

Norman Jay

celebrates 25 years of Good Times



It's August bank holiday monday, the sun is burning down and thousands of people are cheering in tandem and moving in unison to the sounds emanating from the Good Times bus. We're in Southern Row, Ladbroke Grove. It can only really mean one thing.....

It's the Notting Hill Carnival again.

Think Norman Jay, think the Good Times sound system and Notting Hill Carnival. The two are dependent of each other, and the crowd listening to Norman's sets seem to swell every year. Norman has claimed the junction of Southern and Western Row and always makes his presence felt....



souledUp introduces a brief guide to the history of Notting Hill Carnival, and managed to ask a very busy Norman Jay some questions.....

Oh, and say happy birthday to Good Times.



The carnival originally began to take roots in the 1950's. Caribbean immigrants started organising dances where black people could come together. At the same time, a steel band were playing at a pub in Earls Court every Sunday and the idea of inviting this band to play in a street festival some years later in Notting Hill was born. The festival was aimed at getting people of all credes to come onto the streets and artistically express themselves. The first ever Notting Hill Carnival took place in 1964, and when the black people of the area heard the steelband, they immediately came out onto the streets to join in the fun, reminiscing the steel drums and carnivals back home. Due to the success of the first carnival, people of the neighbourhood rallied around to make sure that they could make it an annual thing.



The carnival grew and grew until it became recognised as one of the biggest free street parties in the world. During the late sixties, the area was being heavily built upon and in 1972, Trellick Tower was finished. This West London landmark is as synonymous to the Carnival as the revellers. It has watched proudly whilst year after year, the carnival has grown and grown, and now spans three days not just one.



Norman Jay attended the carnival from a very early age. Every year the sound systems were getting louder and louder, and people started to compete with each other. Norman played his very first set at Carnival some 25 years ago! As the usual music was reggae, people thought it strange that this up and coming DJ was playing Disco, Soul and

Funk. Gradually his following got bigger every year from people wishing to listen to music with a happier vibe. The name Good Times was taken from the track of the same name by Chic. Eventually Normans sets were taking the Carnival by storm, and it wasn't too long before he found the Good Times area was the most visited. He bought the bus in 1989 and secured his spot on Southern Row as we know it today. We asked Norman a few questions:

SU: 1) Good Times is 25 this year, how did The Good Times sound system first come about?

NJ: Because of a burning childhood desire and passion to do Notting Hill Carnival with our own sound system.

SU

SU: 2) On a musical level, what are the major differences of the Carnival from 25 years ago to now, and what progressions in music have you noticed?

NJ: There has been no musical progression as such, we still play great tunes both new and old spanning all genres.

SU: 3) Planning and building your carnival set must be a huge task. Where do you start?!

NJ: There are never any plans for my set, just a big box of great tunes and the crowd decide from there.



SU: 4) You go to your record box to line up a tune and realise you've left the tune at home. What's the worst tune this could happen to?!

NJ: Never happens, I have so many great tunes to pic from.

5) Your mammoth carnival sets encompass everything from rare groove, to techno. As one of the busiest DJs in the world, how do you find time to listen to the copious amounts of music that you must receive? Do you have a system for wading through it?

NJ: Not really, 98% of the stuff I receive is crap! I still buy a large amount of my good records myself.



Those cool dudes at Serious have given us two copies of Good Times 5, and two T-Shirts celebrating its Silver Jubilee. For a chance of winning simply answer the following question. What London tube station name is depicted on the cover of Good Times 5?

Email your answers to competitions@souledup.com and make sure you include your name and address!

SU

SU: 6) If you weren't able to play here this year, who would you have sent as your replacement?

NJ: My Sons!

SU: 7) The Good Times bus - tell us all about it! How did it come about?

NJ: It was tucked away at homelands in either '89 or '90, and as soon as I saw it I knew it would be great at Notting Hill. So we bought it and the rest is history!



SU: 8) Whilst you're playing, who's on the bus with you?

NJ: Joey, Rudy and a whole host of, radio and sound techs.

SU: 9) Was it a logistical nightmare getting all the equipment onboard?

NJ: Yes! But now I have a great production team running things!

SU: 10) For all the souledUppers who've never had the Good Times experience, how would you describe it?

NJ: The most exhilarating free street party you will ever experience!

SU: 11) The carnival is like a yearly residency for you. Do you play at any other events around the world with the same regularity and dedication?

NJ: No...but I do play regularly at huge events in Europe, Japan and Australia.

SU: 12) Do you have a most fondly remembered year at the Carnival?

NJ: Last year I would have said last year. This year I will say this year! Every year surpasses the last.

SU: 13) How many more years do you see yourself playing here?

NJ: For ever and ever.. Amen!

SU: 14) After playing a five hour set to one of your legendary carnival crowds, what do you do? The adrenaline rush must be massive, yet tiring. Do you rock on or go home?

NJ: I don't go anywhere, I stay right till the very last tune has stopped, besides its hard to move a bus that's surrounded by thousands of people!!



Thanks to Chris and Dan at Special World.

