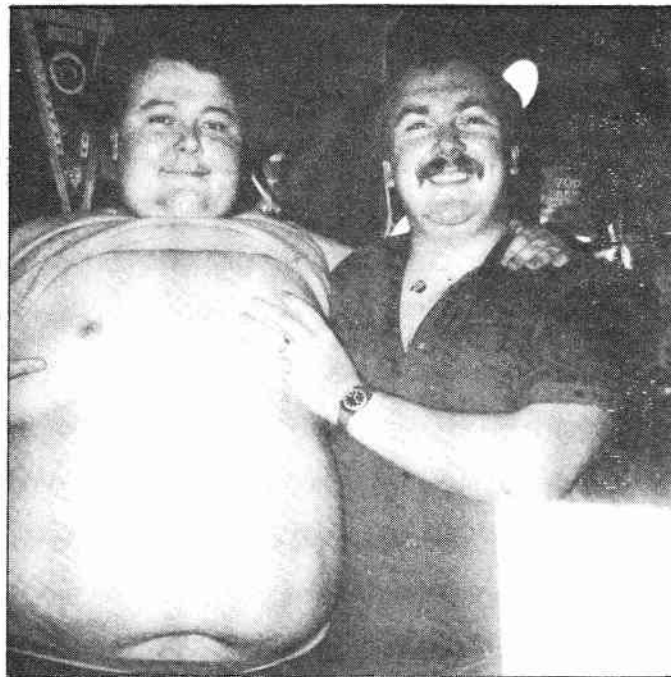
The club is to be open fortnightly so people wanting to go (and you should if you like good Soul) can work out opening dates as every two weeks from Thursday November 17.

Obviously with Sam there it gives a clue as to the type of music being played at the Oval Ball. In a word stompers . . . Alan, working every two weeks at Wigan is also into Stompers of course, and from the previous attendances and the current attendances it would appear that the people of York are in a like mind.

I personally am getting fed up with typing by the light of a couple of candles and wearing my overcoat.

Back to the Oval Ball . . . Alan Rhodes has always been known, for his ability to discover new stompers, the fact that this knowledge is mostly in the heads of jocks and people "in the know" rather than the rank and file Soul Fan and has more to do with the part of the country where he lives than anything else.

As is usual these days all his really top or rare sounds are covered up but a few available for the use of the lugholes and feet at



Bub and Derek Greenhoff at the Londoner

Checkin' It Out

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

the Oval Ball include: **Donna Loren**, "Ninety Day Guarantee" (Capital); **Jeannie Dee**, "Come See About Me" (Beacon); **Barry Benson**, "Stay A Little While" (Parlaphone); **Manhattan Transfer**, "Helpless" (Atlantic); and **Maria** (I think — can't read my own writing again) **Jones**, "I Got Your Number" (Ski Hi).

Because of this problem over pressings, which is getting worse instead of better. I am endeavouring to stay as far ahead with my travelling as possible thereby ensuring that such sounds are well played before they appear in print. This, I believe, may thwart the pressers while not mattering to serious record collectors who will still be able to look for the sounds when they know what they are. People who must obtain sounds while they're still on the secret list must be in it for ego or bootlegging — neither of which has my approval.

Chris Holmes, who does the oldies section had a good quote when I started noting some of the sounds down that the was playing . . . "I don't play anything dif-

ferent, 'cos they don't want anything different" he said.

Admirable sentiments Chris. I can think of a few higher paid jocks who could take that lesson to heart — we all like surprises in a club but music that we want is more important than something different for the sake of showing off that jocks latest aquisition. (That'll get em talking).

Records he featured included "Exus Trek", "Get It Babe" and "Fife Piper" all of which are well enough known for me not to need to supply artists and labels.

Soul Sam is of course one on his own. He's still fighting a rearguard action against the pressers and still covering up ninety percent of his sounds. Top sound in his box at the moment is a cover up called "Fools Paradise" which he has by **Jeanette Harper**. It isn't by her but it sure is a mover.

A couple that he played that are not completely unknown were **The Ellingtons**, "Bound To Become A Loser" (Castle) and **The Jetsons** and **The Tangiers**, "Dance Of Love" (Pumpkin); it was also nice to see that even as a top jock he's

not too proud to include **Lou Ragland's**, "I Travel Alone" (Amy) in his box, and to play it.

One thing that I liked at the Oval Ball was the way people danced to Sam's records even though they hadn't heard them before — they have their Souls in the right place — the feet.

There is so little for the Soul fan in the York area — in fact the whole North Yorks area is a desert for Soul — which is silly really when you think of the support around there. People travel from Durham way and down in South Yorks to York and in the four or five times that I've been there I've never failed to have an enjoyable night with good music and good people.

With the profusion of good quality main roads all seemingly leading to York the Oval Ball is in reach of more people than may realise it. The club is highly recommended.

Londoner, Barnsley

NEARLY two years ago when I first visited the Londoner in Lamb Lane, Barnsley I said that to get to it you should head out of Barnsley on the Wakefield Road, turn right just after the camping centre and then ask someone. Well I did and got lost so I don't know what to say after that.

All I can say is that you're only a short distance from the place when you arrive at the roundabout so you can take it from there.

Little has changed in those two years with **Bub and Derek Greenhoff** laying down the good sounds of the old and stomper variety and many loons looning about. (See photo — and those are the jocks . . .!) That particular brand of Yorkshire madness every Monday night, pub hours and goodness knows how much to get in.

Being a Monday, everyone is recovering from the weekend so they mostly sit around listening to the music and getting Mozart on what's left of their money rather than dancing which annoys Derek but doesn't bother Bub.

Music that was played includes: **Soul Brothers Six**, "You Better Check Yourself" (Atlantic); **Saphires**, "Gotta Have Your Love" (Probe); **Carstairs**, "It Really Hurts Me Girl" (Red Coach); **Sister Sledge**, "Love Don't You Go Through No Changes In Me" (Atco); **Velvettes**, "These Things Will Keep Me Loving You" (Motown); **Doris Troy**, "I'll Do Anything" (Cameo Parkway).

If you're in the mood for a laugh, a good time and plenty of good music on Monday nights then the Londoner is a fine place to visit.

Tiffany's, Liverpool

KEEPING in with the directions go straight down Drake Street in Liverpool, past the town hall and

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then the next road on the left is Fenwick Street wherein lies Tiffany's where the Funk thing is done on a Wednesday night 8 pm-2 am.

First thing I got when I wandered in was a shock from **Graham Peel** who I know from Bailey's in Oldham. Second thing was another shock as he is now the manager and he wouldn't let me in wearing denim. However he relented eventually and I went in for a rather interesting and enjoyable night.

Jock is **Mr. George**, so-called because of an unpronounceable surname, a fella who I met while in the 'pool with Mike Davidson some time ago. There should have been a **Mr. Lee** there as well but he went to the Wales / Scotland match instead. In fact that match set up a few things for that night. Half the people in the city were at the match, 49% of the people stayed at home afraid (and the other 1%? ... well somebody has to support Everton I suppose).

The club was down on an ordinary Wednesday night but as there was still a large number of people in it I take that to mean that on an ordinary night the place is chock-a-block. (Another fact is that the Centre Hotel disco where Mike Davidson works was closed as the hotel had enough work with 400 victorious Scots fans staying there overnight...).

To return to Tiffany's. The club is the usual Tiffany's type, clean and plush decor but thankfully minus those appalling palm trees. Large dancefloor, plenty of seating and, — another plus — one Mecca establishment where service at the bar was not only possible but speedy and accompanied by a smile. Take away the dress rules and it would be the most together Mecca club I've ever been to.

Mr. George has been at the club as the full time jock since July of this year since when he's moved Wednesday to a musical state of Funk, Funk and more Funk. Plus some disco Soul and a bit more Funk!

His records are a mixture of imports and new British releases and he avoids chart stuff as much as possible only playing it on request or when occasionally the floor empties! (Top marks for one of the most honest statements I've ever heard from a jock).

He tells me that the new stuff usually empties the floor first time around, struggles through on the second playing and goes well on number three. If they ain't dancing by the third play then the record becomes an ashtray! **George** recently had a van load of albums and 12-inches stolen and despite a massive scrounging session he's still short of some of his top sounds.

As to the people in the club, not only was it full of page three girls (sigh) but although I've said it before Liverpool people can really dance. They seem to move all of their bodies to the music (for which much modern funk is ideal of



Soul Sam, Alan Rhodes and Chris Holmes at the Oval Ball

course) rather than the hands and legs bit most dancers seem to go in for.

Liverpool ladies are lovely, the fellas all much uglier than me (of course) but all of them are very keen on the music with a steady stream of requests coming up all night, although there is still the slow response to new music mentioned earlier which is reflected in **George's** choice of current big sounds:-

Rose Royce, "Makes You Feel Like Dancing" (Whitfield); **Cameo**, "Funk Funk" (Casablanca); **Graham Central Station**, "Now Do You Wanna Dance" (WB); **Le Pamplemousse**, "Get Your Boom Boom" (Avi); **Brothers Johnson**, "Right On Time" (A&M); **Bootsy's Rubber Band**, "Pinocchio Theory" (WB); **George Chandler & The Olympic Runners**, "Keep It Up" (RCA) ... that latter getting me wondering yet again why its sales have dropped although it remains as popular as ever in th discos.

So we have yet another good Funk club, well worth a visit in Liverpool to add to the others rapidly turning Liverpool into the Funk capital of the North West. **Tiffany's**, Fenwick Street, Liverpool, Wednesday nights is highly recommended.

Lancastrian Suite, Burnley

OH, I HAVE been a busy little B... this last few weeks and me notebook is all awry... off to the Burnley Rose Room as was and now isn't — it's the Lancastrian Suite ... for info from **Ginger Taylor**.

I'd like to begin this column with a vote of thanks to **Lesley** for the loan of her pen without which this column wouldn't have been writt. She says hello to Torquay by the way.

The news from Burnley is that the Lancastrian Suite is closing down in January (cries of "shame") to re-open a month-later (cries of "hooray") all done up like Cin-

derella's in Leeds (posh, like). When it re-opens things will be happening (they usually do) with provisional plans running like this: One night Funk; One night Top Northern modern sounds with **Ginger** and guests playing stompers and things; one night as now, Northern Oldies mostly; and the once a month All Dayers will continue. Actual days and things will be brought to you pretty soon after they're given to me. (Best way to do it really).

More news ... the Spinning Jenny closed down but will re-open by the time you read this so I could have saved the ink really ... using **Andy's** equipment (can't touch you for it) and run by **Ginger and Andy** themselves owing to a change in ownership / bank rate / and or the full moon (delete whichever you wish) ... **Ginger** still doing Raquels each fortnight opposite to St. Ives, if St. Ives was going that is ... and he's doing guest spots at the Ritz in Manchester without having been there before.

Lancastrian Suite doing well with music like **Anthony White's** fantastic, "I Can't Turn You Loose" (Salsoul); **Soulful Two**, "Fi-Ya Dance" (Pure Soul); **Lou Roberts**, "Everything I Always Wanted To Know" (MGM) and a re-activation of **People's Choice**, "Saving My Love" (Pamela) ...

N.B. for students of semantics, a re-activation is not an oldie. It is a sound that didn't actually take off the first time it came to light. An oldie is a re-activated top sound

Bits and pieces

A "DISCOMANIA" Record Fair at Champness Hall, Drake Street, Rochdale on Sunday December 3rd, 10 am-5.30 pm looks like being a goodie if what I hear is right. Lots of 78s, Sheet music and pop annuals that we aren't into of course but also Soul stalls and lots and lots of stalls piled with loads of old 45 bargains.

Just like a massive junk shop record stall really and we all know how good they are for picking up

those bargains and wants. I'm going to be there chatting up some of the sellers who I know and probably spending more money than I should — as usual.

Brick's new record, "Dusic", has finally settled the minds of those people who never knew if the record was "Dazz" or if that was the name of the group ... hands up anyone who saw me playing bass guitar with my group on our latest appearance on Top Of The Pops ... none of you? ... well that's a relief! Despite rumours to the contrary it wasn't me ... must have been six other guys ...

Still on the telly, the Granada Television programme on Wigan Casino is provisionally dated for 8.30 pm, 12th December as part of a series entitled "This England" ... this is the gen info. as I spoke to Granada's press office unlike most of the people handing out dates like confetti who got it from a bad dream I think ...

Talking of bad dreams, that other magazine which occasionally refers to Soul music amongst the reggae had me down as working on the Granada programme ... not true, I assisted on the BBC 1 Omnibus programme ... got yer facts wrong again dincha? ...

And that Omnibus thing approximately one third of which deals with Northern Soul Dancing now looks likely for April of next year ...

Anyone with a copy of **Chubby Checker's** "Just Don't Know" on Cameo Parkway going spare can phone **Billy Grady** on 061-445 7523 and start haggling ... Billy was at the Greatstone Hotel, Stretford — also **Jimmy Shennan** the only fella I know to have hit his head on a ceiling beam while attempting a back-drop ... there with his lovely wife **Gail** and leaving their children aged 8 and 6 at home he should have known better ... shouldn't we all?

An RCA promotion at the Placemat in Manchester featuring **Mr. Richard Searling** and films of **Carol Douglas**, **K.C.** and **D.J. Rogers** amongst many others went down a bomb and evoked the information that **Milton Wright's** "I Belong To You" with the "Gallop" — the instr. version on the other side is due out on November 12th in Grapevine. At the moment of writing, I don't know if it did or not. I also don't know if it did whether it was 12 inch or not although it should be ... as should **Arthur White's** "Blot Party" / "I Can't Turn You Loose" on Salsoul also due out ...

More? O.K. then November 26th should be **Odyssey**, "Native New Yorker" on RCA ... **Derek and Ray** and **Mike McDonald's** double "A" looks like early 1978 now ...

Moving labels, **Ian Dewhurst** tells me that **Bobby Paris'** "Nightowl" backed with **Yvonne Baker's** "You Didn't Say A Word" on London (HLU 10553) should be in the shops by the time you read this ...