

Northern Soul Scene Project

Nigel Fishpool (NF) interviewed by Jason Mitchell (JM) on 8th June 2020

JM: Now on the old recorder, and just to make sure we're good there, and that should be all fine. So it's a Northern Soul interview. The date is June the eighth.

NF: Yep.

JM: And my name is Jason Mitchell, and your name is...?

NF: Nigel Fishpool.

JM: And could you spell that for me, please?

NF: Yeah. N I G E L, F I S H P O O L.

JM: Perfect. And, er, it's a telephone interview and it's for the Northern Soul project. So where were you born?

NF: I was born in...well, born in Peterborough.

JM: Whereabouts particularly?

NF: Um, actually it was Thorpe Hall.

JM: Right.

NF: Um, Sue Ryder place, but it was The Gables in them days in 1963.

JM: Oh, right. So you were born in 1963?

NF: Yep.

JM: Perfect. Okay, brilliant. And have you known as any other, sort of, have you...you've got any other names you're known as, especially on the Northern Soul scene, or...?

NF: Um, well, I go in as a DJ as Nigel F.

JM: Oh, right. Nigel F. Perfect. Okay. So, um, can you just, sort of, give me a...tell me a little bit about your experience with Northern Soul, um, sort of, you know, starting, I suppose, at the beginning - how you were introduced to it and then just, sort of, work your way through. And then what I'll do is I'll make some notes, and then I'll...

NF: Yeah, yeah, that's fine, yeah.

JM: I'll just pick up on stuff, um, when you've finished speaking, that's great.

NF: Okay, well, um, excuse me, first of all, a young age, I've got an older brother who's - well, I've got a brother and sister – and the older brother's eight years older'n me. And he was into Motown, and he knew a bloke who worked on Alconbury Base. And when the...a lot of the Americans went home he used to...he used to buy...well, get a lot of their Motown LPs off 'em, 'cause obviously they couldn't take 'em home. And he used to play them as a young teenager and I used to love the music, the black American music, I loved it. And then...then me sister who's 18 months older'n me, she started going to the...the Wirrina, um, and all 'er friends used to meet at my mum's 'ouse and then obviously they went to the...the Wirrina all-nighters – I was too young to go. The only time I went there it was roller skating, but, um, then I just got 'ooked on that and then me sister started, um, getting records off...people used to give 'er records. They weren't worth a lot, you know, and...and then at the age of 13, 14 I started doing the discos at the Stanground Youth Club. And so I borrowed her records one night, started playing 'em and everyone loved 'em, so I spoke to the youth club leader and I said, "On a Friday night we'll play," I said, "we'll play the chart stuff, but on a...one week...one night in the week in the basement can we...can I do...you know, play Northern Soul and Motown?" It's a bit basic stuff. Nothing like the rare stuff they play now, but...and 'e said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," you know, "we don't pay yer so you do what you want," and all the young lads came down and, you know, 'cause a lot of their broth...older brothers and sisters were into Northern Soul anyway, and a lot of 'em obviously got married so they drifted away for a bit and...and then that's how I really got into it. And then, in 1978, um, the East Anglian Soul Club they moved to The Fleet at Fletton, Peterborough, and the first all-nighter there was the third anniversary. I went with a couple of my friends and we was at school then, but in them days they weren't bothered about, um, ID and anything 'cause there was no alcohol there. So, um...but I'll always remember I walked round the corner and I see this crowd, and it wasn't like nowadays where you queue up, um, ordinary and one in, you know, go in, it was just sort of a mob at the door and it was like pushing, shoving, and anyway we got in, and the first I noticed what brilliant dancers they were.

[05:08.3]

And the music, I did not know one record they played [*chuckles*]. So the next time I went I thought, "Well, I'll take a cassette player," one of them, you know, portable cassette player, and so I played that, and then the next day I was listening to it and I, you know, and I...someone told me what records were what and...and I thought...then, you know, that's when I got hooked on it. But I was lucky because I worked...a good...my long while school friend, who's sadly not here no more, um, I worked...me and him worked for 'is dad at the weekends, so we used to get paid and we used to buy...we used to go to – especially, well, 15...14, 15, 16 – we used to go to a shop called Disco Aces what Steve Allen owned, you know, a DJ from Peterborough, a well-known bloke. And we used to buy records from there, um, they were second issues, but that's how we started. And then I started going more...more do...more Northern Soul nights, um, and buying the original ones. When I started working I 'ad the money so I started buying the original ones, and...and that's 'ow it...it carried on.

JM: Oh, right. That's brilliant. Thank you. So, um, the...you talked about – I'm just gonna take you right back to the beginning – you talked about your brother playing the records. Was that...obviously, was that in your house?

NF: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, 'e used to play the records in 'is 'ouse. Yeah, 'e 'ad LPs and...but some of 'em was, you know, well obviously from America 'cause the Americans used to bring 'em over and then obviously when they were told...oh, this was like, at Alconbury, you know, an air base, and then they was saying, "Oh, you're being shipped 'ome," so they can only take so much, so he's, um, er, git all these LPs, and they were fantastic LPs, you know, there was a lot, you know...obviously everything what people knew, but I didn't know that, you know, them at the time, you know, when 'e's playing, like, The Supremes and, you know, Marvin Gaye stuff I just...just fell in love with the music.

JM: Yeah, yeah. And how old was your brother at that time?

NF: Errrrm, tch, tch, tch, tch, tch, tch, I'd...I would say he was...he was a teenager then, say 16 at the time, so I would've been about eight or nine. So, erm, so, you know, that's 'ow I kinda started, you know.

JM: That's young, really young.

NF: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, 'cause we...we then my brother was the only one who 'ad a record player.

JM: Oh, right.

NF: And we weren't allowed to use it, me and me sister, so he used to put 'is own music on, 'cause I didn't 'ave...I think...I think me and me sister 'ad a few records but they were pop songs.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: Well we 'ad...when you was a teenager and...well, well, no, when you was little and someone at Christmas or yer birthday they'd gi' yer a record voucher and you bought anything in the charts, you know, [*chuckles*] but, erm, so...so we...we used, you know, we used to listen to 'is music. And he would know if...if he was at work or if he'd been out and I tried to play it he would know if I played a record.

JM: Would he? [*NF chuckles*]. How come?

NF: Oh yeah, he'd know. Because he'd put it in the sleeve a certain way.

JM: Yeah.

NF: And if I put it the wrong way he would know about it, so I used to get told off quite a bit, but...

JM: So I take...I take it he didn't like you playing his record player?

NF: No, no, no, no, no 'cause...no, 'cause obviously with the stylus in them days...the stylus and, you know, you'd scratch the record. You know, I was a little kid then, so you don't understand, do you, so, you know, you show a young child now and say, "Well, this is a record," they'd say, "What's that?" [Laughs].

JM: So did your brother go to...sorry, you may not just...because of your age difference – did your brother go to any Northern Soul gigs and stuff?

NF: No, he didn't, he didn't. He used to...er, no, 'e...no, 'e...he, um, he used to go to some of the pubs in Peterborough where they mainly played Motown and a lot of reggae stuff and stuff like that, you know, so no, 'e never...'e wasn't really into Northern Soul 'cause, erm, he kind of, you know, likes 'is Motown and that was it. Stuff 'e knew. He didn't...he didn't like the, you know, the stuff what...you know, if they played a record if 'e didn't know it 'e...'e wasn't interested.

[10:17.4]

JM: Yeah, yeah. So tell me a bit about Stanground Youth Club, 'cause I've heard about it but I've had not much description about it. Where was it? Can you tell me a bit about it?

NF: Well, Stanground Youth Club was where Stanground...well where Stanground Academy is now. But, erm, before Stanground Academy was it was where Stanground School was. And the youth club, it was a building next to it and you...it was on two floors. So you actually...to get in the youth club you 'ad to walk up some...some steps and then you 'ad a main floor where you 'ad a snooker table and a couple o' pool tables and a bar what sold, you know, soft drinks and crisps and chocolate, whatever, and the toilets were there, and then you went down some stairs and you 'ad another area, which during the week they use as table tennis, darts and everything, but then you went down another bit which was the basement, and that's where the disco stuff was all locked up and everything. But on a Friday night we used to do the disco on...in the basement. The odd Saturdays...if there was a Saturday disco we used to move the stuff upstairs and play it on the...the proper, you know, really nice dance floor. And that's where the first ever all-nighter in Peterborough ever hel...was ever held. Often I was told...I was too young then. I think it was 1973, I think. I'm not...I'm not hundred percent sure, but I know the DJs who were there, I'm still friends with them now - there was Andy "Smudge" Smith, Jonah, Gary Spencer and then guest DJs - there was a well-known record dealer, John Manship, and another well-known bloke from Stamford called Poke.

JM: Okay, John, sorry, John Man...? Sorry, just say his name slowly, John...?

NF: John Manship.

JM: Oh, right.

NF: Yeah, he's a...he's a well-known record dealer. 'E...e lives in – oh, God, I can't think where 'e lives now. It's not far from there. Oooh, I can't think. Near Leicester somewhere, so...

JM: And what...so Stanground Youth Club, so I take it it was...it was a house?

NF: No, it was...it was a youth club building. It was sadly knocked down when they made the new Academy, but they...what they did, they...they shut the youth club down and they turned it into a...a...like a...a library, erm, and then for pupils that 'ave gotta study.

JM: Oh, right. So it was...it was bricks and mortar, it wasn't like a portacab...?

NF: Oh, yeah, yeah, it's a proper...it's a proper building, yeah, it was a proper brick building. It was a lovely building. It was built in 1960 something.

JM: Right. Okay.

NF: There's photos on Peterborough, you know, the Peterborough website.

JM: Yeah.

NF: Past and present of actually Stanground Youth Club, you know, when people who were in their mid 60s now were there.

JM: Oh, right.

NF: There's all photos of them on there and everything, so...

JM: And what was it like to go there? I mean, was it, like...I mean, what was the age range of people? I'm trying to get a bit of atmosphere about what it was like to actually go there because...

NF: Erm, you had to be...I think you had to be at Stanground School, so you must've been, erm, you must've been 12 or 13, and then I think you was allowed to go there 'til you was 17.

JM: Right.

NF: But then if you was...I think some...some people went there after that, but...but they were volunteers, they helped there, so they was allowed to go. But when you're 17 you don't want to go to the youth club, you started going, you know, you want to start going to pubs and everything, so...

JM: Yeah.

NF: So, yeah, but it was a fantastic club, you know, youth club. All youth clubs were and, you know, and that's where you met people, and people who speak now about, you know, I spoke to...I

put some records on Facebook and people say, "Oh my God, I remember you playing that at the youth club when I was, like, about 12 years old," you know, and [chuckles] so...

JM: So...so when you talk about this all-nighter could...did you know much about that, 'cause I take it you said you didn't go because you were too young?

[15:03.7]

NF: No, no, I was too young. I was...I was...no, I was only...I was only 10 [laughs].

JM: Yeah,

NF: Well, 10 or 11, but, um, all I know is what people 'ave told me, you know, all I know is that, yeah, the youth club leader at the time, um, allowed Andy Smith - who we call Smudge - um, that's the bloke you'll need...you need to talk to.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: And 'e put it on and, you know, and that was the first one ever to be yer first all-nighter ever in Peterborough.

JM: Yeah. Nice. Okay, brilliant. And then you, sort of, you talked about the Wirrina, um...

NF: Yeah. Yeah, I wasn't...I wasn't old enough to go to the Wirrina...

JM: No.

NF: ...unfortunately. Um, me sister used to go with, as I say, with all 'er friends. I started going to... the first all-nighter I went to was The Fleet.

JM: Yeah.

NF: And then, erm, the East Anglian Soul Club used to do the all-dayers at St. Ives, which is obviously not in...not in Peterborough. But then...so, yeah, and I just got hooked on that, you know, so, you know, I started going to The Fleet all the time. I think at the time it was every...once a fortnight.

JM: Yeah, yeah. So...so you'd been to Stanground, you go to the youth club, you're kind of getting into the Northern Soul, you've...you started buying records, and then, sort of, talk me a bit about, te...you..you...you've...you mentioned about going to The Fleet and the, um, and the big crowds, etc. So just...it'd be great if you could, sort of, go back into that a bit more, talk a little bit...

NF: Well...

JM: ...little bit...

NF: The thing is, in the '70s...

JM: Yeah.

NF: ...it was...well, '78 to, say, '81 you had a lot of people there. And...but a lot of...a lot of, obviously, a lot of them were older than me. So...and then, in the '80s, the mid '80s, erm, the crowds seemed to drift away. And I think any documentary you watch it's the same thing, it's like, erm, people got married, or, you know, and they 'ad children, they'd bought a house. So they kind of drifted away. But now, the...yeah, obviously the children have grown up and flew the nest. Then people are coming back.

JM: Yeah.

NF: You know, and, I mean, The Fleet now, erm, we get 200 people in there a night. You know, it's not all-nighters anymore, it's 'alf seven 'til one o'clock. We'll get 200 people in there no problem. And some of them, you know, in their mid 60s, some of them in their 70s but they still love the music, but the children 'ave all flown the nest, you know, they're grandparents now and they say, "Well, you know, we 'ad to drift away because, you know, we got married, 'ad children," so they couldn't go out.

JM: Yeah.

NF: They couldn't...obviously they couldn't go out all night, so, you know...

JM: So when you...so when you went to The Fleet, um, how old were you when you...you were going there then?

NF: Oh God, I was at school. Er, [*chuckling*] in them days they certainly didn't look at your ID. You just...you got a membership and you...you just lied about yer date of birth.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: They weren't bothered, so...erm, I was still at school so I was about four...er, 15.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: Coming up to 15, I think. [*Chuckles*]

JM: And were you...did...did...were you a good dancer? What was your dancing like?

NF: No, I couldn't dance to save my life. [*Laughs*]

JM: Oh, right.

NF: My friend was a brilliant dancer, but no, I could not dance to save my life. And I didn't even bother.

JM: Oh right [*chuckles*].

NF: No [*chuckles*].

JM: So did you go there...you went...you went there mainly for the records, to deal...

NF: Yeah, yeah, I just...I just loved the music and that's when I started collecting records. I just, you know, fell in love with the records and I started collecting them and, you know, I'd say I bought what they call second issues first.

JM: Yeah.

NF: And then which ones I liked, erm, I started buying the original ones, and in them days, obviously as I said, you know, I 'ad a part time job so I could buy some records. But now, you know, the prices 'as gone through the roof.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: You know, some of the...some of the records now, you know, you're talking five, six 'undred, a thousand pound for a record what you could 'ave bought in 70...1978 for five pound, 10 pounds, something like that, so...

JM: Yeah. So can you recall any good memories from The Fleet, you know, that you could share with us, you know, some friends or things that happened, or...?

[19:56.3]

NF: Oh, there was...everyone was so friendly, you know, um, you know, I was a bit...the first...first two or three I went to, obviously, we sat in the corner. But then again, people were so friendly. They, you know, it was, you know, if...if you walked to go to the toilets and someone barged into you, "Oh, sorry mate," you know, "I do apologise," you know, everyone was...there was no anti, you know, there wasn't any, like this, you know, if you're in a pub in Peterborough or whatever and someone barged into you they'd just look at yer.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: But no, everyone was really polite and everyone was brilliant, you know, they all looked after each other. It's like a big family.

JM: Yeah.

NF: Yeah, then you started knowing people and, you know, and I started knowing the record dealers and they were...they were brilliant wi' me, so, you know, that's what I loved about it.

JM: Mmm. So...so you kind of...your...your...side was more the DJ-ing and the record collecting?

NF: Yeah, yeah, mine was. I wasn't a dancer, no. No...no...no way in a million years [chuckles].

JM: So did you...

NF: I tried. I tried but I...I gave up because I couldn't...I just...I just could not get the, you know, I just looked at people and I thought, "No," they were just pure class.

JM: Yeah. Who did you go there with?

NF: Er, a lifelong friend of mine, 'e sadly passed away two years ago, Dave Forest. 'E, er, but I...I used to go with him all the time.

JM: Oh right, yeah, yeah. And, so, what about your D...so your DJ-ing...did you ever DJ at The Fleet?

NF: Yeah, yeah, well what 'appened was I, um...um...The Fleet...after the East Anglian Soul Club packed up doing The Fleet and Northern Soul dos, no-one did it for a couple o' years and then someone...a few people took over there and that kind of drifted away, and then a bloke started running it and then 'e...I started DJ-ing for 'im and then 'e, um, basically said, "No, I've 'ad enough, I'm going back to London. " And there was two other clubs just started up in Peterborough, um, the railway club The Right Track, and then the Post Office Club. So I thought, "Well," you know, "I'll...I'll take The Fleet over."

JM: Oh right.

NF: Not...not knowing that I was going to get backlash from the others. And they said, "Well, you can only play Motown." I said, "No, it's...The Fleet is a Northern Soul do." So I was getting a bit of thing, erm, hassle, but anyway a bloke come up...came to see me and 'e said, "Oh, I'll run it with you. I'll sort the door. You'll 'ave no more hassle." And it's going now, I think this year it's the, er, erm, oh 'ow much is it, it's the 41st anniversary I think, yeah.

JM: Oh right.

NF: '78...or 42nd, I can't remember now. I'm trying to do the maths. 1978, so it'd be, yeah, 42nd anniversary in September.

JM: So...you've...you've done it... you've run it...

NF: That's Northern Soul at The Fleet. Not of the Peterborough Soul Club...

JM: Yeah.

NF: ...which runs it now, it's 40...42 years of Northern Soul being run at The Fleet, and I think what I've been told The Fleet is the second longest Northern Soul venue in...in England...

JM: Right.

NF: ...with, obviously with the original venue. There's other clubs what've been going on longer, but their venues 'ave been knocked down, so they've moved, but The Fleet I'm...someone 'ad told me only Leeds...there's a club in Leeds is the same venue. I don't know, but I'm told The Fleet is the second one longest in the same building, same original building.

JM: Yeah, yeah. That's a long time isn't it? It's like a long time. Haha.

NF: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

JM: So why...when you say that they...you...they didn't take well to you playing Northern Soul there, is that...why is that?

NF: Erm, well, 'cause they...it is...it's like anything, it's like nightclubs innit?

JM: Yeah.

NF: No-one, you know, they...they obviously 'ad their...their venues and they wanted everyone t'go there, but, you know, and I thought, "No," you know, "why...why should they...?" No, I was doing normal discos, you know, I was...I was a mobile DJ, you know, I used to do weddings and everything, since I were 14 years old.

JM: Yeah.

NF: You know. And I thought, "No-one's gonna tell me I can't do a disco." So I thought, "No," so, anyway, that's...it all worked out fine in the end, we all worked together, so...we didn't...we didn't clash with dates and anything like that. So yeah, and it was... *[sound cuts out]*

[25:13.2]

JM: Yeah. Hello? *[Sound of bleeping telephone]*. Phone's just cut out.

[Pause, then telephone ringing]

NF: Hiya, Are you alright?

JM: Yep, haha.

NF: Yeah, sorry the phone went again *[chuckles]*.

JM: You said it would.

NF: Yeah. Um, yeah, I don't...yeah, I don't know where we was on that thing, but, yeah people, you know, we...we worked together in the end so we didn't clash, and people went to all three clubs in the end. So it was all 'appy. And then, so, you know, and that..that was it. So...so The Fleet's still going strong now, so...I think the Right Track's going strong. Erm, I don't know about the Soul Hole because obviously Dave who ran that 'e sat [*unclear*] so with this shut down nothing's open so I don't...I don't really know what's 'appening there, so...

JM: Yeah. Um, and is it...is [*coughs*] I s'ppose...are they...are they different groups of social...social groups, the DJs and the people who go to the clubs?

NF: No, um, yeah, the DJs, erm, you know, there's...DJs...we...we get DJs from all over the place, you know, and, you know, and the other...the other two clubs do.

JM: Yeah.

NF: You know, there...there's DJs out there who've been there from day one, you know, from the '60s. And so, you know, they...they play the records, they've got...still got the records, you know, and they're the ones who pull the crowd in.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: You know, 'cause you don't want someone from...someone no-one knows, 'cause they've got to put the bums on the seats.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: You know, we...we...we get...there's a bloke from Nottingham, erm, and we...well I kinda took a back seat from The Fleet. But Keith, my friend, he books him, and he...he'll bring...there'll be about 25, 30 people...

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: ...who'll go...come to The Fleet, all the way from Nottingham, just to see 'im.

JM: Yeah.

NF: You know, so it's good for us, you know, 'cause bums on the seats, money through the door, but all their money we make, after we've paid the DJs, all the money goes to Sue Ryder Thorpe 'All.

JM: Oh right.

NF: We don't...yeah, we charge...we charge four ninety nine on the door and you put the penny in the thing. Some of the DJs, you know, we'll pay them and they'll say that they'll put their money straight in the, um, proper...it's a proper charity thing.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: So...and it all go...it all goes to Thorpe 'All. Yeah, not...not Sue Ryder thing, but it all goes to Peterborough Thorpe 'All.

JM: Yeah, nice.

NF: We...we've raised thousands for them, so...

JM: Wow.

NF: You know, we always get letters from them thanking us and everything, so...

JM: How much do you think you have raised for them?

NF: Errrr, I wouldn't know.

JM: Yeah.

NF: It's...I don't know. I...I should think, er, 'bout five grand or so...

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: ...over time...

JM: Nice.

NF: ...you know, 'cause obviously I 'ave to pay for the hall.

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NF: After all the expenses, anything left over we...we give it to them, so...

JM: That's brilliant.

NF: Say...say about five thousand over the year, a few years, so...

JM: And have you got any interesting or, you know, surprising stories about records that you've bought or records that, you know, um...?

NF: I've bought, you know, I've bought some...I've been lucky 'cause, you know, I've bought records off people who were, at the time, just wanted to get rid of 'em.

JM: Yeah.

NF: I used to go to car boot sales and buy some, and I found one or two in a job lot. I think the best one I bought at a shop in Peterborough years and years ago. It was a Motown record by Martha Reeves. It didn't chart, but they started playing it on the Northern Soul scene about 12 years...12, 15 years ago.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

[29:44.9]

NF: And I thought, "I've got that." And, anyway, I went to see Martha Reeves at the...at The Cresset one time, and she...she got me and my friend Dave Forest on stage. And, anyway, we was on the stage wiv 'er and then a few weeks later I was at a...a do in...a soul do in March and this...this bloke come up to me and 'e said, "Oh, my wife's got a photo of you." And she showed me the photo and she said, "I'll send it to yer." And, anyway, I got the photo blown up and I went to see Martha Reeves again at The Cresset a year later, and I queued up and she signed the photo, I've got it framed, it's all signed *Martha Reeves* and she signed it, and then also I've got a...the record lay...er, the record sleeve, she signed that and she actually kissed it with 'er lipstick.

JM: Ohhhh.

NF: So I've got that, and that's my claim...no, that is...that is my pride possession.

JM: Haha.

NF: [Laughs]

JM: How did she get you up on stage the first time? Did they ha...did she know that you were...?

NF: No, she just invited two of us on stage and it was just me and my friend.

JM: Oh right.

NF: And...and she actually stopped the orche...the band, she cut...she stopped the band 'cause me and my friend were singing the song. Then...then she [chuckling] she said...she turned round, she said, "God, these...these two lads know the words to my songs better than I do." [Laughs]. Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant.

JM: Yeah. Oh, nice. That's brilliant. Okay, that's great. Have you got anything that...that you've thought about or I haven't asked you about, 'cause we've covered quite a wide area there, haven't you. My tape is...

NF: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm just, you know, I, you know, I still love Northern Soul, um, I've still got all me records. Erm, you know, I do buy records now and again – not so much now. Yeah, and I just...I still, you know, it's...it's in yer, you know, in yer blood.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

NF: You know...you know, it's...it's like anyone who's...what...what they're into.

JM: Yeah.

NF: You know, but, you know, in the '70s there was a lot of people who were into Northern Soul, but in '75...and it was...only because in them days everyone wore baggy trousers and...and it was the thing to be into.

JM: Yeah.

NF: You know, walk round Peterborough with, you know, with yer big flares on and yer...yer...yer leather ja...er, leather...full leather coat on. But then they all drifted off, it was...it was like a phase they went through. You don't see a lot of them now. I've seen photos of people, you know, in Peterborough, you know, soul boys and that. There's only about three...three of them out of the...the 12, 15 of them in that photo who still go to soul dos.

JM: Yeah.

NF: You know, they're into other stuff and they're not, you know...it was a...I think it was a phase what, you know, sort of punk rock, you know, you...people was into that at the time and then they trooped off to something else, you know, so... But, no, it's all...it's in my blood [*chuckles*].

JM: So it means a lot to you then?

NF: Oh, yeah, yeah. Oh God, yeah. You know, I've got a...I've got a, on my back, you know, at the bottom of my back I've got a...well, it needs to get finished, but it's...it's gonna 'ave the Peterborough Soul Club, um, The Fleet, Northern Soul, and then it...then it's got, erm...well, sorry, I've got part of it so it'll be the Peterborough Soul Club, The Fleet and then the ones what I've got at the moment it's got *Northern Soul It's My Life*.

JM: Yeah.

NF: Yeah, so when that's finished [*chuckles*] I'll be 'appy.

JM: And what is it then, do you think, that makes it such a strong connection?

NF: It's because everyone is so friendly, you know. Even nowadays, you know, you get people who will turn up, they don't drink. You know, they'll drive for miles and miles around, and obviously they're driving, um, and a lot of them even if they're not driving, you know, you very rarely see someone who's actually, you know, like in a, you know, actually drunk.

JM: Yeah.

NF: If you know what I mean.

JM: Yeah.

NF: They're not like that, you know. A lot of people, you know, I think they sell more soft drinks at The Fleet than they do alcohol. Well, people do drink but, you know, a lot of 'em, you know, obviously were there and, you know, for the music and the atmosphere and to see their friends, 'cause we get people from all over the place.

JM: Yeah. And...and this is a tricky question I'm gonna ask you now. So if you had to choose one memory about your experience with the Northern Soul, or if you think of one incident, one experience, what...what might that be?

[34:55.2]

NF: Um, I think it was the...the first time I ever went to The Fleet, the...the... in 1978. It was the third anniversary, and there was a dancing competition. And I've never seen any people dance like that in my life. And it...there was three of 'em left and they kept playing record and record and record until one of 'em made a mistake. And in the end they...I think they threw the towel in and said, "Well, all three o' yer are the winners." It was unbelievable, you know, 'cause in them days they used to do all the tricks where, you know, the handstands and the, you know, the backdrops. It was...it was just unbelievable what...I was a small lad and I was, like, looking through, like, people's armpits sort of to watch 'em and it was just unbelievable. I think that was my all-time memory.

JM: Yeah.

NF: And I thought, "How the hell do they dance like that? They must be gymnasts." [Laughs].

JM: Yeah. Brilliant. Okay, that's brilliant. That's fantastic.

NF: Okay, thank you.

JM: I'm just gonna just stop the recording, just two sec...

[36:09.5]