

Northern Soul Scene Project
Stuart Stocks (SS) interviewed by Jason Mitchell (JM)
Date: 25th May 2020

JM: Stating the date which is the 25th of May.

SS: Yeah, yeah.

JM: My name is Jason Mitchell, can I just ask for your first name?

SS: Stuart.

JM: Can I ask you to spell that?

SS: STUART

JM: And your surname?

SS: Stocks

JM: And could you spell that?

SS: STO

JM: Yep.

SS: CKS.

JM: Okay. And have you been known as any ... by any other name around that?

SS: Stocksy.

JM: Okay, good, that's great.

SS: Um....

JM: Okay, go on.

SS: No, that's I've been called loads of names, most of them unrepeatable.

JM: Yeah. So we've moved it to a telephone interview. It's for the northern soul project in Peterborough. You were born in?

SS: 1959.

JM: And you were born in Peterborough, you said?

SS: Yeah, I was born in Peterborough, yeah.

JM: And specifically?

SS: In, I think it was, oh God, what's it called? What's it now? The ...

JM: Sorry, what I mean is the area of Peterborough because you mentioned Stanground a lot.

SS: Oh, well, I was ... exactly, I was born in Peterborough nursing home, you know in a maternity unit. We lived for the first four years in Padholme Road.

JM: Right.

SS: And then we moved to Stanground.

JM: Oh, okay.

SS: Near the Whittle Way.

JM: Great stuff. A good starting point is sort of just to start off generally and tell me kind of about your experience with northern soul very broadly, you know, in terms of the clubs you went to and that and we could just start from there.

SS: I'll tell you what I'll do ... I'll do it as a kind of start and through the ages type, you know, through the ... the time span that I did it, you know. It really started while I was at school. Maybe 14/15 years old. See it on the TV. I think it was Wigan's chosen few, footsy was on Top of the Pops. I just thought it's a bit weird, you know. But it got my interest going, you know. Still at school, didn't know about all-nighters and stuff like that, but at the youth clubs, or our Stanground youth club where I was ... was brought up, they had a, like a place they called the Soul Hole, which was some local elder lads than us were playing this music. And it just was hypnotic. You know, it was the sort of thing, I was at that age, it just caught me. So really, that was my start of the northern soul scene. So it really started, not at all-nighters, but a youth club in Stanground.

JM: Is that it, you were born in Peterborough?

SS: Yeah, yeah.

JM: Okay so and ... and ... and then what was the name of the youth club in Stanground?

SS: It's gone.

JM: It's gone.

SS: It was connected to Stanground Comprehensive School on the ... on the Farcet Road, Peterborough, Farcet. They've knocked it all down, they've knocked all that down. There was a separate youth club and so the place has gone. All the places like the Wirrina and that have all been knocked down, you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: So that part of it is just pure memory like, you know.

JM: Describe the

SS: It's a shame.

JM: Describe the youth club a bit to me.

SS: So the youth club was ... it had an under ... you walked up steps to get to it. And you was on like a ... there was like a top floor with a sort of bar that sold pop and stuff like that. There was a TV room and then you walk down stairs and there was like a similar sort of dance floor type of thing. But then you could go down another set of steps and I remember there was ... it was at the time when people didn't say disco they said discotheque.

JM: Hmm.

SS: There was a great big sign over the top of this last set of stairs with discotheque on it and it was dark and, you know, you could dance and really not be seen that well, you know, if you know what I mean.

JM: Yeah.

SS: At that sort of age, you didn't want to sort of embarrass yourself, you know. So, a guide to ... well there was decks and everything there and people probably a year or two years older than us at the same school. They were already into this music and they'd be playing it and we were getting into, you know, a bit of hero worship as well. You know, we all had to dance like them and all that sort of stuff, you know?

5:11

JM: Yeah. How old were you at the time?

SS: I think I was maybe about 15 then so it'd be '74/'75 something like that. You know, I'm 60 now so it's hard to remember exactly what time, you know, what year and stuff like that, but it was, it was definitely at school. And then from there onwards, we found out there was another one in Orton Longueville School, which was the Soul Cellar I think they called it so then I started to go ... I broke away from Stanground a bit and I was going over to Orton and then I made a whole group ... new group of friends that were all into it. Stanground and Whittlesey and Orton were the people I sort of, you know, my peers at the time, like you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah. And this was ... had the Wirrina been started then or not?

SS: That, I remember that ... I can't remember exactly when it was but it was ... I was still at school and people that I was in class ... school with others but sort of joined on the bandwagon for a little while, they wanted to go to these all night discos. My parents wouldn't let me go so I didn't get to the first one or two. I think the first one I went to was when Junior Walker was on.

JM: Right.

SS: And I can't tell you what year that was but I was still at school so it must have been '75 maybe. I don't remember exactly, you know, I'm getting on a bit now so my memory's not fantastic. But went to that one. There was also another thing that used to go on on a Tuesday night in the Wirrina in the ballroom. Because when I saw Junior Walker that was in the main, the large arena where they played five a side football and roller skated and that. Most of the all-nighters were in the ballroom, in a smaller room like, you know, more intimate sort of room. So on a Tuesday night, I think they called it the Carousel or something like that, a lot of lads would get in there and practice all their, their dance moves and stuff like that, older lads than us, you know, so it seemed to be surrounding us at the time, it seemed like it was ... you was either into heavy metal or you was into pop music, or this was the total alternative like you know, sort of like rebel.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: So you were feeling at the time you know ...

- JM: So you were at Stanground School and before this, you listen to any sort of music or ...?
- SS: I think maybe I was ... I was a bit into T Rex, when that was early '70s and I was a little bit into Slade but this overtook everything else, you know, it was just ... it just came along and, you know, you have to have been through that sort of time, you know, because at the time we were having power cuts and stuff like that, you know, money was tight, really.
- JM: So I didn't ... I didn't go through it so could you explain a bit ... a bit about what you mean by that in terms of like, the connection between the music and the times and?
- SS: Well, it was tough times, you know, like, how most people see desolate times is when they look at, you know, old black and white movies of the north and stuff like that, you know, it wasn't that much different here really, you know. We were classed as the north, there wasn't any ... any like, easy contact to London. It was an hour and a half, two hours, you know, standing in lots of traffic to get to London. We were sort of ... if you went to London, they would say you was a northerner, you know?
- JM: Yeah.
- SS: I think it's slightly different now, you know, but it was only a small market town, you know, it wasn't what it is now.
- JM: Yeah.
- SS: I knew everybody, you know, I could walk through town and I'd be saying hello most of the time, you know. Now, I couldn't say that, you know, it's changed beyond all recognition.
- JM: What was it about the music that kind of drew you in?
- SS: I was more of a dancer. You'll ... you'll find as you talk to different people, they have different classes of people. I was more into just hearing the music and dancing, you know, I didn't collect records. I don't remember too, if I hear them, I know, know what they are. But as far as having an encyclopaedic memory of the names and stuff like that, you know, I wasn't a collector or anything. So, the ones that turned me on really were ones that had a lot of energy in, you know, anything that was sort of danceable to, you know, that I'd be into. And that's really, you know, it just sort of brought me out of myself, you know. The only feeling I've had similar to that is ride a motorcycle when you totally concentrated and forget about the rest of the world, you know. That's what it felt like at the time.
- 10:32
- JM: It was the dancing that gave that feeling.
- SS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was a bit ... it possibly was a bit like some of these South American people that, you know, go into a trance, a bit like that, you know.
- JM: That's really interesting, yeah. As, as in you were just sort of there dancing for ... I take it at the youth club they weren't ... how long did these club things go on for?
- SS: The youth club things only an hour or two, they were sort of like a taster really.
- JM: Yeah.

- SS: But then you wanted more. I wanted to go to these all-nighters, you know, I sneaked out my bedroom overnight once, you know, I climbed out my bedroom window and went to one, you know. And in the end, my parents sort of gave in, you know, now I had left school and things were a lot easier, you know.
- JM: You soon wanted more... I mean it sounds ... it sounds sort of, maybe is addictive, is addictive the wrong word. I don't know.
- SS: Well, now you're getting into a bit that, you know, that is a bit on the grey side, really, okay.
- JM: So before, before we get into that, which I know you're going into. So for me it's kind of ... it's ... it's that element you're talking about of ... of escaping, before you got into the thing, it was addictive.
- SS: I'll give you an idea of a feeling and other people will tell you this. If you walked into an all-nighter in Peterborough, or any of the others, I've been to Wigan, I've been to lots of the other ones as well. Your hairs would stand up on the back your neck, you know, it was that kind of feeling. You know, it was high energy, you know. And the only thing I've experienced since then was a rave.
- JM: Yeah.
- SS: But I was older then and it didn't ... the music didn't appeal to me, but it was like that, you know, high energy.
- JM: So, so you're ... you're ... you're at Stanground and you go to the youth club and the...and the ... and the nights out are about an hour.
- SS: Yeah.
- JM: Talk ... talk me through your first experience of going to something that's a bit more, shall we say longer and more involved. It's really useful to kind of like, have the detail of like, how you got there, how you found out about it?
- SS: Yeah, okay. Well, as I said earlier on, you know, it was sort of word of mouth at school really, a bit like raves. I mean, we didn't have communication like there is now you know, everything was word of mouth. So I'd heard through the grapevine one of these was on, got really excited about it because it was like a step up from the youth club thing like, you know, not just the music, getting properly into the scene.
- JM: Yeah.
- SS: Met up with a load of my friends. Some were from Yaxley, Farcet, Fletton, Whittlesey and Orton Longueville. At the time the bus station was where the court house is now. Where the ... what's it court is.
- JM: Yeah I know.
- SS: The County Court.
- JJ: Yeah, yeah.

SS: Magistrates Court, whatever. So that was... that was the bus station so all the buses ... didn't matter where you lived, that was where you was going to end up if you were coming into town. So we all sort of congregate there, the ones that knew each other. There were different groups that knew each other, you know. So you get like clumps of people all around the bus station waiting for another bus to turn up, another bus to turn up. And there's also people coming from other parts of the country, you know. And it was interesting, because it was my first contact with people other than people from Peterborough, you know.

JM: Yeah.

SS: So, there would be an element of getting together catching up and stuff like that. And then a slow walk over, we'd generally catch the last bus, you know, so these things start at sort of 10, 11 or 12 o'clock, I can't remember exactly when but late. So you didn't really want to be in town at seven. I didn't drink at the time, you know, so it was a case of ... just going to, you know, getting up town.

15:01

JM: Yeah.

SS: Catching up with everybody and then a slow walk over from the bus station, over to the Wirrina, talking all the way, getting over there, maybe making a few more friends from other places. People come and talk to you, it's very friendly, sort of like a society like really.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: So you get people from Derby or from Sheffield or somewhere like come and talk to you, you get to know them. And it's a bit you know, you like pyramid selling kind of thing, you know, you ... you get to know more and more and more people. And it just suck you in, like, you know, it's so friendly. It was totally different thing to everything else that was going on, you know, like the pop charts were things like The Sweet and stuff like that, you know, this was totally off the wall like, you know, it was totally different.

JM: Yeah.

SS: People didn't understand what it was, didn't really want to know. We didn't care if they didn't know.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: It was so good. We didn't want to give it away, you know?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: And then we'd sort of be waiting for the doors to open, you know.

JM: And was it ... was it quite ... was it that ... I know I'm talking about this in retrospect, obviously, because you've got ... you said you went to Wigan so was it a different ... I know that... I know that you've been there and it's retrospective but was it a different experience in relation to going to Wigan?

SS: Well I've been to two ... in the Wirrina they had like I said earlier, they had the large hall if they were having a band on or something and it was more intimate in the ... I forgot what they called it now but in the sort of ballroom part.

JM: Yeah.

SS: It's dark, with little ... just about lit lights and stuff like that and the dance floor in the middle.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: And ... and around it was a carpet with tables, you'd sit at the table with dancing. I mean nobody danced all night long, you know. So it's a mixture of sitting down, watching other people dancing, you couldn't buy a drink which didn't bother me because I didn't drink.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: You could get a coke or whatever. That ballroom was a microcosm version of Wigan Casino. Wigan Casino was an old fashioned, like a music hall. It had a downstairs dance floor, very old, old Victorian place. Columns holding a second floor that went all the way round, so you could look down onto the dance floor. And then in one corner, you could go into another room which was where they played the oldies, and that would be totally like ... totally packed out full of people trying to dance in just enough room to sort of twist and turn really honestly. The smell of Brut, as soon as you walked in, you could smell Brut. When you opened the door to Wigan, it was like hitting a blast furnace, you know, the heat from all the other bodies already in there.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: Just hit you like, within an hour, you'd be stripped to the waist, just sweating like a pig. You know, even if you wasn't dancing, you'd still be sweating. And about four o'clock in the morning it started to rain inside and it wasn't rain. It was ... it was all the condensation falling off the roof like you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: Never seen it before, never seen it since you know. Now, the Wirrina was like a small version of that. It had the same intimacy, you know, dark, lit up in certain places, but the rest of it you could, you could see, but only just if you know what I mean.

JM: Yeah.

SS: And that's what the ballroom was. I liked the ballroom and I was quite proud really to be a part of ... we were sort of like, I felt like we were the most southerly northern soulers if you know what I mean.

JM: Yeah.

SS: And people respected Peterborough. They came from other places, knew Peterborough, you know. Before then, if somebody asked you where you came from, you said Peterborough, they'd go, where's that? You know. So it sort of started to put Peterborough on the map, you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: As far as northern soul went, you know.

JM: Just going back to the Wirrina, what about friends and I mean were these, were they ... were they friends from school that you joined or how ... how did that work in terms of great friendship?

19:56

SS: I started off with a few mates from school. Most of them didn't go that long, you know, I'd really been ... I'd got bitten by the bug really. They were into it first you know like ... like with most people they ... they like something and then they get bored with it. I didn't never get bored with it, you know, I'm still not bored with it. So I started off with them, then I got to know some lads from Orton Longueville who were a bit more sort of into it than the others like, you know, and through them I started to get to know other people from Bretton, from Fletton, Yaxley, I already knew some people from Yaxley, and then Whittlesey and March.

JM: Yeah.

SS: So it's a bit like a sort of virus if you like it, you know, once it bit you like you talked about it and ... and you found other people that were into it and you become like a sort of family, you know.

JM: Did you socialise outside these events? Or, you know ...

SS: No, not really. Some people I knew were going out with somebody so obviously, they were socialising all the time. Most people had a job, you know.

JM: Yeah.

SS: I was a postman ... I was postman at the time. So I worked all week and then I just looked forward to the weekends, you know?

JM: Yeah, yeah. And what was the ... so what was the introduction? I mean, I take it that the ... when you started to go to the ... the clubs, the events that were all night, was it a struggle to do all night? So how did it, and you can be quite frank, how did sort of the introduction of the amphetamine or whatever it was, how did that happen? Was it sort of someone just introduced it or

SS: It was in tablet form like, you know, you know.

JM: I mean, I mean, how did ... did you I mean, obviously at one point you didn't do that. And then you did. Can you remember ...

SS: Well, the side effect is people talking all the time, you know?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: And they'd be dancing obviously. And you look at them and you'd think well they look like they're having a really good time.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: You know, you get kind of sucked into it really, you know, but in the end if you wanted to dance you would have to ... you would have to do something to keep yourself awake, you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: Unnatural times to stay up, you know, normally. I mean, I'd sleep for days afterwards but on that night, you know, I did manage the first one but God it really tired me out, you know.

JM: And, I mean ... I mean, physically exhausting with ... with ... without all ...

SS: Yeah, yeah. I was more of a dancer, you know, so I ... I was trying to emulate people that I'd seen that was I thought were really good dancers.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: I don't think I've ever achieved that, but that was ... that was my aim all the time. You know.

JM: And when you say that ... I mean who ... did you ... were there people that you knew that you could name that were great, really good dancers that you wanted to copy what they were doing?

SS: I couldn't remember his name but it's come back to me. Billy ... Billy Bingham, he'd be like three, four years older than me. And the other one would be Danny Daniels. And they could just spin on a sixpence you know, like before forget all this sort of wrappy stuff that they do now. They could do all that on a ... just looked like they'd ... somebody they'd stood on a little ball bearing.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: And somebody had just spun them around, you know, and their trousers just, because we all had baggy trousers, they just came straight out. The centrifugal force, pushed everything out, you know? I mean, I knew girls that could really do a good spin as well, you know.

JM: And what did you do ... I mean, you kind of watch it and then you practice that how?

SS: Yeah, well you'd do it at home? Or, you know, you'd do it in one of these youth clubs?

JM: Yeah.

SS: You know. I mean, I... I think I maybe, I can't remember if I still went after school. I don't remember to be honest with you. I don't think I did after school, but anything that ... that I did while I was still at school, you know, experienced it, you know, that was where I ... I tried to make it better, you know?

JM: Yeah.

SS: I went into the competitions not in Peterborough, but I tried in competition. Never ever won anything, you know, but even now, you know, I've had to stop dancing because I went to a like a kind of reunion I would say, and I had a bit of a dance because I'm not the same guy anymore even though my mind thinks I am. I ripped one of me ... I ripped me Achilles tendon.

JM: What doing that?

SS: Yeah. So I'm under strict orders now from my wife not to do it anymore, you know?

JM: Yeah, yeah, ouch.

SS: Yeah, yeah. And people laughing, I didn't realise what I've done to be honest with you. It's like, went like a loud clap.

25:34

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So when you went ... you kind of ... the trip to Wigan, and was ... did you all go

SS: There was a guy at the time and I don't really want to mention names so that if they want to get involved or not

JM: No, just say

SS: But I can mention that the ...

JM: Mr A

SS: Sorry.

JM: Mr A, you mean, yeah.

SS: Mr A who run a entertainments company.

JM: Yeah.

SS: Have you heard of him?

JM: I might have. But yeah, carry on.

SS: And sells pizzas. Anyway, he at the time used to run bus trips, you know. So it was still a bus from the local area, be everybody, probably mostly from Peterborough, but from all over Peterborough we'd fill a couch and we'd all go Wigan, you know?

JM: Oh, right.

SS: We did that two or three times and I think maybe a couple of times we'd do it in the car.

JM: But would it be like an organised coach trip, would you pay for the coach? You know, it would be like

SS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JM: Aah.

SS: You know, I mean, for a start it was St Ives, you know, St Ives was for us here bigger than Wigan.

JM: Yeah.

SS: Because it was a big place, you know, but then everybody in the end they wanted it. It's like it was the spiritual home of it, you know, and everybody wanted to at least go you know, but once I went, I thought oh God, I've got to keep coming here like you know, because it was different. Once you put the actual northern landscape and everything into it and the people and everything it changed it a little bit, you know.

JM: In what way?

SS: I don't know. I think maybe even then although I consider myself to be sort of Northern - East Midlands type person that maybe, you know, I was a bit too reserved compared to them, you know? Probably we got a lot of our, you know, we are more southern than what we think we're like, you know, but anyway yeah, I liked Wigan and other places, you know. We went to Bristol. There's one at [Yay]. There was Blackpool Mecca, you know, and there was a few other places in Peterborough, you know, there was The Fleet.

JM: Did you go to The Fleet?

SS: Yeah, I went to The Fleet a lot.

JM: And what was that like?

SS: Well, it's close to where I lived so it was a lot easier to get to. We didn't have to get a bus to town. We could just walk there, you know?

JM: Yeah.

SS: So the people from Stanground that was still into it, we used to meet round one of their houses. You know, we'd all meet in one so we'd go and see people more ... more people turn up and I'll walk that last bit together to it, you know? It was good. Yeah, you have to forget how it is now. There was no houses built at one ends of the car park. It was totally isolated place, you know, you could ... it didn't matter how loud it was. Nobody would have heard it, you know?

JM: Right. Yeah. And how many rooms were there because obviously I've never experienced it, I heard it described.

SS: There's two, two rooms, they're still there. There's a room at the back, a long thin room where they played oldies and the main room, which as you walked through the front door through a little foyer, and there's another set of doors and then there's a sort of ballroom.

JM: Yeah.

SS: And then in another corner they set up a block, a sort of cafe, you know, where you could buy a coffee or, you know, there's never any alcohol ...

JM: Yeah.

SS: ... at these dos. Yes. Well, they could get a licence, you know, because they weren't selling alcohol, you know?

JM: And is that why they could go on all night?

SS: Yeah, yeah, I think so. Yeah. You know, I don't know exactly the reason why, but I think that it has got a lot to do with that, you know, the no alcohol thing. That's how it all started anyway.

JM: So you're saying, so you're working during the day?

SS: Yeah.

JM: You come to Friday, you finished your work. Tell me about sort of the preparation before you go out and what you take and how you get from your house on to the dance floor. Tell me about that I'm ...

30:06

SS: I'm gonna ... I'm gonna tell you because I won't get in trouble now I can tell you this and I won't get into trouble. I wouldn't have told you at the time. I worked at the post office and you was able to do your overtime before you did your actual work so you could do four hours overtime and then it was time to go to work, you know, so money wasn't fantastic at the post office but it was a job. So what I'd do, I'd get up in the morning, I packed me bag with a lot of spare T shirts, maybe a set of pants, and some ... some spare socks and things. And then Brut, you know to splash or Aramis was the stuff like you know that I liked so a bit of Aramis and ...

JM: What shoes did you have?

SS: I had ... I've got to think now, I think there were loafers actually but I did also have a set ... and this ... this was taken on by lots of people, I didn't start it but I used to go bowling when it was near the football ground, the bowling alley there. You'd take a set of shoes out and have a game of bowls and then not bother picking your own shoes up and they would be your dancing shoes, a set of bowling shoes.

JM: Were they're good for dancing?

SS: Oh, excellent, excellent, you know? Yeah, but then they ... they stopped people from doing that. I had ones that were red one side black the other.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: They were just for all-nighters, you know, so I'd go ... I'd go in a pair of like loafers or weaver's or something like that.

JM: Yes.

SS: And I'd change into these when I got there. You needed a couple of extra sets of T shirts and maybe a set of trousers as well, because you sweat profusely, like, you know.

JM: So you were at the post office, you've done your overtime, you've done your shift.

SS: No, I've done my overtime, then I go sick and get paid for it. Now this is the bit, the naughty bit really, I'd go sick so that I could get away to get on the bus or whatever way I was going to get up to either up to The Fleet but normally that would be if I was going to Wigan on a

Friday night that'd be. I mean, The Fleet things and the Peterborough things were normally a Saturday night.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: But if you went to Wigan, you could get Wigan in on a Friday night and then come back to Peterborough and do Peterborough on a Saturday night, you know.

JM: Yeah.

SS: I did ... I think the most I did was two all-nighters and an all-dayer in a weekend with a little bit help from my friends, you know.

JM: Yeah, no, absolutely, yeah.

SS: But, yeah, you really want to know about Peterborough don't you, you know, so Peterborough fantastic. They had other places as well, where I've got membership ... I can't find me blinking memberships but I've got a weekend membership. There was another place and I'm sure it was called the soul cellar.

JM: Yeah.

SS: In Wentworth Street and it was like a crypt or whatever you want to call it. It was like a church above it.

JM: Yeah, yeah, people have told me about it, yeah.

SS: Yeah, and then you went downstairs and it was down the bottom of that. So I went to that one as well, but the floor had never been cleaned and I'll try to do a little bit of dancing and my hands were black, you know, so ...so that wasn't a good ... I don't know how many ... maybe once or twice I think they had it there and give it up as a bad job, you know.

JM: And how did you decide where to go?

SS: Well, I didn't have to decide, you know, I went ... the only thing, you'd got a Friday ... I didn't have many Friday's off to be honest with you, but Saturdays you'd always got free. So you'd just be looking in Blues and Soul to see what was on that weekend.

JM: Right.

SS: You know, and then because it was an underground thing, that was the only way you could find out what was going on. And from there you'd make a plan, you know?

JM: So when you say ... you say underground, because obviously when I were talking about this and because you've got the documentaries and you know, there's the book and stuff like that.

SS: Yeah, yeah.

JM: It ... sometimes you have to remind yourself it was underground in terms of ... so when you say you had to look in, what was it you said you had to look in?

SS: Blues and Soul

JM: And ... and was that a magazine?

SS: Yeah, magazine. Yeah. I don't even know if it's still going, it might be actually, but it used to have a section in it just about northern soul.

JM: Right.

34:56

SS: You know, and it would tell you what was going on what ... what the latest ... you know. I could never afford any of these ... these posh, you know, records or anything or really wanted them. I'm not a collector of things, you know?

JM: Yeah.

SS: I just wanted to hear the music but people would look to see what was coming out in the charts because there were a few released here and there like, you know. It was a job to get them at the shop because I've never heard of them, you know? Go and order it, you know, but I did that a few times?

JM: So you're going ... you're going to Wigan. At what age is this around? So you've got to....

SS: I'd be left school then I think, I think probably 17/18. I think I stopped going to all-nighters in ... it started to die off, you know, and I was getting older. I think '79/'80 I think I'd stopped going. You know, I was in a relationship, like thinking about getting married and stuff like that and all your priorities change, don't they, you know.

JM: So tell a bit about sort of life after Wigan and stuff like that. I mean, you say ... because you said right at the beginning, you're still very connected to it. And how did you ... how does ... how did that...

SS: Well, well it left a massive hole, you know, like, well, I could see it was sort of, I mean, it's revived. It never properly died, you know, it's evolved a little bit. It's not quite the same thing as ... as you know, what's going on now? They still have dos, and that but it's not quite the same thing.

JM: Yeah.

SS: It's more like a reunion for old people like now, you know, but there's young people coming into it. I, I've lost the thread of what I was talking about now.

JM: I was asking you about, you know, how ... how it from ... from Wigan, etc about your journey in northern soul since then. And you were saying ...

SS: Yeah, well, it's ... it's always there.

JM: Yeah.

SS: It's never left me, you know, it's a ... it's ... it's only with age now that, you know, you want to ... I don't know if it's normal or just me, you know, but you ... you want to retrace what you did and see who's still about, you know, and talk about things, you know. That's what it is to me now, but I'm mean the music every ... I've got that sounds app you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: And you can get northern soul and a couple of ... I think Richard Searling does one and another guy so I'm constantly playing it in me van all the time, you know. I'm a courier like, you know, so I can play both of them back to back and just be listening to northern soul all day long, you know, because especially at the minute when you're just hearing about Coronavirus, you know, I don't really want to think about it too much, I wanna just, you know, just try to get on with me life sort of thing, you know, be honest with you at the minute. You know, I work for myself and they haven't said what they're going to do to help me out if I ... if I get sick. So anyway, we're deviating. Yeah, it was a fantastic time. It was a fantastic time. It was ... most people went under the radar, you know, if you're asking about it now, you know, and I don't mean yourself, but anybody that's asking about it now obviously doesn't know anything about it, you know.

JM: Yeah.

SS: It was a family type thing. We knew everybody, we wrote to each other, you know, I ... some people have found out later on were gay, you know, which at the time, you know, I probably wouldn't have liked that much, you know. Things have changed now, you know. Some people have died, you know, constantly hearing about somebody that I knew from them times has, you know. Well, you're, you're not young anymore, you know? It's probably ...I'd probably say the way it is at the minute, the way, because it seems to be a lot of interest in it at the minute. It's a bit like, when I was younger, there was a lot of Teddy boys about, you know, that was about in the '50s and wanted to keep it alive, you know. You don't see so many now and it's probably like the last throws of probably the best time of northern soul, that '70s bit was for me the best time you know.

JM: Yeah.

39:32

JM: So it's really good ... I'm just looking at sort of, I try and keep my interviews roughly to about 40 ... 40 minutes, which is what we're coming in. So ...

SS: Okay.

JM: What would your ...what would your ... I'm going to ask you two questions here, they're quite open.

SS: Right.

JM: The first one is what do you think your life would have been like without northern soul?

SS: I was getting bullied a lot at school, I won't tell you for why and isolated at school, you know. I was getting bullied. I didn't really like what was going on but then by joining this sort of family, that didn't matter anymore. It was just about the music, you know. And it didn't matter, you know, I then got to know black people and Asian people and Scottish people, you know, and we were just always into the music. It wasn't anything to do with the, you know, all the bias that most people have got all the time, you know. Even I've got some bias, you know, but that threw it all out the window, it was just about black soul music really.

JM: Yeah. So it took you away from that situation?

SS: Yeah, yeah. I mean long term without going into too much detail, it kind of broke me, you know, but it was a start of a new, you know, it was a crossroads in my life and at the time I felt I was going down the right way and I still think maybe I would have not made some mistakes I did make. I think I'd still have gone down the same road, you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah, and would you ... and so your life ... so the opposite to that is what ... what has northern soul meant to your life?

SS: it's ... even though I say I don't know that much about the artists and the music and the names of the records and stuff like that, there are ... there is for whatever mood you're in there is a corresponding record for that mood.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: That you could listen to and like, there isn't many records you could listen to now that you can hear every single word of the song, you know, and you could sing along ... or even in your head just go along with it and think do you know what, that's just how I feel, you know. I only liked the fast, racy ones at the time but now I'm mellowing out, you know, you know, and there are ones for that as well, you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

SS: It was very mis... well it was an unrepresented part of British culture, you know. A large part, you know, a very large part.

JM: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think that's why Kate from JumpedUp is interested in sort of, you know, developing this project around ... around northern soul and especially the northern soul in Peterborough.

SS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JM: That's really good.

SS: You know, I'm interested in, you know, I've got ... my life's gone on since then. I've got four children and eight grandchildren now, you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SS: And if there was somewhere in the future where they could, you know, my Dad passed eight, nine years ago, I haven't got any record of his voice or anything like that, you know. I feel like I'm leaving something, you know.

JM: Yeah absolutely, and as I said this is the intention, it will be archived in the library at Peterborough. That's great. So I'm just going to sum up just by doing a little bit of ... it's a bit of detail in terms of just

The End