# Identifying the Vicwardian Continuum in British Popular Music: Working-Class Performance and Cultural Continuity, 1945-1979

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# Abstract

This thesis explores the overlooked influence of Victorian and Edwardian culture within post-war British popular music. The portmanteau 'Vicwardian' is employed to describe what became a collection of tropes associated with the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The thesis offers a counterpoint to academic and popular narratives that emphasise the era's popular music as a radical departure – primarily influenced by American styles of music – from past socio-cultural tradition. Utilising a wide range of historical study and qualitative archival research, analysis is divided into three areas of investigation focused on local cultural hubs, commercial popular music, and television. These studies re-frame familiar narratives surrounding the rise of rock music and reveal vibrant but critically marginalised practices that perpetuated the forms and meanings of much older urban working-class leisure. Commentators have on occasion drawn attention to an apparent sense of music hall nostalgia in the work of The Beatles, The Kinks and other 1960s rock musicians. But the thesis' original contribution to knowledge lies in its establishment that an eclectic and enduring mix of performance culture, social environments and collective mentalities, rooted in both the real and imagined nineteenth and early twentieth-century past, not only intersected with and influenced 1960s rock culture, but constituted what I term a wider post-war 'Vicwardian continuum', visible in a plurality of popular music contexts. The study questions classic historiographical approaches to post-war British popular music and, in so doing, places itself alongside revisionist histories of the era which argue that the scale and pace of post-war change has routinely been overstated to the detriment of what were purposeful constructions of socio-cultural continuity.

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Two people I'll never be able to thank enough are my mother, Karen Saywood and, my wife, Heather Dutton. They have been with me every day of this journey and have given me so much love and support. I couldn't have done it without you.

I'd like to dedicate this work to the memory of my father, Doctor Barrie Saywood (1943-2017). My research simply wouldn't exist if you hadn't shared your passions, kindness and love.

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# Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis explores the presence of Victorian and Edwardian culture within 1960s British popular music and seeks to offer an interpretation as to why it continued to play an active role in the post-war era. Via a range of historical study and archival analysis, the research examines three contrasting areas: local social hubs such as the working men's clubs and preservation societies; commercial popular music associated with the rise of rock culture, as well as overlooked performers who operated outside its youth-oriented boundaries; and BBC and ITV television programming. These varied though intertwining realms illuminate a variety of enduring customs and practices enjoyed by broad age demographic that propose a counterpoint to familiar narratives of 1960s popular music that focus on innovation, change and a youth culture that was largely influenced by American styles. The investigation highlights three inter-related nineteenth-century legacies. First, a range of structural, presentational and musical practices and customs within both informal and commercial settings, collectively categorised within the research as performance culture. Second, real and imagined leisure environments that continued to be tied to social hierarchies. Third, the perpetuation of mentalities, conceived within the thesis as collective perspectives related to class, nation and race, that had their gestation in the socio-political processes emerging from the industrial revolution. The thesis expands to demonstrate that although these instances of continuity played an active role during the 1960s, they were part of an ongoing encounter throughout the 1945-1979 period, which I have termed the 'Vicwardian continuum'.

In its strictest sense, 'Victorian' refers to the years 1837-1901, and 'Edwardian' to Edward VII's reign between 1901-1910. This portmanteau has been used occasionally in popular contexts to describe aspects of historical architecture, sartorial codes and certain post-modern aesthetics, but not to my knowledge in the study of popular music. It is self-admittedly kitsch and almost ironic in its carefree collision of what were distinct and monumental ages. However, this playfulness is part of the term's meaning, in that what we will be studied demonstrates that within the post-1945 era, the continuities between the 'Victorian' and 'Edwardian', particularly in popular culture, often led to the two eras being elided within contemporary discourse. Furthermore, it captures the sense that the features of this continuum, though taken seriously and ever-evolving, were rarely dispatched without a knowing music-hall wink. It's possible to view the term as a compromise of sorts that generalises significant periods, as do terms such as 'renaissance' or 'neo-liberal', so that, for the sake of the unconvinced, the term signifies the enduring connections to the high-point of the British industrial working-class' social and cultural formation, 1870-1914.

I have long been intrigued by 1960s British popular music's appropriation of Vicwardian culture, appreciating the small but select literature that has either made passing reference or a concerted effort to understand its presence and utilisation. However, these explanations often propose pre-1914 legacies as simply artifice or are subsumed within grander narratives which frame popular music as the ultimate signifier of innovation and change. By shifting the perspective to a specific focus on building a landscape that gathers up instances of continuity, the research aligns with Keith Jenkins thoughts on history as a 'discursive practice' that can re-organise the past, 'that can make visible aspects of the past that have previously been hidden or secreted away; that have previously been overlooked or sidelined, thereby producing fresh insights'.[1]

The catalyst for this theses particular interpretation involved linking Eric Hobsbawm's historical theories on the invention of tradition with concepts surrounding the notion of collective memory.[2] Connecting Hobsbawm's ideas involving tradition (fixed practices) and customs (evolving rituals) with Jan Assmann's delineation between institutional remembrance ('cultural memory') and informal, everyday recollection ('communicative memory'), provides a platform to not only identify the different types of Vicwardian continuity within forms of expressive culture, but also trace its wider perpetuation by cultural organisations from 'above' as well as via working-class performers and social groups from 'below'.[3] This interdisciplinary approach facilitates a distinctive interpretation of 1960s popular music. My reading does not seek to deny that innovation and change took place, but instead offers the more nuanced argument that within that change, traditions and customs of a pre-1914 world – both real and imagined – continued to circulate across generations, perpetuating collective memories within manifold post-war cultural contexts.

In constructing this alternative perspective of 1960s British popular music, the research aims to make several contributions to knowledge. By foregrounding continuity and demonstrating the active role of the Vicwardian within a plurality of popular music contexts, not only throughout the sixties, but in preceding and subsequent decades, the work challenges ossified narratives that cast the 1960s as the peak of musical and social change, represented by aggrandising statements made by popular authors such as Bob Stanley claiming 'the Beatles effectively signalled the end of World War Two in Britain'.[4] In so doing, the thesis

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[1] Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History,* (London: Routledge, 1991, 2003), p81.
[2] Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1983, 2019).
[3] Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning, (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2010) p111.
[4] Bob Stanley, *Yeah Yeah Yeah: The Story of Modern Pop*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2013), p131.

encourages reconsideration of the manner in which the nineteenth century defined and moulded twentieth-century popular culture, but also places popular music within a broader set of historical interpretations. These revisionist readings shift master-narratives of post-war progress and modernity to perspectives which emphasise overlapping cultural contexts and gradualism over generational estrangement and cultural rupture. For although many within society embraced change that involved affluence, technology, increased social mobility and the benefits of the welfare state, this thesis draws attention to the Vicwardian performance cultures, social environments and collective attitudes these transformations couldn't entirely displace.

## Literature Review

The following section provides an elementary outline of the ideological frameworks which provoked the research, presenting a range of popular accounts and academic studies which examine and challenge the dominant narrative which casts 1960s British popular music as a radical departure from past socio-cultural traditions. The major fields of this study are historical and cultural studies, which provide the important themes regarding histories of 1960s Britain, the Victorian-Edwardian cultural legacy and popular music studies. Particular attention will be paid to attempts made by scholars to identify and explain the continuities shared between 1960s popular music and its earlier Vicwardian forms.

## Background – Britain and the 1960s

The 1960s stands as a decade of unparalleled socio-cultural change with popular music positioned as one of its ultimate signifiers. Evidence of positioning 1960s popular music at the vanguard of cultural metamorphosis can arguably be said to have begun with British publications such as *Melody Maker* publishing sixties retrospectives in the early 1970s. In the twenty first century, a variety of media and cultural institutions has also cemented this reputation, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum's exhibition *You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966-70* (2017), The British Music Experience which ran at the O2 in Greenwich between 2009-2014 and the BBC's *Britannia* music documentaries (2005-2013). Before an effort can be made to contradict this narrative and unearth overlooked continuities of Vicwardian popular culture within 1960s British popular music, a wider context is needed. Measuring change in a variety of economic, social and cultural realms has largely been the focus of historians who have studied this particular decade in British history, but whether this change was of benefit to the nation has been heavily contested.

First propagated by social commentators in the late 1950s and the 1960s, negative interpretations of the decade have often been debated through the channel of Britain's economic performance.[5] One of the most impactful works on the subject of 'declinism' was that of historian Correlli Barnett in 1996, arguing that the failures of both pre and post-war governments had led to 'the symptoms of the "British disease" of the 1960s… a largely ill-educated, ill-trained and ill-motivated workforce'.[6] This narrative of decline at home has also been attached to Britain's post-war process of decolonization abroad, leading, in Waters opinion, to a British society of the 1950s and 1960s suffering from 'a crisis of national self-representation', which struggled to come to terms with Britain's reduced global stature.[7]

Alternatively, George L. Bernstein's 2004 history constructs a more positive post-war narrative, suggesting that Britain underwent a social revolution where the influx of immigrants, a rise in the status of woman, an expansion of education and a loosening of the laws regarding social freedoms all contributed to creating 'a more fluid, skilled and competitive society'.[8] These liberties were often enacted through parliament via the Theatres Act (1968), abolishing censorship on the theatre stage; the Divorce Reform Act (1969) which removed the need for a partner to prove 'fault'; the Abortion Act (1967) which legalised the practice; and the Sexual Offences Act 1967 which permitted homosexuality between two consenting adults in private over the age of 21. The upheaval of social and moral paradigms is a continuing theme in Arthur Marwick's 2003 work on the 1960s, concluding that 'paternalistic Victorian controls' were once and for all lifted from society. Marwick also offers a more nuanced understanding of working-class contributions to culture, particularly popular music, by suggesting that they created 'a perception of the working-class not as a stereotype, not as a banner-bearer of the future, but as itself, on its own terms'.[9]

In an effort to 'avoid the predictable and tiresome ritual of either romanticizing or demonising the sixties', Dominic Sandbrook's popular history, published in 2011, has foregrounded the contradictions underlying the era.[10]

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[5] For examples, see: Michael Shanks' *The Stagnant Society* (1961), Andrew Shonfield's *British Economic Policy since the War* (1958) and the collection edited by Arthur Koestler, *Suicide of a Nation?* (1963).
[6] Correlli Barnett, *The Lost Victory: British Dreams, British Realities 1945-1950*, (London: Pan Books,1996), pxiii.
[7] Chris Waters, "'Dark Strangers' in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947–1963," *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (April 1997): p208, https://doi.org/10.1086/386134.
[8] George L. Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline: The Rise of Britain since 1945*, (London: Pimlico, 2004), p275.
[9] Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, (London: Penguin, 2003), pX, p97.
[10] Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, (London: Abacus, 2011) pxvii.

> Class consciousness, cultural conservatism, a deep sense of nostalgia: these are not values that we readily associate with the sixties. It would be absurd to deny that things changed during the era… But the sixties are best understood not as dramatic turning point… but rather as a stage in a long evolution stretching back into the forgotten past.[11]

Sandbrook's arguments produce a counterpoint to histories that prefer to emphasise a more socially progressive view of the era, but as social historian David Kynaston underlines, 'Any moment in history is Janus-faced: simultaneously looking backwards and forwards'. In 2023's *A Northern Wind*, Kynaston gives both tendencies an even-hand, acknowledging that during the 1960s 'major plate-shifting historical forces were at work, mainly in the direction of greater individualism', but also recognising that Britain was 'a society that in some fundamental, deep-lying ways was still conservative and hierarchical, with a strong abiding sense of deference'.[12]

Nevertheless, sixties Britain is largely placed in a vacuum of change, in which its economic, social or cultural merits are debated. Although historians have addressed popular music and youth culture with regard to how they reflected broader trends, output has been minimal, continues to focus on socio-cultural change and is largely reticent to involve itself in the details of popular music activity.[13] I argue that popular music's performance, discourses and environments not only aid analysis of youth-culture and change but can also be applied to a wider spectrum of media and generations in society, adding nuance to master-narratives of change — in the case of this thesis, specifically highlighting a continuum with the Vicwardian past. Therefore, histories and interpretations of the Victorian and Edwardian legacy, especially its popular culture, are vital in helping to begin constructing a network of continuities.

## Victorians, Edwardians and Nineteenth-Century Popular Culture

To produce a diverse and balanced overall assessment of the Victorians is a monumental task, but the desire to encapsulate the era has attracted opinion from wide-ranging popular, academic, conservative and radical perspectives. Popular accounts, such as A.N. Wilson's *The Victorians* (2002) attempts to offer a wide-ranging view, largely via the perspective of politicians, generals, cardinals, novelists and philosophers. More recently, Simon Heffer's popular tomes *High Minds: The Victorians and The Birth of Modern Britain* (2014) and *The*

[11] Ibid., p793-94.
[12] David Kynaston, *A Northern Wind, Britain 1962-65*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), pix, x, 521.
[13] For an exception to this see Bill Osgerby's *Youth in Britain since 1945* (1997).

*Age of Decadence* (2021) are similarly made up of portraits of eminent Victorians and Edwardians, which in one reviewers words 'offers a vision of Victorian Britain as viewed by middle-class intellectuals, reformers, and Westminster politicians'.[14]

Matthew Sweet's 2002 revisionist history focuses on continuities between the nineteenth century and its successor, attempting to debunk the Victorian myth by exploring the era's proto-modern relationship with popular leisure, tabloid sensationalism and sexuality. Ultimately he concludes 'if we concede that they moulded our culture… then we undermine one of the founding myths of modernity'.[15] Sandbrook has also elaborated on his observations of 1960s cultural conservatism by arguing in 2015's *The Great British Dream Factory* that much of the country's imaginative life is still rooted in the culture of the Victorians.[16] In the British political realm, the Victorians appear in popular history as the preserve of traditionalists.[17] This tendency by right-leaning voices to champion the Victorians can largely be traced back to Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's advocating a return to 'Victorian Values'. In a 1983 interview for the *Evening Standard*, Thatcher elaborated:

> we were taught to work jolly hard. We were taught to prove yourself; we were taught self-reliance; we were taught to live within our income. You were taught cleanliness was next to godliness. You were taught self-respect. You were taught always to give a hand to your neighbour. You were taught tremendous pride in your country. All of these things are Victorian values. They are also perennial values.[18]

This Conservative endorsement has led to those on the left of politics to either mock or indict the nineteenth-century, demonstrated by Neil Kinnock's retort that 'the "Victorian values" that ruled were cruelty, misery, drudgery, squalor and ignorance', representing the divide between petit bourgeois and working-class interpretations of the era.[19]

In Simon Joyce's 2007 work, the battle between these binary readings of what consists of 'the Victorian' has been raging since the end of Queen Victoria's reign:

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[14] Rohan McWilliam, "The Victorians Are Still with Us," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 20, no. 4 (December 1, 2015): 568–70, https://doi.org/10.1080/13555502.2015.1090212.
[15] Matthew Sweet, *Inventing the Victorians*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p231.
[16] Dominic Sandbrook, *The Great British Dream Factory: The Strange History of our National Imagination*, (London: Penguin, 2015) pxxxii.
[17] Exemplified by well-known Conservative politician Jacob-Rees Mogg's *The Victorians: Twelve Titans Who Forged Britain* (2019), which was almost universally eviscerated by reviewers. See: "'Staggeringly Silly': Critics Tear Apart Jacob Rees-Mogg's New Book," the Guardian, May 19, 2019, http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/19/jacob-rees-mogg-book-the-victorians-12-titans-who-forged-britain.
[18] Raphael Samuel, "Mrs. Thatcher's Return to Victorian Values". *Victorian Values*, 1992: p14, https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/4021/78p009.pdf.
[19] Ibid., p13.

> Our idea of "the Victorian" in fact serves as a condensation of contrary tendencies and oppositions, which we can see hardening over the subsequent century into doxological assumptions and attitudes that are henceforth available for a range of political and cultural forces; these in turn advance by positioning themselves as for or against a partial image of the whole, in the process helping to constitute each other in a form of dialectical spiral.[20]

These binary interpretations of the era play a significant role in either marginalising or victimising the working class of the nineteenth century, therefore eschewing the historical contributions made by that class to the popular culture of the nineteenth century and obscuring the continuation of these traditions, particularly in post-1945 Britain.

Study of Victorian popular music entertainment has been fertile ground for scholars, especially the study of the British music hall. The first sustained academic investigation into this nineteenth-century cultural phenomenon came in a companion pair of 1986 publications that still stand as the most significant collection regarding the genre: *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure* and *Music Hall: Performance and Style,* the former edited by Peter Bailey, the latter by J.S. Bratton.[21] The two volumes cover a wide scope, the former dealing with the various ways the music hall developed as a commercial industry, the latter on its established music and performance paradigms. The work combined to present the music hall as a place capable of working-class emancipation and conservativeness in equal measure. This re-structuring complicated previous binary interpretations of the music hall, which had consisted of either an overarching romanticist narrative of an authentic working-class form being sanitised to comply with middle-class standards of respectability, or simply the music hall as a 'culture of consolation' for a working class that accepted its social position.[22] Whatever the various historical socio-cultural trajectories the music hall represented, consensus is found with the notion that music hall entertainment, in Dagmar Kift's words, was 'significant in the formation not only of a modern British working-class culture but of the culture of a nation as a whole'.[23] It is clear from this plethora of previous academic investigation that it's possible to begin to contextualise and delineate continuities between the music hall and popular music

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[20] Simon Joyce, *The Victorians in the Rearview Mirror*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007) p7.
[21] Peter Bailey (ed.), *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure,* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986); J.S. Bratton (ed.), *Music Hall: Performance and Style,* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1986).
[22] Peter Bailey, "Introduction: Making Sense of Music Hall", in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure,* ed. Peter Bailey, pviii-xxiii.
[23] Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), p175.

cultures of the post-war period. However, the popularity of the music hall's performance culture also spread to other working-class environments and social milieus of the Vicwardian era.

One under-explored social setting in Victorian working-class culture is that of the working men's club (WMC). John Taylor's 1972 History Workshop publication tracks their socio-cultural evolution from the mid-nineteenth century, including the commitment to and enjoyment of music, with amateur club concerts 'closer in spirit to the music hall than the drawing room ballad'.[24] Most relevant is Taylor's discussion of WMCs post-1945 renaissance and the continued focus of the clubs as sites of musical entertainment. This classed social environment, established in the nineteenth century, still held distinct cultural influence in the way music and entertainment was enjoyed in twentieth-century Britain. Further research since Taylor's has been sparse: George Tremlett's 1987 history of the Club and Institute Union is a sober yet informative history, whilst both Ruth Cherrington and Richard Hall's twenty first-century work on WMCs tends to focus on post-war gender and family dynamics, racial discrimination and interference at government level, paying little attention to the type of entertainment given in these clubs. A reassessment of these working-class cultural worlds, their relevancy post-1945, and the continuities shared with nineteenth-century incarnations can pull the habitual focus of popular music as youth-orientated and provide a clearer picture of Victorian legacies in the way people performed and enjoyed popular music. [25]

The most adventurous mapping of Victorian and Edwardian popular music lies with the work of Dave Russell, emphasising that nineteenth-century industrialisation and urbanisation created working-class spaces for cultural participation. These spaces were not in the concert hall, but 'in the pubs, houses, streets and similar focal points' and documents the proliferation of cheap sheet music, brass band culture, upright piano purchase in working-class homes, street singers and the popularity of music hall.[26] Russell reminds us that the Victorian legacy in popular music ultimately involves the working class becoming 'co-partners

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[24] John Taylor, *From Self-Help to Glamour: The Working Man's Club, 1860-1972*, (Oxford: History Workshop, 1972) p44.

[25] George Tremlett, *Clubmen: The History of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union,* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1987). Ruth Louise Cherrington, "The Development of Working Men's Clubs: A Case Study of Implicit Cultural Policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, no. 2 (May 1, 2009): 187–99, https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630802653798; Richard Hall, "Being a Man, Being a Member: Masculinity and Community in Britain's Working Men's Clubs, 1945–1960," *Cultural and Social History* 14, no. 1 (January 2017): 73–88, https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2016.1237798.

[26] Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England: 1840-1914,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p171.

in the process of cultural production' whether this be in the music-making, the type of performance venue or audience demographic.[27]

## Popular Music Historiography and the 1960s

The analysis of 1960s British pop and its associated industries is dominated by narrative interpretations that seek to emphasise youth-culture, class rebellion and cultural change. In this telling, the decade's music — primarily inspired by sounds from the United States — contributed, reflected and represented an irrevocable break with past traditions and customs of British musical entertainment. This predominating account, that prioritises a sea-change in popular music, predates popular music studies as a subject and is largely inherited from earlier cultural and sociological studies that began in the sixties itself.

An early crystallization of this narrative came in 1970 from cultural critic, singer and music industry insider, George Melly. Recognising sixties British pop and popular culture as a 'fanatic rejection of the past', Melly's *Revolt into Style* also began to aid construction of the prevailing history of post-war pop's creation story.[28] At the advent of rock 'n' roll to British shores, Melly describes youths in the 1950s who 'slashed the cinema seats to ribbons' whilst watching American stars such as Bill Haley and Little Richard on the big screen.[29] In Melly's opinion however, this rebellion inspired by the new music was only fleeting, as the entertainment and media establishment quickly demonised and sanitised rock 'n' roll for a mainstream audience, until the Beatles arrival in 1963 heralded a new era of change and modernism in pop music. Although Melly's narrative is laced with cynicism towards commodified pop music culture and he intriguingly calls the Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album 'a celebration of the past', his witty explanation of the radical changes in 1960s popular music is now an extremely familiar one.[30]

The theme of youth culture in revolt was especially bolstered by sociological work undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the work of former students of The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), whose work still casts a long shadow over how popular music studies interprets the past. Although Richard Hoggart had warned of the erasure of traditional working-class culture at the hands of American cultural imperialism in *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), the CCCS developed a determination to reinsert social class into studies of the new British subcultures that were being influenced by trans-Atlantic dialogue.

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[27] Ibid., p4.
[28] George Melly, *Revolt into Style: The Pop Arts in Britain,* (London: Penguin, 1970), p9.
[29] Ibid., p39.
[30] Ibid., p114.

With popular music at its heart, youth culture was largely seen as a form of symbolic working-class rebellion against the dominant hegemony. As David Muggleton explains, many of these studies:

> proposed that the subculture was merely an 'imaginary' solution as it did nothing to solve the material problems that were its source and that, furthermore, any element of resistance would be relatively short-lived; for the deviant styles would ultimately be recuperated by the media and commercial elements of the youth market in their attempts to turn them into mass fashion.[31]

This broadly Marxist notion of pop music and its many genres as representing youth-oriented, working-class rebellion, particularly in the sixties and seventies, has permeated the thought of both lay and academic popular music discourse into the twenty-first century.

More recently, David Simonelli's 2013 work – preserving the ideas of the CCCS – suggests that vague notions of rebellion that were linked to the working class were imaginary and employed in 'the perpetuation of an image, a rhetoric and a lifestyle'.[32] Similarly, Keith Gildart's work of the same year suggests British popular music of the era, led by working-class audiences and musicians and principally influenced by American culture, created an oppositional landscape and 'mental flight from… the English class structure' whilst paradoxically reinforcing a sense of collective class identity.[33] Whilst not seeking to deny the tremendous influence that Gildart attributes to American music, a broader conceptualisation of popular music, that takes into account the lineage and abundance of musical styles that were part of the British cultural diet, would yield a more nuanced understanding of cultural influences.

Other popular music studies focus on specific elements of the music industry. Simon Frith et al's 2016 investigation of the live music scene in Britain between 1950 and 1967 is a narrative that chooses to prioritise the 'profound changes' of the era, largely provided by the growth of television and the record industry, causing touring and live appearances to become 'inextricably linked to record companies' release schedules'.[34] Correspondingly, Gordon Thompson's 2008 work involves the dynamics of the 1960s recording industry, where British

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[31] David Muggleton, "From Classlessness to Clubculture: A Genealogy of Post-War British Youth Cultural Analysis," *YOUNG* 13, no. 2 (May 1, 2005): p209, https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308805051322.
[32] David Simonelli, *Working Class Heroes: Rock Music and British Society in the 1960s and 1970s*, (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2013) pXVI.
[33] Keith Gildart, *Images of England Through Popular Music: Class, Youth and Rock 'n' Roll 1955-1976,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) p11.
[34] Simon Frith, Matt Brennan, Martin Cloonan and Emma Webster, *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 1: 1950-1967,* (London: Routledge, 2016) p195, 161.

songwriters, producers, engineers and session musicians 'represent the vanguard of change', pushed forward by rapid improvement in recording technology.[35] Although both sets of authors suggest change was more gradual and complex, taking time to emphasise certain nineteenth-century legacies such as the influence of organised labour in the form of the Musician's Union, state regulation of live music venues, the continuation of pre-war musical entertainment and the lack of social mobility within the industry, Frith et al. conclude that by the end of the fifties, institutions such as the variety theatre were an 'outmoded entertainment'.[36] This thesis concedes that although variety did migrate from theatres and new groups did not necessarily see themselves as performers within a variety context, its performance culture and popularity continued and were reinterpreted by a significant number of musicians before, during and after the sixties, in a range of environments and via various media. This reinterpretation spanned the breadth of youth-orientated pop and rock emanating from London to the hundreds of working men's clubs around the country.

Studies of British popular music, largely inherited from cultural and sociological work of the sixties and seventies, contribute a broad left-leaning focus on change, youth, rebellion and the cultural influence of the United States. The texts presented above exemplify the arguments made by many others and popular music historiography has been slow to deviate from this focus. They are however, undeniably important contributions in helping to explore the landscape of sixties British popular music. In many ways, it would be more difficult to highlight the continuities this thesis aims to draw attention to without understanding the important changes that took place. But these histories are partial ones, obscuring continuities that could offer alternative interpretations of the post war British musical climate.

## Sixties Popular Music and the Vicwardian

Due to the dominant historical narrative casting sixties pop and rock as the soundtrack to change, youth and rebellion, popular music research that not only highlights a pre-1914 influence in post-1945 Britain, but offers possible reasons for its presence, continue to be underexplored. Authors tackling questions around nineteenth-century legacies within post-war pop offer explanations that cover a variety of inter-connecting themes relating to Romanticism, Bohemianism, Post-Modernism, nostalgia and cultural tradition. Although these observations begin to illuminate and add value to the subject, they also confirm the need to create a more detailed understanding.

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[35] Gordon Thompson, *Please Please Me: Sixties British Pop, Inside Out,* (Oxford: University Press, 2008) p230.
[36] Frith et al., p170.

Simon Frith and Howard Horne's landmark study *Art into Pop* (1987) foregrounds British art school philosophy as largely responsible for the bricolage of sounds and imagery emanating from pop and rock, particularly in the late sixties. Although originally established in the nineteenth century, the post-WWII art school movement is linked temporally to the coming of post-modernism, a 'historical moment' which facilitated a mixing and merging of high and low theory in the form of art and commodified culture, creating a seriousness around popular music which helped certain groups to transition into 'art-rock'.[37] Frith and Horne argue that a significant number of students — who would go on to belong to pop groups of the sixties — were exposed to 'the Romantic vision which is deeply embedded in the art school experience'.[38] In other words, art schools gave British sixties musicians the intellectual and artistic justification to create a post-modernist collection of cultural reference points within pop, which included mixing contemporary culture with a frisson of de-contextualisation involving British nineteenth-century music and iconography.

Ian MacDonald's *Revolution in the Head* (1994) agrees that 'the art school backgrounds of The Beatles, The Who, The Kinks et al… allowed them to introduce the concept of "concept" into pop'.[39] MacDonald expands on the Frith and Horne art school theory by suggesting that the experience of taking LSD also helped to create a spirit of Bohemian experimentation. Vicwardian appropriation is therefore largely done in the name of 'the English love of fantasy and artifice' rather than from any concrete connection to earlier traditions.[40] Frith and Horne alongside MacDonald hold valuable academic and populist explanations for aspects of the Vicwardian within sixties popular music. What these explanations are less explicit about is why British musicians understood and *specifically* referenced nineteenth and early twentieth-century British popular culture, and whether that understanding could have possibly come from a wider range of environments – local, informal experiences or an absorbing of elements prevalent in the cultural mainstream of the mass media.

Robert Chapman's 2015 history of psychedelia bristles at what he terms 'the myth that has grown up around the fact that a few prominent pop stars attended art school'.[41] However, Chapman does place great store in the argument that LSD inspired bands to draw upon the performance culture of the Victorian music hall and other older forms of working-class culture.[42] When investigating the influence of nineteenth-century performance in the work of non-LSD taking Ray Davies and The Kinks as well as other lesser known groups, Chapman

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[37] Simon Frith and Howard Horne, *Art into Pop,* (London: Routledge, 1987, 2016), p5.
[38] Ibid, p30.
[39] Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties*, (London: Pimlico, 1994, 2005), pXX.
[40] Ibid, pXX.
[41] Rob Chapman, *Psychedelia and Other Colours*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p358.
[42] Ibid., p424.

explicates via Svetlana Boym's concept of 'reflective nostalgia', a form that 'cherishes shattered fragments of memory' but has no wish to return to it, 'perpetually deferring homecoming'.[43] The concept of nostalgia persuasively taps into ideas surrounding a sense of loss surrounding an imagined past, but the use of Boym's concept of a deferred homecoming suggests that Chapman believes the Victorian cultural references used by British musicians was a nostalgic revival of a culture that had already vanished. This thesis contends that one of the reasons for extension and re-interpretation was due to elements of the Vicwardian never really going away; many people within British society during the 1960s had a lived experience of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, which continued to influence a range contemporary cultural frameworks that were constantly being transmitted in a variety of social networks and media.

Barry J. Faulk's 2010 exploration of Victorian music hall influence on British rock performers of the epoch brings the explanation of nineteenth-century appropriation to 'residual ideas of an empire and working class associated with Victorian/Edwardian England… in the adolescence of post-WWII musicians'.[44] Although Faulk never truly gives a definition or outlines key characteristics of the Victorian music hall that are appropriated, he argues that rock groups 'invoked music hall largely in order to hijack its authority'.[45] Faulk demonstrates this sort of ironic nostalgia by casting The Beatles *Magical Mystery Tour* television film as well as the similarly aborted *The Rolling Stones Rock 'n' Roll Circus* as highly self-conscious projects 'ironically appropriating the traditional forms of music hall' in order to establish an aesthetic merit for the new rock movement.[46] In an effort to align new rock music to working-class tradition and expression, these films in Faulk's opinion have the opposite effect, this artificial invocation of the past 'widened the gap between rock music and working-class culture'.[47]

The most incisive attempt to track and explain cultural continuity within British popular music between the nineteenth and twentieth century comes in the first three chapters of *Britpop and the English Music Tradition* (2010). First, Dave Laing charts the rise and decline of the music hall, spotlighting the continuation of some of its distinguishing features in post-war British culture. Second, Jon Stratton argues that English music traditions that were 'fundamentally urban and working-class', resurfaced in the late fifties and early sixties after an era dominated by American cultural imperialism and highlights the proliferation of continuities

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[43] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York: Basic Books: 2001) p49.
[44] Barry J. Faulk, *British Rock Modernism, 1967-1977: The Story of Music Hall in Rock*, (London: Routledge, 2010) p3.
[45] Ibid, p2.
[46] Ibid, p1.
[47] Ibid, p16.

in television, radio and popular music entertainment.[48] Lastly, Stratton continues exploring the ways popular musicians of the sixties used a 'tradition of popular music located in music hall that transforms and survives… It is coloured by a nostalgia for a lost, British imperial past, but it is first and foremost the expression of a local, working-class culture'.[49] Laing and Stratton's arguments are persuasive and perceptive, moving away from the idea of Vicwardian appropriation as simply artificial and building an argument encouraging the idea of working-class traditions permeating popular music and culture over a sustained period of time. However, the use of the term 'tradition' is used in a broad, generalised manner, and engagement with historical sources is lacking. These could be used to track, elaborate and differentiate between some of the continuities observed in post-war music such as the assimilation of skiffle into variety, the transmission of music hall-variety into television and the influence of musicians formative experiences in working-class environments and family households.

Overlooked from these popular and academic accounts is the possibility that the Vicwardian presence within 1960s popular music also existed in popular music cultures outside the demographic of youth culture. Once again, the work of Dave Russell draws attention to an alternative 1960s world involving the renaissance of working men's clubs and its more consciously cosmopolitan cousin, the cabaret club. Russell demonstrates how contemporary popular music rubbed shoulders with music hall-variety style entertainment, demonstrating that 'such binaries as "permissive" and "conservative", "progressive" and "traditional" and even "change" and "continuity" are rarely neat and clean.'[50] Russell explores a world of overlapping cultural contexts where new forms of popular music 'could be absorbed comfortably into existing patterns of working-class life because they never lost sight of pre-existing cultural patterns'.[51]

The works analysed in this section, which aim to explain Vicwardian appropriation in 1960s popular music are all key contributions, whether they are positioned to challenge or expand upon. Laing and Stratton's work attempting to establish a pattern of working-class tradition within British popular music pushes beyond the established narrative that perceives Vicwardian cultural continuities as merely ornamentation inspired by art school Romanticism or LSD inspired nostalgia. Furthermore, by highlighting the influence of music hall

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[48] Jon Stratton, "Skiffle, Variety and Englishness", in *Britpop and the English Music Tradition*, ed. Andy Bennett & John Stratton, (London: Ashgate, 2010) p32.
[49] Jon Stratton, "Englishing Popular Music in the 1960s", in *Britpop and the English Music Tradition*, eds. Andy Bennett & John Stratton, (London: Ashgate, 2010) p53.
[50] Dave Russell, "Glimpsing La Dolce Vita: Cultural Change and Modernity in the 1960s English Cabaret Club," *Journal of Social History* 47, no. 2 (December 1, 2013): p299, https://doi.org/10/1093/jsh/sht083.
[51] Ibid., p311.

performance styles during the 1950s, they hint at the possibility that the existence of the Vicwardian was not solely a phenomenon of the 1960s and acts associated with psychedelic rock music, but an ongoing encounter within British popular music. As an outlier, Dave Russell's use of primary sources to foreground continuing legacies within the framework of 1960s clubland reminds us that a plurality of popular music cultures existed during the era that historiography has neglected due to the repetitive focus on the relationship between popular music and youth culture.

## Summary and Concluding Remarks

The texts analysed above offer a varied sample of the broad orthodoxies relating to Britain's 1960s, evaluations of Victorian and Edwardian cultural legacies, and the places where popular music studies' has attempted to position itself within these narratives. A proportion of these texts, alongside other detailed studies, will be deployed in further chapters alongside primary sources in order to further aid the original research. In this context, however, they demonstrate how master narratives surrounding post-war Britain, in particular the 1960s, have largely constructed a history of economic, social and cultural rupture, one in which popular music is at the vanguard, and where legacies of the Vicwardian are primarily read as decontextualised innovation that are of marginal concern to wider narratives of change, youth and symbolic rebellion. However, by broadening the definition of popular music to explore a plurality of music cultures, a more nuanced understanding involving long-term perspectives of popular music historiography can take place, which encompass continuity just as much as change. The following section now establishes the final critical piece: a theoretical framework for exploring how and why Victorian and Edwardian continuity was present in post-war Britain.

## Theoretical Perspectives

This thesis attempts to frame the existence of Vicwardian legacies within post-war British popular music through an interdisciplinary approach, that combines the study of collective memory with historical theories on tradition and custom. Five important strands of theoretical thinking within these interconnected fields will provide insight and understanding to the sources and topics investigated in later chapters: George Lipsitz's concept of music as dialogic process; Maurice Halbwachs' foundational theories on collective memory; Jan and Aleida Assmanns definitions of 'communicative' and 'cultural' memory as well as 'canon' and 'archive'; Eric Hobsbawm's influential concepts regarding 'tradition' and 'custom'; and Peter Burke's ideas on the role media plays in the organisation of social memory. Collectively, these

will illuminate the argument that culturally speaking, real and imagined versions of the Vicwardian were an active participant in post-war culture, complicating notions of 1960s Britain as a time of overwhelming cultural upheaval.

Lipsitz's use of 'dialogic' criticism, a concept borrowed from Russian literary critic and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's explanation of the polysemic nature of the novel, acts as a launching pad for investigating the presence of the past in British popular music. Lipsitz contends that 'popular music is nothing if not dialogic, the product of an ongoing historical conversation in which no one has the first or last word'.[52] The dialogic process offers

> a means of transcending some of the limitations of musicological, anthropological, and semiotic approaches to popular music. It connects affect to agency, and grounds social and ideological choices within the life worlds and collective memories of actual historical subjects. It shows how part of "what popular music is" can be found in "how popular music came to be," but it also avoids the twin pitfalls of formalism and essentialism.[53]

Lipsitz not only offers a way to conceptualise the past in popular music, but also outlines how dialogic criticism can complicate interpretations of 'how popular music came to be', by exploring and 'finding meaning not in the forms themselves, but in how forms are put into play at any given moment to re-articulate or dis-articulate dominant ideology'.[54] By understanding popular music as a dialogic process that constantly converses with the past, this alternative critical approach creates the opportunity to consider the presence of the Vicwardian within 1960s British popular music as beyond an isolated moment and more than just a fashionable vogue, to one that was an ongoing encounter that occurred in multiple popular music contexts throughout the post-war period.

An effective way to develop the notion of popular music as carrying, constructing and expressing a version of the past is via the theory of collective memory. When defining and giving contextual consideration to the term, the work of Maurice Halbwachs is central, not only for his role in creating a foundation for the study of collective memory in the 1920s, but because many of the concepts he first espoused still inform contemporary academic work on the subject, as well as this research's theoretical perspectives. In its basic sense, Halbwachs understood collective memory as collectively shared representations of the past and although

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[52] George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990, 2013) p99.
[53] Ibid., p102.
[54] Ibid.

he gave space for the existence of the individual who remembers, it is the social milieu that decides what is 'memorable'. It is worth quoting Halbwachs at length:

> everyone has the capacity for memory that is unlike that of anyone else… but the individual memory is nevertheless a part or an aspect of group memory, since each impression and each fact, even if it apparently concerns a particular person exclusively, leaves a lasting memory only to the extent that one has thought it over – to the extent that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu. One cannot in fact think about the events of one's past without discoursing upon them. But to discourse upon something means to connect within a single system of ideas our opinions as well as those of our circle… In this way, the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrance to each other.[55]

There are three principles originating from Halbwachs work that are still key concepts for memory studies today. First, individual memory as being influenced, shaped and part of a social group and experience. Second, different social groups finding freedom from the present in collective memories; in Halbwachs words, memory 'does not impose itself on us and we are free to evoke it whenever we wish'.[56] Last, the idea that the very social group finding freedom in the collective memory evoked, is also influenced by contemporary circumstances and is re-interpreting the memory itself: 'to touch them up, to shorten them, to complete them so that, however convinced we are that our memories are exact, we give them a prestige that reality did not possess'.[57] These three concepts help to understand, explore and ask how and why the Vicwardian was perpetuated by different social groups – organised or informal networks, professional or amateur performer, producer or consumer – in 1960s popular music entertainment and beyond. With the boom in memory studies at the end of the twentieth century, many other academics have attempted to challenge, refine and add nuance to this foundational work.

When tackling a range of historical sources, a clearer delineation of different types of collective memory and where they take place is needed in order to understand their agency in society. Aleida Assmann's work divides collective memory into two categories of 'remembering'. The first being 'active' memory involving institutions such as museums and other media that 'preserve the *past as the present*'.[58] Analysing and re-evaluating the work of

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[55] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (Chicago: University Press, 1992) p53.
[56] Ibid., p50.
[57] Ibid., p51.
[58] Aleida Assmann, "Canon and Archive", in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning, (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2010) p98, (emphasis in original).

well-known British musicians of the sixties will represent active memory or what Assmann ultimately defines as the 'canon'. However, this thesis seeks to broaden the analysis and expand the focus of post-war popular music in order to identify Vicwardian styles of entertainment. This will include musicians and entertainers whose work, though largely forgotten, has been preserved. This falls under Assmann's contrasting category of 'archive': sources that are part of the 'passive' memory that are 'stored and potentially available, but it is not interpreted'.[59] What types of collective memories are we faced with when exploring both canon and archive? Jan Assmann's interpretation and development of the work of Halbwachs helps us to confront this dilemma by dividing collective memory into two categories. The first is communicative memory which:

> is non-institutional… it is not cultivated by specialists and is not summoned or celebrated on special occasions… it lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this very reason, has only a limited time depth which normally reaches no farther back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations.[60]

Elements of popular music memory surrounding pre-1914 culture can undoubtedly be categorised in the 'communicative genre', with its informal, everyday communications and its temporal setting, appearing as an active influencer in the post-war climate of Britain. Assmann argues that memory can also exist in objectivised culture and delineates this second category as cultural collective memory. In contrast to the communicative, the cultural 'has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are important events or eras of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance).'[61]

The question remains however: how can we trace the construction and perpetuation of collective memories within a form of expressive culture such as popular music? Eric Hobsbawm's 1983 work on the 'mass-producing' or 'invention of tradition' during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helps us to move past the metaphorical level many of these arguments operate on. Hobsbawm argues that from the 1870s onwards 'rulers and middle-class observers rediscovered the importance of "irrational" elements in the maintenance of the social fabric and the social order.'[62] These irrational forms manifested in

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[59] Ibid, p103.
[60] Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", p111.
[61] Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique*, no. 65 (1995): p129, https://doi.org/10/2307/488538.
[62] Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914", in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: University Press, 1983, 2019), p268.

the creation of 'invented traditions', defined as 'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules… which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.' Hobsbawm's delineation between 'tradition' and 'custom' is also a valuable tool, bringing specificity when differentiating between various ways Vicwardian legacies continued in post-war popular music. Unlike tradition, in which 'the past, real or invented… imposes fixed (normally formalized) practices', custom 'does not preclude innovation and change up to a point, though evidently the requirement that it must appear compatible or even identical with precedent imposes substantial limitations'.[63] Although Hobsbawm concedes that most invented traditions at the turn of the century filtered socially downwards, his conceptualisation accommodates the possibility of new practices and customs emerging from 'below', which 'spring up spontaneously at the grass roots', expanding the possible range of cultural environments in which tradition and custom can develop.[64] Furthermore, Hobsbawm claims that these theories are by nature interdisciplinary and 'cannot adequately be pursued without such collaboration'.[65] The interconnection between Assmann's concepts surrounding informal 'communicative' memory from 'below' and institutional 'cultural' memory from 'above' and Hobsbawm's theories on the different ways custom and tradition extend a sense of the past in the present, offer a distinguishable method to conceptualise as well as to categorise the various ways that a continuum of nineteenth and early twentieth-century popular culture continued to play a dynamic role in post-war popular music, sometimes appearing invariant, at other times amenable to adaptation and innovation. First, we can look at informal leisure spaces where Vicwardian cultural practices and customs endured, such as the home, pub and club. Second, we can explore the way established institutions providing popular music such as radio, television and the music hall-variety stage utilised performance culture, perpetuated mentalities and maintained sites of memory that although had their roots in the nineteenth century were recognised, re-interpreted and enjoyed in various contexts.

This combination of memory studies and historical theory also encourages engagement with historical sources, Wulf Kansteiner argues that although 'collective memory is not history… it is sometimes made from similar material'.[66] Kansteiner goes on to suggest several methods in the quest for reliable data, some based on the assumption that the 'structural characteristics of the dominant media correlate to some extent to the perspective

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[63] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: University Press, 1983, 2019), p1-2.
[64] Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions", p303.
[65] Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", p14.
[66] Wolf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): p180, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/0018-2656.00198.

of its users' which is validated by sources that these representations found large audiences.[67] The earlier cultural work of Peter Burke expands upon the idea of historians benefiting from interaction with cultural studies. In his 1997 work *Varieties of Cultural History*, Burke outlines five varieties of media employed in sustaining perceived traditions and constructing social memory. Oral traditions which give rise to interest in the symbolic aspects of historical narrative; 'the traditional province of the historian, memoirs and other written "records"'; images still or moving; 'action' or 'ritual' which in the case of popular music would translate as the act of live or recorded performance; and finally 'space', a place where certain social groups can 'resist the destruction' of certain associated traditions, customs and meanings.[68] Burke's categorisation of the way different media can preserve traditions and customs and perpetuate collective memory is also a strategy for the popular music historian to track and highlight their presence.

## Original Contribution to Knowledge

By framing popular music as a dialogic process – collective memories of the past perpetuated by traditions and customs that act as an active participant in forming the present – this thesis asks a clear and straightforward question: how and why did Vicwardian legacies play a dynamic role in 1960s British popular music? Burke's categorisation of the various modes employed in the dissemination and maintenance of social memory provide a template for turning theory into precise strategy, namely, tracking the diffusion of nineteenth-century practices and customs in various twentieth-century media settings by utilising the varied primary sources available to the popular music historian. Examples deployed within this thesis include but are not limited to: musician's memoirs and biographies; music and media magazines such as *Melody Maker* and *Radio Times*; local, national or specialist newspapers; trade union journals; TV broadcasts available at the BFI or via YouTube; internal memoranda, audience research reports and TV scripts held at the BBC Written Archive Centre and documentation found in less obvious settings such as Glamorgan Archives. All of these assist in answering three more specific questions that are under analysis throughout the thesis:

- What traditions and customs of Vicwardian performance culture were perpetuated?
- How were Vicwardian social environments, both real and imagined, re-constructed via popular music entertainment?

[67] Ibid., p194.
[68] Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History*, (London: Polity Press, 1997), p47-48.

- How were mentalities of class, race and nation, with origins in the Vicwardian, re-articulated within sixties popular music and its discourse?

The drive to identify continuity between Vicwardian performance culture, environments and mentalities with that of post-war Britain is directed into three areas of 1960s popular culture: local social networks such as the working men's clubs, public houses, seaside venues and music hall re-enactment; the live and recorded commercial popular music industry; and the titan of sixties domestic leisure – television. These contrasting, yet complementary cultural spheres did not exist in isolation but regularly interacted – TV re-constructing local entertainment, the local imitating commercial industry etc. – and studying them means broadening the analytical scope of popular music cultures within 1960s Britain, offering the opportunity to re-frame familiar narratives as well as revealing marginalised ones. Ultimately, the research sets out to demonstrate that the presence of pre-1914 popular culture during the mid-to-late sixties was not just a brief moment of a fashionable trend pertinent only to the rock and pop music associated with youth culture, but instead, part of a wider ongoing encounter. This 'Vicwardian continuum' involved the 'passing-on' of invented traditions and evolving customs with origins in the urban nineteenth century, which, in turn, perpetuated both communicative and cultural collective memories of the era in a wide-range of popular music styles and contexts. This alternate perspective, arguing that the presence of the Vicwardian in 1960s British popular music was part of a continuum, leads to another by proxy – that its influence was not restricted to a number of years in a particular decade, but operated throughout the post-war period. The research therefore distinguishes itself from previous orthodoxy that focuses on the 1960s as a high point of musical change, instead, adding nuance via the exploration of continuity, not in an effort to claim a more accurate assessment, but to provide insights that have the potential to revise and complicate popular music historiography. On a broader level, the thesis counters master-narratives that place popular music as a reflection of radical change in post-war Britain, arguing that just as in the social, economic or political arenas of post-1945 period, popular music reflected the push and pull between change and continuity.

## Chapter Overview

Following the present chapter, the research is divided into six additional chapters – four chapters regarding the Vicwardian presence during the 1960s, bookended by two that demonstrate how the extension and re-interpretation of nineteenth and early twentieth-century legacies were not exclusively a sixties phenomenon but endemic in post-war British culture.

The next chapter therefore begins with a focus on popular music between 1945 and 1960. Introducing the range of research areas that feature throughout the thesis, it opens the exploration of the ways performance culture, social spaces and media discourse drew on legacies with origins in the previous century. The research departs from the more celebrated 1950s narrative regarding rock 'n' roll and post-war youth culture's emergence. In its place, it establishes focus on a dynamic range of entrenched nineteenth-century legacies that were either disseminated or incorporated into a plurality of popular music cultures and which would continue to be re-interpreted in a variety of 1960s settings.

The examination of Vicwardian legacies in 1960s popular music culture begins by surveying two overlooked institutions in Chapter Three, the working men's club (WMC) and the British Music Hall Society (BMHS). First, the chapter contradicts the myth that sixties popular music swept aside earlier forms of performance culture, documenting how enduring nineteenth-century customs of WMC entertainment provided a haven for the continuation of music hall-variety culture – often viewed within media discourse as a return to its working-class roots. Second, it investigates the multiple ways contemporary popular music interacted, was incorporated and received in these venues, and how WMCs approaches to government interference, gender dynamics and race relations were anchored in hierarchies influenced by active collective memories of their nineteenth-century past. The cultural life of the WMCs is then contrasted with the increase in music hall preservation culture and the safeguarding efforts of the BMHS, where performance re-enactment offered an escape to an idealised Vicwardian society. Via these differing worlds, a wider context is presented – separate from youth culture related popular music – in which varied perspectives informed by a pre-1914 age continued to thrive in diverse areas of British society.

The following chapter pivots to focus on mass-mediated popular music, initially contradicting the narrative that the pre-1963 British popular music market was one of slavish imitation to American popular music, by highlighting the activities of artists whose personas and popularity relied upon extending music hall-variety archetypes and customs. Following on, investigation demonstrates how in the ensuing beat boom and subsequent 'British invasion', groups continued to incorporate these paradigms in an effort to broaden their appeal at home and abroad. Analysis also explores how a continuing middle-class anxiety established in the nineteenth century over American cultural domination, influenced popular discourse's reportage of beat group success abroad, re-purposing what was originally cast as a working-class phenomenon to represent 'Britishness' at large. Despite this era often being associated with perceived cultural rupture and social change, the research demonstrates that popular music and its related discourse continued to be informed and influenced by deep-rooted nineteenth-century performance culture, attitudes and entertainment structures, which would perpetuate both within and without the English psychedelia era.

Chapter Five moves to one of the most celebrated eras in sixties pop – the rise of rock music – but employs a new focus on British groups' re-interpretation of nineteenth-century culture from 1966 onwards. Analysis highlights the ways musicians re-interpreted Vicwardian musical legacies, and foregrounds how they entered into a continuing dialogue which built upon nineteenth-century ideas of an imagined England. By emphasising these aspects within a familiar area of popular music historiography, the research moves beyond the narrative that the cultural continuities within pop's development were primarily influenced by art-school education or drug-inspired creativity. Instead, I argue that references to Vicwardian cultural practice and perspective were also driven by their continuing presence as collective memories in working-class lives and wider popular culture, often employed to provoke a certain sense of Englishness. A contrast is then provided, foregrounding overlooked musicians whose audience existed either beyond or without the interest of the burgeoning youth culture market. Broadening the investigation to explore the working-class participatory music culture of Mrs. Mills and the chart-topping sentimental ballads sang by Ken Dodd, the chapter demonstrates that cultural continuities with the previous century were endemic, employed not just by the flourishing rock culture, but utilised in a wide breadth of British popular music.

Presenting an alternative perspective on 1960s popular music TV, Chapter Six initially examines a trio of programmes which, via imagined and real leisure spaces, attempted to re-create musical entertainment that had its origins in the nineteenth century urban working-class environments of the music hall, public house and working men's club. The chapter then moves to a reassessment of the lambasted Beatles TV film *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967). I suggest that although a certain counter-cultural influence punctuates the film, much of the plot, cast of characters and imagery is drawn from a foundational base of collective memory closely related to the rituals of the late nineteenth-century working-class holiday. The chapter then turns to one of the most-watched popular music programmes of the 1960s, *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. Show scripts will demonstrate that as well as perpetuating the performance culture of blackface, the programme also relied heavily on Victorian minstrel songs and the imagined world they engendered. Additionally, when the programme was criticised in various quarters as being a racially offensive anachronism, exploration of BBC internal memoranda, public letters and popular musician's comments reveals a defence of the show predicated on enduring forms of white racial authority established in the 'high' imperial moment of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, examples demonstrate that these continuing cultural worlds did not exist in isolation. In fact, both the BBC and ITV provided a broad range of programming which invested in keeping active cultural memories of the imagined Vicwardian world alive, signifying a wider meta-level of remembrance occurring within 1960s British culture.

In the same way Chapter Two demonstrates the presence of nineteenth-century cultural practices and customs in the immediate post-war period, the final chapter illustrates

the ways active collective memories persisted in the cultural imagination of 1970s Britain. Although the seventies are perceived as the pinnacle of rock's ideological and economic hegemony, analysis suggests new interpretations of nineteenth and early twentieth-century culture persisted both within and outside rock music's structures that reflected the changing nature of working-class culture. Examples in the chapter include how British electric-folk musicians re-articulated the music and ideology of the Edwardian English Folk Revival, as well as how Max Bygraves adapted working-class performance custom to produce singalong albums, TV shows and live performances. The chapter progresses to summarise the other key areas of the thesis' analysis, outlining the tension between popular individualism and collective tradition in the WMCs, and lastly, examining the portrayal of working-class performance culture in the form of *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club*.

Concluding the research at this point, the thesis will have shown that between 1945 and 1979, a wide range of popular music continued to draw on performance culture, perpetuate mentalities and be nurtured in a diverse range of environments, all contributing to the 'passing-on' of fixed traditions and evolving customs that sustained an active collective memory of the previous century. Highlighting this continuum spanning the two eras offers a more nuanced perspective of post-war British popular music – Vicwardian appropriation was not a brief moment in the mid-to-late sixties but an ongoing encounter, occurring over a longer period and in multiple cultural contexts.

# Chapter 2 – Locating Vicwardian Continuity in the 1940s and 1950s

In February 1960, a letter appeared in *The Stage* from Ena C. Pinfold of Birchanger Road, South-East London, under the simple heading 'Alive!'. Chronicling her experience as part of a 'packed audience' at the Finsbury Park Empire, Ena stated, with a hint of defiance, that music hall-variety entertainment was 'very much alive… it is the true variety acts that still draw the crowds – away from the TV – to a music-hall.'[1]

For historians focusing on the economic, social and political landscape of the late-1940s and 1950s, these post-war years offer wide scope for the exploration of change. Following the landslide victory of the Labour Party in 1945, a narrative of initial economic austerity is counterpointed by the creation of the welfare state, an undertaking meant to sweep away the last vestiges of nineteenth-century laws and attitudes to poverty, unemployment and healthcare.[2] In short, this radical restructuring involved 'the state's commitment to full employment, free access to health and education and a residual safety net for the most disadvantaged in society'.[3] This account of positive transformation continues into the 1950s, with the re-election of a Conservative government in 1951 coinciding with an economic 'Golden Age' of 'full employment and sustained growth', leading to unprecedented consumer affluence and improved living standards for all classes.[4] Concurrently the working class, roughly 75 per cent of the population, enjoyed increased visibility in the political and social arenas, with rising trade union membership and consumer products largely targeted at this social group.[5] Bill Osgerby describes this consumerism as being also aimed towards young people's new found spending power: 'the range of products geared to the young was boundless. Popular music in particular, became closely tied to the youth market'.[6]

Other historians have chosen to focus on continuities. Selina Todd has underlined that for the elderly, the sick and large families, poverty endured and 'remained a very real fear for

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[1] *The Stage*, 11th February 1960, p18.
[2] Represented by the Poor Law Amendment Act (1834), the final vestiges of which were only abolished with the creation of Public Assistance Act (1948).
[3] Janet Fink, "Welfare, Poverty and Social Inequalities", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p267.
[4] Paul Addison, "The Impact of the Second World War", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p15.
[5] David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain: 1945-51*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2007) p39.
[6] Bill Osgerby, "Youth Culture", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) p129.

ordinary workers'.[7] Additionally, although an increasing number of women took on part-time work, pre-war gender roles within the family unit endured, with the male as 'bread-winner' and the female's primary concern being the domestic sphere.[8] Frank Mort's work on 1950s social and sexual attitudes argues 'Victorian social policies and value systems remained a strong presence in the public and private life in the years after 1945'.[9] Combined with social factors, the British nation still had an overwhelming political, economic and often emotional commitment to an Empire – now beginning to be rebranded the Commonwealth – largely forged in the Victorian era. While a process of de-colonisation was taking place throughout this period, this legacy still held 'great symbolic significance' and would be complicated by the influx of immigrants arriving to Britain from Commonwealth countries.[10]

In popular music historiography, the 1950s has often been contrived as an antechamber to 1960s musical innovation, the decade representing a stifling atmosphere of conformity, only alleviated when the new sounds of rock 'n' roll coming from the USA began 'bursting through the psychic dam' to instigate cultural change.[11] However, as Ena C. Pinfold's letter regarding how music hall-variety performers still drew crowds – published only 6 weeks after the end of the fifties – indicates, this historical perspective obscures a more multifaceted narrative involving the persistence of older performance cultures that had pre-1914 origins, and continued to be enjoyed by audiences and practiced by performers throughout the period. Research will explore musical continuities which occurred in either informal, everyday environs such as the home, pub or working men's club, or the cultural realm: mediated via commercial channels. In establishing these areas of investigation, a plurality of music cultures begins to emerge – one which demonstrates that before the 1960s, a British cultural diet already existed that was steeped in musical legacies shaped by the Vicwardian era, that sat alongside more familiar post-war narratives of rock 'n' roll rebellion.

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[7] Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working-Class, 1910-2010*, (London: John Murray, 2015), p199.
[8] Dolly Smith Wilson, "Gender: Continuity and Change", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell 2005) p263-280.
[9] Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society*, (Yale: University Press, 2010) p4.
[10] Bill Schwarz, "The End of Empire", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) p492.
[11] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, p4.

## Informal Music in the Domestic Environment

Tim Wall has argued that histories of popular music 'emphasise musical forms which at their moment of origin had small followings, and which were often produced on the margins of the record industry'.[12] This reading is particularly evident in the way popular music of the British 1950s has been framed: a narrative of American rock 'n' roll invading a conservative British musical landscape, fostering an independent youth culture and instigating generational divide.[13] Although analysis of memoirs and biographies confirm the impact of fifties rock 'n' roll on future British musicians of the 1960s, they also highlight alternative musical influences. These occurred in domestic settings, included cross-generational participation, and largely revolved around the Vicwardian legacy of the piano in the working-class family home.

Russell contends that 'as the nineteenth-century progressed, music in the home became increasingly focused on the piano… piano purchase permeated some considerable way into the working-class home'.[14] Russell connects this rise in piano ownership to the rapid increase in the availability of cheaply produced and purchased sheet music, allowing secular and sacred music to be performed and enjoyed in the home. However, James J. Nott's interwar history of popular music in Britain argues that the rise of radio, cinema, gramophone ownership and dance halls all contributed to a situation where by 1939 'piano culture was virtually dead'.[15] Since the closing of the Vicwardian era, the choices in the way people enjoyed music were more wide-ranging than ever, but Joanna Bourke's research suggests that the piano continued as a musical focal point in working-class homes post-1945: 'by 1950, one-quarter of households where the chief wage-earner earned less than £3 a week owned a piano'.[16] Many British musicians of the 1960s were raised in working-class homes and communities, and their memoirs attest to the continuing prominence of the piano in the home, acting as a conduit for informally passing on musical styles not necessarily associated with this generation of musicians, as well as formative experiences of cross-generational communality and participation.

One manifestation of the growing affluence within fifties British society was the plethora of consumer goods. For working-class families, items such as fridges, cookers or televisions were available and affordable for the first time through 'hire purchase (HP) or by long hours of

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[12] Tim Wall, *Studying Pop Music Culture*, (London: Sage Publications, 2003, 2013), p7.
[13] For an uncompromising example of this narrative see: Pete Frame, *The Restless Generation: How Rock Music Changed the Face of 1950s Britain*, (London: Omnibus, 2007).
[14] Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England: 1840-1914*, p180.
[15] James J. Nott, *Music for the People: Popular Music and Dance in Interwar Britain*, (Oxford: University Press, 2002) p102.
[16] Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p161.

overtime'.[17] For many households however, the purchase of an upright piano was a more affordable option that took precedence. In the Liverpool flat Cilla Black shared with her family, purchasing a piano provided a centrepiece for the largest room, 'spacious enough for all our family, friends and neighbours to get together on special occasions and Saturday nights. Making your own music was the norm in the fifties for people like us who couldn't afford television sets.'[18] Prioritising the piano and music in the home was also the case for the Davies household in north London, where the front room 'became the place where we learned to play music on the old family upright piano'.[19] In certain families, issues of hardship did not prevent piano ownership: in a south London childhood self-described as being 'scarred by poverty', William Perks' (Bill Wyman) family had an upright piano for entertainment and education. As Paul McCartney summarises, in Liverpool of the forties and fifties: 'no matter how poor you were, most people managed to get a piano'.[20]

If a family did not own a piano, it was possible a relative did. In industrial Walsall, Noddy Holder remembers visiting his grandmother's house where she 'had this fantastic piano. Most families had a piano in the house, but hers was real fancy… I'd always plonk myself in front of it and bang away at the keys'.[21] For Keith Richards, the enjoyment of his grandfather's upright piano led him directly to another instrument: 'I'll never forget the guitar on the top of the upright piano… I just kept looking at it… I didn't find out until after he was dead that he only brought that out and put it up there when he knew I was coming to visit'.[22] For many musicians therefore, their first exposure to music making did not come with the advent of guitar driven rock 'n' roll in the mid-1950s, but from continuation of the Vicwardian legacy of the upright piano as the musical fulcrum within the domestic home.

The ubiquitous nature of piano ownership appeared to be often driven by a senior family member who could already play the instrument and was often self-taught. A well-known fact of Beatles historiography is that Paul McCartney's father, Jim, was the established musician of the family: 'he'd learned to play piano by ear when he was a kid'.[23] Ray Davies also denotes this self-taught style as '"play by ear", which nearly everybody in the family could emulate at the get-togethers at Christmas, weddings and any other excuse dad could find for a party'.[24] Chas Hodges and his siblings relied on their widowed mother's self-taught

[17] Selina Todd, *The People*. p200.
[18] Cilla Black, *What's It All About?* (London: Ebury Press, 2004), p4.
[19] Ray Davies, *X-Ray: The Unauthorized Biography*, (London: Penguin Books, 1995), p32.
[20] Bill Wyman with Ray Coleman, *Stone Alone: The Story of a Rock 'n' Roll Band*, (London: Da Capo Press, 1997), p34; Paul Du Noyer, *Conversations with McCartney*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2015), p17.
[21] Noddy Holder*, Who's Crazee Now?* (London: Ebury Press, 2000), p6.
[22] Keith Richards, *Life*, (London: Phoenix, 2011), p52.
[23] Du Noyer, *Conversations with McCartney*, p15.
[24] Davies, X-Ray: *The Unauthorized Biography*, p36.

musicianship as a source of income, 'sloggin' at it 'till it was right… Mum ended up with a unique style that was admired by many' playing in the local pubs and clubs of Edmonton.[25] Piano ownership was also used for the musical education of children. Although Jim McCartney had performed in semi-professional groups during the 1920s, he insisted Paul attend piano lessons to build upon his natural interest. Mark Lewisohn states these lessons were short-lived however: 'Paul was happy playing piano his way… he certainly did not want to bother with "learning dots"'.[26] Although Bill Wyman's father could play piano well enough to entertain the family, Bill was taken to private lessons as a child, but as his brother recalls: 'he'd return from his piano lessons and jazz it all up… And my father used to beat the hell out of him'.[27]

These recollections suggest that the continuation of the piano as a hub of family music reflected aspirational working-class lifestyles via the increased pursuit of leisure time or musical education; conflict when this expectation of education was not met; and occasionally its necessity as a route to short-term employment. It could be suggested that it symbolised a search for post-war working-class respectability. Russell has warned against such conclusions, countering similar claims made in regard to working-class piano ownership in the late Victorian era, arguing that it 'obscures the existence of deep levels of genuine musical sensibility amongst the working population.'[28] This sense of the piano as symbol of working-class musical self-reliance, can be expanded via its role at the forefront of working-class social activity, acting as a focal point for communality, participation and the transference of informal traditions and customs. With the record-player still considered to be an expensive luxury item in the immediate post-war period, musicians' memoirs bear testament to the notion that the piano had not yet been overtaken as the soundtrack to a social gathering. Chas Hodges recalls the gauging of whether a party was worth going to rested largely on the quality of the musician entertaining: 'Mum was the best piano player down the street. If you got "Daisy" to play the piano at your party you knew it was gonna be a good one.'[29] With the advent of a party or gathering came with it the justification for having the piano in the largest room. It is worth quoting at length Paul McCartney's recollection of the atmosphere such an event engendered:

> The thing was, every New Year, there was always a do, a big family do. There would be someone at the piano, and most of the time that was my Dad. He always said to me, "Learn to play the piano and you'll get invited to a lot of parties" … So he'd play old favourites and I remember everyone joining in, getting him drinks, all the old

[25] Chas Hodges, *Chas and Dave: All About Us*, (London: John Blake, 2008, 2013), p13.
[26] Mark Lewisohn, *All These Years: Volume 1 Tune in*, (London: Little, Brown, 2013), p59.
[27] Wyman with Coleman, *Stone Alone*, p50.
[28] Russell, *Popular Music in England: 1840-1914*, p181.
[29] Hodges*, Chas and Dave: All About* Us, p16.

> aunties, the women, sitting around the edge of the room, joining in. They knew all the words and melodies to these old songs. And they'd go on for hours, getting progressively more tipsy (sic). But it was a fabulous musical atmosphere.[30]

Cross-generational participation dominated at such events with sing-a-longs involving all ages, extending to the ritualistic event, known by Cilla Black and in many working-class households, as when 'everybody would do a turn.'[31] This would involve each family member or friend taking turns to sing or lead the group in a particular tune they had become well known for singing within the social group. Musician's memoirs show the variety of material musicians of the 1960s were exposed to in the preceding decades, varying from country & western, jazz, Irish ballads and American popular song. Amongst these styles, music hall and variety tunes still persisted, Cilla Black recalling her particular 'turn' would involve music hall songs 'such as "My Old Man Said Follow the Van" and loving every moment of it'.[32] Ray Davies also remembers the family turn would involve 'singing popular hits of the time, and hits of my parents youth, music-hall songs'.[33] Due to many working-class pianists being self-taught, many of these songs were drawn upon from memory. McCartney's explanation for his father's knowledge of music hall tunes was due to him seeing 'all the music hall come through Liverpool and he knew the songs… they had these photographic memories'.[34]

The household piano not only provided a vehicle for entertainment, but also offered collective consolation. After the traumatic event of Ray Davies elder sister, Rene, passing away on his thirteenth birthday, he describes his embarrassment at his parents and other adult siblings externalising their feeling of loss by singing 'You Always Hurt the One You Love' by the Mills Brothers around the front room piano: 'they were singing popular pub songs… But all I heard was that pitiful singsong full of tears, beer and cigarette breath'.[35] Joe Brown's memory also echoes such behaviour, quoting his Uncle Harry at the funeral of a relative: '"if Eric was alive now, instead of going up in smoke like wot 'e did twenty minutes ago, 'e'd turn in his grave – if 'e' ad one – to see all you miserable bleeders 'ere. Come on everyone. 'Ow about a song?"'.[36]

Despite claims from popular music historians such as Nott that an irrevocable shift took place in the interwar period, away from the 'performers' of domestic music-making to a music culture of 'listeners' involving live concerts, radio and gramophone ownership, sources

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[30] Du Noyer, *Conversations with McCartney*, p15-16.
[31] Black, *What's It All About?* p5.
[32] Ibid., p6.
[33] Davies, X-Ray: *The Unauthorized Biography*, p53.
[34] Du Noyer, *Conversations with McCartney*, p16.
[35] Davies*, X-Ray: The Unauthorized Biography*, p38.
[36] Joe Brown, *Brown Sauce: The Life and Times of Joe Brown*, (London: Willow, 1986), p9.

presented here suggest the Victorian working-class habit of piano-based music in the home continued – alongside later innovations – into the post-war period.[37] The piano could offer social aspiration in the form of education, but more often provided a platform for cross-generational and communal participation amongst working-class families and groups, in the process acting as a conduit for passing-on or re-interpreting older musical styles and performance culture involving the communal sing-a-long or 'the turn'. These domestic and social habits had their roots in the rise of working-class piano ownership during the late nineteenth-century, producing a channel for the proliferation of informal practice and custom. From these sources, we begin to see a more nuanced picture of post-war musical experience, not just informed by paradigm shifting rock 'n' roll records and culture from the United States, but suffused with communal, classed, family-orientated music activity established in the nineteenth century. These continuities were also being perpetuated in public leisure settings, with origins in urban Vicwardian environs, adding further contradiction to the narrative myth of youth-culture's wholesale rejection of pre-existing musical culture and space.

## Music Participation in Local Social Settings

The tendency to view youth-culture's relationship to rock 'n' roll as one of sweeping embrace is born out in the ways that cultural studies has focused on the new social spaces the music engendered. Youth culture of the 1950s has been cast as exclusively inhabiting youth clubs, milk and coffee bars and producing a juke-box culture; a sign of teenage affluence which emphasises a narrative of generational rupture where these social spaces 'served as a locus for anxieties about social change'.[38] Popular music's focus on change however, bypasses its relevance to social settings already in existence. Local, informal environments associated largely with the working class, such as the pub and the WMCs had roots in the nineteenth century, and a cross-generational, participatory music culture – similar to the domestic sphere – in which established turn of the century musical styles and instrumentation continued to be practiced.

It's well documented that the music hall culture of the nineteenth century primarily grew out of urban Victorian pubs 'self-made entertainment', with the provision of music and song having a 'capital effect on drink sales'.[39] Although naive to assume that the music and singing culture of taverns and pubs began during this era, the increasing rate at which licensed

[37] Nott, *Music for the People*, p99-125.
[38] Joe Moran, "Milks Bars, Starbucks and The Uses of Literacy," *Cultural Studies* 20, no. 6 (November 2006): p570, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380600973911.
[39] John Earl, "Building the Halls", in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure*, ed. Peter Bailey (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986) p3.

premises provided a separate room specifically for this purpose was genuinely innovative. This provision proved to be the dawning of the Victorian music hall industry and its associated performance culture, with many pubs building ever-larger spaces attached to the existing property to provide entertainment. Many pubs however – presumably without the capital, space, permission or desire to accommodate expansion – continued a more informal culture of musical entertainment within the pub itself, a nineteenth-century practice that sustained into the post-war period. Musicians' post-war childhood memories and data collected by Mass Observation (MO), before and after the Second World War, provide evidence of this continuity.

Evidence of sixties musicians interacting with pub culture in their childhood is difficult to procure, though fragments do exist. Pete Townshend summarises the childhood experience of many 1960s musicians succinctly: 'like many of my peers I spent long, boring hours outside various pubs'.[40] For some musicians however, these experiences of being left outside provided foundational musical memories. Eric Clapton remembers the atmosphere created by the local pub singer whose 'powerful voice… would drift out onto the street'.[41] In extreme cases, listening to live music from outside the pub was a luxury some could not afford to enjoy. Shirley Bassey's childhood was spent in the Cardiff docklands and as soon as her single-mother realised she had a talent for singing, was sent under-age to 'steelworkers' pubs, the rough men's pubs… literally singing for her supper. "She had it tough", remembers her contemporary and singer Patti Flynn, "going into the pub when she was twelve or so to sing a song for a couple of shillings"'.[42]

Inside the pub, the layout remained largely identical to its nineteenth-century predecessor, with a room dedicated specifically for musical entertainment. MO reported in late 1930s Bolton: 'in the parlours of most pubs there is a piano. All customers are welcome to play it, sing with it, and on week-end nights playing and singing is usually going on'.[43] The Vicwardian legacy of the upright piano as musical focal point, held similar status in predominantly working-class public settings as it did in the domestic sphere and this legacy continued post-1945. When MO returned to Bolton twenty years later, its findings published as *Britain Revisited* (1961), investigators concluded that most working-class pubs showed a 'preponderance of not-change over change'.[44] This continuity manifested itself in finding the upright piano still at the centre of musical entertainment. In the list of pubs investigators visited,

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[40] Pete Townshend, *Who I Am*, (London: Harper Collins, 2013) p32.
[41] Eric Clapton, *Eric Clapton the Autobiography*, (London: Arrow Books, 2008) p12.
[42] John L. Williams, *Miss Shirley Bassey*, (London: Quercus, 2011), p69.
[43] Mass Observation, *The Pub and the People: A Worktown Study*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1943, 2009), p256.
[44] 'Britain Revisited - Mass Observation Online - Adam Matthew Digital,' https://0-www-massobservation-amdigital-co-uk.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/Documents/Details/Publication-Britain%20Revisited, p183.

labelled ‘A to N’, singing, piano playing or both were taking place in pubs B, C, D, K and L.[45] MO offers significant fragments of description that allow us to picture the types of musicians and music pub patrons were enjoying. Providing music at the piano was usually a non-paid amateur, although investigators suggest that ‘at least one night a week someone is being paid to play’. Although Irish and jazz music featured, a legacy of urban Vicwardian song is hinted at when it was reported that ‘the sentimental and old-fashioned songs go much the best.’ One description gives detail of both amateur and professionally experienced pianists and the sense of communitas they manage to evoke through participatory involvement.

> 9pm. Approx. 70 in all rooms; 35 in main singing room, where an old man, black suit, bald, pince-nez, plays piano and sings, making cracks in music hall patter style between songs… All join in the singing, very loudly indeed, also those in the next room, who usually finish a whole bar later than in here. The entertainer is an ex-pro. and in observer’s opinion is certainly paid by the landlord.
>
> Best room. Piano played by young woman in brown dress… she plays loudly and sings… The young men join in loudly, slapping their knees and beating time with their feet. Then she plays another jazz tune, and then some old ones, such as Berlington Bertie, which are very well received.[46]

These descriptions are from the late 1930s, but the fact that MO returned to these pubs twenty years later to still find these musical customs enduring is proof of their continuing importance.

Although British musicians of the 1960s associated with decade’s pop and rock music were largely excluded from pubs in their childhoods and the musical practices associated with it, these sources show a social working-class music culture that was inter-related to its domestic equivalent, both informed by enduring nineteenth-century music hall song and the communality of participatory music-making. Cilla Black suggests one activity led to the other: ‘after the men had all had a few jars on a Saturday night, it was often back to my place for a “jars out and a singsong” when the pubs turned out’.[47] Informal social musical entertainment fed the domestic setting and vice versa, leading to a strong cross-generational understanding of music as a collective, participatory event. These customs informed a broader musical landscape that would continue to evolve within informal working-class environs, but also be presented as wider cultural memory of tradition, both in commercial popular music and imagined on TV during the next decade.

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[45] Ibid., p175-177.
[46] Mass Observation, *The Pub and the People*, p256-61
[47] Black, *What’s It All About?* p5.

Another social arena for cross-generational music collaboration lay in the ever-growing proliferation throughout Britain of WMCs. Between 1945 to 1960, the number of clubs affiliated with the Working Men's Club and Institute Union (CIU) grew from 2,944 to 3,501 and boasted two million members.[48] WMCs were primarily formed in the nineteenth century as bastions for male working-class social improvement. Registered as private clubs, the impetus to sell alcohol to its members quickly manifested, particularly after government restrictions on drinking hours were enforced by the 1872 Licensing Act.[49] The clubs set their own opening hours and with membership subscriptions providing capital: 'if the club bought in beer, it could supply it to members without the need to make profit, so prices could be lower than in the pubs'.[50] However, as Cherrington points out, the emphasis on WMCs as homosocial drinking dens conceals the large amount of entertainment created and sourced by members, as well as the increasing space made post-1945, for members to include their families in club life. Hall suggests the clubs became 'liminal spaces, in which men could reconcile competing interests of family and homosociality'.[51]

Within these family-friendly club environments, music of an amateur, semi-professional and professional nature all took place. Entertainments were performed to club audiences that mirrored the presentational structure of nineteenth-century music hall: varied but unrelated acts 'giving their turn', usually accompanied by an upright piano rather than a small orchestra.[52] In the forties and fifties, WMCs also provided a supportive space in which youngsters could perform. Noddy Holder's recollection of the Walsall Labour Club contradicts the notion of youth-culture's new-found separateness, suggesting that interaction with popular music often occurred within a supportive adult social environment.

> Upstairs at the club, there was a bar, lots of tables and chairs and a stage where various acts would perform at weekends. Part of the show was called 'free and easy'. It was when anyone in the audience could get up and play the piano or sing. I reckon it was on that stage that the entertainment bug hit me… everyone in the crowd always sat in the same seats. Each week you'd be surrounded by the same faces.[53]

In *The Uses of Literacy*, Richard Hoggart dedicates a chapter to detailed descriptions of working-class musical customs established in the nineteenth-century, that continued to

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[48] Richard Hall, "Being a Man, Being a Member", p73.
[49] Ruth Cherrington, *Not Just Beer and Bingo! A Social History of Working Men's Clubs*, (Indiana: Authorhouse, 2012), p13.
[50] Ibid, p13-14.
[51] Hall, "Being a Man, Being a Member", p81.
[52] Bennett, "Music in the Halls", p7.
[53] Holder, *Who's Crazee Now?* p8-9.

proliferate in the post-war WMCs of Yorkshire. Hoggart describes the WMC concerts as having a 'flavour of the variety hall… There seems to be a great shadow-world of semi-professional entertainers' and in which a climate of new and old tunes were 'living happily together'. The oldest works sung by members and their families largely dated back to the music hall, 'the heyday of the great urban music centres' and Hoggart gives a detailed list of these songs such as 'My Old Dutch', 'Lily of Laguna' and 'Hold Your Hand Out, You Naughty Boy'. Hoggart also illuminates how music and musicians encouraged collective participation, detailing the activity of a blind pianist:

> in his corner he played, literally for hours without a break… At intervals his hand reached out to the spot where he knew they put his pint. He played songs which were sung seventy years ago and hit-tunes from the latest American musical, and there was no sense of break in manner. No doubt he enjoyed playing, but one did not think of him as an individualist… he was rather, a participant – a respected and important participant – in a group activity.[54]

WMCs also became places for aspiring semi-professionals to hone their craft. Evidence of Hoggart's shadow-world where variety still flourished can be borne out in *The Stage*: a newspaper dedicated to theatre and variety entertainment but which also began in the early 1950s to draw attention to WMCs as site of potential future music hall-variety talent. One reviewer commented that a variety show entitled 'Clubland' at the Palace theatre, Leicester was the entertainment equivalent of 'carrying coals to Newcastle' due to the East Midlands burgeoning club culture, adding that 'quite a number of present-day professionals on the variety stage have graduated from the working men's clubs in this busy city'.[55] Another opinion piece aimed to counter a prevailing view within professional entertainment that WMCs were 'stuffy little rooms with an out of tune piano' by focusing on the increasing professionalisation of these venues where 'unknown talent' was being cultivated.[56] An example of this 'unknown talent' was that of Pontypridd's Tom Woodward (Tom Jones), who was spotted singing by a semi-professional entertainer at his local WMC 'free and easy' night and asked to join a variety troupe called The Misfits. Tom's interest in performing had been directly inspired by the local amateur nights and having joined The Misfits, 'our destination was the working men's clubs… Rock 'n' Roll wasn't always what a working men's club wanted

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[54] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life*, (Penguin Books: 1957, 2009), p132-137.
[55] *The Stage*, 3rd September 1953, p4.
[56] Freddie Fox, "There's a Wealth of Talent in the Working Men's Clubs", *The Stage*, 30th August 1956, p5.

to hear… So I made sure I had some ballads up my sleeve.'[57] Jones' early club experiences demonstrate that WMCs were places where a social memory of music was cultivated, but also could be proving grounds for future professionals. Furthermore, new musical styles such as rock 'n' roll were being assimilated into these traditional working-class institutions, albeit at times reluctantly.

In the immediate post-war era, then, WMCs in a mainly amateur capacity, imitated the presentational and musical customs of 'the turn' and 'the singalong' that had originated in the urban public house and had become part of nineteenth-century music hall-variety stage culture. The exploration of these informal social spaces and British musicians of the 1960s interaction with them in formative years, reinforces the perspective that a plurality of music cultures existed and were embraced by this generation. Instances of inclusiveness and musical encouragement in these leisure spaces contrast with the notion of youth-culture as an entity largely separate from established social networks. They also highlight how WMCs had begun to act as a haven for aspiring performers to nurture careers as semi-professional or professional entertainers. As will be explored in the following chapter in more detail, increasing affluence during the 1960s alongside the WMC movement's own adherence to various social and cultural practices forged in the nineteenth century, would see many of these social hubs continuing to re-articulate music hall-variety legacies. Returning to the 1950s, these examples of a continuum regarding structural, presentational and musical elements of Vicwardian performance culture in local, informal environments were also occurring concurrently in the cultural realm of the rapidly growing mass mediums of radio and television production.

[57] Tom Jones, *Over the Top and Back*, (London: Penguin, 2016) p108.

## Billy Cotton and the Expansion of Music Hall-Variety Culture

Although the 1950s are often associated with the dawning of the TV age, Mark Abrams 1956 study, 'Child Audiences for Television in Britain' reminds us that at the mid-point of the decade, only 26% of working-class households possessed a TV set in comparison to 40% of middle-class homes, demonstrating the continuing prevalence of radio alongside rising TV ownership.[58] In the childhood home of Eric Clapton, the radio was 'permanently switched on' and in Pete Townshend's household it was 'our chief entertainment'. In Lewisohn's opinion, the impact of radio was equally 'momentous' in both Lennon and McCartney's childhood homes due to the wealth of music and programming available.[59] Whilst a multitude of musicians' memoirs attest to the celebrated narrative of first hearing American rock 'n' roll artists on the radio such as Elvis Presley, Little Richard and Chuck Berry, alternative musical influences have been overlooked in popular music historiography, presumably due to their musical practices seeming to lack any connection to the proceeding 1960s pop-rock canon.[60] One name that does appear regularly, with musicians such as Paul McCartney and Roger Daltrey attesting to having tuned in frequently during their childhoods, is that of recording, radio and TV star Billy Cotton.[61] The specific acknowledgement by 1960s musicians of Cotton's career – a performer who regularly reached an audience of millions until his death in 1969 and whose perpetuation of Vicwardian performance culture and their relationship to a perceived national identity is discussed below – suggests he was a significant presence in the musical landscape and justifies investigating Cotton's performance style in detail.

Born to working-class parents in Westminster and a veteran of World War One, Cotton began his musical career in the 1920s and built a reputation throughout the 1930s as a dance band leader associated with popular jazz styles. Financial incentive convinced Cotton to focus on turning his dance band into a comedy show band for the music hall-variety theatre. In his own words: 'I wanted to play what people liked and what they clapped. I didn't want to be a pioneer… The only people who make money out of a pioneering band leader are the

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[58] Mark Abrams, "Child Audiences for Television in Great Britain", *Journalism Quarterly* 33, no.1, (1956): p35, https://doi.org/10.1177/107769905603300105.
[59] Clapton*, Eric Clapton the Autobiography*, p15; Townshend, *Who I Am*, p25; Lewisohn, *Tune in*, p55.
[60] For examples of this narrative perspective see: Paul Friedlander, *Rock & Roll: A Social History*, (London: Routledge, 1996, 2018) & Bob Stanley, *Yeah Yeah Yeah: The Story of Modern Pop*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2014).
[61] Keith Badman, *The Beatles Off the Record: Outrageous Opinions, Unrehearsed Interviews*, (London: Omnibus, 2007), p13; Roger Daltrey, *Thanks a lot Mr Kibblewhite*, (London: Blink Publishing, 2018), p15.

musicians'.[62] Post-1945, Cotton was combining variety show appearances with his own Sunday afternoon programme on BBC radio, where Joe Brown, like many others, heard Cotton's catchphrase 'shatter the Sunday peace with a particularly raucous "Wakey, wakey!"'.[63]

Radio and television were dominated in the forties and fifties by the BBC, enjoying an almost total monopoly during the era.[64] By 1939, over nine million people owned a radio licence, a figure that steadily increased after the war and despite radio's continuing importance throughout the fifties, 'by 1960, 80 per cent of families owned a television set'.[65] These figures demonstrate the unique influence post-war BBC programming had in the construction of cultural memories, engendering, according to Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, 'a sense of belonging, the "we-feeling" of community… Radio and later, television, were potent means of manufacturing that "we-feeling". They made the nation real and tangible through a whole range of images and symbolism, events and ceremonies'.[66] Thomas Hajkowski develops this point, suggesting the imagined community the BBC aimed to create during this period combined the continuance of 'imperial popular culture' with an effort to make programming 'more flexible and accommodating of the diversity of the peoples'.[67]

From its inception in 1922, the BBC's conception of cultural and national identity included broadcasting performers and programmes relating to the world of the music hall-variety entertainment.[68] To appreciate the post-war significance and continuance of music hall-variety culture, Oliver Double's research in the field helps to clarify variety theatre's importance, difference, but most meaningfully, why it cannot be separated from its nineteenth-century incarnation. Double states cultural historians regularly portray variety theatre as:

> a sadly diminished rump of the earlier, more vital music hall… 'Music Hall' was seen as authentic, vital and democratic, whereas 'variety' was refined, efficient and soullessly respectable. Pejorative or not, the terms have been used since then to

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[62] Billy Cotton, *I Did It My Way: His Life Story*, (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1970), p105.
[63] Brown, *Brown Sauce*, p13.
[64] The BBC's radio broadcasting in the period from 1946 to 1967 chiefly consisted of three separate program services: The Light Programme, providing entertainment; The Third Programme, for debate and education; and the Home Service which provided a balanced mixture of the latter two. The BBC's monopoly of radio and television was not complete however, Radio Luxembourg had been broadcasting to Britain since 1933 and the Television Act (1954) ensured the broadcasting of Independent Television in Britain by 1955.
[65] Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures*, p183, 188.
[66] Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting: Volume One 1922-1939*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p177.
[67] Thomas Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain: 1922-1953*, (Manchester: University Press, 2010), p237.
[68] David Hendy, *The BBC: A People's History*, (London: Profile Book Ltd, 2022), p146-53.

> distinguish between earlier and later halves of a continuous tradition, but confusingly, 'music hall' was still being used to describe the current scene when the theatres closed in the early 1960s.[69]

Although Double concedes there were several dynamic differences between music hall and variety theatre – seated audiences, no chairman present on the stage to introduce acts, twice nightly shows, and the introduction of the microphone – he concludes that many of the key performance customs of the music hall remained within variety. Popularity with a variety audience still rested on the same, distinctive criteria as it had in the nineteenth-century music hall: emphasis on musical entertainment, expression of unique personality, inclusion of audience participation, demonstration of skill and the feature of novelty.[70] With BBC radio and TV aiming to appeal to a wide audience demographic, the new mass media formats acted as a conduit for the perpetuation of these music hall-variety performance dynamics as well as its accompanying discourses, with Cotton as one its most visible practitioners.

By 1955, Cotton's regular radio performances were complemented by the opportunity to perform on television too, giving his show-band the largest possible platform to continue to disseminate music hall-variety performance to a mass audience. As mentioned above, Double's four key tenets of music hall-variety culture included personality, audience participation, skill and novelty, and Cotton and his band exhibited all of these elements within performance. Contemporary specialist newspapers such as *The Stage* and *Melody Maker*, document that although Cotton's post-war popularity still owed a debt to his performance of American jazz, emphasis had shifted to the adoption of music hall-variety performance dynamics. A review in *The Stage* neatly summarised Cotton's mixture of jazz inspired instrumentation and variety humour as 'brassy blare, soft sentimentality, slick efficiency and vigorous and versatile clowning'.[71] Cotton ensured his musicians had a range of skills, commenting in an interview that 'everyone must have two or three talents, or more, for their instrument, for teamwork comedy, singing, gagging and the rest'.[72] This range of skills provided versatility that drew live audiences in, but also offered multiple opportunities to translate variety styles for the new mediums of radio and television, where Cotton's brand of 'brilliant commercialism' could thrive.[73]

Music hall-variety acts, musical or otherwise, could rarely achieve nationwide popularity on skill alone; 'a warm, powerful bond with the audience' had to be created through

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[69] Oliver Double, *Britain Had Talent: A History of Variety Theatre*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p38.
[70] Ibid., p95-198.
[71] *The Stage*, 21st August 1947, p5.
[72] *Ibid*., 29th March 1951, p1.
[73] *Melody Maker*, 26th August 1950, p2.

the use of personality, participation and novelty.[74] Cotton never tried to hide his London accent and the personality portrayed was warm, jovial and 'down-to-earth'. However, the idea of having 'personality' is ambiguous and Cotton was also perceived within comedy performance as 'a kind of schoolmaster trying to manage a set of unruly boys'.[75] This factor was a common feature of Cotton's persona, leading one reviewer to describe him as 'the master of deadpan resignation' which only encouraged the audience to laugh more at the 'antics of his men'.[76] Cotton also facilitated a sense of collusion between audience and his disorderly band, encouraging what Peter Bailey terms 'conspiracies of meaning' or a 'knowingness' between artist and audience. Bailey writes of 'knowingness' in relation to the audience and performer relationship of the nineteenth-century music hall, particularly performers regular use of coded language and sexual innuendo to bypass the local government censors and middle-class reformers. Bailey concludes that 'In a broader sense, however, knowingness as popular discourse works to destabilise the various official knowledges that sought to order common life through their languages of improvement and respectability and the intensifying grid of regulative social disciplines that marked the period'.[77] Mort argues that the continuation of these 'social disciplines' could be found in fifties Britain, describing it as a society that continued to be anchored in 'traditional hierarchies of place and power' and in which nineteenth-century discourses 'were not simply residual; "Victorianism" was understood to be an active presence' within society.[78] In his role as 'schoolmaster', Cotton inhabited the role of institutional and social respectability, continuing to draw upon the music hall-variety custom of facilitating the creation of knowingness between performer and audience.

Novelty and participation in Cotton's act were usually driven by the musical content. Cotton performed and recorded a wide variety of tunes from the USA, but also a significant number of British compositions which drew upon music hall-variety's musical styles featuring sing-along choruses, lyrical innuendo and cultural references specific to British audiences.[79] This included performances of well-known music hall tunes such as the sentimental ballad 'My Old Dutch', but no song proved more popular or facilitated more audience participation in a theatre setting than 'I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts'.[80] This brass-heavy novelty number, about a fairground coconut shy, was performed at Royal Variety performances in 1950, 1952

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[74] Double, *Britain Had Talent*, p163.
[75] *The Stage*, 29th March 1951, p1.
[76] *Melody Maker*, 26th August 1950, p2.
[77] Peter Bailey, "Conspiracies of Meaning: Music-Hall and the Knowingness of Popular Culture," *Past & Present*, no. 144 (1994): p155.
[78] Mort, *Capital Affairs*, p122.
[79] Examples include 'The Marrow Song' (1953), 'Friends and Neighbours' (1954), 'Forty Fahsend Fevvers on a Frush' (1951),
[80] *Melody Maker*, 20th August 1949, p4.

and 1960, which involved giant cotton balls – substituting as coconuts – with Cotton and his band 'furiously throwing them at the audience and the audience retaliating'.[81]

Once Cotton and his group secured their own television programme, visual illusions also became prominent, connecting Cotton's perpetuation of music hall-variety culture to a wider cultural memory of an imagined nineteenth-century past.[82] In 1957, Cotton's show began to be advertised as *The Wakey Wakey Tavern* with the stage set dressed in 'full Victorian regalia – bowler hats and shirt sleeves for the band; bowler hat and fancy weskit for the one and only Billy'. Though the music performed was often contemporary, the convivial atmosphere of 'the turn' in the imagined setting of a turn of the century working-class tavern would develop – much like in the nineteenth century itself – into the *Billy Cotton's Music Hall*, receiving ten million viewers at its peak.[83] Cotton therefore, performed for his TV audience a culturally mediated version of a communicative experience, recreating the inclusive, participatory music culture found in social and domestic settings, linking it to the music hall-variety culture and in so doing, perpetuating their interwoven existence within popular memory. BBC audience research reports attest to the popularity of Cotton's late-fifties TV programmes, with 75% of the 223 audience sample giving a 1958 edition of *The Wakey Wakey Tavern* either an 'A' or A+' rating, with Cotton himself being described as a 'wonderful showman', whilst an 'Electrical Engineer's Wife' described the programme as 'Tuneful, gay with plenty of good fun'.[84]

Cotton's use of music hall-variety performance culture within imagined Vicwardian environments in turn perpetuated a particular discourse surrounding national identity, one that had itself been conceived in the previous century. Reviews in the contemporary press were keen to praise Cotton's comedy and music for representing a style that could be identified as characteristically British.[85] The labelling of Cotton's entertainment appears in *Melody Maker*'s

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[81] *The Stage*, 16th November 1950, p6; *Ibid*., 6th November 1952, p10; *Ibid*., 19th May 1960, p5.

[82] Cotton initially signed a television contract with independent television (See The Stage, 23rd June 1955, p11.) but quickly moved to the BBC (See *The Stage*, 26th January 1956, p12.) where he remained for the rest of his career.

[83] *The Stage*, 23rd October 1958, p8; *Ibid*., 10th August 1967, p23.

[84] BBC Written Archives Centre, *Audience Research Report*, 29th November 1958, (T12/23/8).

[85] It is worth noting that Cotton was also referred to as being 'very English' (*The Stage*, 24th July 1952, p5). Often within both nineteenth and twentieth-century discourse, 'English' and 'British' were interchangeable categories which shifted without explanation. Analysis throughout the thesis will encounter at various points how England and 'Englishness' was used to represent a wider sense of Britain and how references to Britain or 'Britishness' were often constructed from cultural material that was explicitly English. I do not attempt to resolve these definitions as it would obscure the ambiguities that form part of the historical discourse under analysis, but my own focus is largely on musicians and events that occurred within England.

radio reviews, which at various points refer to Cotton as 'very British' or the group as 'a good old British band'. This element of 'Britishness' is expanded upon in *The Stage*, a reviewer labelling Cotton as 'the only serious exponent of contemporary British folk music'. Cotton played into this notion of himself as an urban folk archetype by highlighting his London working-class background, often encouraging audiences to participate in renditions of 'Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner' as well as releasing an EP of London associated songs entitled 'Cockney Capers'.[86]

The work of Gareth Stedman Jones helps to connect Cotton's 'cockney' references and contemporary critical discourse around Britishness: he attributes the cultural formation of the cockney archetype to its promotion within literature, art, mass media and the music hall during the late-nineteenth century. Imaginative rather than investigative, this cockney was 'conservative rather than reformist, and populist and celebratory rather than elitist and moralistic', navigating effortlessly between his working-class origins and embodiment of national solidarity.[87] With the onset of The Blitz during the Second World War, Stedman Jones argues that the iconography of the 'cheerful cockney' was resurrected by the Conservative press and 'the cockney archetype was intrinsically connected with the attempt to discover and embody a form of national spirit'.[88] Furthermore, Stedman Jones suggests that post-1945, 'dwelling upon the cockney was one way of registering a protest against the American cultural threat'.[89] This anxiety over American cultural dominance could certainly offer a partial explanation for elements of the music press proudly labelling Cotton and his band as quintessentially British. *Melody Maker*'s columnists in the late forties and fifties were largely American jazz enthusiasts, but took opportunities to bemoan the state of British music and song writing as well as suggest remedies that would help it to step out of the United States cultural shadow.[90] It also offers a possible motive for Cotton's constant promotion on the BBC, whose variety policy book's section on 'American Material and "Americanisms" ' – in use from 1948 to 1963 – reminds BBC employees that their 'primary job… must be to purvey programmes in our own native idiom, dialects and accents.'[91] Whilst praise for Billy Cotton can be partially explained by anxieties around contemporary trends within popular music, the

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[86] *Melody Maker*, 5th January 1952, p2; *Ibid*., 18th December 1954, p2; *The Stage*, 6th August 1953, p5; *Ibid*., 10th January 1952, p5; *Melody Maker*, 24th September 1960, p6.
[87] Gareth Stedman Jones, "The 'cockney' and the nation, 1780-1988", in *Metropolis London: Histories and Representations since 1800*, eds. David Feldman and Gareth Steadman Jones, (London: Routledge, 1989), p300.
[88] Gareth Stedman Jones, "The 'cockney' and the nation", p313.
[89] Ibid., p311.
[90] Ernest Bourneman, "A few words on the sad state of our songwriters", *Melody Maker*, 29th March 1952, p5; Maurice Burman, "A Chance for British Songsmiths… but it needs handling with care", *Melody Maker*, 27th January 1951, p4
[91] BBC WAC, *Variety Policy Book*, (R34/259/1), p7.

acclaim within discourse specifically re-articulated a perspective that had its origins within turn of the century popular culture – the notion of the working-class cockney symbolising consensus regarding wider notions of Britishness.

Cotton therefore perpetuated a Vicwardian cultural memory in the new mass media of radio and television in two intertwined ways. First, the extension of music hall-variety's presentational and musical performance customs that continued to play an important role in post-war popular culture: Cotton's cockney manner and employment of 'knowingness' within his entertainment; the use of participation within his novelty songs; and the versatile skills of his musician-comedian band played into the tenets music hall-variety culture established in the nineteenth century. Second, Cotton's popularity specifically as a 'cockney' entertainer also perpetuated a contemporary discourse first articulated in the late-nineteenth century, that equated this particular working-class archetype with a wider sense of invented Britishness. These evocations which aimed to encourage a broader sense of inclusiveness across class boundaries, also fostered an attitude of exclusivity surrounding notions of 'Britishness', counteracting wider insecurities surrounding Britain's political, cultural and economic standing in an increasingly post-colonial world, which, as we will see in subsequent chapters, persisted into the sixties and seventies. Intriguingly however, the utilisation of Vicwardian performance culture was not solely the province of an earlier generation of musical performers, also being assimilated and re-interpreted by performers who have been more often than not, associated with the rise of youth-orientated popular music culture.

## Lonnie Donegan and Music Hall-Variety's Assimilation of Style

Popular music historiography emphasises 1950s rock 'n' roll as the disruption which triggered significant change within the industry, producing the rapid enlargement of a separate market and discourse surrounding youth orientated music culture as well as acting as the spark for the musical innovation of the 1960s. This historical perspective however, obscures the continued cultural relevance during the period of the music hall-variety theatre as a setting for the performance of popular music. With the inclusion of rock 'n' roll on variety theatre bills, many of Britain's home-grown performers not only spread new American idioms to British audiences, but assimilated and re-interpreted nineteenth-century customs of popular performance.

Continuity within change has been foregrounded by Gillian Mitchell's exploration of 1950s Britain's pioneering rock 'n' roll star, Tommy Steele. Mitchell argues Steele's transition from rock 'n' roll teenage heart-throb to respected family entertainer was due to his embrace

of the 'variety ethic'. In Mitchell's words: 'The new culture was, thus, visible and strident, but it had certainly neither replaced nor uniformly challenged the old ways'. This mingling of the 'new culture' with older styles can also be seen clearly through the rock 'n' roll related skiffle craze of the mid-to-late fifties. At the forefront of skiffle popularity was Lonnie Donegan, whose career in popular music entertainment is, unlike Steele, repeatedly mentioned in musicians' memoirs as exerting a direct influence over their understanding of what Mitchell calls an 'informal "blueprint" for success'.[92] Although Donegan initially relied upon American folk material, when recording success offered the opportunity of performing live within the established music hall-variety theatre industry, he began to draw regularly on the cultures own particular nineteenth-century legacies regarding performance dynamics of personality and audience participation, as well as musical material involving novelty. Exploring Donegan's trajectory therefore, offers a more nuanced portrait of 1950s British popular music in two ways. First, it highlights the continuing dominance of the 'variety ethic' as a performance paradigm and second, the ability it had to incorporate change and intertwine new genres of popular music with its own established performance customs.

Predominantly raised in working-class east London of the thirties and forties, Donegan's formative career as a musician was spent playing in 'trad' jazz bands of the immediate post-war era.[93] This small but dedicated band of musicians largely viewed their strict allegiance to early jazz in terms that Frith casts as 'folk discourse', consisting of 'a set of anti-modernist values that understands the commercialisation of music as corruptive'.[94] Skiffle in Britain grew out of its inclusion as an interlude at 'trad' jazz gigs, performing predominantly Black American folk songs. In July 1954, Donegan recorded one of his skiffle interlude tunes, 'Rock Island Line' as an after-thought at a Chris Barber Band recording session.[95] In 1956, this record resurfaced and gained regular radio airplay, entering both *Melody Maker*'s national and local charts and providing Donegan with a commercial hit as an individual artist.[96] This mainstream success acted not only as a gateway for Donegan's entry into the music hall-variety theatre circuit, but also acted as a catalyst for the emancipation of predominantly working-class youth to pick up skiffle instruments in the spirit of 'Do-it-Yourself Music'.[97] In short, Donegan created for many working-class youngsters 'the feeling that we could be a part

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[92] Gillian A. M. Mitchell, "A Very 'British' Introduction to Rock 'n' Roll: Tommy Steele and the Advent of Rock 'n' Roll Music in Britain, 1956-1960," *Contemporary British History* 25, no. 2 (2011): 205–25, https://doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2011.570112, p220.
[93] Donegan played guitar and banjo for a number of jazz groups, most notably the Chris Barber Band.
[94] Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 1: 1950-1967*, p3.
[95] Patrick Humphries, *Lonnie Donegan and the Birth of Rock & Roll*, (London: Robson Press: 2012), p98-103.
[96] *Melody Maker*, 5th May 1956, p10.
[97] Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 1: 1950-1967*, p97.

of it'. Teenagers, like Roger Daltrey 'felt a frisson' in Donegan's sound, and the skiffle music that had grown from a 'folk discourse' primarily inspired by American sounds, began to be associated with the commercial popularity of the music hall-variety theatre.[98]

With the success of 'Rock Island Line', Donegan stated his hope to 'launch out in Variety' and reviews suggest he initially stuck with the American folk material in his early variety appearances. This adherence to the folk-skiffle idiom led a review to claim that 'the stalls were stony, the circle in ecstasy… He obviously caters for the Presley school: the mums and dads can take him or leave him'. A review of the same show for *The Stage* listed the songs Donegan played as being drawn from the American folk tradition, such as 'Lost John', 'Bring a Little Water, Sylvie' and 'Dead or Alive'. By the summer of 1957, Donegan had continued chart success with folk song content such as 'Cumberland Gap' and 'Gamblin' Man' and a 'West End Hat-Trick' of appearances at the Prince of Wales, the London Palladium and the London Hippodrome, all bastions of the variety circuit.[99]

In Donegan's own opinion however, his initial popularity was over-reliant on a youth audience and career longevity could not rely on the novelty of singing American folk tunes.

> I will never forget my mortification. I had only been in variety a few weeks, and I mentioned to one of the support acts, an Irish comic, that it was sold out and he said, "that's right, son, you bring 'em in and we'll entertain 'em!" So I set about consciously learning this thing called show business.[100]

Donegan's conscious learning took the form of embedding himself in the customs of music hall-variety, assimilating and incorporating its performer-audience dynamics in order to broaden his appeal to a wider demographic. From 1958 onwards, Donegan appeared in five consecutive pantomimes, in Chiswick, Stockton, Finsbury Park, Nottingham and Birmingham in various comedic and musical roles.[101] The mass popularity of the pantomime in its post-war incarnation was a direct result of its institutionalisation during the Victorian era. As Jeffrey Richards states: 'Everyone went to the pantomime in Victorian England. From the Queen and her royal family to the humblest of subjects. It appealed to West End and East End audiences, to London and the provinces, to both sexes and all ages.'[102] Victorian pantomime consisted of

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[98] Du Noyer, *Conversations with McCartney*, p19; Daltrey, *Thanks a lot Mr Kibblewhite*, p29.
[99] Bob Dawbarn*, Melody Maker*, 19th May 1956, p11; Dick Hall, *Melody Maker*, 8th December 1956, p8; *The Stage*, 6th December 1956, p5; *Melody Maker*, 1st June 1957, p1.
[100] Humphries, *Lonnie Donegan*, p141.
[101] *The Stage*, 2nd January 1958, p7; *Melody Maker*, 3rd January 1959, p10; *Ibid*., 2nd January 1960, p1; *Ibid*., 31st December 1960, p2; *The Stage*, 4th January 1962, p36.
[102] Jeffrey Richards, *The Golden Age of Pantomime: Slapstick, Spectacle and Subversion in Victorian England*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), p1.

family orientated productions where versatility in performers was expected in song, comedy, dance and compering, with reviews of Donegan's performances appreciative and admiring. Furthermore, his participation in this nineteenth-century tradition, where many tastes were catered for, cemented the approach that he took into his own personal shows. A review from a Donegan show in Harrow in the spring of 1960 suggests that Donegan had transcended his early skiffle-orientated popularity, beginning 'to appeal to all tastes and his show… played to varying age groups was applauded by young and not so young alike'.[103]

This wider appeal that Donegan successfully cultivated also involved the adoption of alternative musical influences alongside the American folk songs that had initially driven his popularity. Donegan had hinted at his appreciation of music hall song material when he took part in a charity LP record entitled 'Hail, Variety!' which included contemporary musicians singing music hall songs of the nineteenth century. Donegan embraced the music hall song stylings of the participatory sing-a-long chorus; a vocal delivery that incorporated patterns of everyday rhythmic speech; and a subject matter broadly drawn from working-class archetypes in the successful release of 'My Old Man's a Dustman', peaking at number one in the British charts in 1960.[104] This connection to the music hall-variety idiom was further accentuated by the fact that the record that was released was recorded in front of a live variety theatre audience, the impact of the song's jokes and punchlines being enhanced by the audible atmosphere of audience laughter and participation.[105]

With the success of a tune influenced by the established conventions of music hall-variety song, Donegan's transition from skiffle performer to variety artist culminated with performing the dustman song at the Royal Variety Performance, billed alongside Billy Cotton. Donegan however, continued the dichotomy of recording American folk songs alongside music hall inspired knockabout such as 'Lumbered', as well as a tune about 'cockney' burglars entitled 'Lively'.[106] Perhaps the most direct instance of Donegan linking his own identity as a contemporary performer to a continuum of music hall-variety performance culture can be demonstrated by the novelty recordings he made with Max Miller, arguably the most famous

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[103] *The Stage*, 5th May 1960, p4.
[104] Anthony Bennett, "Music in the Halls", in *Music Hall: Performance and Style*, ed. J.S. Bratton, (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1986) p1-22; *Melody Maker*, 2nd April 1960, p2.
[105] Since the time Donegan released the song, the origins of its subject matter, melody and tune have been disputed. On 4th June 1960 (p10), *Melody Maker* reported that Donegan's publishing company had agreed to pay Lawrence Wright Publishing a share of the profits for basing the tune on a 1920s song in their catalogue entitled 'What d'yer think of that'. Others have suggested the song's origins go further back and is based on an Edwardian song relating to fireman in Liverpool, which was later adapted to refer to British soldiers during the First World War, see: https://web.archive.org/web/20090812054829/http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/christopherhowse/100002242/he-wears-a-gorblimey-hat/.
[106] *Melody Maker*, 21st May 1960, p12; *Ibid.*, 3rd December 1960, p13.

British music hall comedian of the inter-war period. Although the record was not a commercial success, the intentional re-articulation in 'The Market Song' and 'Tit Bits' of the costermonger characters found in nineteenth-century music hall song exemplify Donegan's assimilation of Vicwardian performance culture.[107]

Although Donegan regularly recorded and appeared on television, his own retrospective views suggest his priorities lay with his regular appearances in the music hall-variety theatre:

> Don't forget, in those days, people went to variety theatres regardless of the artist performing. It was their night out at the theatre, and they went regularly… I could see they didn't know what 'Rock Island Line' was; their expressions said: when's he getting to the jokes? And I had to adapt to that.[108]

Donegan's reflections suggest that, with a British popular culture still steeped in the structural, presentational and musical customs of music hall-variety culture, assimilating these dynamics was a pragmatic method of achieving career longevity. It's possible that Donegan felt impelled to do this due to the hostility the skiffle craze faced from the majority of the music press. This antagonism bore relation to previous nineteenth-century anxieties surrounding the emancipation of the working class via musical pursuit. Russell explores how middle-class Victorians tried – in the name of social improvement – to exert control over the type of popular music the working-classes enjoyed: 'it was axiomatic that music should be more than mere artistic experience or a form of amusement'.[109] When Alexis Korner commented that skiffle 'rarely exceeds the mediocre and is, in general, so abysmally low that it defies proper judgement', he may not have been actively seeking to control working-class musical habits, but certainly re-articulated a certain bourgeois perspective of contempt regarding working-class musical taste.[110] Conversely, the other argument made against skiffle music was drawn from the Victorian working-class legacy of organised labour. British alto saxophonist Bruce Turner argued that skiffle amateurs and music promoters were in a 'powerful alliance directed against the professional musician' to take work away from musicians allied to the Musicians' Union.[111] Although these arguments came from different standpoints, they arguably both featured middle-class perspectives regarding a low esteem for commercialism and an

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[107] Humphries, *Lonnie Donegan*, p277.
[108] Ibid., p268.
[109] Russell, *Popular Music in England*, p23.
[110] Alexis Korner, "Skiffle or Piffle?", *Melody Maker*, 28th July 1956, p5.
[111] *Melody Maker*, 14th December 1957, p11.

embedded fear of new modes of working-class emancipation that were perceived to challenge acceptable forms of musical participation.

For Donegan, his willing integration into the music hall-variety ethic left 'the vexed question of "authenticity" which would continue to dog his career'.[112] By the early sixties the 'folk' discourse he sprung from had largely disowned him for his association with commercialism, whilst simultaneously, the music hall-variety theatre circuit began to rapidly fall into decline.[113] Although Donegan and other home-grown skiffle and rock 'n' roll artists had helped a resurgence in audience attendance, wider trends such as urban migration, the rise of television, and the inclusion of nude revues all contributed to a pervading sense that its popularity could not be salvaged.[114] Historians however have been quick to conclude the story of music hall-variety with the demise of the traditional proscenium-arch theatre setting. In the sixties this art-form itself migrated, just like much of its working-class audience, finding a new home in which Vicwardian legacies of entertainment could evolve, chiefly in the suburban landscape of the WMCs prominent throughout Britain, which I will explore in detail in Chapter Three.

Regarding Donegan's assimilation into music hall-variety and his incorporation of its musical and presentational styles, Frith et al. argue that 'explaining his appeal in terms of traditional entertainment suggests an inability to understand that skiffle represented a profound change'.[115] It is true that Donegan's initial popularity with American folk songs in the skiffle genre inspired many working-class youths to pick up the guitar, an instrument which would achieve total popular music supremacy in the 1960s. However, it would be equally misleading to simply focus on his role in musical change and marginalise the context he performed in, an environ which held significant continuities with nineteenth-century urban cultural customs. The music hall-variety theatre as a setting was in decline, but its performance tenets, including its musical aesthetics, continued to pervade British popular culture. Due to their continuing dominance, Donegan consciously integrated these paradigms in an attempt to ensure career longevity, in the process also attracting discourse that was influenced by hierarchies of class inherited from the nineteenth century. Donegan therefore is an example of a pre-1960s post-war performer who mixed popular American folk genres with the re-interpretation of performance legacies associated with the Vicwardian music hall-variety theatre in which versatility was a sign of personality and accomplishment, and where musical styles involving novelty and audience participation could be utilised. Popular music

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[112] Humphries, *Lonnie Donegan*, p217.
[113] Examples of this opinion in *Melody Maker* include articles such as Jack Payne's "Variety Needs a Wash and Brush Up" (15th December 1956, p7) and Jerry Dawson's "Variety is Dead but Spectaculars may save Show Biz" (2nd May 1959, p1)
[114] Double, *Britain had Talent*, p69-92.
[115] Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 1: 1950-1967*, p104.

historiography has tried to cast skiffle and rock 'n' roll's assimilation into earlier urban music hall-variety styles as 'change that was only briefly held back'.[116] However, it will be evident in subsequent chapters that the cultural customs that artists such as Donegan actively incorporated into their performance during the fifties would continue to be developed and re-interpreted by British musicians of the sixties in a variety of contexts.

## Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter has established the research's three key areas of focus: informal social networks which here has meant the home, public house and working men's club; the flourishing media of radio and TV; and the commercial popular music industries of recording and performance. Via investigation of these various popular music contexts of the late forties and fifties, a range of performance cultures, environments and discourses that had their foundation in the nineteenth century becomes apparent. Memoirs and biographies of 1960s popular musicians provide an entry point to this alternative landscape of post-war British popular music. From this perspective, many early musical experiences did not involve rock 'n' roll, jazz or blues, but relate instead to an enduring working-class culture revolving around the continued customs of communal, participatory, piano-led music-making with origins in urban environments of the pub, WMC and close-knit domestic communities. When exploring these sources further for references to contemporary mass mediated forms of popular music culture, the regular mention of Billy Cotton and Lonnie Donegan reveal the enduring prominence of music hall-variety culture. Analysis of these respective performers demonstrates how modern media, such as radio and TV, transferred and re-interpreted performance styles established in the Vicwardian music hall, as well as how the remaining music hall-variety theatres assimilated new forms of popular music until they were compatible with a more established set of performance dynamics. Furthermore, both performers approaches to popular music encouraged the contemporary press to re-articulate familiar discourses: in the case of Cotton, the 'cockney' performer as being symbolic of wider Britishness and Donegan as a catalyst for criticism of working-class musical tastes, attitudes that had been established in the nineteenth century, and as the following chapters will demonstrate, manifested in various ways throughout the ensuing decades.

What becomes evident, unsurprisingly perhaps given its chronological proximity, is a post-war popular music culture that was in conversation with the past, where active 'Vicwardian' communicative and cultural customs – both consciously and unconsciously –

[116] Ibid.

played a dynamic role in the development of contemporary society. By exploring these processes in the immediate post-war decades, a different historical interpretation begins to appear, in which the development of British popular music featured a plurality of overlapping contexts, and where the new sounds of rock ‘n’ roll existed alongside a Vicwardian continuum of both informal and commercialised urban music culture. How these continuities were practiced and re-interpreted within a range of British popular music cultures of the 1960s, a decade usually thought of as representing unparalleled musical change in Britain, is the subject of the next four chapters – beginning with an exploration of how pre-1914 legacies presented themselves within the contrasting environments of the working men’s clubs and the burgeoning preservation movement.

# Chapter 3 – The Turn: Music Hall, Variety and Generational Dialogues in 1960s Clubland

When perusing the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*'s advertisement section for Tuesday the 21st April 1964, the reader was given a list of local entertainment options. That very evening, a member of the public – providing they had a Club and Institute Union member's card – could choose to 'Twang with the Fabulous Flamingoes' at the Unicorn WMC from 8 till 11pm. A similar invitation presented itself for Thursday evening at Wyken WMC, where you could 'Twist and Twang' from 8 to 10:45pm to the Barry Johns Five. As an alternative, though further afield in north Birmingham, evening performances of 'Old English Variety' were running all week at La Reserve, Sutton Coldfield.[1]

The previous chapter established the three areas of research focus by highlighting the continuing legacies of Vicwardian popular culture within Britain of the late-1940s and 1950s. These connections included enduring customs of local, participatory music-making within the working class home, pub and club; the persistence of music hall-variety performance culture and their transference to radio and TV; as well as commercial popular music's evolving relationship with an active – though declining – music hall-variety theatre circuit. Popular music historiography, as well as wider social history, has tended to view these continuities within the immediate post-war decades – if acknowledged at all – as the 'last gasp' of older socio-cultural habits that were being swept away by the cultural rupture of the 1960s. In this telling, historians have placed popular music at the vanguard of this change, particularly focusing on the prevalence and importance of youth culture and their separate social spaces for the enjoyment and development of sixties popular music. The status of Liverpool's Cavern Club as one of the cradles of youth-led cultural change was established several decades ago.[2] More recently, Gildart has focused on the role of Soho's Flamingo Club in fostering 'interconnections between white working-class youth, American rhythm and blues and West Indian migration'.[3] Although Frith et al. cautiously point out that 'separation of young from grown-up leisure spaces did not happen evenly', their research chooses to prioritise the youth focused 'shake up' of live popular music entertainment.[4]

However, as the adverts from the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* suggest, if we broaden the exploration of social spaces and pull focus away from the habitual sites of 1960s youth-

[1] *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 21st April 1964, p18.
[2] See: Spencer Leigh, *Let's Go Down the Cavern: The Story of Liverpool's MerseyBeat*, (London: Vermilion, 1984).
[3] Gildart, *Images of England*, p61.
[4] Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 1: 1950-1967*, p122.

culture, a more nuanced picture emerges. Specifically, the chapter will build on the exploration of local leisure habits made in Chapter Two, by analysing two contrasting areas. The first focus concerns the continuation and growth in the 1960s of the working men's club movement's cross-generational music culture. Analysis of regional newspapers, *The Stage* and the WMC's *Club & Institute Journal* reveals an overlooked pre-existing working-class cultural agenda, whose continued practice of cultural preferences established in the nineteenth century had popular music at its heart. The exploration of these social spaces, often referred to in the sixties press as 'clubland', will contradict the argument that music hall-variety paradigms did 'not survive the changes in audience tastes' brought by 1960s modernity, as well as question the assumption that contemporary pop music associated with youth-culture stood outside these class-orientated social spaces.[5] In fact, a conscious continuation of what Brad Beaven calls the nineteenth-century working-class 'culture of self-reliance' – born from resistance to and manipulation of Vicwardian governmental and middle-class interference – persisted during the 1960s, incorporating both older and newer forms of entertainment to coincide with these enduring cultural preferences.[6]

The chapter will then move on to investigating how this self-determining WMC culture continued to be interfered with or disapproved of by both government and media during the 1960s, re-articulating specific discourses that also had their origins in the late-nineteenth century. However, enduring societal attitudes inherited from their nineteenth-century beginnings also occurred within WMC hierarchies themselves, particularly regarding gender and race. These began to become increasingly problematic in the context of sixties modernity, affecting entertainment and demonstrating the inconsistency with which these autonomous social spaces handled the balance between enduring internal tradition and changing external attitudes.

These working-class social spaces will then be contrasted with the development of music hall re-enactment culture, a form of leisure that consciously aimed to re-create the entertainment of the Vicwardian age. Its rise in popularity during the 1960s occurred amongst social groups across the country, though was spearheaded by the formation of the British Music Hall Society. I will argue that the growth of this preservationist model of entertainment helped to ossify a collective cultural memory of an imagined Vicwardian past, romanticising aspects of nineteenth-century society, class and culture via music hall-variety paradigms and in the process offering a post-war 'culture of consolation'. In a wider sense, by broadening the scope of social spaces in which society enjoyed popular music to include these local hubs, I aim to further problematise the idea of the sixties as one of rapid cultural change – instead

[5] Ibid., p170.
[6] Brad Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850-1945*, (Manchester: University Press, 2005), p89.

building a picture of overlapping contexts where modernity mixed with enduring cultural customs, discourses and environments which drew on their pre-1914 origins.

## The Relocation of Music Hall-Variety Theatre to Clubland

Cultural historians have tended to end their chronologies of music hall-variety with the ever increasing closure of its theatres in the late fifties and early sixties. This demise has been attributed to changes in society such as working-class urban migration, increased TV ownership and the rise of new youth-specific popular music styles. Kynaston is indicative of this perspective, suggesting this type of entertainment was 'conclusively destroyed' by the end of the fifties, with any music hall-variety performers presented thereafter on television 'inhabitants of a lost world'.[7] Double argues this conclusion is unfair, leading to the genre's post-fifties cultural contribution being 'written out of history'.[8] Likewise, Russell has suggested that many scholars have found the subject 'unattractively unchallenging and mainstream' due to the middle-of-the-road connotations related to 'light entertainment'.[9] In the previous chapter, it was shown that the performance dynamics associated with music hall-variety entertainment were still a dominant cultural force in a variety of cultural contexts during the forties and fifties. In local spaces such as the home, pub and WMC, as well as in the theatre and growing realms of television and radio, the customs and practices of music hall-variety performance culture, established in the nineteenth century, persisted and incorporated new forms of popular music. What has largely been overlooked, however, is that during the 1960s, 'live' music hall-variety was not demolished by television and the guitar-group revolution, but continued, finding refuge and success in the WMCs. As primary source material will demonstrate, music hall-variety culture had played an important role in WMC life since the nineteenth century, and these continuing working-class cultural tastes, combined with the rising economic status of the CIU and the closure of variety theatres, perpetuated the migration of music hall-variety performers to clubland.

A contextual and historical analysis of the nineteenth-century origins and socio-cultural structure of the WMC movement provides a more nuanced understanding of how and why music hall-variety performers were able to quickly re-locate and thrive in the world of the 1960s WMCs. The idea of a club exclusively for working men was initially born from a perspective shared by a significant proportion of the middle-classes and elites in the second half of the

[7] David Kynaston, *Family Britain: 1951-57*, p206.
[8] Double, *Britain Had Talent*, p199.
[9] Russell, "Glimpsing La Dolce Vita", p298.

nineteenth century – that industrialisation had brought de-stabilising forces into British society. One aspect of these anxieties was the perceived negative 'efflorescence of a vigorous plebeian culture' from which the upper-classes had withdrawn their patronage in the new and frightening urban spaces of the nineteenth century.[10] In Beaven's summary: 'From the Socialists to the Salvationists, a common strand of thinking materialised which believed that only through aggressive forms of rational recreation, taken to the heart of working-class communities, could the modern citizen be fostered'.[11] It was in this cultural climate that the WMCs established themselves from the 1860s onwards. Originally led by the Reverend Henry Solly, initial funding of the clubs relied on donations from Lords, Deans and various other members of the Victorian elite. This money was largely provided on the premise that it would be used to forward the cause of rational recreation: constructive and educational activities that were still important elements of the movement in the 1960s.[12] By the early 1960s, membership of CIU affiliated clubs had reached over 2 million members frequenting just under 3,500 clubs and a cultural framework of sport, education, charity and member welfare had remained largely unchanged since the nineteenth century.[13] This adherence to the principles of rational recreation was documented by the *Club and Institute Union Journal* (*CIU Journal*), which regularly reported the continuing popularity of activities introduced in the nineteenth century involving sports such as billiards, darts and angling, educational opportunities and scholarships, as well as charity and member welfare support.[14]

What was as equally important to the cultural life of the WMCs was the prioritisation of musical entertainment for its members. Beaven comments that during the late-nineteenth century 'working men showed a tremendous propensity to manipulate the entertainment offered to coincide with their own cultural preferences', and initiating music hall-variety style shows within the clubs offers an example of WMCs ability to also subvert middle-class ideas as to what constituted rational recreation.[15] With the removal of honorary elites at the executive level in 1886, followed by the decision in 1889 to make every club a shareholder in the union, working-class members were able to dictate the types of entertainment available in their club.[16] Evidence of musical activity comes largely from London-based WMCs, which at the start of

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[10] Robert D. Storch, "Introduction: Persistence and Change in Nineteenth-Century Popular Culture", in *Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. Robert D. Storch, (London: Routledge, 1982, 2016), p4.
[11] Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain,* p39.
[12] George Tremlett*, Clubmen: History of The Working Men's Club and Institute Union*, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1987) p17-18.
[13] *CIU Journal*, July 1960, pIV.
[14] *Ibid*., January 1962, p10; *Ibid*., April 1966, p27; *Ibid*., January 1962, p15; *Ibid*., October 1960, p9.
[15] Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain,* p39.
[16] Tremlett, *Clubmen*, p70-75.

the 1890s made up almost half of the 329 clubs in the union, though by the end of the decade CIU affiliated clubs had risen to 683.[17] Concerts happened regularly during the late-nineteenth century, particularly at weekends, and members would write to the *CIU Journal* to report on their entertainments, several examples of which demonstrate the foregrounding of music hall-variety entertainment, particularly in song format. The Deptford Liberal Club reports of many 'tuneful songsters who warbled forth their pleasant songs', including music hall favourite 'My Old Man', whilst at Shoreditch Liberal and Radical club, the efforts of the members' song performances would 'make the pro's sit up'. Music at these concerts was also mixed with other variety acts, with Battersea WMC reporting the performance of a female singer and dancer, a comic, duettists and a ventriloquist. In the case of the West Kensington Park Radical Club, its members had created their own minstrel troupe who performed a Christmas concert for the inhabitants of Kensington Workhouse. As these examples make clear, most of the musical performances were given by members or their guests, but clubs also employed professionals. This could end in dispute over pay or treatment, and the 1891 article 'A Club Singer's Grievance' rebukes a professional singer for demanding more money than was apparently agreed upon at the Holborn Gladstonian Club.[18]

Working-class participatory music culture, which had primarily originated in nineteenth-century pubs before proliferating into a professionalised music hall culture and emulated by the Victorian WMCs, was still in evidence at the start of the sixties and continued to be performed by club members. The amateur nature of music entertainment still predominated in many 1960s clubs, with the talent contests advertised at Measham WMC just one of the many 'free 'n easy' music evenings being advertised by WMCs in multiple regional newspapers.[19] Members of Westerhope Excelsior Social Club in Newcastle also had their own resident minstrel show much like the members of West Kensington Park Radical Club almost seventy years before. Regarding instrumentation, many clubs also saw no reason to change from the nineteenth-century fulcrum of a resident pianist at these events. Many were long-serving members such as Mr. W Jenkins, who received a cheque for £5 as reward for his thirty years' service as Bedwas Workmen's Club pianist.[20] From this range of sources spanning the late nineteenth century and early 1960s, it is evident that an active communicative memory of working-class musical and entertainment customs had been passed on and remained in place within WMC environments. These cultural customs existed within a wider set of leisure values, part inheritance from the Victorian middle-class tenets of rational recreation and part

[17] Ibid., p112.
[18] *CIU Journal*, 3rd January 1891, p162; *Ibid*., 24th January 1891, p186; *Ibid*., 3rd January 1891, p162; *Ibid*., 17th January 1891, p178; *Ibid*., 24th January 1891, p190; *Ibid*., 15th August 1891, p23.
[19] *Burton Observer & Chronicle*, 13th April 1961, p3.
[20] *CIU Journal*, September 1960, p19; *Ibid*., June 1961, p23.

manipulation by working-class members to suit their own cultural preferences. Consequently, these socio-cultural habits, which had prioritised music hall-variety entertainment since the nineteenth century, were an ideal migration point for performers displaced by theatre closures.

The healthy economic situation in the country also meant that the clubs of the 1960s were able to afford the luxury of paying regularly for professional performers. As Bernstein points out, real wages had been steadily rising since the early fifties and with the standard working week being reduced to forty hours, members had increased social opportunities with more money to spend.[21] Combining with these factors was the privileged status clubs had due to being registered as private spaces where only members, associates and guests of members were welcome. Although each club had to pay £5 per annum for Club Licence Duty as well as beer duty on refreshments purchased for the club's bar, the fees from membership renewal, no taxation on profit due to the excess being put back into the club, and breweries willing to finance loans for premises extension all contributed to clubs being able to pay high fees to incorporate professionalised music hall-variety entertainment.[22] This increase in the amount of professional music hall-variety in WMCs was noticed early on by James Hartley, northern correspondent for a column dubbed 'Club Corner' in *The Stage*. Entitled 'West End Monopoly will be Smashed', Hartley's summarised music hall-variety's migration.

> The invasion of Northern Clubland by national favourites – names generally associated with the number one music halls… continues unabated and more and more clubs are opening up to accommodate them. Keen competition is leading to better and better standards. There's hardly a name in Vaudeville which someone in Manchester is not willing to pay for.[23]

Hartley made further claims to contradict the notion that music hall-variety had been destroyed, claiming that with every announcement of a theatre closure there were five 'New Club Opens' notices, optimistically arguing that the 'mesmeric influence' of television was on the wane.[24] By 1964, Hartley was confident that the 'virtual transfer of the Music Hall to Clubland' was complete and evidence suggests that structural, presentational and musical culture brought from the professionalised world of music hall-variety was mixing with the amateur approach, practiced by club members since the nineteenth century, with varying degrees of success.[25]

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[21] Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline,* p308.
[22] Tremlett, *Clubmen*, p139.
[23] James Hartley, "Club Corner", *The Stage*, 18th February 1960, p5.
[24] *Ibid*., 9th March 1961, p5.
[25] *Ibid*., 19th November 1964, p4.

The structure and presentation of professionalised music hall-variety fit neatly into the way entertainment was conducted in the WMCs. Rather than replicating the fixed stall seating of the *fin de siècle* music halls and variety theatres, the WMC concert room draws greater comparison to the 'open and fluid logistics' of earlier nineteenth-century music halls.[26] These were often built as extensions to original club rooms, with tables for the audience and a separate bar-area, with the concert room being the largest space on the premises.[27] A WMC's presentational style also retained a key feature of the nineteenth-century music hall that later twentieth-century incarnations had eradicated: the role of the chairman. Famed for introducing acts and holding audience attention in the Vicwardian music hall, this presentational custom continued in the sixties WMCs, often conducted by either a club's entertainment secretary or by a hired professional. By the sixties they were more often referred to as a 'compere' rather than 'chairman', though they largely fulfilled the same function, 'glamorising the subject it is their business to introduce'.[28] The structure of an evening's entertainment in the WMC also continued the format of music hall-variety, an assortment of acts giving their 'turn' on stage. This continuity is exemplified by the list of performers who appeared at the 1962 club 'command' performance at Eccles Carlisle Club in Manchester. On this bill, comics, magicians, instrumentalists and singers all gave their performances in what was seen as a demonstration of the quality of working-class clubland's entertainment sector, largely separate and removed from London's showbiz credentials.[29] Conversely, this bill demonstrated that large-scale incorporation of professionals into WMCs did not exclude semi-professional and amateur performers, many of whom – as in the nineteenth century – were club members themselves, and reports from the period suggest all strata of performer could be mixed on the same evening's bill.[30] For many of these amateur performers, club slots offered the opportunity to gain experience, a chance to 'turn pro', or be spotted by the BBC at a 'Clubland Shop Window Audition', where many entertainment secretaries also scouted appropriate acts for weekend club bookings.[31] Although the WMCs were able to afford and incorporate experienced and professional music hall-variety acts into their entertainment, they also still acted as a potential stepping-stone to amateur performers pursuing professional careers. Most crucially of all, the relocation of music hall-variety to the WMCs was able to take place because both entertainment environments had prioritised music since the nineteenth century. Hartley commented that for club audiences 'There is just no substitute for music and good vocalists' and whilst amateurs such as Ken Vincent, dubbed 'the singing Doncaster collier', kept member

[26] Peter Bailey, "Introduction: Making Sense of Music Hall", pXI.
[27] *The Stage*, 26th March 1964, p26.
[28] James Hartley, "Club Corner", *The Stage*, 18th January 1962 p4.
[29] *Ibid*., 15th March 1962, p4.
[30] *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 13th March 1962, p8.
[31] James Hartley, "Club Corner", *The Stage*, 10th January 1963, p5.

participation alive, discourse suggests the incorporation of musical and performer standards from professional music hall-variety into the WMCs was more uneven than the smooth transition of its presentational and structural touchstones.[32]

The influx of professional performers brought pay disputes and contractual difficulties, similar to the issues in the nineteenth century mentioned above. Many club entertainment secretaries were volunteers with little experience of the professional world of entertainment. The Variety Artist's Federation (VAF) and the CIU regularly disputed the suitability of the standard CIU contract provided to member clubs, which were vague on issues such as cancellation fees and 'the facilities to which music hall artists are accustomed, among these, a warm changing room, a thoroughly adjusted microphone and above all, competent musical backing'.[33] This last request was a significant point of dispute, as resident – and often local – club musicians, who were perhaps used to providing a more informal participatory music culture for their members, adjusted to this professionalised version of music hall-variety culture.

Many resident pianists had been encouraged to move from the piano to the electric organ as the facility for larger and more amplified concert rooms became a reality for most WMCs during the sixties. However, the 'free 'n easy' atmosphere in which club pianists and organists – sometimes accompanied by a drummer – were used to accompanying amateur singers in, was criticised in 1964 by performer and VAF member Melville Thompson.

> What I did find annoying, though, is that they nearly all think they can walk into the dressing room literally two minutes before an act is due to go on, take some copies of the music and get through well enough to make everyone happy. Very often they can. But the number of singers I have seen cursing the pianist convinces me that in the majority of cases they can't.[34]

Although Thompson's comments provide insight into occasional tension between the amateur and professional performer, the club pianist-organist still remained the focal point of the WMC music culture as they had done in the late nineteenth century. They were expected to be at least skilled in versatility and deliver musical accompaniment at a varied amount of club events such as bingo, talent shows, sing-songs, variety, dancing or family request nights and were therefore integral to wider events in WMC life.[35] Despite disputes regarding professional

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[32] *Ibid*., 18th August 1966, p4; *Ibid*., 9th March 1963, p5.
[33] *Ibid*., 24th March 1960, p4.
[34] Melville Thomson, "Don't Shoot the Pianist!", *The Stage*, 9th July 1964, p11. Emphasis in original
[35] *CIU Journal*, May 1963, p25.

standards, music hall-variety entertainment was not only surviving, but thriving within the socio-cultural world of the WMCs. Acknowledgment of this came in the form of *The Stage* providing a 'club supplement' on a regular basis, offering advice on myriad topics to both entertainers and the clubs themselves.[36] With this expansion came what were commonly referred to within the industry as 'proprietary clubs', which also hosted similar entertainment but were owned by private businesses. Outside the remit of the CIU, these clubs accommodated gambling areas and consciously attempted to imitate a culture reminiscent of the Las Vegas strip.[37]

In regard to WMCs, members were quick to identify the similarities between the 1960s WMCs and the nineteenth-century music halls. Jim Sables of the Salford Victoria commented in 1964 'There's little difference these days between clubs and music halls. They draw from the same pool of artists'.[38] Stan Oakes went further in 1967, with James Hartley quoting him as saying 'The Music Hall has returned to where it was born'.[39] In these comments lies the essential awareness of working-class members that the entertainment provided in clubs was linked to a continuum of customs begun in the nineteenth century. Dagmar Kift's research into the composition of Victorian music hall audiences has concluded that even at the turn-of-the-century, 'the regular audiences at the overwhelming majority of halls continued to be drawn from the working class'.[40] Since that period, social groups within the WMCs had facilitated these working-class cultural preferences, particularly for a music culture – albeit in a largely amateur capacity – that drew upon music-hall variety performance culture. Many of these WMC socio-cultural elements, established in the Victorian era, remained intact at the beginning of the sixties, combining with the era's affluence to assist the relocation and continuation of professional music hall-variety culture. This exploration of its prominence during the 1960s contradicts the narrative that 'live' music hall-variety's mass popularity ended when the theatres closed. Instead, an enduring preference for its performance customs within the world of the WMCs provided a platform that allowed it to adapt and thrive amongst the social class from which it had been born. However, this type of musical entertainment did not exist alone in the world of the sixties WMC, with many clubs also keen to embrace a modernity that incorporated contemporary popular music and youth culture.

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[36] *The Stage*, 17th October 1968, p11-40.
[37] Russell, "Glimpsing La Dolce Vita", p308.
[38] James Hartley, "Club Corner", *The Stage*, 25th June 1964, p4.
[39] *Ibid*., 9th February 1967, p4.
[40] Kift, *The Victorian music hall*, p68.

## Popular Music and Youth Culture in the Working Men's Club

In January 1969, a *CIU Journal* report proclaimed it was 'astonished by the cumulative effect of youth activity in our Clubs', particularly how younger members of WMCs were enthusiastically involving themselves in organising live music entertainment such as 'beat dances'.[41] The preservation and performance of older cultural forms were not the only type of musical entertainment in sixties WMCs. Club culture also attempted to incorporate contemporary popular music of the sixties, largely in an attempt to attract younger members, but was also motivated by the traditions of the nineteenth-century CIU that perpetuated discourses emphasising working-class progress.[42] These efforts were varied, inconsistent and often relied on contemporary popular music performers adapting their repertoire and presentation styles to suit a cross-generational audience, many of whom were steeped in music hall-variety dynamics. However, further exploration will complicate the dominant assumption of 1960s youth-culture purely existing as a 'separate segment of society with a culture of its own that seemed to transcend both class and nationality'.[43]

Within the ideology of the CIU, since its inception, was the commitment – whether it be political, economic or cultural – to working-class 'progress'. During the 1860s, founder of the WMCs, Henry Solly, drew up a manifesto outlining the CIU's aims, stating 'Recreation must go hand in hand with Education and Temperance if we should have real and permanent improvement'.[44] Whilst the adherence to temperance had been given up on very quickly by the CIU, the dedication to improvement through recreation and education was something still endemic in club life in the post-war era. Supported by these enduring nineteenth-century legacies pertaining to development and growth, much of what the CIU movement embraced as progress in the 1960s was often intertwined with notions of modernity.

The affluence brought by job security and rising real wages was also accompanied by working-class urban migration, 'entering en masse' into the suburbs, either to newly-built council estates or even to buying their own homes.[45] In Robert Taylor's view this post-war migration 'tended to encourage working-class families to turn themselves inwards, to

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[41] *CIU Journal*, January 1969, p4.
[42] Although part of this research's aim is to highlight overlapping contexts of popular music cultures that were 'contemporary' during the sixties, in this section when using the phrase 'contemporary popular music' it is deployed as an umbrella term to refer to what Frith et al. call the 'Do-It-Yourself' music culture of the era. This largely involved the performance and enjoyment of popular music inspired by rock 'n' roll, skiffle, folk and beat music that was associated with youth-culture.
[43] Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline*, p420.
[44] Tremlett, *Clubmen*, p14.
[45] Mark Clapson, "Cities, Suburbs, Countryside", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p66.

strengthen their voluntary social networks centred on a strong sense of family, kinship and community. The world of the working men's clubs and pubs also reflected this trend'.[46] Whilst Taylor's comments acknowledge the rising popularity of CIU-affiliated clubs in the 1960s suburbs, they neglect to take into account that these working-class social 'networks' were pre-existing, born in the urban spaces of the previous century, and largely continued to operate within a socio-cultural framework built on nineteenth-century conceptions of class hierarchy. This turning 'inwards' can be alternatively interpreted as the post-war migration and continuation of Beaven's culture of working-class 'self-reliance', where social division, established in the nineteenth century 'was now enshrined in the physical structures' of places such as the WMCs.[47] Rather than simply passive receivers of mass culture, working-class members continued to manipulate old and new cultural forms to suit their own preference. Furthermore, embedded within these continuing cultural activities established in the nineteenth century, lay an enduring dedication to the Vicwardian working-class ideals of improvement and progress. In practical terms, this led to the expansion of leisure facilities and attempts at accommodating the 'new' interests of working-class youth.

This desire for participation in modernity and progress quickly manifested itself through the regular announcements of extensive renovations taking place in WMCs across the country. Possibly inspired by the lead the CIU had taken in building a new London headquarters in 1962, clubs were often loaned large sums of money by breweries to help extend their premises.[48] Often these renovations were contextualized in the *CIU Journal* under the pretext that the time had come for the working man to enjoy his social leisure time in modern comfort, with the declaration that the 'sawdust days give way to luxury'.[49] By February 1967, the *CIU Journal* reported that the 48 clubs who had received coverage of their renovations in the publication during 1966 had spent a collective amount of £1,428,000 on improvements.[50] Often pride of place in these renovations were the large concert halls, with easily folding tables and chairs all pointing towards a lavish and well-equipped stage area.[51] As an article showcasing the renovations at Stanhill WMC in Lancashire pointed out, these attempts at modernisation always aimed to strike a balance between the mutually reinforcing and active Vicwardian discourses of being 'tradition-proud, yet forward-looking'.[52]

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[46] Robert Taylor, "The Rise and Disintegration of the Working Classes", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p376.
[47] Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain*, p89.
[48] *CIU Journal*, June 1962, p3.
[49] *Ibid*., December 1962, p3.
[50] *Ibid*., February 1967, p23.
[51] *Ibid.,* August 1966, p17.
[52] *Ibid*., April 1965, p22.

The progressive aspect of these increased leisure facilities when it came to musical entertainment included the new well-spring of musicians influenced by guitar-led rock 'n' roll and beat music. Inclusion of what were often referred to as 'rock groups', even at this early time, was already flourishing in music hall-variety-style club bills at the beginning of the 1960s, with James Hartley from *The Stage* praising Manchester group, the Rebels, for their performance of 'Shakin' All Over' and 'modern professional standards'. Hartley often chose to write about groups such as the Dynamites, specifically for their ability to play a range of modern styles such as '"rock", "beat", "twist", instrumentals, and cheerful ballads' but could also be equally scathing. During these early years of the decade, Hartley often bemoaned the new generation of performers who had 'never known the discipline of the theatre' and also took time to specifically target guitar groups who needed to learn 'more about their instruments they profess to play – and don't!'.[53]

Further reports from *The Stage* suggest that if a guitar-led band were to be booked for these working-class social spaces in which audience preference for performance styles dating back to the nineteenth century continued, Oliver Double's central tenets of music hall-variety performance dynamics involving personality, skill, participation and perhaps above all, novelty, were still vital for success. Amongst these novelty guitar groups were Nero and the Gladiators, playing rock 'n' roll in togas and Roman helmets and adding comedy routines to their stage performances.[54] The HY-FY's were also regulars on the WMC circuit due to what was described as a mixture of popular tunes and 'vocal harmony backing for visual comedy patter and slick, flowing movement'. Sometimes the choice of novelty could cause controversy. Whilst *The Stage* reported 'heavy bookings all over the north' for The Rocking Vicars, it also questioned whether the choice of stage attire was in bad taste.[55]

The novelty element so prized by music hall-variety audiences, then, remained an essential element for success in these working-class social spaces of the early 1960s. The advent of The Beatles and the ensuing 'beat boom' however did change the measure of performance standards in a certain respect. With the proliferation of guitar groups in the charts writing their own material, Hartley conceded that groups doing the same on the WMC circuit brought 'zest and liveliness to their work'.[56] By the mid-sixties it was reported that record company scouts had been searching the WMC circuit for groups such as The Kirkbys, who performed their own material.[57]

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[53] James Hartley, "Club Corner", *The Stage*, 15th September 1960, p5; *Ibid*., 12th July 1962, p4; *Ibid*., 1st June 1961, p5; *Ibid*., 9th November 1961, p4.
[54] *Ibid*., "Lines from Lancs", *The Stage*, 23rd March 1961, p4.
[55] *Ibid*., "Club Corner", *The Stage*, 26th April 1962, p4; *Ibid.,* 4th June 1964, p2.
[56] *Ibid*., 4th May 1963, p4.
[57] *Ibid*., 29th September 1966, p4.

The popularity and proliferation of amplified guitar music in the WMCs and the desire of clubs to cater towards modern sounds for their audiences is also evident in the *CIU Journal*. By December 1964, Vox electronics, the choice of many chart-topping British guitar groups, were using the journal to offer entire backline package deals for clubs involving guitar amplifiers, public address systems and accompanying microphones for use by visiting 'pop groups and artists'. In a music special from January 1966, the journal carried multiple adverts for public address systems and urged club members to remember that 'music always draws crowds', declaring that loudspeakers should be purchased in order to 'distribute the music evenly'. The *CIU Journal* offered its support of youth-culture related popular music in more direct ways, making concerted efforts to emphasise the cross-generational encouragement of these activities within the WMCs. In 1962, the journal started to include 'disc reviews' of pop singles which extended to double page reviews of releases featuring such artists as Roy Orbison, Gerry and the Pacemakers and The Beatles.

The most obvious example of the CIU incorporating and encouraging youth participation was a series of articles in early 1967 entitled 'Accent on Youth'. Although these articles highlighted the participation of younger members across a broad spectrum of leisure activities, particular focus was awarded to youth culture's involvement in WMC music culture. The president of Hopetown and Whessoe WMC in Darlington declared that, as regards club music entertainment 'we want teenagers to run it to their own requirements – to choose the groups that we can book'. Of the 1,200 members of Kettering WMC, nearly 400 were under the age of 25 with club entertainment secretary Norman Love suggesting this was due to regular band nights twice a week, proving in his estimation that 'Club life does have something for young and old alike'. For many within the CIU therefore, the inclusion of guitar-led groups within WMC entertainment not only embraced modernity, but represented an active commitment to the traditions surrounding the movement's ideals of collective progress. By promoting contemporary popular music associated with youth culture alongside the established preference for music hall-variety culture within the WMC, many within the movement felt they were adhering to their Vicwardian ideal that 'what really matters is that the growth, the progress, never stops'.[58]

In regard to the encouragement of youth participation, there were both musicians and journalists who were critical of the way contemporary music styles were incorporated into club life. In a *Daily Mirror* article profiling a beat group, Get Rich, who had recently moved to London, the band expressed their frustration at the WMC circuit's adherence to the familiar, particularly regarding the continuing preference for participatory music: 'Audiences there only

[58] *CIU Journal*, December 1964, p25; *Ibid*., January 1966, p31; *Ibid*., July 1963, p16; *Ibid*., February 1967, p9; *Ibid*., March 1967, p25; *Ibid*., March 1966, p24.

want to hear Beatles' music or the stuff they can sing along to'.[59] Vic Holbrook in *The Stage* perhaps confirmed the opinions of such musicians as Get Rich, commenting that in Manchester the demise of beat, rock and pop groups in WMCs had 'brought back musical sanity'.[60] Opinions such as Holbrook's suggest that for some within clubland, guitar-led beat music was merely a passing fashion which had to be briefly tolerated within the dominant performance customs of music hall-variety. The promotion of another aspect of musical modernity within the *CIU Journal*, often referred to in advertisements as either 'planned music' or 'muzak' could also be seen as catering to members who preferred music as background rather than amplified spectacle. This type of pre-recorded music was operated by an automatic tape machine, which piped music into whichever room of the club it was thought appropriate, usually suggested as the bar or lounge area.[61] Judging from the list of artists procured by frequent advertiser Reditune Music – Mantovani, Burt Weedon, Ted Heath and Eric Winstone – it could be inferred that this type of music was aimed at perhaps older members of the club who spent time in the club away from the concert rooms, separate from some of the youth-orientated live music culture.[62]

Despite the reservations shown towards guitar-driven popular music, WMCs continued to book guitar bands into the late sixties, with groups as nationally known as The Kinks appearing at Langley Mill WMC suggesting a continued appetite amongst club patrons for the latest pop stylings.[63] However, a list of the acts to have performed at Batley Variety Club in 1967 indicates that contemporary popular music associated with sixties youth culture was just one in a plurality of music cultures, with performers as diverse as Scott Walker and Long John Baldry to established stars of the music hall-variety theatre era such as Billy Cotton, Frankie Vaughan and Max Wall all appearing.[64] Whilst Batley Variety Club was a privately managed business, outside of the CIU remit and employing groups and singers who enjoyed national popularity, the diversity of performers engaged is reflective of the multiplicity of music and performance cultures also taking place in the CIU-affiliated WMCs. Despite the growing delineation towards the end of the sixties between 'pop' and what Simonelli describes as the 'new seriousness' of 'rock', whereby 'a social and rhetorical Rubicon was being crossed', the *CIU Journal* was still promoting the importance of incorporating youth-culture into these working-class leisure spaces.[65] President of the CIU, Joe McEnery, encapsulated the view held within the union towards encouraging this cross-generational engagement, a position he

[59] *Daily Mirror*, 6th June 1966, p14.
[60] Vic Holbrook, "Nothing's Changed", *The Stage*, 12th October 1967, p9.
[61] *CIU Journal*, June 1964, pii.
[62] *Ibid*., February 1965, p25.
[63] *The Stage*, 14th September 1967, p4.
[64] *Ibid*., 21st March 1968, p23.
[65] Simonelli, *Working Class Heroes*, p98-101.

felt would ensure the continuing progress of the CIU: 'the Working men's Club of today must continue to encourage you. Never mind if they have long hair… the youths, the followers of fashions, are the future stalwarts of the Club Union Movement'.[66]

From this analysis, what appears is that throughout the sixties, guitar-led bands associated with youth-culture and who performed in WMCs were met with an inconsistent mixture of encouragement, tolerance and criticism from CIU members, its hierarchy and the media discourse that surrounded club entertainment. Due to pre-existing working-class preference for the performance and enjoyment of music hall-variety culture, guitar groups success in these local leisure spaces often rested on adapting to music hall-variety performance dynamics. Paradoxically, accompanying these cultural preferences were the enduring Vicwardian ideals of progress and growth. Many within the movement perceived the inclusion and encouragement of youth-related popular music as supporting these broader ideals embedded within the movement since the nineteenth century. Evidence shows these principles were inconsistently practiced within individual WMCs, despite *the CIU Journal* preaching that such support adhered to a wider cultural memory of dedication to working-class emancipation via increased leisure choices for multiple working-class generations in shared social spaces where 'the best of Victorianism rubs shoulders with the modern spirit'.[67] Despite the varying degrees of success in putting the 'accent on youth' in the WMC movement, this exploration shifts the common focus of popular historiographies tendency to emphasise 1960s British popular music as solely existing in youth-specific social spaces that supposedly reflected the 'classless affluence' of the era.[68] This element of the research chimes with wider revisionist histories of the period, such as Todd and Young's reappraisal of discourse surrounding 1960s teenagers, in which they argue that 'far from causing widespread moral panic, working-class teenagers' lifestyles provoked positive responses from many politicians, journalists and, notably, working-class parents.'[69] In the case of WMCs, contemporary popular music was performed alongside or incorporated into older music customs in cross-generational working-class social spaces, enabled by a movement simultaneously eager to take part in notions of modernity and perpetuate a perceived tradition regarding nineteenth-century ideals of progress.

These multiple music cultures of the WMC movement were built upon a Vicwardian socio-cultural framework of working-class self-reliance and participation in cultural production. However, just as WMC culture was not something that was passively received from above,

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[66] *CIU Journal,* January 1969, p4.
[67] *Ibid*., April 1965, p23.
[68] Simonelli, *Working Class Heroes*, p98.
[69] Selina Todd & Hilary Young, "Baby-Boomers to Beanstalkers", *Cultural and Social History* 9, No. 3, (2012): p463, https://doi.org/10.2752/147800412X13347542916747.

nor was it a culture that manifested in isolation from outside influence. Government interference, challenges to autonomy and issues of inclusiveness were all conflicts with origins in the Vicwardian era which continued to influence the way the WMCs conceived their identity in the twentieth century. These legacies were still impacting the way WMCs perceived leisure time in the 1960s as well as who was entitled to be a part of it, with changing political and social attitudes asking increasingly complex questions over the way the movement interpreted issues of class, gender and race.

## Interference, Autonomy and Exclusion in WMC Leisure

Whilst Marwick broadly argues that the sixties marked the end of Victorianism in society, he also acknowledges the continuation of a 'deep sense of cultural identity and class awareness of the British working-class'.[70] The analysis of 1960s clubland bears this notion out. The socio-cultural customs and ideology of these class-specific spaces fostered a commitment to the ideals of progress alongside a continued proclivity – begun in the Vicwardian era – for manipulating entertainment styles to suit longstanding working-class cultural preferences. In other words, with regard to working-class cultural and social rituals, millions 'clung firmly to what they knew and loved'.[71] These continuities not only reflected working-class music practices, but broader attitudes running through 1960s British society. Older hierarchies of power, established in their contemporary form during the nineteenth century regarding class order, gender primacy and racial anxiety continued to exist. Some of the established social structures and attitudes influencing leisure that were re-articulated in the 1960s came from discourse external to the WMC movement and were perceived as a challenge to working-class autonomy. Other aspects of these wider discourses were adopted and reproduced within the movement itself, causing varying responses when either the CIU or individual WMCs struggled to reconcile ideas surrounding tradition and modernity.

Since permitting the sale of alcohol to its members in 1865, both local and central government had made attempts to interfere with the growing CIU membership. In response, the CIU quickly became adept at lobbying parliamentary allies to scupper various attempts by local governments to pass bills that would give them the power to control and inspect these private clubs without need of a warrant.[72] With the rise of political and radical clubs in the 1880s, police and government interest in club activities intensified, with a particular interest in prosecuting what were termed 'bogus' clubs which sold alcohol to non-members and

[70] Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, p131. Emphasis author's own.
[71] Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p743.
[72] Tremlett, *Clubmen*, p58.

facilitated in-house gambling. Despite pressure from social movements such as temperance societies and publican committees, the CIU successfully defended the right that 'no police officer be empowered' to inspect the premises without a warrant.[73] With the need to have supporters in parliament to lobby for the right to autonomy inside clubs, much of the CIU's ire was reserved for the police and local courts. Distrust of these institutions was cemented during the late Victorian and Edwardian period and regular reports appeared in the *CIU Journal* of underhand police tactics. In December 1900, it was reported that four policemen had entered both The Shaw and Wootton Bassett clubs claiming exhaustion after a long bicycle ride and 'induced the stewardess of each to sell excisables to them', after which the clubs were promptly fined. Similar anger in the journal appeared when the Chief Constable of Wakefield argued the need for search warrants to be abolished due to WMCs being 'chief causes of separation and divorce'. Police intrusion was also a reality when the Oakfield Social Club experienced a raid in which all the club's literature was confiscated before being returned with no charge forthcoming.[74]

Even in the 1960s, feelings of distrust towards police endured, as efforts by local law enforcement and government to interfere and control the autonomy of leisure within WMCs continued in much the same vein as the late nineteenth-century. A report in the *CIU Journal* shows evidence of the CIU successfully challenging a parliamentary bill brought forward by a London County Council to obtain the right for the council or the Commissioner of Police to veto the registration of a prospective club.[75] This was followed quickly in January 1961 by the CIU calling for its members to 'Be Prepared for Action Stations' as the new Licensing Bill of 1961 made provision for 'Police Right of Entry'.[76] Although large parts of this bill were passed, the CIU managed to lobby successfully for this particular clause to be removed, with their opposition couched in memories of class and political conflict, commenting that 'bias was not unknown' in the agencies of law enforcement who were 'chiefly of the opposite political view'.[77] Resistance to interference was not reserved solely for the Conservative government of the early 1960s, but continued after the election of a Labour government in 1964. Objections regarding the passing of the Road Safety Act in 1967 which introduced the Breathalyser Test were voiced in *The Stage*, with club entertainment secretaries calling the new law 'economic suicide', fearing that audiences would decline in number as many members relied on car ownership to get to the WMCs in their new suburban bases.[78] The CIU Executive also encouraged members to complain against the 1968 Gaming Act, legislation which was passed

[73] Ibid., p98.
[74] *CIU Journal*, December 1900, p12; *Ibid*., April 1910, p12; *Ibid*., December 1910, p13.
[75] *Ibid*., February 1960, p14-15.
[76] *Ibid*., January 1961, p14.
[77] *Ibid*., p15.
[78] *The Stage*, 26th October 1967, p1.

partly in an effort to counteract the proliferation of organised crime within the proprietary clubs that operated casinos, recently legalised by the 1960 Betting & Gaming Act.[79]

This opposition to intrusion into working-class leisure habits in the 1960s was born from a history of attempted restrictions imposed almost since the WMC movement's inception in the nineteenth century. Whilst it is undeniable that the social contexts had changed, many of these attempts bore startling similarities and the CIU position had not altered: 'we will resist to the bitter end', commented CIU president Joe McEnery.[80] It is important to qualify that this suspicion of regulations directed at working-class autonomy did not extend to all institutional attempts to interfere with regulation of leisure. An increase in the music licensing costs via the Performing Right Society (PRS) were not resisted by the CIU executive, though not all WMCs were compliant with payment.[81] A plea made by the CIU to its members, entitled 'Why Our Club Music Must be Paid For' suggested that certain WMCs resisted this law, as they appealed to clubs by invoking a sense of class-consciousness and solidarity with working musicians, arguing that many composers 'died in the direst poverty while people all over the world were enjoying and making money from the performance of their music'.[82]

Other pressures from outside the CIU movement came from middle-class critiques of working-class leisure, continuing the Vicwardian discourse of rational recreation from which the WMCs had sprung. This perspective had been inherited from middle-class reformers of the nineteenth century, who wanted to stop the 'expansion of "low" forms of leisure' associated with urban working-class cultural preferences.[83] This continuing discourse was mediated in the 1960s by national newspapers such as the *Daily Mirror* and *The People*. Although the *Daily Mirror,* in Todd's words, 'had a well-deserved reputation for investigative journalism that focused on working-class life', much of its WMC coverage during the 1960s could also be seen to have contributed to what Hall describes as the 'present-day associations of post-war working men's clubs with misogynist comedy and seedy striptease acts'.[84] Initially, the Mirror's reports related to the effects of 'one-armed bandits', fearing their proliferation was creating a working class of gambling addicts. This focus moved on to a subject which continued a legacy of middle-class anxiety directly relating to entertainment that encouraged 'low' moral values: the proliferation of female striptease artists in WMCs. Although clearly more explicit than

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[79] Joseph M. Kelly, "BRITISH GAMING ACT OF 1968," *NYLS Journal of International and Comparative Law*: Vol. 8: No. 1, Article 4. (1986). https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/journal_of_international_and_comparative_law/vol8/iss1/4.
[80] *CIU Journal*, November 1967, p9.
[81] *Ibid.*, February 1962, p11.
[82] *Ibid.*, October 1965, p17.
[83] Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain*, p17.
[84] Todd & Young, "Baby-Boomers to 'Beanstalkers", p453; Hall, "Being a Man, Being a Member", p83.

anything the nineteenth-century music hall stage conjured, the element of sexual innuendo was essential to music hall-variety performance culture and one of the prime causes of concern to middle-class reformers within local councils.[85] In an effort to arrest the decline of music hall-variety theatre and revive finances in the forties and fifties, this culture had progressed from ritual innuendo to the performance of static female nudity, simultaneously keeping fears of low moral standards very much alive and ingrained within certain sections of society.[86]

Usually receiving musical accompaniment from club resident musicians, striptease acts became a popular way to generate club audiences on quiet business days such as Sundays. The *Daily Mirror* quoted angered residents in the town of Loughborough, where the local WMC was promoting striptease acts: 'I should not have thought that was the sort of thing we wanted in Loughborough. This is a nice town', commented one resident.[87] Whilst the *Daily Mirror* did not condemn this aspect of WMC culture, its selective reporting knowingly played on accepted moral standards. It took salacious delight in a husband who accompanied his fiancée on her striptease engagements and had wound up in court due to performing in a WMC who had invited non-members to her performance, proclaiming that she 'went too far' after she 'fully revealed her naked body for thirty seconds'.[88] In an opinion column in *The People* it was argued that striptease artists in WMCs were leading to slackness amongst working-class employees, particularly miners who were not working traditional Christmas overtime in case they missed a show.[89] This type of media discourse, which focused heavily on perceived 'low' moral values in working-class culture, translated middle-class anxiety for wider national consumption, perpetuating an external discourse surrounding class that had begun in the nineteenth century. However, not all of these challenges that had continuity with the Vicwardian era came from external institutions and discourse. Some of the challenges to working-class leisure habits were a product of the WMCs own practice and acceptance of broader Vicwardian social hierarchies, particular regards gender and race.

Although women were a visible presence in the life of the WMCs, their roles in club life remained restricted into the 1960s, with participation limited to similar roles undertaken during the Vicwardian period. Hall highlights however that during the fifties and sixties, 'For the CIU, the inclusion of women was a mark of the movement's modernisation'.[90] This inclusion was

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[85] Susan Pennybacker, "'It was not what she said, but the way in which she said it': The London County Council and the Music Halls", in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure*, ed. Peter Bailey, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986). p137.
[86] For a detailed explanation of how sexual and moral standards of the 1960s were influenced by earlier traditions of sexual performance, see: Mort, *Capital Affairs*, p243-281.
[87] *Daily Mirror*, 16th April 1966, p22.
[88] *Ibid*., 31st December 1966, p5.
[89] *The People*, 13th December 1964, p12.
[90] Hall, "Being a Man, Being a Member", p80.

reflected in the early sixties with the *CIU Journal* introducing a woman's supplement in January 1962, giving advice largely relating to the female role in the domestic sphere with articles relating to beauty, health and recipes.[91] Later in the year, an article appeared quoting Mrs. Joyce Butler, MP for Wood Green speaking at a council meeting held at Tottenham Liberal and Radical Club in which she claimed that 'The women are coming in – the process is inevitable…They too want to enjoy the amenities, the décor and surroundings'.[92] What is incongruous about the CIU's perspective in the sixties is that primary source evidence suggests that women, to a certain degree, had been an active presence in the clubs since the nineteenth century, particularly with regards to music and entertainment culture. If, as Hall states, the club journal was 'shaped by contemporaneous political and strategic concerns' of the post-war period, the fact that the male-led CIU did not recognise this previous female participation as being significant – instead choosing to encourage female domestic pursuits – only reinforced the continuing patriarchal nature within club structures.[93]

Many examples of a female presence within clubs in the late nineteenth century testify to female participation and a willingness on behalf of male members to an inclusiveness beyond women simply facilitating homosocial leisure activities. The Alliance Cabinet Makers Club of Hackney made clear that for their forthcoming weekend concerts 'Affiliated members, their wives and sweethearts are always welcomed'. At the Robson Club in Mile End, the variety concert given featured both Mrs. and Miss Curtis performing musical duets. What is also apparent is that some clubs relied on women to provide the musical accompaniment for weekend concerts, which Mrs. Purdy is reported to have often done on the piano at the Gladstone Club in Leytonstone. Whilst it is unclear what their association was to the club, women such as Amy Burton, Minnie Gray and Nellie Hawkins all gave musical performances at the Shoreditch Liberal and Radical Club on the same evening. These examples are just several of many instances which attest to the fact that in nineteenth century, in London at least, that despite the invented tradition of male-only membership, WMCs had never entirely been homosocial working-class leisure spaces, making allowances for women to take part in the burgeoning entertainment culture. However, even in the late nineteenth-century, frustration existed at the way female involvement was restricted, as evidenced in an anonymous article the journal published in 1891, entitled 'Women's Point of View':

> We have no brains, eh? Care nothing about anything but domestic trivialities and gossip… You look upon women as little children pleased with a rattle, and to have the stupidest songs to listen to, not caring for the lecture or discussion on popular

[91] *CIU Journal*, January 1962, p1.
[92] *Ibid*., November 1962, p5.
[93] Hall, "Being a Man, Being a Member", p74.

> subjects… Clubs, to do the good that was intended by the originators of the movement must cater for both sexes.[94]

Despite the proliferation of material directed at female members in the *CIU Journal* and its support of rallying cries towards inclusiveness in the 1960s, evidence suggests that efforts to include women had changed very little from the nineteenth century. Distinct spheres of activity within club life continued, with mixed participation likely to take place via entertainment and music culture. There were in fact a small number of WMCs in Britain who still practiced a blanket 'no ladies' policy in the sixties, but although most clubs allowed female members they were 'unable to vote on club matters, hold committee posts, become associates and, in many cases, restricted to designated rooms and nights of the week'.[95] The activities women participated in under the continuing influence of 'separate spheres' varied. A letter in the *Daily Mirror*, explained that male members of the Chase Road WMC handed over the club to wives every Thursday evening, where charity drives, poetry readings and music discussions were organised'.[96] Melville Thompson in *The Stage* highlighted the patriarchal hypocrisy in Manchester, where male striptease performances 'were greatly appreciated by large audiences composed entirely of women' but were stopped by member's objections, whilst 'Stag shows' were allowed to continue.[97] Ultimately, the nineteenth-century custom of female inclusion via weekend concerts carried on being the primary occasion for gender mixing within WMCs, although rules continued to vary within clubs, such as whether women could purchase their own drinks in the bar area.[98] The proclivity for female singers and entertainers in clubs – besides striptease artists – remained strong during the decade, but in an anonymous article published in *The Stage*, a female club performer stated that an 'attractive woman with a good figure, good legs, good act and well-presented can work anywhere'.[99] Comments such as this signal the enduring patriarchal dynamics of clubs, where women could either perform or be entertained, but under the organisation and control of its male committees. Female members still had no direct authority within the clubs themselves; inherited Vicwardian notions of the structural subordination of women were slow to change in these local working-class social environments.

The WMC movement that had formed and grown in the nineteenth century reflected the class divides precipitated by the era's rapid industrialisation. This class hierarchy, broadly

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[94] *CIU Journal*, 25th February 1893, p58; *Ibid*., 3rd January 1891, p162; *Ibid*., 15th August 1891, p8; *Ibid*., 15th August 1891, p8; *Ibid*., 9th May 1891, p308.
[95] *Ibid*., September 1965, p26; Hall, "Being a Man, Being a Member", p80.
[96] *Daily Mirror*, 8th October 1968, p20.
[97] Melville Thomson, *The Stage*, 13th October 1966, p12.
[98] Cherrington, *Not Just Beer and Bingo!,* p94.
[99] *The Stage*, 13th October 1966, p11. Emphasis in original.

speaking, was accepted, and would continue to be (in Paul Gilroy's words) the most significant theme 'from which national identity would be assembled' in Britain's twentieth-century, particularly if institutions of power could be challenged by representatives of working-class political organisations, such as trade unions and the Labour party.[100] With CIU membership running at 2.5 million by the beginning of 1963, it is clear that, for many members, the movement represented a coherent and distinctive culture that aimed to uphold and forward working-class interests and leisure pursuits.[101] Despite a congruence existing within the WMC movement of class being the dominant form of identity, it had formed in a duality alongside the invented traditions aimed at growing support and pride for Britain, its monarchy and empire. These mentalities played a prominent part in WMC identity during the Vicwardian era. During the Boer War, the *CIU Journal* had reported with pride that 'clubmen were well represented at the front' and reports the following month revealed widespread celebration on Mafeking Day, proclaiming that 'Radical clubs showed, if anything, greater exhilaration than any other'. Upon the death of Queen Victoria, the editor's column noted how the WMC movement saw the monarchy as the CIU's ally and how the world would remember 'the great deeds done in her name'.[102] Consequently, despite the WMC movement's emphasis on developing autonomous working-class spaces dedicated to progress and leisure during the nineteenth century, they could also act as fomenting areas for patriotism, monarchy and empire, reinforced during the twentieth-century by ex-servicemen members who had served their country in the subsequent World Wars.

When these perspectives of class and nation were challenged post-1945 by the influx of immigrants into working-class communities, these dual identities became difficult to accommodate. As David Olusoga states, it was 'likely that many millions of white Britons in the period struggled to reconcile the racial hierarchies and unquestioned white supremacy of the age of empire with which they had been brought up, with the post-war view that racism and racial intolerance was socially unacceptable'.[103] Bill Schwarz specifies that the racial hierarchies of 'the strict binary of white and non-white' that Olusoga highlights were formed in the nineteenth century, 'the product of an entire discursive apparatus' that involved both state and media institutions. Furthermore, Schwarz argues that these Vicwardian discourses continued to manifest in 'memories of an ordered past, in the 1960s and 1970s… driven by a powerful, if displaced, recollection of forms of authority which had been deeply shaped by the

[100] Paul Gilroy*, After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London: Routledge, 2004), p99.
[101] *CIU Journal*, January 1963, p32.
[102] *Ibid*., May 1900, p9; *Ibid*., June 1900, p7; *Ibid*., February 1901, p10.
[103] David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History*, (London: Pan Books, 2017), p503.

experience of empire.'[104] Within the context of CIU-affiliated clubs, we see contradictory responses to this perceived dichotomy. During the 1960s, contemporary evidence illustrates behaviour where 'non-whites were shut out by the force of class conflicts that bound authentic Britons to each other'.[105] In other instances we see active protests against these attitudes from both inside and outside the WMC movement, with particular impact on club entertainment.

Despite well-documented government reservations, from 1948 and through the 1950s Britain operated an 'open-door' policy to immigrants from the Empire.[106] Despite this professed welcoming policy towards immigration, racial tensions in society quickly emerged with the 'race riots' of 1958 viewed as a 'watershed' moment in influencing future British government policy.[107] In a Gallup poll in 1961, 67% of Britons supported restrictions on further immigration and these views were cemented by the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, which restricted the amount of new immigrants coming to Britain.[108] Instances of this shifting perspective were reflected in local spaces of the early sixties, with certain WMCs operating what was commonly referred to as a 'colour-bar' policy. The *Coventry Evening Telegraph* reported that the West End WMC in Wolverhampton had decided to stop admitting membership to Black and Asian men, even though the club already had five Black members.[109] This discrimination reached wider public circulation when *The People* reported that the West End WMC had taken further action and decided that the five Black men who were already members could remain, though could no longer invite Black guests, a decision which a significant group of club members, according to the report, intended to overturn.[110]

The CIU executive at this time, with its long-established practice of protecting working-class autonomy, defended clubs' rights as private spaces to forge their own policies, suggesting that such matters were 'being entirely for each individual club committee in its discretion to decide'.[111] Discord between traditions of class solidarity and the intention to, as every member's club card said, 'honour all men' clashed with wider collective cultural memories of racial pre-eminence associated with conceptions of British national identity and empire.[112] An example of this inconsistency can be shown by the racial discrimination experienced by an Asian member of Birchill Liberal Club's snooker team visiting Walsall WMC

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[104] Bill Schwarz*, Memories of Empire, Volume 1 The White Man's World*, (Oxford: University Press, 2011), p9, 21.
[105] Gilroy, *After Empire*, p100.
[106] Wendy Webster, "Immigration and Racism", *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000,* eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p96.
[107] Olusoga, *Black and British*, p510.
[108] Ibid., p511.
[109] *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 9th January 1961, p5.
[110] *The People*, 26th February 1961, p11.
[111] *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 5th May 1961, p20.
[112] Tremlett, *Clubmen*, p243.

for a league game. When Walsall WMC would not let the Asian member of Birchill's team enter the premises, his teammates called the game off in solidarity, the incident revealing the prevalence of and resistance to these colonial legacies within the WMC movement. Although Walsall WMC's secretary explained that they did not operate a 'colour-bar', he also added that 'It is an unwritten law, however, that coloured men should be discouraged from being members or guests', otherwise, he added, they could be 'facing a flood'.[113]

Anxieties surrounding race and immigration continued throughout the sixties, with the West Midlands continuing to be an area of tension. *The Stage* reported an incident at North Wolverhampton WMC where Ruth Saxon, a female black singer who had recently performed at the club, was denied entry as a guest.[114] Sixteen days later, M.P. for Wolverhampton South, Enoch Powell, gave his infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech, making Commonwealth immigrants appear to be 'exclusively responsible' for the disruption of what were previously homogenous white working-class social spaces.[115] The Labour government offered contradictory responses to this sentiment, on the one hand passing the 1968 Race Relations Act, outlawing racial discrimination in public spaces, and on the other introducing even stricter quotas in the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act.[116]

Sentiment in the entertainment sector, which was a vital artery of the WMCs, quickly sided against any practice of discrimination, with *The Stage* reporting that both Equity and the Musicians' Union had asked its members to boycott performing in any club or venue that practiced racial discrimination.[117] Some WMCs however remained wedded to the notion that they were, by law, private institutions, and able to make their own admittance rules. When musicians boycotted the Edgewick Trades Hall Social Club due to a 'colour-bar' policy, the club secretary responded that 'Our members will be quite happy to have a sing-song on their own'.[118] The CIU executive at this stage were still largely committed to its traditions, fixed in the nineteenth century, of defending private spaces for working-class leisure autonomy and supported clubs who were prosecuted under the 1968 Race Relations Act by paying their legal fees. These issues surrounding CIU policy would however remain unresolved and would come to a head in the 1970s.

The CIU's protection of individual club's right to an autonomous working-class leisure space was a defensive mentality born from collective memories of its nineteenth-century past, in which the movement had battled for its identity, privacy and autonomous law enforcement. These working-class perspectives were slow to shift, and when they came into conflict with

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[113] *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24th October 1962, p16.
[114] *The Stage*, 4th April 1968, p4.
[115] Gilroy, *After Empire*, p126.
[116] Webster, "Immigration and Racism", p98-99.
[117] *The Stage*, 17th October 1968, p40.
[118] *Daily Mirror*, 4th January 1969, p9.

changing perceptions of class that included non-white immigrants, both the CIU and its members reflected the difficulty to reconcile these seemingly contradictory convictions of solidarity and superiority based on empire. These clashing notions were also reflected in a wider manner by the inconsistent government policy towards immigration, suggesting the invented traditions of Empire resonated deeply across broader sections of British society. Although the majority of WMCs did not operate a colour-bar in the sixties, occasionally condemning fellow clubs that did, discriminatory policies received legal support from the CIU executive, demonstrating the limits of class identity as well as the presence of an active collective memory of Vicwardian mentalities that continued to inform racial dynamics within sixties leisure. In the words of Krishan Kumar: 'An empire that lives on in the mind is not the least potent of empires'.[119]

## Music Hall Preservation and Re-Enactment Culture

While most cultural historians have focused on the 1960s as a period of dramatic change, Raphael Samuel has drawn attention to the decade's huge increase in 'preservation mania'.[120] Samuel used this phrase to describe the rise in the conscious protection of cultural forms which grew as a pole of opposition to the modernisation taking place in society. Samuel argues that this increase in preservation broadened the notion of what counted as 'heritage' in British society, 'to take in not only the ivied church and village green but also the terraced street, the railway cottages, the covered market and even the city slum'.[121] Furthermore, Samuel adds that the expansion of heritage also included imagined pastoral versions of Britain found in literary and folk song culture. But he neglects to include the rising practice during the 1960s of the preservation and re-enactment of the Vicwardian music hall. The practice of this performance culture provides an important point of difference to the socio-cultural habits of the WMC movement. As we have seen, whilst the migration of music hall-variety performers to 1960s clubland was facilitated by enduring cultural tastes established in the previous century, its interdependent Vicwardian ideals of working-class progress also made provision for the embrace of modernity via refurbishment of leisure facilities and attempts at accommodating youth culture. By contrast, Vicwardian music hall re-enactment culture made explicit attempts to re-create the past and construct a fixed set of traditions, resurrecting

[119] Krishan Kumar*, The Idea of Englishness: English Culture, National Identity and Social Thought*, (London: Routledge, 2017), p18.
[120] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1994, 2012) p139.
[121] Ibid., p151.

nineteenth-century song, period-correct costume and presentation whilst encouraging audience members to suspend their historical disbelief and indulge in the same behaviours.

Re-enactment culture proliferated in a range of social settings, becoming formalised by the creation of the British Music Hall Society (BMHS), which made significant strides in preserving buildings, performance knowledge and ephemera. Analysis of the discourse that surrounded this preservation of knowledge and practice can be interpreted, from a cultural perspective, as a retreat into an imagined past, where romanticised cultural traditions regarding British society and identity could be performed, free from the complexities and challenges of sixties modernity.

The preservationist turn had its origins in previous decades. The clearest example of a previous attempt to re-create the nineteenth-century music hall came from the performances of the Player's Theatre in London. A report in *The Stage* from 1946 describes the players' work as 'delicious Victorian cabaret' where the audience 'sang every chorus lustily and yelled themselves hoarse with excitement'. Alongside description of hearty audience participation, the review also made mention that the Player's began in the 1930s and had since become 'an institution'.[122] Led by their chairmen, Leonard Sachs, the Players also appeared at the Riverside Theatre as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain, where 'entertainments of the kind that could be enjoyed a hundred years ago' were performed.[123] This explicit re-creation of the past, with Vicwardian period costume and song-sheets of music hall lyrics for audiences to sing-along with, contrasted greatly with the 'modern, even futuristic' exhibitions of the Southbank Centre, but were clearly integral to a fundamental understanding of perceived British cultural tradition.[124] At the heart of this festival with its focus on progress and a turning away from the difficult years of war and austerity lay a performance culture which audiences and performers continued to recognise and enjoy. The popularity of music hall re-enactment was to reach its height during the 1960s, contrasting greatly with the decade's perceived break with older forms of British culture.

The spread and popularity of music hall re-enactment was initially taken up by local council entertainment committees in the urban settings from which music hall had originated in the nineteenth century. At Battersea Town Hall an 'Old Time Music Hall' evening was aimed at elderly residents of the borough, where the performance of 'true music hall tradition' was successfully received.[125] This attracted performers such as Marie Lloyd Junior, whose 'personality and understanding' of the genre ensured sold out evenings.[126] The format was

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[122] *The Stage*, 17th February 1946, p1.
[123] Guidebook, *Pleasure Gardens, Battersea Park: Festival of Britain*, 1951.
[124] Becky E. Conekin, *The Autobiography of a nation: 1951 Festival of Britain*, (Manchester: University Press, 2003), p203.
[125] *The Stage*, 30th March 1961, p5.
[126] *Ibid*., 22nd June 1961, p4.

quickly copied by other committees such as Bethnal Green, which produced music hall evenings with performers in 'Victorian costumes', evenings that the article correctly predicted would be 'the forerunner of many more to come'.[127]

Although John K. Walton's study of British seaside holidays of the fifties and sixties contends that with regard to architecture, 'all things Victorian were deeply unfashionable', conversely it seems music hall re-enactment brought success and profit to resort locations during the era.[128] Working-class demand had been the driving influence of seaside resort entertainment ever since it became a widespread experience within the reach of urban populations in the nineteenth century, and this custom continued in the post-war decades.[129] For many working-class seaside visitors, the enjoyment of Vicwardian re-enactment was an established ritual of the seaside excursion, perpetuating an environment which Walton describes as 'the last bastion of those carried-over Victorian frames of mind'.[130] At Gorleston Pavilion, Norfolk, the introduction of what was now being largely referred to as 'Old Time Music Hall' brought the theatre profits 'for the first time in many years'.[131] The production of music hall re-enactment was profitable for many struggling seaside theatres, with an in-depth review by *The Stage* of the entertainment during the summer season of 1964 testifying to its popularity. 'Old Time Music Hall' was being performed with chairmen and gavel alongside period correct costumes and songs in Jersey, Llandudno, Margate and Ramsgate, with the added opportunity in Lowestoft for audience members to buy 'hats and bonnets' if they wanted to partake in the Vicwardian spectacle.[132]

Music hall re-enactment culture was also performed away from traditional working-class leisure locations, in the more urbane London cabaret club scene. At Winston's Club, female impersonator Danny La Rue performed as music hall songstress Marie Lloyd, and after leaving for pantomime was replaced by Ted Gatty's 'Edwardian Nights'. Gatty's show, with himself as chairman, was already a seaside resort favourite and adhered to period-correct costume and song selection, with Gatty later commenting that the key to the show's success lay in its employing young performers who 'ensure the vigorous attack the old songs demand'.[133] *The Stage*'s review of Gatty's stint at Winston's Club was aware of the incongruity of the re-enactment style with the sophistication such a cabaret club tended to project, but admitted that although it 'seems strange… there is no doubt that owner Bruce Brace has hit

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[127] *Ibid*., 22nd February 1962, p5.
[128] John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, (Manchester: University Press, 2000), p113.
[129] Ibid., p15.
[130] Ibid., p12.
[131] *The Stage*, 14th November 1963, p1.
[132] *Ibid*., 13th August 1964, p33-34.
[133] *Ibid*., 12th August 1965, p31.

on a winning idea'.[134] In both seaside resorts primarily associated with working-class visitors and the suave settings of the metropolitan cabaret club, music hall re-enactment was evidently popular with a broad swathe of the public, revealing once again the plurality of popular music cultures in the sixties aside from youth-culture specific activities. The continuing proliferation and passing-on of music hall-variety culture's paradigms and experience in local environs such as the pub and club, as well as in mass media forms of television and radio, ensured the format was engrained and familiar to audiences, with the novelty of Vicwardian costume and ritual adding an element of whimsical escape to proceedings.

Other social groups approached the culture of Vicwardian music hall as a more conscious act of preservation and heritage. These parties often heralded from the theatrical profession and several examples demonstrate the growing commemoration of music hall culture in the sixties. As early as 1960, an album of music hall songs had been recorded in front of a live audience at the Metropolitan Theatre on Edgeware Road, to preserve, in *The Stage*'s words 'a flash of bygone brilliance'.[135] At the Lady Ratling's annual ball, a society for professional female entertainers, the performance of nineteenth-century music hall material had in the review's words recalled 'brighter and possibly better days'.[136] The renewed interest in the well-preserved McDonald's Music Hall in Hoxton seemed to act as a catalyst for the formalisation of this preservation culture, with *The Stage* announcing shortly after the formation of the British Music Hall Society (BMHS).[137] The society was spearheaded by talent agent Ray Mackender, who had spent years building his own archive of music hall ephemera including playbills, costumes and curios. This collection was initially used as a launching point for the BMHS, being presented as an exhibition at the re-discovered McDonald's Music Hall, described as an event of 'unguarded sentiment, reminiscence and emotion'.[138] The movement's own journal *The Call Boy* was established soon after and by the end of 1963, 700 members were already registered with the society.[139]

Regular activities took place via monthly meetings where retired performers shared memories, and performances were given by present music hall-variety entertainers. Live performances organised by the BMHS also took place at McDonald's Music Hall, with attention paid to re-creating perceived performance traditions. Not only was period-correct song and costume adhered to, but shows were also praised as 'real live Music Hall without a mike in sight'.[140] Educative talks and re-enactment performances in locations built in the Vicwardian

[134] *Ibid*., 21st December 1961, p7.
[135] *Ibid*., 7th July 1960, p3.
[136] *Ibid*., 26th October 1961, p4.
[137] *Ibid*., 19th September 1963, p3.
[138] *Ibid*., 7th November 1963, p19.
[139] *Ibid*., 19th December 1963, p5.
[140] *Ibid*., 2nd December 1965, p5.

era helped to actively preserve a store of knowledge regarding the culture, but the BMHS activities extended to safeguarding sites of memory. Thanks to vigorous BMHS campaigning, Wilton's Music Hall in the east end of London was listed as a 'Building of Historical or Architectural Interest' and saved from planned demolition.[141]

Despite the society's rapid successes, largely due to its formation and activities being driven by a group of entertainment industry insiders, many within the movement were left frustrated by the perceived disinterest of established cultural institutions. BMHS member Ellis Ashton complained in 1967 that bodies such as the Arts Council viewed the nineteenth-century music hall as 'not "culture" and so must be put down'.[142] This critique was perhaps in response to the BMHS proposal of a special music hall museum-theatre space at the proposed Barbican estate in London being summarily ignored.[143] Whilst the BMHS bemoaned its lack of recognition from cultural organisations, others within media discourse criticised the society itself for its detachment from more contemporary forms and venues of variety entertainment, where although music hall-variety was not being performed in a period-correct manner, many of its performance customs were still being practiced. Tommy Kane of *The Stage* accused the BMHS of being too London-centric, unable to break out of its cosy insider clique: 'the British Music Hall Society should extend its interest and take note of the re-born settings – the clubs and pubs'.[144] Other critics such as James Towler questioned the authenticity of the BMHS's perceived practice of tradition and the wider re-enactment movement, suggesting it bore 'little resemblance' to the urban nineteenth-century music hall it attempted to re-create.[145]

Despite critics' appraisals, veteran music hall-variety performer and BMHS supporter, Georgie Wood, expressed a sentiment that he believed spoke for the movement: the preservation of nineteenth-century music hall culture was a way of holding on to 'a traditional British way of life'.[146] This belief would explain the BMHS aim to have this perceived specific British culture institutionalised in a space such as the Barbican Centre. However, the fact that in the middle of 1960s 'preservation mania', a society had been founded and flourished via educative talks, performances and successful heritage site campaigns had in many ways already assured the validation of this culture's performance rituals and spaces. The BMHS during the 1960s, therefore, played an important role in formalising and creating a fixed

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[141] *Ibid*., 15th June 1967, p15.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid*., 9th March 1967, p14.
[144] Tommy Kane, "Raising Kane", *The Stage*, 6th February 1969, p7.
[145] James Towler, "The Good Old Days?", *The Stage*, 19th February 1970, p10. Towler had a point, in a review of an Old Time Music Hall evening in Manchester reviewed by *The Stage*'s James Hartley on 17th September 1964, he commented that the performance of beat-combo the Mysteries was 'rather out of context'.
[146] Georgie Wood, "Betjeman Benediction", The Stage, 25th March 1965, p5.

portrayal of Vicwardian music hall, solidifying its identity and perpetuating its cultural memory via preserving and re-constructing a fixed set of images, performance styles and sentiments.

The evocations to preserve British ways of life via fixed practices and encouragement to members to share their stories of brighter days within BMHS discourse, coupled with the broad popularity of music hall re-enactment throughout the country, not only problematises the notion that 1960s British music culture experienced a great rupture with past traditions and customs, but could also be perceived as a reflection of certain insecurities within elements of British society. Kumar argues that with the rapid decline of the British Empire during the 1960s, the 'disappearance of the "protective layer" of empire, left the English exposed', with confused notions of what now constituted British identity now that the Empire was no longer able to act as a signifier. Although many aspects of sixties British society, broadly speaking, attempted to embrace this change, the growth in preservation and re-enactment of music hall 'heritage' was just one instance of a cultural retreat into an imagined Vicwardian past, where previous comforting identities appeared in a simplified version of a nineteenth-century cultural form.

The invented traditions of Vicwardian music hall re-enactment, then, permitted continuities to exist in British society, where familiar hierarchies, often ritualised within performance material, allowed postponement and relief from the complexities of change, a post-war 'culture of consolation'. Steadman-Jones used this phrase to describe the perceived working-class retreat in the late nineteenth-century from radical politics to a culture that was conservative, separate and 'inward-looking'.[147] The investigation of WMCs above has demonstrated that Beaven's 'culture of self-reliance' was also a context the working-classes operated in, particularly when analysing the prioritisation of popular entertainment. In the case of 1960s music hall re-enactment however, Stedman-Jones' consolation culture offers appropriate re-contextualisation: the formalisation of perceived traditions offered escape to cultural memories that imagined a British past of benevolent power structures, accepted class hierarchies and identity reassuring performance rituals.

## Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter has begun the analysis of a Vicwardian continuum within 1960s popular music by extending the focus on local social spaces overlooked in both historical and popular music studies of sixties Britain. The investigation has primarily centred on the social environs of the

[147] Gareth Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900; Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class", *Journal of Social History* 7, no. 4 (1974): p498. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786468.

WMC, exploring how these environs intertwined Vicwardian principles of rational recreation, entertainment customs drawn from the music hall-variety idiom, and enduring beliefs in the value of working-class progress within shared, cross-generational communal spaces. These factors had a two-fold effect in the 1960s. First, the continued cultural taste within WMCs for music hall-variety performance customs facilitated the relocation and extension of this entertainment sector to the WMC world, contradicting the historical myth that the popularity of this genre was almost extinct due to the decline of music hall theatres and their audiences. Second, honouring the nineteenth-century ideals of working-class progress led many clubs in the sixties to encourage youth-related popular music.

However, within these classed environs also lay enduring Vicwardian mentalities, often causing friction within the WMC movement and when it was confronted by external power hierarchies or changing identities. Perceived government and police attempts to regulate behaviour, alongside media coverage of perceived 'low' forms of WMC culture, re-articulated discourses that had their origins in the previous century. However, the CIU's perpetuation of practices surrounding the defence of working-class autonomy also indirectly underwrote the continuation of other nineteenth-century legacies. Patriarchal structures endured whilst, at the same time, powerful collective memories regarding national and racial superiority, fostered within WMCs since the era of high imperialism, impacted the CIU response to racial prejudice. In contrast, the re-enactment culture spearheaded by the BMHS demonstrated the continued fascination the imagined Vicwardian music hall still held. Rather than nineteenth-century performance culture developing as a set of evolving customs, the BMHS contributed to creating a formalised tradition that could be re-enacted as an actualised cultural memory of the urban nineteenth-century.

These local, often disregarded musical cultures enjoyed by a broad age demographic reveal a more nuanced picture of the 1960s, where overlapping styles, environments and attitudes illuminate continuity and complicate historical interpretations that prioritise the 1960s as a time of change. Evidence of bands playing alongside music hall-variety acts to cross-generational WMC audiences, in particular, clouds the perception that youth culture and its associated music solely inhabited separate spheres during the sixties. The discourse surrounding music hall revivalism suggests that running concurrently to this WMC world, was a culture constructing a romanticised Vicwardian past that reflected deeper insecurities regarding change occurring within 1960s British society. With an understanding of how the Vicwardian continuum operated within local cultural settings, the thesis turns to how a pre-1914 age, both the real and imagined, presented itself within the mass commercial forms of youth-related popular music.

# Chapter 4 – 'British Flavour': Rock 'n' Roll, Jazz and Beat Music in the Early 1960s

Writing in *Melody Maker* upon the release of 1967's *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Chris Welch's verdict was that the album was 'a remarkable and worthwhile contribution to music'. What is intriguing about Welch's review, however, were his observations that over the last couple of years, up to and including this latest release, The Beatles music often worked within 'the grand music hall tradition'.[1]

The previous chapter explored how within the local settings of the working men's club, enduring cultural preferences and mentalities with roots in the nineteenth century facilitated a range of continuities within working-class leisure spaces, including the perpetuation of performance culture that had been established within music hall-variety theatre. Alongside this investigation, a music hall re-enactment culture continued to thrive in the 1960s, offering evidence of a more conscious invention and preservation of perceived Vicwardian culture. Welch's comments also demonstrate that elements of contemporary discourse perceived innovation and change within youth-related commercial popular music to rely, in part, on a continuity of styles that had origins in the previous century. These continuities have largely been overlooked in popular music historiography, but when they have been explored, 1967 has often been perceived as a decisive historical moment. For Frith and Horne, this year saw a 'crucial shift' in which popular musicians, influenced by their art-school backgrounds 'affected a self-conscious bohemian style', facilitating the growth of an 'art rock' culture which featured a post-modern juxtaposition of reference points which included elements of the nineteenth century.[2] This perspective is an important aspect in understanding why late-1960s popular music witnessed an intensification of references to both a real and imagined Vicwardian past, but does not explain the presence of Vicwardian legacies within 1960s British popular music before this perceived shift.

I now attempt to address this issue – in the first of back-to-back chapters focused on live and recorded commercial popular music – by highlighting the influence of Vicwardian performance and discourses within 1960s popular music prior to the rise of the 'rock bohemians'. The years between 1960 and 1963 have often been categorised as a period where British musicians and the wider popular music industry simply 'imitated American models'.[3] Simonelli manages to pack the entirety of British post-war popular music up to 1963

[1] Chris Welch, *Melody Maker*, 3rd June 1967, p5.
[2] Frith and Horne, *Art into Pop*, p56-57.
[3] Thompson*, Please Please Me*, p20.

into one chapter, concluding that before the arrival of The Beatles, British pop 'did not have much of a British flavour to it at all'.[4] An exploration of two contrasting performers both operating in the early years of the decade will complicate this narrative. First, an analysis of Joe Brown's career in the early 1960s will suggest his popularity owed to a merging of American rock 'n' roll with Brown's re-articulation of the music hall-variety 'Cockney' archetype. Second, examination of The Alberts will explore how the group's comedic integration of Vicwardian culture alongside early jazz and satire reflected an ambivalence that encompassed both veneration and ridicule for the legacies of the nineteenth century.

Inquiry will then move on to exploring what is arguably perceived as the first great rupture of 1960s British popular music: the 'Beat Boom' and the subsequent popularity of British pop groups in America, dubbed the 'British Invasion'. This investigation demonstrates that amidst the social and musical changes, commercial success still partly rested on the ability to be able to adapt to environs in which music hall-variety paradigms prevailed, with certain beat groups incorporating its customs to broaden appeal, both at home and in the USA. These continuities ran alongside enduring British anxieties regarding the influence of American culture. Established in the nineteenth century, this predominantly middle-class anxiety influenced popular discourse's reportage of beat group success abroad, re-purposing what was originally cast as a working-class phenomenon to represent 'Britishness'. The chapter therefore seeks to foreground a pre-existing Vicwardian continuum within British commercial popular music, whereby elements of the nineteenth century were already playing a dynamic role in shaping perceived change.

## Beyond American Imitation: Cockney Rock and Music Hall Jazz

In a 1960 review of the music programme 'Wham!', described by *The Stage* as 'ITV's gift to the teenager', the newspaper included a photograph of Joe Brown, the show's resident guitar player.[5] Brown's clothing presented an unusual dichotomy. Whilst wearing a thick leather jacket was a bold but obvious choice on a music programme presenting both British and American rock 'n' roll artists, he chose to pair it with a traditional flat cap, synonymous with working-class dress codes associated with the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Brown's sartorial choices represented his musical juxtaposition between American music and long-standing music hall-variety styles, a contrast that also featured in the work of The Alberts. In differing regards, both artists fit into Keith Negus's category of 'synthesists', musicians who 'draw on elements of an emerging style but blend them in such a way so as to create a new

[4] Simonelli, *Working-Class Heroes*, p16.
[5] *The Stage*, 28th April 1960, p12.

distinct musical identity… working at the fuzzy boundaries where generic codes and stylistic conventions meet'.[6] By highlighting these performers' merging of styles, early-sixties commercial popular music begins to appear as more than just an American simulacrum, but a historical period in which re-interpretations of nineteenth-century popular culture continued an active cultural dynamic with emerging genres, reflecting wider competing tensions over changing notions of Britishness.

Joe Brown's early life and career offered a unique set of contributing factors and experiences which dispel any notion of incongruity regarding synthesis of musical styles. Brown grew up living above the pub his mother ran in the East End of London whilst often working on a mobile jellied eel stall at weekends.[7] Many of Brown's formative musical experiences were not dissimilar to the informal working-class customs of the previous century, with Brown's memoir describing street parties where neighbours 'used to drag their old piano out on to the pavement', as well as regular singalongs in his mother's pub.[8] In contrast to these initial experiences, the early 1960s saw Brown become one of the few British musicians who had performed with American rock 'n' roll stars, accompanying Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran on British tours and Johnny Cash on television.[9] Due to his association with the organiser of these tours and appearances, music manager and promoter, Larry Parnes, Brown was offered a contract as an artist rather than a supporting musician. It was from this point that Brown's recording career began and along with it, in Stratton's words, the 'attempt to find an English voice amidst the impact of American rock rhythms'.[10] Alongside his talent for guitar playing, Brown states retrospectively in his memoir that he was well aware that his trademarks included 'my blond spikey hair and cockney singing'.[11] It was to this active presentational custom of the music hall cockney archetype that Brown would merge with rock 'n' roll in order to gain popularity with audiences.

Chapter Two demonstrated how the 'cockney' figure, originating from Vicwardian music hall-variety, continued in the immediate post-war era, disseminated on stage, radio and television by established music hall-variety performers such as Billy Cotton. Joe Brown's music and performance persona supports the notion that this nineteenth-century archetype was an evolving element of sixties rock 'n' roll youth culture. Derek Scott's categorisation of the music hall cockney into three evolutions helps to identify specifically what active cultural customs both Brown and the discourse that surrounded him continued to be familiar with. First,

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[6] Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, 2003) p146.
[7] Brown, *Brown Sauce*, p18.
[8] Ibid., p25-27.
[9] Ibid., p66-70.
[10] Stratton, "Englishing Popular Music in the 1960s", p38.
[11] Brown, *Brown Sauce*, p73.

Scott identifies 'parody' which represented 'Cockneys as figures of fun' for middle-class audiences; second, the 'Character Type' where by 'the identity of the performer remains separate from the character portrayed'; and lastly 'The Imagined Real' of the 1880s onwards where 'the performer is no longer thought of as playing a role, but as being the character'.[12] However, as Scott points out, this 'Imagined Real' was not necessarily based on a performer's proletarian credentials, but 'a desired image created by the music hall and perpetuated by the music hall's feeding on itself rather than by drawing ideas from, or representing, the world outside'.[13] Scott explores this third category by exploring the careers of music hall artists such as Gus Elen and Albert Chevalier who both performed regularly as working-class 'Cockney Costers'. Examples held by the British Library, such as Chevalier's 'The Coster's Courtship (A Cockney Love song)', as well as Elen's 'The Coster's Mansion' and 'My Next-Door Neighbour's Gardin (sic)', all demonstrate this archetype, via the sheet music's exaggerated drawn portraits of the performer in working-class costume allied to cockney vernacular included in the musical score's lyrics.[14] Scott makes the argument that although such representations were praised in the Victorian press as being authentic, Elen and Chevalier were acting out a 'representational code' that had been learnt in order to reproduce the cockney. Although Joe Brown was a musician that had grown up in the East End, his recordings and stage persona often played into this 'representational code', merging rock 'n' roll styles with the 'imagined real' cockney.

The continuity Brown shared with the music hall cockney was quickly identified and foregrounded within contemporary reviews of early performances in rock 'n' roll package shows: 'perkily cockney and chockful of high spirits, Joe Brown gives a new zest to traditional music hall songs' said one 1960 review.[15] This impression had primarily been cultivated by the type of material Brown had been offered and chosen to record. Brown was not a songwriter and leant on a variety of material, an initial example being the early jazz tune 'Darktown Strutter's Ball' (1917), which he turned into a cockney-rock 'n' roll hybrid. This tune included a spoken word introduction, with Brown accentuating his cockney accent in reference to 'a ditty what the old woman used to sing to us when we were kids, fank you' and punctuating the song with raucous guitar solos.[16] In an effort for the lyrics to resonate with a rock 'n' roll audience, Brown also substituted lyrics, replacing references to taxis with hot-rod cars and old dancing shoes to ones of the blue-suede variety. His next single spotlighted the use of the cockney archetype further, a Lionel Bart novelty composition entitled 'Jellied Eels', a working-class East

[12] Derek B. Scott, "The Music Hall Cockney: Flesh and Blood, or Replicant?", in *Sounds of the Metropolis*, (Oxford: University Press, 2011), p178-183. Emphasis author's own.
[13] Ibid., p193.
[14] British Library Music Collections, H.1260.b.(11.); H.3602.b.(14.); H.3602.b.(39.).
[15] *The Stage*, 11th August 1960, p10.
[16] Joe Brown, 'Darktown Strutter's Ball', Decca, 1960.

End delicacy which Brown was familiar with from his childhood years. The record dispensed with a rock 'n' roll beat, providing a lyric that allowed Brown to regale the listener with tales of his jellied eel stall, emphasising his cockney accent and featuring a sing-along chorus reinforced by group vocals. The recording itself failed to chart, but in the case of one reviewer, a live performance of the song reinforced the notion that 'Brown's roots were planted firmly in the old music hall'.[17]

Throughout the years 1961 and 1962, Brown continued to synthesise his rock 'n' roll sound with cockney vocal delivery and working-class subject matter. 'Crazy Mixed-Up Kid' featured another spoken-word introduction, presenting to the listener his accompanist Charlie, who plays a manic honky-tonk piano throughout the novelty number, that instrumental tone often used to aurally trigger the evocation of an upright piano as found in many pubs from the late nineteenth-century onward. Brown's next recording, however, produced a more direct example of rock 'n' roll merging with music hall cockney customs. The B-side to his next single was a version of a song from 1910, originally made famous by music hall singer and composer, Harry Champion, entitled, 'I'm Henery the Eighth, I am'.[18] Though the song refers to a working-class man who becomes the eighth man named Henry to marry a widow who lives next door, Brown re-arranged the tune as a fast-paced rock 'n' roll shuffle, whilst staying faithful to the original rendering by delivering the vocal in a cockney twang. This was followed by 'What a Crazy World (We're Livin' in)', described as a 'comedy number' which integrated rock 'n' roll guitar-led sound with a contemporary working-class perspective that Brown's young audience could potentially identify with.[19]

> Dad's gone down the dog track, Mother's playing bingo
> Grandad's swearin' at the telly, tryin' to make the thing go
> No one seems to notice me, isn't it a sin
> What a crazy mixed up world we're living in.[20]

Regarding songs of the Vicwardian music hall, Russell contends that 'it seems reasonable to claim that the major topic of interest was the daily life of the working class', and via the song's narration of contemporary working-class pre-occupations, Brown rearticulates this cultural language.[21] 'A Lay-About's Lament', a country and western infused instrumental which lyrically bemoaned the closure of the local labour exchange continued to explore these contrasts, but

[17] *The Stage*, 20th October 1960, p4.
[18] British Library Music Collections, H.3995.j.(54.)
[19] *The Stage*, 19th April 1962, p4.
[20] Joe Brown, 'What a Crazy World (We're Livin' In), PYE Records, 1961.
[21] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*, p121.

it was with the B-side entitled 'A Picture of You' that Brown had his biggest chart success. This song represented a departure, since while it was once again a country and western tune, this time it was sung in an imitative American accent with a subject matter that did not accentuate any sense of place or class. The success of this song suggests that Brown's cockney persona was not an essential part of his popularity, especially considering that some of the songs that actively foregrounded a congruence with music hall song failed to chart.

However, whilst 'A Picture of You' was at the top of the *Melody Maker* charts, Brown gave an interview to the publication expressing his frustration at not being able to shake off the image of the '24-hour comic Cockney character', commenting 'That makes me so mad… This tag, this label they put on you. You know, like a filing cabinet. Let's see… B… B… Brown, Joe, Cockney character. You know what I mean?'.[22] Whilst Brown seemed to be aiming these remarks at the popular discourse that commented upon him, it also appears that the cockney persona used within his songs was also an important factor with his audience. In another interview with *Melody Maker*, when asked if it was time to drop such songs as 'I'm Henery the Eighth, I am', Brown replied: 'You try and tell the fans, mate. Not long ago we did that. We put all new things in and didn't do the regulars. The audience wouldn't have it. So they've had to come back.'[23]

Brown's eventual vexation at being labelled a 'cockney sparrow' or as indulging in 'cockney humour' allied to a demand from audiences to carry on playing songs that employed this archetype, clearly demonstrate the continuing prominence and recognition of these nineteenth-century music hall-variety tropes within the British cultural repertoire.[24] Evidence contradicting the possibility that Brown's cockney persona was simply an outlier in a British popular music industry geared towards the replication of US popular music, can be found in a 1960 *Daily Mirror* article entitled 'Cor! The Cockneys are calling the tune'. Within it, correspondent Patrick Doncaster placed Brown alongside other London-born musicians and songwriters such as Lonnie Donegan, Lionel Bart, Alma Cogan, Anthony Newley and Max Bygraves, who were 'taking a big bite at the British music scene' via the popularity of their 'Cockney-inspired' songs.[25] Despite his quickly mounting frustrations at not being able to move beyond his 'cockney character' label, it was this persona that dictated and continued to dominate Brown's career throughout the 1960s. More than a youth-oriented rock 'n' roller, he became primarily thought of as an 'all-round entertainer', making appearances in variety seaside packages, pantomime and northern clubland, all bastions of music hall-variety culture

[22] *Melody Maker*, 14th July 1962, p7.
[23] *Ibid*., 23rd March 1963, p7.
[24] *Ibid*., 25th June 1960, p6; *The Stage*, 29th November 1962, p5.
[25] Patrick Doncaster, 'Cor! The Cockneys are calling the tune', *Daily Mirror*, 16th June 1960, p25.

with predominantly working-class audiences.[26] Nevertheless, Brown's successful hybridisation of music hall-variety presentational codes with youth-oriented rock 'n' roll not only offers a counterpoint to the notion that British popular music pre-1963 was simply a cultural colony that imitated American genres wholesale, but also highlights commercialised popular music's relationship with a Vicwardian continuum before the art-school, 'rock bohemian' moment.

Whilst exploring the threads of nineteenth-century continuity within early sixties British rock 'n' roll, it is important to consider that the genre did not have sole hegemony, existing as one of a plurality of popular music cultures. These other styles also synthesised the musical past and present: an example from the early 1960s being the work of The Alberts, who mixed musical performance with comedy. Described by George Melly as creators of 'satiric pop music', this musical-comedy troupe performed in both live and recorded settings, where earlier American musical styles, such as traditional jazz, often intertwined with re-interpretations of nineteenth-century legacies.[27] Contemporary critical reflection on The Alberts performances remarked on their derision of 'high' culture, the 'Establishment' and institutional deference, whilst also emphasising their veneration of Victorianism and music hall culture, reflecting a wider ambivalence within sixties British society regarding collective cultural memories surrounding national identity.

The career and popularity of The Alberts has perhaps been over-looked due to their work straddling a position between the traditional jazz revival and the satire boom, both of which occurred in early sixties Britain. Adding to the difficulty of categorising or defining their work, both these cultural trends associated themselves with humour. Conversely, The Alberts presented themselves on stage as 'totally serious'.[28] In Melly's words, this often created the impression 'that they have happened to find themselves on a stage facing an audience, but are not going to allow this to affect them'.[29] The contemporary music press quickly linked the group's musicianship and comedy to notions of Vicwardian eccentricity, with *Melody Maker*'s Robert Dawbarn describing them as 'musical goons' who collected and tried to emulate Edwardian cylinder recordings. Dawbarn also reassured his readers that although the accompanying picture showed the group 'bearded, waist-coated and drainpipe trousered' evoking iconography of the nineteenth century, 'This picture was taken today… and the musicians who posed for it are perfectly serious'.[30] This early press discussion associating The Alberts' to a Vicwardian past, was, according to Roger Ekins, indicative of the early-sixties

[26] *Melody Maker*, 25th July 1964, p7; *Ibid*., 18th January 1964, p4; *The Stage*, 4th July 1968, p4.
[27] Melly, *Revolt into Style*, p201.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., p200.
[30] Robert Dawbarn, *Melody Maker*, 30th June 1956, p5.

traditional jazz movement and reflected the commodification process surrounding the 'mainstreaming' of the genre. Alongside The Alberts, traditional jazz musicians with chart hits, such as The Temperance Seven and Acker Bilk, were marketed 'wholly in terms of an Edwardian image', signified, not only through clothing, but via 'album sleeves, concerts programmes and paraphernalia'.[31] The description of The Alberts – led by brothers Douglas and Tony Gray – as musical goons was likely due to their television appearances as a supporting 'musical act' throughout the fifties and sixties for Spike Milligan and Peter Sellers.[32] Milligan and Sellers had originally found fame writing and appearing on BBC radio's *The Goon Show*, a surreal comedy series which, in Stuart Ward's words, had its 'roots in a working-class tradition of poking fun at the pretensions of the aristocracy' with further derision reserved for symbols of authority, empire and patriotism, an influence that would manifest in The Alberts' own work.[33] Widely regarded as subversive by the standards of fifties, *The Goon Show* was an important influence on the satire revival of the early sixties, represented most prominently by *Beyond the Fringe*, and The Alberts began to be linked with this movement in contemporary discourse.

The association with the satirical movement was primarily due to The Alberts residency at The Establishment, 'Britain's Satirical Nightclub' in London, where 'Monday night [was] Albert Night'.[34] Music featured heavily, with one reviewer describing them as 'musical assassins' and these performances led to a six month engagement in New York organised by American comedian Lenny Bruce.[35] Around this time, The Alberts also recorded two tunes which give an indication of the music they had been performing, a late twenties tune entitled 'Sleepy Valley', and an original composition, 'Morse Code Melody'. Both recordings highlight a synthesis of musical genres: early contrapuntal jazz with a re-interpretation of Vicwardian music hall song. In the case of 'Morse Code Melody', the lyric describes a dance being 'the scourge of the Edgware Road' and ending with a recitative declaring the song 'may be rubbish, but by jingo it's English rubbish!'.[36] The use of the word 'jingo' evoked its usage in patriotic songs of the Victorian music hall, most famously in 'MacDermott's War Song' of the late 1870s, which according to Russell lead to the term 'jingoism' being coined, though re-articulated by

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[31] Richard Ekins, "Traditional Jazz and the mainstreaming of authenticity: The case of British traddy pop (1959-1963) — a grounded theory approach," *Popular Music History* 5, no.2, (2010): 125-150, doi:10.1558/pomh.v5i2.125., p143.
[32] *The Stage*, 6th April 1961, p14.
[33] Stuart Ward, "'No nation could be broker': the satire boom and the demise of Britain's world role", in *British Culture and the end of empire*, ed. Stuart Ward, (Manchester: University Press, 2001, 2006) p95.
[34] *The Stage*, 22nd February 1962, p6.
[35] *Ibid*., 8th March 1962, p7; *Ibid*., 27th September 1962, p7.
[36] Sbritt, 'The Alberts Morse Code Melody', 30th June 2010, YouTube, 2:26, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qGMCeqwW8g.

The Alberts to signal a self-deprecating humour rather than the hubristic attitudes of Empire.[37] Regardless of the song's ambivalence towards the nineteenth century, *Melody Maker*'s review of the single picked up on the evocation of these cultural references, calling the songs 'relics of Victoriana'.[38]

Equivocations surrounding the nineteenth century within Albert performances would manifest most clearly in their theatrical show entitled *An Evening of British Rubbish*, which ran at the Comedy Theatre in London's West End for almost a year from January 1963.[39] These fluctuating sentiments were also recognised by reviewers, reflecting a broader discourse within sixties Britain regarding conflicting collective memories of Britain's nineteenth-century. *The Stage* provides insight into the contradictions between critique and veneration for the nineteenth century that The Alberts reflected, stating initially in positive tones that the show 'is beating away the last remnants of nostalgia clinging to our sentimental minds; proving once and for all time that indeed the sun has set upon our Empire'.[40] This perspective conjured from The Alberts' performance certainly suggests that their popularity was not only due to their synthesis of styles but also their contemporary relevance to issues surrounding the dismantling of Empire and its reconfiguration in the collective memory. Whilst decolonisation had been high on the British agenda since 1945, the early sixties saw a 'massive wave of acts of decolonisation', particularly in Africa.[41] The implications of the British Empire's decline and the potential irrelevance of its successor, the Commonwealth, precipitated anxiety in some quarters, which in one view had been brought on by 'nerveless drift at home'.[42] By challenging Empire nostalgia and 'belabouring the Establishment, from Victoria's time to the present day' it would seem The Alberts were articulating a sense of indifference towards this perceived decline.[43]

However, *The Stage*'s review also mentions that The Alberts attack was 'without bitterness or sickness' and the description of the show itself suggests The Alberts were not entirely reconciled to the derision of all nineteenth-century socio-cultural legacies. *An Evening of British Rubbish* also affectionately evoked elements of nineteenth-century performance culture, noting 'the music hall was vividly recalled' alongside 'Irish ballads; ballad singers; the British seaside; the cult of Victoriana and Edwardian'.[44] It is hard to grasp exactly what these instances of Vicwardian homage were, but a short half-hour documentary made in 1986

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[37] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*, p147.
[38] *Melody Maker*, 28th April 1962, p6.
[39] *The Stage*, 10th January 1963, p8.
[40] *Ibid.*, 31st January 1963, p15.
[41] John M. MacKenzie, "The persistence of empire in metropolitan culture", in *British Culture and the end of empire*, ed. Stuart Ward, (Manchester: University Press, 2001, 2006) p22.
[42] S.C. Leslie, "While the watchdogs sleep", *The Listener*, 6th February 1964, p221.
[43] *The Stage*, 9th January 1964, p15.
[44] *Ibid.*, 31st January 1963, p15.

covering a retrospective of The Alberts' career interspersed with footage from a reunion performance of the show provides insight.[45] Interviewed for the documentary, English actor John Wells suggests 'It's a kind of crazy, amateurish love of British music hall that seems to be behind actually why they do it' (12:44) and the film reveals several examples. Footage is shown of Douglas Gray performing a novelty song called 'The Dustbin Dance' whose lyric tells of a tramp 'living on luxuries' that the West End hotels throw away, all recounted whilst dancing in a dustbin (11:34). This is quickly followed by a slapstick comedy routine involving a classical violinist who doubles as a magician (13:02) and other illusions to nineteenth-century culture feature comedic impersonations (23:01), brass bands descending onto the stage (28:29) and Morris dancing (28:32).

Although some of these references to nineteenth and early twentieth-century culture were not originally intended to incite humour, the title of the show itself affectionately alerted the audience to their intended connection to 'Britishness'. This mixture of veneration and derision for a perceived Vicwardian past chimes with what Ward calls 'the deep sense of ambivalence that permeated British culture' in the early sixties and beyond.[46] Contemporary discourse surrounding the show in *The Stage* confirms this, on the one hand praising The Alberts derision of nineteenth-century hierarchies, on the other, appreciative of their re-interpretation regarding the era's popular culture.

By exploring two artists within contrasting professional spheres, this section has offered the perspective that despite the many facets of American culture infiltrating pre-1963 British popular music culture, performance culture originating from the nineteenth century continued to contribute to their performance and mediation. Joe Brown's conscious re-interpretation of the music hall cockney within the parameters of American rock 'n' roll was a presentational and performance continuity recognised within contemporary discourse due to its practice in a range of popular music contexts and appreciated by his audience. Analogously, The Alberts reference to the music hall was reflective of the wider usage of Vicwardian signifiers in the promotion of the early-sixties British trad jazz movement, but association with satirical comedy and the opportunity to perform in middle-class theatrical settings drew a discourse that reflected the contemporary ambivalence and anxiety over which cultural memories of the nineteenth century were to be celebrated and which should be forgotten. This discourse which drew illusions to Britain's Empire, status and class structures during the Victorian and Edwardian eras would continue within the press coverage surrounding the 'Beat Boom' and 'British Invasion' of the USA. Furthermore, the continuing customs of music hall-variety performance culture – showcased and re-interpreted in different

[45] Arthur Phillips, "The Alberts: An Evening of British Rubbish", 27th December 2015, YouTube, 58.30, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=is-BjqykocA&t=1709s.
[46] Ward, "'No nation could be broker'", p109.

ways by Joe Brown and The Alberts – would be embraced by beat musicians, providing an undercurrent of continuity to what is generally perceived as British popular music's most radical departure from the past.

## Career Longevity, Class and Nationalising the Beat Boom

On the 18th July 1953, the *Melody Maker* published an interview with a Francis, Day and Hunter song-plugger, Jimmy Barry, entitled 'Will there BE any British songsmiths in ten years' time?'. The outlook was bleak, Barry suggested: 'While it's predominantly American-controlled, our composers stand little chance of getting a song recorded and exploited when best-sellers are continually flooding in from the States'.[47] Although Barry wouldn't be the first or the last British music industry insider of the 1950s to bemoan American domination of the charts, from the vantage point of the twenty-first century, the article's headline appears ironic when analysing British popular music from 1963 onwards. Narrative constructions of popular music historiography that emphasise radical change, generally cite 1963 as a watershed moment when British musicians, led by the innovation and popular triumph of The Beatles 'transformed an often pale imitation of Americana into a robust culture of their own making'.[48] This shift is also accentuated in wider social histories of the era; Kynaston's *On the Cusp: Days of '62* indicates by title alone a focus on a moment when the 'cultural tectonic plates were about to shift'.[49] It would be contrary to deny that with the advent of The Beatles and the ensuing 'beat boom', popular music influenced and reflected broader socio-cultural changes – the increased visibility of working-class culture; a rapid decolonisation programme; and a questioning of Establishment figures, particularly in the wake of the Profumo Scandal, all contributed to a growing sense that moral codes and culture were changing irrevocably. Regarding the music itself, the influence of African-American blues and rock 'n' roll upon beat music is well-documented, inspiring a new generation of largely working-class 'do-it-yourself' British songwriters to dominate the charts of both Britain and the USA.

By 1965 however, whilst the music press was covering the latest single releases of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, and waiting in anticipation for Bob Dylan's UK tour, a song unmistakably in the music hall-variety idiom, entitled 'Mrs Brown You've Got a Lovely Daughter', sung by Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits in a distinct Lancashire accent, was

[47] *Melody Maker*, 18th July 1953, p3.
[48] Thompson, *Please Please Me*, p13.
[49] David Kynaston, *On the Cusp: Days of '62*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), p199.

sitting at number one in the US charts.[50] This rather singular example of continuity within a perceived moment of cultural transition was symptomatic of wider trends within the post-1963 British 'beat boom' that not only presented interpretations of American influenced sounds, but also continued to develop music hall-variety paradigms established in the Vicwardian era. These aspects, which included song material, performance customs and environments, remained widespread in the British popular music industry and popular with audiences. They also provided a novelty factor in their signification of a quaint 'Britishness', helping to gain a springboard to popularity in ultra-modern North America and beyond. Furthermore, underlying these performance continuities was a media discourse that, despite initially recognising this musical movement as an assertion of working-class cultural capital, subtly repurposed its classed origins to serve the language of 'banal nationalism' – the collective response to a long-standing anxiety, originating in the late-nineteenth century, around American cultural domination.

Simonelli writes that The Beatles 'blazed every path travelled by British bands in the 1960s'.[51] Whilst this point is hard to contradict in regard to musical innovation, the road that led to mass success began with the group adapting themselves to performing in pre-existing entertainment environs configured around the music hall-variety legacies. The narrative regarding the group's formative years on the stages of Liverpool and Hamburg, and their transition from leather-clad rockers to suited pop stars under the management of Brian Epstein, is well-documented to say the least. What is less commonly studied, is how this diversity of experience prepared and enhanced their ability to adapt to these long-standing practices whilst retaining their working-class northern identities. McCartney explained, that in the days of the Cavern club, the group had always enjoyed improvising, joking and interacting with their audience:

> to keep ourselves laughing… we used to come on with the maddest gear on. I had shredded newspaper sticking out of the bottom of my trouser legs, John wore a Cellophane bag around his shoes… The crowd would call out "Hey Paul, you've got newspaper…" and I used to say: "Where? What? What you talking about…?".[52]

Two milestones of acceptance within music hall-variety culture came in quick succession. First, an appearance on the premiere variety television show *Sunday Night at the London*

[50] *Disc Weekly*, 8th May 1965, p2. Note: Up until the 5th April 64, *Disc Weekly* published under the name *Disc*. On the 23rd April 1966, the publication changed its title once more to *Disc and Music Echo*. Although all one publication, the title cited will be the one at time of publication.
[51] Simonelli, *Working Class Heroes*, p37.
[52] *Melody Maker*, 3rd August 1963, p7.

*Palladium*, placing the group in front of a cross-generational national audience, explicitly suggesting that their music and personalities had broad appeal. Second was their headline appearance in the 1963 Royal Variety Show with acts as diverse as Max Bygraves, Buddy Greco, Harry Secombe and Marlene Dietrich.[53] Originating in 1912 as the Royal Command Performance, this annual tradition was the 'symbolic apotheosis of music hall', and despite John Lennon's subversive request for 'People in the cheaper seats – clap your hands. The rest – rattle your jewellery', contemporary reports suggest nothing incongruous about their presence on the bill. Further evidence of The Beatles' willing acceptance into continuing music hall-variety structures of entertainment was recognised with the award of 'Show Business Personality of 1963' from the Variety Club of Great Britain.[54]

The Beatles, as well as many other beat groups, took part in another popular legacy emanating from the nineteenth century: the pantomime. Although these shows were adapted to feature modern popular music, The Beatles still took part in many Christmas themed comedy sketches. These shows occurred both in 1964 at the Astoria in Finsbury Park and Hammersmith in 1965. An article covering the show at Hammersmith included pictures of the four dressed for various sketches, including 'Eskimo costumes' and 'giant jumpers'. It is illuminating however, that in the article George Harrison commented 'we think it's dreadfully unfunny, but there you are!', suggesting that, by this time, members of the group were hoping that their ever-growing fame would extricate them from these long-standing entertainment traditions founded in the previous century.[55]

For other musicians of the beat boom, the success of their music was seen as an entry point to a more secure career in the long-established music hall-variety industry, whether it be theatre, clubland or via new opportunities in TV. This route was often openly aspired to by musicians who, unlike The Beatles, did not write their own material. Frith and Horne suggest that 'the art school connection' is 'the best explanation' for why some groups managed to successfully move out of 'professional entertainment' and into the burgeoning rock culture, 'while others were doomed to play out their careers in performances of their old "entertaining" hits night after night on the working men's club and cabaret circuit.'[56] Whilst this rationalisation contributes to understanding changing music-making attitudes and the growing contemporary divide between perceived artists and entertainers, it predicates itself on the assumption that rock culture was an inevitable cultural progression away from an undesirable past. For many, including The Beatles – who professed it themselves in early interviews – the expected time-

[53] *Ibid.*, 9th November 1963, p3.
[54] Bailey, "Introduction: Making Sense of the Music Hall", pxii; *Melody Maker*, 9th November 1963, p3; *Disc*, 28th March 1964, p2.
[55] *Disc Weekly*, 9th January 1965, p3.
[56] Frith and Horne, *Art into Pop*, p86.

span of a 'pop' musician's career was short.[57] One of the few precedents for prolonging a career within the entertainment industry involved transitioning from a youth-culture orientated musician to a performer beloved as a 'family entertainer' in a range of music hall-variety environs. Therefore, insecurities surrounding longevity drove many of the choices beat musicians made, regardless of their song-writing ability, also demonstrating the continuing prevalence of music hall-variety culture as a template for success in this particular historical moment.

One prominent example of this dynamic is the career trajectory of Freddie and the Dreamers, a Manchester group led by the bespectacled Freddie Garrity, whose top ten hits such as 'I'm Telling You Now' and 'You Were Made for Me' sat neatly within the guitar-led beat group sound. Their performances, however, incorporated music hall-variety's presentational customs of novelty and persona, including synchronised dance steps, maniacal laughter and jumping, as well as drawn-out slapstick comedy routines.[58] Though their initial popularity rested on chart hits, by early 1964 Freddie was already voicing in the press the group's desire to manoeuvre from youth-orientated beat music to the perceived stable institutions of cross-generational entertainment born from music hall-variety culture. Early opportunities came in the form of pantomime in Chester, with Freddie enthusiastic that performing in 'Cinderella' had 'given us a terrific feel for the old music hall'.[59] These experiences of pantomime seem to have led to further merging of their music with conscious comedy routines, later in the month promising readers of *Disc* that they would find Freddie's television performance on *Thank Your Lucky Stars* 'a giggle too because we do "Short Shorts" in a bathing pool setting – complete with shorts'.[60] This decision to 'concentrate much more on the comedy angle', focusing on performance elements that adapted established music hall-variety customs seemed to stem from a belief that 'we appeal to people who don't usually buy pop records'.[61]

Although beat music involved musicians from working-class backgrounds with influences in rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues from the USA, the examples of The Beatles and Freddie and the Dreamers demonstrate the interactions beat groups had in the years between 1963 and 1966, not only with a distinct youth culture, but with the continuing paradigms and environments of an entertainment industry predicated on music hall-variety

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[57] See: Graham72, "The Beatles John Lennon Paul McCartney George Harrison Ringo Starr TV Appearances Interview 1963", 29th January 2021, YouTube, 11:17, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlRWokXBXwc.

[58] For an example of the novelty elements in Freddie and the Dreamers live performances, see: Arty Davies, "Freddie and the Dreamers palladium", 4th October 2011, YouTube, 7:35, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vk3bGfz4eVE.

[59] *Disc*, 4th January 1964, p1.

[60] *Ibid*., 25th January 1964, p11.

[61] *Melody Maker*, 21st March 1964, p7.

culture. The Beatles' rise in popularity partly relied on their ability to navigate and perform within the music hall-variety model, featuring in TV and live variety shows, pantomime, as well as attending show business events. Freddie and the Dreamers not only embraced these entertainment structures, but enthusiastically incorporated many of its performance customs such as novelty presentation, slapstick comedy and exaggerated personality. These interactions are often viewed within wider popular music historiography as a rite of passage beat groups had to endure – or get left behind in – on the road to the perceived rock authenticity of the late sixties. However, they can be interpreted differently – for beat groups within the short-term world of popular music, connecting with this hegemonic industry that still prioritised many of the paradigms that had been customary since the late nineteenth century was the most viable way to establish longevity.

When exploring the discourse of the popular music press in relation to the huge popularity of beat music and its chart prominence, the pervading attitude was initially one of identifying and documenting a provincial, primarily working-class phenomenon. In *Melody Maker*, the 'beat battlefront' was a northern spectacle, one principally concerned with whether Liverpool or Manchester groups 'can justly claim to have the true Northern sound?'.[62] The element of class, specifically northern working-class, was further emphasised by the publication. In an article entitled 'If you want to get ahead – get an Accent', journalist Chris Roberts explored the shift beat music had caused within the cultural imagination.

> In Britain the accent has been on London, and like the BBC voice, anything that sounded remotely Cockney-fied was accepted from one end of Britain to the other. Accepted as the universal language of the working-class… Until the Beatles turned up with accents that were unmistakeably Merseyside… Freddie and the Dreamers and The Hollies who were just as blunt in Northern fashion… they're going to be around for a long time in our classless country.

It is curious that Roberts uses the word 'classless' in an article highlighting the class backgrounds of popular musicians. According to Stuart Laing, this kind of discourse is indicative of a type of political commentary prevalent in the early sixties, which suggested the majority of the working class, due to social affluence, the welfare state and greater opportunities for leisure, were in 'the throes of embourgeoisement… a new social group, secure, prosperous and satisfied'.[63] Additionally, analysing this press discourse further, also demonstrates how it provided a platform to reconceptualise beat music from a product of a

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[62] *Ibid*., 1st June 1963, p8.
[63] Stuart Laing, *Representations of Working-Class Life: 1957-1964*, (London: Macmillan, 1986), p4.

strident working-class culture to representing a new form of 'Britishness', particularly when groups became popular in the USA.

Russell contends that during the nineteenth century, the north of England moved 'far more towards the forefront of national economic and political life… only to experience, sometimes extremely painfully, a relative decline in fortunes over the twentieth'.[64] As a contrast to economic suffering however, in the post-war period in particular, the north 'became fashionable within the cultural field'.[65] In his overview of the region's hold in the national imagination, Russell later suggests that the northern working-class cultural flowering of the post-war era was often appropriated by popular discourse to act 'as a powerful bulwark against the general threat of mass culture and the specific one of Americanisation'.[66] For Jonathan Rose, the threat of American cultural imperialism or 'Americanisation' is an ideological division between classes:

> That country has always fascinated the proletariat as much as it has repelled the European educated classes, because it has promised the former a measure of freedom and affluence that latter was not prepared to grant.[67]

This middle-class anxiety – expressed by politicians, writers and public figures from across the political spectrum – gained further prominence in the inter-war period with the advent of mass communication, fuelled by the arrival of gramophone ownership and with it the popularity of American jazz, coupled alongside the rise of Hollywood cinema and musical films amongst other genres.[68] The increase in access to American goods and media during this period left intellectuals fearing an 'erasure of cultural specificity and the history that produced it', an attitude which continued in the pages of publications such as *Melody Maker* and in socio-cultural studies of the post-war age such as Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*.[69]

In British popular music historiography, certain authors have called attention to earlier instances of American popular music culture in Britain, in particular the popularity of minstrelsy from the nineteenth century onwards as evidence of the 'first American pop form to leave its

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[64] Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination*, (Manchester: University Press, 2004, 2015) p24.
[65] Ibid., p28.
[66] Ibid., p268.
[67] Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, (Yale University Press: New Haven & London, 2002, 2010) p353.
[68] See: Nott, *Music for the People*, p13-96.
[69] Genevieve Abravanel, *Americanizing Britain: The Rise of Modernism in the Age of the Entertainment Empire*, (Oxford: University Press, 2012), p4; Steve Race, "Everything is American", *Melody Maker*, 5th December 1959, p5.

mark on British musical culture'.[70] Examination of *The Era* (1838-1939), a theatrical trade paper which extensively covered the music halls of London and the provinces suggests that minstrelsy was one of many popular American cultural forms, with sand dancing at Crowder's in Greenwich, a banjo-playing female comedian and a performance of the cake-walk in Bristol all being described as being in 'the American style'.[71] The growing influence of the USA in British popular music entertainment of the Vicwardian period was not simply reserved for live acts but also through the sale of sheet music, with the foundation of a 'New American Music House' in Covent Garden dedicated exclusively to the sale of 'terrific American song hits'.[72] Furthermore, exploration of a variety of late Victorian and Edwardian newspapers demonstrates that the topic of being 'Americanised' was already a concept being discussed and debated within wider middle-class society. Fears of over-privatisation of railways and the democratisation of the franchise, to changes in university education and the building of 'streets that go in one direction' in St. Helens were all critiqued as attempts to Americanise aspects of society.[73]

From this evidence, it is possible to propose that the prevalence, enjoyment and concern surrounding American socio-cultural forms was a dialogue that had its origins in the late nineteenth-century, intensifying and continuing through the twentieth century. This middle-class discourse of anxiety was a perspective that had continued to be disseminated and thus played a role in the way the British music press celebrated the success of working-class British beat groups in the USA during the sixties. Rather than continuing to highlight the music's specific working-class origins and American influences, discourse chose to emphasise beat music's 'Britishness'.

This celebration, directly informed by fears of American cultural dominance in the popular music industry, can be framed in contemporary discourse by what Michael Billig calls the 'flagging' of banal nationalism. In Billig's terminology, flagging is the continual reminder of nationhood 'embedded in routines of life… so numerous and they are such a familiar part of the social environment… the national flag hanging outside a public building… illustrates this forgotten reminding'.[74] Popular discourse's re-conceptualisation of beat music from working-class phenomenon to a symbol of a broader British reply to American cultural dominance began to be articulated before any of the groups visited the USA. As early as June 1963,

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[70] Simon Frith, "Playing with real feeling: making sense of jazz in Britain", in *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) p121.
[71] *The Era*, 10th January 1885, p10; *Ibid.,* 27th February 1892, p16; *Ibid.,* 4th December 1897, p25.
[72] *Ibid*., 29th April 1905, p34.
[73] *Cornish & Devon Post*, 31st January 1885, p2; *Norfolk News*, 1st August 1885, p7; *Liverpool Daily Post*, 29th December 1904, p9*; Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 10th June 1909, p7.
[74] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London: Sage, 1995, 2014) p38.

*Melody Maker* were confident that 'The inferiority complex that British popsters have had about American music is already starting to disappear. Because the new wave have shown they can beat America'.[75] When the Beatles went to the USA for the first time in February 1964, the banal flaggings of new found British dominance were numerous, from the constant reference to 'Britain's Beatles' to replacing the stars in the American national flag with Beatle heads.[76] Upon their return, this specific cultural discourse continued, labelling the group as 'America-conquering' and declaring they 'had done Britain proud'.[77] From this point onwards, when a British group would visit the USA, the language was usually one of banal nationalism, with 'the Stones set to invade' or the 'U.S go[ing] British!' due to 'personal appearance invasions'.[78] This language adopted within media discourse in the midst of this transatlantic popularity was also occasionally used by the musicians themselves, with one Rolling Stone purportedly commenting on their first trip to the USA that 'the natives appear to be friendly. We don't need the beads and trinkets after all'.[79] With the immense popularity of British beat groups in the USA, the notion of beat music as a working-class cultural expression was revised by the music press to represent 'Britishness' on the global stage, countering long-standing anxieties surrounding American cultural domination.

However, in what was referred to as the 'second wave' of British beat group popularity in the North America during 1965, groups such as Freddie and the Dreamers and Herman's Hermits success continued to rely on the re-articulation of music hall-variety performance culture within beat music. Freddie and the Dreamers re-released 'I'm Telling You Now', with Freddie suggesting 'the visual approach' of his slapstick musical performances on American television pushed record sales.[80] Herman's Hermits had even greater success, initially choosing song material that imitated music hall-variety paradigms – in the case of 'Mrs Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter' – or indirectly appropriated it. In August 1965 an exact copy of Joe Brown's interpretation of music hall favourite 'I'm Henery the Eighth, I am' replaced the Rolling Stones '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction' at the top of the USA singles charts.[81] These re-interpretations of urban music hall-variety were recognised in the British press, with one article commenting that promotion of the group had included presenting Herman as a 'juvenile George Formby'.[82] This demonstrates an awareness within discourse that although the Lancashire accents and music hall-variety song choices perpetuated cultural memories that

[75] *Melody Maker*, 8th June 1963, p4.
[76] *Ibid*., 15th February 1964, p2-3.
[77] *Disc*, 29th February 1964, p1.
[78] *Melody Maker*, 23rd May 1964, p1; *Disc*, 9th May 1964, p11.
[79] *Melody Maker*, 6th June 1964, p1.
[80] *Ibid*., 24th April 1965, p3.
[81] *Ibid*., 7th August 1965, p2.
[82] *Disc Weekly*, 10th September 1966, p11.

were linked to older forms of working-class custom; they only enhanced the groups 'Britishness' in the context of American audiences. The group itself was also aware of this approach, in another interview Herman admitted that he felt the groups success was down to 'using typically English songs'.[83] This adaptation of music hall-variety custom and material alongside the influence of American genres was not necessarily welcomed by other British musicians, with Mick Jagger commenting that when it came to Herman's Hermits, 'we think their music is wet and watery and not significant'.[84]

Contemporary comments by a leading songwriter of the era such as Jagger, who principally took inspiration from African American music, perhaps encourage the dominant historical perspective that, despite the use of these music hall-variety paradigms by certain groups primarily targeting the youth-market, these instances were in decline and reflective of their inability to write their own material. However, by exploring the overlooked fame – in Britain and beyond – and surrounding discourse of groups navigating and incorporating forms of music hall-variety culture, British beat culture appears not solely as a symbol of cultural change, but an era of intersecting musical contexts and cultural dialogue that carried continuity as well as bringing change.

## Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter has attempted to highlight instances of Vicwardian performance custom, environments and discourses within commercial popular music of the 1960s before the rise of the rock bohemians and 'music as bricolage'.[85] Initially countering the historical narrative that pre-1963 British popular music was dominated by derivative of American styles, analysis explored how two performers – Joe Brown and The Alberts – working in different genres, hybridised American forms with references that evoked the British music hall. The musical innovation brought by the beat boom also entered into a dynamic relationship with a cultural Vicwardian continuum. Despite the re-structuring of the British popular music industry engendered by beat groups, the seeming transience of pop fame, and the perception that this enduring performance culture was a more secure route to career longevity meant that many groups continued to present their music within the continuing dominant structural traditions and presentational customs of music hall-variety entertainment. When this form of popular music found a mass audience in the US, contemporary media discourse made a sustained effort in re-purposing a predominantly northern working-class cultural form, to act as a symbol

[83] *Ibid*., 15th January 1966, p10.
[84] *Melody Maker*, 15th May 1965, p9.
[85] Frith and Horne, *Art into Pop*, p107.

of a new, strident ‘Britishness’, with its working-class origins being overlooked. This global cultural success, often reported with delight as the ‘British Invasion’, was the projection of a broader Vicwardian legacy – predominantly middle class in origin – surrounding long-standing fears of American cultural colonisation.

Whilst this exploration has illuminated the plurality of popular music cultures that drew upon and hybridised Vicwardian performance culture, it also challenges the wider myth that British popular music was simply an industry that mimicked US styles. On the contrary, it had its own distinctive musicians, character and appeal. This would inform and benefit activities of the mid-to-late sixties. Audience demand for musical innovation, coupled with cultural confidence in British popular music, would intensify the re-interpretation of continuities active in the national cultural imagination, involving popular imagery and symbols of Britishness. Amongst the traditions and customs evoked or re-interpreted during this period in popular music, many continued to express the strong presence of the real and imagined collective memories of the Vicwardian.

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# Chapter 5 – 'Very English Songs': Vicwardian Rock and its Unsung Others

In March 1968, Chris Welch was once again reviewing The Beatles latest music, this time describing their latest single 'Lady Madonna' as the 'riotous music of all our yesterdays'. In the case of this particular song, Welch was probably referring to the connotations the music had with early and inter-war twentieth-century jazz as well as rock 'n' roll boogie-woogie piano of the 1950s, but the suggestion again, that The Beatles had to 'go backwards' for inspiration illustrates a broader trend within British popular music of the mid-to-late sixties.[1]

The previous chapter explored instances of the dynamic role Vicwardian continuity played in commercial popular music during the first half of the 1960s. In so doing, it attempted to challenge a number of dominant historical narratives. Highlighting British musician's contrasting attempts to synthesise elements of music hall-variety performance culture with various American musical genres pre-1963, it questioned the perspective that this period of commercial popular music was simply derivative of American styles. These enduring performance paradigms were also navigated and adopted by groups during the beat boom, alongside a media discourse – influenced by the perceived threat of American cultural domination – that emphasised a banal nationalism involving 'Britishness', a discourse that had beginnings in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, these case studies serve to demonstrate youth-culture related popular music's pre-existing interaction with nineteenth-century legacies, before the perceived 'high art presence in rock' during the second half of the 1960s.[2]

As Welch's review highlights, however, I do not attempt to deny that from the mid-sixties onwards, the re-interpretation of customs and traditions that perpetuated cultural memories of the past intensified with the growth of a burgeoning rock culture. This chapter begins by encountering this specific moment, exploring British popular musicians who began situating their music and lyrical subject matter within an imagined, bygone Britain. In reality, what was often being re-articulated was 'Englishness', reflecting in Genevieve Abravanel's words 'a shift from imperial confidence to pride in local customs and national traditions'.[3] Village greens; dreaming spires; cottages in the Isle of Wight; regattas; holidays in Blackpool; steam trains; nurses selling poppies; afternoon tea; and darlings of the Wapping Wharf launderette; these are just a small sample of the images conjured by popular musicians which reflect this landscape. Although this imagined Englishness was a multi-layered network of reference points from various eras, many involved eclectic customs associated with the

[1] *Melody Maker*, 9th March 1968, p7.
[2] Frith and Horne, *Art into Pop*, p106.
[3] Abravanel, *Americanizing Britain*, p5.

Victorian and Edwardian period. The section will analyse four pop-rock groups who received extensive coverage in the contemporary music press. Analysis will not only explore the different ways these musicians interacted with and re-interpreted Vicwardian musical legacies, but demonstrate that the reference points to Englishness specifically involved Vicwardian touchstones due to many of its ideals and imagery being established in the late nineteenth century.

The chapter then moves away from 1960s rock music to explore overlooked musicians whose popularity existed either beyond or without the interest of the burgeoning youth-culture market. Broadening the investigation, to feature the working-class participatory music culture of Mrs. Mills and the popularity of sentimental ballads sung by Ken Dodd, will establish that cultural continuities relating to the previous century were endemic in a plurality of British popular music cultures throughout the decade. Foregrounding these associations with the past is not an attempt to deny the impact of change, but to add nuance and advance the narrative that, in popular music of the 1960s, the 'new' was always in dialogue with the past.

## The Re-articulation of 'Englishness' in Sixties Rock

Krishan Kumar contends that during the late Victorian period, a cultural reaction took place which he defines as the 'moment of Englishness'.

> Faltering confidence in empire; the decline of religion, and the identities it had sustained; changing perceptions of the national enemy; the rise of cultural and ethnic nationalism; all these worked to undermine the primacy of British identity… Not that British identity by any means collapsed; far from it… Specifically, there was room, and a felt need, for some expression of English national identity.[4]

Kumar explores how writers, poets, intellectuals and politicians of the era found their source of patriotism in the imagined pastoral, 'a very old thing in English literary culture… that takes on a new intensity in the late nineteenth century'.[5] This pastoralism was not of the earlier Romantic wilderness but of the villages, market towns and cathedral cities of the southern counties where the large industrial urban areas could be conveniently forgotten. Kumar's concepts build upon Martin Wiener's own arguments, which persuasively suggest that a

[4] Krishan Kumar*, The Making of English National Identity*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), p202.
[5] Ibid., p213.

faltering belief amongst Vicwardian elites and middle classes in industrialisation as a symbol of humanity's progress contributed to industrial decline in twentieth-century Britain. This turning away involved taking cultural comfort in imagining true Englishness as fundamentally pastoral. Wiener also contends that the 'victory of the Southern Metaphor' could not have been won if it was 'simply elitist; it had room for a good deal of populism' from supporters on both the left and right of the political spectrum.[6] Wiener describes this as imagining 'Old English' which 'meant not the imitation of a style, but the creation of an atmosphere'.[7] Wiener presents further arguments suggesting this 'atmosphere' implicitly received cross-class acceptance, due to its continuing evocation throughout the inter-war period onwards, summoned in a range of political, social and cultural circumstances, particularly in the mass media of radio and television.[8]

Many of these notions of Englishness, originating from the nineteenth century continued to be given voice in wider culture of the post-war period, depicted as shared collective cultural memories by institutions such as the BBC and were also utilised in British popular music's transition from pop to rock music of the mid-to-late sixties, in what I term 'the re-articulation of Englishness'.[9] Due to rock musicians' predominantly working-class backgrounds, this re-articulation also included socio-cultural elements which incorporated urban and suburban settings. Furthermore, these characteristics continued to be expressed musically via the music hall-variety paradigms still endemic in British entertainment.

Before analysing how these enduring legacies of imagined Englishness were utilised in sixties British popular music, it is important to explore why this intensification occurred at this particular moment. As Chapter One outlined, this particular era has been rehearsed many times within popular media, whilst a handful of popular and academic authors have sought to provide interpretations for this shift. To restate briefly, arguments have varied: Frith and Horne's influential exploration of how musicians' experiences of art school facilitated the ability to mix and de-contextualise 'high' and 'low' art forms; Chapman's focus on LSD as a catalyst for whimsy and experimentation; Faulk interpreting the use of music hall tropes as ironic posturing to puncture its hegemony; whilst Stratton's contention that the notion of continuing residual traditions was coloured by nostalgia. By exploring continuities and reasons for their existence, these arguments have contributed to countering a narrative that prioritises change

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[6] Martin J. Wiener*, English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1981, 2004) p42.
[7] Ibid., p66.
[8] Ibid., p72-80.
[9] For examples of the BBC continuing to give voice to the link between Englishness and the pastoral in the 1960s, see: Babara Ward, "The Menace of Urban Explosion", *The Listener*, 14th November 1963, p785-787; James Lees-Milne, "Who cares for England?", *The Listener*, 19th March 1964, p457-459; Gerald Haythornthwaite, "My case for preservation", *The Listener*, 24th February 1966, p274-275.

and perceived rupture. However, these authors do not make direct use of primary source evidence, particularly in the form of contemporary discourse. But by adopting a documentary approach, two interconnecting factors contributing to the re-articulation of Englishness come to the fore: the high demand for new sounds and perceived innovation in the popular music market and a temporary disenchantment amongst British musicians with the socio-cultural climate of the USA.

By 1966, the multitude of new music being released in Britain had swelled the amount of competition for success in the popular music charts, with *Disc and Music Echo* single's reviewer Penny Valentine estimating at least 2,500 releases for that year alone.[10] This volume of music had precipitated an even greater need for new and innovative sounds in order to attract the record buying public, reach the chart list and maintain career momentum. Although chart hits had been a primary requirement to prolonged success ever since their formation, in 1966 *Melody Maker* drew attention to what it called 'Soundmania!', implicitly suggesting that British musicians could not rely on re-interpreting American influences as in the early years of the beat groups. The article observed that 'striving to do something original' had led to the introduction of Indian instruments such as the sitar as well as the use of feedback, and interviewed various musicians who speculated on future sound influences, including Japanese music culture and the increasing innovation of electronic music.[11] It is also clear from contemporary reports that part of this exploration was influenced by many groups feeling that the American genres of rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues, which had initially inspired either their song-writing attempts or choice of material, would not necessarily continue to attract a market becoming well-versed in these genres and their originators. Ray Davies commented that as a song-writer, 'you get bored writing the same old things' whilst Chas Chandler of the Animals reflected that one of the reasons for the groups recent split was that 'we were just repeating ourselves'.[12] New groups such as The Pink Floyd drew attention in early interviews to the notion that they 'don't just record other people's numbers, or copy American demo discs', summing up a general shift away from the re-creation of American models.[13] Although comments which explicitly critiqued musicians who copied American records highlight an early suggestion of rock music's simultaneous preoccupation with 'evaluating the authenticity of popular music' whilst being on 'the lookout for signs of alienation and inauthenticity', it was also indicative of a broader disenchantment with the US's cultural, domestic and foreign policy, particularly with British musicians who had first-hand experience of the US.[14]

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[10] *Disc and Music Echo*, 24th December 1966, p16.
[11] *Melody Maker*, 28th May 1966, p3.
[12] *Ibid*., 15th October 1966, p10-11.
[13] *Ibid*., 1st April, 1967, p8.
[14] Keir Keightley, "Reconsidering Rock" in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, eds. Simon Frith, Will Straw and John Street, (Cambridge: University Press, 2001), p131.

John Lennon's comments regarding The Beatles being 'more popular than Jesus now', and the ensuing hostility it brought forth during their final live tour of the USA, is well explored.[15] What is less remarked upon, is the general disenchantment expressed by other popular musicians of the era regarding their experiences of the USA. Lennon's interview with Maureen Cleave was one of four interviews the journalist undertook with each Beatle separately, and Paul McCartney's comments made clear his disillusionment with the many aspects of the US. Whilst expressing his revulsion at the treatment of African-Americans, McCartney also opined that the absence of a BBC equivalent in the USA led to a dearth of culture.

> Whether you want to listen to it or not… it's there. They hardly have any plays on television in America… like in 1984, plays are out of the dictionary… We look after things a lot better over here; we have millions of little societies preserving things. We have little societies to preserve barrels of beer and little John Betjeman societies, little ban-the-bomb societies. O, sceptred isle.[16]

McCartney continued on this trajectory in an interview later in the year, commenting that 'I don't like our American image… four silly little puppets, which is what the Americans tend to think of us'.[17] Mick Jagger freely criticised various aspects of US life from transport cafes to hotel security, cigarettes and etiquettes in 1965, and proclaimed in early 1967 that The Rolling Stones 'would never tour America again'.[18] The Kinks were banned from the US after their tour in 1965 due to Ray Davies's altercation with a television executive, and although this event went seemingly unreported in the British music press, Davies later recorded his feelings of disillusionment in his memoir.

> I had started playing music because it was the only way I could express myself as an individual, and yet America, the country that had always inspired that sense of freedom inside me, was somehow one of the most repressed, backward-thinking places I had ever been to.[19]

From this evidence, two contemporary inter-related themes can be placed alongside previous interpretations as contributing to a re-articulation of Englishness in popular music: demand for

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[15] Maureen Cleave, "How does a Beatle live? John Lennon lives like this", *Evening Standard*, 4th March 1966, p10.
[16] Maureen Cleave, "Paul all alone: running hard to catch up with music", *Evening Standard*, 25th March 1966, p8.
[17] *Disc and Music Echo*, 11th June 1966, p9.
[18] *Disc*, 6th November 1965, p7; *Melody Maker*, 22nd May 1967, p11.
[19] Davies, *X-Ray*, p239.

innovation and 'new' sounds and a disenchantment regarding experiences and culture in the USA. Paradoxically, changing opinions and a demand for the 'new' acted as a catalyst for musicians to emphasise cultural continuity, turning to earlier, familiar forms of popular culture which included ideals and paradigms relating to aspects of Vicwardian culture.

How were elements of the Vicwardian incorporated into the music and subject material of British popular music at this particular time? Examples of this are numerous and vary in degree as well as approach. To elucidate this analysis, four popular music groups who not only drew a significant amount of press coverage, but whose music drew a specific discourse acknowledging the evocation of the past, will be used to feature the three main ways Vicwardian culture were utilised: in the service of comedy and parody; to create an imagined space or atmosphere; and in the re-interpretation of music hall-variety customs and attitudes. What these instances have in common, but also what sets them apart from popular musicians' previous interactions with the Vicwardian, is that they all precipitated the re-articulation of an imagined collective Englishness.

In early 1968, *Melody Maker* reported on the ubiquity of comedy bands and their success 'on a national scale', noting their popularity in northern cabaret, jazz and pop clubs as well as various television appearances.[20] The groups cited in the article, such as The Bonzo Dog Doodah Band, The Lounge Lizards and The Incredible Chicago Gangsters all drew a lineage in performance from The Alberts, mixing references and iconography relating to both the music hall and inter-war jazz era. This particular merging of past periods was referred to in *Melody Maker* as 'Vaudeville', which up unto this point in popular culture was a term often used to denote the 'American equivalent' of British music hall-variety.[21] From 1966 onwards, however, it became the blanket expression within popular music discourse to denote what was primarily the parodying of both Vicwardian and inter-war styles. This adoption of the phrase was brought into usage due to the chart success of a song entitled 'Winchester Cathedral' by The New Vaudeville Band. Written by Geoff Stephens, a song-writer described as interested in the 'sounds of Vaudeville' who scoured junk shops – much like The Alberts – for inspiration, a group of musicians was hurriedly assembled to capitalise on the song's success.[22]

The musicians presented in both performance and instrumentation a mixture of eras, the collage contributing to the comedy. In a clip of a television performance, the group's iconography mixed inter-war pin-stripe suits with nineteenth-century facial hair and aristocratic evening dinner-suits, whilst instrumentation was an eclectic combination featuring trumpets, bassoons, electric bass and Union Jack embossed drums, all delivered with a comedic

[20] *Melody Maker,* 3rd February 1968, p10-11.
[21] Double, *Britain had Talent*, p38.
[22] *Melody Maker*, 15th October 1966, p13.

nonchalance.[23] This mixing of time-periods naturally led to efforts in the music press to discern which era was the dominant strand of the group's parody. *Melody Maker* initially suggested the group were initiating a 'Twenties Boom', though an article written by *Top of the Pops* presenter Samantha Juste insisted the group were 'most closely associated with the 30's in clothes and music'.[24] Although both these decades undeniably influenced the approach of the group, what is revealing is that the article which featured interviews with multiple members was entitled 'Vaudeville Victoriana' where the group professed that many of their between song sketches were 'directly revived from the Victorian music halls'.[25] Despite the bricolage of eras, pre-1914 references were a key part of the group's image and music, though these cultural memories were exaggerated for the purposes of comedy. Drummer Henri Harrison made clear, 'We intend to entertain by using comedy and so we want to be a joke' and this embellished form of Englishness was especially played upon when seeking success in the US. Self-conscious parody took place in the US with one group member declaring they toured with the intention of 'Showing the flag in the far corners of the old Empire', which they proceeded to do by draping a ten by eight-foot Union Jack on stage. By this point however, despite chart success, group member Alan Klein suggested that '40-year-old Mums reminiscing about the past' were now generally their core live appearance demographic rather than the youth market.[26]

This parodying of perceived Vicwardian performance custom, iconography and attitudes, and a comedic form of exaggerated Englishness that was popular with older audiences, may explain why the band's reception in the primarily youth-focused music press quickly soured for The New Vaudeville Band. The Bonzo Dog Doodah Band, a group who had the endorsement of The Beatles, accused the group of copying their musical choices and sketch material.[27] With the release of their new single 'Green Street Green', Penny Valentine declared she was 'very tired of this Vaudeville Band sound'.[28] Paul McCartney had perhaps inadvertently begun this distancing from parody when reviewing musician Alan Price's single 'Simon Smith and his Amazing Dancing Bear', a song which utilised elements of the vaudeville sound. McCartney suggested, 'It's so much better than the period, Vaudeville stuff, because it's still a bit modern. It's hip'.[29] Whilst the novelty of exaggerated Englishness had initially proven popular with a wide demographic and enjoyed support amongst the music press,

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[23] Polydor 1000, "The New Vaudeville Band – Winchester Cathedral (1966)", 11th September 2021, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GcPYzYYM9M.
[24] *Melody Maker*, 22nd October 1966, p3; *Disc and Music Echo*, 4th February 1967, p11.
[25] *Ibid.,* 3rd June 1967, p10-11.
[26] *Ibid.,* 4th March 1967, p2.
[27] *Melody Maker*, 6th May 1967, p10.
[28] *Disc and Music Echo*, 29th July 1967, p15.
[29] *Melody Maker*, 25th February 1967, p13.

McCartney's comments signal the second approach to re-articulating Englishness during this period in British popular music. Rather than parodying the past for explicitly comedic purposes, this alternative would involve the evocation of an atmosphere or an imagined place, perhaps what would have been described in the parlance of the day as 'hip vaudeville'.

Two groups whose music provoked discussion that recognised evocations of the past were The Beatles and Small Faces. Although both groups' re-articulation of Englishness often involved the adaptation of the music hall sing-along chorus, it was their lyrical subject matter that often engaged with Vicwardian notions of English pastoralism. Due to their predominantly working-class backgrounds, however, this collective cultural memory was often re-framed to include a landscape of urban and suburban settings.

In the case of The Beatles, discussion that drew comparisons between their recordings and urban nineteenth-century music culture began with the release of 1966's *Revolver*. Though *Melody Maker* ran a headline declaring The Beatles had broken 'the bounds of pop', mention of a 'join-in-the-chorus singalong' on 'Yellow Submarine' and the 'pub-piano' style of 'Good Day Sunshine' alluded to the adaptation of earlier working-class custom as an access point to innovation.[30] With the release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the group's work drew further comparisons to the past. The Edwardian figure of Sgt. Pepper within the album artwork obviously encouraged this discourse as well as the choice of album cover, a Peter Blake design which featured the group dressed in colourful military regalia clutching marching band instruments. The evocation of a romanticised Vicwardian atmosphere was not just visual, but identified as being within the music itself by contemporary reviews. Chris Welch's comments in *Melody Maker* regarding the album's debt to music hall culture began Chapter Four, but he also speculated on other nostalgia inducing inspirations present in the music, including inter-war music hall-variety star George Formby, Lonnie Donegan and 'an elderly lady school-teacher'.[31] *Disc and Music Echo* also immediately associated the album's music with 'vaudeville melodies', all perhaps induced by the album's opening song, which is introduced by orchestral instruments tuning up to the sound of audience chatter. Sheila Whiteley suggests these initial sounds act as a 'psychological trigger' to an 'imaginary (and most English of settings) music hall Palace of Varieties', but concludes that the evocation of the shared atmosphere of an English music hall is ultimately undercut due to its context within 'a psychedelically charged rock album'.[32] This observation certainly reflects the analysis of a generation of musicologists who came of age during the sixties, focusing on the stylistic

[30] *Ibid.,* 30th July 1966, p3.
[31] *Ibid.,* 3rd March 1967, p5.
[32] Sheila Whiteley, "'Tangerine Trees and Marmalade Skies': Cultural Agendas or Optimistic Escapism?", in *Sgt. Pepper and the Beatles: It Was Forty Years Ago Today*, ed. Olivier Julien, (London: Routledge, 2008, 2016), p14.

innovations of the album whilst passing off its debts to the past as escapism and ornamentation. As analysis of these contemporary reviews makes clear, however, many specifically praised the album for evoking previous musical styles and cultural eras, highlighting the inclusion of music hall-variety references within the work and in doing so, implying a shared sense of a collective cultural past.

Between the making of *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, The Beatles had released the double A-side of 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and 'Penny Lane', both titles featuring place names from their childhood neighbourhoods in the suburban fringes of Liverpool. These songs represented the first time Lennon and McCartney had explicitly referenced specific locations in England. Wiener has argued that the original Victorian ideal of the English pastoral was extended in the post-war period by public figures such as the popular poet laureate John Betjeman. Not only a passionate defender of Victorian architecture, Betjeman championed the inclusion of suburbia as pastoral, becoming an 'integral part of old England'.[33] Frith has stressed the importance of the 'suburban sensibility' in pop and rock as a romantic setting 'to escape from, not retreat to' and is 'characterised by what it lacks – culture, variety, surprise – not by what it offers – safety, privacy, convenience'.[34] Whilst both songs offer surreal and impressionistic lyrics within innovative soundscapes, in different ways they both advocate the ideal of suburbia. In Lennon's 'Strawberry Fields Forever', this specific evocation of a place in England is a pastoral suburbia, valued precisely for its offer of safety and privacy, where there is 'nothing to get hung about'.[35] McCartney's 'Penny Lane' on the other hand, despite the dreamlike lyrical occurrences, celebrates a sense of community 'beneath blue suburban skies' where people 'stop and say hello'.[36] Advertisements in music publications for this double A-side explicitly signalled this sense of place, providing a map of Liverpool, pointing out these places alongside The Beatles childhood homes.[37] Whilst The Beatles evoked an Englishness by including aspects that were perceived within the music press as having connections to the Vicwardian music hall-variety culture, these songs built upon and re-interpreted the nineteenth-century pastoral ideal, using working-class experiences and backgrounds to re-frame a cultural memory of Englishness that intertwined both pastoral and communal suburbia.

Faulk discounts the Small Faces from his study of British rock modernism by asserting that the group only 'evoke the recent past without the larger aesthetic ambitions of

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[33] Wiener, *English Culture,* p165.
[34] Simon Frith, "The Suburban Sensibility in British Rock and Pop", *Taking Popular Music Seriously*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p144.
[35] The Beatles, 'Strawberry Fields Forever', Parlophone, 1967.
[36] The Beatles, 'Penny Lane', Parlophone, 1967.
[37] *Disc and Music Echo*, 18th February 1967, p5.

contemporaneous records by The Beatles and The Kinks'.[38] On the contrary, from 1966 onwards, Small Faces received ever increasing coverage in the music press which often highlighted their juxtaposition of contemporary sounds with an atmosphere that drew upon music hall-variety customs. On their critically acclaimed album *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake*, the collective cultural memory of Englishness is once more imagined as fundamentally pastoral, but also in other moments, re-framed to incorporate the urban settings of their working-class backgrounds.

Small Faces initially found chart success and popularity by being associated with the Mod Movement, a largely working-class youth culture, where in Gildart's words, 'The Sounds of American soul, West Indian ska and English beat provided a soundscape of excitement, hedonism, transgression, radicalism and in some cases liberation'.[39] However, the group's primary songwriters, Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane, both came from working-class backgrounds in London, and by 1967, the group were releasing songs which incorporated older working-class popular culture into their contemporary beat-combo sound.[40] An early example is the album track entitled 'All Our Yesterdays', which featured – over seaside organ, swooning brass and prominent snare drum – Marriott embodying the character of a music hall chairman, introducing the song with 'And now for your delight, the darling of the Wapping Wharf Launderette, Ronald "Leafy" Lane!'.[41] Marriott would continue to evoke this atmosphere of the past by singing regularly in what was termed by the music press as 'Hip cockney', a new re-interpretation of the working-class archetype that began in the nineteenth-century music hall.[42] Fellow Small Faces bandmate Ian McLagan described Marriott as 'a music hall kind of guy', and though never completely imitating music hall-variety songs, Marriott used its working-class sentiments via the 'Hip cockney' persona to communicate a sense of imagined urban place.[43] The 1968 album *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* was rated album of the month in both *Melody Maker* and *Disc and Music Echo*, and reviews picked up on what were labelled 'Steve's cockney bits'.[44] 'Rene' was a sing-along tune with barely disguised sexual innuendo regarding an East End woman well-known to London dockers, whilst 'Lazy Sunday' was described as a 'cockney rave-up' in 'best East London'.[45] 'Lazy Sunday' is firmly set in an imagined urban English working-class environment, a tale of neighbourly relations when living in close

[38] Faulk, *British Rock Modernism*, p2.
[39] Gildart, *Images of England*, p127.
[40] Steve Marriott's father was a pub pianist and Marriott recalled fondly his early memories of pub and family singalongs. See: Simon Spence, *All or Nothing: The Authorised Biography of Steve Marriott*, (London: Omnibus Press, 2021) p5.
[41] Small Faces, 'All our Yesterdays', Decca, 1967.
[42] *Disc and Music Echo*, 8th June 1968, p15.
[43] Spence, *All or Nothing*, p131.
[44] *Melody Maker*, 6th June 1968, p16.
[45] *Ibid.,* 6th April 1968, p11.

proximity, which features possibly the only reference in popular music to singing 'in the khazi'.[46] With these examples Marriott re-interpreted the enduring presentational customs of the music hall cockney, re-articulating an Englishness that evoked a working-class urban experience. Marriott's song-writing partner, Ronnie Lane, would stay closer to the Victorian pastoral ideal of Englishness, though in a similar way to The Beatles, would incorporate the suburban into the perpetuation of this imagined cultural memory.

Like many British groups of the mid-to-late sixties, particularly those based in London, the regular use of marijuana and the experience of LSD became a contributing factor in the music and subject matter of songs. Chapman has extensively documented groups use of euphemism alongside the BBC's efforts to ban any songs that referenced recreational drugs.[47] In August 1967, Small Faces released 'Itchycoo Park', a song the BBC initially banned due to the lyrics 'I got high', 'we'll get high' and 'blow my mind'.[48] This ban was overturned when the group gave press interviews claiming the song was about a nettle-strewn park they used to visit as children and that they simply enjoyed getting 'high' on the playground swings.[49] This plea of innocence can be clearly interpreted as a ruse to ensure radio-play whilst also ensuring the cultural cache of having a subversive song make it past the BBC censors. In their later incarnations as heavy-rockers of the 1970s, both Marriott and Lane distanced themselves from the song's drug associations, calling it a 'piss-take because we were never too hippy-trippy', passing it off as simply an attempt at 'camp humour'.[50] Part of the song's appeal was its ability to be interpreted in a number of ways, and regardless of the songs links to the contemporary drug culture, what is less acknowledged is that the celebration of hedonistic youth lifestyle was expressed within a larger, older cultural framework of imagined English pastoral. Once again, due to this landscape being re-articulated by a working-class songwriter, steeped in urban and suburban experiences, these possibly drug enlightening experiences take place in an imagined pastoral suburban England of 'dreaming spires' and 'shades of green'.[51] These rock innovations with undercurrents of continuity were extended on side two of *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake*, a suite of songs involving a fairy tale about Happiness Stan, who lives in a 'Victoriana charabanc' in the countryside, going on a journey to retrieve the half of the moon that has been stolen.[52] Between songs, the group employed Stanley Unwin the 'professor of gobbledygook, who spoke his own language, Unwinese' to narrate the story. According to Marriott, to aid this narration the group gave Unwin 'a glossary of hip terms to

[46] Small Faces, 'Lazy Sunday', Immediate Records, 1968.
[47] Chapman, *Psychedelia and Other Colours*, p385-413.
[48] Spence, *All or Nothing*, p110.
[49] *Disc and Music Echo*, 12th August 1967, p2.
[50] Spence, *All or Nothing*, p109.
[51] Small Faces, 'Itchycoo Park', Immediate Records, 1967.
[52] Small Faces, 'Happiness Stan', Immediate Records, 1968.

throw in with cockneyisms', mixing contemporary rock and older working-class identities, all within a framework of English fairy tale pastoralism.[53]

Small Faces soon split up after the release of their most successful album, though within a short space of time, their re-articulation of Englishness bore the imprint of a divided cultural consciousness. Largely through the song-writing and recorded performances of Steve Marriott, the presentational custom of the working-class music hall cockney continued to be adapted and utilised in commercial rock music. Concurrently, the group synthesised these working-class cultures and landscapes with enduring Vicwardian imaginings that reinforced Englishness as fundamentally pastoral.

The popular musician who consistently employed and re-interpreted performance culture with origins in the nineteenth-century music hall – as well as dialoguing with the Vicwardian pastoral – was Ray Davies in the work of The Kinks. The Beatles aside, perhaps no other British musician of the sixties has been written about so extensively, with Gildart suggesting Davies's work as an 'essential source for making sense of the sixties and the experience of the working-class'.[54] Others such as Faulk have focused on his position as a pioneer of the 'rock auteur' whose songs he describes as a retreat from the 'obvious commercial nature of pop music'.[55] Nick Baxter-Moore has discussed Davies in relation to Englishness, suggesting the England he imagines is pasted together by 'a collage of images drawn from different moments and places and class-based visions of an idyllic society'.[56] Whilst some popular and academic exploration has explored that Davies's patchwork of Englishness specifically involves the Vicwardian music hall, analysis has never fully explored what exactly this connection entails. Judging from contemporary press interviews, it is clear Davies himself was keenly aware of constructing a past that expressed cultural sentiments of Englishness.

> I hope England doesn't change… I hope we don't get swallowed up by America and Europe. I'm really proud of being British… We have so much that is great… I want to keep writing very English songs.[57]

One method Davies employed to write 'English songs' utilised the presentational and musical customs – fostered in both commercial and local settings – of music hall-variety song. To

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[53] Spence, *All or Nothing,* p128.
[54] Gildart, *Images of England*, p147.
[55] Faulk, *British Rock Modernism*, p127.
[56] Nick Baxter-Moore, "'This Is Where I Belong'—Identity, Social Class, and the Nostalgic Englishness of Ray Davies and the Kinks", *Popular Music and Society* 29, no. 2 (1 May 2006): p162, https://doi.org/10.1080/03007760600559989.
[57] *Melody Maker*, 16th April 1966, p3.

understand how, rather than employing parody or evoking an atmosphere like his contemporaries, Davies re-interpreted music hall to re-articulate Englishness, a more detailed exploration of what music hall songs consisted of is necessary.

In his study of popular music in Victorian and Edwardian England, Russell marks out some of the challenges when studying music hall song. Whilst arguing that it is 'impossible to claim the songs as the property of an individual class', Russell also concedes that 'the major topic' of lyrical interest was the daily life of the working class.[58] Complicating this observation is the fact that thousands of songs were written and thousands survive in multiple archives, with very little context as to their popularity or significance. Russell writes,

> The sheer scale of song production presents the potential student of the halls with a number of practical difficulties. Of key importance, one can never be certain that the pieces chosen for study are in any sense representative of particular song types… Obviously, the popularity of some songs is apparent from contemporary criticism… However, there is no definitive collection of published songs… There is no solution to this, beyond acknowledgement of the partial nature of the source.[59]

To directly compare and contrast Davies's songs with specific music hall songs pulled out of various archives due to their similarity would be bordering on apophenic. However, by using Russell's own categorisation regarding three popular themes of the music hall – songs of social comment, the political-topical and patriotic-imperial – alongside my own examples of these themes found in the British Library Music Collections, a clearer understanding can be made concerning how Davies utilised a legacy of nineteenth-century popular culture pre-occupied with themes of class, cultural conservatism and the imagined nation to re-articulate a sense of Englishness in the sixties.

The Kinks came to prominence by securing consistent chart hits during the guitar-led beat boom explored in the previous chapter. In accordance with groups such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, their early chart hits such as 'You've Really Got Me', 'All the Day and All of the Night' and 'Tired of Waiting' had relied on inspiration from the sounds of American rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll. Although Baxter-Moore highlights the 'intercultural hybridity of sound' in The Kinks 1965 single 'See My Friends', it was only after being banned from the US that Davies consistently explored subject matter that can be described as specifically English. Davies acknowledged this shift in 1966, stating in an interview that the groups recent run of singles, compared to 'The stuff we used to do… belong to two different worlds'.[60]

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[58] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*, p115 & 121.
[59] *Ibid.,* p111.
[60] *Disc and Music Echo,* 2nd July 1966, p9.

The different world Davies's writing had pivoted to involved the adoption and re-articulation of themes used in music hall songs of social comment. Although Russell suggests the prime topic of interest in music hall song was working-class daily life, these songs essentially offered 'a deeply conservative world-view. This is not to deny, however its occasional radical potential and its more consistent capacity to operate as cultural insulation, maintaining a certain space for the expression of working-class values and aspirations against external attack'.[61] Although music hall song rarely challenged class structures, they frequently commented on them. This was often via the satirical exploration of social trends, either reflecting the conservatism of cultural insulation, celebrating working-class leisure pursuits or deriding moral pretentiousness and bourgeois aspirations. One early popular form of music hall song that played into all three of these elements was the 'swell' song, often referred to as the 'masher' song later in the nineteenth century. Performed by singers such as George Leybourne and Charles Vance known as *Lions comiques*, Peter Bailey's research suggests that the swell song came in three forms: the swell as 'effete fop'; boisterous man about town; and lastly the 'sham swell'.[62]

Davies's initial efforts with specifically English subject matter mixed the tropes of all three types of swell song defined by Bailey. In 1965, Davies wrote and released 'A Well Respected Man', a song that explored middle-class pretension via the theme of swell as counterfeit. Lyrically, Davies describes the character of a young man who works in the city whilst returning home to live with his parents in the suburbs. In the music hall this type of sham swell lyrically played on an effort to 'maintain appearances' and remained a popular topic with songwriters – and potentially audiences – after the initial surge of *Lions comiques* songs in the 1860s.[63] 'The Marquis of Camberwell Green', 'I Wink at the Girls on the Sly' and 'Ta! Ta! Tra, La, La, La!' are all examples from the 1880s of either working or middle-class males portraying wealth and respectability in public circles when in reality their backgrounds are either humble, mundane or fraught with debt.[64] Davies employs this device by contrasting a chorus of appearances ('He's a well-respected man/Doing the best things so conservatively') with a stress on the hypocrisy of the young man and his family in the verses, noting the extra-marital affairs of his parents and the protagonists desire for his father's death in order to gain his inheritance.[65]

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[61] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914,* p121.
[62] Peter Bailey, "Champagne Charlie: Performance and Ideology in the Music-Hall Swell Song", in *Music Hall: Performance and Style,* ed. J.S. Bratton, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), p54-55.
[63] *Ibid.,* p64.
[64] BL Music Collections, H.1260.j.(16.), H.1260.a. (36.), H.1260.a.(73*.).
[65] The Kinks, 'A Well Respected Man', Pye Records, 1965.

This checking of aspiration was followed in 1966 by 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion', quickly identified by contemporary discourse as having a 'social observation' line.[66] Penny Valentine's review for *Disc and Music Echo* identified the song's surface relation to music hall-variety custom, commenting on its 'drunken chorus' as well as suggesting it was 'heavily-influenced by George Formby'.[67] The song has often drawn passing comparison to the music hall, largely due it featuring a sing-a-long chorus, a pumping root-and-fifth bass line and an overall jaunty musical flavour, but Davies's satirical comment extended the use of the swell as effete male, 'defined in terms of dress, and where this was a meticulous and obsessive preoccupation which marked him off from the common herd'.[68] Music hall songs of the late nineteenth century such as 'John the Masher' and 'Quite a Toff in my Newmarket Coat' both satirised swell or masher behaviour by making extended lyrical reference to their ostentatious clothing, as well as the illustration of each singers appearance on the sheet music covers wearing outlandish, exaggerated forms of clothing.[69] 'Quite too Utterly Utter (Round fashion's lamp we flutter)' mocks the interests and perceived femininity of the late-Victorian aesthetic movement, and Davies utilises the style of the swell song to satirise the sixties youth-culture fashions of London's Carnaby Street, 'eagerly pursuing all the latest fads and trends'.[70] Emphasising the dedication to sartorial elegance ('He thinks he is a flower to be looked at'), Davies created continuity between popular song of the sixties and music hall's proclivity to make light of the fashion conscious male, satirising bourgeois tastes and its aspirational tendencies.[71]

Finally, Davies explored the portrayal of the boisterous swell, often a womaniser and hard-drinker, via the song 'Dandy'. Bailey suggests that this type of song performance confronted middle-class values, with the popularity of such songs as 'Champagne Charlie', performed by George Leybourne reflecting the music hall's promotion of an attitude that valued 'play against work, heroic consumption against exemplary abstinence'.[72] This outlook to social endeavours abounds in songs such as 'Hurrah for the Yellow Ribbon', a tale of a male group who drink prodigiously and refuse to pay the bill, 'Nonsense! Yes!! By Jove!!!', a swell duet involving alcohol, actresses and staying out all night, as well as 'The Bond Street Masher', who parades up and down the thoroughfare and enjoys flirting with the women who pass by.[73] Davies adapted this theme via 'Dandy', where despite initially warning the subject

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[66] *Melody Maker*, 26th March 1966, p1.
[67] *Disc and Music Echo*, 26th February 1966, p15.
[68] Bailey, "Champagne Charlie", p54.
[69] BL Music Collections, H.1260.a.(73.), H.1260.a.(33.).
[70] Ibid., H.1260.b.(58.)
[71] The Kinks, 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion', Pye Records, 1966.
[72] Bailey, "Champagne Charlie", p69.
[73] BL Music Collections, H.1260.a.(13.), H.1260.a.(41.), H.1260.j.(7.).

that his excesses might catch up with him, eventually concludes over descending chords that 'You will always be free', repeating in the song's coda against wildly strummed guitar chords that 'You're all right', suggesting a begrudging yet knowing approval towards the social libertine.[74] In these examples where Davies employs the three main approaches of the swell song, a mock exaggerated upper-class accent is also adopted, helping to emphasise the humorous elements, a device also often utilised in the music hall where 'satirical exaggeration of middle-class and aristocratic speech patterns' was common.[75]

These early attempts that utilised music hall customs of social comment led Davies to experiment with 'inhabiting various protagonist personae'.[76] Chapman has drawn attention to the sixties 'revival of one of the mainstays of the music hall, the character song' and throughout the rest of the decade, Davies often assumed a first-person working-class narrative perspective to explore versions of Englishness.[77] Beginning with the single of late 1966 'Dead End Street', Davies began a series of songs that portrayed working-class existence, imbuing his character's attitudes with similar qualities of the music hall song and depicting a conservative picture of life involving a 'deep rooted fatalism. Life simply happened to music hall characters: they had no control over their destiny'.[78] It is certainly the case for the protagonist Davies inhabits, who is behind on the rent, can't understand how they have ended up in poverty or how to escape from it, despite their desire to work. Although the single was seen as a contemporary social comment in the music press, it sat within the cultural sentiment of sensationalistic music hall songs such as 'The City Waif' or 'Please Give Me a Penny'.[79] Songs with narratives of distress and poverty such as these however were 'not in any way an attack upon the social system… but rather an invitation to marvel at and enjoy the thrill of indignation'.[80]

Music hall's songs of social comment via working-class subject matter could also reflect a certain mundanity and cultural insularity. An increasing domesticity in urban life was articulated in songs such as 'My Next-Door Neighbour's Gardin' and 'What will the Neighbours Say?', was also explored by Davies in 'Autumn Almanac'.[81] Although the song celebrated working-class community ('Friday evenings, people get together/Hiding from the weather') and would supposedly – presumably due to its sing-along chorus – encourage people, in one reviewer's words to 'knock their beer glasses together', 'Autumn Almanac' also re-articulated

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[74] The Kinks, 'Dandy', Pye Records, 1966.
[75] Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall,* p22.
[76] Matthew Gelbart, "Persona and Voice in The Kinks' Song of the Late 1960s", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 128(2), (2003): p230, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3557496.
[77] Chapman, *Psychedelia and Other Colours*, p418.
[78] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914,* p126.
[79] BL Music Collections, H.1260.f.(29.), H.1783.y.(2.).
[80] J.S. Bratton, *The Victorian Popular Ballad*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1975), p113.
[81] BL Music Collections, H.3602.b.(39.), H.3602.b.(66.).

the music hall's inclination to present society on an unchanging backdrop where class division was accepted.[82]

> This is my street and I'm never gonna leave it,
> And I'm always gonna stay here,
> If I live to be ninety-nine
> 'Cause all the people I meet,
> Seem to come from my street,
> And I can't get away,
> Because it's calling me (Come on home)
> Hear it calling me (Come on home).[83]

*Melody Maker* writer Nick Jones looked upon this sentiment towards social conservatism unfavourably in his review of the single, suggesting Davies 'stopped writing about grey, suburbanites going about their fairly unemotional daily business'.[84] At a time when popular music discourse was attaching many groups musical innovations to terms such as 'revolutionary' and 'progressive', Davies's first-person narrative regarding working-class invented traditions of football on Saturdays, roast beef on Sundays and holidaying in Blackpool did not easily fit into this category.[85]

Davies's song-writing would continue in this vein with the 1968 album *The Kinks are the Village Green Preservation Society* (VGPS), a record which re-articulated not only the music hall's general approach to political song but the Victorian ideal of Englishness as fundamentally pastoral. Russell has argued that although 'overtly political material was not a major strand' of music hall, when alluded to it was 'constructed to favour the Conservative party'.[86] Furthermore, Russell states

> The thousands of working-class people who were happy to be entertained by these songs must have found the ideals and attitudes they offered as broadly sympathetic. The picture of English society, that the music hall offers us, as humane but opposed to radical change and largely accepting of the existing class structure, could not have been mere fiction of music hall song.[87]

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[82] *Disc and Music Echo*, 14th October 1967, p15.
[83] The Kinks, 'Autumn Almanac', Pye Records, 1967.
[84] *Melody Maker*, 21st October 1967, p10.
[85] *Ibid.*, 3rd December 1966, p13.
[86] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*, p135-136.
[87] *Ibid.,* p139.

Songs such as the 'The Standard of Blue', 'Why Not?' and 'Gladstone he's a Brick' are examples from the music hall that demonstrate this perspective, all opposed in various ways to Liberal policy, whether it be domestic or foreign.[88] As with The Kinks previous albums, VGPS synthesised rock instrumentation with various musical genres, though Davies described the album generally as a 'looking back thing'.[89] This was often expressed in lyrical sentiments that continued the nineteenth-century music hall's tendency to oppose radical change and adoption of the southern metaphor of pastoral England that had its roots in Victorian ideals. The album's opening song, 'The Village Green Preservation Society' is a manifesto of the many cultural elements Davies wants to see preserved. Despite mentioning Donald Duck and Vaudeville, suggesting Americanisation is already embedded in English experience, most things mentioned in Davies's list are representations of perceived Englishness: variety theatre and its characters such as Old Mother Riley, draught beer, custard pie, the George Cross, Sherlock Holmes and little shops. Elements within the song that are specifically condemned are British post-war developments such as office blocks and skyscrapers.[90] Throughout the album an imagined England based on the Victorian southern metaphor is created, including village greens, seaside holidays, long afternoons on countryside riverbanks and tending to country farms. Davies retrospectively suggested in his autobiography that the 'subtext to the whole album was more interesting than the songs themselves', acknowledging the record worked on a meta-level that played on an active cultural repertoire of images and ideals that re-articulated an imagined Englishness.[91] This particular pastoral Englishness, although new to popular music, shared continuity with a wider cultural imagination – a Victorian cultural memory that according to Wiener began in elite circles and pervaded to popular culture, reflecting 'disenchantment with continual change' and a countryside that offered 'a source of alternative values', imagined as a place of preservation and continuity where national identity was secure.

Davies's next album, *Arthur (Or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire)*, re-interpreted the elements of Russell's third and final categorisation of music hall song, the patriotic-imperial. The album title explicitly referenced a perceived national past and contemporary reviews praised the music's specifically British subject matter and reference to collective experience, being described as 'beautifully British – to the core'.[92] *Disc and Music Echo* immediately recognised this evocation of a shared national past via an '"All Our Yesterdays"/music hall/Coronation cup atmosphere', a comment that reflected Davies's

[88] BL Music Collections, H.1260.h.(13.), H.1260.i.(30.), H.1260.j.(23.).
[89] *Melody Maker*, 30th November 1968, p8.
[90] The Kinks, 'The Village Green Preservation Society', Pye Records, 1968.
[91] Davies, *X-Ray*, p377.
[92] *Melody Maker*, 11th October 1969, p18.

prioritising of working-class experience.[93] Patriotism and the Imperial ideal was reflected in a number of ways in the Vicwardian music hall. Hostility towards immigrants was expressed in 'England for the English', though in songs such as 'England in Danger?' and 'In England', a vague foreign threat was usually enough of a device to express imperial strength. This willingness to fight when needed was also often mediated through female singers such as Pollie Randall's 'John Bull's Flags' and Vesta Tilley's 'For the Honour of Old England'. [94] Songs of a patriotic-imperial nature also eulogised 'individualists, people whose solitary and extreme exploits embodied a spirit which made them in some way representatives of the popular idea of heroism'.[95] A powerful example in this vein is 'The Forlorn Hope', a song about the 'last defender' in an imperial outpost against an unnamed foe, who dreams of his loved ones and his cottage home whilst in the midst of battle.[96]

The device of narrating an individual's heroic deeds to reinforce collective patriotism is an approach re-interpreted by Davies in several ways via writing a set of songs revolving around the character of Arthur, 'born a simple man/In a plain simple working-class position', an individual who fights and survives through two World Wars whilst raising a family.[97] Initially Davies mimics music hall jingoism in the album's opening song 'Victoria', a fanfare of brass, chugging guitars and raucous backing vocals that underpin a lyric which once again invokes the southern metaphor of Englishness, referring to village greens, stately homes and croquet lawns, but when faced with the reality of war, Davies interchanges this traditional imperialist perspective to communicate an ambivalence. In 'Yes Sir, No Sir', a song about Arthur's time in the trenches of the First World War, although focusing on the heroism of the 'common man', Davies eschews the invented traditions of patriotism by squarely pointing the blame at the ensuing slaughter upon the upper-classes. To do this, Davies employs the strikingly effective approach of switching narrative voice midway through the song from Arthur to a generic upper-class officer who is disdainful of the men at his command.

> Just be sure they are contributing their all,
> Give the scum a gun and make the bugger fight.
> And be sure to have deserters shot on sight,
> If he dies, we'll send a medal to his wife.[98]

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[93] *Disc and Music Echo*, 11th October 1969, p18.
[94] BL Music Collections, H.1260.a.(24.); H.1260.f.(32.); H.1260.f.(36.); H.1260.f.(7.); H.1260.i.(26.).
[95] Bratton, *The Victorian Popular Ballad*, p63.
[96] *Ibid.,* H.1783.y.(8.).
[97] The Kinks, 'Arthur', Pye Records, 1969.
[98] The Kinks, 'Yes Sir, No Sir', Pye Records, 1969.

Despite questioning the class divisions at work within this scenario, Davies returns to using the music hall patriotic song trope of tragedy for sentimental effect. Although Russell suggests it is 'difficult to take many of these "good-bye" songs particularly seriously', the sheer volume of songs in this vein within the British Library Collections suggest that elements of the audience must have been receptive to a certain degree.[99] Davies's collection of stark and emotional images effectively plays into this convention.

> Some mother's son lies in a field
> Back home they put his picture in a frame
> But all dead soldiers look the same
> While all the parents stand and wait
> To meet their children coming home from school
> Some mother's son is lying dead.[100]

Imperialism and Empire were not subjects greatly explored in British popular music of the 1960s, reflecting a cultural trend concerning the re-calibration of what Jeffrey Richards calls 'the officer and gentlemen hero' construct, which 'increasingly became imbued with negative values retrospectively associated with the Empire: snobbery, arrogance, racism and irrelevance'.[101] Although Davies adopted the music hall patriotic song to emphasise the common hero archetype via the figure of working-class Arthur, he re-interpreted its purpose by imbuing the narrative with ambivalence and occasional disdain for positions of authority, reflecting the contemporary re-shaping of broader historical narratives.

Through these four examples of British musicians who received extensive coverage and whose music was often described as having connections to the past, analysis has demonstrated that throughout the wide variety of inspirations and synthesis of genres associated with pop and rock of the sixties, there exists an overlooked influence that continued to extend and re-interpret pre-1914 performance culture and in so doing, perpetuate cultural memories of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Although this was done in a variety of ways, all largely re-articulated an Englishness within British popular song that had often prioritised American affectations. The New Vaudeville Band parodied music hall custom, iconography and attitude to elicit humour, whilst The Beatles and Small Faces innovations within rock included continuity connected to music hall sing-along, the evolving cockney

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[99] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914,* p150.
[100] The Kinks, 'Some Mother's Son', Pye Records, 1969.
[101] Jeffrey Richards, "Imperial Heroes for a Post-Imperial Age: Films and the End of Empire", in *British culture and the End of Empire*, ed. Stuart Ward (Manchester: University Press, 2001, 2006), p138.

archetype and specifically English subject matter to evoke an imagined environment of Englishness. In so doing, these song-writers' with working-class origins, constructed an Englishness that not only continued to draw upon the cultural pastoral embraced by the Vicwardians, but also re-framed this imagined memory to include urban and suburban settings.

In many ways, Ray Davies's work in The Kinks is an anomaly in the sense that he directly extended customs specific to Victorian music hall song. Through either observation or assuming a character, Davies consistently gave voice to a working-class experience both past and present, using themes comprising social comment, political and the patriotic-imperial. Dagmar Kift has concluded that, despite differences in interpretation, there is a general consensus regarding music hall's significance 'in the formation not only of modern British working-class culture but of the culture of the nation as a whole'.[102] Although these working-class contributions to national culture are overlooked, as archival research has demonstrated, music hall's cultural expression of English experience often reflected a working class who were socially-conservative and opposed to radical change, a perspective that although Davies occasionally deviated from, was often present in his work, alongside a propensity to manifest the Victorian ideal of England as an imagined rural idyll. Although this section has focused on untangling and categorising the various under-explored references to Vicwardian culture within canonical British rock, broadening the investigation demonstrates that the use of cultural preferences with roots in the nineteenth century were not the exclusive preserve of the youth-culture orientated pop-rock.

## The Participatory Music of Mrs Mills and the Sentimental Ballads of Ken Dodd

In the *Long Eaton Advertiser* during the run up to Christmas 1965, local shop C. Gilbert Ltd took out a large advert on the front page. Amongst the suggested gifts, the shop advertised a list of 'New Hit Releases' available to purchase, with the top two positions occupied by The Beatles *Rubber Soul* LP and an album entitled *Mrs Mills' Party*.[103] By this time, with numerous record releases alongside radio, television and live appearances, Mrs Mills' piano-playing was instantly recognisable to many. Dave Davies of The Kinks immediately identified Mrs Mills' music in *Melody Maker*'s 'Blind Date' column, remarking 'This sounds like our local, at Christmas. Cor, what a gas'.[104]

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[102] Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall*, p175.
[103] *Long Eaton Advertiser*, 3rd December 1965, p1.
[104] *Melody Maker*, 22nd January 1966, p8.

This chapter has so far focused on highlighting Vicwardian continuities within the work of British musicians associated with youth-culture, rock music innovation and cultural change. As the advertisement in the local newspaper above suggests, however, a 1960s commercial popular music existed that worked beyond these narrative boundaries. Mrs Mills and comedian-singer Ken Dodd's work enjoyed popularity with a wide age demographic, demonstrating how endemic cultural preferences with origins in the nineteenth century were during the sixties, and problematising popular music historiographies focus on prioritising a narrative of change. Dave Harker has argued that due to this emphasis, 'the musical practices and tastes of most people – the working class – are marginalised or ignored in even the better critical accounts of periods like the 1960s'.[105] Emphasising the piano-playing of Mrs Mills and the singing of Ken Dodd is therefore useful in this regard as much of their popularity relied on enduring pre-1914 working-class cultural preferences. In the case of Mrs Mills – the culture of the piano player in the home, club and pub as a focal point for cross-generational communal music making – and in Dodd's example the continuing cultural appetite for the sentimental ballad, which in the context of the 1960s, was often viewed negatively as a continuation of 'low' working-class culture.

Gladys Mills had never strived for a career in the popular music industry, working semi-professionally since the 1940s in clubs and pubs. In late 1961, she was spotted performing at Woodford Golf Club by a television producer and immediately offered a slot on *Billy Cotton's Music Hall*.[106] This single appearance would propel her to securing a recording contract with EMI, recording in Abbey Road Studio 2 and being managed by Eric Easton, who would also co-manage the early career of The Rolling Stones.[107] With this platform, Mrs Mills performed on variety tours, television, radio and via record releases, translating a style that was often associated with informal communicative memories, originating from the nineteenth-century working-class urban experience, into a mass cultural memory, underlining the strength of working-class popular customs within British popular music of the sixties. Before examining how this music-making associated with informal working-class leisure was circulated in the cultural realm, an analysis of how Mrs Mills' musical style and personality contributed to a sense of continuity with the past is helpful in contextualising.

Mrs Mills played piano in the 'stride' style, a way of playing that emanated from ragtime music in the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. It became popular with pub and club pianists in Britain as a way to fill the sound when playing alone: the right-hand

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[105] Dave Harker, "Still crazy after all these years: what *was* popular music in the 1960s?" in *Cultural Revolution? The Challenge of the Arts in the 1960s,* eds. Bart Moore-Gilbert & John Seed, (London: Routledge, 1992), p251.
[106] *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 9th March 1962, p2.
[107] *The Stage*, 1st March 1962, p4.

playing the melody whilst the leaping left-hand alternates between bass notes and chords.[108] Due this style's association with the customs of participatory working-class entertainment, the key impact of Mrs Mills instrumental style, whether performing live or on record, is that it acted as an aural trigger to encourage audiences to sing-a-long. The personality also matched the music, with both Mrs Mills and the media coverage keen to portray a 'down-to-earth' working-class housewife, often described as 'very jolly' and a self-taught pianist.[109] In interview profiles her working-class origins were highlighted alongside reassurances that fame would not change her. One interview reported Mrs Mills 'idea of a night out… a walk down to the "local" for a small gin and bitter lemon' whilst the *Liverpool Echo* reassured readers that 'Glad Mills is still just a plain honest-to-goodness housewife' with Mills quoted as saying 'Before I knew it, they were calling me a star. Daft, when you think about it, isn't it luv?'.[110] The nostalgia inducing style of piano-playing, allied to Mrs Mills' natural demeanour of gregarious and respectable working-class housewife with modest ambitions all contributed to an instantly recognisable archetype for the nation's pub pianist – a seamless facilitator of communicative memories surrounding working-class participatory culture in the post-war cultural realm.

The initial place for Mrs Mills to find an audience was in live variety tours, particularly in British seaside resorts, a continuing strong-hold for popular entertainment which continued to attract working-class holiday makers. Early forays included a supporting artist role for variety stalwarts Frankie Vaughan and Max Bygraves, with one reviewer remarking on the 'air of real chumminess' Mrs Mills exuded.[111] Later reviews in the decade commented on how she catered for 'sing-along addicts' who could participate in her shows, suggesting that live audiences were well-versed in the informal participatory customs Mrs Mills was extending and evolving.[112] There was also the recognition that this type of entertainment was connected to the nineteenth century, as Mrs Mills also performed live in a music hall revival show in apartheid South Africa, revealing a certain social-conservatism in her approach, commenting in regard to the tour 'I can assure you when I return to Britain there will be no complications. I don't have to answer to anybody… I have been sent here to do job and I am delighted'.[113]

Regular performance on radio and TV also emphasised the continuing popularity of piano-led participatory culture, often being directly linked to working-class cultural preference. Appearances on the BBC Light Programme were a feature throughout the sixties,

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[108] MasterClass staff, "Stride Piano Guide: How to play the Stride Left-Hand Technique", *Masterclass*, last modified 7th June 2021, https://www.masterclass.com/articles/stride-piano-guide - want-to-learn-more-about-music.
[109] *TV Times*, 5th October 1962, p6-7.
[110] *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 23rd April 1962, p2; *Liverpool Echo*, 6th June 1962, p2.
[111] *The Stage*, 25th January 1962, p3; *Ibid.,* 15th March 1962, p3; *Ibid.,* 17th May 1962, p4.
[112] *Ibid.,* 6th January 1966, p30.
[113] *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 4th January 1965, p10.

broadcasting under such titles as *Mrs Mills and her mates* that explicitly encouraged a feeling of participation and community.[114] The popularity of Mrs Mills can perhaps be summarised by Christmas Day 1966, when her *Christmas Party* broadcast directly followed the Queen's Christmas radio message.[115] The music's association with participatory working-class culture was a focus for Mrs Mills involvement with ITV series *Sing Along*. Information regarding the format of the show is vague, but what can be deduced from TV listings is that the programme involved Mrs Mills playing the piano in a variety of unconventional settings, accompanying established popular singers as well as amateurs in a talent show. These places were often sites of working-class employment, including a tram depot in Blackpool, a television scenery construction plant in Manchester, an electric lightbulb factory in Oldham, the National Coal Board Area Central Workshop and a cigarette manufacturing plant in Hyde.[116] Allied to this were continued TV guest appearances on *Billy Cotton's Music Hall*, with stage sets created to evoke the informality and interaction of a nineteenth-century pub.[117] *The Daily Herald* described Mrs Mills in 1964 as 'the best pub pianist in the business', suggesting Mrs Mills' variety, radio and television appearances all clearly evoked within popular discourse a sense that this particular cultural experience was linked to specific working-class sites of leisure.[118] Furthermore, other media attributed Mrs Mills to an increase in piano sales, suggesting it was new status symbol of respectability and asking 'Why the sudden flashback to the Victorian days?'.[119] As Taylor has argued, 1960s 'living-standard improvements and social change had not really transformed deeper working-class feelings and loyalties of social conservatism', a view that can also be applied to cultural disposition.[120] The very suggestion that the style and performance of Mrs Mills was partially responsible for rising piano sales suggests not a 'flash-back', but that a more affluent working class were able to indulge in a cultural preference that had sustained since the nineteenth century.

It's also important to qualify that, despite evidence suggesting that more money was spent on the home and entertainment in the sixties than ever before, not every household had a proficient piano player.[121] The record business more than doubled in Britain between 1960 and 1969, from £15 million to £32 million, and Mrs Mills' consistent album output during this

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[114] *Daily Mirror*, 26th March 1964, p18.
[115] *Ibid.,* 24th December 1966, p16.
[116] *TV Times,* 5th October 1962, p23; 26th October 1962, p20; 16th November 1962, p19; 23rd November 1962, p19; 30th November 1962, p18.
[117] *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 23rd October 1965, p6.
[118] *Daily Herald*, 31st March 1964, p7.
[119] *The People*, 3rd March 1963, p17.
[120] Taylor, "The Rise and Disintegration of the Working Classes, p379.
[121] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Living Standards and Consumption", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, ed. Paul Addison & Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p240.

period fostered further mass cultural dissemination of informal working-class music-making style.[122] Allusions to the perpetuation of working-class customs were encouraged on record through style of recording, choice of material, liner notes and iconography. In terms of album titles, most of Mrs Mills' albums chose to include the word 'party', an explicit suggestion to the listener as to when this album might be an appropriate choice to put on the record player.[123] Record reviewers in local newspapers suggested to readers that this was the case, the *Norwood News* commenting that a Mrs Mills album was 'An ideal record to get your party started' whilst the *Liverpool Echo* suggested party-gathering a prerequisite by concluding their review 'Pass the pint pot and let's all sing along!'.[124]

The choice of song material was eclectic, providing a mixture of inter-war popular song and jazz standards with songs from the turn of the century music hall. The 1964 release *It's Party Time*! featured music hall songs that sustained their popularity such as 'Lily of Laguna', 'Oh, Oh Antonio' and 'Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow wow'. This inclusion of music hall song throughout Mrs Mills' albums culminated in the 1972 release, *Music Hall Party*, suggesting both the record company and Mrs Mills both felt a demographic existed – justified perhaps by the popularity of music hall revivalism in theatre and television – who would appreciate an album exclusively dedicated to the era. Just as the memoirs of British musicians in Chapter Two explored domestic, cross-generational piano-orientated sing-alongs of the forties and fifties, the iconography and the liner notes of Mrs Mills' records encouraged the evolution and extension of this popular custom. The front cover for the album *Mrs Mills' Party* recreated this environment: Mills at the centre on an upright piano, surrounded by adults and teenagers of various ages in party hats. On the back sleeve of *It's Party Time!* various photographs showed a mixture of domestic and social environments which varied from Mills cooking at home to playing piano in a club-pub environment where punters are joining in. Later releases, such as 1973's *Knees-Up Party*, took this encouragement for the listener to participate further by including a pre-recorded studio audience already singing along to the tunes, unsubtle perhaps, but a distinct indicator of the communal atmosphere the records were intended to evoke.

Liner notes also encouraged cross-generational participation. One of the rare instances of a Mrs Mills album not to include 'party' in the title, 1967's *Look Mum, No Hands* suggested the music could appeal to a broad demographic.

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[122] Harker, "Still crazy after all these years", p238.
[123] Examples include: *Everybody's Welcome at Mrs Mills' Party* (1963); *It's Party Time* (1964); *Mrs Mills' Party* (1965); *Let's Have Another Party* (1967); *Party Sing Along* (1970) and *"Another Flippin' Party"* (1972).
[124] *Norwood News*, 6th April 1962, p8; *Liverpool Echo*, 6th October 1965, p4.

> "Swinging" Grandparents can recapture the days of their youth… "with-it" parents will feel nostalgic… "Switched-on" teensters will want to dance… So, Mum, organise a jolly family get-together or party, spin this record on the turntable, and watch everyone join-in the fun.

The liner note sleeve to 1974's *Piano Sing Along* shows an historical awareness of the music's Vicwardian roots within informal, community-based urban working-class sing-along. This elicitation conjured wistful tones of an imagined past, rather than celebrating a continuing ritual.

> Once upon a time – when entertainment was real and didn't come out of a box, people made music for themselves. Sentimental ballads with Mum and Dad and Aunt Em. Naughty choruses with a pretty girl and a glass of beer at the music hall. Family sing-songs, warm and lamp lit against foggy November skies. It was a time when people enjoyed being involved – and a time when there was a little less loneliness around.

This particular liner note mixed sentiments regarding certain insecurities that it felt the listener might share regarding social change, whilst offering comfort in the informal musical customs that perpetuated a collective memory of a misty-eyed Vicwardian past. Stefan Collini states that in the twentieth century, the nineteenth century was often used for this purpose: 'the Victorian period is just near enough, and can seem (though this is often an illusion) familiar enough to allow the projection onto it of psychological longings'.[125] Although Mrs Mills' music presented a cultural representation on radio, television, theatre and record of a musical style that had developed from local, informal customs of the nineteenth century, contemporary reviews and readers' letters suggest that popularity would not have ensued if this cultural representation had not had perceptible roots in working-class social experience. James Towler of *The Stage* suggested in 1966 that Mills' success rested on 'her obvious sincerity, and her sound sense just to be herself'.[126] Likewise, Mrs J.M. Place of Yorkshire wrote into *the Sunday Mirror*'s 'Be Your Own TV Critic' column suggesting Mrs Mills was more relatable to the 'glamour boy efforts' of pianist Russ Conway because of her 'natural performance'.[127]

Combining Mrs Mills evocations of a local, participatory working-class cultural past with the continuing facilitation of music hall-variety entertainment in the 1960s WMC movement, explored in Chapter Three, presents further evidence of an overlooked side to British popular

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[125] Stefan Collini, "Speaking with Authority: The Historian as Social Critic" in *English Pasts: Essays in History and Culture*, (Oxford: University Press, 1999), p93.
[126] James Towler, "Yorkshire Relish", *The Stage*, 6th January 1966, p4.
[127] *Sunday Mirror,* 25th October 1964, p22.

music of the 1960s. Specifically, that music entertainment in both local and mass spheres not only represented change but the acme of something very old: the high visibility of working-class music culture that had its beginnings in the urban settings of the nineteenth century. Chapter Three also highlighted female participation in working-class music culture even in the perceived homosocial strong-holds of the late nineteenth-century WMCs, and Mrs Mills' popularity as the archetypal club pianist demonstrates another continuing aspect of this culture, providing further example of the variety of Vicwardian legacies inherent in sixties British popular music.

The music of Ken Dodd during the sixties offers a different perspective concerning nineteenth-century legacies. Unlike Mrs Mills' popularity, which derived from the recognition of musical customs that perpetuated a collective memory of participatory working-class culture, Dodd's music relied on its relation to an enduring popular tastes established in the cultural mainstream of the nineteenth century: the musical genre of the sentimental ballad. The successful run of singles Dodd released in the mid-sixties was seen in the contemporary music press as reflective of a broader trend towards balladeer singers enjoyed by 'the mums and dads of Britain', and indicative of what *Melody Maker* called in 1965, the 'Adult Revolution' in record buying.[128] Popular music historiography has categorised this type of sixties balladry as 'easy-listening', which, although mapped out in Keir Keightley's study of the genre's impact in the US and Canada, remains under-explored in studies of post-war British popular music.[129] Derek B. Scott is a lone figure in attempting a brief trans-Atlantic history of the genre, listing light classical music, dance bands, Tin Pan Alley, operetta, chanson and cabaret as well as vaudeville and variety as influences. Scott suggests easy-listening can be split into three types: cool and sophisticated listening associated with crooners, easy-listening that evokes nostalgia via sentimental themes, and easy-listening which proves to be 'emotionally difficult listening'.[130] Although Dodd's music can loosely fall into the second category, the label of 'easy listening' itself, whilst aiding retrospective contextualisation of its role in sixties popular music, obscures its continuity with earlier popular forms. These motifs and themes shared continuity with the nineteenth century and their recognition remained widespread enough for Dodd's music to find success in the British charts. Dodd's singular personality as a performer, who in many reviews and profiles was seen as a 'throw-back' figure to earlier music hall comedians popular with northern working-class audiences, also contributed to creating a platform where by a continuing popular taste for sentimentalism could be cultivated.

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[128] *Disc and Music Echo*, 18th March 1967, p8; *Melody Maker*, 5th June 1965, p9.
[129] Keir Keightley. "Music for Middlebrows: Defining the Easy Listening Era, 1946-1966." *American Music* 26, no. 3 (2008): 309–35. https://doi.org/10.2307/40071710.
[130] Derek B. Scott, "Light Music and Easy Listening", in *Musical Style and Social Meaning, Selected Essays*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), p77.

Dodd was already a successful comedian when the sixties began, appearing as a comedian on stage and radio as well as having his own BBC television series *The Ken Dodd Show*. His working-class upbringing on the fringes of Liverpool in Knotty Ash was steeped in music hall-variety culture. Initially taking an interest in music – his father was a band leader – as well as ventriloquism, Dodd settled in comedy where he was known for taking 'comedy seriously' with a meticulous approach to dissecting his performances.[131] Dodd's appearances in pantomime were so popular that he was largely acknowledged as the reason the Bradford Alhambra broke the record for Britain's longest running pantomime in 1960, and his connections to the long-running customs of the music hall-variety era were mentioned by reviewers.[132] James Hartley in *The Stage* wrote of Dodd's genius 'in relation to music-hall audiences' whilst Georgie Wood declared Dodd 'one of the greatest natural music-hall comics', comparing him to Max Miller's fast-paced one-line jokes.[133] Placing Dodd within a continuum of music hall-variety was partly due to his connection with a live audience, appearing so crucial to his popularity that his BBC television series was filmed in front of an audience at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool.[134] Dodd was also connected to music hall-variety custom via his interspersing comedy and song, a combination that stemmed from singer-comedians Gus Elen, Harry Lauder and Harry Champion in the late nineteenth century and had continued in the inter and post-war eras by comedians such Max Miller and Max Wall. These music hall artists often sang comedy songs that enhanced their reputations as humourists, though Dodd's choice of material would offer contrast and draw upon a continuing popular predilection for sentimental balladry.

Although Stephen Downes' wide-ranging study of sentimentalism in music of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries primarily focuses on classical music, his 'working definition' of the sentimental in music is broad enough to be applied to the popular:

> wide critical consensus would understand the sentimental as incorporating a range of sensitive expressive modes for releasing heartfelt yearning for connection, to embrace, to share, often with sympathetic response to the spectacle of another's suffering or loss.[135]

Although this definition is a useful basis, it can be reasoned that all popular music songs are, in Timothy J. Fleming's words, 'sentimental in the broad sense in that they are concerned with

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[131] *The Stage*, 12th May 1960, p5.
[132] *Ibid.,* 31st March 1960, p3.
[133] *Ibid.,* 22nd February 1962, p5; 6th May 1965, p5.
[134] *Ibid.,* 17th May 1962, p11.
[135] Stephen Downes, *Music and Sentimentalism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (London, Routledge, 2021), p13.

summoning and enjoyment of feelings'.[136] Fleming's thesis on the development of the lyrical elements of the sentimental tradition in Anglo-American popular song is a solitary and valuable effort in delineating sentimental specifics and its themes, as well as offering a historical context to its development. Fleming argues that sentimentalism in music was largely a product of the eighteenth-century, where it was accorded a 'high seriousness' as proof of a quasi-religious 'worthiness' amongst elites.[137] Downes describes briefly its importance to opera and chamber music of this period, but both scholars contend that in the nineteenth century, sentimental themes infiltrated popular culture, gaining hegemonic status in the music hall, where its themes were 'incorporated in to working-class musical life in a more communal way'.[138] Fleming also details that when the sentimental was assimilated into perceived forms of 'low' popular culture such as the music hall, it lost much of its 'credibility as a "serious" cultural idiom' amongst elites and bourgeois conveyors of 'high' art.[139] In Bratton's work on the Victorian popular ballad, detailed study is devoted to the sentimental and pathetic ballads 'which dominated the music hall in the later decades of the century' and included a wide range of topics such as lost love, the plight of the poverty stricken mother, child mortality, homelessness and a longing for home.[140] These topics performed a range of social functions depending on the subject matter, though all ultimately bolstered the sentimental ballad's power to create a 'unity of feeling and experience' amongst its audience.[141]

Whilst Dodd's music did not feature the precise subject matter of the more dramatic music hall songs of urban poverty and tragedy, the increasing volume of sentimental songs in nineteenth century popular music led to 'a natural selection of its preferred emblems', and Dodd's employed many of the motifs dominant in the nineteenth century.[142] One motif of the Victorian sentimental ballad was the use of objects as sentimental triggers for the exploration of loss or bereavement. Examples which were advertised as being sung with 'enormous' or 'immense' success in the 1880s were 'The Dear Old Stile', 'Don't put my Father's Picture up for Sale' and 'Grandfather's Clock'.[143] Dodd's first single 'Love is like a Violin', whilst a translation of a French chanson, drew on this theme, comparing the sound of a violin to extremes of the heart, whether it be new romance or the sadness of parting.[144] Dodd used the

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[136] Timothy J. Fleming, "*Awfully Affecting: the development of the sentimental tradition in the lyrics of British and North American popular song*", (PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1999), p5.
[137] Ibid*.,* p102.
[138] Ibid*.,* p173.
[139] Ibid*.,* p104.
[140] Bratton, *The Victorian Popular Ballad*, p105.
[141] Ibid*.,* p136.
[142] Fleming, "Awfully Affecting", p178.
[143] BL Music Collections, H.1260.f.(51.); H.1260.i.(19.); H.1784.e.(11.).
[144] *Melody Maker,* 6th August 1960, p7.

object trope again in 1964's 'Eight by Ten', a reference to a picture frame which was a reminder of lost love and ultimately loneliness.

> My lonely world is eight by ten
> I'm looking at the picture you gave me
> I see the words I love you by your name
> But someone else's arms are around you
> And now I'm left with just this picture frame.[145]

Dodd's most successful single was to employ another enduring motif from the nineteenth century, involving 'profuse lachrymosity… incorporated into the national psyche as a more generalized mark of sensitivity'.[146] Dodd's 1965 song 'Tears' spent five weeks at number one in the British charts and was perhaps immediately nostalgic to some listeners, being a song originally released in 1930.[147] However, the explicit lyrical emotion suggests that its success was rooted in a longer evolving custom that had established itself in nineteenth-century popular culture. The act of crying was often an essential feature of Victorian sentimental ballads that focused on won, lost or reunified love: 'Crying Duet' ('Let's pour our tears together/For cruel fate doth darkly frown'); 'The Plaintive Melody' ('eyes now dimmed with tears') and 'Give me back my heart again' ('foolish tears/tis a bitter cup to drain') are all examples of populist sentiment.[148] Whilst Dodd's national reputation as a comedian played a part in the song's success, the fact that an audience purchased a record that utilised nineteenth-century sentimental motifs suggests the continuing potency of the sentimental in the post-war era to engender a unity of feeling. The single's ability to produce a communal experience was taken advantage of in Dodd's live TV broadcasts, with *The Stage* reporting one show ending where 'The Blackpool audience sang-along loyally to Ken Dodd's soulful "Tears"'.[149] The fact that this sing-along took place in Blackpool, a bastion of music hall-variety seaside resort entertainment and largely frequented by working-class holiday-makers, suggests this sensibility was somewhat classed, endemic within a populist culture that actively embraced the customs of sentimental song originating from the music hall. One reviewer, trying to explain Dodd's popular appeal, could only use the word 'homely', hinting at the idea that Dodd represented something familiar.[150] Dodd followed the chart success of 'Tears' with two more hit songs that explored similar emotional states entitled 'The River' and 'Promises'.

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[145] Ken Dodd, 'Eight by Ten', Columbia, 1964.
[146] Fleming, "Awfully Affecting", p175.
[147] *Disc Weekly,* 9th October 1965, p5.
[148] BL Music Collections, H.1783.y.(10.); H.1783.y.(31.); H.1783.y.(50.).
[149] *The Stage*, 28th July 1966, p12.
[150] *Ibid.,* 29th December 1966, p10.

Musically speaking, although these songs repeated the sophisticated modern arrangements of 'Tears', utilising lush orchestral strings, haunting vocal choirs and relaxed rhythmic accompaniment, both tunes also dealt with broken hearts, separation and loneliness.

The enduring efficacy of the sentimental ballad in sixties Britain suggests a broad cultural conservatism, one that included change only if it appeared compatible with precedent, in this case, dating back to the nineteenth century. Whilst this chapter has analysed how musicians of a growing rock music culture looked to older forms of working-class culture for inspiration, it must be acknowledged that the level of affluence and education attained during this era also afforded this post-war generation exposure to 'the modernist mood of disillusionment, disaffection, dissent and dissonance'.[151] In Rose's view, what originally began as an elitist-Bohemian culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries permeated popular culture of the post-war era so that 'By the 1960s, this process produced middle-class youths who so thoroughly embraced Bohemian values that they grew frankly contemptuous of a culturally conservative working class'.[152]

Rose's analysis is accurate in certain regards, particularly when highlighting other musicians' attitudes to Dodd's chart success. Whilst Dodd's reaction to his music's popularity was a dialogue of inclusion, stating 'I've got nothing against groups… I think there is room in the Top 30 for all sorts of material', younger British popular musicians were not so conciliatory.[153] Alan Price distanced Dodd's music from youth-orientated popular music, suggesting 'These records are put out for a certain market' whilst Sandie Shaw explained 'I don't like "Tears"; but my Mum does. She goes mad over it'.[154] Pete Townshend was perhaps typically more confrontational in his assessment stating 'Ken Dodd annoys me particularly… It's sentimental crap. We're living too much on sentiment and if this is what people want to hear I give up'.[155] Whilst Townshend praised Ray Davies's portrayal of the working class in song as 'not cynicism… he loves the working-class and their simple ways', he seemingly found it difficult to reconcile with older populist musical forms that were associated with older working-class generations.

If Dodd's music was easily dismissed by certain popular musicians due to its perceived association with an older generation, then that picture is complicated by articles published in *Disc Weekly*, which suggest Dodd's popularity relied on a wide audience demographic that could switch between enjoying older populist culture and the more modernist youth-culture. Whilst 'Tears' was number one in the British charts, *Disc Weekly* gathered opinions on the

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[151] Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, p456.
[152] *Ibid.,* p462.
[153] *Disc Weekly*, 8th January 1966, p6-7.
[154] *Melody Maker*, 14th May 1966, p10; *Disc Weekly*, 23rd October 1965, p16.
[155] *Disc and Music Echo*, 3rd December 1966, p9.

song from members of the public aged between fourteen and twenty-five. The positive judgements were obviously collected to provoke further discussion, but illuminate the broad nature of youth-culture's musical taste, a culture that did not solely create a 'context for the emergence of new kinds of music audience, new kinds of music venue and new kinds of musical entertainment', but which also allowed for continuities with the past.[156] Brenda Ousley (20) of Yorkshire proclaimed Dodd was 'the kind of artist who appeals to everybody, no matter what their age is. I'm very glad he made number one', whilst Maureen Walsh (16) suggested the reason for the song's success was due to Dodd singing 'with great feeling'. Males who were interviewed responded similarly: Gordon Davies (25) was enthusiastic, stating 'it's great to see this kind of record doing so well' whilst Michael Coombes, perhaps surprisingly for a 15 year-old, suggested 'We need more of these records'.[157]

This survey of contemporary opinions is small, but it does suggest a popular culture less divided between supposed youth-culture and adult taste than popular music historiography generally assumes. Dodd's adoption of the sentimental ballad appealed to 'the mum and dad belt', who, despite the social mobility and affluence the decade brought, stuck with enduring populist working-class cultural taste that still bore similarity to its Vicwardian precedent.[158] However, it also seems a younger generation, while exposed to more modernist tastes in the cultural mainstream, were able to navigate between various styles without being influenced by their cultural categorisation in popular discourse. In many ways, therefore, the efforts of popular musicians associated with early rock analysed in the previous section – those who combined innovative new styles with performance culture and ideals of the nineteenth century – were reflective of a wider cultural consciousness that combined elements of continuity and change. Just as Mrs Mills' success relied on the audience recognition of a working-class participatory music culture, Ken Dodd's chart hits employed motifs and themes of the sentimental ballad that had been part of a populist music taste since the nineteenth century. Dodd's fame as a comedian, founded upon his ability to create a joyful communal experience and interpreted by many critics as sustaining a continuum of music hall-variety culture, also permitted his pivoting to evoke a more downbeat communal experience via the sentimental ballad. In a decade where 'the key ideological component of mythology… was its classlessness', both Mills' and Dodd's large audiences and listeners demonstrated the continuing preference for working-class cultural customs emanating from the nineteenth century, these largely marginalised from popular music historiography due to their being

[156] Frith *et al.*, *The History of Live Music in Britain*, p125.
[157] *Disc Weekly*, 9th October 1965, p5.
[158] *Melody Maker,* 14th January 1967, p11.

unable to serve a narrative involving the rise of rock and the perceived cultural rupture it provoked and reflected.[159]

## Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter has continued to focus on commercial popular music's relationship and interaction with Vicwardian legacies in two contrasting but mutually reinforcing ways. The first area was concerned with the rise of rock culture and its intensive use of musical bricolage and quotation post-1965, asking why this occurred and how it specifically utilised both a real and imagined Vicwardian past. Analysis drew attention to causal factors such as disenchantment with the USA's social situation and cultural power, coupled with consumer demand for musical novelty, leading to a re-articulation of Englishness involving parody, evolving Victorian ideals of English pastoralism and the mining of socio-political themes of music hall song. Operating outside rock's perspective, the music of Mrs Mills and Ken Dodd can also be placed within an evolving continuum that drew upon working-class participatory culture and the nineteenth-century sentimental ballad. Furthermore, they problematise the idea that this music sat outside the remit of youth culture, suggesting that the perceived taste barrier between adults and youth was crossed more often than popular music history tends to suggest.

These aspects of continuity within late-sixties rock and pop culture are often alluded to within popular music historiography, but even more frequently overlooked in favour of a narrative emphasising innovative change and an emerging middle-class audience. Highlighting them points to a creative vocabulary amongst musicians that featured the adoption and reinvention of earlier working-class culture dating back to the nineteenth century and that, at times, re-articulated socially conservative values. By exploring the presence of Vicwardian continuities in 1960s popular music and discourse across these last two chapters, an alternative narrative becomes apparent. This narrative foregrounds the evolution and continuation of musical customs couched in the rituals of the urban working class, these in turn, perpetuating collective memories involving cultural constructions of Englishness. What these elements share are their origins in English popular culture of the Vicwardian period; continuing to play a dynamic role in conceptions of nationhood and class within a plurality of 1960s popular music. These are perhaps unattractive propositions for rock histories that emphasise cultural rupture driven by rebellious youth culture. As the next chapter will show, these continuities within popular music also featured in the cultural medium with the biggest audience of the 1960s: television.

[159] Harker, "Still crazy after all these years?", p250.

# Chapter 6 – Screen Memory: Remembering, Re-Constructing and Ritualising the Vicwardian on 1960s TV

In 1966, BBC listings magazine the *Radio Times* used a full page spread to feature BBC One's new television drama series, *Adam Adamant Lives!* Described as an athlete, scholar and adventurer, this fictional character was 'At the height of his fame… the ideal Victorian gentleman'. The piece further explained how, in 1902, Adam was lured into a trap by his arch enemy, whereby he was entombed in a block of ice. Fortuitously, however, during the routine demolition of a Victorian building in London, Adam had been discovered, thawed and was now free to live again, with the prospective viewer encouraged to watch this Victorian hero and his 'daring exploits in 1966'.[1]

The expanding 1960s British TV industry provides the third area of this thesis' focus, and the area which had the largest collective audience. Whilst the BBC's television service had begun in 1936, its programming and momentum were suspended with the advent of war. Following its return in 1946, opportunities for mass viewership began in earnest in the early 1950s, with the 1953 broadcast of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation often cited as a historical turning point in the way British society accessed culture.[2] From this point onwards, transmitter construction, the 1954 Television Act's ensuring the advent of commercial television, the extension of broadcasting hours and growing production bases all developed alongside an increasing viewership.[3] The percentage of the population with a TV in the home had risen from 4.3% in 1950 to 81.8% just ten years later, creating in Paul Addison's view 'the single most sweeping change in mass consumption' of the post-WWII period.[4]

Television and its associated industry can perhaps be regarded as the ultimate symbol of post-war change, representing modernity and affluence whilst establishing a new visual media for collective cultural experience. However, like any cultural conduit, it facilitated investigation of the present, visions of the future but also re-constructions of the past. In Robert Dillon's view, 'television has become a historian in its own right… It not only reports, presents, re-presents – in the case of the past – it also promotes a dynamic visual insight into Britain

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[1] *Radio Times*, 16th June 1966, p43.
[2] Rob Turnock, *Television and Consumer Culture: Britain and the Transformation of Modernity,* (London: I.B Taurus and Co Ltd., 2007), p61-65.
[3] Ibid*.,* p14.
[4] Paul Addison, *No Turning Back: The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain*, (Oxford: University Press, 2010), p56.

that history books cannot match'.[5] Whilst Adam Adamant was the protagonist in a fictional action-drama rather than a historical figure, the idea of a Vicwardian presence waking up in 1966 is the perfect metaphor for much of British television's choice of programming during the decade. Throughout the sixties, a collective cultural memory of the Vicwardian era was woven into the tapestry of television in a variety of styles and genres. Significantly, popular music programming also contributed to keeping various aspects of this imagined Vicwardian world alive in the cultural imagination of sixties Britain.

In the context of popular music historiography, there has been a surprisingly small amount of interest in the relationship between television and popular music.[6] Frith argues that, due to the increasing dominance throughout the fifties and sixties of rock ideology and its association with youth culture, both audiences and scholars have often focused on defining rock's authentic 'liveness' in opposition to television's supposed staged and often lip-synched commercial pop.[7] This focus on youth-orientated programmes featuring rock has continued, with authors such as Lowry and Mills suggesting shows such as *Ready Steady Go!* (1963-66) and *The Old Grey Whistle Test* (1971-83) offered infiltration of and opposition to mainstream presentations of popular music.[8] Jeff Evans offers a comprehensive cataloguing of popular music on British television in the sixties and beyond and, whilst informative, also has a lens slanted towards rock, or what he terms 'young people's music on television'.[9]

This chapter will present an alternative perspective of popular music on British television during the 1960s. When examining various primary sources, a more nuanced landscape becomes apparent: a regular stream of programming that cultivated collective cultural memories of the nineteenth century and its popular music culture. Within these programmes lay not only the re-presentation of performance customs, but the re-construction of its leisure spaces, as well as continuing mentalities regarding class, race and national identity also linked to the urban metropole of the Vicwardian era.

Analysis will initially examine a trio of programmes which, via imagined and real leisure spaces, attempted to re-create musical entertainment with origins in the nineteenth century

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[5] Robert Dillon, *History on British Television: Constructing nation, nationality and collective memory,* (Manchester: University Press, 2010, 2015), p2.
[6] The exception to this observation is the study of the music video. See: Will Straw, "Music Video in its Contexts: 30 Years Later", *Volume!* [Online], 14:2 | 2018: 1-6. https://doi.org/10.4000/volume.5696.

[7] Simon Frith, "Look! Hear! The Uneasy Relationship of Music and Television", *Popular Music* 21, no. 3 (October 2002): p284, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143002002180.
[8] Adrienne Lowry, "*Ready Steady Go!* Televisual Pop Style and the Careers of Dusty Springfield, Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw and Lulu"; Peter Mills, "Stone Fox Chase: *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and the rise of High Pop Television", both in *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, ed. Ian Inglis, (London: Routledge, 2016).
[9] Jeff Evans, *Rock & Pop on British TV*, (London: Omnibus, 2016), p129.

urban working-class environments of the music hall, public house and working men's club. Although these practices were rooted in working-class culture, their re-presentation also reflected the continuation of class mentalities within the institutions that produced them and the viewers who watched them. The chapter will then offer a contrast, by exploring The Beatles made-for-television film, *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967). The film was much lambasted by critics and TV-viewers of the era, and many scholars who have analysed the film subsequently have attempted to emphasise the film's radical, counter-cultural aspirations. I will suggest that although a certain counter-cultural influence punctuates the film, much of the plot, characters and imagery were drawn from a foundational base of collective memory relating to the habits and customs of the working-class holiday, established in the previous century.

Lastly, the chapter will turn to one of the most-watched popular music programmes of the 1960s, *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. Through the examination of programme scripts and media discourse I identify two separate but intricately linked legacies of the nineteenth century. First, although the show's popularity was often explained by producers and journalists as owing to the modernisation of minstrel performance, the perpetuation of the blackface mask and Victorian minstrel songs within the show often returned the viewer to an imagined American plantation enjoyed by Victorian theatre audiences, whilst simultaneously continuing to root the show in the racist stereotypes established during the previous century. Second, examination will demonstrate that when the show was criticised by individuals and groups for the perpetuation of this entertainment, viewer letters, interviews with programme producers and BBC internal memoranda and press release would understate the show's claims to modernisation, defending it under the auspices of tradition. In the process, this revealed continuing high-imperialist mind-sets regarding racial dynamics based on white cultural authority.

Throughout these examples of the Vicwardian legacy within 1960s popular music television, exploration will demonstrate that these continuing cultural worlds did not exist in isolation. In fact, both BBC and ITV provided a broad range of programming which invested in keeping the imagined Victorian and Edwardian alive, suggesting a wider meta-level of remembrance occurring within 1960s British culture, where by a narrative of post-war social change was accompanied by a post-war reluctance to leave the Vicwardian past behind.

## Remembering *The Good Old Days*

Standing apart from the more celebrated popular music shows of the 1960s – *Top of the Pops*, *Ready Steady Go!*, *Thank Your Lucky Stars* and *Juke Box Jury* – was a programme in which, in the *Radio Times* words, it was 'always 1905', which ran for thirty years consecutively, which

featured songs from the nineteenth century and which had a live audience waiting list in the thousands.[10] Running from 1953 to 1983, the BBC's *The Good Old Days* was a perennial feature on 1960s British TV screens, gaining large viewership via its recreation of the Victorian and Edwardian music hall. Previous chapters have explored legacies of music hall-variety theatre in a number of domains: its return to informal, local cultures such as working men's clubs, its formalisation amongst music hall revivalist groups as well as its influence in commercialised popular music. Exploration of *The Good Old Days* will demonstrate that music hall legacies also migrated to television and in the process, reached a larger audience than any other cultural medium preceding it. The investigation will also consider how these programmes reflected the mentalities of the 'historians' who made them. Both BBC and ITV's approaches embodied attitudes to class and national identity that were themselves inherited from the nineteenth century.

*The Good Old Days* (TGOD) aimed to create an immersive 'living history' experience of the atmosphere, music and performance culture of the Edwardian music hall. The show was in full stride by the advent of the sixties, but its significance within popular culture has largely gone unexplored. For scholars of the nineteenth century, such as Peter Bailey, the programme only served to mobilise clichés regarding both the culture of the music hall and the wider fin de siècle era, creating a 'contrived and secure past… a plush and womb-like never-never land of Edwardian England'.[11] Whilst Bailey's enlightening works have often involved disentangling nineteenth-century music hall performance from twentieth-century pastiche, I posit that his critique of the programme merits the very basis for its investigation. How did the show attempt to construct an Edwardian England? If it did portray an idealised version of the past, why? To answer the former question, we have to examine the content of the programme, and in the case of the latter, consider the discourse surrounding the show to understand the attitudes of both the BBC and its audience.

Before we can begin exploring these two questions however, contextualisation of the changing middle-class attitudes to working-class leisure in the nineteenth century – particularly regarding the music hall – is salient if we are to fully comprehend the role of TGOD and the cultural memories it disseminated during the 1960s and beyond. In Chapter Three, brief consideration was given to Victorian middle-class fears of 'low' culture associated with the urban working-class and how this anxiety gave rise to the cause of 'rational recreation' and its relation to WMCs. This class-based tension in the second-half of the century played out over various sites of urban culture, including initially the music hall or anywhere 'that class

[10] *Radio Times,* 14th January 1965, p3.
[11] Bailey, "Introduction: Making sense of Music Hall", pviii.

and status differentials were being eroded by the leisure gains of the masses'.[12] From the 1860s onwards, however, the music hall had begun to grow from an extension of the urban working-class pub into a sophisticated industry, featuring syndicates or chains of halls, journals dedicated to the profession, as well as alcohol restrictions and rowed seating within the halls themselves. Alongside this, middle-class attitudes had also started to shift, from one of suspicion, to one that viewed the music hall as a culture that could be enjoyed in a respectable manner, and prevent the working class from other vices whilst also 'exploiting its dynamic properties to reinforce class identity'.[13] The manipulation of music hall chimes somewhat with Hobsbawm's theories on the invention of tradition in the late nineteenth century, and the middle class rediscovering 'the importance of "irrational" elements in the maintenance of the social fabric and the social order.'[14] In this particular instance, the middle class were not manufacturing ritual from above but placing themselves within and appropriating informal working-class culture from 'below'. Although it's important to qualify that there was not one single middle-class position on the music hall, examples of these altered perspectives are found throughout the 1890s in the industry journal *The Era*. In response to the suggestion at a London County Council meeting that music halls attached to pubs should not be granted any further licenses, one columnist defended the halls:

> The best patrons of the modern music hall are not the young "swell" … but the respectable working man and the small tradesman and his wife… Having paid for his seat, there is nothing to prevent a visitor obtaining three hours' relaxation without laying out a penny more than his entrance fee. To be permitted to remain in a public-house for the same space of time he would of have been obliged to consume at least twelve glasses of drink.[15]

Whilst understandable that a columnist would defend the industry he owed his living to, this caveat did not apply to the Reverend George Reynolds. Agreeing with the belief that the music hall distracted from the vices of the urban pub, Reynolds went further, praising the entertainment in the East End music halls he had visited featuring 'singing, dancing, and acrobatic performances, with a pretty little sketch or miniature play, and wholly free from coarseness or vulgarity'. Finally, in 1894, whilst commenting on the music hall as a magnet for drawing working-class people away from the public house, one columnist focused on its

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[12] Peter Bailey, "The Victorian middle-class and the problem of leisure" in *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), p28.
[13] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*, p89; Bailey, *Ibid.*
[14] Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914", p268.
[15] *The Era,* 6th December 1890, p15.

power as a class differentiator, providing entertainment for 'the large class who are intellectually incapable of following the plot of a play'.[16]

Music hall entertainment was beneficial to allaying middle-class anxiety in several ways: it kept working-class people away from the supposed morally degenerate influence of the public house and brought them into a social arena that was perceived to be controllable, and perhaps even enjoyable for the middle-class themselves as the industry itself became homogenised. By the end of the century, music hall had gone from a potential urban menace to having cross-class momentum and in Russell's words 'become a genuinely national cultural institution.'[17] This process of middle class-controlled regulation and homogenisation, can be said to have been influenced by the cultural agenda of Victorian critic, Matthew Arnold. A collection of essays, published in 1869 and entitled *Culture and Anarchy*, outlined the Arnoldian perspective that culture is 'The pursuit of perfection… the pursuit of sweetness and light.'[18] The concept of anarchy in Arnold's work is in many ways a synonym for the burgeoning urban culture of the Victorian era, which encourages the working class man to 'do what he likes, enter where he likes, hoot as he likes, threaten as he likes, smash as he likes.'[19] 'Culture' in Arnold's perspective is therefore mobilised to maintain social order and authority, something that the music hall industry was eventually enlisted to partake in. This Victorian perspective began what Storey calls the 'culture and civilisation' tradition, which in his view remained 'a cultural agenda that remained dominant in debate' in the post-WWII period.[20]

Nowhere was the continuation of this cultural perception more prominent in Britain than at the BBC. According to David Hendy, from the BBC's inception in 1922, 'the spirit of Matthew Arnold' was a guiding principle. 'Riddled with middle-class attitudes', the corporation had continued the Vicwardian legacy of integrating music hall-variety entertainment from a potential reflection of 'anarchy' into 'respectable' working-class culture, promoting social order and class hierarchy in the guise of shared cultural tradition.[21] What was once 'rational recreation' in the cause of 'sweetness and light' appeared in the twentieth century as the BBC's motto 'inform, educate and entertain'. Tom Mills asserts that this continuing Arnoldian perspective, and the enduring class congruity at the BBC post-WWII, was symptomatic of wider shared values between the corporation and its counterparts in government, administration and security, particularly regarding what was deemed to be in the 'national interest'. Whilst potential working-class anarchy was framed differently, even Hugh Greene,

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[16] *Ibid*., 25th October 1890, p17; *Ibid*., 17th February 1894, p15.
[17] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*, p99.
[18] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, (Oxford: University Press, 2006), p52.
[19] Ibid., p57.
[20] John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction,* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), p18
[21] David Hendy, *The BBC, A People's History*, p48 & p121.

perceived as the liberal-minded Director General of the BBC for the majority of the sixties, pushed security services for greater vetting of potential socialist and communist influence amongst staff and potential recruits.[22] Whilst the dynamics of this political-cultural threat had shifted due to the influence of the Cold War, into the sixties the BBC's inherited middle-class Arnoldian cultural perspective of maintaining social cohesion was still an element driving programming. Perhaps ironically, then, *The Good Old Days*, a recreation of music hall culture that had originally been born via cultural customs from 'below', feared and then slowly legitimised and homogenised by the end of the nineteenth century, was by the post-war period being utilised as a bastion of British cultural tradition. In its filming location, style of music performance and the willing participation of its live theatre audience, the show became an important site for the curation of invented tradition on television, re-creating and idealising a collective cultural memory of a Vicwardian past.

From its beginning in 1953, one of the key components of TGOD was its filming location, the City Varieties in Leeds. This surviving nineteenth-century music hall acted as a legitimising site of tradition not only due to its age, but its distinguished past. According to the *Radio Times*, its record of hosting legends of music hall, such as Harry Lauder, Charlie Chaplin, Vesta Tilley, Dan Leno, Florrie Forde and Little Tich all gave credence to the idea of keeping the memory alive.[23] The venue's illustrious history therefore gave it built-in authenticity, supported by a letter in *The Stage* from Bert Donn, who attested to performing at the City Varieties in 1907 and judging from what he saw on his television screen, the music hall itself 'did not look any different to what it did then'.[24]

Although the *Radio Times* regularly celebrated the City Varieties as a monument to collective cultural tradition, TGOD dedication to the re-construction of perceived nineteenth-century practice extended to costume, performance and live audience interaction. All performers were presented in period-correct costume as well as the filmed audience that had gathered inside the music hall, with Leonard Sachs guiding proceedings as the verbose and alliterative chairman. The participation of the filmed audience was an essential element in re-constructing an idealised atmosphere of Edwardian communal conviviality, not only for the performers but also for the TV viewer. As a *Radio Times* supplement featuring a profile of the programme remarked:

> not only do the audience look so much like authentic Edwardians, they obviously feel like Edwardians as they join in the choruses, heckle the chairman, provide the gaiety

[22] Tom Mills, *The BBC: Myth of a Public Service*, (London: Verso, 2016, 2020), p62-64.
[23] *Radio Times,* 20th June 1963, p39.
[24] *The Stage*, 27th February 1964, p11.

> and gusto and warmth in which Variety flourishes… Their enthusiasm is one of the most remarkable things.[25]

Whilst the in-house BBC magazine was bound to emphasise the idealised social cohesion the programme engendered, waiting-list figures for the chance to sit in the audience at the City Varieties only increased through the sixties, accelerating from 2,000 in 1963 to 14,000 by the end of 1967.[26] These rising figures suggest the opportunity to dress as an Edwardian and participate as an audience member, partaking in perceived collective rituals by reacting, heckling or singing along, was a key component the BBC and TV-viewers valued as a significant element of its popularity.

This collective memory of participatory culture was emphasised by the show's choice of camera work. A script held by the BBC Written Archives of the show that was a Rose d'Or (Golden Rose) entry in 1964, demonstrates that not only do the cameras switch to the audience for their applause at the end of an act, but often mid-performance for what are termed audience reaction shots.[27] The presentation of participatory audience culture was often highlighted by critics and TV-viewers as being the element of the show which resonated. *The Stage*'s John Saunders suggested that 'the best act of all… is the audience'; a letter to the *Radio Times* emphasised the 'delight' of listening to the audience 'joining in all the lovely old songs'; one example of many from the BBC's Audience Research Reports was a 'sales manager' who commented that his pleasure of the programme stemmed from 'the atmosphere of shared hilarity and enjoyment'.[28] For both the audience in the City Varieties and viewers at home, the show's facilitation of an occasion for collective participation and communality was an important contributor to its popularity, both evoking a turn-of-the-century atmosphere whilst idealising the era through its repeated ritualisation.

Although the show often invited well-known contemporary actors and comedians to draw in TV-viewers – Freddie Frinton and Ken Dodd helped celebrate the 100th episode in 1968 – much of the driving force for this re-creation of the communal Edwardian spirit lay in the large amounts of music hall popular song used throughout each programme.[29] The songs' presence not only gave the show period authenticity but also represented the continuing popularity and presence of a plurality of music cultures in the British sixties. As an example, a list of 18 songs was produced for a recording of the show produced on the 13th November

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[25] *Radio Times*, 29th September 1964, supplement (emphasis in original).
[26] *The Stage*, 21st February 1963, p9; *Radio Times*, 2nd November 1967, p33.
[27] BBC WAC, (T12/650/1) p13.
[28] *The Stage,* 1st December 1966, p12; *Radio Times*, 9th January 1964, p23; BBC WAC, *Audience Research Report*, 17th April 1964, (T12/650/1).
[29] *Radio Times,* 18th January 1968, p43.

1966.[30] Although some were incorporated into medleys, much of the material was in accord with what would have been heard in a pre-1914 music hall, with well-known examples such as 'Honeysuckle & the Bee' (1902), 'I'm Shy, Mary Ellen, I'm Shy' (c.1910), 'Hello, Hello, Who's Your Lady Friend' (1913) and 'Hold Your Hand Out Naughty Boy' (1913) all included.[31] Episodes would also occasionally be augmented by tribute sections to particular music hall performers such as George Robey and Harry Champion, reinforcing the fixed practices of tradition by curating a particular canon of music hall artists and song.[32]

Complementing the rich legacy of music hall popular song was an eclectic mix of acts that further demonstrated that although TGOD may have produced an idealised re-construction of the music hall, it drew on a continuing legacy of variety performance culture in accord with the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Music hall song dovetailed in TGOD with ventriloquism, trapeze artists, swordsmen and foot jugglers as well as performing monkeys.[33] These particular examples that were featured in the programme during the sixties all had their nineteenth-century equivalents, as evidenced in the popular theatrical journal *The Era* (1838-1939). Ventriloquism featured at the Metropolitan on the Edgware Road in 1890; Clemelo the performing monkey appeared in 1891 alongside strong men, trapeze artists, singers and comedians at Day's Concert Hall, Birmingham; 'sword feats, such as cutting a potato on a lady's throat' thrilled at the Oxford, London in 1888, and finally a variety company who visited the Theatre Royal, Bristol, in 1898, included Zoliac the 'foot juggler'.[34]

The enduring performance culture of nineteenth century music hall song and entertainment styles, accompanied by the ritualisation of participatory audience culture in a historical location were all elements that enabled TGOD to re-construct an Edwardian England for the TV-viewer. Furthermore, in its drawing on contemporary 1960s acts and audiences to recreate this world, the show also demonstrated the continuing strength of these cultural memories, all adding up to what critic Michael Billington called 'a curious British ritual'.[35] If it was curious, a large proportion of TV-viewers seemingly found nothing strange or unusual about the programme, judging from its popularity. Viewing figures of 10.5 million claimed by the BBC Audience Research Department for an April edition of the show in 1968 suggests that praise sent via letters pages or from critics were not isolated views, but reflective of a significant volume of the national audience.[36] Feedback to the BBC offers further insight,

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[30] BBC WAC, (T12/1/1009/1).
[31] BL Music Collections, H.3282.pp.(7.); H.3996.p.(22.); G.1520.y.(73.); H.3995.m.(18.)
[32] *Radio Times*, 11th June 1964, p55; *Ibid.,* 16th February 1967, p27.
[33] *Ibid.,* 14th June 1962, p42; 17th January 1963, p41; 5th September 1963, p45; 14th October 1965, p21.
[34] *The Era*, 4th January 1890, p14; 7th February 1891, p7; 25th February 1888, p15; 11th June 1898, p23.
[35] *The Stage*, 27th April 1967, p12.
[36] *Ibid.,* 16th May 1968, p11.

suggesting that although the show's popularity represented the strength of music hall-variety culture, for some TV-viewers, the show countered an intangible sense of loss regarding communality. As one viewer reported, the show 'has something you don't get nowadays'; an accountant found comfort in putting 'the clock back half a century to live in the merriment of our Grandparents'; whilst the BBC summed up multiple viewer comments on the idea of a 'camaraderie' being brought 'dramatically to life'.[37] The idea of the show as a celebration of cross-generational communal entertainment was cemented by the BBC broadcasting Christmas or New Year holidays specials, reflecting the view that TGOD was part of a national cultural tradition that had respectable, familial overtones.[38]

The connection *The Good Old Days* provided between the present and an imagined lost pre-1914 world was not made in isolation, but across additional BBC television and radio. Further imaginative recreations of the music hall occurred in television dramas such as *Tuppence in the Gods* (1960) and was complimented later in the decade by *Kindly Leave the Stage* (1968), a programme that briefly dovetailed with TGOD's focus on popular song by offering entertainment 'based on some of the gags in music hall'.[39] The presence of music hall during the sixties was also enhanced by BBC radio: *A Night at the Varieties* (1961); *A Night at the Music* Hall (1963); *A Night at the Music Hall in the North* (1964); *Late Joys* (1967) and *Come to the Music Hall* (1968) all promised the recreation of Victorian and Edwardian pasts.[40] These live audience broadcasts were offering similar fair to TGOD; in educational mode, the BBC also produced radio documentaries and talks, exploring, for instance, the life of music hall stars such as Vesta Tilley in 1964 and Marie Lloyd in 1966 alongside *Victorian Gems of the Music Hall* (1966), where presenter Charles Chilton performed 'cockney songs' and attempted to 'sketch in some of the social and historical background'.[41]

Across both BBC television and radio of the sixties, a wider imagined world of the Vicwardian was, at times, seemingly inescapable. A Charles Dickens television adaptation ran every year between 1960 and 1970 alongside other prominent nineteenth-century authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, George Elliott, Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, and Thackeray, with the high-point perhaps the much celebrated 26-part TV adaptation of Galsworthy's *The*

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[37] BBC WAC, *Audience Research Report,* 24th January 1963; 17th April 1964; 26th July 1962, (T12/650/1).
[38] Most years featured a Christmas holiday special of *The Good Old Days* during the 1960s. See: *Radio Times,* 22nd December 1960, p25; 19th December 1963, p27; 17th December 1964, p55; 23rd December 1965, p29; 4th January 1968, p57; 19th December 1968, p57; 18th & 25th December 1969, p74.
[39] *Radio Times,* 22nd December 1960, p12; *ibid.,* 15th August 1968, p6.
[40] *Ibid.,* 19th November 1961, p29; 13th June 1963, p18; 18th June 1964, p24; 30th March 1967, p38; 22nd February 1968, p8.
[41] *Ibid.,* 7th April 1964, p56; 28th July 1966, p22; 3rd March 1966, p57.

*Forsyte Saga* in 1967.[42] These fictional worlds were accompanied by television dramatisations of Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* as well as radio documentaries such as *The Making of Victorian England* on the Third Programme, and archived recordings broadcast featuring individuals recalling their memories in an *Edwardian Scrapbook* and *London in the Seventies and Eighties*.[43] It is clear from these examples that the legacy of music hall and its popular song was a significant contributor to a broader continuing interest in cultural portrayals that featured both fictional and factional Victorian and Edwardian worlds.

It is evident that BBC's *The Good Old Days* and its portrayal of the nineteenth and early twentieth century music hall, reflected both the active legacy of a popular culture that had its roots in the urban working-class as well as the continuing middle-class Victorian inheritance of appropriation and adaptation, acting as a conduit of respectability by recasting music hall as a national, rather than classed, cultural tradition. If it was indeed a flagship example of an imagined 1960s world of Victorian and Edwardian fantasy, the large but by no means exhaustive range of examples listed above attest to the programme sitting prominently within a wider BBC cultural remit which extensively employed the Victorians and Edwardians to inform, educate and entertain. As we will now see, this approach contrasts with ITV's attempts at recreating legacies of nineteenth-century working-class leisure, where its vernacular origins in the Victorian were at once celebrated, connected and juxtaposed with the 1960s popular music.

## Re-Constructing Working-Class Leisure and Community

In her article concerning ITV broadcasting, Helen Wheatley summarises the prevailing historical view towards its programming succinctly:

> The official histories of British broadcasting have depicted the emergence and impact of ITV in rather damning tones, as a chronology of populist programming catering to the lowest common denominator, in which trite or morally dubious programme formats

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[42] For BBC Dickens adaptations see: *The Stage (Barnaby Rudge*), 22nd September 1960, p9; *Radio Times* (*Oliver Twist*), 4th January 1962, p13; *Ibid., (Old Curiosity Shop),* 22nd November 1962, p2; *Ibid., (Martin Chuzzlewit),* 16th January 1964, p15; *Ibid., (Tale of Two Cities),* 24th April 1965, p15; *Ibid., (David Copperfield),* 13th January 1966, p11; *Ibid., (Great Expectations),* 19th January 1967, p12; *Ibid., (Nicholas Nickleby),* 8th February 1968, p11; *Ibid., (Dombey and Son),* 14th August 1969, p27; *Radio Times,* 18th February 1965, p5; *Ibid.,* p15; *Ibid.,* 15th September 1966, p32; *Ibid.,* 29th September 1966, p15; *Ibid.,* 30th November 1967, p3; *Ibid.,* 5th January 1967, p4-5.

[43] *Ibid.,* 7th April 1966, p3; *Ibid.,* 23rd February 1961, p13; *Ibid.,* 8th October 1964, p51; *Ibid.,* 3rd August 1967, p48.

> (the quiz show, the variety show, the fast-paced and violent American or 'Americanised' filmed series) feature heavily.[44]

The perspective Wheatley outlines has perhaps been reinforced by events that occurred in 1960 with the formation of the Pilkington Committee. Whilst ostensibly an inquiry into whether the BBC's charter should be renewed, the committee also planned to make recommendations to the government with regard to how, and in what form, both the BBC and the Independent Television Authority (ITA) should continue to operate, as well as suggesting which broadcaster should receive a new television network. When the committee published its report in 1962, it endorsed awarding the BBC a second television network whilst advocating for 'a revision and overhaul of the ITA structure'.[45] Whilst the government agreed with the former and ignored the latter proposal, for many within the television world, the report made explicit, in the words of an indignant *TV Times* editor, that 'Popularity is bad, free enterprise is evil, and success is wicked'.[46] It was certainly true that an influential member of the Pilkington committee, Richard Hoggart, had previously voiced concerns regarding commercialised or Americanised mass-entertainment. Whilst 1957's *The Uses of Literacy* criticised the increase in homogenous, US-influenced culture in popular literature, Hoggart added in his conclusion to the study that:

> Every tendency I have analysed in popular publications is to be found in some forms of broadcasting – especially those with commercial connexions – and in some ways more strikingly than in publications… Most mass entertainments are in the end what D.H. Lawrence described as 'anti-life'. They are full of corrupt brightness, of improper appeals and moral evasions… They assist a gradual drying-up of the more positive, the fuller, the more co-operative kinds of enjoyment.[47]

It is perhaps ironic then that after the Pilkington Committee had published their recommendations, ITV went on to create and broadcast *Stars and Garters* (1963-66), a show focused specifically on the communal kinds of entertainment that Hoggart and others felt commercial television had been undermining. As a vehicle for this entertainment, *Star and Garters* drew upon the participatory, cross-generational, local social space of the working-class pub, often perpetuating collective memories of its reputation as a social urban hub of the nineteenth century.

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[44] Helen Wheatley, "ITV 1955-89: Populism and Experimentation," in *The Television History Book*, ed. Michele Hilmes, (London: BFI Palgrave 2003, 2015), p76.
[45] Dillon, *History on British Television*, p55-56.
[46] *TV Times,* 6th July 1962, p3.
[47] Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy,* p308.

The origins of *Stars and Garters* can be found in ITV's 1962 broadcast *Time, Gentlemen, Please*, a documentary described as 'a voyage of rediscovery around some of the bar parlours of London' where, according to presenter Daniel Farson, 'a new Music Hall is being born', a similar description given to the flourishing of professionalised entertainment in WMCs around the country.[48] Nineteenth-century music hall was of course, intimately connected to urban working-class public house culture, with many early music halls attached to or beside public houses, having often grown from 'free and easy' concerts given in the pub itself. However, with the continuing growth of industrialisation and increasingly large urban working-class communities throughout the century, the public house still saw a large growth in its numbers, with 102,000 registered in England and Wales by the turn of the century, helping to 'bond communities together – many of which would otherwise have been rootless'.[49] It is also in the second half of the nineteenth century, that according to Paul Jennings, an institution known simply as the 'pub' begins being mentioned in documents of the era, further attesting to the beginnings of a homogenised space in urban conurbations.[50]

Although detailed primary source evidence is scarce in regard to informal music-making in the working-class Vicwardian pub – likely due to the stigma attached to these urban locations as dens of iniquity – Jennings' use of memoir attests to music and singing's importance to patrons throughout the nineteenth century.[51] Also significant is an 1878 Parliamentary Select Committee report pertaining to a Metropolis Management and Building Acts Amendment Bill. The report includes the testimony of George Steed, an Inspector in the Stepney Division of the Metropolitan Police, who confirms the sense of communal, participatory music culture active in the Victorian pub. It is worth quoting Steed's cross-examination at length.

> 1097. There are a great many different kinds of music halls in the metropolis are there not? — Yes.
>
> 1098. There are some which consist of a large room adapted only for music where they have a stage with scenes? — Yes, there are some such music halls.
>
> 1099. And some like the Eagle Tavern, where there is a great deal of dancing going on? — Yes.

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[48] *TV Times,* 30th November 1962, p6&7.
[49] Simon Heffer, *The Age of Decadence, A History of Britain: 1880-1914*, (Pegasus Books, Ltd: New York, 2022), p173. According to figures in 2022, this figure has now dropped below 40,000. See: https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2022/07/04/How-many-pubs-are-there-in-England-and-Wales.
[50] Paul Jennings, *The Local, A History of the English Pub*, (Cheltenham: The History Press, 2007, 2021), p88.
[51] Ibid., p109-134.

1100. But much the largest number are the small rooms in public-houses? — The large majority are those rooms.

1101. I take it that they have no scenes in those rooms? — No.

1102. No stage? — No.

1103. No footlights? — No.

1104. They have the ordinary gaslights of a tap-room? — Yes.

1105. People sit and smoke and drink their beer, and listen to such music as may be provided? — Yes.

1106. Sometimes there is a piano? — Yes.

1107. And a song? — Yes.

1108. Sometimes you say the audience sing themselves? — Yes.

1109. Is not it the fact that the attendants during the evening at a place of that sort come to about half-a-dozen at a time who come and drink their beer, hear a song, and then go away? — Very often.

1110. That is the general character of such places? — Yes.

1111. You say that a music hall would not answer, generally speaking, unless it had a public-house attached to it? — No, a small house would not.

1112. You say it is a great advantage to a great number of these public-houses in those crowded places to have a music room attached to them? — I think it is.[52]

As Chapter Two showed by way of the findings of Mass-Observation in *Britain Revisited* (1961), this participatory music-making culture still existed with the continued prominence of working-class urban leisure spaces post-WWII. After the experience of *Time, Gentlemen, Please*, ITV aimed to present a reconstruction of these informal cultural customs: incorporating entertainment with roots in the nineteenth century alongside contemporary popular music acts, in the process creating something that was a mixture of both real and imagined working-class collective experience.

From its outset in 1963, *Stars and Garters* aimed to enhance its credentials of reflecting genuine working-class talent and entertainment by recruiting performers who were experienced and familiar with performing in 'clubs and pubs all over the country'.[53] Whilst guest stars would appear throughout the programme's run, they revolved around a core group of performers who would appear in every broadcast, filmed in a studio-built pub, filled with

[52] London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Library & Archives Service, "Report from the Select Committee on Metropolis Management and Building Acts Amendment Bill", London, 1878, https://archive.org/details/b21365969/page/n83/mode/2up, p70.

[53] *The Stage*, 16th May 1963, p11.

supporting actors – otherwise known as extras – appearing as 'regulars'. Although Kathie Kirby, one of the core group of performers, confessed in the *TV Times* to never having sung in a pub, she was surrounded by experience: singer Clinton Ford was a veteran of northern WMCs; compere Ray Martine had been talent spotted performing in London pubs; they were later joined by singer Kim Cordell, known as the 'star of publand'. Cordell had been plucked from obscurity, and her personality was often connected to her class background in press discourse, the singer described as having 'fought her way up with the poverty of her East End background as a sparring partner'.[54]

Early reviews of the show produced positive notes with comparisons immediately being made with 'the lusty vitality one associates with the music hall'. The legacies of nineteenth-century pub culture, where a mix of professional, semi-professional and amateur pub performers appeared alongside each other were also adhered to, with examples ranging from singers spotted in a Docker's club in Hull to more seasoned metropolitan acts such as George Melly and later, Dusty Springfield.[55] Within a couple of months of first airing, just under 5 million viewers were tuning in and with this quick success, the programme began to make explicit connections between the show itself and the Vicwardian legacies of both the music hall and the 'free and easy' that it utilised. A particularly symbolic moment regarding the show's acknowledgment of its inheritance, was a visit to the set by Edwardian music hall star Marie Kendall, signifying to the show's co-director John Hamilton that 'the wheel has gone full circle, and that the music hall has gone right back to where it originated'.[56] Amateur and semi-professional performers scouted in working-class sites of leisure; a core resident group of singers and a compere largely drawn from working-class pubs; appearances of current stars of variety and popular music alongside dedications and references to the entertainments origins in Victorian music hall and pub. *Stars and Garters* encapsulated all these elements in an imagined pub setting that at once portrayed cultural memories pertaining to working-class communal music-making of the previous century, whilst juxtaposing them alongside contemporary acts, in the process highlighting continuity due to the shared performance space and audience.

Evidence of this, albeit limited, can be found in 15 minutes of footage that survives, and which is held at the BFI.[57] Although the acts chosen for the show aimed to simultaneously create a heterogeneity between contemporary and historical performance custom within the continuity of participatory leisure space, the opening credits largely focus on evoking

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[54] *TV Times*, 24th May 1963, p11; *Ibid.,* 31st May 1963, p5; *Ibid.,* 25th February 1965, p16-17.
[55] *The Stage*, 6th June 1963, p10; *Ibid.,* 11th July 1963, p11; *Ibid.,* 8th August 1963, p7; *TV Times,* 18th February 1965, p29.
[56] *The Stage*, 18th July 1963, p12; *TV Times*, 29th November 1963, p5.
[57] British Film Institute Mediatheque, Identifier: N-628129, *Stars and Garters*, (Associated-Rediffusion), 15th February 1965.

nineteenth-century reference points. The opening shot creates a sense of escape to the past by introducing the supposed street the studio pub is situated on, with pavements in view and the architecture of the pub's façade in the style of the Victorian saloon or gin-shop, a popular urban style of pub design from the 1870s onwards, itself originally designed as an ornate fantasy that 'represented as an escape from poverty for many of its customers'.[58] Accompanying this image is the sound of an upright piano, accompanied by singing and noisy chat from within the pub itself, as the viewer is taken into the pub via a cross dissolve shot. Inside, the pub is full of customers, dressed in an amalgamation of working-class dress codes, some in contemporary styles, others appearing in attire associated with previous eras such as flat caps, collarless shirts and braces. All are smoking, drinking, chatting and interacting with the first performer, a semi-professional housewife, Mrs Margaret Dove, who walks around the pub encouraging patrons to touch the python she is carrying on her shoulders, all whilst singing the 1930s song 'Embraceable You', without a microphone for projection and solely accompanied by upright piano.[59] Until the end of this performance the camera retains an observational perspective, giving a potential TV-viewer unfamiliar with the programme, the impression they may possibly be watching a documentary.

This impression is swiftly shattered when Ray Martine appears at the bar at the end of the performance. In the evening wear of a Victorian gentleman, Martine specifically locates the programme amid a working-class experience, taking off his top hat and directly addressing the camera, proclaiming he's stopped by to 'listen to a few of the songs the working-class enjoy' (02:41). A more contemporary style of performance thus ensues with guest singer, Tommy Bruce, appearing with a microphone and crooning directly to camera, backed by a small band who are situated in the pub, but barely seen in the background (03:01). After this performance, the episode immediately pivots back to an observational style for female singer Tsai Chin, dressed in what appears to be a Victorian-like urchin outfit, singing 'Daisy Bell (Bicycle Made for Two)', this time with the upright pianist in shot (05:27). After this slightly solemn rendition, Ray Martine then returns to screen, proclaiming 'Let's see who's in', talking to supposed patrons, making jokes at their expense and recreating a sense of familiarity and community viewers perhaps identified with (06:37).

At this point footage is clearly missing, but what does remain leaps back once more to the contemporary pop style, with Adam Faith performing to camera accompanied by the house band, followed by a duet with resident cast member Susan Maugham (7:20-10:35). During all of these performances, the patrons of the pub appear to carry on throughout with their socialising, only stopping to applaud before returning to their conversations. Although they

[58] Jennings, *The Local*, p85.
[59] *Daily Mirror*, 15th February 1965, p4.

have all been contributing to creating an atmosphere inside the studio, the participatory music-making customs of the pub are indulged directly when all performers and patrons of the *Stars and Garters* join together to sing 'Side by Side' (12:20).

> Oh, we ain't got a barrel of money
> Maybe we're ragged and funny,
> But we'll travel along, singin' a song
> Side by side
>
> Don't know what's comin' tomorrow
> Maybe it's trouble and sorrow
> But we'll travel the road, sharin' our load
> Side by side [60]

Although the tune was written in 1927, the lyrics are clearly in keeping with what Russell describes as the 'deep-rooted fatalism' of working-class music hall song, emphasising communality despite inevitable hardship.[61]

Several factors suggest that TV-viewers recognised and related to the show's portrayal of working-class leisure experience and music-making. As briefly mentioned above, viewing figures for the show were consistently high from the beginning, and these only increased when ITV chose to switch the programme to the earlier time of 9:15pm. For the Christmas Special, the BBC Audience Research Department claimed the rival programme pulled in 10 million viewers, whilst the independent Television Audience Measure (TAM) were perhaps more realistic with an estimate of 4.6 million. Accompanying this was ITV's decision to temporarily drop contemporary popular music programme *Ready, Steady, Go!* from broadcasting in the Midlands, due to *Stars and Garters* returning for a new season. This decision not only demonstrates ITV's belief that the programme would gain a larger audience, but also suggests a more nuanced picture of 1960s TV, in which older forms of popular music were often a bigger draw, despite the impact of 'new' 1960s youth-oriented music programmes.[62]

Further evidence of audience identification with the working-class leisure habits depicted in *Stars and Garters* lay in the reaction received when the programme's production company, Associated-Rediffusion, decided to change the tone and structure of the show. In August 1965, a 'new-look version' entitled *The New Stars and Garters* was announced, replacing compere Ray Martine with actress Jill Browne, who played the landlady of the

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[60] BL Music Collections, VOC/1927/WOODS.
[61] Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*, p126.
[62] *Daily Mirror*, 3rd July 1963, p14; *Ibid.,* 22nd January 1965, p11.

fictional premises. Regular members of the cast, such as working-class singer Kim Cordell were also removed. The fictional space was now a 'restyled East End Pub' and the *TV Times* promised that 'the accent is on glamour'.[63] This rebranded version, which seemingly attempted to create a more sophisticated, cabaret style of entertainment, immediately drew negative feedback in letters to the *TV Times*: the more consciously modern, bourgeois night-club style was 'absolute rubbish' for Mrs Carnell of Sheffield, and 'unadulterated tripe' to E.W. Coules of Hampshire. A slightly more constructive letter from A. Yale of Kings Lynn suggested a return to the original mixture of nineteenth century and contemporary styles: 'if they drop a crinoline over the garters I think thousands would be happy'.[64] It's possible these complaints influenced ITV's Associated-Rediffusion to hastily bring back the axed working-class pub singer Kim Cordell, as well as return the set to something that, in the words of executive producer Elkan Allan, 'feels like a pub, smells like a pub… in fact is better than any pub in the world'.[65] These complaints and the seeming subsequent concession to viewer opinion suggests that the show's original emphasis on re-constructing nineteenth-century participatory music-making customs alongside incorporation of contemporary acts was an approach that resonated with TV-viewers. Momentum, however, was lost, and it appears that the show was quietly axed in 1966, with one final reprieve when a similar programme featuring Kim Cordell entitled *Down at the Old Bull and Bush* was broadcast on Boxing Day 1967, the same day as The Beatles *Magical Mystery Tour*. This was warmly received in the *TV Times* letters page.[66]

Although ITV was commercially funded, its regional programme companies were regulated by ITA, a public body appointed by government and mandated by parliament. The government also had the power to change this legislation if it so wished, which in Turnock's view 'marked a degree of continuity… These principles marked an ongoing commitment to the ethos of public service established by the BBC in the 1920s and 1930s.'[67] Although many of its programmes leaned into populist trends, ITV still had a regulatory obligation to provide certain types of programming such as religious, news and educational services, and this requirement may have impacted other choices. ITV produced plays such as the 4-part series *The Victorians* (1963) and *The Edwardians* (1965); the adventures of *Sergeant Cork* (1963-68), a 'dedicated Victorian policeman' and documentaries about life 'below stairs' in *The Servants* (1964), all in a similar fashion to the BBC, kept the imagined life of the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries in the cultural imagination. ITV also reported on the disappearing Vicwardian world, such as the destruction of urban working-class neighbourhoods in the 1964

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[63] *The Stage,* 19th August 1965, p9; *TV Times,* 7th October 1965, p9.
[64] *TV Times*, 28th October 1965, p19.
[65] *Ibid.,* 18th November 1965, p37; *Daily Mirror*, 22nd November 1965, p18.
[66] *TV Times*, 21st December 1967, p8; *Ibid.,* 11th January 1968, p17.
[67] Turnock, *Television and Consumer Culture,* p16.

documentary *The End of the Street*.[68] Filmed in the St. Mary's Ward of Oldham, the programme interviewed working-class people whose nineteenth-century terraced homes were being demolished in favour of 'new flats', a direct result of the Housing Subsidies Act of 1956 which gave 'housing authorities a larger subsidy the higher they built… Rarely were council tenants or the general public invited to express their own preferences'.[69] This Act stayed in place until 1967, when it began to be scaled back, but not before 72-year-old resident Bill Travis had told the documentary-makers that 'I'll survive. As long as there's a pub'. Director Norman Swallow told *TV Times* that the programme shed light on not only physical destruction of buildings but also 'a deeper destruction of the society they represent'. The only letter published which made reference to the documentary was from Eli Renshaw, who wrote of his fond memories of the Canteen Inn in the St Mary's Ward where his father played piano 'for almost 12 years'.[70]

*Stars and Garters*' short-lived success on ITV celebrated both the nineteenth-century working-class leisure the programme was founded on and the contemporary acts that demonstrated this culture's enduring nature. The programme not only reflected a wider process of music hall-variety culture's migration back to pubs and clubs throughout the country, but, via reconstructed fantasy, celebrated a spirit of continuity, community and consolation in the face of social change. Evidence from viewing figures, and negative reactions when the show tried to move away from the imagined urban pub, suggests that this cultural portrayal of working-class leisure connected with TV-viewers.

ITV's success was in stark contrast to BBC's attempt to foreground vernacular urban culture in the form of *Club Night*. Just as ITV portrayed *Stars and Garters* as a reflection of music hall-variety theatre's historical roots, subsequent migration and return to the public house setting, so the BBC attempted to present its concurrent popularity in 'the Northern clubs'. Where the BBC's attempt differed was via its lack of acknowledgement regarding a self-reliant entertainment culture extant within working men's club culture since the nineteenth century. Whilst the amount of clubs had increased post-war, the BBC's suggestion that 'clubland' was a phenomenon that had only 'proliferated… in the past few years' was a myth that ignored decades of entertainment tradition.[71] Motti Neiger et al. state that various forms of media act as 'memory agents' as they constitute 'the most prevalent and quotidian site of collective recollection in modern national societies', but that the right of these elites to narrate these

[68] *TV Times,* 24th May 1963, p16; *ibid.,* 29th April 1965, p10; *ibid.,* 21st June 1963, p6; *ibid.,* 20th November 1964, p9.
[69] Addison, *No Turning Back*, p164.
[70] *TV Times*, 10th December 1964, p13.
[71] *Radio Times*, 13th February 1964, p45.

memories can be challenged.[72] Whereas *The Good Old Days* presented a sentimental portrait of the perceived fixed traditions of the Edwardian music hall, *Club Night*, in contrast, quickly drew the ire from the community of working-class club performers and industry insiders, who questioned the programme's authenticity as well as the BBC's right to re-construct working-class entertainment culture.

The BBC began its othering of these working-class social spaces by suggesting in the *Radio Times* that, if you lived 'south of Leicester, the odds are you will be entering a realm as richly unfamiliar as a Persian market', possibly as a way to draw interest to the programme. The BBC also filmed the show in the north, converting an abandoned cinema in Stockport for the purpose.[73] As explored in Chapter Three, entertainment in working men's clubs of the sixties often blended the continuing performance styles of music hall-variety culture alongside the incorporation of contemporary popular music, allowing its working-class patrons in the words of Russell to engage 'fully with 1960s consumerism, a way of "being modern"… but without losing contact with pre-existing practices and habits.'[74] A study of the acts listed to appear in various episodes shows that the BBC did appear to capture the club-blend between old and new, featuring such acts as The Bachelors, Joan Turner, Vera Lynn and Gerry and the Pacemakers.[75] Conversely, these examples reflect a policy of broadcasting solely professional acts, consciously choosing not to draw upon the rich circuit of semi-pro and amateur performers found in clubland. While no footage seems to survive, promotional photographs suggest that the BBC was possibly attempting to portray a more affluent type of club culture, with audience members sat at tables in formal wear whilst being served by waiters, this more representative of the private cabaret clubs of Northern England.[76]

Whilst private clubs may have offered more trappings associated with affluence such as casino-style gambling, higher drinks prices and table dining, they were in a minority compared to CIU registered working men's clubs, and, significantly, drew upon many of the same performers, with a clientele largely from 'the better paid sections of the working-class'.[77] It was members of the demographic with a vested interest in these long-established working-class cultural spaces that proceeded to heavily criticise what they perceived as the BBC's bowdlerised portrayal. The first dissenting voice wrote into *The Stage* – which often covered events in both private and working men's clubs – suggested that the acts booked for the

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[72] Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers and Eyal Zandberg, "Editor's Introduction", in *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age,* eds. Motti Nieger, Oren Meyers and Eyal Zandberg, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p11.
[73] *Radio Times,* 13th February 1964, p45.
[74] Russell, "Glimpsing *La Dolce Vita*", p307.
[75] *Radio Times*, 23rd April 1964, p59; *ibid.,* 6th August 1964, p29; *ibid.,* 3rd September 1964, p7.
[76] *Ibid.,* 18th March 1965, p55.
[77] Russell, "Glimpsing *La Dolce Vita",* p306.

programme 'would never get a booking in a club' and that the BBC's recreation of a typical club space 'was patently obvious to anyone who knows clubs that the setting is artificial – table cloths on the tables indeed! And a full orchestra tucked away in the corner.'[78] This letter of criticism prompted Vic Holbrook, Secretary of Manchester Entertainers & Concert Artistes' Association, to write in, and his letter was given the confrontational heading 'Are the BBC trying to humiliate us?'. Holbrook claimed that 'unknown artists of talent and ability' had not been given a chance on *Club Night* because the BBC 'have not even bothered to accept our offer of assistance in that direction, but persist with artists who are plainly not at home in this atmosphere'.[79] Although TAM ratings suggest that just over 2 million viewers were regularly watching the programme, the letters of disapproval persisted from both members and performers in WMCs. Brian Doyle of Handsworth, Birmingham complained – perhaps enviously, considering he was a performer himself – that 'More than 75% of the artists appearing on this feature would not be accepted at any self-respecting club'. A final example, from a TV-viewer in Sheffield, expressed the fear that 'the prestige of club entertainment is not being enhanced; indeed, it is being damaged… They should have a quiet word with Billy Cotton who might teach them how to recognise an artist'.[80] Supposed confirmation that these weren't simply resentful individuals came from *The Stage*'s variety correspondent, Andrew McLachan, who claimed he had heard criticism from 'Working Men's Club frequenters all over the country. This section of the community believe they should have these shows in one of their clubs and that entertainers should be drawn from the vast number employed regularly by concert secretaries'.[81]

Whilst these dissenting voices were likely motivated by the fear that a large proportion of their demographic would stay at home watching a simulated club, rather than enjoying a real one, what they do articulate is the continuing existence of an independent working-class club culture. These active customs which had their origins in the self-reliant club culture of the nineteenth century, were continuing to be ritualised and reinterpreted in the 1960s. Correspondingly, the BBC – whose programme makers were still almost exclusively middle class – also unwittingly perpetuated an inherited cultural view, chiefly the middle-class drive of the nineteenth century to control, regulate and homogenise forms of working-class leisure in an effort to create cross-class consensus with a fixed hierarchy. In the case of *Club Night* however, the lack of recognition for a pre-existing working-class club culture brought forth sections of the community who contested the BBC's authority and knowledge to turn informal

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[78] *The Stage*, 4th June 1964, p15.
[79] *Ibid.,* 11th June 1964, p13.
[80] *Ibid.,* 16th July 1964, p9; *ibid.,* "Why can't we have the real thing?", 2nd July 1964, p11; *ibid., '*Should have a word with Billy Cotton', 22nd April 1965, p11.
[81] *Ibid.,* 25th March 1965, p4.

cultural customs into homogenised cultural practice. This contrasted with ITV's *Stars and Garters*, where a populist approach created a predominantly music inspired programme, not only incorporating contemporary pop, but consciously acknowledging its existence within a continuum of participatory working-class leisure dating back to the urban nineteenth-century. Regardless of each programme's attempts, or lack of, to acknowledge their foundations in nineteenth-century working-class leisure, if we include *The Good Old Days*, these three under-examined musically-led programmes offer a clear indication that collective memories of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century, whether foregrounded as national heritage or class specific, fixed tradition or evolving custom, were an integral and popular aspect of television viewing in the 1960s. They provide an alternate historical perspective on popular music programming of the era – which in the case of popular music historiography has often prioritised a focus on youth-culture – suggesting a wider plurality of musical styles available and enjoyed by TV-viewers. Even then however, some popular musicians associated with youth culture, given the opportunity to create their own programme, still looked for inspiration in the rituals established by the Vicwardian working class.

## Working-Class Holiday Ritual in *Magical Mystery Tour*

'Pure unadulterated tripe' was the succinct verdict of a reader's letter to the *Radio Times* in regard to the Boxing Day 1967 BBC broadcast of The Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour*. Reviewing the made-for-television film in *The Listener*, Peter Black stated that whilst he saw 'the value of springing these terrifying surprises on the nation', ultimately the Beatles had indulged in 'aimless, rootless fantasy'. Over half of the 368 people quizzed for the BBC's Audience Research Report gave the film the lowest possible rating of 'C- ', with the report including anonymous viewer comments such as 'A load of RUBBISH. We have made better home movies ourselves' alongside 'I found it unspeakably tiresome and not the least bit funny – but perhaps this is "sick" humour'.[82]

Whilst the film had its minority of defenders in the music press, the most vocal was Paul McCartney himself, who appeared on ITV's *The Frost Programme*, filmed on the 27th December 1967. When asked by Frost if he thought the film a success or failure McCartney replied 'You can't say it's a success, 'cos the papers didn't like it, and that's what people read, you know. But, I think it's all right'. These contemporary critiques contributed significantly to sealing the film's fate from a historical perspective, with MacDonald suggesting that the film was product of the groups 'false modesty' and represented 'the breakdown of cross-

[82] *Radio Times,* 11th January 1968, p63; Peter Black, 'Nay, Nay, Nay'*, The Listener*, 4th January 1968, p27; BBC WAC, *Audience Research Report*, R9-7-90.

generational consensus' regarding their popularity.[83] Scholarly forays have attempted to rehabilitate the film's reputation by framing its perceived break with previous social and cultural popular tradition as a positive, emphasising connections to the 'radical and subversive ideas in terms of content and form' associated with the wider 1960s counter-culture.[84] Barry J. Faulk has made passing mention of the film being 'immersed as it was in a specifically British history of working and lower middle-class entertainment' without examining where these linkages explicitly exist, preferring to detail how The Beatles' 'new rootedness in the cosmopolitan habitus of London' aided in producing a 'symbolic violence' towards any perceived continuities with previous popular culture.[85]

Whilst these viewpoints offer a legitimate perspective, they principally reinforce the idea of the film representing The Beatles parting from a perceived popular tradition in pursuit of counter-cultural capital. However, as we have seen in the previous sections, television programmes that emphasised continuity via collective memories of nineteenth-century working-class leisure were prominent during the sixties. If we move beyond the sixties media reaction and scholarly inducements to see the film as a surreal counter-cultural text, an alternate reading of the *Magical Mystery Tour* might highlight the film's utilisation of shared working-class experience. Specifically, when given the opportunity to create, film and edit their own autonomous piece of television, The Beatles – themselves products of working and lower-middle-class upbringings – chose as its basis the continuing customs regarding the working-class holiday established in the nineteenth century. By doing so, The Beatles utilised a set of social codes and symbols which suggest that many of the film's aspects that are deemed counter-cultural did in fact have roots in working-class forms of collective release and leisure.

Popular music television programming with an emphasis on youth had been broadcast since the 1950s in various iterations by both BBC and ITV, though presentational forms and sound restrictions involving mimed performances, adult presenters and chaperoned teenage audiences generated persistent critique into the early 1960s.[86] Criticism inevitably came from both industry insiders and TV-viewers, whose taste these programmes were meant to reflect. *Melody Maker*, often operating as the mouthpiece of the Musicians' Union, openly professed cynicism at the way it felt programmes such as the BBC's *Six-Five Special* attempted to manipulate youth-culture into trends that served the interests of the music industry over

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[83] *Disc and Music Echo,* 23rd December 1967, p16; Badman, *The Beatles: Off the Record,* p336; MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head,* p256.
[84] M. S. King, "'Roll up for the Mystery Tour': Reading The Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour as a Countercultural Anti-Masculinist Text.", *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* 4 (2015), http://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/605015/.
[85] Faulk, *British Rock Modernism,* p49,50 & 73.
[86] Some of these shows included: *Cool for Cats* (ITV: 1956-61), *Six-Five Special* (BBC: 1957-58), *Oh Boy!* (ITV: 1958-59), *Boy Meets Girl* (ITV: 1959-60) and *Wham!!* (ITV: 1960).

professional musicians.[87] In the case of the BBC's long-running *Juke Box Jury*, teenage viewers could be left dissatisfied with a lack of representation: 'not one of the jury is under twenty-five… Being teenagers ourselves – the section of the public that buys these records – we would like to see our generation represented.'[88]

What both critiques had in common was a sense that the way popular music was being presented on television did not reflect the lives of the TV-viewer, but instead, reflected the perspectives of those Negus would later term 'cultural intermediaries', personnel who are 'constantly contributing to the production of and then reorganising, circulating and mediating the words, sounds and images of popular music to audiences across a range of entertainment media.'[89] In the context of both the BBC and ITV of the late fifties and early sixties, these perspectives largely referred to the staunch middle-class values often held by organisation heads. Whilst understanding the need to appeal to a younger audience, figures such as the BBC's Head of Light Entertainment Eric Maschwitz wanted to ensure that rock 'n' roll was an element that could be incorporated alongside other musical styles and entertainment and in the process avoid 'cluttering up the screen with "juvenile delinquents"'.[90]

The criticism that youth-culture were under-represented on popular music television dissipated somewhat with the arrival of ITV's *Ready, Steady, Go!* (RSG) in August 1963, followed shortly after by BBC's *Top of the Pops* (TOTP) in January 1964. The *TV Times* encouraged viewers to 'dance with the teenagers' and the influence of youth-culture on the show's style and presentation was significant.[91] This included a producer in her early twenties, Vicki Wickham, two presenters under 20-years-old in Michael Aldred and Cathy McGowan and perhaps most crucially, a studio-set that 'appeared to be a claustrophobically crowded cellar bar filled with trendy, dancing teenagers'.[92] Despite Evans describing these programmes as part of a 'giant leap' in popular music programming, by 1965, music press discourse were again foregrounding opinions from TV-viewers suggesting this form of presentation was already being deemed repetitious and formulaic.[93] *Melody Maker* continued to push this agenda by conducting a public poll, concluding that 'many teenage viewers are worried by poor miming and the appearance of the same groups on all the regular programmes in the same week'. This critique continued into 1966, when journalist Chris Welch suggested slipping

[87] John Williamson and Martin Cloonan, *Players' Work Time: A History of the British Musicians' Union, 1893-2013*, (Manchester: University Press, 2016), p145.
[88] *Melody Maker*, 11th January 1958, p3; *Radio Times*, 6th April 1961, p41.
[89] Negus, *Popular Music in Theory*, p62.
[90] Hendy, *The BBC,* p419.
[91] *TV Times,* 16th August 1963, p34.
[92] Evans, *Rock & Pop on British TV,* p82.
[93] Ibid., p129.

audience ratings were due to a 'terrible pall of "sameness"' hanging over regular programmes.[94]

The Beatles themselves had appeared on the majority of both regional and national television pop programming as well as appearing on the cinema screen in two carefully curated films, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965). Both these efforts were made within and featured The Beatles navigating and co-operating with the established industry structures of the pop world that interlinked the record industry, television, film and radio. By 1967, however, the group had begun to take advantage of their critical acclaim and popular appeal by beginning to resist many of the standard practices expected of a contemporary sixties pop group. The most significant of these was the group's decision to cease making appearances in concert in order to spend more time in the recording studio. This journey to greater creative and commercial autonomy was hastened perhaps by the death of Beatles' manager Brian Epstein on the 27th August 1967, a piece of news that according to MacDonald left the group 'shattered', with McCartney fearing that 'the psychological force holding them together would soon dissipate without some creative focus'.[95] What this artistic effort would revolve around was quickly decided and involved returning to a song recorded in April and May 1967 entitled 'Magical Mystery Tour', expanding the idea into a film that began shooting in early September. On the surface, the filming of *Magical Mystery Tour* was a radical departure in terms of the way popular music programming had been created up to this point. This was the first time 'cultural intermediaries' in the creative process of television filming had been removed; popular musicians from working and lower-middle class backgrounds had creative autonomy in regards to way their music would be presented. As George Harrison expressed in *Melody Maker*:

> The more involved we get with film people the less of a Beatles film it's going to be… It's a constant struggle to get ourselves across through all these other people, all hassling… In the end it'll be best if we write the music, write the visual and the script, film it, edit it, do everything ourselves.[96]

Although this opportunity for working-class autonomy and self-reliance in the creative process of popular music television was new, what the Beatles chose to present was in many ways the culmination of something very old: the film was based upon the working-class customs of the seaside holiday that had formed throughout the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

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[94] *Melody Maker*, 16th January 1965, p10-11; ibid., 29th January 1966, p11.
[95] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, p265.
[96] *Melody Maker*, 9th September 1967, p13.

The inspiration for the title song and film has often been attributed by popular writers to McCartney's exposure, when on a trip to the USA in April 1967, to Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters and their psychedelically painted coach.[97] The fact that the title track was recorded very shortly after McCartney's jaunt suggests Kesey might well have provided the initial spark, but by the time The Beatles came to filming in September 1967, translating this idea onto film rested on delving back into specific rituals surrounding working-class seaside holidays. Alistair Taylor – Brian Epstein's assistant who had continued to work for The Beatles – in his memoir, *With the Beatles* recalls McCartney drawing explicitly on the memory of his own seaside coach tours: 'Paul rang me one day… He said "I've had this idea. Do they still do mystery tours on buses?" … Paul had this happy memory from somewhere of getting on a coach and paying five bob and being taken off who knows where.'[98] In episode seven of *The Beatles Anthology*, George Harrison reinforces the notion of inspiration being drawn from working-class leisure experience.

> It was basically a charabanc trip which people used to go on from Liverpool to see the Blackpool lights… And you know, they'd get loadsa' crates of beer and an accordion player and all get pissed basically. Pissed in the English sense meaning drunk… and it was kind of like that.[99]

The ritual of the working-class seaside holiday or day-trip was a development that was largely established in the second half of the nineteenth century. With the growth of railway networks, ever-growing urban conurbations in the industrial north and London metropolis as well as the passing of the Bank Holiday Act (1870) with its subsequent extension in 1875, many within working-class communities came to regard 'the seaside holiday as a natural part of the rhythm of the seasons'.[100]

Evidence of this growing custom during the late nineteenth-century can be found in the *CIU Journal*, with reports from various clubs detailing what were often referred to as 'excursions'. In the summer of 1891, West Southwark WMC took the train to spend the day on Brighton beach, whereas members of the Holborn Gladstonian, 'accompanied by wives and friends' took a day tour of the countryside in 9 horse-drawn carriages, stopping for games, 'alfresco concerts', and dances led by 'Our dear old friend Jackson… indefatigable in playing his harmonium'. By the mid-point of the decade, sojourns to the seaside had increased in

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[97] See: MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head,* p254; Chapman, *Psychedelia and other Colours,* p299.
[98] Alistair Taylor, *With the Beatles*, (London: John Blake Publishing, 2003, 2011), p208.
[99] *The Beatles Anthology*: *Episode 7*, directed by Geoff Wondor & Bob Smeaton, (1995; London: Apple Corps Ltd, 2003), DVD (24:02).
[100] Walton, *The British Seaside*, p51.

scope and organisation. In July 1895, the journal dedicated its entire front page, headlined 'All About the Big Excursion' to Ramsgate, including instructions on train travel; brake tours of the surrounding areas; directions to the Club Union convalescent home; as well as recommendations on sea-trips, walks and drives, concluding: 'Of course you'll take the wife?'.[101]

The extension of day-trips and seaside excursions into mystery tours appears to have been a development of the inter-war period with the increased availability of motorised charabancs and buses. One of the earliest examples found in the British Newspaper Archive is advertised by 'Greyhound Cars' in a 1921 edition of the *Western Daily Press*, where alongside trips to Weston-Super-Mare, Bournemouth and Burnham-On-Sea was the option to opt for 'A Grand Mystery Tour… Refreshments, and entertainments etc. Full satisfaction guaranteed'.[102] Popularity of mystery tours increased during these inter-war years, particularly amongst working-class associations and informal fraternities. Reports of day-trip mystery tour exploits from groups such as the Bristol Women's Licensed Trade Association, Old Contemptibles Association, South Normanton Miners' Welfare Male Voice Choir and Glastonbury Worker's Educational Association often included mention of mystery tours ending with a musical concert in an undesignated location.[103]

With the rise in living standards and the extension of paid holidays, the relationship established in the nineteenth century which continued in the inter-war period between the British working class and domestic seaside holidays expanded further in post-WWII period of the fifties and sixties.[104] These cultural practices were also embedded and reflected within the output of popular culture on both the television and radio. Most of this cultural production focused on the northern seaside resort of Blackpool as a symbolic site of working-class leisure and entertainment, with the BBC producing programmes throughout the sixties such as television's *Blackpool Favourites* (1960), as well as radio staples in the summer months including *Friday Night is Seaside Night* (1961), *Blackpool Night* (1967) and *Meet Us at the Tower* (1969).[105] The *Radio Times* also produced supplements relating to seaside entertainment, beach fashion, games and food as well as suggesting domestic holiday destinations.[106] ITV also drew on this active cultural legacy, initially with the programme *Big Night Out* (1963) which promised to bring 'the atmosphere of the seaside' into the living room,

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[101] *CIU Journal,* 22nd August 1891, p30-31; *ibid.,* July 1895, p1.
[102] *Western Daily Press*, 6th August 1921, p4.
[103] *Ibid.,* 27th August 1922, p7; *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 13th July 1932, p5; *ibid.,* 10th July 1933, p5; *Central Somerset Gazette*, 7th July 1939, p6.
[104] Susan Barton, *Working-Class Organisations and Popular Tourism 1840-1970,* (Manchester: University Press, 2005), p88-90; Walton, *The British Seaside,* p62.
[105] *Radio Times*, 8th July 1960, p4; *ibid.,* 29th June 1961, p54; *ibid.,* 17th August 1967, p9; *ibid.,* 26th June 1969, p8.
[106] *Ibid.,* Supplement, 22nd July 1965, iv-v; *ibid.,* 5th January 1967, I-IV.

eventually morphing into *Blackpool Night* (1964) which was broadcast with a live audience from the town's ABC Theatre.[107] What had begun in the Victorian era as organised working-class day-trips from industrial areas had quickly developed into a working class ritual of leisure. Accompanied by legacies of entertainment both musical and otherwise – including the thrill of the mystery tour – this collective tradition and custom that connected the working class to the pleasures of the domestic holiday space was not of singular interest to The Beatles, but a prevalent part of popular culture that continued to be facilitated and curated by both television and radio throughout the 1960s.

Rob Shields explores how the seaside town of Brighton became 'territorialised as a site fit for leisure', suggesting the influx of working-class holiday crowds in the second-half of the nineteenth century turned not just Brighton, but many seaside resorts into what he terms a 'liminal space'. Shields argues that for working-class holiday-makers this liminality represented a temporary space that was a 'liberation from the regimes of normative practices and performance codes of mundane life… the new holidays marked a collective release from the rationalised regimes of industrial labour. Holidays were thus special and "extra-ordinary"'.[108] These liminal geographic spaces of working-class communal release are ultimately socially unifying, temporarily creating the perception of 'unmediated encounters with other individuals also momentarily stripped of their social status. This experience of equal individuals fosters a sense of communitas', whilst also providing a regulated encounter with minor transgression involving 'morbidity, voyeurism, and flirtation with the illicit.'[109]

Darren Webb positions working-class relationships to the seaside differently, suggesting that rather than a carnivalesque suspension of social hierarchy, places such as Blackpool in the mid-nineteenth-century reinforced class difference. Webb argues that attractions and spaces purposely engineered to appeal to separate classes, organised works-trips with regimented itineraries, the resorts' built-up environment, and even its friendly northern landladies, all contributed to 'the inescapable presence of class distinctions, established hierarchies and the norms of distorted communications… Reminders of established truths, the established order, the immutable, were everywhere'.[110] However, Webb contends that from the 1890s into the Edwardian era, discourse suggests Blackpool began to revel in an identity that was 'for the working class created in large part by the working class… a space symbolising hope in the collective creative potential of the working class. Blackpool Tower was the ultimate product and the ultimate symbol of this hope.' Rather than a space

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[107] *TV Times*, 21st June 1963, p7; *ibid.,* 3rd July 1964, p21.
[108] Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p75, 84, 85.
[109] Shields, *Ibid.,* p89, 98.
[110] Darren Webb, "Bakhtin at the Seaside: Utopia, Modernity and the Carnivalesque," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 22(3), (2005): p128. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276405053724.

regulated for the working class, Webb conceives of resorts such as Blackpool as spaces of autonomy, symbolising a 'utopian' space for working class holiday-makers, a fantasy that depicted a 'non-existent society that is regarded as better than the one in which its readers live'.[111]

Though Shields and Webb differ on whether working-class Victorian and Edwardian seaside holidays established a ritual involving the suspension of class hierarchy or a fantasy of working-class utopia, both authors share a notion that this relationship represented a form of escape from 'everyday' routine. The commonality in their work suggests that binary interpretations are unhelpful and that it's possible to interpret the working-class holiday as a space that manifested the opportunity for both the liminal and the idealistic fantasy alongside one another. The working-class seaside holiday therefore provided opportunities for interruption of social codes, a regulated space for transgression and a fostering of communitas, whilst simultaneously offering affirmation of working-class identity that encouraged idealism and fantasy. When applying these factors to an interpretation of The Beatles *Magical Mystery Tour*, it is evident that, regardless of whether or not the film can be read as a counter-cultural text, what has been overlooked is the utilisation – via imagery, action, character and music – of collective customs involving working-class leisure paradigms established in the nineteenth century. The Beatles, themselves so often cast during the 1960s as the ultimate symbols of changing hierarchies and a new idealism, experimented with these continuities involving both liminal and utopian fantasy.

The film's opening sequence immediately establishes elements of both the utopian and liminal holiday space. As Webb describes Blackpool Tower as the defining symbol of a 'space of pleasure', opening shots of the bright, multi-coloured coach shooting down the roads of England indicate a symbolic vehicle, ready to emancipate its passengers in utopian pleasure fantasies.[112] Whilst the film's title track is playing in the background, the notion of a holiday space that fosters communitas amongst participants is promoted by shots of the Beatles themselves waving directly to camera from the bus (00:18), followed by members of the coach party themselves (01:13).[113] This inclusivity continues as the 'Magical Mystery Tour' song fades out to imagery of a huge crowd positioned in front of the coach. Once more, people of all ages are clapping and waving to camera, reinforcing to the TV-viewer the notion that The Beatles and their magical coach can facilitate a cross-generational communality via familiar domestic holiday tradition (02:20).

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[111] Ibid., p131, 132.
[112] Ibid.
[113] *The Beatles: Magical Mystery Tour*, directed by The Beatles, (1967; London: Apple Films Ltd, 2012), DVD.

The idea that the creation of liminal space is due to a direct relationship between the working class and day-trip seaside adventure is reinforced in the following scene. Ringo – symbolically stripped of his celebrity by being referred to as 'Richard B. Starkey' in John Lennon's voiceover – and the character of Aunt Jessica make their way through streets of terraced houses in order to catch the coach, offering the suggestion that they are local working-class people booked in for the coach tour (2:39-3:17). As Aunt Jessica arrives on the bus, we realise that she is one of several characters that can be interpreted as representations of 'the grotesque body'. As Shields argues, the fostering of communitas in the working-class liminal holiday space allows for the suspension of hierarchical rank, creating an opportunity for interaction between the grotesque 'low' and 'high' authority figures.[114] These 'low' characters within the film bear similarity to the culture of the comic seaside postcard, a practice that began in the early twentieth-century before branching out by the inter-war to include themes that propagated the myth of the seaside holiday as a place of vulgarity as well as 'sexual liberation and unbridled hedonism.'[115] These postcards drew upon, in George Orwell's opinion, 'an utter lowness of mental atmosphere… a sort of sub-world of smacked bottoms and scrawny mothers-in-law'.[116] Within this postcard atmosphere lay many stock figures or stereotypes of low working-class characters, 'fat-bathers, holidaying dandies, and buxom ladies' often interacting with 'stiff-collared guardians of public morality or propriety' and captions that engaged in double entendre.[117] Many of these working-class stereotypes are represented on the Mystery Tour coach itself: Aunt Jessica, a plump older woman with striking features who later in the film dreams of food; The Beatles themselves, Nat Jackley, a music hall-variety performer known as 'The Rubberman', and 'Jolly Jimmy' (Derek Randall), the tour's courier, are all variations on the holidaying dandy, dressed in colourful, exaggerated attire; and Miss Wendy Winters (Miranda Forbes), as the curvaceous coach assistant.

By the film's ten-minute mark, these working class seaside stereotypes begin to explore the breakdown of hierarchical rank the holiday trip has facilitated, when the party stops and interacts with the incomprehensible authority of the British Sergeant-Major played by Victor Spinetti. The ranting and barking of orders from this military figure in a room bedecked with Union Jacks and Lord Kitchener recruitment posters is met with bemusement by the coach party who eventually lose interest and walk away, leaving Spinetti's character talking to a life-size model cow – re-emphasising the lack of authority these traditional moral arbiters

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[114] Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p92-93.
[115] Svetlin Stratiev, "The Margin of the Printable: Seaside Postcards and Censorship", in *Modernism on Sea: Art and Culture at the British Seaside*, eds. Lara Feigel and Alexandra Harris, (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd, 2011), p195.
[116] George Orwell, "The Art of Donald McGill" in *George Orwell: Essays*, (London: Penguin, 1968, 2000), p195.
[117] Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p93.

have in the liminal space of the day-trip mystery tour (10:43-11:46). Displacement of high and low rank continues to occur via the film's next sequence, with the coach party taking part in collective holiday amusements and games. This carnival-like ambience is emphasised with the soundtrack of a fairground organ playing The Beatles composition 'She Loves You', whilst the coach party engage in a tug-of-war and sack-racing. Alongside this cross-generational coach party ranging from small children to pensioners are also a group of vicars playing blind-man's-buff and dwarf muscle men, foregrounding the intermingling of social position and codes of etiquette (12:51-13:36).

Within the liminal space of the working-class holiday is opportunity for minor transgression, including the flirtation with the forbidden. Ivor Cutler plays the character of Buster Bloodvessel, a member of the coach who declares his love for Ringo's Aunt Jessica whereby a fantasy sequence ensues. In this segment, Bloodvessel dreams of courting, cuddling and kissing Aunt Jessica on a sunlit beach, accompanied by an orchestral version of The Beatles 'All My Loving'. Shields suggests that the liminality of the holiday resort not only provides a flirtation with transgressing social codes, but is also tempered by the Victorian and Edwardian cultural embarrassment of being 'caught in the act', a form of self-regulation and a reminder that the liminal space was a temporary state.[118] The character of Bloodvessel plays out this Vicwardian dichotomy when he awakes from his dream, immediately standing at the front of the coach and reminding his fellow passengers that he is 'concerned for you to enjoy yourselves. Within the realms of British decency. You know what I mean, don't you?' (22:14-24:52).

Other elements of minor transgression within the liminal space listed by Shields pervade the film. Voyeurism is explored via the coach's stop at a nightclub, where the male passengers proceed to watch a striptease performer accompanied by The Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band. The inclusion of striptease chimes with its contemporary popularity in working men's clubs of the 1960s, as explored in Chapter Three, and its voyeuristic nature is emphasised via extreme close-ups of the stripper as well as Buster Bloodvessel furiously cleaning his glasses in a knowing manner, engendering a sense of an experience outside the regulative practices of 'everyday' moral codes (46:07-47:30). This commitment throughout the film of using the customs of the working-class holiday to explore the breakdown of hierarchy also permeates The Beatles own musical sequences. The imagery accompanying the performance of 'I Am the Walrus' explores elements of the transgressive via interest in abnormality: Lennon's miming in an eighteenth-century madman's cap; the circling of The Beatles by others dressed as madmen; anthropomorphic animal costumes and policemen stripped of their authority, swaying gently together whilst holding hands (25:09-29:44).

[118] Ibid., p99.

Rather than the suspension of hierarchy, *Magical Mystery Tour* also explores Webb's notion of the holiday trip as a space of idealism and pride in working-class culture. The Beatles connection to the informal, cross-generational sing-along is emphasised within the film. Instigated by Ringo singing 'I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts' (1944), an accordionist appears on the coach and leads the party through a sing-song of pre-war favourites including 'When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along' (1926), 'Galop Infernal' (1858), otherwise known as The Can-Can Song, and 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling' (1912) (42:25-44:37).[119] This continued referencing of working-class ritual, cross-generational participation and communality occurs in the film's finale, a sequence that also references the utopian spirit of the creative working-class collective Webb believes was symbolised by Blackpool Tower and its assorted entertainments via a fantasy ballroom setting. Wearing white tuxedos, The Beatles lead the rest of the coach party, ballroom dancers and dozens of extras through a choreographed rendition of 'Your Mother Should Know', a scene Alistair Taylor suggests was due to Paul McCartney's love of 'the Busby Berkeley school of thought' and large Hollywood dance routines.[120] However, the setting and song itself references collective dancing and singing indicative of working-class cultural holiday spaces such as Blackpool Tower Ballroom. With the cross-generational crowd dancing in a choreographed manner within a fantasy ballroom, the encouragement to communality appears via the entry lyrics to each verse: 'let's all get up and dance to a song'; 'lift up your hearts and sing me song that was a hit before your mother was born'; as well as 'Sing it Again!'.[121]

With The Beatles' unmediated references to the suspension of social hierarchy, minor transgression and cross-generational participation, all via the rituals of the working-class holiday, the finale and the film itself can be interpreted as an experiment by the group to place their artistic and creative popularity into a continuum of wider popular culture.[122] As evidenced at the beginning of this section, the television film was not well-received generally by critics or viewers. MacDonald states that *Magical Mystery Tour* 'is where parents began to part company with their sons and daughters over the group, rightly suspecting drug induced pretension'.[123] Letters such as Mrs. Margaret Grubb's to the *Radio Times*, thanking the BBC

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[119] An out-take clip in *Beatles Anthology, Episode Seven* also shows the coach party singing the well-known music hall-variety song, 'You Made Me Love You' (1913), (25:56), 2012, DVD.
[120] Taylor, *With the Beatles,* p318.
[121] The line 'Sing it Again!' could be a possible reference to a long-running BBC radio programme of the same name, see: *Radio Times,* 17th November 1960, p54.
[122] British television has continued to reference the connection between working-class leisure and the seaside holiday in a range of programmes. Two notable examples are *Only Fools and Horses* 'The Jolly Boys' Outing' (1989) episode which features a trip to Margate and the BBC's ongoing *Strictly Come Dancing* (2004-), which includes an annual trip to broadcast an instalment from Blackpool Tower Ballroom.
[123] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, p256.

for an enthralling 'fifty minutes of fantasy and piquant humour' perhaps hint that the contemporary media, alongside subsequent popular writers and scholars, have over-emphasised the film's polarising counter-cultural credentials, perhaps in an effort to fit the film into the popular narrative of the sixties decade offering a decisive break with past cultural tradition and custom.[124] The analysis above of the film's relation to previous popular music television, working-class leisure of the nineteenth-century onwards and the film itself has offered a different interpretation. This places *Magical Mystery Tour* as an autonomous piece of working-class music television production that greatly contrasted to previous middle-class mediated popular music programmes of the 1960s. The Beatles' backgrounds stimulated a collective memory of working-class holiday ritual, using its spaces as a foundational base to explore and hybridise. Although this exploration has concerned undoubtedly the most well-known popular music group of the 1960s, this final section will now turn to a music television programme that not only carried Vicwardian legacies of music and performance, but over the course of the sixties was often top of the viewer ratings*: The Black and White Minstrel Show*.

## Victorian Dixieland, White Authority and *The Black and White Minstrel Show*

In the summer of 1958, two days before the beginning of the racially motivated riots in Nottingham and just over a week before the similar events in Notting Hill, *The Stage* published a review of a new television programme that had begun broadcasting on the BBC: *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. The review proclaimed that the musical entertainment 'achieved something of which few others are capable. It made this critic wish for more.'[125] This critic was not to be disappointed. By the end of the 1960s, *The Black and White Minstrel Show* was so popular that BBC One chose to squeeze in a half-an-hour edition of the programme in-between coverage of Apollo 11's lunar module separation from the command module and Armstrong and Aldrin's descent to the Sea of Tranquillity.[126]

At the heart of the programme's musical entertainment – watched by millions – was the blackface mask, an expressive culture born in the USA and a popular performance tradition in Britain since the mid-nineteenth century which carried with it multiple and contradictory meanings. It gave its white practitioners, in the words of Michael Pickering, a 'cultural permit… to otherwise unavailable versions of license, display and release', often via performance of

[124] *Radio Times,* 11th January 1968, p63.
[125] *The Stage*, 21st August 1958, p5.
[126] *Radio Times,* 17th July 1969, p12.

black racial stereotypes.[127] Despite its complicated modes of access to imagined physical and emotional pleasure, which in Eric Lott's view expressed both white envy and ridicule of black culture, Pickering reminds us that it was always 'the black in blackface who became the clown… Blackface then operated as nothing other than comic racial mockery'.[128] *The Black and White Minstrel Show*'s manifestation of an uncomfortable and grotesque legacy of nineteenth-century musical entertainment on 1960s British television has rightly been condemned by various social historians, but investigation as to why the show was not only widely acceptable but incredibly popular seems to be a moot point.[129] As one of the few chroniclers of nineteenth-century British minstrelsy, Michael Pickering reminds us that 'Merely condemning the past is to fail in historical understanding'.[130]

This section therefore seeks to confront these continuities and ask why, in a decade often associated with the liberalising of social values, did so many TV-viewers enjoy watching a programme that dealt in racial ridicule? Although Pickering's work will be a key guide in understanding the programme's links to the previous century, he does not attempt any detailed analysis of the show itself. Similarly informative is Christine Grandy's exploration of the discourse surrounding the show, though this analysis appears within a wider context of blackface 'screen culture' between the 1920s to the 1970s.[131] Contributing a new perspective, my investigation will argue that despite contemporary profiles suggesting the show's success lay in its modernisation of minstrel performance, archival scripts and the programme's surrounding discourse will demonstrate that *The Black and White Minstrel Show*'s popularity involved its continuity with performance customs established in the nineteenth century, particularly involving the enduring imagined 'Dixieland' plantation pastoral, which continued to be familiar in the popular memory of British audiences. Furthermore, when the show was criticised for its continuing use of blackface, the show's producers, readers' letters and BBC internal memoranda contradictorily defended the programme on grounds of tradition. This justification revealed a second Vicwardian legacy, involving enduring mentalities still grounded in nineteenth-century high imperial constructions of white authority.

To understand *The Black and White Minstrel Show*'s popularity from its first broadcast in 1958, all the way through the 1960s to its final appearance in 1978, it's useful to make an

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[127] Michael Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, (London: Routledge: 2008, 2016), pXIII.
[128] Eric Lott, "Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy", *Representations*, no. 39 (1992): 23–50, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928593; Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain,* p158.
[129] See: Hendy, *The BBC*, p379 & Addison, *No Turning Back*, p241.
[130] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, p92.
[131] Christine Grandy, "'The Show Is Not about Race': Custom, Screen Culture, and the Black and White Minstrel Show", *Journal of British Studies* 59, no. 4 (October 2020): 857–84, https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2020.125.

exploration of minstrelsy's popularity and the evolution of its performance culture within British popular music culture from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. First, it will help identify continuities the show had with Victorian incarnations of minstrelsy and second, demonstrate the extent of popularity both amateur and professional blackface performance continued to enjoy into the post-WWII era. Alongside primary source evidence, the work of Pickering is an important contribution towards understanding minstrelsy's specific evolution in Victorian Britain. Minstrelsy was a North American creation that was introduced to London sometime in the 1830s, quickly becoming a key component of urban entertainment, and contributing to early commercial popular culture in taverns, music halls, gin palaces and circuses. However, 'minstrelsy's appeal was widespread and not confined in any direct way to the "common people"', and this cross-class attraction led to prominence as a popular music culture with its own separate performance spaces. Pickering chronicles how early shows' 'Demeaning and pathetic depictions of black people' initially established the two key musical registers of 'comic ridicule and sentimentalism' before developing by the 1850s to become associated with a sense of refinement and musical skill.[132] These developments in performance culture also included the change from solo or duo performers to ever-larger minstrel troupes.

The two most documented minstrel troupes of the nineteenth century, due to their career longevity, London performance residencies and regular tours of Britain, are the Mohawk Minstrels and the Moore and Burgess Minstrels. In the case of the Mohawk Minstrels, by the 1880s show reviews were counting up to forty performers on stage.[133] Alongside this shift to large ensembles came performance customs Pickering believes to be particular to British minstrelsy, involving 'harmony and fine musical arrangement' and an 'aesthetic hotchpotch' of musical material.[134] Once more, show listings and reviews give us an indication of what this variety of musical material involved. Moore and Burgess Minstrels' 'musical excellence' could not be matched whilst the Mohawk Minstrels advertised musically themed evenings such as a 'Scottish festival of song', 'welsh entertainment' as well as regularly featuring Irish tunes.[135] The versatility and range of the Mohawk Minstrels music was seemingly significant to their reputation, judging from a book published in 1891 entitled *505 Mohawk Minstrels Songs and Ballads*. Claiming that the songs contained within were 'dear to domestic circles where Wagner is voted a bore and Beethoven dull', the tunes confirm the group's versatility. The Mohawk's song choices clearly enlisted minstrelsy to cover a range of themes, including patriotic songs of empire such as 'Balaclava', 'The Old Redoubt' and 'God

[132] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, p2, 3.
[133] *The Eastern Post,* 9th July 1881, p3.
[134] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, p18.
[135] *The Era*, 22nd September 1888, p15; *The Eastern Post,* 24th January 1880, p5; *ibid.,* 6th March 1880, p5; *The Era*, 1st December 1894, p17.

Protect England' amongst many others, but also highlight the continuing depiction of minstrelsy's supposed origins in the southern states of the USA.[136] These portrayals were often referred to in advertisements as 'Plantation Night', which both the Mohawk Minstrels and the Moore and Burgess Minstrels took part in.[137] In the case of the Mohawk Minstrels, whilst the critic acknowledged these 'plantation melodies' from the 1850s such as 'Old Folks at Home', 'My Old Kentucky Home' and 'Camptown Races' 'delighted a former generation', they also noted that their popularity had undergone 'scarcely any alteration' since their first airing.[138]

By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, minstrelsy's reputation as a 'perfectly harmless' family entertainment that oscillated between comedy and pathos was secure.[139] With large ensembles dressed in elaborate costumes such as 'aristocratic attire', musical versatility was demonstrated using a variety of themes.[140] However, Pickering notes that 'Minstrelsy's depictions of black characteristics undoubtedly became more brutally racist as the century wore on, reaching their most malicious pitch during the heyday of "high" imperialism'.[141] This facet of minstrelsy was represented perhaps most famously by Moore and Burgess minstrel and, later, music hall star, Eugene Stratton and his song 'The Whistling Coon'. Despite the tune's particularly vicious racist imagery, *The Era* claimed Stratton had sung it 1,150 times by 1888 before retiring it in the early 1890s.[142] The popularity of Stratton's 'coon' character was used as a device to mock the vanity, laziness and occasional violence which supposedly lay within the urban black male. This persona built on contradictory stereotypes contrasted with the other leading minstrel star of the Edwardian era. Known as 'The Chocolate Coloured Coon', G.H. Elliott was generally known for his 'upbeat, sunny side of life numbers', crooning vocal style and sophisticated stage costume.[143] His press releases referred to his 'debonair style' of top hat and cane and one particular review mentions how 'his smart dancing is appreciated'.[144] Throughout these varied styles and developments, minstrelsy never stopped dealing in racial mockery and offering contradictory stereotypes, though Pickering elucidates other meanings that featured within this culture, suggesting it created a 'cultural space bracketed off from moral rules'. In relation to the specific practice of blacking-up, Pickering writes,

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[136] *505 Mohawk Minstrels' Songs and Ballads*: *As Sung by them at the Royal Agricultural Hall, London,* (London: Francis & Day, 1891), p2, 6, 35, 93.
[137] *The Era,* 2nd December 1899, p8; *ibid.,* 29th February 1896, p16.
[138] *Ibid.,* 25th November 1899, p19.
[139] *Ibid.,* 19th November 1892, p17.
[140] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain,* p21.
[141] Ibid., p29.
[142] *The Era,* 22nd September 1888, p15.
[143] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain,* p180.
[144] *The Era,* 2nd July 1910, p37; *Ibid.,* 10th December 1910, p6.

> But at playing at being black, performers and audiences could temporarily escape from the seriousness of being white without contaminating whiteness. This was the mask's magic trick. The mask protected white people from racial contamination whilst also liberating them from racial constriction.[145]

Minstrelsy, therefore, within its two dominant modes involving the comic and sentimental, acted as a vehicle for many different styles of popular music and was often regarded as family entertainment. It also represented British society's first sustained fascination with a form of American popular culture, offering a picture of the US through the fantasy of the Dixieland pastoral which, although not directly related to the British Empire, could also, via its racial stereotyping, complement imperial mentalities present in the nineteenth century and lasting deep into the twentieth century. BBC radio's *The Kentucky Minstrels* (1933-1950) kept minstrelsy in the commercial mainstream, and research suggests amateur minstrel shows in the post-WWII period were still a popular occurrence in Britain. Local newspapers throughout the late forties and fifties often carried reports of minstrel shows from various amateur groups: The Juvenile Section of the South-West Stanmore Community Association presented 'the cabaret coons'; a minstrel show for holiday makers was given on the jetty during the summer months in Broadstairs; the Kentish Town branch of the Church of England's Men's Society performed a minstrel show; the South Norwood scouts incorporated a minstrel performance into their 5th November celebrations; 12 members of the Mother's Union of Whalley Parish Church, 'suitably attired', performed a minstrel show at their Christmas party and finally Eastbourne's 'Friday Street Youth Club' performed a minstrel show 'after many months of rehearsing'.[146] Although the *Radio Times* suggested *The Black and White Minstrel Show* represented the resurrection of a performance culture that had 'barely kept going' since the Victorian age, evidence suggests blackface minstrelsy was a constant source of entertainment in Britain from the nineteenth century onwards, revealing a fascination with perceived American popular culture whilst proving extremely adaptable.[147] Deeply embedded therefore in both the commercial metropolitan arena as well as more local, informal popular culture, the programme had an audience well-versed in the performance vocabulary and collective memory of minstrel entertainment, which it regularly used to its advantage.

Though first broadcast in 1958, *The Black and White Minstrel* Show's reputation as a BBC flagship entertainment programme truly gained momentum when an episode won the

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[145] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain,* p100, p106.
[146] *Harrow Observer*, 21st March 1946, p2; *Thanet Advertiser*, 16th May 1950, p3; *Middlesex County Times*, 21st February 1953, p2; *Norwood News*, 20th November 1953, p9; *Clitheroe Advertiser & Times,* 10th December 1954, p4; *Eastbourne Herald*, 14th January 1956, p4.
[147] *Radio Times*, 4th October 1962, p38.

Golden Rose Trophy for excellence in television at the inaugural European Broadcasting Union awards in 1961.[148] The programme was profiled seven times across that year in the *Radio Times* and was always given a peak family-viewing hour on a Saturday evening, culminating that year with the BBC Audience Research Department's estimating an audience of 17.2 million for the Christmas Day broadcast. [149] Admiration for the programme during the early sixties often revolved around the show's high production and performance values. Reviews stressed a sense of the show creating a new peak for television entertainment, with 'real singing talent, gorgeous girls, sets and costumes, combined with outstanding camera and lighting techniques, make it one of the few TV shows worthy of the word "spectacular"'. Often referred to at the time as 'the fastest show in television', this sense of extravaganza was accompanied with praise for delivering well-known popular tunes at 'exhilarating speed': 'It averages a song a minute… and presents the sort of music audiences have known all their lives'.[150] The television show was accompanied by various commercial tie-ins and achievements. The BBC produced a book about the programme as well as two compilation albums, which appeared in the *Melody Maker* top ten LP charts at the same time. These successes were also accompanied by live appearances in summer resorts such as Scarborough, the 1962 Royal Variety performance and a separate live production of *The Black and White Minstrel Show* starting at the Victoria Palace theatre that same year. This West End production ran until May 1969, and it was replaced in November 1969 by a new stage show entitled *The Magic of the Minstrels*.[151]

Much of the contemporary acclaim given to *The Black and White Minstrel Show* suggests fundamental similarities between the TV show's appeal and reasons for minstrelsy's popularity as a performance culture during the nineteenth century. This included praise for musical excellence and skill, large ensembles with elaborate costumes, the shows' incorporation into music hall-variety performance, popular enough to have its own stage show residency, all accompanied by a general perception that minstrelsy was family-friendly entertainment. If the TV show's success owed anything to the traditions of minstrelsy other than the fixed practice of blackface, both the programme's producers and the BBC preferred to emphasise its modernistic elements. Writing in *The Stage*, the programme's musical director George Mitchell claimed that himself and producer George Inns had 'wanted to get away from the accepted formula and incorporate modern show business ideas'. This was

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[148] *The Stage*, 1st June 1961, p9.
[149] For the seven times the *Radio Times* profiled *The Black and White Minstrel Show* in 1961 see: 12th January 1961, p5; 26th January 1961, p4; 23rd February 1961, p5; 9th March 1961, p5; 4th May 1961, p6; 20th July 1961, p19; 21st December 1961, p23.
[150] *The Stage,* 18th January 1962, p9; *ibid.,* 26th October 1961, p11.
[151] *Radio Times*, 4th October 1962, p38; *Melody Maker*, 28th October 1961, p4; *The Stage,* 14th July 1960, p4; *Radio Times,* 1st November 1962, p12; *The Stage,* 31st October 1968, p5.

reiterated in 1964, when a *Radio Times* profile entitled 'Far from their Old Kentucky Home' suggested the show's success lay in 'Breaking away from the traditional minstrel background'.[152]

It is important to acknowledge certain changes *The Black and White Minstrel Show* had from the performance culture established in nineteenth-century British minstrelsy. Gone were the blackface roles of Mr Interlocutor and comedic 'corner men' Tambo and Bones, as well as the three-part structure of music and jokes, followed by variety and lastly a burlesque of some form of 'high' culture.[153] In their place were musical medleys – sung by the minstrels in blackface – that usually fitted into certain themes, which were performed alongside highly choreographed dances performed by the all-female 'TV Toppers'. Interspersed amongst this were short presenter skits, comic routines and also musical interludes by George Chisholm's jazz group. Whilst the traditions of variety performance within a minstrel show were therefore adhered to, the acts were compartmentalised, unlike the nineteenth century, where a minstrel troupe was responsible for delivering musical performance, comedy and parody. Continuity remained through the commitment to a large troupe of performers, musical skill and family entertainment, though according to musical director George Mitchell, 'The music in the show gets complete priority'. It was largely through the choice of *The Black and White Minstrel Show*'s musical material that collective cultural memories of an imagined 'Dixieland', established in the nineteenth century, continued to be evoked.

The musical medleys that were constructed for the show continued to deal in a wide range of material, continuing the British minstrel custom of diverse song selection. Lists of songs catalogued for copyright clearance from mid-1960s episodes of the show, available to view at the BBC Written Archives Centre, attest to this heterogeneity. One list marked only with the details 'Show: 11' include songs such as 'Come Fly with Me', 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen' and Lennon and McCartney's 'Can't Buy Me Love'.[154] This one example attests to producer, George Inns' description that 'the show is a Disneyland', a modern update which bore little connection to previous incarnations of minstrel entertainment.[155] However, the claim that 'a veteran car has been equipped with a jet engine' was only a partial interpretation.[156] Further investigation of archived scripts not only shows the continuing legacy of British minstrelsy's dedication to musical variety, but that the show specifically continued to mine nineteenth-century minstrel songs. Using these Victorian tunes, the 'Disneyland' often

[152] *Ibid.,* 26th October 1961, p12; *Radio Times*, 14th May 1964, p20.
[153] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, p16.
[154] BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), T12/850/1, '*The Black and White Minstrel Show*'.
[155] *Melody Maker,* 20th May 1961, p5.
[156] *Radio Times Supplement,* 24th September 1964.

returned to within the show was actually 'Dixieland', the evocation of a particular Victorian fantasy regarding the imagined plantation pastoral.

Held in the Glamorgan Archives (Archifau Morgannwg) is a collection of TV scripts and ephemera belonging to comedian and musician Stan Stennett, who appeared in both TV and stage versions of *The Black and White Minstrel Show* as a presenter and comic interlude. TV scripts attest to the importance of the continuation of a Victorian legacy within the show as early as 1959, with the back-to-back performance of tunes such as 'Uncle Ned' (1851) and 'Old Black Joe' (1860).[157] Both these songs, written and published before slavery was abolished in the USA, are sentimental in tone regarding 'the cotton fields away', but also racially mock the song's subjects regarding their physical appearance whilst romanticising their simplistic loyalty to their work in this imagined South.[158] Multiple examples throughout the scripts, including the perennial 'Lily of Laguna' (1898) and 'Ma Curly Headed Babby' (1897) feature within episodes, though perhaps the best example of the show using nineteenth and early twentieth-century minstrel songs to evoke an imagined cultural memory of a nineteenth-century plantation idyll is from a 1961 episode that at its core features a 'Dixie' medley.[159] Beginning with the upbeat 'Are you from Dixie?' (1915) and 'I want to be in Dixie' (1911), these songs by title alone implicitly reference an antebellum American world with the song's protagonists claiming once again that 'the fields of cotton beckon to me'. The medley then begins to clearly connect the imagined American southern plantation to nineteenth-century minstrel song by moving into 'Oh, Dem Golden Slippers' (1879), a sentimental tune regarding death and the prospect of heaven for its black protagonist. The medley continues to employ Victorian minstrel songs, veering between the two major registers of comic ridicule and sentimentalism, with 'Polly Wolly Doodle' (traditional), 'Some Folks Do' (1856) and 'Camptown Races' (1853) in the former, and 'Back Home in Tennessee' (1915) and 'Dixie's Land' (1860) in the latter. Within the scripts, the use of eye dialect – non-standard spelling intended to reflect pronunciation – during this medley is prominent, with such words as 'those' replaced by 'dem' and 'the' by 'de', emphasising the perpetuation of racial stereotyping.[160] Whilst other stereotyping occurred within the show, such as that of the Irish and the 'Island Native', none were evoked so consistently as the original Victorian minstrel fantasy of the primitive yet noble, plantation 'black', imagined in a romanticised 'Deep South' idyll.[161] This is further underlined by a script from one of the live shows: medley's of Dixie-minstrel songs open and close the

[157] Glamorgan Archives, D1235/1/1/5, Stan Stennett, Scripts, *The Black and White Minstrel Show*, 3rd December 1959, p16,
[158] BL Music Collections, H.1437. (9.); F.328.c.(19.).
[159] Glamorgan Archives, D1235/1/1/6, 17th December 1959, p4, p16.
[160] Ibid., D1235/1/1/11, 25th March 1961, p1-5.
[161] Ibid., D1235/1/1/10, 11th March 1961, p16-20; ibid., D12/1/1/12, 3rd April 1961, p19a.

show, suggesting this performance customs continuing importance.[162] This foregrounding of Victorian-plantation minstrel fantasy via song continued to be evoked throughout the sixties. A list of songs used on the programme from the middle of the decade continue to lean heavily on the work of American minstrel progenitor Stephen Foster, with tunes such as 'Old Folks at Home' (1851), 'Nelly Bly' (1852), 'Ring de Banjo' (1853) and 'Oh! Susannah' (1852) all containing references to imagined rural, plantation lives.[163]

From a perspective of popular music historiography that emphasises the rise of rock and cultural change, it is perhaps unsettling that one of the most viewed popular music television programmes of the 1960s – a decade synonymous with liberalist change – continued to deal in racial stereotyping via the use of blackface, nineteenth-century minstrel song and evocation of the American plantation setting. If we investigate a broader swathe of television broadcasting by both the BBC and ITV, it's possible to argue that both organisations attempted to engage TV-viewers over questions regarding contemporary racial inequality, both in Britain and abroad. BBC Documentaries such as *Come Back Africa*, *White Africa* and *The Colour War* explored apartheid South Africa and racial inequality throughout the world. ITV produced *One More River* regarding African-American Civil Rights and the BBC also held discussion programmes asking 'Is colour prejudice in Britain on the increase?'.[164] If racial inequality and the re-shaping of British society with the influx of immigrants was part of 1960s television agenda and discourse, why was *The Black and White Minstrel Show* not seen as more problematic?

In her insightful study of how Afro-Caribbean migration reconfigured post-WWII British society, Kennetta Hammond Perry suggests internal and international notions of Britain as a place of justice had remained since the nineteenth century, largely due to Britain's leading role in the abolition of slavery. This accruing of 'moral capital' that had propelled the perception of the British Empire as liberal 'anti-slavery state', carried through into the fifties and sixties with the founding of the Commonwealth, continuing a discourse that emphasised 'Britain's position as a counterpoint to the racial orders that sanctioned Jim Crow in America and apartheid rule under the National Party in South Africa'.[165] This idea of British identity as a liberal counterpoint to the evils of both nineteenth century and contemporary racial inequality certainly contributed indirectly to the acceptability of British minstrelsy in a variety of commercial and local settings,

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[162] Ibid., D1235/1/1/24, *The Black and White Minstrel Show* on tour, Morecambe Winter Gardens, 1964, pi-iv.
[163] BBC WAC, T12/847/1, 'The Black and White Minstrel Show'. The four songs listed can be found in the BL music collections under: H.1652.ss.(39.); H.1437.(3.); H.1437.(8.); H.1437.(11.).
[164] *Radio Times,* 10th December 1964, p6; *Ibid.,* 18th January 1968, p51; *Ibid.,* 7th September 1967, p35; *TV Times,* 13th September 1963, p10; *Radio Times,* 28th October 1965, p17.
[165] Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race,* (Oxford: University Press, 2015, 2018), p102.

its common practice contributing to a sense of *The Black and White Minstrel Show* being disassociated with racism. This disconnection was perhaps further reinforced by the regular evocation of the imagined fantasy within the show regarding the nineteenth-century American 'Dixie-plantation', deflecting away once more from the idea that the minstrels were symptomatic or related specifically to British attitudes regarding race.

Chapter Three of this thesis partly explored the effects of immigration in the 1960s within the settings of the working men's club, suggesting that members' struggles to reconcile contradictory notions of working class solidarity and empire influenced ideas of racial superiority were reflective of a wider political and social discourse taking place in 1960s Britain. *The Black and White Minstrel Show* also encapsulated this dichotomy at the heart of British society. Despite the seeming detachment the programme enjoyed from discourse around race, due to collective understanding of blackface as a tradition that was, to use Pickering's phrase 'bracketed off from moral rules', the show's continuance of racial stereotyping was a performative example of what Schwarz calls 'memories of an ordered past' provoked by 'perceptions of disorder'.[166] With immigration and the destabilisation of racially exclusive notions of British identity during the 1960s, *The Black and White Minstrel Show*'s continuing ritualisation of minstrelsy could be interpreted as an example of Halbwachs idea of collective memories offering a counterpoint to contemporary conflicts. In short, escaping contemporary racial issues by performing fantasy based on previous racial hierarchies. Schwarz elaborates:

> memories of Empire… are carried into the post-imperial epoch by an acting out of prior racial assumptions and practices which themselves had formed in the interstices of Empire, in the metropole and on the colonial frontiers.[167]

Whilst the TV show's connections to racial inequality were cloaked in Victorian fantasies that were projected onto the Southern US, when criticism did appear in media discourse, particularly from black observers, much of its defence – from both the programme producers and members of the British public – leaned on continuing empire mentalities that minstrelsy had complemented since the nineteenth century. In Schwarz's words, 'the proximity of black migrants worked to activate memories of the imperial past – memories of white authority'.[168]

Challenges to the idea of a programme dedicated to minstrelsy had begun before the show was broadcast by the BBC. Initial protest can be found in the pages of the *Melody Maker* via jazz musician Humphrey Lyttelton. Criticising a TV appearance by the George Mitchell singers – before they were given their own show – on the grounds of racism, Lyttelton argued

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[166] Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain,* p100.
[167] Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*, p9, p204.
[168] Ibid., p11.

that minstrelsy 'invites us to laugh at the physical appearance, the alleged childishness and stupidity of large numbers of our fellow men'.[169] The publication would intermittently return to the topic during the sixties, exploring popular musicians' opinions on the subject in both 1963 and 1967. On both occasions, dissenting voices were in the minority. More common was Acker Bilk's opinion that he 'couldn't see anything offensive' or *Jukebox Jury* presented David Jacobs claim that 'The basic idea is surely traditional'. Perhaps slightly more surprising were the comments made in 1967 by Stevie Winwood that 'If people dig it, I don't see anything wrong with it' or Manfred Mann suggesting that 'a programme such as this, with white people blacked up as Negroes, couldn't influence normal people towards racial prejudice'. Others such as Lennon and McCartney voiced dislike of the show but opposed the suggestion of a ban, further evidence of a mind-set that failed to see *The Black and White Minstrel Show* as product of existing racial prejudice, rather than a potential cause.[170]

Whilst this discourse suggests conflicted views within the popular music industry, Grandy's research on blackface within British film and television prominently highlights the criticism the show received from *Flamingo*, a monthly magazine aimed at West Indians and Africans living in Britain and from the Campaign for Anti-Racial Discrimination (CARD). Grandy chronicles an important flashpoint in the programme's history, when the BBC received a petition from CARD in 1967 requesting the show to be banned.[171] Grandy documents defences of the show after the petition was raised, such as articles in the *Daily Mail* as well as the oft-quoted memo from Olivier Whitley, chief assistant to the Director General of the BBC who suggested that:

> The best advice that could be given to coloured people by their friends would be: "on <u>this</u> issue, we can see your point, but in your own best interests, for Heaven's sake shut up. You are wasting valuable ammunition on a comparatively insignificant target".[172]

This critique from black voices that Grandy documents was, as Schwarz points out 'from the inside and intimate and simultaneously from the outside', provoking perplexed and often hostile responses which reverted to a defence of the show based on enduring nineteenth century racial mentalities. These attitudes carried a paradox, built on perceptions of blackface as a harmless tradition within a tolerant, democratic state, whilst concurrently denying the right

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[169] Humphrey Lyttelton, "Let's bury these minstrel shows", *Melody Maker,* 2nd August 1958, p11.
[170] *Ibid.,* 12th January 1963, p10; *ibid.,* 27th May 1967, p7.
[171] Grandy, "'The Show Is Not about Race'", p879.
[172] BBC WAC, Olivier Whitley to Barry Thorne, R78/1921/1. Emphasis in original.

of ethnic minorities to complain, and reasserting white authority inherent in the cultural practice of minstrelsy itself.

Whilst these justifications for the continuance of *The Black and White Minstrel Show* might be expected within the media organisation that produced the show and conservative publications such as the *Daily Mail*, contemporary popular musicians' general bemusement towards the idea of the show causing offence is reinforced by readers' letters defending the programme in local newspapers. Around the time of CARD's petition to ban the show, a small surge of letter's occurred on the subject: 'there is no more harmless show on British television'; 'Never have I heard anything so diabolical and stupid'; 'Our coloured citizens would be welcome to produce a show in which the roles are reversed'.[173] These examples hint once more to what Hammond Perry summarises as 'the mystique of British anti-racism', reinforcing white authority via the notion of Britain and Britishness as a liberal paragon, with minstrelsy itself helping to establish both discourses in the nineteenth century.[174] Schwarz reminds us, however, that if these mentalities were shaped by racial hierarchies established by nineteenth-century empire, their continuance in the 1960s 'could only have happened through the medium of memory'.[175]

The cultivation of an active cultural memory of empire within post-WWII British society no doubt occurred in multiple social contexts, but perhaps nowhere was the opportunity greater to present an imagined past than on television itself.[176] This chapter has already explored the portrayal of a wide range of aspects relating to an imagined nineteenth and early twentieth century on radio and television, and this large amount of coverage also applied to images of British Empire, primarily through Victorian imperial perceptions. The dramatic events relating to Gordon of Khartoum was adapted for both radio in 1962 and television in 1966 by the BBC as well as TV series involving Kipling's empire fiction entitled *Indian Stories* (1964). Elsewhere, documentaries were produced: Radio 4's *Indian Days* (1968) about 'the finest civil service the world has ever known', complemented by the military accomplishments of 'the men who built the empire' in BBC Two's *Soldiers of the Widow* (1967). These programmes, promoting a pride and sentimentality for the height of imperial empire were also laced with programmes mourning its passage. Profiling Panorama's *The Wind of Change* (1960), the *Radio Times* mused that it could 'all too easily become a hurricane' without British rule in Africa, whilst the 1961 Reith lectures on the Home Service were on a similar subject,

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[173] *Newcastle Journal,* 19th May 1967, p8; *Newcastle Chronicle*, 25th May 1967, p10; *Reading Evening Post*, 30th May 1967, p6.
[174] Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me*, p19.
[175] Schwarz, *Memories of Empire,* p5.
[176] For an overview regarding the manifestations of Empire in British society up to 1960 see: John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*, (Manchester: University Press, 1984, 2003).

and entitled *The Colonial Reckoning*. ITV also pondered the fate of Britain in *Postscript to Empire: Britain in Transition* (1962) as well as the *TV Times* profiling the *World in Action* special on upheaval in Africa by having Oxford historian Alan Bullock declare it was the 'world's end for the white man's rule'.[177] Whether TV-viewers were encouraged to feel proud, sentimental or fearful of the empire's decline, a popular cultural imperialism encouraging an imagined collective memory was a media presence throughout the decade. This dovetailed with the perpetuation of mentalities seen in the production and defence of *The Black and White Minstrel Show*, in itself a cultural practice which continued to act out prior racial assumptions.

*The Black and White Minstrel Show* therefore encapsulated many of the conflicts and fascinations in 1960s British society that shared continuity with Vicwardian popular culture. One clear factor via archive analysis of show scripts and surrounding discourse is that despite contemporary attempts to disassociate from previous British minstrel style, its popularity relied on the continuation of nineteenth-century performance culture, both common and familiar in commercial and amateur settings: the use of the blackface mask; the inclusion of Victorian minstrel song; the notion of harmless family entertainment alongside musical variety and refinement; all aspects that made minstrelsy popular in the nineteenth century continued to make it so in the twentieth century. These elements also facilitated a post-war audience to replay a Victorian fantasy involving an imagined southern plantation. This particular imagined collective memory, where an ordered racial past supposedly existed, based outside of Britain, offered an escape from destabilising racial issues occurring within post-war Britain, whilst simultaneously cloaking minstrelsy's racial stereotypes via the idea of a separate cultural space, sealed off by tradition.

Nevertheless, *The Black and White Minstrel Show* fed off nineteenth-century performance practice that fed into the perpetuation of negative racist stereotyping that complemented an enduring British imperial gaze. When these elements of the show were challenged, defences of the programme from various quarters were built on ideas of minstrelsy as tradition and black migrants as oversensitive. These two perspectives attest to the presence of ideas passed down from the nineteenth century that, despite their contradictions, worked in tandem. First, the collective memory of British Empire as a tolerant, benevolent ruler of its subjects, and second, that white authority and cultural traditions could not be challenged easily. These mind-sets were also reinforced by a broader swathe of 1960s programming highlighting, on the one hand, racist discrimination as a problem largely in other countries, whilst on the other, romanticising the deeds of nineteenth-century empire. *The Black and White Minstrel Show* and the culture and discourse surrounding it can be seen to envelop a

[177] *Radio Times,* 8th November 1962, p7; *ibid.,* 13th January 1966, p11; *ibid.,* 2nd July 1964, p15; *ibid.,* 26th September 1968, p48; *ibid.,* 25th May 1967, p4; *ibid.,* 8th April 1960, p7; *ibid.,* 9th November 1961, p12; *TV Times*, 5th January 1962, p6; *ibid.,* 6th September 1963, p6.

more nuanced narrative of sixties Britain, one where continuity and change were in conflict, or perhaps more specifically, a culture caught between its legacies of power and adjusting to new realities within its society. Furthermore, this replaying of Victorian Britain's first encounter with an American popular music form ran parallel with twentieth century infatuation for other American styles such as jazz, blues and rock 'n' roll, reminding us that these perceived later influences on 1960s musical change and cultural upheaval were rooted in a long-standing continuities regarding British enchantment with American popular culture, both real and imagined.

## Summary and concluding remarks

In 1959, Ken Couper of *Melody Maker* confirmed to his readers that when it came to popular music entertainment, 'The gold is in TV all right'.[178] By the dawn of the 1960s, it was already clear that rising TV ownership was fundamentally altering popular culture, the way society accessed it, and how it mediated versions of the past. Popular music was part of this change, and in the twenty-first century, the BBC continues to mine surviving footage from programmes such as *Top of the Pops* and *The Old Grey Whistle Test*. These regular re-visitations secure a popular memory of a particular narrative – often reinforced by scholars – in which popular music on television during this period was one serving up either ephemeral chart fripperies or serious rock music.

This chapter, however, has attempted to reveal something different, by focusing on continuities that not only survived but were watched by millions of TV-viewers. *The Good Old Days* foregrounded the music hall as a national rather than a class tradition whilst *Stars and Garters* and *Club Night* both attempted, with differing degrees of success, to depict Vicwardian legacies that were more class-specific. The Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour* was grounded within a collective memory of working-class holiday rituals established in the nineteenth century whilst *The Black and White Minstrel Show*'s success involved the perpetuation of Victorian mentalities established in the age of 'high' empire.

These programmes, with popular music at their core, only serve to demonstrate wider trends in TV programming of the decade. Victorian and Edwardian authors, settings, events, cultures and conflicts, both imagined and real, consistently featured in the schedules. In a broader context, it offers a counter-weight to histories of Britain's 1960s that focus on cultural innovation and change, suggesting that the replaying and viewer enjoyment of older cultural narratives was symptomatic of a wider ambivalence regarding modernity, what Waters has

[178] Ken Couper, "The gold takes some digging!", *Melody Maker*, 21st March 1959, p15.

called Britain's post-war 'crisis of national self-representation'.[179] These cultural encounters with collective memories of the Vicwardian, would continue to play a dynamic but changing role within popular music culture of the 1970s.

[179] Chris Waters, "'Dark Strangers' in Our Midst", p208.

# Chapter 7 – The Vicwardian Continuum in 1970s Britain

In early February 1974, *Melody Maker* reviewed a single by a group called Grumpy, entitled 'Rule Britannia (We're Doing Our Bit)'. The satirical sing-along lyrics regarding the 1973-74 energy crisis, interspersed with air raid sirens and impersonations of Winston Churchill's wartime speeches, had ominous potential: 'what a disastrously gloomy song… Let's hope the crisis lifts before this is a hit.'[1] The subject of 'crisis' was a significant feature of 1970s discourse – often invoked by politicians, sociologists or the media – to describe Britain's social, political or economic circumstances and assessing this sense of emergency has preoccupied many historians work on the decade.

Writing in 2010, Addison suggests the 1970s were 'new and more troubled times' involving the destabilising effects of 'rapid inflation, rising unemployment, and lower rates of the growth, punctuated by periods of recession.' These particular economic issues led to such high levels of industrial dispute that Bernstein checks his largely positive 2004 interpretation of post-war events, conceding that 'there was a breakdown in industrial relations unlike anything experienced'.[2] This industrial unrest was accompanied throughout the decade by other socio-political tension, violence, or in the worst cases, both: conflict in Northern Ireland and IRA bombing campaigns; the increasingly multiracial character of the population meeting with an increase in support for – and opposition to – the National Front; Women's Liberation, Gay Rights and the relaxation of divorce laws all brought new gender dynamics and sexual mores. Although some of these issues had their roots in government decision-making of the previous decade, Marwick's 2003 history argues the conflicts and changes of the seventies signalled the end of consensus and a 'return to the gloom' of the pre-welfare state. In the words of Jeremy Seabrook's searing 1978 travelogue through what he described as the 'persisting sense of bitterness and disappointment' that he encountered in 1970s Britain: 'What Went Wrong?'.[3]

In the view of more recent reassessments of Britain's 1970s, not as much as perhaps has been represented; after all, the song recorded by Grumpy didn't manage to chart and was quickly forgotten. In their introduction to a 2013 collection of essays re-examining 1970s Britain, Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton suggest that although 'we do not argue that the

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[1] *Melody Maker*, 2nd February 1974, p16. The song itself can be listened to hear: *Grumpy - Rule Britannia (We're Doing Our Bit)*, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVSTGcyV-c0.
[2] Addison, *No Turning Back,* p261; Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline*, p198.
[3] Marwick, *British Society since 1945,* p151; Jeremy Seabrook, *What Went Wrong? Working People and the Ideals of the Labour Movement*, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1978), p9.

decade was one of sweetness and light', they argue that a mixture of contemporary genuine surprise and media sensationalism regarding economic difficulties, coupled with post-1970s prime ministers such as Thatcher and Blair encouraging a pejorative popular memory of the decade, have contributed to the idea of crisis being 'overdone'. In its place, they lean on Peter Hall's interpretation of the 1970s as a 'marketplace for ideas', arguing for its expansion beyond the economic sphere to understanding the 'convulsive moment' of the 1970s as producing a 'battle of ideas' across a broader social, political and cultural spectrum.[4]

If we apply this concept of the seventies as a clash of ideas, rather than a crisis, more specifically to popular music historiography, then there appears to be only one winner: rock music. Discussion of folk rock, progressive rock, hard rock, glam rock and punk rock dominate Simonelli's purview of 1970s Britain, at the expense of all other popular music investigation. Elsewhere, Frith et al. describe the period between 1968 and 1984 as 'the age of rock', which they define as less the hegemony of a musical style, more the domination of an economic model and 'rock critic' ideology. Although Frith et al. make a space to explore other musical worlds existing alongside the dominant rock culture, Will Hodgkinson's exhaustive exploration of what he terms 'singalong pop' paints a broad canvas on which to explore much of the novelty and unexpected chart hits of the era. This attempt to bring fresh perspective, whilst valuable, lapses into the crisis narratives often associated with the period, too often suggesting that musical success was predicated on listener desire for escapism in 'a period in British history when violence and dysfunction made reality a bleak prospect.'[5]

This final chapter attempts to contribute to histories that move beyond 1970s crisis narratives and accounts that solely focus on change in popular music. Instead, it shows how, within this 'marketplace of ideas', the Vicwardian continuum of the post-war decades – built on familiar musical customs, deep-set mentalities and anchoring social environments – endured. What differed from previous decades, however, is that a highly qualified and distinctive working-class culture cedes to a less qualified fragmentation. This was articulated, via performance culture, through competing claims to class access and exclusion, tension between individual working-class expression and collectivist traditions, and contrasting memories and meanings concerning the working-class cultural past. To illustrate this, the examples covered will round up the broad areas covered in the last four chapters of the thesis. Investigation of commercialised popular music will analyse how electric folk musicians within

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[4] Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, "Introduction. The Benighted Decade? Reassessing the 1970s", in *Reassessing 1970s Britain*, eds. Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton and Pat Thane, (Manchester: University Press, 2013, 2016), p2, 14.

[5] Simonelli, *Working Class Heroes*; Simon Frith, Matt Brennan, Martin Cloonan and Emma Webster, *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 2: 1968-1984*, (London: Routledge, 2019), p2-5; Will Hodgkinson, *In Perfect Harmony, Singalong Pop in '70s Britain,* (London: Nine Eight Books, 2022), p111.

rock culture reinterpreted the music and ideology of the late Victorian and Edwardian English folk music revival, dovetailing with an exploration of how Max Bygraves embodied a different kind of working-class history for his audience, involving the perpetuation of urban performance cultures. The chapter will then return to the world of the WMCs to understand how continuing Vicwardian legacies regarding class identity began to come increasingly under pressure from forces of change, both inside and outside the movement.

Lastly, an examination of aspects of seventies TV will sidestep a previous heavy focus on rock music programming, to instead investigate the programme content and the surrounding discourse of *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social* Club. The analysis will demonstrate how the programme not only perpetuated older forms of performance culture, but accommodated perspectives of class, nation and gender that now, much more than in earlier decades, worked not just by invoking belonging, but also exclusion. Regularly foregrounded by the show, these perceived 'others' were the now sizeable immigrant population, whose access to working-class status was symbolically barred via the show's mobilisation of racial humour, and women who did not adhere to lingering patriarchal stereotypes were likewise, often met with derision and casual misogyny.

## Replacing the Working-Class Past in Folk-Rock

If popular music historiography has characterised the seventies as having a 'rock boom' in monetary terms, then its ideological assertions of superiority can be seen within the pages of its contemporary music press. The era witnessed the rise of rock criticism which, Frith et al. state, 'described a new popular music aesthetic and challenged arts page distinctions between high and low culture'.[6] This growing seriousness within music press discourse often involved earnest conversations with musicians about rock's current condition and future possibilities in such regular articles as *Melody Maker*'s 'The State of Rock', but just as significant were the features which began the construction of a canonised history. The three-part *Melody Maker* 'History of Pop' series is an early example which focused heavily on popular music's American roots in blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll, tracking its progression to its seemingly inevitable metamorphosis into rock music, something which 'defined itself against pop in terms of art and community', supposedly distinct from concerns of commerce.[7] Although this was clearly an attempt to play to a narrative that would appeal to its circulation, the expansion of rock

[6] Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 2: 1968-1984,* p6.
[7] *Melody Maker,* "The State of Rock", 25th September 1971, p24-25; *Ibid.,* "History of Pop, Part One 1943-56", 7th July 1973, p31; *Ibid.,* "History of Pop, Part Two 1957-62", 14th July 1973 p31; *Ibid., "*History of Pop, Part Three 1963-66", 21st July 1973, p29; Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 2: 1968-1984,* p6.

journalism also led the *Melody Maker* to highlight a different kind of rock music during the 1970s. A live review from 1976 describes a group that largely rejected American influence and instead made a conscious and direct effort in performance to reference an imagined rural English community, first constructed by Victorians and Edwardians. This was the Albion Band: a fluid group of musicians led by Ashley Hutchings, which at this particular time comprised of electric guitar, bass, drums, but also concertina and recorder, playing alongside performers who demonstrated 'country dance, clog… as well as Morris', and were 'full of showmanship'.[8]

'Electric folk', as it was regularly termed in the seventies (more recently it has been known as British 'folk rock'), has often been cast as just one of the many stylistic developments that took place within 1970s rock music. Musically speaking, focus has been given primarily to folk-rock's use of electric instruments, a development which, according to Rob Young 'turned the folk world upside down'; Robert Burns has also accentuated the adaptation of folk 'for rock performance drawing upon Afro-American influences', pulling it closer to a commercialised popular music industry.[9]

Whilst these authors either acknowledge a sense of musical tradition or the origins of its discourse, neither has focused specifically on how 1970s folk-rock re-articulated the imagined communities first constructed by the English Folk Revival of the Victorian and Edwardian period. Analysis of the folk-rock group Steeleye Span and its founder member, Ashley Hutchings, alongside examination of music press discourse will suggest that through the re-use of rural folk material found by turn-of-the-century collectors, these musicians re-articulated a Vicwardian desire for creating music with a distinctive national character to counteract the perceived dominance of American music culture. Unlike the preceding 1960s rock musicians, this group of musician's re-articulation of pastoral Englishness did not intermingle with working-class culture or the urban landscape. Instead, it reproduced a particular Vicwardian middle-class fantasy, whereby urban popular culture was rejected in favour of an imagined rural working class, who were once more idolised and remade to represent in John Storey's words 'a lost world of the authentic, a culture before the fall into industrialisation, urbanisation and the awful visibility of antagonistic class relations.'[10]

Before we can identify how the folk-rock movement re-articulated ideologies of the fin de siècle, a chronology of the first English folk revival and its chief tenets is necessary. Georgina Boyes offers a thorough and illuminating interpretation of the actions and

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[8] *Melody Maker*, 21st July 1976, p48.
[9] Rob Young, *Electric Eden, Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p244; Robert G.H. Burns, *Transforming Folk, Innovation and Tradition in English Folk-Rock Music,* (Manchester: University Press, 2012), p4.
[10] John Storey, "Class and the invention of tradition: The cases of Christmas, football, and folksong", in *The Making of English Popular Culture,* ed. John Storey, (London: Routledge, 2016), p210.

motivations of the Vicwardian folk collectors, linking them to familiar nineteenth-century middle-class fears, suggesting 'the inter-relation of industrialisation, urbanisation and mass production were widely felt to have produced a cultural crisis in which refined aesthetics were being overwhelmed by a tide of vulgarity'. Boyes argues that allied to this fear was dawning acceptance of Darwinist theory and its application to the anxiety that 'sheer weight of working-class numbers, combined with their inherited physical and moral weakness would inexorably lead to the political and cultural obliteration of the race, the nation, the empire and the social structures which supported them.'[11] These fears over urban working-class culture have been explored in the thesis previously, and analysis has demonstrated the ways the middle class attempted to arrest this perceived decline via methods of – in the case of the WMCs – 'rational recreation', and in others – such as music hall – by way of their incorporation into cogent representations of national identity and invented tradition. The English Folk Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century mutated into a slightly different mission, due to a belief amongst its progenitors that 'The Folk', ostensibly the rural working class, did not possess the education or organisation to preserve their own rituals and customs. This assumption was perceived by some within the movement as the domestic equivalent of 'taking up the white man's burden' and further supported by the idea that 'the culture of the Folk was a heritage common to all – it was the product of the race, not of the working class'. This reasoning, in Boyes' view, justified 'the conscious choice to replace the Folk by a new, knowledgeable, aware group of performers'.[12]

These attitudes are clearly expressed by the English Folk Revival's most famous collector, Cecil Sharp, in his 1907 work, *English Folk-Song, Some Conclusions.* The need to save folk-song from the '*un*-educated and the *non*-educated' is articulated early on, though the purpose of this collecting is made clear in the final chapter, in which Sharp outlines English folk-song's possibilities. For Sharp, folk-song and its associated customs had the future potential to counteract urban culture, particularly 'the poverty-stricken tunes of the music-hall', producing a fixed tradition that encouraged 'love of country and pride of race, the absence of which we now deplore.'[13] In this way, the Vicwardian English Folk Revival, via the rejection of urban culture and a desire to shape national identity, replaced 'the Folk' with their own image to create a powerful imagined collective tradition: 'the expression of the perceived culture and social cohesiveness of the pre-industrial village… the actualising of "Merrie England"' in Boyes' words.[14]

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[11] Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival*, (Leeds: No Masters Co-operative Ltd, 2010), p23, 24.
[12] Ibid, p31, 36.
[13] Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Song Some Conclusions*, (Alpha Editions, 1907, 2019), p4, 135, 136.
[14] Boyes, *The Imagined Village,* p65.

Post-Second World War, this hegemonic rural imagining of English folk music, now formalised under the auspices of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), 'organised, staffed, trained and recruited', Boyes writes, 'among the middle classes' began to be challenged by a new generation of enthusiasts and collectors.[15] This milieu included such Marxists as Ewan MacColl and A.L. Lloyd, who chose to emphasise what Rob Young called 'a parallel tradition… the vast, still active canon of music which came to be known as industrial music: songs of the coal mine, weaving loom, conveyor belt, blast furnace, fishing trawler, road and railway.'[16] The links to Marxism, with its wider commitment to Internationalism in what Burns calls 'the second British folk revival' also facilitated an intersection of British and American proletarian music.[17] This American influence throughout the fifties and sixties encouraged the increasing use of guitar and, perhaps ironically, it was an American based rock group's 'reconnection with a rural Americana' in the form of The Band's *Music from Big Pink* that provided partial inspiration for the re-articulation of a specific British equivalent within rock music.[18]

The paradigmatic moment for British folk-rock is generally perceived to be Fairport Convention's *Liege and Lief* (1969), which featured the almost exclusive dedication to British folk song material, interpreted by instrumentation associated with rock music. The music itself was accompanied by a gatefold sleeve that included iconography that featured 'an archaeology of English customs' alongside pictures of Vicwardian folk-song collectors such as Francis Child and Cecil Sharp.[19] Despite this deliberate sign-posting via the album's artwork, through interviews with musicians involved in the album's recording, Burns shows that this use of folk-song was the result of an organic process that had begun simply as a convenient way to showcase singer Sandy Denny, and that 'innovative adaptation' was based on 'enjoyment of the performance of folk music' rather than 'as a means of furthering its preservation'.[20] If *Liege and Lief* 's innovation came out of an initial convenience which later turned into genuine interest in preservation, then Steeleye Span – the group that bassist Ashley Hutchings formed after leaving Fairport Convention – was born, in his own words, from an 'obsession with traditional English music, getting deeper into it'. In so doing, Hutchings re-articulated an imagined world first cultivated by the original Vicwardian revivalists.[21]

In early 1970, Hutchings began to echo Sharp's belief in the potential of folk-song to express national identity, telling *Melody Maker* that Steeleye Span aimed to make music that

[15] Ibid., p107.
[16] Young, *Electric Eden*, p117.
[17] Burns, *Transforming Folk,* p1.
[18] Young, *Electric Eden*, p252.
[19] Ibid., p262.
[20] Burns, *Transforming Folk,* p134.
[21] Young, *Electric Eden,* p265.

produced 'a good English sound in the traditional idiom.'[22] This attempt at an 'English sound' involved Hutchings 'worshipping at the temple of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House', scouring the Vicwardian collections at the EFDSS headquarters for song material. This dedication to material originally collected during the first English Folk Revival produced a flurry of three albums in two years: *Hark! The Village Wait* (1970), *Please to See the King* (1971) and *Ten Man Mop or Mr. Reservoir Butler Rides Again* (1971). All three albums leaned heavily on songs 'discovered' by Vicwardian collectors such as Francis Child, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Lucy Broadwood and Cecil Sharp. In focusing on work collected in this era, Steeleye Span revisited less the industrial world emphasised by post-war revivalists, and more a return to the Vicwardian cultural construction concerning the imagined communities of rural Englishness, which in Boyes opinion had always 'existed in an inter-subjectivity which condensed time and space'.[23] Lyrical material emphasised this wide-ranging historical landscape: a world which featured lovers torn apart by press gangs in 'Lowlands of Holland'; the delights of 'Copshawholm Fair'; romantic betrayal in 'The Blacksmith'; loyal maidens who wait for their 'Dark-Eyed Sailor' to return; the devil disguised as a 'False Knight on the Road'; and anthropomorphic ravens deciding whether to feast on a slain knight in 'Twa Corbies'.[24] Added to this imagined rural Englishness was a depiction and veneration of the turn-of-the-century world in which many of the songs had been originally been collected. Promotional material within the music press for *Hark! The Village Wait* included use of Edwardian photographs depicting Morris dancers being enjoyed by a street crowd, and later, for *Ten Man Mop…*, two elderly, though striking, rural topers.[25]

Although some music press discourse recognised a conscious move away from any sense of trans-Atlantic hybridity – with Karl Dallas of *Melody Maker* describing *Please to See the King* as having 'British roots with much less overlay… from American country music' – contemporary interviews suggest that for Hutchings, a sense of Britishness was not enough. In 1971, he stated that 'I would say that as far as traditional music goes the first English traditional group is still to come', and was later dismissive of his own group's influence upon rock music, adding 'Everyone carries on singing in mid-Atlantic accents and writing the same

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[22] *Melody Maker,* 25th April 1970, p30.
[23] Boyes, *The Imagined Village*, p98.
[24] Vaughan Williams Memorial Library:
Roud No.484, https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S153579;
Roud No.9139, https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S510211;
Roud No.816, https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S138059;
Roud No.265, https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudBS/B7819;
Roud No.20, https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S204894;
Roud No.5, https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S316378.
[25] *Melody Maker*, 13th June 1970, p13; *ibid.,* 8th January 1972, p8.

type of songs.'[26] It was with this pervading attitude that Hutchings left the group he had formed to reinvigorate the Vicwardian English Folk Revival's aim: to popularise a perceived collective tradition of folk song that reflected, in Sharp's words, 'the musical life of England'.[27] From this point emerged two different approaches to folk-rock music, one continuing under the Steeleye Span banner now held by founder members Maddy Prior and Tim Hart – revolving around the rock music 'logic of record selling… building stars and promoting new releases', in which Englishness and Britishness were both interchangeable and marketable tools – and the other in the form of Hutchings' Albion Band, existing outside rock music dynamics and resolutely determined to explore Englishness as an antidote to American influenced commercialism.[28]

Steeleye Span recruited new musicians and continued to predominantly draw upon traditional music from Britain, recording seven further albums between 1972 and 1978. However, in the opinion of *Melody Maker* the interpretation of this music quickly moved from 'electric-folk' to 'contemporary rock' for 1972's *Below the Salt*, and it continued to be perceived in this vein. This change can be interpreted as a conscious effort not to retreat from a transatlantic musical dialogue as in previous iterations, but an attempt to win favour with North American audiences by presenting traditional material in more conscious rock arrangements as a form of novelty. Encapsulating this shift in sound and approach was the promotional advert for the album *Parcel of Rogues* (1973), which featured a UK electrical plug with the phrases 'Made in England' and 'Adapts to US Voltage' emblazoned across it. The group openly talked in interviews of a desire to 'be accepted on a much larger scale' and other performance culture perceived by the original Vicwardian collectors as English customs were incorporated into live concerts in the 1973 tour of the USA. This included interludes where the band performed a mummers' play and performances where the group were accompanied by Morris dancers. This historical bricolage reinforced the perception within discourse that the group were a 'true English rock band', even incorporating a performance segment where this 'authentic' Englishness was counterpointed against a satirical rock 'n' roll medley, the group dressed in wigs and teddy boy outfits and performing 1950s hits, seemingly designed to simultaneously acknowledge and differentiate themselves from American influence and reference respectively.[29]

Whether via live performance, TV appearances or single releases, the utilisation within rock music surrounding perceived English folk customs also appears to have appealed to a large demographic. A significant proportion of this audience were certainly the

[26] *Ibid.,* 13th March 1971, p35; *Ibid.,* 30th October 1971, p46.
[27] Sharp, *English Folk-Song,* p136.
[28] Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain Volume 2: 1968-1984,* p2.
[29] *Melody Maker*, 14th October 1972, p52; *ibid.,* 24th March 1973, p19; *ibid.,* 8th September 1973, p37; *ibid.,* 14th July 1973, p41; *ibid.,* 17th November 1973, p13.

contemporary equivalent of the educated, socially mobile and growing middle class who had been attracted to the pre-1914 English Folk Revival. The percentage of the population in higher education had reached a new high of 14.2% in 1972, and in a late-1973 tour of Britain, of the 25 towns or cities that Steeleye Span appeared in, eight were at university venues, fifteen were university towns and the remaining two (Swansea and Portsmouth) had polytechnics.[30] This mixture of commercialised rock music that was rooted in Vicwardian folk discourses rural imagination was further linked to Englishness via the BBC television series *Steeleye Span's Electric Folk*. Within this programme the group's music continued to be framed within an imagined cultural collective memory of a rural England, performing in locations such as nineteenth-century stately home, Thorseby Hall, and medieval Warwick Castle.[31] The apogee of this popular attempt to offer a type of commercial rock music that was not solely reliant on American influence but engrained with Englishness came when it was announced that Mike Batt, creator of the Wombles pop act, would be producing the group. This collaboration peaked with the rock arrangement of a broadside ballad which had also been collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1904 entitled 'All Around My Hat', which subsequently reached the number three position in the *Melody Maker* singles chart.[32]

By 1976, and the release of *Rocket Cottage* ('pure rock territory' said the *Melody Maker*), Steeleye Span had moved from a group that explored British folk music in an effort to offer an alternative to US-led commercial rock music, to then utilising Vicwardian invented traditions of imagined Englishness to exploit its possibilities for profit. This transition was perhaps nowhere better demonstrated than the group's orchestrated 'money-drop' moment, when performing in concert, they let an estimated £8,500 rain down on their audience.[33] This socialistic willingness to share a portion of a success – based on re-articulating a constructed cultural memory of Englishness – highlights the contradictory nature contained within notions of 'Merrie England', something which Boyes notes is 'inherently both revolutionary and conservative.'[34] Although a Sharpian sense of using traditional song to reinforce a national identity still remained a part of the discourse that surrounded the group and their actions, its use within commercial realms rather than 'in the hands of the patriot, as well as of the educationalist' would perhaps have been all too reminiscent of 'the songs that bawled out on

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[30] Roy Lowe, "Education", in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, p290); *Melody Maker*, 29th September 1973, p12.
[31] *Ibid.,* 9th March 1974, p28; *Ibid.,* 16th March 1974, p4.
[32] Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Roud No. 22518, https://www.vwml.org/record/RVW2/2/50; *Melody Maker*, 13th December 1975, p2.
[33] *Ibid.,* 16th October 1976, p22; *Ibid.,* 11th December 1976, p17.
[34] Boyes, *The imagined village*, p3.

Margate steam-boat or… are coarsely shouted, whistled, or played on barrel organs in Seven Dials.'[35]

For Ashley Hutchings, the search for an authentic 'English sound' involving electric instruments lay in his newly formed Albion Band. This communion with various customs that Vicwardian middle-class revivalists had earmarked as part of a collective cultural tradition of Englishness, continued to be rural at heart, and continued to mimic the original revival with its explicit rejection of contemporary urban commercialism. In typescript lecture notes dated 1906, Cecil Sharp stated that there was 'Nothing more characteristic of Merrie England than Morris. It figured at all the chief village festivals and ales. Every village has its Morris dancers. Is it not worth reviving?'.[36] In 1972, Hutchings released *Morris On*, a collection of electrified arrangements found in Sharp's *The Morris Book* (1907), which appeared to contribute to a wider revival of interest in Morris dancing during the decade that was at a remove from rock music. By 1974, *Melody Maker* featured the pastime in its 'Weird Scenes' series, where it was detailed that the men who took part were often university students and considered by some onlookers who were interviewed for the article as 'pouffes'.[37]

Hutchings' tendency, voluntary or otherwise, to operate outside rock's economics and aesthetics did lead to letters of support published within the music press. Peter Grout wrote Hutchings was a musician who had 'shun[ned] the limelight and financial rewards of top line groups (Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span) in favour of getting closer to the roots and public'; another letter quoted the sleeve notes to the Albion Band's *Battle of the Field* (1976) in praise of the 'continuing quest for an indigenous electric music away from the dominance of American rock forms'.[38] This quest to re-construct the cultural memory of an imagined rural working class that Vicwardian revivalists had felt that a) was disappearing and b) if revived could act as a bulwark against crass urban commercial entertainment, is perhaps best exemplified by Hutchings and the Albion Band's involvement with the National Theatre. In 1978, they appeared in an adaptation of Flora Thompson's literary trilogy *Lark Rise to Candleford* (1945), semi-autobiographical novels about village community life in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire in the late Victorian and Edwardian era, with Hutchings et al. punctuating the action with traditional songs collected by the original revivalists in what was described as 'a masterly memorial to a lost age.'[39]

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[35] Sharp, *English Folk-Song,* p136, 137.
[36] Roy Judge, "Cecil Sharp and Morris 1906-1909", *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 2 (2002): p200, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4522670.

[37] *Melody Maker*, 27th May 1972, p37; *Ibid.,* 10th August 1974, p37.
[38] *Ibid.,* 12th June 1976, p56; *Ibid.,* 29th July 1978, p12.
[39] *Ibid.,* 23rd September 1978, p48.

Hutchings, through his initial work with Steeleye Span and beyond, had innovatively resurrected traditional British folk-song collected by the Vicwardian revivalists and placed them within an electric-rock setting. With this pursuit, Hutchings also re-articulated a Vicwardian mentality of Englishness that collapsed time and space in deference to an imagined rural past that in the process – just as Sharp had hoped in his battle against the perceived crudeness of working-class music hall song – critiqued and rejected the dominant commercial form of popular music. While the original Vicwardian revival had replaced 'the Folk' with their own middle-class invented traditions of 'Merrie England', so Hutchings, performing at the National Theatre, strangely mimicked this process in a metahistorical manner, his band imagined as working-class rural characters, for the sake of the national arts, and undoubtedly for the entertainment of a predominantly middle-class audience. If these particular musical expressions had their origins in the replacing and remoulding of Vicwardian rural working-class culture, the 1970s also witnessed entertainment inhabiting customs and mentalities outside of rock music's boundaries that spoke to notions of a shared urban working-class past.

## Performing the Working-Class Past with Max Bygraves

Writing in a 1978 edition of the *Daily Mirror,* regular columnist Paul Callan attempted to reassure his readers that despite becoming Prime Minister, James Callaghan still 'retains the human man-of-the-people side of his nature which earned him the nickname Sunny Jim.' To demonstrate this, Callan claimed that a source close to Downing Street had revealed that Callaghan was a fan of the music of Max Bygraves, and that the Prime Minister's car 'had no less than eight of the singer's tapes in the Singalongamax series lying on the backseat'.[40]

The legacy of both informal and commercialised performance culture, with origins in nineteenth century urban working-class culture, continued to permeate rock during the 1970s courtesy of a variety of popular musicians. Slade's run of chart hits between 1971 and 1974 was built on the music press foregrounding the group's working-class background, producing the maxim 'Slade music is community music'. Ian Dury was also perceived to hybridise 'music-hall monologue' with new forms of rock music, perhaps inspiring Chas 'n' Dave's later cultural fusion of 'Fats Domino through Mrs Mills', which would gain traction in the early 1980s.[41] Unsurprisingly Max Bygraves' own mixture of nostalgic comedy and music was unwelcome within the letter's pages of the rock press. 'There must be something wrong if we can allow

[40] *Daily Mirror,* 20th May 1976, p13.
[41] *Melody Maker,* 13th January 1973, p17; *Ibid,* 1st October 1977, p26; *Ibid,* 13th October 1979, p33.

Max Bygraves and his seemingly pretentious dirge anywhere near the charts', commented one reader, perhaps referring to the moment in late 1973 when Bygraves had three albums simultaneously in the *Melody Maker* top thirty album chart.[42] The desire expressed within the pages of the seventies rock press to have its music accepted 'on terms equal or superior to those granted to folk, jazz, blues and sweet music', the continuing focus on rock music and its discourse within historical studies of 1970s British popular music, and Bygraves initial rise to prominence in the 'pre-rock' music hall-variety era of the immediate post-war period, all contribute to a general lack of interest in Bygraves seventies success.[43] Although nearly every single album Bygraves released in the decade featured the word 'singalong', he does not receive a single mention in Hodgkinson's history of *Singalong Pop in '70s Britain.* Bygraves' chart placings and the description of James Callaghan's backseat – apocryphal or not – hint at a narrative of 1970s British commercial popular music that lies not only outside the purview of rock, but one that continued to draw upon an imagined working-class past that was in direct contrast to the pastoral one re-articulated by folk-rock. Specifically, Bygraves performed a working-class social history via entertainment which drew upon a continuum of practice and custom emanating from the urban nineteenth century,

Bygraves began the seventies as an established entertainer who perpetuated styles of performance in entertainment spaces, associated with an enduring music hall-variety culture. However, Bygraves' specific successes from 1973 onwards revolved around taking a historically self-conscious approach: adapting customs that had historical associations with participatory culture in both informal working class and professionalised music-making. With this conscious framing of his own working-class past, Bygraves not only breathed new life into his career, but also acted as a conduit for his audience to celebrate a version of the urban working-class past and its customs of social leisure.

In the early weeks of the 1970s, *The Stage*'s James Towler described Bygraves: 'he isn't our funniest comedian, neither is he our best singer. Yet when it comes to handling an audience I doubt if there is anyone to touch him.' Towler was referring to a recent Bygraves one-hour special on ITV, and with JICTAR estimating an audience of 7.8 million, it appears Bygraves' popularity had gone undiminished, despite what he referred to in his autobiography as the rise of the 'rock beat' and his subsequent relegation to 'the "old school"' during the

[42] *Ibid.,* 5th January 1974, p48; *Ibid.,* 27th October 1973, p2.
[43] Marcus Collins, "'I say high, you say low': The Beatles and Cultural Hierarchies in 1960s and 1970s Britain." *Popular Music, 39*, 3-4, (2020): p409, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143020000458.

sixties.[44] Despite these protestations, Bygraves had always worked within the parameters of the comedian-singer associated with music hall-variety culture: telling jokes and punctuating his acts with songs, having been inspired as a member of the 'working-class public' at the New Cross Empire in the inter-war years. It was in this environment that Bygraves had directly learned from performers such as Gracie Fields, George Formby and Max Miller that audiences 'wanted their humour basic, songs singable and the specialities breath-taking.'[45]

Bygraves working-class London background was often emphasised within appearances and discourse, creating a potential point of connection with his audience via references to poverty in a pre-welfare state world. One TV programme entitled *Max in the Thirties* built a replica of the two-room childhood home he shared with his parents, grandfather, brother and four sisters in Rotherhithe, and in the media he was often referred to as 'the Cockney boy from the East End slums', or as someone who had mastered the art of the 'Cockney entertainer'.[46] With this framing of Bygraves as a catalyst for classed reminiscence and representing a 'cockney' presence, we can see another appearance, this time in the 1970s, of the perennially adaptable Vicwardian performance custom of the cockney archetype. Whilst cockney personas had been framed by discourse to reinforce ideas of a unified Britishness in the immediate post-war era (see Chapter Two), or utilised as an ingredient to mix with American rock 'n' roll in the early sixties (see Chapter Four), what differentiated Bygraves' cockney performance was the perpetuation of the Vicwardian mentalities the archetype originally represented. These were often interchangeable and involved pride and humour in working-class experience, whilst also emphasising 'the unity which underlay difference', via the cockney's ultimate subordination to a broader British identity.[47]

The notion that Bygraves' entertainment represented a sense of, at certain times, working-class experience, at others, a sense of national unity, can be supported by his popularity in a mixture of social environments. Some of these performance spaces accentuated a collective class memory such as the remaining enclaves of the working class music hall-variety circuit. Despite the 1970s becoming synonymous with 'Brits abroad' and the package holiday, Walton's history of the British seaside resort cites estimates that in 1975 around 27 million still took their main holiday in Britain, whereas it was 'not until 1979 that the number of foreign holidays taken by British customers passed the 10 million mark'.[48]

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[44] *The Stage,* 15th January 1970, p12; *Ibid.,* 22nd January 1970, p2; Max Bygraves, *I Wanna Tell You a Story,* (London: W.H. Allen & Co Ltd, 1977), p121.
[45] *Ibid.,* p43.
[46] *Daily Mirror,* 25th November 1970, p18; *The Stage*, 27th May 1976, p9; *Ibid.,* 13th August 1970, p42.
[47] Steadman-Jones, "The 'cockney' and the nation", p278.
[48] Walton, *The British Seaside,* p66.

Whilst leisure habits were undoubtedly changing, many seaside resorts remained important outposts for the continuing resilience of working-class holiday rituals established in the late-nineteenth century. A 1974 article in the *TV Times,* perhaps in a bid to allay fears over dwindling business, claimed that 'British resorts have more built-in entertainment than any in Europe', and in a 1975 series entitled 'Piers of the Realm', various resorts were profiled, emphasising the quality of the performers holiday-makers could still see in these locations.[49] This included Bygraves, who played summer seasons at largely working-class resorts such as Bournemouth and also regularly performed one-night stands in places such as Margate Winter Gardens.[50] Running parallel to these affiliations was Bygraves status as a regular performer at Royal Command or Gala performances on sixteen separate occasions by 1976, as well as appearing in several private engagements for the Royal Family at Windsor. Bygraves therefore was equally comfortable connecting to audiences within environments that, on the one hand, continued working-class cultural customs, and on the other, represented the subservience of class to national identity.

Although it was generally perceived within media discourse that 'what suits him (Max) best' was 'a music hall setting', in September 1972, a new residency had been prompted by his new found success within the popular music album market.[51] Bygraves moved into the Victoria Palace Theatre, replacing the long-running stage iterations of *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. Whilst Bygraves had recorded in the fifties and early sixties, this musical project was specifically aimed at an older working-class audience who still thrived on the collective, participatory singalong. As Bygraves mother explained in a *TV Times* interview:

> He just walked in one day because I don't have the front door shut when I'm home and he said: "What are you sitting there all miserable for; why haven't you got the radio on, or the records?" And I said: "The songs don't interest me… They never put any of the old ones on." He went back to his agent and said: "Look, I've been over to Mum and I've got a great idea for an L.P…"[52]

Bygraves elaborated on this, claiming that the albums were a conscious effort to reach an audience who missed informal social music-making and the urban working class piano singalong: 'My way of going on television is for people who haven't got pianos.'[53] This approach saw the beginning of a sustained shift in Bygraves' modus operandi: moving from a

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[49] *TV Times,* 5th-11th January 1974, p36; *Ibid.,* 26th July-1st August 1975, p2-5; *Ibid.,* 2nd-8th August 1975, p8-9; *Ibid.,* 9th-15th August 1975, p6-7.
[50] *The Stage,* 13th August 1970, p42; *Ibid.,* 3rd August 1972, p10.
[51] *Daily Mirror*, 3rd August 1972, p17; *The Stage.,* 21st September 1972, p1.
[52] *TV Times*, 1st-7th September 1973, p21.
[53] *Ibid.,* 30th March-5th April 1974, p29.

performer who not only prolonged 'old school' music hall-variety cockney customs within contemporary settings, but who also actively used this persona to embody and perform the past for his audience, creating empathy, intimacy and a point of communion. The albums, initially titled *Sing Along with Max* before changing to the *Singalongamax* series, featured a bricolage of medleys, drawn from a diverse range of primarily pre-WWII popular song, that could feature anything from music hall to Broadway standards, sometimes coalescing round a theme such as *Singalongapartysong* or *Singalongamemory.* Instrumentally, the albums created a vague wash of the past, summarised by the *Daily Mirror* as 'bouncy banjo, dancing piano, silvery trumpet and jolly chorus', all evoking 'Non-stop nostalgia'. Within a modern medium, Bygraves once more evoked the powerful construction dating back to the Vicwardian music hall of the working-class cockney as both 'a "traditional" and "English" experience', signifying 'the community, of the singsong and the knees-up, of an old-fashioned Saturday night… of street parties festooned with Union Jacks', at once both classed and patriotic.[54]

In a popular music industry dominated by rock's 'album-orientated market', where audiences and musicians alike viewed the music (in Simonelli's words) as 'genteel, pretentious, artistic, bourgeois and expertly crafted', Bygraves' albums offered a contrast, drawing on the performance customs of both the nineteenth-century working-class pub and the commercial music hall by encouraging 'community singing with a difference', the success of which was so great that ITV quickly commissioned a TV series to accompany the albums.[55] The continued appetite for communal music-making can be attested to by the positive response the programme received within the letter's page of the *TV Times*, which, although were undoubtedly placed within the magazine to drum up interest in the show, demonstrate genuine viewer connection to the format and sing-along experience. For Mrs H. Widdous of Dalston, the songs brought back 'wonderful memories'; a viewer in Manchester suggested the show affirmed Bygraves as 'truly an entertainer in the classic mould'; whilst a slightly later letter from Miss Sybil Isaacs attested to the show's cross-generational appeal, claiming 'he had his family – including Grandma… applauding spontaneously.'[56]

Bygraves also had an elusive quality, described by Jeremy Myerson in a 1978 edition of *The Stage* as 'the ability to generate a particular atmosphere', which resulted 'in a feeling of reassurance in an audience.'[57] Though difficult to make an atmosphere palpable, it can be possible to explore what its creation and ingredients might entail. Bygraves certainly utilised familiar performance customs within environments where the performer-audience dynamic was well established, clearly helping to evoke an ambience audiences were acquainted with

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[54] *Daily Mirror,* 10th April 1973, p11; Steadman-Jones, "The 'Cockney' and the nation", p278.
[55] Simonelli, *Working Class Heroes*, p190; *TV Times,* 1st-7th September 1973, p43.
[56] *Ibid.,* 22nd-28th September 1973, p79; *Ibid.,* 16th-22nd February 1974, p63.
[57] *The Stage*, 7th September 1978, p5.

and comforted by. But within these performances, Bygraves extended his ability to perform a version of the working-class cultural past, namely, by mixing nostalgic sing-along with a form of anecdotal, communal and dialogical social history. A clear example of this dynamic can be found in the New Year's Eve 1975-76 BBC One special, *I Wanna Tell You a Story*, filmed in front of a studio audience at Shepherd's Bush Empire which presented a review of the past seventy-five years of entertainment.[58]

Bygraves begins the programme by singing a self-penned tune entitled 'Childhood Days' (1:07-4:35), immediately establishing a sense of a shared working-class past with his audience. Alongside name-checking inter-war events, popular figures and crazes that were, according to Bygraves lyrics, 'haunting my memory', the upbeat orchestral tune also makes room for specific reflections on his own childhood poverty.

> I remember my Dad saying "things sure look bad,
> It never rains but it pours",
> Then my mother would smile and say "Wait for a while,
> Things will get better I'm sure"
> But they didn't get better, in fact they got worse,
> We were skint, brassic, lean to coin a phrase,
> And to buy food and coal, they were drawing the dole,
> Back in my childhood days (2:50-3:22)

After the introductory song, Bygraves then proceeds to take the studio audience and the viewership on a review of the last seventy-five years of British entertainment via music, dance and jokes, supported by a chorus-line of performers. The review begins with Bygraves reminding his audience of the venues significance as a site of collective memory with a classed dynamic, commenting 'before this was a television studio, it was a music hall' (5:08), and suggesting 'If you'd been one of the working class people coming to theatre in those days in the 1900s, you wouldn't have been sitting there, in the posh seats' (6:10). After this preamble, song and dance depicts a highly romanticised tour of the Edwardian London music halls (6:58-17:20) which includes blackface minstrelsy (9:21), pearly kings and queens (12:41), as well as Bygraves inserting himself into this continuum of performance culture by dressing as a cockney tramp and singing 'I Live in Trafalgar Square' (11:00) and 'Any Old Iron' (13:15). The formal routines are also complimented with Bygraves building a sense of a shared past, with

[58] This can programme can be viewed in its entirety on YouTube, see: David Baldwin, "BBC 1975 I wanna tell you a story", 22nd December 2022, YouTube, 1:17:54, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=px9QhCh-gsA&t=465s.

movie footage and casual anecdotes regarding the lives of such music hall stars as Little Tich (14:40) and Marie Lloyd (17:17).

The programme winds its way through the ensuing decades, playfully portraying the jingoistic music hall tunes of the First World War (18:00-21:30) and jazz dancing of the 1920s (26:06-32:38), Hollywood film (33:18-34:11), before returning to emphasise memories of 1930s British music hall-variety performance culture. This features footage of George Formby (35:54) and Gracie Fields (37:18) before Bygraves impersonates Max Miller (41:10) and performs Flanagan and Allen's 'Home Town' (48:30-51:15). The light-hearted nature of the revue is then juxtaposed with a reverence for the subject of the Second World War, exemplified by Bygraves serious recitative delivery accompanied melodramatic strings (51:15-52:18). Bygraves then returns to gentle humour, parodying himself in a teddy boy suit whilst singing his 1950s hit 'Fings Aint What They Used t'Be' (59:30) before performing as Tom Jones to poke fun at the sixties (1:04:08).

During pauses in musical action, Bygraves connects with the audience by finding humour in his own family's poverty in a pre-welfare state Britain; creating a perceived shared collective memory of working-class life. Some of the biggest audience laughs are reserved for recounting exaggerated 'cockney' stories, continuing music hall-variety's propensity to present working-class social plight as a vehicle to generate 'sentimentality and even humour.'[59] In reference to the economic depression of the 1930s, Bygraves tells the audience:

> I can remember those years very well, we had no money, no future. I know as kids we used to get sent food parcels and clothes parcels from society people in Mayfair. I was the only kid in class who wore a top hat, frock tail coat and riding boots (46:45-47:10) …We had a woman who lived three doors down from us, she had seventeen children, and some days you'd pass her front room and you'd see her sitting there praying that her husband would get a day job. Preferably in a saw mill. (47:45-48:05)

Bygraves' TV special not only produced a shared sense of working-class otherness, but also performed and framed a wider sense of working-class history, intertwining urban culture and national events and making them entertainingly digestible with relatable anecdote and humour. Bygraves' 'atmosphere', then, was the product of his ability to embody an outsider history – free from the usual political titans, generals of war and scientific breakthroughs – that celebrated forms of working-class popular culture, found humour in hardship and reassurance in communal allegiance, that had their formulation in performance codes of the previous century.

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[59] Russell, *Popular Music in England 1840-1914,* p127.

What becomes apparent via these two examples of 1970s commercial popular music – one working within rock economics and ideology, and the other, outside it – is not only the continued framing of Vicwardian performance culture, environments and discourses, but two differing interpretations regarding what elements of the working-class cultural past should be emphasised in the present. Discord over the role of traditional working-class social hierarchy in contemporary society would also play out within the 1970s WMC movement, whose adherence to nineteenth-century practice played a part in its deteriorating social reputation.

## Discord and Change in the WMC Movement

If an entertainment or concert secretary of a working men's club needed to book some acts for a forthcoming weekend, they could always turn to *The Stage* for ideas and inspiration. An example from 1975 illustrates the volume and variety of performers available. Famous names such as Acker Bilk, Winifred Atwell, The Baron Knights, Harry Secombe, or even Dai Francis from *The Black and White Minstrel Show* were available for engagements. Unfortunately, securing even one of these artists might exceed a club's entertainment budget. If so, other options were available: Gordon Turner, dubbed 'The Man with the White Piano' offered a 'comedy act plus sing-along participation'; you might book 'Shep's Banjo Boys', or take a punt on Patsy McGregor, who simply advertised herself as a 'vocalist'. Lastly, maybe mix these performers with a speciality act: the drama of Stromboli and Silvia the 'Sword Swallower and Fire Eater'; Paul Vernon's 'Magic and Mindreading act'; or Marc Fleming the 'Premier dame comedian'. These adverts paint a portrait of a vibrant 1970s clubland that continued its proclivity for earlier forms of performance culture. However, by early 1979, Tommy Kane in the same publication was proclaiming that 'the club boom period is now, alas, a fascinating piece of history.'[60] What these two sources demonstrate is the rapid decline of clubland that reflects the wider fragmentation of working-class culture and identity throughout the seventies. Despite the continuation of entertainment rooted in music hall-variety culture that, in the first half of the seventies, appeared to withstand the vagaries of the economy, an increasing disconnection with youth culture and an inability of the club movement to adapt its collectivist, patriarchal fixed hierarchies to changing laws, social attitudes and aspirations of workers, helped sow the seeds of the club's movement's dwindling membership in the 1980s.

As established in Chapter Three, the 1960s saw extensive migration of music hall-variety performers from the rapidly closing theatres to the burgeoning CIU-affiliated and proprietary clubs. Throughout the sixties, expansion of WMC entertainment facilities was

[60] *The Stage,* 20th March 1975, p49-52; *Ibid.,* 29th March 1979, p6.

hailed as a sign of modernity which was also in keeping with the movement's original nineteenth-century ideals of progress. This trend continued unabated in the first-half of the 1970s, with newly built concert halls regularly featured in the *CIU Journal*. The epitome of this continuing optimism was CIU Vice-President Derek Dormer's prediction that for the new town of Milton Keynes 'it would not be too ambitious to plan for 50 new clubs'.[61] Continued expansion of entertainment facilities was aided, ironically perhaps, by one of the CIU's perennial threats: government interference. On the 1st July 1970, the 1968 Gaming Act took effect, stipulating the legal separation between gambling and other forms of entertainment. This struck a blow to the privately run proprietary clubs, which relied heavily on its replication of a heady Las Vegas-style cocktail involving casino leisure and stage entertainment. By 1971, powerhouse proprietary clubs such as the Greasbrough Social Club and Doncaster's The Scala had both been turned into supermarkets.[62]

Change in the law hastened closures, but also drove more performers into CIU affiliated clubs. In October 1972, *The Stage* estimated around 30,000 performers were competing for entertainment spots in clubland, whilst the CIU hit their all-time membership high in 1973 with 4,042 clubs announced as being within the union.[63] It is perhaps this wealth of available entertainment, peak CIU membership and restrictions on private competition that seemingly made the WMCs, in the perception of the contemporary media, recession proof in an era that was proving economically unpredictable. In Jim Daley's 'Northern Club commentary' for *The Stage*, he reported that despite the winter fuel crisis of 1973, Yorkshire had seen 'a record breaking Christmas for most clubs as far as bar takings are concerned'. These optimistic outlooks regarding clubs' resistance to economic recession continued throughout the decade in *The Stage*, with the claim in early 1975 that WMCs were generally 'keeping ahead of inflation'. Although these attitudes could be perceived as an industry reassuring itself through difficult times, James Hartley in 1977 insisted that 'There isn't the brass about, yet working men's clubs are thriving', arguing that low overheads, cheap beer and plenty of talent were largely responsible.[64] What of that talent?

The preference for music hall-variety performance culture involving personality, participation, skill and novelty, and a structure that continued the archetype of 'the turn', had been established within the club movement during the late-nineteenth century, and remained a key touchstone of 1960s WMC entertainment. Although this cultural legacy of working-class self-reliance remained largely unchanged in the 1970s, seemingly less interest was paid to

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[61] *CIU Journal,* January 1970, p11; *Ibid.,* December 1970, p11; *Ibid.,* April 1970, p12; *Ibid.,* May 1973, p29; *Ibid.,* May 1973, p29.
[62] *The Stage*, 11th March 1971, p4; *Ibid.,* 17th June 1971, p3.
[63] *Ibid.,* 19th October 1972, p13; *CIU Journal*, January 1974, p2.
[64] *The Stage,* 24th January 1974, p9; *Ibid.,* 20th March 1975, p17; *Ibid.,* 31st March 1977, p18.

accommodating youth culture. Whilst inconsistent, the club movement's attempts during the 1960s to make a cross-generational space that supported younger members were regularly featured in the *CIU Journal*. Sources suggest, however, that the increasing proclivity for 'package' variety shows, demand for celebrity performers and the continued ability of WMCs to absorb rock music into music hall-variety performance contexts all contributed to marginalising the interests of youth culture within the 1970s club movement. Whilst the *CIU Journal* proclaimed at the beginning of the decade that the movement had 'bridged the generation gap' with 'Youth discotheques… now commonplace' and praised other clubs for booking 'some of the top pop groups', these events were often advertised as occurring on specific evenings and in separate rooms, presumably so members would not have to partake. Accompanying this, *CIU Journal* coverage of the movement's in-house youth culture dwindled significantly. In December 1972, an opinion piece in the journal urged clubs to tell entertainers, particularly bands, to 'turn the volume down' on their 'gigantic noise inflation from powerful amplifiers'. This was accompanied in early 1973 by an article offering alternative suggestions to booking 'noisy pop-groups' with 'ear-splitting amplification'. Although there is reference to the occasional exception – Judas Priest being listed as 'folk to watch' in 1976 – there are signs that what was, at times, an enthusiastic interaction with youth culture-oriented music during the sixties had become a schism in the seventies.[65]

Just as in 1960s club culture, most contemporary forms of popular music continued to be incorporated into the deep-set music hall-variety culture endemic within the circuit. These expectations allowed for the feature of solo-singers rather than groups, preferably 'full voiced… plus a touch of dramatic showmanship' and could belt-out 'perennial anthems' such as 'My Way', 'Aquarius/Let the Sunshine in', 'Moonlight and Roses', 'Danny Boy' and 'Breaking Up is Hard to Do'. The utilisation of comedy and novelty within a band setting continued to be a trusted path to bookings. A high-profile example were rock group The Grumbleweeds, whose reputation was based on their comedic impersonations of contemporary popular musicians.[66]

Perhaps the most consistently successful approach to bringing rock music into the WMCs during the seventies involved the nostalgia craze for 1950s rock 'n' roll. Alwyn Turner's 2013 history of the British seventies has pointed out 1970s rock musicians such as David Bowie and John Lennon's own tendency to revisit the 1950s reflected 'a new self-awareness of rock's own history'.[67] It's likely that clubland's own penchant for fifties revivalism was closer

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[65] *Ibid.,* April 1970, p31; *Ibid.,* September 1971, p12; *Ibid.,* December 1972, p46; *Ibid.,* February 1973, p18; *The Stage,* 1st April 1976, p19.
[66] *The Stage*, 26th February 1970, p4; *Ibid.,* 20th May 1971, p4; *Ibid.,* 2nd September 1971, p4; *Ibid.,* 2nd March 1978, p6; *Ibid.,* 20th March 1975, p43; *Ibid.,* 23rd May 1974, p8.
[67] Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis? Britain in the 1970s*, (London: Aurum Press Ltd, 2013), p148.

to hand: namely the success of throwback 1950s revival band Showaddywaddy on the first series of ITV's *New Faces*, combining with a likely demographic of adults within WMCs for whom rock 'n' roll was a reminder of bygone youth. Rock 'n' roll revivalism's continued rise in clubland can be evidenced via the popularity of groups such as 'Remember This' who offered according to one review a 'precise re-creation'; Big John's Rock 'n' Roll Circus in Birmingham and beyond, as well as Crepes 'n' Drapes, a group who specialised in a dedicated Elvis section and were accompanied by Be Bop Bella, 'Britain's top teddy girl DJ'.[68]

The first half of 1970s, therefore, saw growing membership, further expansion of premises and a wealth of available variety entertainers, creating a perception within discourse that WMCs were largely recession proof. This was accompanied, however, by a declining interest in creating cross-generational social leisure, with discourse in the *CIU Journal* surrounding how to attract younger club members fading from the agenda. The WMC leisure environment, dominated by working-class traditions of social hierarchy, also received parallel criticism throughout the seventies for its uncompromising audiences and inequitable practices. Numerous complaints appear from performers and critics in *The Stage*: clubs refusing to pay performers full fees after being deemed 'not up to standards' by committee members; rowdy heckling and harassment of acts; and performers who regularly received cheques that bounced. Instances like these led to one journalist concluding in 1978 that what he thought had been 'a revival of variety theatre' had in reality 'turned out to be its last fling'.[69] These additional examples of attitudes and atmospheres from WMC audiences hint at further reasons for decline in the 1980s, as individuals sought alternative forms of social leisure that were not dictated by older cultural tastes or bound up in traditions of class. Frith et.al excellently document this transition in their study of 1970s disco clubs, describing these new leisure environments as 'safe settings' for the performance of individual expression.[70] In 1979, *The Stage* launched its first supplement dedicated to disco clubs, a sign of changing tastes which almost certainly contributed to the closure of around 500 CIU affiliated clubs by 1990.[71]

Despite the continuing presence of older forms of performance customs within clubland, these changing attitudes in 1970s WMC entertainment were not only reflective of the altering nature of social leisure, but also symptomatic of wider societal trends in which the continuity of class, as a form of identity, was beginning to be severely challenged. In his opening *CIU Journal* article of 1970, General Secretary, J.B. Holmes, wrote that in regard to the WMC movement, 'It has been a long struggle to preserve our heritage. And the struggle

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[68] *The Stage,* 30th May 1974, p7; *Ibid.,* 8th January 1976, p2; *Ibid.,* 2nd February 1978, p9.
[69] *Ibid.,* 8th July 1971, p5; *Ibid.,* 15th July 1971, p3; *Ibid.,* 5th July 1973, p8; *Ibid.,* 29th May 1975, p13; *Ibid.,* 16th July 1970, p6; *Ibid.,* 16th March 1978, p22.
[70] Frith et al., *The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 2: 1968-1984*, p146.
[71] *Ibid.,* 5th April 1979, p29-41; *CIU Journal*, January 1990, p5.

is never-ending.' By 1977 however, the CIU received Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh at Coventry WMC as part of the silver jubilee celebrations. In its coverage, the *CIU Journal* reported the 'Queen of Clubs wins all hearts', adding that members had been 'deeply impressed by the Royal couple's friendliness… it was almost as if they were fellow members'.[72] What both these sources demonstrate are a wider set of Vicwardian inheritances continuing to effect 1970s social leisure. First, the belief not only in self-reliance but the right of clubs to autonomy, and second, the attachment to established forms of social hierarchy. Chapter Three established how attitudes in the sixties WMCs towards hierarchies regarding gender and race were symptomatic of positions formed within the movement during the previous century. As the seventies progressed, the CIU continued to be pre-occupied by these perceived fixed traditions, adhering to outlooks which became increasingly problematic when faced with the rise in British society of what Emily Robinson et al. refer to as 'popular individualism', ultimately contributing to its relevancy as a vital space of leisure.[73]

The evolution of Britain's multi-racial society in the seventies has been well-documented: continued support for Enoch Powell's stance on immigration; the National Front's growing profile; Black and Asian communities resistance to these trends and other forms of discrimination; the Rock Against Racism movement; and the exploration of racial dynamics within TV's programmes such as *Love Thy Neighbour* (ITV 1972-76).[74] One area of leisure where this conflicted relationship is continually overlooked is in the environs of 1970s clubland. During this era, the CIU's awareness of its nineteenth-century collective mission to create an independent space for working-class leisure manifested an ambivalent and uneven effort to adapt its Vicwardian practices towards changing attitudes and laws regarding race. This set in motion a perception that WMCs were increasingly anachronistic institutions within British social life.

The 1968 Race Relations Act, outlawing racial discrimination in public spaces, had encouraged the CIU to view their clubs – registered as private social spaces – as not only exempt by law, but free from the responsibilities of encouraging racial integration. Individual clubs displayed mixed attitudes. Surrey's West Byfleet Social Club opened its doors to 130 nurses 'as a token of appreciation for all the good work that they do for the community… the club hope their example will be followed by similar organisations… to make the nurses, many of whom come from all parts of the Commonwealth, feel at home.' In the case of North

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[72] *CIU Journal,* January 1970, p2; *Ibid.,* September 1977, p1.
[73] Emily Robinson et al., "Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s", *Twentieth Century British History* 28, no. 2 (June 2017): 268–304, https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwx006.
[74] See: Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis?*, p205-226; Addison, *No Turning Back,* p364-402; Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency, The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-74,* (London: Penguin, 2011, 2020), p253-297.

Wolverhampton WMC, active separation of races continued to be practiced, with Equity instructing its members to the 'non-acceptance of contracts in Clubs with a colour bar policy'.[75] Ultimately, despite the varying attitudes of individual clubs, the CIU executive under the auspices of a right to privacy continued to legally support clubs who operated a colour-bar. This inability to reconcile inherited traditions of class identity with new forms of national identity came to a head in 1974, when the CIU chose to defend Preston Dockers' Club and Institute's formal decision to operate a colour-bar, a resolution that was upheld in the House of Lords. This flashpoint led to the *Daily Mirror* headline: 'The Colour Bar is legal in Britain's 4,000 working men's clubs', a statement which, though technically true, contributed to a perception that *all* WMCs practiced racial discrimination.[76]

It was seemingly at this point that, after a discussion with Labour Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, the CIU realised that 'full integration' was, after all, in keeping with the CIU's mission statement to 'Honour all men, Love the Brotherhood, use hospitality one to another, be not forgetful to entertain strangers'. Once more the link to a collective Victorian heritage was reinforced, adding 'this declaration of purpose, which was first made 100 years ago, is the foundation upon which this great movement has been built.'[77] This volte-face from the CIU coincided with the New Race Relations Act of 1975, outlawing racial discrimination in private spaces, a piece of legislation that Robinson et al. suggest acted not only as further 'legal recognition of discrete and protected legal collective identities' but played into larger changing trends surrounding the individual's right to 'universal entitlements, social aspirations and "equality of opportunity"'.[78] Despite these changing dynamics surrounding the collective and individual, isolated clubs such as Barras Green WMC continued to hold onto older conceptions of class, operating a colour-bar until the new Act came into force in 1977. At that year's Annual Meeting, President Bates betrayed a sense of reluctance to reconcile new conceptions of class and nation, stating that in relation to the 1975 Race Relations Act, 'persuasion created a better attitude than compulsion'.[79] Although the CIU had chosen to re-contextualise their Victorian declaration of purpose to 'honour all men', national media coverage surrounding initial CIU support for clubs that practiced discrimination during the 1970s was damaging to the wider perception of WMCs as tolerant leisure spaces in a social climate that was championing individual autonomy. This adherence to social hierarchies, in place within the movement since the nineteenth century also continued to affect gender roles within club leisure.

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[75] *CIU Journal*, September 1971, p23; *The Stage*, 14th October 1971, p25.
[76] *Daily Mirror,* 17th October 1974, p15.
[77] Tremlett, *Clubmen,* p243.
[78] Robinson et al. "Telling Stories about Post-War Britain", p298.
[79] *The Stage,* 28th April 1977, p6; *CIU Journal*, May 1977, p2.

Investigation in Chapter Three illuminated the presence of women in WMCs since the nineteenth century, documenting evidence of frustration surrounding the limits placed on their sociability – often restricted to providing or being entertained and prohibited from full membership or taking part in educative or management activities. Patriarchal structures were still largely in place during the 1960s, and despite Pete Brown highlighting Sheila Capstick's campaign in the late seventies and early eighties for equal rights within CIU clubs, WMCs of the period largely held fast to attitudes regarding female participation established in the previous century.[80] Encapsulating these ongoing attitudes was the *CIU Journal*'s reaction to the Labour government's 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, writing in bold font that discrimination in areas such as education, entertainment or trade only concerned 'the provision of goods, facilities and services to the public or a section of the public'. That the act did not apply to private leisure spaces, such as WMCs, only encouraged the CIU executive to take a detached attitude to the debate that ensued.[81] When certain members advocated for women to be made full members at the 1977 Annual Meeting, it was reported that 'The President intervened to say that it was a matter for Clubs'. When the issue was debated again in 1979, National Executive member J.T. Rudd complained of a passive 'heads-in-the-sand policy' which led to the CIU 'refusing women their rights but… also turning away valuable revenue', comments which received anonymous cries of 'Keep them in the kitchen' from the amassed members present.[82]

Although women were praised within the *CIU Journal* for involvement in charitable causes, the realm of entertainment continued to be a domain in which female participation was at its most visible. Alongside the litany of female balladeers came the perpetuation of entertainment dictated by enduring patriarchal structures, and which naturally prioritised male member's interests. Part of this landscape can be summarised by taking a random 'Artistes Wanted' section from *The Stage* near the end of the decade, where six out of the eighteen advertisements required 'attractive striptease artists'. Perhaps just as representative of these enduring mentalities were the homelier 'Queen of Clubs' competitions taking place in various regions, culminating in the CIU endorsed 'National Queen of Clubs' competition. The male policing of female involvement in entertainment occasionally extended to potential audience members: one Bunny Reed wrote to *The Stage* in 1973 to complain that she was 'refused

[80] Pete Brown, *Clubland, How the Working Men's Club Shaped Britain,* (Manchester: HarperNorth, 2023), p225-251.
[81] *CIU Journal,* February 1976, p1.
[82] *Ibid.,* May 1977, p4; *Ibid.,* May 1979, p3.

admission' from an unnamed club, 'on the ground that I was wearing corduroy trousers' rather than a skirt.[83]

What the CIU's uneven incorporation of more contemporary ideas surrounding the collective and individual, particularly in regard to youth, race and gender, demonstrate, is that despite the continuation of music hall-variety culture and the total of CIU-affiliated clubs being at over 4,000 for most of the 1970s, these 'self-governed social centres' were beginning to fragment when faced with new conceptions of identity.[84] These changing conceptions of class and identity were also accompanied by something far more tangible: the erosion of the industrial working-class way of life these social environments had been founded upon in the nineteenth century. As Addison writes, by the end of the seventies,

> Manual occupations were in long-term decline and manual workers, who had once made up three-quarters of the population, now accounted for little over half. Working-class solidarity had been weakened by the sectionalism of the trade unions, hostility to immigrant workers, the increasing employment of women, and the complacency with which well-paid workers in trade unions viewed the plight of the poor.[85]

WMCs had been vast holding areas for a continuum of working-class tradition, custom and experience, often perpetuating conservatism in cultural taste and older forms of social hierarchy. These elements were all active during the decade, but as the nineteenth-century industrial communities from which they had sprung began to disintegrate, they had begun to appear increasingly anachronistic, bringing more discord and divide rather than cohesion and solidarity. If we conceptualise the historical narrative of the 1970s, in Pemberton and Black's terms, as a 'battle of ideas', surrounding continuity and change, the collective and the individual, the traditional and the modern, then WMC popular culture and its traditions were losing their relevancy for a significant portion of the working class. In the realm of 1970s television, however, older notions of class identity, and who was excluded from them, could continue to be replayed.

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[83] *Ibid.,* August 1972, p23; *The Stage*, 7th June 1973, p4; *Ibid.,* 23rd February 1978, p30; *CIU Journal*, January 1970, p24; *Ibid.,* August 1970, p3; *Ibid.,* May 1979, p24-25; Addison, *No Turning* Back, p219; The *Stage*, 23rd November 1973, p20.
[84] *Ibid.,* May 1973, p28.
[85] Addison, *No Turning Back*, p335.

## Rescuing Variety and Saving the Nation: *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club*

In his social history of British TV, Jack Williams argues that although 'television events can provoke a sense of national belonging… The main emphasis in television has been on the individual, and individuality is the antithesis of the collective outlooks that have been seen as the hallmark of class.'[86] During the seventies the balance between emphasising the collective and individual was something still being disputed within TV entertainment. A popular ITV variety programme which can be interpreted as perpetuating a particular collective perspective is *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club* (WTSSC), which was firmly planted in a specific imagined experience of collective working-class leisure. Popular music historiography has largely conducted its explorations of 1970s British TV much like its analysis of 1960s British TV: via a rock music lens, traversing areas such as the portrayal of live rock performance on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* (1971-1987), its dramatisation in *Rock Follies* (1976) as well as attempts to marry rock performance with comedy and satire in the short-lived *Revolver (1978).*[87] Likewise, Evans' focus on popular music TV of the seventies prioritises representations of rock, with occasional forays into juvenile (*Lift Off* 1969-1974) or family orientated pop-programming (*Supersonic* 1975-77).[88]

Whilst *The Good Old Days* and *The Black and White Minstrel Show* remained popular programmes throughout the 1970s, and *Opportunity Knocks* (1956-78) and *New Faces* (1973-78) offered continuing forms of variety entertainment, *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club* (1974-77), was a programme that returned to the effort, previously attempted in the 1960s, of portraying an evening in a WMC. Little attention has been paid to this popular programme. Louis Barfe's popular history of British TV light entertainment industry prioritises behind-the-scenes intrigues and egos over programme content, whilst Double's insightful work surprisingly chooses to skip this era of TV in favour of emphasising music hall-variety's relation to stand-up comedy.[89]

On announcement that the show was in production with Granada, WTSSC was positioned as departing from previous attempts made to portray contemporary WMC life.

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[86] Jack Williams, *Entertaining the Nation*: *A Social History of British Television,* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004) p236.
[87] Mills, "Stone Fox Chase"; Peter Hutchings, "Little Ladies: *Rock Follies* and British Television's Dramatisation of Rock Music"; Richard Mills, "Pop Half-Cocked: A History of *Revolver*", in *Popular Music and Television in Britain*, ed. Ian Inglis, p55-71, p137-148, p149-160.
[88] Evans, *Rock & Pop on British TV*, p131-175.
[89] Louis Barfe, *Turned Out Nice Again, The Story of British Light Entertainment,* (London: Atlantic Books, 2009).

Unlike the BBC's *Club Night* of the 1960s, WTSSC was going to 'give a chance to performers new to network television'. The decision to base a new show around the re-creation of contemporary clubland, however, was built on a contradiction: one that recognised potential viewer identification with working-class leisure, but was also motivated by a growing fear within discourse that variety entertainment itself 'must be rescued' due to so many people continuing to stay at home and enjoy entertainment on TV. In order to undertake this rescue act, it seemed logical for ITV to present this form of entertainment as closely as possible to the environs where it still had a strong social appeal: the northern WMCs. Although the WTSSC would be a studio-constructed club, it promised to have 'all the authentic "dressings"': posters advertising 'bingo and coming attractions'; a studio audience 'made up of coach-loads from local clubs around Lancashire' would consume 'real alcohol'; and proceedings would be dictated by resident chairman and compere, all ensuring the flavour of a genuine night in a northern WMC that foregrounded variety entertainment.[90]

The concept was spearheaded by producer Johnnie Hamp, who had enjoyed success with ITV's *The Comedians* and chose two performers – originally scouted in the northern clubs – from this previous triumph to present the new venture. Bernard Manning was a comedian, singer and proprietary club owner in Manchester steeped in club custom, whilst Colin Crompton was recruited to play a character that personified the stereotype of the witless WMC concert secretary.[91] With a headline act and accompanying group of performers largely drawn from contemporary clubland, the show rapidly established a large viewership, drawing over an estimated 6 million viewers by 1975 as well as enjoying a prominent New Year's Eve special episode. Popularity was often attributed to the programme's perceived dedication to realism, typified by a lack of acknowledgement from both performers and studio audience to the presence of cameras coupled with the seemingly unrestricted consumption of cigarettes and alcohol. This occasionally led to letters in *TV Times* asking if the club was a real place, or specifically praising 'an atmosphere of fun'. Other viewers felt the portrayal of this northern working-class social space broke down geographic and class assumptions, Mrs. R. Woodruff of Brighton commenting 'I'm sure mine can't be the only voice of praise in the South… the programme provides us with first class variety acts in a plausible setting', whilst B. Williams of Barnsley added 'It's about time that viewers were shown what working men's clubs are really like… really friendly and relaxed atmospheres'. These viewing figures and letters of praise suggest that the show's attempt to rescue music hall-variety entertainment via its exhibition in

[90] *The Stage,* 17th January 1974, p16; *Ibid.,* 14th February 1974, p12.
[91] *TV Times,* 27th July-2nd August 1974, p14-15.

an imagined contemporary WMC setting was successful, simultaneously perpetuating performance culture with nineteenth-century origins.[92]

This performance culture can be analysed across the complete forty-seven episodes that were broadcast, now collected on DVD, which reveal their constant dissemination as well as their existence within a broader set of mentalities and iconography that idealised a collective memory of a working-class social experience.[93] The application of Double's four key tenets of performance dynamic that acted as a constant throughout music hall-variety's various iterations is once again, a valuable framework through which to explore these continuities. The employment of personality, participation, skill and novelty occurred in every single episode of WTSSC amongst performers, but the utilisation of personality, which Double states was always 'at the very centre of performance', was dominated by hosts Manning and Crompton. Both appeared in every episode, Manning often crooning an opening song accompanied by the house band and telling jokes between acts, presenting himself as a gregarious yet savvy compere. Crompton's approach dovetailed Manning, using forms of 'grotesquery, exaggeration and eccentricity' to create the persona of the irritable and often flustered, cloth-capped WMC concert secretary, claiming in an interview that the character was an amalgamation of '30 or 40 club committeemen'.[94] Crompton's character often straddled the line between the studio audience laughing with him, for instance telling the Amazing Bavarian Stompers that 'We don't mind you beating us at our national sport, 'cus we always beat you at yours' (3/8/74, 04:28-04:33), or laughing at his hapless, exaggerated attempts at booking artists, such as phoning Las Vegas and asking to speak to 'Elvis Preistley' (20/4/74; 00:35-02:25). Crompton created a memorable persona through the use of catchphrases, every episode ringing the fireball that lay on his desk to announce that 'we've had a meeting of the committaaaayyyy', which had often 'passed a resoluuuuution', usually intended to gently mock the parochial and patriarchal stereotype, such as the resolution to invite 'two women on the committee… On your behalf I have written to Bridgette Bardot and Raquel Welch' (31/8/74, 11:25).

If the facet of personality lay in the foundations of Manning and Crompton's comedy, the element of participation with the studio 'club' audience was an enduring custom utilised by all performers, particularly by musicians and singers. Not an episode of WTSSC went by without performers willing the audience to clap or sing-along, from contemporary crooners such as Frank Ifield (11/5/74; 31:34-36:42) and Peter Gordeno (31/8/74; 12:56-20:02) to

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[92] *The Stage*, 17th April 1975, p8; *TV Times*, 27th December-2nd January 1975, p63; *Ibid.,* 18th-24th May 1974, p74; *Ibid., 6th-12th December 1975, p24; Ibid.,* 11th-17th May 1974, p79.
[93] *The Wheeltappers & Shunters Social Club,* directed by John Scholz-Conway, David Warwick, Nicholas Ferguson and Peter Walker, (ITV Studios Ltd: London, 1974-1977, 2017), DVD.
[94] Double, *Britain Had Talent,* p102, 122; *TV Times,* 3rd-9th August 1974, p12.

established groups. Participation could be employed for different reasons within the same episode, in the case of The Bachelors (18/5/74 29:24-36:53), participation was a sign of audience familiarity and the popularity of the group, but in the case of little known country-pop trio Springfield Revival, it was deployed as a way to win favour and appreciation (18/5/74; 2:12-06:10). Participation in the form of audience sing-along led by upright piano also featured — appearances from Mrs Mills with music hall tunes (26/5/74; 00:07-03:53), Russ Conway (27/7/74; 30:34-37:42) with Broadway standards and Winifred Atwell with 'Darktown Strutters Ball' (3/8/74; 38:05-38:54) all played into this urban working-class ritual. Audience participation also took slightly more unorthodox forms. Legendary music hall star Tessie O'Shea, handed out paper bags to the audience and asked them to pretend to play along with her renditions of 'Four Leaf Clover', 'When the Saints…' and 'Nice one Cyril' (13/4/74; 31:44-36:10). Other forms of musical participation featured a Xylophone duo handing out mini Xylophones with numbered mallets, creating a 'play-along' via shouting out the number of the required mallet.

The requirement of skill to showcase versatility or produce 'elements of astonishment' were often foregrounded by musicians such as guitar-playing Bert Weedon (1/3/75), and were regularly produced by the continuing prevalence and appeal of the specialist acts drawn from clubland. Perennial favourites of the music hall world since the nineteenth century were represented in the show by such acts as sword juggler Steve Sabre (1/3/75), strongman Tony Brutus (27/4/74) and ventriloquist Terri Rogers (27/4/74; 22/3/75). WTSSC also gave a platform to the 'constant quest' for novelty within music hall-variety culture.[95] This desire amongst performers to create a unique appeal that perhaps also had a sense of newness often had an element of the nonsensical: The Morton Fraser Harmonica Gang, whilst reaching virtuoso levels on their instruments incorporated the slapstick dynamic of continually having to physically remove from the stage a dwarf intent on joining in (7/9/74; 03:06-07:16). Other acts such as percussionist Eric Delaney combined skill with novelty, performing 'Big Noise from Witnetka' with the audience quiet with respectful fascination (18/5/74 21:51-25:13). Naturally, acts often encapsulated all four of these performance dynamics into their performance. Unlike most turns who were given somewhere between five to ten minutes, Ronnie Jukes and Ricki Lee were a married couple given a longer spot of eighteen minutes to present their comedy, dance and family band. Ronnie, a short and stout Yorkshireman, told jokes – usually at the expense of his stone-faced mother-in-law Violet Tomlinson who played piano – sang 'Hava Nagalia' whilst encouraging the audience to sing-along, and tap-danced in conversation with his son's drum solo. Ricki sang 'My Yiddisha Mama', whilst the band also found time to perform a 1950s rock 'n' roll medley (26/7/75 19:22-37:51).

[95] Double, *Britain Had Talent,* p158, 178

The show's constructed portrayal of perceived working-class cultural practice and custom in a specifically northern setting was also accompanied by the signification of collective perspectives regarding class, nation and the past. What differentiated WTSSC from other portrayals of the working-class past explored in this chapter, was the regular, explicit reminders of not only who was included, but who was excluded. Patriotism and national pride within the WTSSC, in continuity with the Victorian music hall, was often explored via the recounting of military daring-do. The conduit for this patriotism within WTSSC was British heroism during the Second World War, an era which many of the studio audience and viewers at home would have remembered. Mike Carter, billed as a 'sound impressionist' recreated the sound of aeroplane dogfights whilst narrating the story of the Battle of Britain as Winston Churchill (5/4/75 22:58-25:20). Accordionist Valentino, played the theme from the film *The Dam Busters* (1955) as he announced that the pilots involved in the raid would be 'remembered forever… for self-sacrifice' before going on to recite dialogue from the film itself (2/8/75; 18:07-23:57). Both of these particular performances, were delivered with sincerity and received rapturous applause, continuing the use of war motifs as a vehicle for moments of collective national sentiment. This imagined national unity was also reinforced via the show's iconography, the club wall draped in the Union Flag and often cutting to a framed picture of Queen Elizabeth II to indicate the start and end of advert breaks (4/5/74; 17:57).

Alongside the foregrounding of patriotism within an imagined working-class leisure space, other mentalities were evoked, chiefly, the wider-framing of a specific working-class social experience that was still mono-cultural in character. If the real WMCs were struggling to reconcile their Vicwardian social traditions with increasing governmental, media and public support for individual rights, then the ultimately constructed and imagined world of the WTSSC – alongside its attempts at salvaging music hall-variety entertainment – offered a haven from these conflicts, where older conceptions of social hierarchy within working-class leisure remained undisturbed. A bricolage of performative and iconographic indicators littered the programme which marked out this specific classed experience. Alongside pictures of the monarchy were photographs of both Clement Attlee and Harold Wilson, inferring an imagined community that were not only patriotic but leant towards the Labour Party (13/4/74; 00:06). The fact that the programme was set in an imagined WMC was obviously the biggest signifier of WTSSC's class affiliations, but prompts highlighting a larger working-class world of leisure were given. For instance, a special episode was broadcast portraying the club's supposed holiday in Blackpool (28/8/74), which as previously explored in Chapter Six, was one of the crucible's for working-class leisure from the nineteenth century onwards.

Patriarchal structures associated with the world of WMCs were exacerbated, with male-humour dominating and spearheaded by Manning and Crompton. This occasionally crossed into casual misogyny, finding humour in subjects such as domestic abuse (17/7/75;

02:09; 23/2/77; 05:20) and can perhaps be summed up by performer Bobby Knutt asking the audience 'What do you think about that women's lib?', to which he gave his own reply 'I don't know, are they affiliated?' (15/3/75; 09:45-09:49). This portrayal of a leisure space regulated by male power was consistent throughout the show's life, culminating in an episode which hosted the Miss Nightclub 1977 (23/2/77). These dynamics within WTSSC were not only reflective of working-class clubland, but of wider change and conflict British society. Despite tangible change in the form of government acts of the 1970s attempting to curb discrimination and the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement, Smith-Wilson reminds us of a 1970s in which social conservatism regarding gender roles continued to be deeply ingrained, with a decline in female full-time workers due to a continued 'pressure to conform to a primary role as mother.'[96]

If WTSSC chose to depict an imagined convivial and insular collective working-class experience left untroubled by newer conceptions of class, the national past and gender dynamics, then the one changing element of society that performers did regularly make its studio audience and viewer's at home aware of was race. Whilst racial mockery in the form of blackface performance had been a feature of British popular culture since the nineteenth century, it had projected a reassuring fantasy world of black stereotypes emanating from the US. In contrast and from the show's first episode, racial jokes revolved around thinly veiled hostility towards the Asian and Black immigrant presence in Britain itself, made by Crompton's character (13/4/74; 28:30-28:46) and appeared regularly thereafter (3/8/74; 01:30-01:41); 22/2/75; 28:23-29:26), even occasionally aimed at performers such as Black Yorkshire comedian Charlie Williams (22/3/75: 19:43).[97] Considering Bernard Manning's later reputation as a comedian who dealt in racial derogation, it is curious that he refrains from this type of material until Mike Reid's appearance in the 14th episode, whose act included vocal and physical racial mockery (1/3/75; 8:24-14:26). This seems to have acted as a catalyst for Manning's own material involving race (1/3/75; 05:18; 15/3/75; 00:48), though he was by no means alone in using this type of material as a way to connect with the studio audience, with performers such as Marti Caine (29/3/75; 21:31-21:39) and Jimmy Marshall (2/8/75; 24:45-30:16) using racial mockery of immigrants as a form of humour. As explored in Chapter Six, racial disparagement as a form of humour had appeared within nineteenth-century popular cultures of the music hall and minstrel show. Its continuance in the immediate post-war period reflected various societal anxieties and fantasies, but its regular occurrence within the classed

[96] Smith Wilson, "Gender: Continuity and Change", p251.
[97] Charlie Williams was in many ways the exception that proved the rule. A former miner and professional footballer turned comedian, Williams's Yorkshire accent and brand of comedy proved popular in WMCs of the 1970s, though much of his material was often at his own expense, particularly his race.

world of the WTSSC can be interpreted as a demonstration of what Gilroy terms 'the recovery or preservation of endangered whiteness'. Whilst WTSSC supposedly salvaged music hall-variety culture, it also imagined a continuing mono-cultural class experience that was also mono-racial; explicitly othering colonial immigrants from customs, mentalities and identities that had their formulations in the nineteenth century.

Affirmations of collective national identity in the 1970s, which produced in Gilroy's words 'exceptionally powerful feelings of comfort and compensation… by the prospect of even a partial restoration of country's long-vanished homogeneity' could still be found in a broad swathe of programming which continued to imagine various aspects of the Victorian and Edwardian past.[98] In 1972, the BBC began a 13-part documentary series on the British Empire by pronouncing: 'They seemed like ordinary men… till they built the British Empire', whilst also offering drama about British Army officers in the 1890s entitled *The Regiment; The Good Old Days* continued throughout the decade, still given pride of place with a Christmas Day special in 1975 alongside regular music hall revivalism on BBC radio; ITV also produced Edwardian drama in the form of *Upstairs, Downstairs* as well as series that dramatised the Vicwardian lives of Edward VII, Florence Nightingale and Charles Dickens.[99]

From this range of examples, we can see that *Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club* continued to sit within a broader field of post-war popular culture that persistently turned to familiar customs, mentalities and environments of the Vicwardian, the cultural memory of which played a dynamic role within contemporary society. Positioned in media discourse as a programme that would evolve and sustain the music hall-variety entertainment, it also heavily featured popular music, the exploration of which offers a counterpoint to popular music historiography's focus on rock music's TV portrayal. The programme also drew on this performance culture's ability to articulate mentalities surrounding nation and class, though these abstractions evolved from previous evocations by regularly foregrounding working-class experience as something that was exclusively white. Although Jack Williams argues that 'If viewers had not felt that television viewing was in harmony with their cultural attitudes, it is unlikely that so many would have watched', perhaps the greatest irony regarding WTSSC's constructions of class-cohesion and exclusive national identity is that they were being played out within a form of media that encouraged individual or social forms of private leisure, rather than communal, class-based public participation.[100] By its very presentation on TV, *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club,* therefore, represented not only imagined continuity

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[98] Gilroy, *After Empire*, p95.
[99] *Radio Times*, 6th January 1972, p33; *Ibid.,* 17th February 1972, p6; *Ibid.,* 20th December-2nd January 1976, p51; *Ibid.,* 23rd March 1972, p28; *TV Times,* 12th-18th April 1975, p41; *Ibid.,* 14th-20th September 1974, p2; *Ibid.,* 25th September-1st October 1976, p8-9.
[100] Jack Williams, *Entertaining the Nation*, p234.

with the past, but the receding of a public, collective of working-class leisure culture formed in the Vicwardian moment.

## Summary and concluding remarks

This final research chapter has gathered together the broad areas of the theses focus to demonstrate that, throughout a range of popular music contexts, Vicwardian performance culture, discourse and environments continued to play an active role within British 1970s popular culture. The chapter has also attempted to move away from familiar narratives of 1970s British popular music. In its place, via folk-rock's re-articulation of a perceived folk tradition, Max Bygraves' performative working-class social history, 1970s clubland's tensions between collective tradition and popular individualism and *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club*'s framing of class and nation in exclusive terms, it has highlighted overlooked aspects that either informed rock music's perceived dominance or existed outside its economic, ideological and demographic models.

What these contrasting Vicwardian performance cultures demonstrate are some of the pressure points applied to a singular industrial working-class culture, identity, and community during the 1970s. Whilst the continuation of tradition and re-interpretation of custom explored in previous chapters relating to the 1950s and 1960s often reflected a strident and cohesive working-class identity, 1970s contemporary working-class culture and the contrasting representations of its past – whether designed to emphasise pastoralism, urbanism, race or gender – can be viewed as a turning point. For many amongst the working class, this critical moment involved the destabilisation of old identities as deindustrialisation, urban decay and a weakening of collective solidarity began to take hold. This was not the complete picture however: for others, it was a liberation bringing a new kind of working-class individualism that encouraged aspiration, personal choice and the continuing improvement of living standards. The 1980s would continue to see political affirmations of working-class identity based on traditions formed in the nineteenth century, most visibly in the Miners' Strike of 1984-85. Despite this, the question of what it was to be working class became increasingly more difficult to define, as an organised manual working class was reduced in size and influence by a Conservative government keen to recalibrate industrial relations. Although the vestiges of a Vicwardian continuum made an appearance in several British popular music contexts after 1979 – most obviously in 1990s Britpop and the ensuing indie scene of the early 2000s – whether or not they were connected in any tangible sense to pre-1914 working-class tradition and custom is an intriguing question for further study.

# Conclusions

Historian Keith Jenkins argues that history is a 'shifting discourse constructed by historians and that from the existence of the past no one reading is entailed: change the gaze, shift the perspective and new readings appear.'[1] This thesis has been conducted in this spirit, attempting to counter master-narratives that rigidly label British popular music of the 1960s as both a catalyst for and reflection of socio-cultural change. Via the utilisation of archival resources, an alternative post-war popular music landscape has been mapped that emphasises continuity with the past – reframing canonical musicians as well as highlighting overlooked environs, performers and audiences – and argues that traditions, customs and collective memories with origins in the Victorian and Edwardian era continued to play an active and highly visible role in the formation of the contemporary. This occurred not only in rock music culture of the late-1960s, but in an ongoing and evolving range of popular music contexts across multiple post-war decades, in what I term 'the Vicwardian continuum'.

My research has explored this continuum in three different cultural arenas which often interacted and overlapped with one another: local music-making networks within the home, pub, WMC and voluntary groups; live and recorded commercial popular music; and the British TV duopoly of the period. Whilst beginning with a broad and clear question – how and why did Vicwardian legacies influence British popular music of the 1960s – archive and discourse analysis helped to categorise three specific lines of discovery in regard to answering the former. This involved identifying enduring traditions and evolving customs of performance culture; social environments of entertainment, both real and imagined; and the perpetuation of collective mentalities within popular music and media coverage, all emerging from the social formations of the nineteenth century.

The passing-on, continuation and creative adaptation of Vicwardian performance culture and its structural, presentational and musical elements, occurred in both local social hubs and commercial culture of the 1960s. The dominant nineteenth-century performance culture that loomed over post-war British popular music was associated with the music hall-variety theatre. Originating from the 'free and easy' pub and tavern entertainment and adopted by the music hall in the increasingly commercialised towns and cities of Victorian Britain, post-1945 popular culture frequently employed the Vicwardian structural practice of the turn and the evolving custom of the singalong. Whether it be the home, public house or WMC, or the albums and TV programmes by performers such as Mrs Mills or Max Bygraves, the idea of consecutive and varied performers or communal, cross-generational sing-along was regularly

[1] Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, p16.

framed – implicitly or otherwise – as carrying-on the legacy of nineteenth-century urban working-class entertainment. The proclivity for audience participation was not only a structural fulcrum, but often employed as a performance dynamic alongside a range of other presentational devices involving the display of personality, novelty and skill, that continued to be utilised by performers and appreciated by audiences. These presentational elements were embedded in a variety of cultural contexts during the post-war period. The popularity of music hall-variety theatre with the Vicwardian working-class hastened its exposure and imitation within the WMCs of the late-nineteenth century, a cultural preference that endured and ensured that despite the closure – and seeming end – of music hall-variety theatres during the late-fifties and early-sixties. This form of expressive culture, featuring magicians, comedians, impersonators, speciality acts and above all popular music, continued to develop alongside its WMC audience during the 1960s and 1970s. Many of these presentational customs of the music hall-variety world were also flexible enough to be re-framed on 1960s TV, such as *Stars and Garters* merging of pre-1914 urban pub singalong with contemporary popular music.

In contrast to these presentational dynamics, other agents of popular music cultural production, be they social groups such as the BMHS or broadcasters like the BBC with its programme *The Good Old Days*, preferred to preserve and re-construct the nineteenth-century music hall-variety world as a fixed and finite entity, historicising presentational styles as a signifier of a supposedly authentic yet comforting *fin-de-siècle* heyday that offered reassuring portrayals of the past. The issue of what was or wasn't an 'acceptable' tradition haunted *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. Despite conscious attempts by the show's creators within media discourse to disassociate itself from nineteenth-century incarnations of blackface minstrelsy, analysis of the show's content demonstrates its popularity throughout the sixties and seventies relied on presentational and musical practice which had originally secured its status in the nineteenth century. Perhaps ironically, when the show was criticised for perpetuating racist stereotypes, the show's makers appeared to do a volte-face, often framing it as harmless tradition. Whilst TV programmes such as *The Good Old Days* and *The Black and White Minstrel Show* directly mined songs from the nineteenth century, the continuation of Vicwardian musical customs evolved in less obvious ways. From the late 1940s all the way through to the 1970s, commercial popular musicians ranging from Billy Cotton to Joe Brown, Ken Dodd to Ray Davies of the Kinks extended and re-interpreted genres of music hall song, fusing contemporary instrumentation with musical or lyrical sentiments made popular in the Vicwardian era, including the sentimental ballad and songs of social-political comment or patriotic commentary.

Many of these performance continuities took place within environments, both real and imagined, that had been established in the Vicwardian period. Working men's clubs, with their membership in the millions, represent the most tangible example of the continuation of classed

leisure spaces. These working-class hubs facilitated both communicative memories via individual clubs' activities as well as the regular proclamations of Club and Institute Union acting as an aide-memoire to a wider sense of working-class history. The BMHS and the music hall re-enactment world spent time performing in or saving sites of memory associated with the nineteenth century, such as Wilton's Music Hall, ensuring these spaces remained part of the psychogeography influencing the construction of collective memory. Vicwardian environments could also be places that were either imagined or re-constructed. Rock musicians of the 1960s and 1970s continued invented traditions – originally conceived by the Vicwardian middle-classes – that envisaged true Englishness as fundamentally pastoral, or re-interpreted them to include urban and suburban working-class surroundings. The nineteenth-century environment that continued to hold an importance across local, commercial and TV settings was the working-class seaside resort. Its landscape was a bastion for working-class leisure during the 1960s, continuing to serve as a focal point for live and broadcast music hall-variety performance as well as being utilised as a foundational base from which The Beatles explored social hierarchy and transgression in *Magical Mystery Tour.*

Enduring performance cultures and social environments with roots in a pre-1914 age inevitably led to the perpetuation within popular music and its surrounding discourse of collective mentalities that also emerged from the Vicwardian era. The idea that popular music might be able to represent a sense of Britishness or Englishness was something explored by popular musicians and encouraged within media discourse. From the 1940s to the late-1970s, a sense of national identity was invoked in popular music in a number of ways. Vicwardian middle-class perspectives that conceptualised Englishness as bucolic, as mentioned above, not only re-articulated an idealised environment, but often expressed an enduring collective anxiety that stood in opposition to or attempted to subsume urban working-class expressions of cultural identity or American cultural forms. This latter concern is complicated by British popular music's appreciation and appropriation of musical genres perceived as having American origins, whether it be via twentieth-century forms such as jazz, blues and rock 'n' roll or the continued enjoyment of earlier forms, such as minstrelsy. This ambivalence regarding American cultural influence continued throughout the rest of the twentieth century and is often viewed as a phenomenon particular to the modern epoch, though ultimately its roots clearly lie in the nineteenth century. Due to their conception in the 'high' imperial moment, mentalities of Englishness were intricately tied to collective perceptions of Empire. This particularly involved an enduring belief in white authority, which was deeply ingrained across the class spectrum, an issue this thesis explored via CIU legal support for WMCs who operated a colour-bar, the public and media defence surrounding criticism pertaining to *The Black and White Minstrel Show*'s racism, as well as *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social*

*Club* racial humour, which symbolically excluded immigrants from certain forms of social experience.

Intertwining with these Vicwardian conceptions of race and nation within post-war discourse were enduring class mentalities. It has been demonstrated across the three areas of this investigation that class hierarchies and their associated agendas, formed from the urbanisation of the nineteenth century, continued to influence or be replayed in popular culture of the 1960s and wider post-war period. At times, these involved either middle-class declassification or usurpation of working-class culture, witnessed across the beat music and folk-rock eras, as well as TV programming and re-enactment societies' emphasis on music hall-variety theatre as an invariant national tradition rather than a set of evolving working-class cultural customs. However, the presence of a continuing middle-class anxiety regarding working-class culture during the post-war period is also testament to the notion that many of the Vicwardian legacies this thesis has identified encompassing performance culture, leisure environments and mentalities – within rock music culture or outside its purview – would not have endured without the agency, influence and continuation of working-class cultural customs. Many of these were forged and perpetuated by a continuing Vicwardian mentality of working-class self-reliance, in equal turn both conservative and progressive; they were protective of hard-won autonomy yet keen to take part in contemporary modernity, propelling both the continuation of established cultural practice as well as its re-interpretation in new forms of popular music such as the burgeoning rock culture. Foregrounding these enduring Vicwardian class perspectives, customs and environments gives a different sense of 1960s British popular music, one that has finer cultural nuances, inhabits a cross-generational space and features a plurality of music cultures developed by and for working-class taste. These elements are often marginalised in favour of historical narratives that choose to emphasise a more progressive and, at certain points, less problematic account of post-war Britain, a country shown as breaking free of class strictures and accompanied by a youth culture in thrall to a trans-Atlantic popular music dialogue.

My thesis has sought not only to demonstrate how these Vicwardian legacies played a role within 1960s pop and rock, but to offer an interpretation which argues their presence as part of a wider continuum of British popular music cultures from 1945 to the end of the 1970s. Furthermore, I have sought to ask why this continuum specifically involved traditions and customs drawn from the nineteenth and early twentieth-century past. The era itself was certainly accessible, being within living memory for a significant section of the population. However, the presence of the Vicwardian continuum and the increasing prominence given to its collective representations can be interpreted as a manifestation of broader contemporary anxieties surrounding changing perceptions of British identity in the post-WWII era. Despite the argument that enduring Vicwardian working-class cultural practice and custom drove post-

war continuity, this thesis has never attempted to deny the occurrence of cultural change, at times demonstrating how the 'new' re-articulated the 'old'. Social hierarchy based on nineteenth-century formations of class were changing and fragmenting as de-industrialisation, 'affluence' and individualism, as well as Britain's declining global influence played their roles in reshaping the national culture. Whilst prosperity brought increased leisure time it was also accompanied by changing localities which gradually erased swathes of urban working-class community from which many of the traditions and customs explored in this thesis emerged. Perhaps paradoxically, these social trends prolonged and intensified a sense of cultural connection with the Vicwardian across the period 1945-1979, acting as an anchor in a range of local and commercial contexts, and often expressed via popular music. Broadly speaking, my research places itself alongside revisionist histories of the era which argue that the scale and pace of post-war change has routinely been overstated to the detriment of what were purposeful constructions of socio-cultural continuity.

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