

# B&S Clubs & Disco Report

## Nocturne, Manchester

STILL a nice way to spend Tuesday nights if you like Northern Soul... and if you don't then what the hell are you reading this for? **Johanny Birch** has asked for a mention in this column for the last twenty five years, man and boy, so I thought I might as well — for persistence...

Getting very lazy in my old age and I pass the notebook on to **Dave Evison** and **Richard Searling** to write things in while I feed my ulcer. What they write is often unprintable but here goes with the abridged version. **Dave Evison**:— **Motown Spinners**, "Sweet Thing" (Motown); **Bobby Newton**, "Do The Whip" (Mercury); **Little Richard**, "A Little Bit Of Something" (tell them about the Honey, Frank) (Okch); **Shella Anthony**, "Livin' In Love" (Buttercup); **Shirelles**, "Last Minute Miracle" (Scepter); **Volcanoes**, "The Laws Of Love" (Arctic... is that last one real cool, I ask myself? And what the hell is that thing about the Honey? Only Evison can tell...)

**Richard**:— **Don Ray Sampson**, "Baby Come Back" (£ Records) ... everything else covered up, Sale Mecca now 50/50 oldies and newies, 9-1am, make a date (he doesn't say but it is Wednesdays now, of course).

Not world shattering news that but still... they're still coming in to the Nocturne and I'm there most Tuesdays until its time for Police Woman of course. She's nicer than Richard any day...

## An interesting point

TALKING to **Garrell Redfearn**, head of the MIF promotion company the other day and we naturally got onto the subject of new releases and Funk discos. I was interested to learn that from his close knowledge of the Southern Funk clubs and his albeit secondhand knowledge of records that are big in our New Release clubs he can still see a difference in musical tastes.

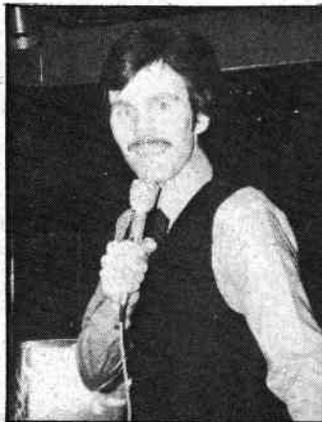
Garrell can still see a link in our New Releases in terms of tempo with Northern Soul as opposed to the heavy Funk of the Southern Clubs. It even goes down to different tracks from the same albums.

Now this is something I'd not really noticed myself but it does re-inforce a point I've made before in that the New Release scene in the North (as opposed to the Funk clubs) is a natural progression from Northern Soul rather than an unconditional surrender to the Funk scene.

As an "outsider", Garrell has perhaps noticed something that we have not. It's not a bad thing either

# Checkin' It Out

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



It's that feller **Dave Simmons** at New Scamps in Preston, trying not to look like he knows a little hairy guy is pointing a camera at him...

because there will always be regional differences in musical taste and so long as they are so small then there is still hope for the Soul scene.

The Northern jocks who have gone over to new releases can still use their own ideas to choose records. For instance, **Richard Searling**, supplied by **John Anderson** of Soul Bowl in Kings Lynn, has a lot of new releases that can be described as rare in that they have not been hits in America. So long as the musical format (i.e. Funky) is retained then perhaps the Soul scene will benefit from a wider playlist around the country. Better than everyone playing the same track from the same album surely.

While the Southern Clubs are established as new release players, the problem in the North is still the fact that many people are hanging on to the "old" line of Stompers and so long as this continues, with Stomper fans denying the right of Northern Clubs to feature new releases then the Northern Scene will be in danger of collapse. As with every other change in the Soul music field the change will come eventually but my worry is how many clubs, with attendances almost halved, will go to the wall first?

To those jocks on the Northern Scene who have been converted to New Releases, I give a few words of advice. Programme your records as

a mixture. Don't separate Stompers and Funky sounds into sections but mix them up. Don't announce funk records and stompers, just titles and try to slip a funkier oldie in just before a funky newie.

I think that much of the antagonism between the two camps comes from jocks themselves who are too honest. Many people at, for instance, Wigan, dance to new releases if they aren't told that they are new releases!

There are differences between regions and between records but the list of sounds that went down in Funk clubs and Northern Clubs at the same time ("What A Difference A Day Makes" **Esther Phillips**; "I Love Music" **O'Jays**; "Love Machine" **Miracles**) is big enough to show that perhaps a lot of these differences are more imaginary than real. No one can ever convince me that after dancing to **Gill Scott Heron**, "In The Bottle" they cannot dance to **Roy Ayers** "Running Away".

I love listening to Oldies and always will. As I sit here typing now **Otis Redding** is wailing away on my turntable, but as far as new dancers go no one will ever convince me that stompers and new releases don't mix. They did when Northern Soul began (before it began in fact) and they will again.

## New Scamps, Preston

AFTER some of the childish mutterings and ego tripping on the Northern/New Release scene, I always enjoy the sort of club where the music played is classified as Disco Soul and where the people dance to the records they like and sit down to records they don't like. It is probably true that ninety per cent of the Northern Scene trouble is caused by labels on records rather than the sounds and at Scamps in Preston such things seemed like a million miles away.

As mentioned in this column some time ago, **Dave Simmons** is the gentleman behind the turntable and the person responsible for playing everything from **Jay and the Techniques** "Apples Peaches Pumpkin Pie" (Smash) to **Lenny Williams**, "Shoo Doo Fu Fu Ooh". They do say that ignorance is bliss and while I wouldn't describe Dave, or his regulars as ignorant, they

really don't know about the different classifications, nor do they care — treating each record on its merits.

Dave is a Soul jock with a capital 'S'. He's been at Scamps for four months and as a commercial club jock he does play Pop when requested but after four months of his music those requests are now few and far between. His first night was "like a Silver Wedding" (which mobile jocks will be able to identify with!) and he's lifted it from about 1/4 full to packed out with his Soul.

New Scamps is in Church Street, Preston, round the one way system and it's on your left going into the town. There is parking in the street outside and a car park nearby which may be a better bet when Preston play at home as they did the week I visited the club. I wouldn't like to be there when they lose because even with a win I detected something akin to antagonism from the alcoholic haze surrounding certain people with rosettes and scarves.

In the club, while I still kept a weather eye on them, there was no trouble at all with the football supporters celebrating in the time honoured way and the dancers dancing.

Dave does the club Fridays and Saturdays due to an illness which tends to take his voice away and he assures me that Saturday is the best night. A young lady that I spoke to said that Friday night has too many fellers looking for girls for the evening to be enjoyable, but I would have thought the girls would enjoy that night!

Saturdays are packed out, as I mentioned earlier and certainly on the night of my visit, while there was enough room to remain comfortable the place was heaving. There is a fair sized dance floor which remained full for most of the night, plenty of seats (bum-shaped and definitely not funny if you sit the wrong way on them!) and tables and a couple of bars from which service was sharp enough.

It may seem like a small thing but having to hang around at a bar for half the evening can spoil a club and quick and efficient service, as at Scamps, can help the enjoyment a great deal.

Another plus is that although the club is smart and quite posh there is no silly insistence on 'no jeans'. In fact the doormen seemed well versed in making their minds up from a person's manner rather than their dress as to who got in or not.

I stood at the door for a while to have a word with the manager, whose name I unfortunately didn't make a note of, and it was illuminating to watch them weed out potential trouble makers and suggest that they wouldn't enjoy themselves inside.

Such things as being able to dress comfortably and to enjoy oneself without fear of trouble are great plusses in my book and from

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my conversation with the manager I gained the impression that these are important things to him as well (that goes for the bar service as well). He leaves the music to the jock, who should know what he's doing anyway — and looks after the running of the club.

If you like your Soul from **Roy Ayers** and **Earth Wind and Fire**, to **Chairmen Of The Board** and the **Philly All-Stars** in comfortable surroundings — and friendly too — then **New Scamps**, Preston, is a fine way to spend a Saturday night, 8.30pm-2am. I'll certainly go back again for pleasure as well as work.

## Timepiece

A FLYING visit to the Timepiece in Liverpool found the place steaming as ever, although slightly down as always the night before the regular Funk All Nighter (which regular readers will know has been going on for two years, etc, etc) . . . and although a few weeks since the visit have dated these records **Les Spaine** was playing such sounds as, **Graham Central Station**, "Crazy Chicken" (WB); **Parliament**, "Bop Gun" (Casablanca); **High Energy**, "You Can't Turn Me Off (In The Middle Of Turning Me On)" (Motown); **Temptations**, "In A

Lifetime" (Atlantic); **Larry Page Orchestra**, "I'm Hooked On You" (London); **Eddie And Freddie**, (Let The Funk Get Next To You" (October). All good stuff and probably all mis-spelled as I wrote them on a little piece of paper being there for pleasure not business as it were.

I'll say one thing: Timepiece is still the North Wests top Funk club without a shadow of a doubt.

## N.S.S. Funk All-Nighter

NOT really the same thing as the Timepiece's All-Nighter, which is heavy Funk, but more the Blackpool Mecca-type of New Releases (see "An Interesting Point" above), this was the second Funk All-Nighter run by **Terry Sampson's** "Northern Soul Scene" at the KGB Ballroom in Abbeydale Road, Sheffield.

Don't ask me how to get there as I still don't know myself! How anyone arrived with a Sheffield bus strike in progress defeats me, but they did. Well over 250 in fact and enough for Terry to tell me later that the next one is December 9th and after that fortnightly. It may not sound like a lot but the venue isn't too big and those people helped to provide a good atmosphere and a great night

which I couldn't hang about to see I'm afraid.

Jocks were **Steve** and **Gary** from Rotherham, a couple of guys who built a fair reputation in a short time at the Wakefield Unity All Nighters New Release slots; **Colin Curtis**, **Neil Rushton**, **Paul Schofield** and **Rob Baker**, who didn't actually jock after all.

Rob is a Punk jock who works in Sheffield at a Punk and Funk night where, he informed me the two mix quite well. He further told me that he had brought along some **Clash** records, although the Reggae he normally played hadn't arrived.

I was sitting with **Terry Sampson** when **Colin Curtis** arrived and persuaded Terry, with my help, that Punk was not on. Terry said that he was trying it as an experiment but when he went to tell Rob that it was not on, it appeared that Mr. Baker had had second thoughts himself. It appeared tht he was afraid of being barracked (I would have thought that he would have enjoyed a bit of spitting, but that's besides the point).

The KGB Ballroom is not Russian-owned by the way, but a former Court School of dancing and therefore features a nice dance floor. There is a lounge for sitting (or loungin') in and plenty of soft drinks and food. A bit dark perhaps but comfy.

Terry Sampson deserves our thanks for setting something like this up and new release fans should support it if only to show their strength.

## Wakefield Unity

HAVING heard that **Malc Burton** was no longer promoting the All-Nighters at Wakefield, **Eddie Law** of Retford's Broken Wheel fame applied and got it. Those of you who like a battle will be sorry to hear that Malc was there and that there is no emnity between him and Eddie.

The first night was an oldies night with jocks **Ginger Taylor**, **Pat Brady**, **John Vincent**, **Paul Rowan**, **Bub**, **Nev Wherry**, **Snowy** and **Poke** (although I didn't see Poke all night and so maybe he wasn't there). That's a formidable line-up for anyone I would have thought. Enough for an interesting All-Nighter anyway.

Problems? Well, if you can call running out of coffee a problem then they had one . . . and the sound system was working at full stretch for the main room, but not so much as to spoil the place. Good points were that the place was well organised by Eddie and his entire family I think. Certainly his mother and wife were there all helping the night to run smoothly.

Due to very little advertising the place wasn't as full as I've seen it but Eddie seemed to think it O.K. and told me that the next one would be December 16th. He also said that as this was about a year since All-Nighters at the Unity Hall he was going to ask **Malc** and **John**

**Green** to come along and celebrate a sort of anniversary. These plans were provisional and as I have been unable to contact him on the 'phone at the time of writing I can't say they're definite yet.

With the wealth of good jocks on, it was only to be expected that the night would be a good one. However, while I don't usually pick out one jock I must say that **Snowy's** oldies spot in the upstairs room was the finest oldies spot I've ever experienced in all my years of going to Soul clubs.

My "going home time" arrived and passed as I just sat listening to records such as "Little Queenie", "Wade In The Water", "You've Been Cheatin'"; and many more. Every one a real oldie going back many years and every one following on from the other. Bloody great!

## Halsowen; to be, or not

**HALESOWEN** Tiffany's manager **Les White** decided that oldies is the way for the Wednesday night session to follow and therefore gave **Colin Curtin** and **Keith Minshall** the push. Whether we agree with him or not is immaterial as that is his choice.

**Phil Richards** and **Max** have been carrying on with low attendances but Les is starting a policy of guest jocks and tells me he'll hold off his superiors who wish to close it down entirely until the new year to give oldies' fans in the Birmingham area a chance to show that they want such a session.

So, now it's up to you lot. No funk but a great session of oldies, if it is forced to close through lack of attendance then Halesowen Tiffs will have nobody but you lot to blame.

## Bits and pieces

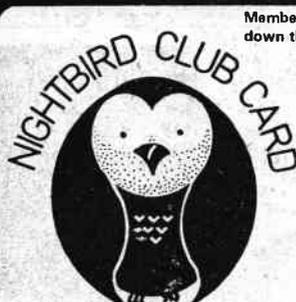
**Tony Petherbridge's** All Nighter at Northwich, December, is off, look out for a new date next year. Meanwhile if the 3rd December All-Dayer at Whitchurch was a success then it will be every month. The Shrewsbury All-Dayers are established as once a month. . . .

Doncaster's "Drum" is in danger of closing down again, either it gets more support and less head-bangers down there or another good night bites the dust . . . Lancastrian Suite All-Dayer Burnley on Boxing Day runs from Noon to 2am, bars open and only £1.

Darwen Tiffany's Northern Soul night is no more. . . down the road in Blackburn on Sundays is Soul at the Golden Palms, no more details at the moment, I don't even know if it's Northern or not . . . **Chairmen Of The Board**, "Give Me Just A Little More Time" improving with age when I heard it at Wigan oldies . . . Bedford has the International Club, 8-11pm, 60p to get in, **Tony Warot**, **Mick Smith**, **Hammie** and **Stuart Green** jocking . . . oldies mostly.

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