

B&S Clubs & Disco Report

Central, Leeds

WHEN, after the first twenty minutes, there were fifty people in the Central Leeds, for the first night of the Funky/New York Disco Scene we began to think that maybe it would be a success... as the evening wore on and the place became packed out, jocks **Ian (Frank) Dewhurst** and **Paul Schofield** lost a lot of sweat (as we all did) and found it very hard to wipe great big smiles off their faces.

It very much looks like Friday nights at the Central have arrived... or 'come back' if you remember how they used to be — with the exception that the music has changed slightly. For those of you as confused as I am after that last sentence, read on...

The Central was once upon a time a regular Friday night Northern Soul Scene. It began to die off, Frank went to the States and the Central closed down. Ian came back from America full of the New York Disco music (and dropping the name Frank as well) got a job as Disco Promotions with Decca and settled down to working for a living.

Paul Schofield in the meantime, a great friend of Ian's, was doing a highly successful couple of nights at Primo's in Leeds, playing Funk and New York Disco until he left (whereupon the club was sold!).

The two of them got together after a while, went to the owner of the Central, **Len Cave**, and suggested starting up again but playing the new stuff instead. Len, 28 years the owner of the Central, and a qualified dancing instructor and organ player, readily agreed as he told me, "as a musician and dancing instructor I enjoy this new music they're playing very much". He also told me, by the way, that in his books he's found the earliest mention of music as "Funky" as early as 1912!

The thing was planned out properly. Extra special disco equipment was drafted in to do full justice to the music and it was 'fingers crossed' time. Both Ian and Paul were very nervous early on (I arrived before the club opened intending to go on elsewhere — I couldn't leave in the end!) but with the following they both have, plus the closure of the Mecca recently, they needn't have bothered.

Success isn't really the right word. Terrific, fantastic and great come close. The local Yorkshire mob were there in force but people from as far away as Preston turned up — and all without advertising! Everyone I spoke to had a great time, the music was just right and there's something about Northern Soul fans turned Funky dancers that really seems to come together on the dance floor.

The club's open from 9pm-2am and from about 10pm onwards the floor was full as can be. At least a dozen people who said that the club could well become the successor to Blackpool Mecca in the New York

Checkin' It Out

Frank Elson's
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Disco scene. This I doubt because it just isn't big enough and the seaside resort "digs" enabled people to travel for the Mecca. However, musically the Central has filled the gap that appeared when the Mecca closed down.

With New Releases, by their very name, having such a quick turnover, the music played that night will probably already be old hat for some of you. Bear with me though as there are lots of people around the country whose only guide to the top disco sounds is this column. Tips are silly in this situation of course so just a few of the records played and enjoyed during the night:

Ian Dewhurst: **Benny Golson**, "The New Killer Joe Rap" (Columbia album track); **Ashford and Simpson**, "Bourgie Bourgie" (WB LP); **Bill Cosby**, "That's How I Met Your Mother" (Capitol — LP); **Lonnie Smith**, "Funk Reaction" (LRC — LP); **Ramsey Lewis**, "Skippin'" (Columbia); **Players Association**, Whole of the "Born To Dance" album (Vanguard); **War**, "Galaxy" (MCA).

Paul: — **Brass Construction**, "Celebrate" (UA — LP); **Bar-kays**, "Some Like Fun" (Mercury — LP); **Quincy Jones**, "Original Killer Joe" (A&M — LP); **Roy Ayers**, "Running Away" (Polydor); **Inside Connection**, "You're So Right For Me" (Rampart); **Patti Labelle**, "Joy To Have Your Love" (Columbia — LP).

A night I'll remember for a long time and one which I have no doubt will be repeated many times in the future. I think this time the Central will keep going for a long, long time. Highly recommended night.

Norfolk Arms, Glossop

FROM the newest of new releases to the oldest of oldies. The Norfolk Arms at Glossop, mentioned many times before in this column, is still doing it every Wednesday with the "Gang Of Five" running it as ever. Those of you who remember my last write up on this scene will be interested to know that well over £160 was raised by their sponsored dance with only a handful dropping out without doing the full eight hours. (Pip was one who dropped

out, so there goes his private side bet!)

The lovely **Christine** is now organising a holiday in Spain for everyone and loads are going so look out Spain next year! The mind boggles thinking about the action when that lot get over there!

The ten current favourites from the Norfolk Arms, chosen this time by Ian and Dave, are: **Hesitations**, "I'm Not Built That Way" (Kapp); **Wynder K. Frogg**, "Green Door" (Island); **Julian Covey**, "Little Bit Hurt" (Island); **Velvet Satins**, "Nothing Can Compare To You" (General American); **Diana Ross & The Supremes**, "Shake Me Wake Me" (Motown); **Johnny Wyatt**, "This Thing Called Love" (President); **R. Dean Taylor**, "Let's Go Somewhere" (Motown); **Spellbinders**, "Help Me" (Direction); **Jimmy Cliff**, "Waterfall" (A&M); **Inez And Charlie Foxx**, "Tightrope" (Pye Int.).

Still a damn' good night for oldies at the Norfolk Arms — still recommended!

Wigan Casino: going strong

I WAS having such a good time at the Casino the last time I was there that I just plain forgot to talk to all the jocks. Despite what people may say, the Casino is still going strong on ordinary Saturday nights with up to 1,000 people still turning up and having a good time.

Although everyone but **Richard Searling** will deny it the music is getting funkier all the time, which is as it should be of course... no great change just a slow gradual progression which is what the Northern Scene has always been about. People who talk about "traditional" Northern Soul or "stompers" have obviously been around for so short a time that they cannot remember, as many of us can, when not only was a great deal of the music played on the Northern Scene much slower than the mis-named "traditional stomper" but much of it was brand new from the States.

While I accept the fact that harping back to long ago means very little to many current Northern Soul fans it is true that only those

people who remember back before the days of the Torch All-Nighters can see the current change in music in its proper perspective. Northern Soul has always gone through a process of change, even before the name was applied and the move to New York Disco and New Releases just carries the "Tradition" on.

I did get a list of some new sounds being played by **Richard Searling** before I started to enjoy myself too much and they are: **7 Dwarfs**, "Stop Girl" (Ideal); **Bonnie Miller**, "What Are You Trying To Do To Me" (Astro); **BenZine**, "Village Of Tears" (Parkway); **Richard Popcorn Wylie**, "Hanky Panky" (Karen); **Betty Boo**, "Say It Isn't So" (Kind); **Ringleaders**, "Baby What Has Happened To Our Love" (M-Pac).

Wigan Casino is still highly recommended!

Gary's greats

I WANDERED into **Gary Laine's** Spin Inn, in Cross Street, Manchester, to find Gary raving over a handful of sounds that he insists I tell the world about. Being a lazy type of feller at the best of times, I simply wrote down his own comments on the following:

Lonnie Smith, "Funk Reaction" (LRC): There seems to be some confusion as to if this is my **Lonnie Liston Smith** hero or not — however Gary says it's, "the best Jazz Funk album in a long while".

Bob James, "Heads" (Columbia): "Very smooth Jazz Funk on a par with B. James 3 and much better than the disappointing 4".

Barkays, "Flying High On Your Love" (Mercury): "This is disco Funk perfection and should be released over here unlike the last one which sold equally well on import".

Bill Williams, "Menagerie" (Columbia): "This is smooth disco music that is ideal home as well as club listening".

Talkative feller, Laine, isn't he? It's nice to find a guy working selling records for a living who still loves records enough to remark on extra special ones. The thing is still the same though Gary reports that these albums and others of the ilk (E.W.F., War, Temptations etc.) are still selling well to the punters while only one jock in town is actually buying them to play. Manchester isn't doing too well on the club front.

That thing with **Richard Searling** and **John Grant** appears to be off, although moves are afoot for the new year — so keep watching this space!

Sale Mecca

ANOTHER one of those clubs that carries on going along with the regulars, they've recently started

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something new with **Dave Evison** and **Richard Searling** splitting up so that only one of them is on each week with guests. **Brian Rae** has been on with Richard but the week that I popped over Dave Evison had **Soul Sam** as his guest.

I think perhaps Dave rather wishes it had not been his week as an incident in the car park with a stolen car being chased by the police led to considerable damage being caused to Dave's car by the stolen car. I wasn't too pleased either as my car was damaged as well although luckily not too badly. (The two guys in the stolen car were the least pleased of anyone — they were caught!)

To be honest, the Blue Rooms didn't seem much different from their usual style over the last year of so. Apart from the change to Wednesday night the night remains one of regulars gathering for a drink and a bit of a twirl to some good sounds. Not packed out but not empty either. Sam brought a car load of our Welsh friends over from the Wrexham area but apart from that it was just the usual good time.

Musically, the week of my visit was all stompers of course. Dave on the oldies and Sam on the "discoveries" — all of which were covered up as usual. Still well worth a visit is Sale Mecca, so long as you park your car where budding Jackie Stewarts can't get near it!

Burnley Lancastrian Suite All-Dayer

I'D NOT yet been to one of the latest crop of All Dayers at Burnley and it is well enough known that All-Dayers are not my particular bag. However, I thought it was about time I clocked at least one, having enjoyed myself at the usual Sunday night thing many times. As it was I arrived late enough for the usual Sunday night session, so I needn't have bothered I suppose!

Jocks I missed were **Richard Searling**, **Soul Sam** and guest **Brian Rae**. The aforementioned two, together with **Ginger Taylor** and **Andy Ryding**, are the regular All-Dayer jocks supplemented by one guest. Ginger and Andy were the two remaining when I arrived and as they are the two that do it on Sunday nights anyway like I said earlier . . . just like a normal Sunday night.

The exception to this was the crowd which was considerably larger than the usual Sunday, and that's a night for crowding them in. I was absolutely amazed to meet **Alex Lowes** all the way from Newcastle with a bus load of mates, and more surprised to learn that they are regular travellers down to the All-Dayers. That's a hell of a long way to go just for an

All-Dayer.

Ginger's another with a smashed up car and, with an All-Nighter the night before at Peterborough then straight to the All-Dayer, he was about out on his feet. He's another jock who doesn't seem to experience any difficulty in getting hold of "new" stomper type records (although they're getting funkier) for those people who want them although I'm pleased to see that he's playing more and more New Releases in amongst the usual stompers.

Like Sam, Ginger also feels the need to cover up most of his new records but he usually manages to toss a few crumbs my way. Three that he would allow me to write down (grovel, grovel) were: **June Jackson**, "It's What Underneath That Counts" (Imperial); **Jimmy Burns**, "I Really Love You" (Erica); **Eddie Foster**, "Indeed I Do" (label not supplied).

Andy Ryding surprised me with his selection of records as while I've always thought of him as an oldies jock his first five records of one spot were a mixture of either pure bravery or stupidity: **Gwen Owens**, "You Better Watch Out" (Casablanca); **Chic**, "Dance, Dance Dance" (Atlantic); **Pockets**, "Come Go With Me" (CBS); **Anthony White**, "Can't Turn You Loose" (Salsoul); **Major Lance**, "Investigate" (Columbia).

In the event I think it was bravery and perhaps a little more good sense than some people might give the lad credit for. He held a dance floor for all those records which surely is what counts. As I've written before, and in this column elsewhere — and will continue to write until a few other people take notice, a clever mixture is the way to do it. Moderation rules, O.K.!

people travel hundreds of miles for an eight-hour dancing session and then travel home again. I'm a Northern Soul fan whose one and only interest in the media beyond personal entertainment when they're dealing with one of my hobbies is that they get it right. Granada Television did and for that I thank them.

Bits and pieces

COMING SOON: reports on the Angel, Burnley where every Wednesday is Funk and New York Disco night and the manager **Paul Simon** is a very together guy . . . spent a long time talking to him one afternoon recently and I'm really looking forward to visiting his club.

Also featuring Funk is the Lode Star, Ribchester, with **Andy Kay** jocking on Sunday nights that gets between 700 and 800 people in each week from reports I've had — so look out for both of these in the next ish. . . .

Pete Ashton will never forgive me . . . first of all I put his name down with his oldies chart as Ashford (Ashton from Ashton is correct) . . . then I turn up at Hilton Park motorway services one hour and 10 minutes late when we'd arranged a meet . . . Pete does the Railway Hotel, Mumps, Oldham on Sunday nights spinning oldies with **Dave Parker** and I've not dared to go along yet!

Yet another report coming up, probably in the next ish will be **Valentino's** in Southport . . . Monday nights with **Dave Wheeler** . . . at the time of writing they've only been open for two weeks and attendances have gone up so far. . . .

By the time this lot gets into print, the Central Soul Club up in Scotland will have held their first ever All-Nighter in Aberdeen. Sorry I couldn't get a mention in earlier fellers, and sorry I couldn't get up to it but I hope it went off O.K. . . .

Brian Rae murmured something about a possibility of himself and **Colin Curtis** doing the Penny Lane Club, Leigh, on Thursday nights . . . look out for that one . . .

Here we go with Christmas screwing a nice orderly life up again. . . for travellers to the Oval Ball in York, normally a fortnightly event. After the 15th December evening the next one will be 12th January and every fortnight thereafter. Every year we have this, nearly a whole week of special events and messing about with visiting relatives and giving presents and not being able to get on with me job properly which is what I want to do.

Don't forget you lot, check in advance as to whether your local club is having its regular Soul disco or some other insufferable substitute in the name of love your fellow man (for on New Year's Eve you can get Mozart and smash his skull in).

B&S PLAYLISTS

Some of the sounds that the dudes at B&S have tuning their ears in to of late:

JOHNNY ABBEY: single — Grace Jones "La Vie En Rose"; album — Earth, Wind & Fire "All 'n' All".

DAVE HENDLEY: single — Augustus Pablo "Zion High"; album — Sly & the Revolutionaries "Go Deh Wid Riddim".

DAVE TOWRY-COKER: single — Lou Rawls "Lady Love"; album — Ramsey Lewis "Tequila Mockingbird".

GOF ABBEY: single — Donna Summer "Love's Unkind"; album — The Trammps "Trammps III".

JOHN HASSINGER: single — Montreal Sound "Music"; album — Earth, Wind & Fire "All 'n' All".

JEFF TARRY: single — The Floaters "You Don't Have To Say You Love Me"; album — Shirley Caesar "First Lady".

DAVID NATHAN: single — The Pockets "Come Go With Me"; album — Earth, Wind & Fire "All 'n' All".

BOB KILLBOURN: single — Kenny Williams "You're Fabulous Babe"; album — The Four Tops "The Show Must Go On".

Blues & Soul:
way out in front for club
and disco reports

Wigan on the telly

BY THE time this gets into print you lot will all have seen the Wigan Casino television programme on the box in your own homes. That's if you wanted to watch it, of course.

I was fortunate enough to have a preview of the programme at the Granada studios so that's how I'm able to write this even though it hasn't been on at the time of my writing.

What I would like to do is to express my sincerest thanks to **Alan Wright** who researched and wrote the script for getting it right. I know that the filming was superb, the editing marvellous, the actual construction of the programme perfect but as I explained to Alan after the preview that is all by the way — and I'm pleased to say that he got to know the Northern Scene well enough while working on the programme to know what I meant.

I'm not a champion of the Northern Soul cause, I'm not intellectually interested in the sociological significance of why