

AUSTERITY, AFFLUENCE AND DISCONTENT: BRITAIN, 1951-1979

Part 3: “Can’t Get No Satisfaction”
***What were the main changes in entertainment
and fashion in this period?***



Source 1: Fans outside Buckingham Palace for The Beatles as they receive their MBEs in 1965

What were the main changes in popular music c.1951–1979?

How people listened to music

1) Records

Before 1950 people had listened to music at home by playing records on large gramophone machines. These 78 rpm records were heavy, fragile and expensive. New record technology was introduced in 1948:

- The 45 rpm 7-inch single (known as an EP, for 'extended play') by RCA Victor
- The 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm 12-inch album (known as an LP, for 'long play') by Columbia.

These new vinyl records were much cheaper and more durable, and had a more accurate representation of the actual musical performance. These new records lowered prices and during the 1950s plain record sleeves (with a hole in the middle to show the title of the record) were replaced with picture covers to increase sales. In 1955 some 4 million 7-inch singles were sold, but by 1963 this had increased to 61 million.

Sales of albums gradually began to overtake sales of singles. The teenagers of the 1950s bought mostly singles. By the 1960s these young record-buyers were more grown up and wanted more than just a two-and-a-half minute 'throwaway' pop song and album sales began to increase. In 1964 singles outsold albums by three to one but by 1968 equal numbers of albums and singles (49 million copies of each) were being sold. By the end of the 1960s Led Zeppelin would sell 2 million albums and become one of the most famous bands in the world without selling any singles at all.

New designs of record players made listening to records more accessible. For example, the Dansette, made in the UK from 1952, was typical of these new record player designs – it was smaller and lighter, with some models designed to be portable. Later models included autochangers allowing people to listen to several records one after the other without having to change them. They could play 7 and 12 inch records at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$, 45 and 78 rpm.

The jukebox, a public record player containing hundreds of records that could be chosen to be played, was invented in the USA in 1927 and was first made in the UK in 1938. There were a few hundred in the UK in 1945 but 13,000 by 1958. It gave listeners control over what they could listen to in public places. As austerity and rationing ended in the early 1950s both jukeboxes and the records to go in them could be imported directly from the USA. At the time American records were not often played on the BBC which was the only radio service legally available in Britain. First jazz, and 'rock 'n' roll' records were played in jukeboxes. They were often found in places where teenagers spent their free time such as the growing number of coffee bars like El Toro in Muswell Hill, or the Kardomah in Liverpool.



Source 2: A Dansette record player

2) Cassettes

The compact cassette, a small plastic box containing a reel of tape, was invented by Philips in 1963. The cassette was originally only used for dictation because the sound reproduction was not very good. Early in the 1970s a number of improvements were made to sound quality using higher quality metal tapes and noise reduction techniques. The cassette tape's main advantage over records was that it could be bought with music already recorded onto it, but it could also be recorded on. Tapes quickly became available that could record two or three hours of music, and they were also smaller and more convenient than records. By 1977 more music was sold on cassette than on vinyl records. Sony introduced the Walkman in 1979, a small and portable cassette player that was listened to using small headphones and could be carried and used anywhere. The cassette continued to be a popular music format until the 1990s.



Source 3: Teenagers listening to a jukebox

3) Radio

Radio technology had also changed. Before the 1950s radios used glass valves to amplify the sound. From 1956 transistor radios became available in the UK.¹ They were much smaller and lighter, and powered by much longer-lasting batteries and they were also very portable. These new radios also meant that listening to the radio became more of a personal experience – teenagers were no longer restricted to listening to what their parents wanted them to listen to.

¹ More information on transistor radios may be found at <http://goo.gl/2aoDKQ>



Source 4: Early transistor radios available in the UK in 1956

Radio broadcasting was also changing. Until the 1970s, the BBC had the monopoly on radio broadcasting in the UK. BBC programmes were very restricted in what music they could play and many new acts, especially those associated with teenage audiences, were given very little 'needle time' on air. Only *Pick of the Pops* played this music once a week.

Radio Luxembourg, which broadcast in the evening from mainland Europe and was aimed at US troops stationed in Germany, could also be received in the UK. Its programmes were made up of more popular and modern music, especially the latest records from America, and it made stars of its presenters who were referred to as **DJ's** like Jimmy Young and Alan Freeman.

A new alternative began in 1964 when Radio Caroline began broadcasting from a ship anchored off the UK coast, just outside of British territorial waters. It was soon followed by many more 'pirate radio' stations,² the most successful being Radio London. They played non-stop popular music, alternating between current chart music, older singles and album tracks. Millions of listeners tuned in to enjoy music that they could not hear on the BBC, presented by much less formal DJs like Tony Blackburn and Kenny Everett. The government eventually passed the Marine and Broadcasting Offences Act in 1967 that made pirate radio stations illegal and they were shut down.

The BBC responded by hiring many of the most successful pirate radio DJs to work on its new Radio 1 network. Even though it was only broadcasting for a few hours a day originally, Radio 1 quickly became very popular – for example, the 1970s Breakfast Show with Tony Blackburn regularly got 20 million listeners.

The BBC had a monopoly on radio until 1973. By 1951 90% of British homes had a 'wireless'³ radio set. There were falling radio audiences as a result of the rise in television viewing – for example during the 1950s the audience for the popular BBC radio soap opera *The Archers* went down from 23 million to 10 million listeners a week. But ultimately radio did better than the cinema because changes in technology enabled people to listen to the radio in places they could not

² A short film about Radio Caroline may be seen at <http://goo.gl/pJxX3r>. A documentary about Britain's pirate radio may be seen at <http://goo.gl/PIJU1C>

³ Stuart Clayton, *Mass Media, Popular Culture and Social Change in Britain since 1945* (Edexcel, 2010), page 20

watch television – portable transistor radios, long-life batteries and headphones all contributed to this, as well as the growing numbers of cars with radios installed in them.

What radio was offering also changed and adapted. In 1967 the BBC split the Light Programme into Radio 1, with music for younger listeners, and Radio 2, music for more mature listeners. The Third Programme became Radio 3 for people who wanted to listen to classical music; and the Home Service became Radio 4, which broadcast news, discussions and plays. Work also began in 1967 on local radio stations which became very successful. As radio listening tended to be done by individuals, programmes could be targeted towards what specific audiences wanted. From 1973 the BBC also had to compete with commercial radio stations like London's Capitol Radio.

4) Television

Popular music programmes also made their way onto television. In 1956 ITV began showing *Cool For Cats*, where dancers danced along to popular records. The BBC showed *Six-Five Special* from 1957 ('Time to jive on the old six five' was presenter Pete Murray's catchphrase), a magazine programme for teenagers that included interviews, comedians and popular music performances. It was shown at teatime on Saturdays and quickly became very popular, regularly getting 10 million viewers. The BBC added *Juke Box Jury* to their Saturday evening schedule from 1959. Twelve million people regularly tuned in to see a panel of four celebrities give their verdicts ('Hit' or 'Miss') on the latest record releases. ITV responded with *Oh Boy!* which had regular performances from popular young singers like Cliff Richard and Marty Wilde. The longest-running music television programme was BBC's *Top of the Pops* which ran from 1964 to 2006 and in the mid-1970s was regularly getting 15 million viewers a week.⁴

Where people listened to music

1) Dance halls

As television took away their live audiences, old music hall theatres became venues where bands could play to live audiences. Every town had a dance hall and bands like The Beatles spread their music to a wide audience by taking part in touring shows that would travel from town to town and city to city, playing these old venues before becoming famous.

In 1951 there were 450 dance halls,⁵ mostly run by the Mecca and Locarno chains, where you could go to dance to live music. Big bands, like 'Ted Heath and his Music' dance band,⁶ played swing tunes by Frank Sinatra and Glenn Miller. The people who went dancing there tended to be adults rather than younger people. '**No jiving**' notices were often widely ignored. These dance halls were often very popular – the Hammersmith Palais had 7,000 dancers a night.⁷

2) Nightclubs and discos

Nightclubs⁸ (discothèque in French) came to take over from dance halls as the places where young people would go to dance in the later 1950s and as their name suggests they were open long into the night. They did not just have bars to serve alcohol, but also dance floors where the

⁴ Clips of performances by decade may be seen at the BBC Top of the Pops website <http://goo.gl/Rj2wt9>

⁵ Clips of dance hall venues and jiving may be seen at <http://goo.gl/JqCIVf>

⁶ An excellent colour Youtube video of Ted Heath may be seen at <https://youtu.be/0PMxlqBUZIk>

⁷ The importance of the local Palais to Ray Davies of the Kinks' sister features in their 1982 song 'Come Dancing' – the video may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lgzc0axshc>

⁸ Photographs of the lost nightclubs of London may be seen at <http://goo.gl/V4DI7V>

7 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

dancers would hear the latest bands or records played by DJs. There were an increasing number of these clubs, catering for a wide variety of musical tastes:

- The Marquee Club opened on Oxford Street in London in 1958, starting off as a jazz club but later on being important in launching the careers of bands like the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds and Led Zeppelin in the 1960s, as well as musicians like Jimi Hendrix and David Bowie, and played an important role in the early punk movement in the 1970s
- The UFO club opened on Tottenham Court Road in 1966 – its psychedelic liquid light shows were used alongside live performances by cutting edge 1960s bands like Pink Floyd⁹
- Wigan Casino¹⁰ became the venue for ‘Northern Soul’ all-night dancing sessions from 1973, described by America’s *Billboard* magazine as ‘the best disco in the world’ in 1978 (other ‘Northern Soul’ venues were The Twisted Wheel in Manchester and The Golden Torch in Stoke-on-Trent)
- The Cavern Club opened on Mathew Street in Liverpool in 1957, originally opening at lunchtime serving milky coffee as it had no alcohol licence. It started as a jazz venue but quickly became a place where young people could go and see bands playing live rock ‘n’ roll. The Beatles played there almost 300 times between 1961 and 1963 and it was described by their manager Brian Epstein as “a live cellarful of noise.”¹¹



Source 5: The Cavern Club

⁹ A video of Pink Floyd performing ‘Interstellar Overdrive’ may be seen in colour at <http://goo.gl/esZn1t> or in black and white at <https://youtu.be/5uqzMaNPiJM> and a video of the UFO Club or ‘Astronomy Domine’ may be seen in black and white at <http://goo.gl/t8vDJi>

¹⁰ This England, a 1978 documentary on the Wigan Casino ‘all-nighters’, may be seen at <http://goo.gl/5WSgmt>

¹¹ This is quoted in Yesterday’s Britain: The illustrated story of how we lived, worked and played in this century (Reader’s Digest, 1998), page 256.

3) Outdoor performances and festivals

Free, large-scale outdoor festivals, where audiences could listen to a wide variety of musical acts including some of the most popular bands and artists of the time began as part of the hippy movement in the 1960s. They started in the USA with events like the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 and the Woodstock Music and Art Fair in 1969. There were a number of notable attempts to have free festivals in the UK as well:

- The Rolling Stones played a one-off free outdoor concert to 250,000 fans in Hyde Park, London, in July 1969¹² – it was the first show with new guitarist Mick Taylor and lead singer Mick Jagger read some poetry and released white butterflies in memory of their former bandmate Brian Jones who had died a few days earlier
- The Isle of Wight Festival started in 1968 and by August 1970¹³ the audience consisted of 600,000 people; the event featured more than fifty musical acts including The Who, Jimi Hendrix and The Doors
- The Pilton Pop, Blues and Folk Festival of 1970 was attended by 1,500 people who came to see headline act Tyrannosaurus Rex (later 'T-Rex'); in 1971 this event became Glastonbury Fayre¹⁴ and had David Bowie as one of its headline acts.

Changing trends in popular music c.1951–1979¹⁵

Popular music c.1951 – 'mom and dad' music

American music was already a big influence in the UK before the arrival of 'rock 'n' roll' in the 1950s. American jazz music had been listened to since the 1920s and swing music, a more modern dance version of jazz, had been made popular in the 1940s by the American Forces Network radio broadcasts to US troops stationed in the UK. By 1951 it was the music of American artists like Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey that people danced to rather than British ones.

American artists dominated the charts of the early 1950s (based on sales of sheet music), which were full of songs by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Perry Como, alongside orchestral pieces. In response to this, by the end of the 1950s the four major British record companies made the vast majority of their profits from comedy records, recordings of classical performances or West End musicals, rather than popular or dance music.

1950s: Rock 'n' roll and skiffle

'Rock 'n' roll' was used by American DJ Alan Freed who popularised the term to describe upbeat black American music that was made for a white audience. Elvis Presley became the most famous singer of this style of music. Many people's first exposure to rock 'n' roll in the UK was Bill Haley's 'Shake Rattle and Roll' in 1954,¹⁶ and other songs in the film *Rock Around the Clock*. American rock 'n' roll stars like Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Buddy Holly were first heard by people listening to Radio Luxembourg.

¹² A TV recording of this show, The Stones in the Park, may be seen at https://youtu.be/_qxMRHyZq0

¹³ A short overview of the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival may be seen at <http://goo.gl/wbh4G8>

¹⁴ A trailer for the DVD of the 1971 film Glastonbury Fayre may be seen at <http://goo.gl/9M3EJT> with links to the full version of the film.

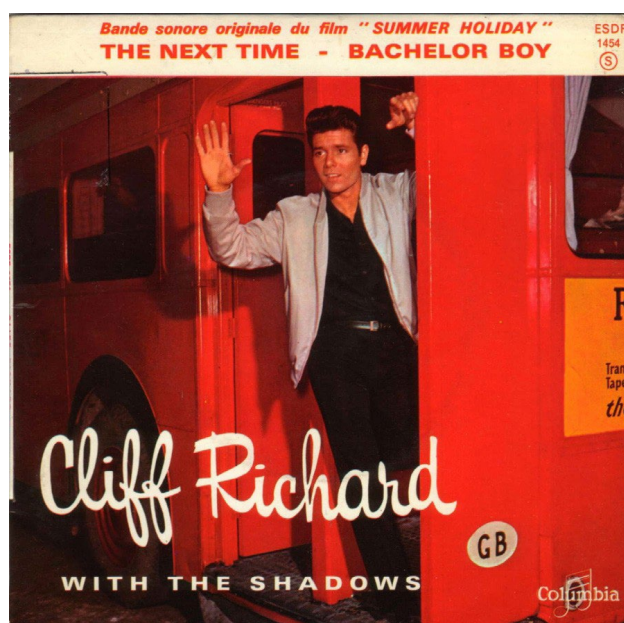
¹⁵ The Guardian's interactive timeline of the development of popular music may be seen at <http://goo.gl/Zfoqaz>

¹⁶ This song and others performed by the band may be seen at <http://goo.gl/YYjtR4>

The first British rock 'n' roll artists were Tommy Steele with his number one hit 'Singing the Blues' in 1957 and Cliff Richard who, with his backing band The Shadows, had a big hit with 'Move It'¹⁷ in 1958. Billy Fury's debut album *Sound of Fury* in 1960 is considered to be the best British rock 'n' roll record. Fury had written all the songs himself, played by his backing band the Tornados. These British versions of rock 'n' roll were relatively safe and sanitised compared to their American counterparts like Elvis Presley, Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent.

FOCUS: Cliff Richard – the British Elvis

Born Harry Webb, Cliff Richard took his stage name from 'Cliff', implying danger, and 'Richard' in honour of his musical influence, American rock 'n' roll singer Little Richard. He regularly performed live at the 2is coffee bar with his backing band The Drifters, who soon became The Shadows to avoid legal problems in America. A regular slot on the ITV music show *Oh Boy!* also helped his publicity and his first single 'Move It' went straight into the charts at number 2 in 1958.



Source 6: Cliff Richard

Cliff modelled his original stage persona and look on Elvis Presley – suit, quiff, curled lip, eye liner and swivelling hips. 'Is this man too sexy for television?' asked the *Daily Sketch* newspaper.¹⁸ He quickly became more 'show business' than 'rock 'n' roll', softening his image and widening his fan base. He even started to appear in musical films like *Summer Holiday* and *The Young Ones*, becoming the most successful artist at the UK box office in 1962 and 1963, ahead of Sean Connery's James Bond. Cliff Richard's career has outlasted all of his rivals, and has even lasted longer than many new musical trends – his greatest hits compilation album *Forty Golden Greats* was knocked off the number one spot in 1977 by The Sex Pistols, and yet he still had number one records for several decades after.

Skiffle was a home-made British response to rock 'n' roll, played using acoustic or even homemade instruments. One of the most successful skiffle records was Lonnie Donegan's version of the American folk song 'Rock Island Line' which sold 3 million copies in six months. Many young

¹⁷ A video of Cliff and the Shadows performing this may be seen at <http://goo.gl/qoMpQH>

¹⁸ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 474.

10 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

musicians picked up this style of music because the instruments were cheap and the songs and playing style were very accessible. The Liverpool skiffle band The Quarrymen went on to playing electric instruments and became The Beatles.

FOCUS: Beatlemania

The Beatles had been playing together in some form since 1956 but they only became famous after they were seen playing in Liverpool's Cavern Club in 1961 by Brian Epstein. He softened their rocker look from leather jackets and trousers to collarless lounge suits, and got them to have their hair cut shorter into 'mop tops'. He taught them to behave in a way that would be acceptable to the widest possible audience (e.g. bow after every song) and that they should keep their performances short to keep the audiences wanting more.



Source 7: The Beatles in 1964

The band's first single was 'Love Me Do'¹⁹ which made the Top 20 chart in 1962, and their first album *Please Please Me* went to the top of the album charts in 1963. The Beatles popularised the idea that bands should write their own songs, which had not been the case before they became famous but became normal practice. Their two-minute pop songs dominated the charts in 1963 and for several years afterwards. The popularity of The Beatles was unprecedented – 26 million people tuned in to watch them perform on *The Royal Variety Show* in 1963 and 73 million Americans tuned in to watch them on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964.²⁰

As soon as they became famous great crowds of fans would follow them around, as shown in

¹⁹ A video of The Beatles performing this song in 1962 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/IX9W6y>

²⁰ For information and pictures about the Beatles performances in Cardiff see

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/day-beatles-played-cardiff--10584998> and an archive about The Beatles performances in Wales at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/music/sites/beatles/>

11 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

the opening sequence of their 1964 film *A Hard Day's Night*. Merchandise featuring The Beatles on everything from tea towels to hair spray filled the shops on both sides of the Atlantic. The obsession for all things Beatles became known as 'Beatlemania'. Screaming at their concerts was so loud that the audience could not hear what they were playing. However, John Lennon caused a lot of opposition to the band in the USA when he said in the *Evening Standard* newspaper in 1966, "We're more popular than Jesus now."²¹

1960s: 'Beat' music

As skiffle bands took up electric instruments, they created their own version of rock 'n' roll that is sometimes referred to as 'beat music' because of the driving rhythms of the songs and the backbeat in the drumming. These beat bands, like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Who, etc. were influenced by a wide range of rock 'n' roll and **R&B** records from America.

FOCUS: 'Would you let your daughter marry a Rolling Stone?'

The Rolling Stones started playing together in 1962. Their first single, 'Come On', was released in 1963, and their first album, *The Rolling Stones*,²² in 1964. Early newspaper stories focussed on the band's raw and energetic live performances, as well as their long-haired, rough look which was in contrast to the well-behaved and well-dressed Beatles. The band's manager Andrew Oldham encouraged this by planting headlines in newspapers, for example the *Melody Maker* newspaper headline 'Would you let your sister go with a Rolling Stone?'

Although the band started off recording R&B and rock 'n' roll cover versions (and even a Lennon–McCartney song, 'I Wanna Be Your Man'), Keith Richards and Mick Jagger developed a very successful song-writing partnership. Rolling Stones' songs were often more openly sexual than anything by The Beatles, from cover versions of songs like 'I Just Want To Make Love to You' (a 1950s R&B hit, made famous by Muddy Waters), to Jagger/Richards' compilations like '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction'²³ and 'Let's Spend The Night Together'.²⁴

British record companies were slow to realise the growing popularity of beat music – a record executive for the Decca label turned down the opportunity to sign The Beatles in 1962 because he said that guitar bands were going out of fashion. In the first half of the 1960s these beat bands became so successful in the UK that their records were sold in the USA – the American media called it the 'British Invasion'.

²¹ Stuart Clayton, *Mass Media, Popular Culture and Social Change in Britain since 1945* (Edexcel, 2010), page 45.

²² Clips of The Rolling Stones performing some of the songs from this time in their career may be seen at <https://youtu.be/XhFbpUGteMQ>

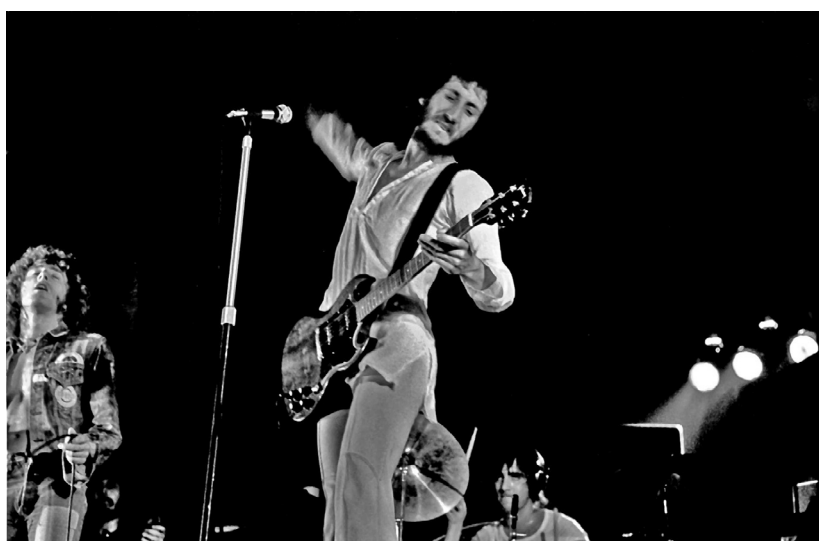
²³ A video of the band performing this live in 1965 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/UITcB9>

²⁴ A video of the band playing this on Top of the Pops in 1967 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/gpY0J2>

FOCUS: The Kinks and The Who

Two other influential British bands from the 1960s were The Kinks and The Who. Both bands began their careers in London in 1964.

The Kinks released their first song 'Long Tall Sally'²⁵ in 1964, and their first album simply called Kinks in the same year. Ray Davies became very well known for his innovative use of sounds in the studio. For example, he slashed his guitar amplifier to create the distorted guitar sound on 'You Really Got Me',²⁶ which very heavily influenced amateur garage musicians in the UK and USA. The Kinks were also the first British musicians to incorporate the Indian drone into their music, as can be heard in 'See My Friends'.²⁷ Eventually they would move away from making singles to concentrate on writing themed albums about elements of life in Britain like *The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society* (1968). An American musicians' union had the band banned from playing in the USA for four years during their 1965 American tour.



Source 8: The Who

The Who's first single was 'I Can't Explain'²⁸ (1964) and their first album, *My Generation*, was released in 1965. They received a lot of attention from the media because of their 'auto-destructive art' – this referred to the way the band often destroyed their instruments at the end of a gig. This eventually resulted in the permanent ear damage caused to Pete Townshend when they blew up the drumkit on an American TV show.²⁹ Pete Townshend was the main song-writer and began with songs about teenage angst like 'I Can't Explain'³⁰ and 'My Generation',³¹ then more challenging topics like transvestites ('I'm A Boy') and pornography ('Pictures of Lily'). By the end of the 1960s the band stopped concentrating on singles and started producing 'concept' albums like the rock opera *Tommy* (1969) about a disabled youth who was good at pinball and *Quadrophenia* (1973) about mod culture.

²⁵ A video of The Kinks playing this at the Cavern Club in 1964 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/GZQ05f>

²⁶ A video of an early TV performance (with a screaming audience in the background) may be seen at <http://goo.gl/qa6jmH>

²⁷ A video of a performance of this song may be seen at <http://goo.gl/buCRWE>

²⁸ A video of The Who performing this song may be seen at <http://goo.gl/zm17ed>

²⁹ This incident may be seen at <https://youtu.be/MVa4q-YVjD8>

³⁰ An early pop video for this record may be seen at <http://goo.gl/So3eJs>

³¹ An early performance with a typically raucous ending may be seen at <http://goo.gl/tDZlJP>

13 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

Psychedelic rock

In the later 1960s, psychedelic rock music tried to replicate the mind-altering experience of taking hallucinatory drugs like LSD. This was achieved by mixing elements of world music, like the extended ragas and drones of Indian music along with instruments like the sitar and tabla, with new electronic effects (feedback, wah wah) and recording techniques (tape loops, backward taping, delay). New electronic synthesisers and the mellotron, which could play recorded sounds through a keyboard, were also used. Songs would often be much longer than traditional pop songs, with unusual time signatures and musical structures. Psychedelic lyrics often referred to drugs, literature (like the works of Tolkien), or were filled with surreal imagery. These influences can be seen in songs like 'A Whiter Shade of Pale'³² by Procul Harem, and albums like The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*³³ or Pink Floyd's *Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*.³⁴

1970s: Glam Rock and Punk³⁵

Glam rock

A new generation of musicians made their names in the early 1970s with loud electric pop music that went along with outrageous fashions and controversial ideas. The optimistic 1960s had led into the more miserable 1970s and young people were looking for music to escape from the increasingly harsh reality.

Glam rock was loud and bright and challenged many existing ideas of what was acceptable in terms of dress and attitudes about sexuality. Singers and musicians would wear outrageous clothes, often based on glamorous old Hollywood outfits and designs. Male performers were happy to be seen wearing big platform-soled boots, glitter and make-up.

FOCUS: T-Rextasy

T-Rex was formed by singer/songwriter Marc Bolan³⁶ in 1967. It was the performance of their single 'Hot Love'³⁷ on *Top of the Pops* in 1971 which is considered to be the first public 'glam rock' performance as Bolan wore bright satin trousers and glitter make-up around his eyes. After this the songs of T-Rex became more openly sexual, like 'Get It On'³⁸ (1971). Future performances would see Bolan adding high-heeled boots and feather boas to his stage outfits. The hysterical reaction from fans, especially teenage girls, was compared to 'Beatlemania' – the band called it 'T-Rextasy'.

Bands like Slade dressed in glam fashions but their music was more like traditional rock, while at the other extreme Roxy Music made music that was more experimental and sophisticated. David Bowie deliberately played with his image, becoming increasingly **androgynous** not just in his

³²The video that goes with this song may be seen at <http://goo.gl/r1Gs57>

³³ The psychedelic video for 'Strawberry Fields', one of the songs used to promote this album, may be seen at <https://youtu.be/8UQK-UcRezE>

³⁴ The video for the song 'See Emily Play' may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R8EpAv4miA>

³⁵ Don Lett's film about the 1978 UK punk scene may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qYWbhZHbug>

³⁶ The BBC documentary Marc Bolan – The Final Word may be seen at <http://goo.gl/qzvyO3>

³⁷ This performance may be seen at <http://goo.gl/S34TN4>

³⁸The Top of the Pops performance of this may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNkwe86LY6Q>

14 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

lyrics ('You've got your mother in a whirl/She's not sure if you're a boy or a girl' – Rebel Rebel) but also with his elaborate stage persona, Ziggy Stardust.

FOCUS: David Bowie and Ziggy Stardust

David Bowie had spent eight years desperately trying to become a star, with 'Space Oddity'³⁹ (1969) being his only hit. In 1972 one of his artistic creations, the spikey red-haired Ziggy Stardust, struck a chord with the public after a striking performance of the song 'Starman'⁴⁰ on *Top of the Pops*, wearing a sequined jumpsuit and platform boots, with his arm draped over the shoulder of his guitarist Mick Ronson. The album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and The Spiders From Mars* (1972) stayed in the Top 50 chart for two years, even though it never got higher than number 5.



Source 9: David Bowie and Mick Ronson performing

There were several things about David Bowie's music and image that appealed in an era of rising unemployment and widespread strikes – the *Ziggy* album was about celebrating in the face of catastrophe (Earth has only five years left) and was followed by two other apocalyptic albums – *Aladdin Sane* and *Diamond Dogs*. The Ziggy character's costumes and mime routines which played to glam rock's sense of the theatrical, along with Bowie's ambiguous sexuality, made him seem much more mysterious and interesting – he had told *Melody Maker* that he was **bisexual** in 1971. Ziggy was retired after a final show in 1973 but the influence of the songs and the imagery lasted for many years afterwards.

³⁹ A 1970 TV performance of this song may be seen at <http://goo.gl/eKCleZ>

⁴⁰ Memories of the reaction to seeing Bowie perform 'Starman' on Top of the Pops may be seen at <http://goo.gl/VR3n8N> and <http://goo.gl/nY27wN> but also see the infamous photo by Mick Rock showing how this idea was taken much further in Bowie's concerts <http://goo.gl/nrNzhS>

Punk rock

Punk music⁴¹ started in America in the 1960s. The term 'punk' was originally used to mean 'beginner' and punk music was music played by people who did not have any particular skill in singing or playing. By the second half of the 1970s many young people were very disillusioned as there was rising unemployment and many thought they had little to look forward to. Tony Parsons, a *NME* music journalist writing in 1976,⁴² called punk 'dole queue rock 'n' roll'. Punk rock, a very loud and raw sound made by young people often with little musical skill, became the way that these angry teenagers expressed themselves. Punk lyrics were deliberately provocative, attacking the Royal Family, dead-end jobs, the police, war, **anarchy**, riots and consumerism. It was not about skill – punk was about attitude.

Many people consider 'New Rose'⁴³ by The Damned to be the first British punk record, and many other bands soon followed. The Sex Pistols are the most notorious of the punk bands as they deliberately tried to be controversial – swearing on live teatime television and playing their music on a boat on the River Thames, right outside Parliament. Punk fashions, as with glam rock, were intended to shock – haircuts were bright and spiky for men, close-cropped for women; clothes were ripped with studs and safety pins barely holding them together, sometimes using Nazi emblems or defacing images of the Queen. At punk gigs people would 'pogo' up and down to the music, spit at each other and get into fights.

FOCUS: The Sex Pistols and the 1977 Silver Jubilee⁴⁴

Formed in 1975 to be the 'anti-Beatles', the Sex Pistols' first single was 'Anarchy In The UK'⁴⁵ (1976). In December 1976 they appeared on the teatime TV magazine show *Thames Today* and swore live on air after the interviewer Bill Grundy asked them to do something outrageous,⁴⁶ and many of the venues for the 'Anarchy Tour' of punk bands cancelled their bookings after seeing the programme⁴⁷. The following day the Daily Mirror newspaper covered the story under the headline 'The Filth and the Fury'.

This was not the peak of their notoriety. The Queen's **Silver Jubilee** in 1977 gave the Sex Pistols the ideal opportunity to grab publicity by attacking the monarchy and government. Several people were arrested after the Sex Pistols played their anti-monarchy song 'God Save The Queen' directly outside Parliament from a boat in the Thames. There is a modern conspiracy theory that the music charts for early June 1977 were fixed to prevent The Sex Pistols' 'God Save The Queen'⁴⁸ from being the number 1 record during the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations.

⁴¹ The BBC documentary series Punk Britannia may be seen at <https://youtu.be/5VZ-cSo0PhA> (episode 1 - Beginnings of punk)

⁴² Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun* (London, 2012), page 556.

⁴³ The raw energy of punk may be seen in the band's video for this song at <https://youtu.be/UZu8aDWhM9Y>

⁴⁴ The film *The Filth and the Fury*, looking at the Sex Pistols from the band's point of view, may be seen at <https://youtu.be/OXyf4jKtrSo>

⁴⁵ A video of a TV performance may be seen at <http://goo.gl/wlacjN>

⁴⁶ A short documentary about this infamous bit of TV history may be seen at <http://goo.gl/Xah0j5>

⁴⁷ Sex Pistols: Anarchy in the UK and the tour they tried to ban <https://goo.gl/5W8aOO>

⁴⁸ The official video for this may be seen at <http://goo.gl/yUNKbj>

The influence of Black American music

'Rhythm and Blues' (R&B) was the generic name given to upbeat Black American music after the 1940s. This style of music was spread to a white audience as 'rock 'n' roll' when performed by white artists like Elvis Presley, but eventually R&B artists like Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Howling Wolf came to have a huge influence over British music. Bands like The Kinks and The Rolling Stones released cover versions of some of these American R&B records before they began to write songs of their own, and 'mod' bands like The Small Faces and The Who were also big fans of R&B (The Who's slogan was 'Maximum R&B'). Some black American musicians like Geno Washington and Jimi Hendrix came to the UK and became successful musicians because they were appreciated more here than they were in their own country.

Soul music was a variety of R&B that came to prominence in the 1960s, especially through the Motown and Atlantic record labels. Adding brass sections to the usual band format of guitar, bass and drums, it was a lively, gospel influenced, style of dance music with catchy songs and choruses that could easily be sung along to. Throughout the 1960s black American soul acts like Smokey Robinson and the Miracles,⁴⁹ The Supremes and The Four Tops toured the UK playing to sold-out theatres and having a lot of chart success. White British singers like Tom Jones and Dusty Springfield even built their musical careers by singing what black Americans called 'blue-eyed' soul. In the 1970s nightclubs in some northern towns, like Wigan Casino, began to play soul music at special dance meetings that would go on all through the night. The records they were playing were often from the less famous soul labels than the music that would appear in the charts. This became known as 'Northern Soul'.⁵⁰

How popular was new popular music?

The music charts of the 1960s and 1970s showed that new styles of music continued to compete with older styles of music which continued in popularity:

- The bestselling single of 1965 was the ballad 'Tears' by comedian Ken Dodd, not a single by The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, or any of the other new British bands
- In 1967 Englebert Humperdinck's ballad 'Release Me'⁵¹ kept The Beatles' 'Strawberry Fields/Penny Lane' off the number 1 chart position
- The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album was only occasionally number one as it was competing with the very popular film soundtrack to *The Sound of Music*
- The best-selling albums in the 1970s were not those by the Clash or the Sex Pistols but by more disco-influenced acts like Abba and the Bee Gees; the best-selling singles of the 1970s were Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta's 'You're the one that I want' from the *Grease* soundtrack, and Art Garfunkel's 'Bright Eyes' from the film *Watership Down*

⁴⁹ A video of them performing on TV may be seen at <https://youtu.be/5RDUYOSpH9w>

⁵⁰ The Culture Show special on Northern Soul may be seen at <http://goo.gl/9UFZZT> and a shorter piece about the 'soul boys' may be seen at <https://youtu.be/GpiWdWbl6t0>

⁵¹ A video of Humperdinck performing this in 1967 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/UjTGkD>

- The Sex Pistols’ single ‘God Save The Queen’ was kept from the number 1 slot in the Queen’s Silver Jubilee summer 1977 by Rod Stewart’s ‘I don’t want to talk about it/The first cut is the deepest’.

What was the impact of the increasing use of television?



Source 10: A British family watching television in the 1950s

Introduction: Increasing television ownership

The BBC did not get its money from advertising, but from the annual sale of licences. People had to buy a licence to be allowed to listen to radio or watch television. The number of licences bought gives historians a good indication of how many televisions people owned.

Table 1: Number of TV licences between 1950 and 1975⁵²

1950	1955	1960	1965	1975
344,000	4,504,000	10,470,000	13,253,000	17,701,000

These licence figures show that by 1961 75% of the population had a TV in their house, and by 1971 this had risen to 91%. They also show that 1958 was the year when the number of TV licences issued was greater than the number of radio licences. By 1969 television accounted for 23% of how everyone in the UK spent their leisure time.

⁵² Sally Waller, *A Sixties Social Revolution? British Society 1959–1975* (Nelson Thornes, 2008), page 39.

Why did the television become so popular?

Hire purchase – making televisions more affordable

The growth of the television service after the war encouraged more people to want television sets but they were expensive. As full employment and better wages made more families affluent in the 1950s more and more people could buy their own sets. For those who still could not afford to buy a television, companies like Radio Rentals offered sets at a monthly rental price or repayment (known as 'hire purchase') which was much more affordable. As the television service grew and changed with the introduction of ITV and BBC2, with colour broadcast from the late 1960s, it became much easier for people to rent the most up-to-date televisions, rather than having to keep on buying them. As a result colour televisions were greatly out-selling black and white ones by the 1970s.

Changes in television – improving the service

The BBC television service resumed in June 1946 after being switched off during the war. To begin with it was only available to people living in the south-east of England. Over the next two decades there were a number of important changes to the television service:

- Through the 1950s the television service was gradually spread throughout the UK
- In 1955 a second television channel began broadcasting – ITV (Independent Television) was a **commercial broadcaster**. Although ITV was a single channel, programmes broadcast on the channel were made by different regional television companies like Granada, Yorkshire, Midlands, Tyne Tees and Anglia
- In 1962 the Telstar⁵³ communications satellite made live transatlantic broadcasting possible; as more satellites were put into space international broadcasts became more common, e.g. in 1967 the programme *Our World* was the first live global broadcast, watched by 400 million people in 26 countries around the world, and featuring the world premiere of The Beatles' song 'All You Need Is Love'
- In 1964 a third channel, BBC2, began broadcasting in black and white, and started showing some programmes in colour from 1967, usually live sporting events like Wimbledon,⁵⁴ and films; in 1969 BBC1 and ITV started broadcasting in colour as well
- From 1966 a new generation of televisions using transistors were much smaller and cheaper than older models.

Competing for viewers – making popular programmes

The first edition of *TV Times* magazine in 1955 stated:

Viewers will no longer accept what is deemed best for them. The new independent television planners aim at giving viewers what viewers want – at the time viewers want it.⁵⁵

⁵³ A short film celebrating 50 years since the launch of Telstar may be seen at <http://goo.gl/TvVhpV> and a longer documentary may be seen at <http://goo.gl/OmwKkb>. President Kennedy's broadcast via Telstar may be seen at https://youtu.be/pZmzb2_HTjQ

⁵⁴ Colour footage may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxfZEZY5ilo>

⁵⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 387.

19 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

The BBC had a monopoly on broadcasting television until 1955⁵⁶. The BBC had tried hard to divert audiences on ITV's opening night by scheduling the gruesome death of Gracie Archer in popular BBC radio drama *The Archers* for the same night. By 1957 ITV had a 76% share of the television audience. In 1960 ITV had all of the top 10 most popular programmes. ITV showed a lot more light-hearted programmes, while the BBC as the state broadcaster was much more serious in its programmes. ITV also showed popular American programmes like *I Love Lucy* (a comedy), *Dragnet* (a police drama) and *Gunsmoke* (a western). There were also British versions of American game shows like *Double Your Money* and *Take Your Pick*, and the talent show *Opportunity Knocks*. More serious and less popular shows, such as classical concerts and performances of operas, were put on very late at night when there were very few people watching anyway.

Unlike the BBC, ITV was not a public service and had no obligation to inform or educate people. As one woman remembered, "We weren't allowed to watch ITV. My mother was a teacher and she thought it would rot our brains."⁵⁷

To win back the television audience the BBC appointed Hugh Greene as Director General in 1960. He diverted money from radio to television and built the Television Centre in Shepherd's Bush to accommodate the new programmes they were going to make. Winning the franchise for a new channel in 1960 meant that more serious programmes could be moved to BBC2, allowing BBC1 to show more popular programmes.

A new Head of Drama, Sydney Newman, was recruited. Newman had a lot of success with his popular dramas on ITV, like *The Avengers*, and went on to create programmes like *Doctor Who* and popular period drama *The Forsyte Saga* for the BBC, as well as supporting more challenging new dramas like *Cathy Come Home* about homelessness. New and more challenging **sit-coms** like *Steptoe and Son*, about a father and son who ran a junkyard, and *Till Death Us Do Part*, about an angry old man, were commissioned. There was also a shake-up of the news service to make it more like the television news we see today, and *That Was The Week That Was* was broadcast to **satirise** politicians and news stories. It was so popular that it would empty the pubs of the UK at 8pm on a Saturday evening as people rushed home to watch it.

ITV also had to make changes. From 1960 the government insisted that ITV had more serious programming, which is why they introduced *News At Ten* and the investigative *Tonight* magazine show to rival the BBC news and the current affairs programme *Panorama*.

There are many examples of programmes on one channel introduced to rival the other. The BBC series *The Great War* about the First World War was eventually followed by ITV's *The World At War* about the Second World War. ITV's *Coronation Street*, a soap opera about 'life in an ordinary street in an ordinary town', first aired in December 1960. To begin with it was broadcast live so good scripts and acting were needed. The BBC responded with *Z Cars*, a realistic police drama set on Merseyside, with its unsettling storylines that showed the negative impact of the job on the lives of the police characters. Sometimes star performers were tempted to move from one channel to another – Morecambe and Wise worked for ITV from 1961 to 1968, but were then brought over to the BBC where they worked from 1968 to 1977 (their 1977 Christmas Special got 28 million viewers), only to move back to ITV from 1978 to 1983.

⁵⁶ VIDEO 75 years of BBC TV History <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOQCA0r1PZk>

⁵⁷ Sally Waller, *A Sixties Social Revolution? British Society 1959–1975* (Nelson Thornes, 2008), page 389.

Case study: Television and important public occasions – the Coronation of 1953⁵⁸

Queen Elizabeth II had become Queen on the death of her father, King George VI, on 6 February 1952 but her formal **coronation** took place in Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953. Two million people lined the streets of London to watch the royal procession. It was the first major public event to be broadcast live on UK television.

According to the BBC's audience research:

More than half the viewers of the Coronation Service were in the homes of friends and about 1,500,000 were viewing in public places like cinemas, shops, etc. The average number of people around each domestic television set was about seven, excluding children.⁵⁹

In fact 32% of the adult population (11.7 million people) listened to the coronation on BBC radio with commentary by John Snagge, but 56% of the adult population (20.4 million people) watched the coronation on television,⁶⁰ where the ceremony was commentated on by Richard Dimbleby.

It had been a struggle to persuade the authorities to allow the BBC to televise the coronation, but this was supported by campaigns in the newspapers. There were restrictions imposed on the BBC:

- Only four cameras were allowed
- No close-ups were allowed
- There was to be no direct coverage of the anointing ceremony.

The audience not only watched the coronation itself but stayed for the appearance of the newly crowned Queen on the balcony at Buckingham Palace, as well as the RAF flypast and Winston Churchill's speech. Young Tiger (real name George Browne), a Trinidad immigrant, sang the calypso song 'I was there at the Coronation' at the end of the television coverage.⁶¹ A cinema newsreel was also shot in colour and became very popular in the following weeks.

Mrs P. Gerrish, who answered a 1990s radio appeal for memories of growing up in the 1950s, described her experience of the coronation as follows:

The Coronation was due on June 2nd so Dad went and rented a TV set. We were suddenly the most popular people in the street. We only had a small bungalow and the set was in the little dining room. The table went in the corner and the chairs were spread around. Some people brought their own. Friends, neighbours and even the vicar squeezed in and they all brought food for lunch.⁶²

⁵⁸ A full-length documentary may be seen at <http://goo.gl/PHeeuW> but a shorter item about BBC coverage may be seen at <http://goo.gl/wS0su1>. A short programme about the significance for television may be seen at <http://goo.gl/HDiWIZ>

⁵⁹ David Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951–1957* (Bloomsbury, 2010), page 300.

⁶⁰ David Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951–1957* (Bloomsbury, 2010), page 299.

⁶¹ This may be heard at <http://goo.gl/abVYHm>

⁶² Phil Star, *Developments in Sport, Leisure and Tourism during the 20th century* (Aberystwyth, 2011), page 68.

21 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

According to Judith Miles, who lived in Sussex and was 11 at the time of the coronation:

There must have been a dozen crowded into our living room, eating sandwiches and drinking dreadful South African sherry. When the National Anthem was played we all got to our feet. It was really thrilling seeing the golden coach and this young woman who was our new queen. Later, we all went down to the Lewes Odeon and watched the ceremony all over again – in colour.⁶³

Case study: Television and sport - the World Cup 1966⁶⁴

BBC's *Grandstand* started in 1958 covering every major sporting event, including the FA Cup, Wimbledon, the Grand National, Test Match cricket, the Olympics, and the football World Cup. ITV's *World of Sport* started in 1965 and included football previews (the 'On the Ball' feature), horse racing ('ITV Seven') and wrestling, as well as less well-known sports such as hockey, netball, water skiing and Gaelic football. This was because the BBC had bought the rights to all of the major sporting events.

Both channels were allowed to show the 1966 World Cup Final from Wembley where England beat West Germany 4-2. It was watched by 32.6 million people in the UK. It is still the most watched television programme in the UK and demonstrated the huge influence of television on the popularity of sport by the 1960s. Many people rented televisions especially to watch the 1966 World Cup Final.

World Cup coverage was very patchy before 1966. The 1962 finals from Chile were only shown as a highlights package edited in the USA. Football was being shown on television already – *Match of the Day* on BBC1 from 1964 and ITV's *Big Match* from 1968. Before the 1970s football was mostly reported on the radio. A diagram was printed in the BBC listings magazine *Radio Times* every week to show how the pitch was divided into eight squares. The commentators then described the action of the match by saying which square it was in. The World Cup coverage of 1966 boosted the profile of football on television and coverage became much more like it is today – matches filmed from multiple angles with commentary broadcast over it.

Ann Hungerford, who was 7 years old in 1966, was interviewed for a primary school project on the World Cup in 2010:

I remember the final well. My dad had got a TV from Rediffusion just for the World Cup. During the match, I could not stand the strain any longer so I went out for a walk. The streets were deserted. No cars on the road or people in the street. I walked past a neighbour's house as England scored the final goal to clinch the cup and was greeted by the householder, who came out running shouting "We won! We won!" I rushed home and my dad was holding my baby sister up to the TV and said, "My darling, you will never see this again in your lifetime."⁶⁵

⁶³ This is quoted in Yesterday's Britain: *The illustrated story of how we lived, worked and played in this century* (Reader's Digest, 1998), page 209.

⁶⁴ black and white coverage may be seen at <https://youtu.be/FMDuHPvNtgg> or good highlights in colour may be seen at https://youtu.be/3T6lY2fz_Mc and <https://youtu.be/Dau4icemNnE> The 'They think it's all over...' Hurst goal may be seen at <http://goo.gl/t9x4nO>

⁶⁵ Phil Star, *Developments in Sport, Leisure and Tourism during the 20th century* (Aberystwyth, 2011), page 23.

22 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

Television made many lesser known sports seem much more compelling – snooker, bowls and darts all had good audiences on television, as did boxing, all-in wrestling, weightlifting, diving, skiing, athletics and motor racing.

Television publicised the careers of many of the stars of sport, like the Manchester United player George Best, but also made stars of the television presenters as well:

- Jimmy Hill (*Match of the Day*)
- Frank Bough (*Grandstand*)
- Dicky Davies (*World of Sport*)

There were also increasingly famous commentators:

- Brian Moore and John Motson (football)
- Brian Johnston (cricket)
- Harry Carpenter (boxing)
- David Coleman (athletics)
- Eddie Waring (rugby league) and Bill McLaren (rugby union)

Sports coverage became very important to the BBC. It made up a fifth of the BBC's broadcast output by 1968, helped by the popularity of its coverage of the 1966 World Cup and the Mexico Olympics in 1968.



Table 2: Some of the popular early TV shows⁶⁶

Type of programme	Channel	Title of programme
SERIAL DRAMAS/SOAP OPERAS	ITV	<i>Coronation Street</i> (1960–present)
		<i>Crossroads</i> (1964–88 and 2001–03)
		<i>Upstairs, Downstairs</i> (1971–75 and 2010–12 on the BBC)
	BBC	<i>Dr Finlay's Casebook</i> (1962–71)
		<i>Z Cars</i> (1962–78)
		<i>The Forsyte Saga</i> (1967)
ACTION ADVENTURE SERIES	ITV	<i>The Avengers</i> (1961–69)
		<i>Danger Man</i> (1960–68)
		<i>The Saint</i> (1962–69)
	BBC	<i>Quatermass</i> (1953–59)
		<i>Doctor Who</i> (1963–89 and 2005–present)
CHILDREN'S	ITV	<i>Thunderbirds</i> (1965–66)
		<i>Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons</i> (1967–68)
		<i>How</i> (1966–81)
	BBC	<i>Watch With Mother</i> (1950–74)
		<i>Play School</i> (1964–88)
		<i>The Magic Roundabout</i> (1965–77)
		<i>Blue Peter</i> (1958 –)
MUSIC	ITV	<i>Ready Steady Go!</i> (1963–66)
	BBC	<i>Juke Box Jury</i> (1959–67, 1979 and 1989–90)
		<i>Top of the Pops</i> (1964–2006)
SPORT	ITV	<i>World of Sport</i> (1965–85)
	BBC	<i>Grandstand</i> (1958–2007)
		<i>Match of the Day</i> (1964–present)
CURRENT AFFAIRS	ITV	<i>World in Action</i> (1963–98)
	BBC	<i>Tonight</i> (1957–65)

⁶⁶ This is based on Sally Waller, *A Sixties Social Revolution? British Society 1959–1975* (Nelson Thornes, 2008), page 42, and a comprehensive list of the Wikipedia pages for British TV programmes which may be seen at <http://goo.gl/cu9VB8>

24 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

Type of programme	Channel	Title of programme
GAME SHOWS	ITV	<i>Double Your Money</i> (1955–68)
		<i>The Golden Shot</i> (1967–75)
	BBC	<i>The Generation Game</i> (1971–82 and 1990–2002)
		<i>What's My Line?</i> (1951–63)
TALENT SHOWS	ITV	<i>Opportunity Knocks</i> (1964–78 and 1987–90 on the BBC)
		<i>New Faces</i> (1973–78 and 1986–88)
QUIZ SHOWS	ITV	<i>University Challenge</i> (1962–87 and 1994–present on the BBC)
	BBC	<i>Mastermind</i> (1972–97 and 2003–present)
HISTORY PROGRAMMES	ITV	<i>The World At War</i> (1973–74)
	BBC	<i>The Great War</i> (1964)
VARIETY SHOWS	ITV	<i>Sunday Night at the London Palladium</i> (1955–67)
	BBC	<i>Billy Cotton Band Show</i> (1956–65)
		<i>The Black and White Minstrel Show</i> (1958–78)
COMEDY, SATIRE, SITCOMS	ITV	<i>The Army Game</i> (1957–61)
		<i>Bless This House</i> (1971–76)
		<i>Rising Damp</i> (1974–78)
		<i>The Morecambe and Wise Show</i> (1978–83)
	BBC	<i>Hancock's Half Hour</i> (1956–61)
		<i>Steptoe and Son</i> (1962–65 and 1970–74)
		<i>Dad's Army</i> (1968–77)
		<i>The Likely Lads</i> (1964–66)
		<i>That Was The Week That Was</i> (1962–63)
		<i>Monty Python's Flying Circus</i> (1969–74)
		<i>The Morecambe and Wise Show</i> (1968–77)

Conclusion: Television audiences by the end of the 1970s

By the end of the 1970s people watched an average of 16 hours of television a week in summer and 20 hours a week in winter. Royal occasions, national sporting events and blockbuster films on television could attract up to 20 million viewers; popular entertainment shows 15 to 20 million viewers; documentaries could get 7 to 8 million viewers; and there were often 5 or 6 million for news and current affairs programmes. But for all of the advances in television, people still listened to radio for an average of 9 hours a week.⁶⁷

Teenagers and the 'generation gap'

The teenager

The term 'teenager' was first used in 1930s America as a way of identifying a particular age group to be targeted by advertising. It came to be used in the UK in the 1950s. Before this people thought that you were a child, and then you were an adult, without any transition in between. Children were smaller versions of adults, expected to wear the same sorts of clothes, have the same haircuts, and follow the same interests. However, from the 1950s onwards young people were becoming a much more important influence in society. By 1960 some 40% of the UK population was under the age of 25.

The teenagers of the 1950s were too young to remember the Depression of the 1930s, along with the dangers and shortages of the Second World War and the austerity that followed. They were growing up in a much more stable and prosperous world. They were healthier than young people had ever been before as a result of the introduction of the welfare state. They were wealthier because full employment gave their parents job security and higher wages.

It was not just because of their parents that young people were becoming more affluent:

- They found it easier to get part-time or weekend jobs
- They could look forward to being able to have a job and earn decent wages when they left school aged 15
- Technological advances meant that there was a lot of demand for unskilled labour so young people could avoid having to do poorly paid apprenticeships
- Working-class teenagers were no longer expected to put their earnings into the family budget as their parents' wages were much better
- Teenagers were still young enough to be living at home which left them with more of their wages to spend on themselves
- From 1960 young men could earn a decent wage sooner because they no longer had to do National Service, which had required all 18-year-old men to spend two years in the armed forces, and four years in the reserves.

⁶⁷ Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London, 1982), page 206.

26 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

Research carried out between 1959 and 1961 showed that young people had on average £8 a week to spend, which meant that they accounted for 10% of the UK's total national income. They spent half of this on entertainment – young people made up one-third of cinema admissions and two-fifths of the sales of records and record players.

FOCUS: Teenage fashion and Carnaby Street

By the early 1960s, teenagers had become a very important group of consumers. By 1967 half of women's clothes made in Britain were sold to women aged 15 to 19. Fashion began to change very quickly as clothes were increasingly made to be disposable rather than to be kept⁶⁸. Fashion became brighter and more experimental as technological developments led to new materials like PVC plastic, nylon, polyester and acrylic which were all cheaper, as well as being easier to shape and colour. Designers like Mary Quant, with her chain of boutiques, had a lot of influence over these new fashions, introducing bold new ideas like the mini skirt. These new fashions were popularised by models like Twiggy and Jean Shrimpton. Fashion became a very important British industry, centred around Carnaby Street in London. There were also shops associated with particular subcultures – mods would buy sharp designer suits from John Stephen, while hippies would buy vintage military jackets from I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet.

2) The generation gap

Differences in fashion became a visible sign of the **generation gap**. In clothing it was developments like shorter skirts for girls, while longer hair styles were more acceptable for boys. The extremes of these 1960s' differences in fashion are satirized in the song 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion'⁶⁹ (1966) by The Kinks.

There were a wide range of issues where younger and older generations had different views:

- Pop music and pop idols which changed with every new generation of young people
- Changing attitudes towards sex, challenging religious views about sex before marriage, making use of modern contraception
- Taking drugs, with cannabis smoking and LSD popularised by bands like The Beatles and The Rolling Stones
- Political views like supporting equality for women, sympathy for immigrants, anger at the Vietnam War
- Less trust for the **Establishment** because of political scandals.

Young people in the 1950s and 1960s had more independence from their parents than any generation of young people before them. They were better educated and more financially secure, so they could more confidently assert their right to question things and to make their own choices. More and more middle-class children in particular were leaving school at 16 or staying on to

⁶⁸ For a clip about 1960s fashion in Wales see <https://goo.gl/W5gSCu>

⁶⁹ A live performance of this song by The Kinks (with audience participation) may be seen at <https://youtu.be/tqXrAHuLksU>.

27 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

university which was now paid for by state grants. Between 1961 and 1969 the number of full time students in further education increased from 200,000 to 390,000. As young people were spending longer in education they felt less need to focus on work and earning money which had been very important to their parents' generation. They had more time, more independence and could focus more on developing their own distinct identity.

Young people even had their own places to go to and spend their time with other young people. Coffee bars like the 2is in Soho, El Toro in Muswell Hill or the Kardomah in Liverpool became meeting places for teenagers as pub landlords would throw out underage drinkers. Coffee bars had jukeboxes full of the latest music from America and sometimes even featured live music performances. Wimpy burger bars also became places where young people would meet together.

The generation gap was not just about specific ideas but also a different view of the world. The older generation had been brought up in an age of war and austerity, while the younger generation had been brought up in a time of affluence. The ideas of duty, respectability and obeying orders seemed less important to young people who had not fought in a war or done National Service. In the 1960s these opposite views about many important issues led to the interests of younger people being described as a **counter-culture**. These differences between young and old are explored in the song 'My Generation' (1965) by The Who,⁷⁰ which opens with the line 'People try to put us down'.

Elisabeth Taylor, a British teenager during the 1960s, recollected the time as follows:

As a sixteen year old, my parents forbade me to go out alone with a boy, to ride on the back of a motor scooter, to drink [alcohol] or to go to a club where the Rolling Stones played.

So one night I deliberately broke every one of their rules. There was a sense that we were going to do things our way, and that there were a lot of us who rejected not just our individual parents but what their values represented.⁷¹

3) Teenage delinquency

According to a letter in the *Daily Mail* newspaper in October 1949:

Teenagers are pampered with high wages, first-class working conditions and excellent facilities in education. Their outlook is centred in trashy books and films. The boys are hoodlums in embryo, defiant and uncouth, while the girls are brazen and unrefined.⁷²

Young people growing up in the 1950s and 1960s had a lot more leisure time because:

- Housework was less time-consuming because of labour-saving devices
- From 1960 young men did not have to do National Service
- Trade unions had made sure jobs had reasonable working hours

⁷⁰ A video compilation of the band's performances of this song may be seen at <http://goo.gl/Ky0MTS>

⁷¹ Colin Shephard and Rosemary Rees, *British Depth Study 1939–1975* (London, 2010), page 24.

⁷² Stuart Clayton, *Mass Media, Popular Culture and Social Change in Britain since 1945* (Edexcel, 2010), page 34.

28 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

- As the school leaving age was raised there were school holidays for those still in education
- There were guaranteed paid holidays for those in work

However, more leisure time and more money did not necessarily make young people happy. It could mean lots more time with nothing constructive to do and more boredom.



Source 11: Teddy boys in the 1950s

In the early 1950s the teddy boys⁷³ were demonised by the older generation. They were banned from dance halls and pubs, accused of rival gang fights and of attacking youth clubs that would not let them in. The American teen film *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) was about a temporary teacher being given a bad time by difficult teenage pupils, and *Rock Around The Clock* (1956) was a musical vehicle for Bill Haley and the Comets. British teenagers vandalised their seats when these films were shown in UK cinemas – these incidents were blamed on the teddy boys and many towns banned cinemas from showing *Rock Around The Clock*.

FOCUS: The impact of American Culture

One of the fears that adults had about the changing lives of British teenagers was the increasing influence of American culture – ‘Are We Turning Our Children Into Little Americans?’ was the 1957 headline in *Everybody’s Weekly* magazine.⁷⁴ American influence began with US armed forces stationed in the UK during the war. British people knew a lot about the USA already through Hollywood films. American influences amongst 1950s British teenagers may be seen in:

- Teddy boys’ sideburns and neckties which were taken from the image of gamblers in Westerns, and their long coats were based on the ‘zoot suits’ of off-duty US service personnel
- American jukeboxes would be used for listening to rock ‘n’ roll records in US-style milk bars
- The rockers who came along in the later 1950s and who were influenced by a new generation of US rock ‘n’ rollers like leather-clad Gene Vincent or film stars like biker Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*.

⁷³ Ken Russell’s photos of post-war London <https://goo.gl/uzojpe> and <https://goo.gl/8KQTrJ>

⁷⁴ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 437.

29 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

Not all teenagers were so obviously influenced by American culture. The mods were more influenced by European style and fashion, hanging out in Italian coffee bars, although they did listen to soul music and modern jazz. Musically, British performers like Cliff Richard and Tommy Steele imitated Elvis Presley, but quickly became far more popular than middle-aged Bill Haley had been. The British beat groups of the 1960s took their inspiration from American rock 'n' roll and blues music, but combined them with more traditional British music like skiffle and music hall.

By 1964 Americans were starting to worry about the impact of a 'British Invasion' on their teenagers. In the end there was a sympathetic relationship between the USA and the UK. American garage and punk bands like Iggy and the Stooges, New York Dolls and the MC5 were influenced by 1960s British music but influenced the British punk movement themselves in the 1970s.

Successive generations of teenagers came to be seen by older people as hooligans and delinquents. The 1950s and 1960s did see a rise in reported crimes, and many of these were blamed on young people. Between 1955 and 1961 the number of boys aged 14 to 21 who were convicted of serious offences doubled, even though the overall number of young people involved in crime was still very low. The Albermarle Report 1960 was commissioned by the government because of concerns over a growing youth problem, but it concluded that most young people were not cynical or disrespectful. Young people were far more likely to smoke tobacco, and drink coffee and alcohol than they were to be taking LSD.

Newspapers continued to publish extreme stories like the Bank Holiday clashes between teenage mods and rockers in 1964, although they did make things seem much worse than they were in reality. According to the popular newspaper *The Daily Mirror* :

The Wild Ones [gangs of mods and rockers] invaded a seaside town [Clacton] yesterday – 1,000 fighting, drinking, roaring rampaging teenagers on scooters and motor cycles... Leather-jacketed youths and girls attacked people in the street, turned over parked cars, broke into beach huts, smashed windows and fought with rival gangs.⁷⁵



Source 12: Rockers in the 1960s⁷⁶

⁷⁵ From *The Daily Mirror*, 30 March 1964, as quoted in Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 203.

⁷⁶ See <https://youtu.be/miiopvQDP3M> where there is also a 30 minute programme about mods and rockers.

30 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

Media hysteria turned public opinion against these youth groups even though much of what was reported was exaggeration or fabrication. It was more petty acts of vandalism by bored teenagers whose tempers tended to blow up as a result of heavy-handed policing.⁷⁷

FOCUS: Reducing the voting age

However much young people were demonised in the press, politicians took a different view. The Representation of the People Act 1969 reduced the voting age to 18 from 21. Labour had been promising to do this since their 1966 election manifesto, 'to add a necessary political dimension to the increasingly important economic and social position of young people'.⁷⁸ A parliamentary investigation into lowering the voting age had been started in the early 1960s and had already recommended lowering the voting age to 20. Labour chose 18 because that was the age that people could get married and fight for the country. It was when people became full citizens, so that should be the age at which they could vote.

Supporters of this also argued that young people would benefit from being more directly involved in the political process and would feel much less alienated from political decisions. Most Conservative MPs voted against it, but it did bring the UK into line with most other advanced industrial countries. The General Election 1970 was the first time that 18-year-olds could vote. Some went to vote on the way to school to take their A Levels.

Many young people did become increasingly disenchanted in the 1970s. Since the Second World War there had been full employment, jobs for everyone that wanted one. As the UK economy began to struggle at the start of the 1970s, unemployment began to rise. By 1977 there were 252,328 people under the age of 20 out of work. This was three times more than it had been in the 1960s. By 1979, four out of ten young people under the age of 25 were out of work. As the Sex Pistols sang in 'God Save The Queen' it looked as if they had 'no future'. Some of these bored unemployed youths were attracted to the violent and **nihilistic** punk movement. As a Daily Mirror editorial from June 1977 called 'Punk Future'⁷⁹ put it:

It's not much fun being young today... 104,000 school leavers have gone straight from their classrooms to an idle and purposeless life on the dole... Is it any wonder that youngsters feel disillusioned and betrayed? Is it any wonder they turn to anarchistic heroes like Johnny Rotten?... Punk rock is tailor made for youngsters who think they only have a punk future.

⁷⁷ Mods versus Rockers Bank Holiday chaos clip <https://goo.gl/3vRQUy>

⁷⁸ This is quoted from the 1966 Labour Party Manifesto found at <http://goo.gl/ildDPU>

⁷⁹ Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun* (London, 2012), page 556.



Source 13: Two punks in London

Sometimes the frustrations of young men in the 1970s also spilled over into **hooliganism**. There were several notorious examples of this:

- In 1975 Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea fans fought on the pitch at the end of a match⁸⁰
- At the 1977 Home International football match at Wembley between England and Scotland, Scotland won 2-1 and Scottish fans poured onto the pitch, damaging the goal posts⁸¹
- Fighting broke out in the terraces between fans at the 1978 FA Cup quarter final between Millwall and Ipswich and dozens of people were injured.

4) Teenage subcultures

There were a number of distinct **teenage subcultures** between 1951 and 1979. None of these groups dominated at any time and many young people did not see themselves as belonging to any of these groups.

⁸⁰ This incident may be seen at <http://goo.gl/xnGa49>

⁸¹ The pitch invasion may be seen at <http://goo.gl/fcz7cA>

<p>TEDDY BOYS⁸²</p> <p>Beginning in the early 1950s, they wore Edwardian-styled outfits which gave them their name ('teddy' is a shortened version of 'Edward'). Compared to other youth subcultures they were well-dressed with their long colourful 'Drape' jackets, drainpipe trousers and crepe-soled shoes called 'brothel creepers'. They had longer than usual greased hair, with a quiff on top and the DA [duck's arse] parting at the back. The 'teds' listened to earlier rock 'n' roll records by singers like Bill Haley. They were widely blamed for the teenage vandalism that happened in cinemas during showings of <i>Blackboard Jungle</i> (1955) and <i>Rock Around The Clock</i> (1956).</p>	<p>ROCKERS⁸³</p> <p>Later in the 1950s the teddy boys lost popularity amongst teenagers. The rockers took over, riding motorbikes (like the British-made Nortons), while wearing leathers and travelling around in gangs to meet up at roadside cafes. Compared to the 'teds' the rockers were much more scruffy with their leather jackets, dirty jeans, t-shirts, vests and boots. They were inspired by American gangs like the Hells Angels and the bikers in the film <i>The Wild One</i> (1953), led by Marlon Brando. The rockers listened to a newer generation of rock 'n' roll stars like Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran.</p>
<p>MODS⁸⁴</p> <p>Originating in the early 1960s the 'mods' were named after their preference for 'modern' rather than 'traditional' jazz. Mods had a much smarter sense of style than other groups like the rockers. They wore very smart, Italian collarless jackets, parkas, drainpipe trousers, polo shirts or turtle neck sweaters with suede shoes. Their well-groomed hairstyles, like pudding basin cuts, were very influential in the look of the early Beatles. As well as listening to 'cool' modern jazz music, the mods also liked new rock bands like The Who and the Small Faces, as well as having an interest in black American Rhythm & Blues and soul music. As well as their distinctive clothing, mods would also be seen out riding scooters, especially Italian makes like Vespas and Lambrettas.</p>	<p>HIPPIES⁸⁵</p> <p>Their name was taken from the black American slang 'hipster'. The 'hippie' idea had come over from the USA in the summer of 1967. Hippies wore more natural clothing like shaggy Afghan coats, with very long and often unwashed hair. They dropped out of traditional society, supported environmentalism, drug-taking and free love. They took drugs like cannabis and LSD to try to find spiritual enlightenment, and were fascinated with 'oriental' mysticism. Hippies listened to psychedelic music to replicate drug trips. Bands like Pink Floyd and Procul Harem were soon joined by more established bands taking on the hippy sound like The Beatles' <i>Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band</i> album.</p>

⁸² A good summary of teddy boys may be found in a short film which may be seen at <https://youtu.be/tSPloCOMExg>

⁸³ A rocker describes antipathy to mods <http://goo.gl/gDzP8m> and the UK rocker chapter of the Hells Angels may be seen at <http://goo.gl/uy7Dfl> as well as Rocker style clip <http://bbc.in/2gyYovX> and the Cafe Racers at <http://bbc.in/2gyYZ0F>

⁸⁴ The mod style is described on Stuart Maconie's The People's Songs <http://goo.gl/lkqKfp> and at https://youtu.be/cuuf_7OFIhE as well as Mod style clip <http://bbc.in/2y36OIs> and Mods dancing <http://bbc.in/2yOwBIh>

⁸⁵ A BBC Learning Zone clip about hippy fashion at <https://youtu.be/9KWgLFsYIQ> and of the Woburn Love-In from 1967 at https://youtu.be/iqr_kM6uxQY

33 Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979: Part 3

SKINHEADS ⁸⁶	PUNKS ⁸⁷
Beginning in the later 1960s skinheads were a working-class version of the mods. They had closely cropped hairstyles and wore braces, Ben Sherman shirts, rolled-up jeans and Dr Marten boots. For many skinheads it was a very macho response to the more effeminate hippy movement. They listened to ska music which was influenced by the West Indian reggae of artists like Desmond Dekker. The 2 Tone record label of the 1970s made ska become more popular with music from bands like The Specials. By the 1970s some skinheads fought at football matches and some would go on to become involved in racially-motivated violence. As one skinhead said, "What are we for? Nothing really". ⁸⁸	The name 'punk' is American slang for an inexperienced youth. These 1970s youths were very aggressive. They dressed in ways that deliberately upset people, wearing bondage gear, dog collars, Nazi emblems, pins, studs, zips and leather. Their hairstyles were usually brightly coloured – cropped very short for girls, and spikey or in mohicans for boys. Punks deliberately gave off a sense of disgust and menace in their dress and attitude. They also did this in the ways they enjoyed themselves – 'pogo-ing' up and down to live music, spitting and fighting. Punks were very provocative, but gave equal importance to male and female artists – bands like The Slits and The Banshees had female lead singers and musicians.

⁸⁶A short film containing a good summary of skinheads may be seen at <https://youtu.be/I-lykh6-Dc8>

⁸⁷A short film containing a good short piece on punks may be seen at <https://youtu.be/4gt8fJ1cSJs>

⁸⁸Alwyn W. Turner, Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s (Aurum, 2008), page 62.

Glossary

DJ's	Disc jockeys
No jiving	'Jive' was a popular dancing style that came from America in the 1940s
R&B	Rhythm and blues
Androgynous	Partly male and female in appearance
Bisexual	Liked relationships with either women or men
Anarchy	Having no government
Silver Jubilee	Reigning for 25 years
Commercial broadcaster	It would pay for its programmes by selling advertising slots on television, rather than being paid for by a licence fee like the BBC
Sit-coms	Situation comedies
Satirise	Make fun of
Coronation	Crowning ceremony
Generation gap	Differences in attitudes between younger and older people
Establishment	The older and more privileged people who ran the country
Counter-culture	Against the culture of their parents
Nihilistic	Rejecting religious and moral principles and believing that there is no meaning to life
Hooliganism	Fighting and displays of violence in public
Teenage subcultures	Groups of young people with similar interests
Free love	Having sex with whoever you wanted without formal relationships

Recommended materials

VIDEO:

'1960s – the Me generation' in the Landmarks school series

Andrew Marr's History of Modern Britain: episode 2 'The Land of Lost Content' and episode 3 'Paradise Lost' covering the 1960s and 1970s

These films are available on DVD:

The Beatles films *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help*
Quadrophenia

READING:

Phil Star, *Developments in Sport, Leisure and Tourism during the 20th century* (Aberystwyth, 2011).

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