Men's hair in post-war Britain: class, masculinity and cultural change, c.1955-1975

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Abstract

Between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s, British men let their hair down. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century the overwhelming majority of British males had worn short hair and, with the exception of the occasional moustache-craze, had been clean-shaven. In the space of a few short years all of this changed, and by the early 1970s long hair, sideburns, moustaches and beards – articles of appearance which had held connotations of delinquency, dirtiness, effeminacy and deviance – were a common sight on high streets across the country. This shift in fashion, highly contested and widely debated by contemporary observers, has yet to be analysed in any depth by historians of post-war Britain. This thesis represents the first critical social and cultural history of white men's hair in Britain between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s, providing a detailed examination of changing fashions and the explosion of discourse which surrounded these shifts in style. Drawing upon Alan Sinfield's concept of 'the faultline', it argues that the stories that were told about men's hair during the immediate post-war decades were inescapably intertwined with understandings, anxieties and hopes for a wider moment of social and cultural flux. Shifts in hair fashions reflected these broader upheavals, but men's hair – and the surrounding discourse – also helped to shape how individuals understood a post-war society and culture which was changing around them. The thesis considers a series of case studies in order to explore both lived experience, and the discursive significance of men's hair within British society between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s: classroom disputes between teenagers, parents and schools over the length and styling of male pupils' hair; the efforts to exclude long-haired "beatniks" from leisure spaces in English seaside towns; the emergence of a new, heterosexualised ideal of flamboyant "peacock" masculinity; and the rise of the upmarket men's hairdressing salon during the post-war period. Each of these chapters engages with wider questions of class and gender to make interventions concerning the decline of deference, shifting ideals of masculinity, and the extent and character of post-war cultural change.

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Introduction: Men's hair in post-war Britain, c.1955-1975

In mid-1971 Tom Harrisson, the explorer, journalist, anthropologist and co-founder of the pioneering British social research organisation Mass-Observation, began a new project. Since the previous year Harrisson had been working at the University of Sussex, attempting to organise the disparate material collected by Mass-Observation between the late 1930s and early 1950s.[1] Having spent much of the post-war period working overseas in Borneo, Harrisson was clearly struck by the dramatic changes that had occurred in the appearance of students, and, in particular male undergraduates, in his absence. Working with the assistance of a graduate student, Barry Scherer, Harrisson's research soon gained a specific focus – the length of the hair upon the male students' heads, and the existence and styling of the whiskers on their faces.[2]

The new project employed the observational techniques pioneered by Harrisson in Bolton in the late 1930s, requiring the researcher to sit incognito in public spaces and make "counts" in order to categorise the appearance of those passing by. During May and June of 1971 Harrisson and Scherer recorded the hairstyles of 1,000 male Sussex undergraduates, while also carrying out smaller samples at the Brighton College of Education, and at university campuses in Birmingham and Brussels, Belgium. The results, which were published in the December issue of the University's official magazine, *Focus*, stated that 23 per cent of the male students counted at Sussex wore their hair to their shoulders, 48 per cent to the nape, with only 29 per cent being categorised by Harrisson as having hair that was 'normal', defined as 'to [the] ears'. While the smaller sample at Birmingham returned broadly similar results, albeit with an even smaller percentage of "normals", only 5 per cent of the observed students at the nearby College of Education had shoulder-length hair, a greater percentage instead wearing their hair to the nape. By far the highest rate of "normalcy", meanwhile, was recorded in the Brussels sample.[3]

[1] J. M. Heimann, *The Most Offending Soul Alive: Tom Harrisson and His Remarkable Life* (Honolulu, 1997), pp.367-368, 382-385.
[2] B. Scherer, 'Mass Observation Pilot Study', The Keep, Brighton (hereafter: TKB), Hair Length Study, SxMOA29/1/2/1, p.1.
[3] 'Hair Piece', *Focus: The Magazine of the University of Sussex*, No. 21, December 1971, pp.10-11.

While the *Guardian* reported on the research under the headline 'Hairy look 'fact'', Harrisson himself noted that the results revealed a complex and varied picture.[4] Although a higher percentage of Birmingham students had been categorised as wearing shoulder-length hair, this was generally 'less lavish, [and] less associated with full beards, or other "hippy" stereotypes' than at Sussex. Similarly, while the sample taken at Brighton's College of Education actually returned the highest percentage of beards, more of these were categorised as being 'trimmed' than at the neighbouring university. And while Sussex was widely identified as a hotbed of student radicalism and non-conformity, Harrisson was intrigued by the fact that almost 30 per cent of his sample wore hair that would be acceptable to the British Army. 'There is a higher degree of normalcy' amongst students, he wrote, 'than some people realise.'[5]

If university students were not necessarily as hirsute as might commonly be imagined, young men in other occupations could be hard to distinguish from the hairiest Sussex undergraduate. To conclude Harrisson's article, the editors of *Focus* produced a quiz which challenged readers to identify which of six men photographed around Brighton were studying at Sussex; of this selection those with the longest hair, it was revealed, were a window-dresser, a photographer and a youth described as 'unemployed' (Figure 1). By the early 1970s, then, this dramatic change in male appearance could be observed far beyond university campuses, as increasing numbers of British men – many with their teenage years well behind them – abandoned the 'short-back-and-sides' in favour of longer styles. The transformation in men's hairstyles – and its causes, implications, and consequences – clearly continued to intrigue Harrisson. In his archive, filed alongside the materials relating to the research conducted with Scherer, are dozens of press cuttings collected through 1971, 1972 and early 1973, presumably saved because Harrisson considered that they offered some insight into the wider meanings of this shift in male fashion.[6] These articles, typically found with the word 'HAIR' scrawled on them in red pen, covered a range of topics. Newspaper cuttings describing both the prison crops forcibly inflicted upon the editors of *Oz* magazine, and calls from the House of Lords that the police should not be permitted to search young men for drugs on account of their long hair, provided an indication of the divided responses of those in positions of authority to

[4] J. Ezard, 'Hairy look 'fact'', *Guardian*, 14th December 1971, p.5.
[5] Emphasis in original. 'Hair Piece', pp.10-11.
[6] TKB, 'Annotated Press Cuttings: Identity, Hair and Fashion', SxMOA29/1/2/2.

youthful displays of non-conformity.[7] Articles saved from broadsheet Sunday supplements suggested that changing hair fashions were representative of wider changes to British masculinity.[8] Correspondence between Harrisson and the market research department of Wilkinson Sword, keen for any information regarding male attitudes towards shaving, raised the question of the relationship between shifting fashions and men's consumption habits.[9]

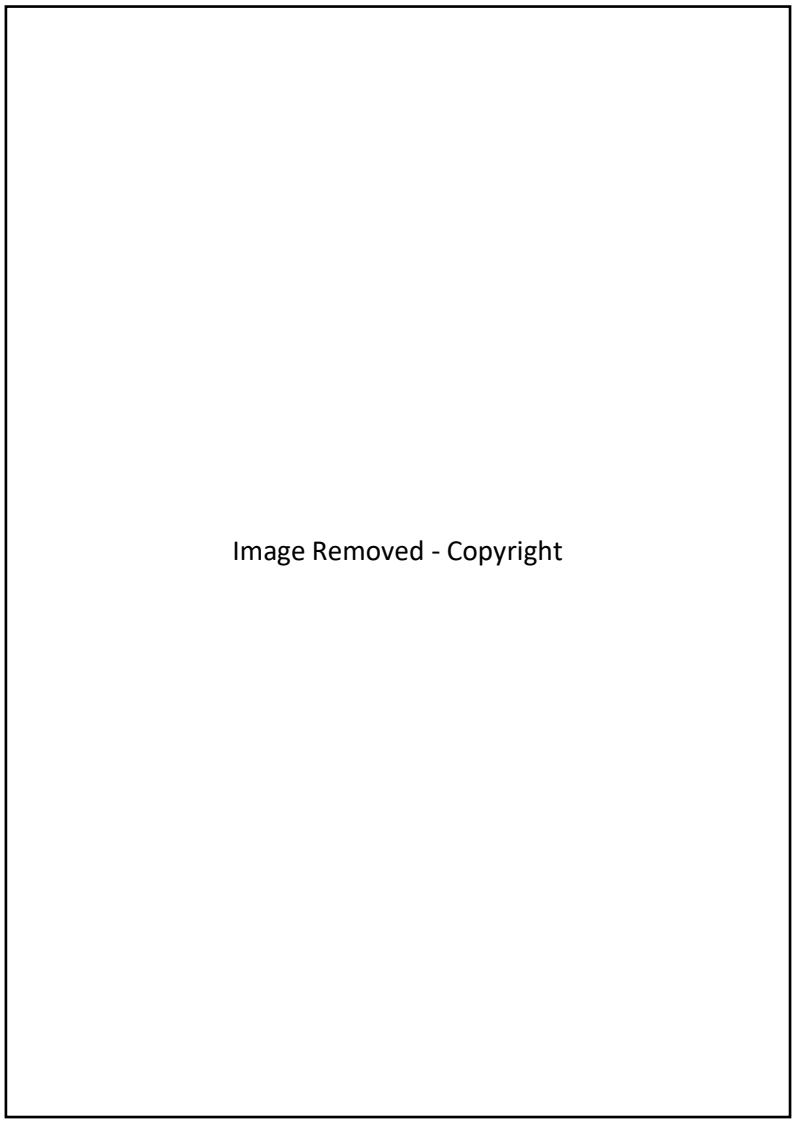


Figure 1: Focus: The Magazine of the University of Sussex, December 1971, p.12. The men's occupations were listed as: A) Window Dresser; B) Unemployed; C) University Student; D) Brighton Polytechnic Student; E) University Student; F) Photographer.

[7] G. Wansell, 'Haircuts for 'Oz' editors', *The Times*, 31st July 1971; 'Drug searches and police costs at pop festivals', *The Times*, 15th July 1971, TKB, 'Annotated Press Cuttings: Identity, Hair and Fashion', SxMOA29/1/2/2.
[8] *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 23rd April 1972, TKB, SxMOA29/1/2/1.
[9] See, for instance, R. Bernholt to T. Harrisson, 24th January 1972, TKB, Hair Length Study, SxMOA29/1/2/1.

Despite continuing to research the topic, Harrisson never published any further findings or analysis in the wake of the *Focus* piece in December 1971.[10] The reasons for this are unclear: it is possible that other projects took precedence, and perhaps he planned to return to the matter at a later date.[11] Regardless, it is apparent that Harrisson had recognised that men's hair was a subject in need of serious study: not only in order to try and document a dramatic change in male fashion and cultural norms, but also as an avenue to explore the consequences and reactions to wider post-war social and cultural change within the arena of the everyday. To date, however, neither historians of post-war Britain, nor academics studying the social and cultural significance of hair, have given more than a cursory degree of attention to the transformation of male hairstyles in Britain during the immediate post-war decades. As is detailed below, other historians have tended to observe this change, rather than explain it in any detail. The potential for this shift in male fashionable norms to illuminate wider cultural and social upheavals, identified by Harrisson in the early 1970s, has remained unfulfilled. This thesis, then, offers the first critical history of men's hair in Britain between the late 1950s and the mid-1970s, exploring both the changes in fashion, and the stories that were told about them. Through the study of men's hair, the following chapters also make interventions concerning social class and the dynamics of eroding deference, the emergence of new forms of flamboyant, overtly heteorosexual masculinity, and the geographical extent of post-war cultural change.

The lack of existing academic analysis is made all the more mysterious by the fact that men's hair was a much-discussed subject in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s. Newspapers not only described changes in fashion, but examined shifts in style for wider meaning.[12] The haircuts adopted by young men, and the responses that they prompted, were debated on early evening current affairs television programmes during the 1960s, and were even the subject of a 45-minute documentary produced by BBC Television in 1967.[13] By the early 1970s popular sociological accounts were attempting to place

[10] In his correspondence with Richard Bernholt of Wilkinson Sword, Harrisson outlined a plan for a comparative global study of men's hair, 'comparing Borneo with Brighton and so on'. T. Harrisson to R. Bernholt, 24th May 1972, TKB, Hair Length Study, SxMOA29/1/2/1.
[11] Harrisson was killed in a road accident in Thailand in January 1976.
[12] See, for instance, W. Cooper, A. Whiting, 'Hair!', *Daily Mirror*, 6th September 1971, pp.16-17; 'The Inside Page', *Daily Mirror*, 23rd March 1965, p.13.
[13] See, for instance, the appearance of a 17-year-old Davy Jones (the future David Bowie) on the BBC's early-evening current affairs programme *Tonight* in 1964, to discuss his 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Long-Haired Men'. 'David Bowie – Tonight – 1964' < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-ShvccGqsw>, accessed 27th July 2019; J. Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*, BBC1, 17th August 1967.

contemporary hair trends within a global and historical context. One such book, *Hair: Sex, Society and Symbolism* by the British journalist Wendy Cooper, was serialised in the country's best-selling daily newspaper, the *Daily Mirror*, in November 1971.[14] This burst of discourse suggests that during these years men's hair acted as a 'faultline' within British culture. The concept of the 'faultline' originates with the work of the late British cultural historian and theorist Alan Sinfield, who wrote that:

> When a part of our worldview threatens disruption by manifestly failing to cohere with the rest, then we reorganize and retell its story, trying to get it into shape – back into the old shape if we are conservative-minded, or into a new shape if we are more adventurous. This is how cultures elaborate themselves. The stories that address the unresolved issues, the one where the conditions of plausibility are in dispute, require the most assiduous and continuous reworking; I call them faultline stories.[15]

Sinfield employed this concept to offer new readings of early modern texts, as well as the character and work of Oscar Wilde.[16] In the latter, Sinfield convincingly demonstrates how readings of Wilde changed as wider understandings of sexuality and class shifted through the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries; 'Wilde's person and writings', he writes, are 'a cultural token around which contest and change occurred, and still occur.'[17] In moments of cultural flux, then, hegemonic understandings of texts, symbols, and fashions can be contested and redefined. This thesis argues that the transformation in male hairstyles seen in Britain between the late 1950s and the mid-1970s, and the debates about them mediated through the popular media, are best understood as part of just such a process of redefinition: as an expression of changing norms, not only in terms of hair fashions, but also underlying social and cultural values. Changing hair fashions rendered physical upon the male body a wider reformulation of hierarchies – of class, gender, authority, race and generation. Between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s, British culture was incessantly telling stories about men's hair, stories which betrayed hopes and fears for this wider upheaval of British culture and society. As old certainties were challenged, against a backdrop of competing narratives of progress and decline, and liberation and decadence, new male hairstyles – startling by the standards of just a few

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[14] W. Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society and Symbolism* (New York, 1971). Cooper, Whiting, 'Hair!', pp.16-17; W. Cooper, A. Whiting, 'Sex – and the Five o'clock Shadow..' *Daily Mirror*, 7th September 1971, p.13; W. Cooper, A. Whiting, 'The Battle of the Beards', *Daily Mirror*, 8th September 1971, p.22.
[15] A. Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (London, 1994), pp.4-5. See also: A. Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford, 1992), pp.46-47.
[16] Sinfield, *Faultlines*; Sinfield, *The Wilde Century*.
[17] Sinfield, *The Wilde Century*, p.5.

years previous – offered a highly visible, and highly contested, symbol of social and cultural change in post-war Britain.

Historiography

The history of hair

In the decades immediately following the Second World War, historians showed little interest in hair as a subject for their research. Between the 1950s and the 1990s it was largely left to psychiatrists, anthropologists, sociologists and journalists to theorise and debate the ways in which hair acts as a social and cultural symbol. In the 1950s and 1960s, the clinical psychiatrist Charles Berg, who had trained under Sigmund Freud, and the anthropologists E. R. Leach and C. R. Hallpike all forwarded universalist models of hair symbolism, arguing that hair carried sexual or social meanings which were shared across cultures and throughout history.[18] While these accounts included interesting ethnographic detail, their essentially ahistorical approach left them vulnerable to criticism, and by the 1970s anthropologists and sociologists were shifting towards more flexible models of hair symbolism. Paul Hershman's 1974 article, 'Hair, Sex and Dirt' argued that in ritual and social life, hair was used to communicate a whole range of values, both sexual and non-sexual. Approaches which supposed a 'single consistent code of hair behaviour', argued Hershman, made 'an unwarranted assumption that the metaphor will always work to give the same pattern of relationships whatever the culture'.[19] As Hershman wrote at the conclusion of his article:

> There is nothing inherent in different states of being with hair or being without hair which forms a natural system, by which sets of symbols will always be structured in a basically similar pattern. It is not until a number of 'cultural givens' are known which are adduced from the particular moral values of a society that it can be understood how a specific semantic structuring of hair behaviour will work in a particular society.[20]

Writing in the following decade, the sociologist Anthony Synnott drew a similar conclusion to Hershman, arguing that it was futile to search for 'intrinsic meanings and a natural symbolism' in hair, and suggesting that meanings are not only variable *between*

[18] C. Berg, *The Unconscious Significance of Hair* (London, 1951); E. R. Leach, 'Magical Hair' in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 88 (1958), pp.147-164; C. R. Hallpike, 'Social Hair' in *Man*, New Series, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1969), pp.256-264.
[19] P. Hershman, 'Hair, Sex and Dirt' in *Man*, New Series, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1974), pp. 291-292, 294-295.
[20] Hershman, 'Hair, Sex and Dirt', p.296.

cultures, but can also change rapidly *within* societies. The meanings of hair and hair behaviour, he concluded, 'cannot be understood as a fixed pattern but as a fluid *process*, as styles change in opposition and contrast to earlier styles. Hair is not only gender and ideology determined, it is also *fashion*.'[21] Deviations from the norm in hair, suggested Synnott, not only symbolise social distinctions within a society, but also allow us to identify and understand wider social and cultural change.

As Christopher Oldstone-Moore has recently noted, throughout the later twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries anthropological and sociological thought shifted away from providing broad theoretical models to account for the cultural and social meanings of hair and hair behaviour.[22] In abandoning the quest to uncover a universal symbolism, attention has instead turned to understanding the significance of hair and hair rituals in particular cultural and historical contexts. Oldstone-Moore, himself a historian, writes that '[u]ltimately, the meaning of hair is to be found in history, rather than psychology or innate patterns of human society.'[23] In recent decades, historical studies of hair have tended to fall into two types. Texts that consider the meanings of hair over the *longue durée* have continued to appear, written by psychologists, sociologists and historians.[24] These accounts often focus on gauging change and continuity in the cultural and social value of hair, measured over centuries. This thesis, however, follows the alternative approach, pioneered by researchers who have explored the meanings of hair or hair behaviour within specific historical contexts in order to address wider questions of class, race, gender, sexuality or national identity.[25] Oldstone-Moore, writing about the 'beard movement' in Victorian England, and Rosalind Eyben, exploring the campaigns by waiters for the right to wear moustaches in *fin de siècle* London and Paris, have demonstrated that the study of men's hair and facial hair in particular spatial and temporal contexts, through the analysis of a range of written sources, can provide wider insights

[21] Emphasis in original. A. Synnott, 'Shame and glory: a sociology of hair' in *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (September 1987), pp.408-410.
[22] C. Oldstone-Moore, 'Social Science, Gender Theory and the History of Hair' in J. Evans and A. Withey (eds.), *New Perspectives in the History of Facial Hair: Framing the Face* (Basingstoke, 2018), pp.23-24.
[23] Oldstone-Moore, 'Social Science, Gender Theory and the History of Hair', p.24.
[24] See, for instance: A. Peterkin, *One Thousand Beards: A Cultural History of Facial Hair* (Vancouver, 2001); V. Sherrow, *Encyclopedia of Hair: A Cultural History* (Westport, 2006); C. Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men: The Revealing History of Facial Hair* (Chicago, 2015).
[25] The two approaches to hair history, of the study over the *longue durée* and close research of a particular historical context, are to an extent reconciled in edited collections which bring together focused essays covering a broad range of periods. See G. Biddle-Perry and S. Cheang (eds.), *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion* (Oxford and New York, 2008); and J. Evans and A. Withey (eds.), *New Perspectives on the History of Facial Hair: Framing the Face* (Basingstoke, 2018).

regarding class and masculinity.[26] Studies of the racial politics of black hair, particularly in the context of the twentieth-century United States, have also proved especially influential on the writing of this thesis. Writers such as Kobena Mercer, Robin D. G. Kelley and Maxine Craig have interrogated the multiple meanings of black hairstyles, illustrating how styles such as the conk, the Afro and dreadlocks could stand as both symbols of liberation, and also signifiers of class and gender within African-American communities, while also exploring interactions between street fashion and the market.[27] Their path-breaking research offers a vital reminder that hair always carries multiple messages, read in different ways by different audiences. Furthermore, Mercer, Kelley and Craig all demonstrate that hair always carries a racial politics. In studying the hair of white men, this thesis identifies 'traces' – to use Bill Schwarz's term – of the legacy of empire and post-colonial white angst that existed, and continue to exist, in post-war British society.[28]

While the historiography concerning the history of hair has grown in recent years, the shifts in popular male styles which occurred in Britain between the 1950s and mid-1970s are yet to be the subject of any detailed study. Where this transformation in the norms of male appearance is noted, it tends to be remarked upon briefly as part of a wider study, either within histories of gender or hair and hairdressing, or broader surveys of the post-war period. For instance, in his history of intimate life in Britain since 1945, Jeffrey Weeks lists 'long hair among young men' alongside the emergence of the Beatles and 'greater explicitness on television' as indicators of the development of 'a more informal and democratic' British culture during the 1960s.[29] Of the generalist historians of the period, Dominic Sandbrook pays most attention to the transformation in male hairstyles during the late 1960s and early 1970s, suggesting that longer hair had 'slowly filtered down the social pyramid from upper-middle-class hippies to ordinary working men.' Sandbrook's focus, consistent with his wider argument of the rise of a populist anti-permissive backlash through the 1970s, is on hostility shown towards the new fashion;

[26] C. Oldstone-Moore, 'The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 48, No.1 (Autumn 2005), pp.7-34; R. Eyben, ''The Moustache Makes Him More of a Man': Waiters' Masculinity Struggles, 1890-1910' in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 87 (Spring 2019), pp.189-210
[27] K. Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York and London, 1994); R. D. G. Kelley, 'Nap Time: Historicizing the Afro' in *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1997), pp.339-351; M. Craig, 'The Decline and Fall of the Conk; or, How to Read a Process' in *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1997), pp.399-420.
[28] B. Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume I: The White Man's World* (Oxford, 2013), p.5.
[29] J. Weeks, *The World We Have Won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life* (London and New York, 2007), p.64.

left unexplored, however, is the fact that some of the opponents he cites – such as *Rising Damp*'s Rigsby and Basil Fawlty – were characters written with the intention of satirising socially conservative attitudes.[30] The following chapters challenge Sandbrook's narrative. Rather than perceiving the passive adoption of upper-middle-class countercultural fashions, this thesis emphasizes the battles fought for the right to fashionable expression by working- and lower-middle-class men, the significance of an erosion of deference within the sphere of the everyday, and the impact of shifting ideals of masculinity and changing conceptions of male attractiveness.

The most detailed accounts of sustained opposition to men's hairstyles during the 1960s and 1970s focus on the United States of America. Christopher Oldstone-Moore and Jo B. Paoletti both explore challenges to bans which prohibited the wearing of long hair, beards or moustaches in American courts, from employees or students who sought to overturn the edicts laid down by business owners or school principals.[31] To date, however, no comparable work has been conducted in the context of post-war Britain. This reflects a wider imbalance within the historiography. With the notable exception of the literature focused on the cultural significance of moustaches and beards, social and cultural histories of hair tend to focus predominantly on women's hair. There are understandable reasons which explain this disparity. Exploring the social and cultural significance of women's hair fashions, and the ways in which they can resist or reinforce patriarchal structures, is vital historical work. White British men, after all, are hardly neglected as historical actors. With that said, this thesis argues that it is important to devote serious scholarly attention to men's hair, not least to gain wider insights into these patriarchal structures, and post-war understandings of class, gender and ethnicity. The following chapters also demonstrate that it is a mistake to suggest, as some writers have argued, that twentieth-century men were not interested in their hair, and that therefore the topic is unworthy of study.[32]

Of the specialist histories of hair, then, few devote any significant attention to men's hair in post-war Britain. Caroline Cox's study of twentieth-century hairstyling, which predominantly focuses on women's hair and experiences of hairdressing, provides a brief

[30] D. Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-1974* (London, 2010), pp.399-400.
[31] Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, pp.251-256; J. B. Paoletti, *Sex and Unisex: Fashion, Feminism and the Sexual Revolution* (Bloomington, 2015), pp.123-149.
[32] P. Malcolmson, *Me and My Hair: A Social History* (Gosport, 2012), pp.20-21; G. McCracken, *Big Hair: A Journey into the Transformation of Self* (London, 1997), pp.18-19.

analysis of developments in male fashions and grooming habits. Cox emphasizes the continued dominance of the 'short-back-and-sides' during the 1950s, while noting the increasing popularity of 'continental' styling with some young men. Like Sandbrook, Cox notes the hostility shown by the 'Great British public' towards long-haired young men during the 1960s, motivated, she suggests, by the belief that long hair represented effeminacy, dirtiness, or subversive politics. Cox also observes that 'the long-haired look had become the orthodoxy by the end of the 1960s, when even middle-aged straights were prepared to have a lick of hair curling onto their jacket collars.'[33] The question of how hostility led to orthodoxy is, however, never addressed. Cox also highlights the emergence of upmarket male and unisex salons in the West End of London during the late 1960s. While acknowledging the significance of developments within the capital, this thesis problematizes this narrative by casting its gaze beyond London, exploring the existence of similar establishments in provincial towns and cities, and deconstructing the atmosphere of sexual fantasy that was said to exist within.[34]

At their simplest, the following chapters address many unanswered questions that exist concerning men's hair in Britain during the immediate post-war decades. Did opposition to men wearing their hair in longer or more eye-catching styles suddenly fade away, or did it remain in some quarters? Was long hair no longer associated with deviance, effeminacy and dirtiness? If not, how did it shed these labels? Did it gain new, more positive connotations? If so, what were they, and how did they develop? How was change in men's hairdressing experienced, by both hairdressers and customers? Was the rise of the fashionable men's salon confined to the swinging districts of the capital, or can we understand it as a more widespread phenomenon? This thesis addresses these questions directly, looking in much greater depth at the values – both positive and negative – attached to men's hair throughout this period, and at those who wore, and opposed, the new styles. Its scope, however, reaches far beyond the history of hair. As the historian Paul Deslandes has written, 'the systemic study of physical appearance, writ large, has the potential to transform how we understand a range of important developments, human experiences and, even, historical periods.'[35] In exploring the ways in which changing hair fashions for white British men intersected with wider social,

[33] C. Cox, *Good Hair Days: A History of British Hairstyling* (London, 1999), p.202.
[34] Cox, *Good Hair Days*, pp.189, 195-202.
[35] P. R. Deslandes, 'The Male Body, Beauty and Aesthetics in Modern British Culture' in *History Compass*, Vol. 8, No. 10, (2010), p.1192.

cultural and economic upheavals between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s, the thesis makes a wider contribution to our historical knowledge of class, masculinity, and the nature of cultural change in post-war Britain.

Class and 'affluence' in post-war Britain

As outlined above, this thesis argues that men's hair is best understood as a 'faultline' in British culture during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the subject of an explosion of discourse that reflected a broader moment of social and cultural flux. Shifts in men's hairstyles existed in a dialectical relationship with these wider upheavals. The fashions themselves, and the responses to them – whether celebratory or condemnatory – were informed by the complex dynamics of social, cultural and economic post-war change. Men's hair, however, also helped to shape reactions to the wider transformations experienced by British society, an everyday symbol of post-war cultural change which was highly contested, and which forced men and women to consider questions of class, gender, authority, tolerance and freedom of expression.

Throughout the post-war decades, men's hair was often read as an indicator of class, and reacted to accordingly. As is discussed in the following chapters, eye-catching styles worn by teenaged boys and young men were eyed suspiciously by some teachers and cultural critics, amongst others, as symbols of proletarian flash and wayward working-class consumption. The long, apparently unwashed locks of scruffily-attired "beatniks" could be read by some observers as evidence of fecklessness and a lack of self-respect, the wearer positioned as belonging to an undeserving poor that threatened the integrity of the welfare state. Conversely, long hair could also be understood as an indicator of upper-class bohemianism – either authentic or posed – with its emphasis on resistance against bourgeois morality and the Protestant work ethic. Haircare brands such as Brylcreem drew upon imagery and conceptions of upper-working- and lower-middle-class respectability in their advertising, particularly during the 1940s and 1950s, portraying neatly and modestly coiffured everymen. Images of happy fathers and husbands, and capable and skilled technicians and professionals, offered aspirational visions of social mobility and technological progress, targeted at upper-working and lower-middle-class consumers. The fact that this image was usurped by a hairier, more flamboyant male ideal in the late 1960s and early 1970s not only indicates shifts in

masculine norms, but also points to the frustration of technocratic dreams of rational, scientifically-directed progress.[36]

In writing the social-cultural history of men's hair in Britain during these years, this thesis builds upon historical literature which approaches class primarily as a 'dynamic social relationship', rather than as a category of economic and social description.[37] Resistance to changing male hair fashions was often centred on maintaining a distinction between the "rough" and the "respectable". As Selina Todd has emphasized, these labels were often applied to working-class men and women by middle-class observers, such as sociologists or state officials, but also circulated within working-class communities. In a post-war period where the working-class was culturally positioned by the trade union movement and the Labour Party as "the people", deviant behaviour – delinquency, worklessness, or unorthodox appearance – provided an "other" against which "normality" could be constructed.[38] The centrality of notions of respectability to working-class self-identity both predated and outlived the period of study covered here, as attested by Lynsey Hanley's 2016 memoir-cum-critique of social mobility, *Respectable: The Experience of Class* – 'It is because of respectability that I don't want my son's hair to grow too long or to be cut too short', writes Hanley in the opening pages.[39] However, as this thesis demonstrates, amidst rising affluence these tenets of respectability were negotiated, contested and reformed during the 1960s and 1970s, not only in the pages of newspapers but also in classrooms, leisure spaces and men's hairdressing salons.

Discussions of class in Britain during the 1950s, 60s and 70s have often centred on the concept of "affluence", considering to what extent full employment, rising living standards and increased consumption (as well as the welfare state) impacted upon social dynamics within and between classes. Contemporary sociological accounts, which were at least partially concerned with determining the causes of the Labour Party's declining electoral fortunes in the mid- and late 1950s, such as Michael Young and Peter Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957), often suggested that increased

[36] Dominic Sandbrook writes that the altogether shaggier appearance of many Labour politicians during the 1974 election campaigns, when compared to their slicked down styles of the mid-1960s, 'aptly symbolized what had happened in the meantime to their modernizing ambitions.' Sandbrook, *State of Emergency*, p.399.
[37] S. Todd, 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street: Reinvestigating the Post-War Working Class' in *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (December 2008), p.501.
[38] Todd, 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street', pp.503, 511-512; see also: J. Lawrence, 'The British Sense of Class' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2000), pp.307-318.
[39] L. Hanley, *Respectable: The Experience of Class* (London, 2016), p.7.

prosperity had led to working-class families adopting behaviours and habits previously associated with the middle-class.[40] The suggestion of the "embourgeoisement" of the British working-class has, however, been challenged, not only by subsequent sociological investigations such as *The Affluent Worker* studies conducted by John Goldthorpe et al in Luton in the mid-to-late 1960s, but also by more recent historical accounts.[41] As Jon Lawrence highlights, the idea of a post-war "affluent age", dawning in the mid-1950s and extending through the 1960s and into the early 1970s, obscures the degree to which the social, cultural and economic shifts commonly associated with "affluence" were already beginning to take root in parts of southern England during the inter-war period.[42] Moreover, as Todd emphasizes, many working-class families continued to live precarious lives in the post-war period, only too aware that their hard won economic gains, and their "respectability", could quickly fall away. [43]

The idea of "affluence" is significant within this thesis in two ways. Firstly, because the changes the term is commonly understood to encapsulate – rising living standards, full employment, a shift from production to consumption – did, inevitably, impact upon the behaviour of British men, including the ways in which they wore and styled their hair, and the spaces within which they had it cut. Secondly, the cultural concept of "affluence", the belief held by contemporary observers that they were now living in an "affluent society", directly influenced how changes in male hair fashions were understood and responded to. As this thesis demonstrates, the study of men's hair in Britain during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s provides important new insights into the social and cultural politics of affluence during these decades. New hairstyles could be condemned by critics as an example of the frivolousness of a society increasingly debased by consumerism; significantly, however, they were also defended – by young men, their parents or partners, and sympathetic voices in the media – as symbols of social and economic progress.

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[40] M. Young, P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957); see also: M. Abrams, R. Rose, *Must Labour Lose?* (London, 1960).
[41] J. H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer, J. Platt, *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge, 1968); Goldthorpe et al, *The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge, 1968); Goldthorpe et al, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure* (Cambridge, 1969); see M. Savage, 'Working-Class Identities in the 1960s: Revisiting the Affluent Worker Study' in *Sociology* Vol. 39, No. 5 (December 2005), p.931.
[42] J. Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c.1930-64' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2013), pp.273-276. See also: J. B. Priestley, *English Journey* (London, 1934).
[43] Todd, 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street', pp.511-514.

Recent historical explorations of class dynamics in post-war Britain have focused on the suggestion of a "decline of deference" in the decades following 1945. Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite argues that this erosion of deference, which she defines as 'the tendency to defer to authority, convention, and tradition in an array of areas – political, social, cultural, and personal', was driven by a multiplicity of factors including full employment, rising affluence, and cultural shifts that undermined the position of 'traditional elites.'[44] While Sutcliffe-Braithwaite's work is focused on the impact of declining deference on understandings of class, and the subsequent electoral consequences in the 1980s and 1990s, this thesis applies this model to a set of localised examples in order to further explore its impact within the sphere of the everyday. The following chapters provide critical analyses of the challenge that teenaged boys and their parents posed to the authority of the school on the regulation of their hair, the claims made by hirsute "beatniks" to public space within seaside towns, and the demands of young men for new, fashionable hairstyles in the face of opposition from some hairdressers. The thesis also supports the argument recently made by Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and her co-authors Emily Robinson, Camilla Schofield and Natalie Thomlinson, that post-war Britain was characterised by the rise of a 'popular individualism', articulated in a language of rights and identities, with men and women increasingly asserting their independence and personal autonomy.[45] However, while Robinson, Schofield, Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Thomlinson argue that "popular individualism" really 'took off' in the 1970s, the evidence here suggests that this was already a noticeable characteristic within British society from the early 1960s, if not before.

Masculinity and men in post-war Britain

Men's hair was, of course, not only read as a marker of class status or increased "affluence", but also as a symbol of masculinity. These understandings were often tightly intertwined. Notions of "rough" and "respectable" not only rested on class indicators such as employment or neighbourhood, but were also centred upon approved performances of gender, while the concept of "effeminacy" was, for much of the

[44] F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, *Class, Politics, and the Decline of Deference in England, 1968-2000* (Oxford, 2018), pp.8-9.
[45] E. Robinson, C. Schofield, F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, N. Thomlinson, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s' in *Twentieth-Century British History*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (June 2017), pp.268-304.

twentieth century, as dependent on class-stereotypes as on notions of sexual identity.[46] As historians of gender have identified, just as with class the performance of masculinity could be read from men's dress, their bodies and their hair.[47] In his memoir, the British writer James Kirkup, who grew up in South Shields in the 1930s, recalled his father's suspicion at both his appearance and his cultural aspirations: '[y]ou're growing into a proper nancy-boy, with your long-hair and all this book-reading.'[48]

Over the past thirty years historians of gender have built upon the theoretical suggestions of the sociologist R. W. Connell that multiple understandings of masculinity – masculinities – circulate within societies at any given historical moment.[49] As Connell identifies, these exist within hierarchies of power – her model is structured around culturally dominant 'hegemonic' masculinities, 'complicit masculinities' which do not challenge these hegemonic forms, 'subordinate' forms of masculinity which are deemed illegitimate, and formations which are 'marginalised' through intersections with race, ethnicity and/or class.[50]

Some historians have criticised Connell's theoretical model, questioning her account of how gender interacts with other power structures.[51] Alex Shepard argues that Connell's terms – 'complicit', 'subordinate', 'marginalised' – underplay the extent to which hegemonic masculinities are contested and resisted, while also emphasising the fluid and situational nature of gender performance.[52] Men did not necessarily only subscribe to one vision of masculinity, but could shift between them dependent on context. This mobility, however, had its limits, as understandings and expectations of gender intersected with class, ethnic and regional norms.[53] Nevertheless, as Ben Griffin emphasizes, Connell's

[46] Sinfield, *The Wilde Century*, pp.130-160; M. Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago and London, 2006), pp.140-141, 169-182; H. Smith, *Masculinity, Class and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895-1957* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp.13-15.
[47] See, for instance, J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, 1996); G. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford and New York, 1996); C. Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life, 1860-1914* (Manchester, 1999); B. Shannon, 'ReFashioning Men: Fashion, Masculinity, and the Cultivation of the Male Consumer in Britain, 1860-1914' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Summer 2004), pp.597-630.
[48] Quoted in Sinfield, *The Wilde Century*, p.148.
[49] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (2nd Edition, Cambridge, 2005).
[50] Connell, *Masculinities*, pp.76-81.
[51] J. Tosh, 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender' in S. Dudink, K. Hagermann and J. Tosh (eds.), *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester, 2004), pp.41-58; For a detailed overview of the criticisms of Connell's theoretical model, see B. Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem' in *Gender & History*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (July 2018), pp.380-384.
[52] A. Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p.250.
[53] Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem', p.384.

model remains useful to historians, not only because it recognises the existence of multiple types of masculinity, but because it identifies relationships of power that exist between them.[54] This thesis explores shifts in these hierarchies of masculinity in the specific context of Britain between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, and argues that men's hair – how it was worn, cut and understood – provides a new perspective on the ways in which ideals of gender changed during this period. This thesis builds on previous historical work which has addressed masculinity in twentieth-century Britain. Ground-breaking histories by Matt Houlbrook and Helen Smith have explored the masculinities and the fluid sexualities that existed in working- and middle-class communities in London and the industrial north during the first half of the twentieth century, and suggested that these cultures began to disappear during the post-war period, amidst rising affluence, changing gender employment patterns, the decline of male-only sociability, campaigns for the decriminalisation of male homosexuality, and popular media narratives which established "the homosexual" as a specific identity.[55] Historians of the family and heterosexual love and courtship have also explored the growing cultural ascendancy of what Laura King terms 'family-oriented masculinity', driven in large part by the same underlying socio-cultural forces identified by Houlbrook and Smith.[56] It is argued in the following chapters that these shifts are central to understanding change in male hair fashions in Britain during the post-war decades, with the increased cultural reach of what Marcus Collins terms 'mutuality' – an equality of difference between men and women focused on partnership, companionate marriage and the reciprocity of affection and desire – placing a renewed emphasis on male appearance.[57]

Much of the historiography of post-war British masculinity, then, is focused on the growth of a home and family-centred gender identity. This can be traced back to the 1930s, with the inter-war, domesticated 'little men' identified by Alison Light, through the 'temperate heroes' of the war years described by Sonya O. Rose, and into the years of

[54] Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem', p.384.
[55] Houlbrook, *Queer London*, pp.269-271; Smith, *Masculinity, Class and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895-1957*, pp.188-195.
[56] L. King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, c. 1914-1960* (Oxford, 2015), p.5. See also: C. Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford, 2013); C. Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England' in *The Historical Journal*, Vol.50, No.1 (2007), pp.173-196; M. Collins, *Modern Love: An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2004); J. Finch and P. Summerfield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage, 1945-59' in G. Allan (ed.), *The Sociology of the Family: A Reader* (Oxford, 1999), pp.12-34.
[57] Collins, *Modern Love*, p.4.

increasing affluence, mutuality and companionate marriage during the 1950s and early 1960s.[58] This thesis, however, pushes beyond this periodisation into less studied territory, by also exploring shifts in British masculinity during the late 1960s and 1970s. In particular, it throws light on the emergence of the "peacock male" during these years, a figure identified through eye-catching dress and appearance, his care for bodily presentation, and an overt heterosexuality. While peacock masculinity could be reconciled as part of the mutual ideal – promising liberated, less repressed, more loving husbands and boyfriends – it also presented male (hetero)sexuality as existing beyond the confines of marriage. In his analysis of British softcore pornography Marcus Collins, one of the few historians to devote attention to this form of mid-century masculinity, questions the extent to which this consumerist, fashion-conscious, sexualized vision could survive beyond the pages of men's lifestyle magazines.[59] While acknowledging and exploring the contradictions and limitations that existed within this model of masculinity, this thesis demonstrates that this vision held currency beyond the pages of the press, not least in the upmarket male salons that began to appear on provincial high streets from the late 1960s, offering the latest styles in an atmosphere of luxury, and staffed by young women who were tasked with offering clients both aesthetic pleasure and emotional reassurance. In offering an analysis of consumption and advertising related to men's hair in Britain during the immediate post-war decades, this thesis helps to bridge the historiographical gap between accounts of male consumers in early periods (in particular the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and the inter-war years), and studies of the advent of the 'new man' in the 1980s.[60]

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[58] A. Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London, 1991), pp.210-211; S. O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003), pp.151-196.

[59] M. Collins, 'The Pornography of Permissiveness: Men's Sexuality and Women's Emancipation in Mid Twentieth-Century Britain' in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Spring 1999), pp.107-109; see also: S. Nixon, *Hard Looks: Masculinities, Spectatorship and Contemporary Consumption* (London, 1996), pp.167-179. For further discussion of the "peacock male" in the context of the United States, see Paoletti, *Sex and Unisex*, pp.59-90.

[60] Breward, *The Hidden Consumer*; Shannon, 'ReFashioning Men'; P. Jobling, *Man Appeal: Advertising, Modernism and Menswear* (Oxford, 2005); J. Bengry, 'Courting the Pink Pound: Men Only and the Queer Consumer, 1935-39', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 68 No. 1 (Autumn 2009), pp.122-148; P. R. Deslandes, 'Selling, Consuming and Becoming the Beautiful Man in Britain: The 1930s and 1940s' in E. Rappaport, S. Trudgen Dawson and M. J. Crowley (eds.), *Consuming Behaviours: Identity, Politics and Pleasure in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London and New York, 2015), pp.53-70; F. Mort, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 1996); Nixon, *Hard Looks*; T. Edwards, *Men in the Mirror: Men's Fashion, Masculinity and Consumer Society* (London, 1997).

Youth, permissiveness and post-war cultural change

Debates about British youth – their habits and behaviours, and their cultural influence – intersected with discussions of changing male hair fashions throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s. As Bill Osgerby writes, '[t]hroughout the post-war decades it became commonplace to draw links between young people's sartorial preferences, growing levels of delinquency and a general decline in cultural values and standards.'[61] The hopes and fears generated by post-war social and cultural change, and rising affluence and consumerism in particular, were projected onto youth.[62] British young people were both vaunted as pioneers of a consumer and pop-cultural revolution, and damned as delinquents and hooligans; a strategy of representation neatly summarised by Dick Hebdige as 'youth-as-fun and youth-as-trouble'.[63] Both of these interpretations were applied to the hair of teenaged boys and young men, their style choices cited as evidence of the emergence of a more relaxed and affluent generation, or of a reliable indicator of vandalism and violence.

Sociological and historical accounts have often paid greater attention to the perceived threat that youth posed to the social order in post-war Britain. The subcultural studies produced within the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), such as *Resistance Through Rituals* (1976), edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, and Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), argue that working-class youth movements such as Teddy boys, mods and skinheads challenged a hegemonic bourgeois ruling class through their style, dress and appearance, only for such performances to be appropriated and incorporated by commercial interests.[64] While attentive to questions of subcultural style, class, representation and dissemination of fashion, the following chapters take a broader approach to the post-war history of youth. As the authors of *Resistance Through Rituals* themselves acknowledged in the mid-1970s, '[t]he great majority of working-class youth never enters a tight or coherent subculture at all', suggesting that school and work – 'what most young people do most of

[61] B. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 1998), p.14.
[62] J. Clarke, S. Hall, T. Jefferson, B. Roberts, 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A theoretical overview' in S. Hall and T. Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London, 1976), p.9.
[63] D. Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (London, 1988), p.19.
[64] See J. Clarke, 'Style' in S. Hall and T. Jefferson (eds.) *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London, 1976), pp.175-191; D. Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York, 1988), pp.93-99.

the time' – might be of greater significance to 'the post-war history of class'.[65] Adopting a wider view of post-war youth culture, with a greater emphasis on lived experience and individual agency in comparison to the heavily theoretical approach that characterised the output of the CCCS, allows us to gain a more nuanced understanding of the attitudes and behaviours of young people, and the dynamics of their confrontations with figures of authority. The first chapter, for example, identifies clashes between teenaged boys and teachers over the matter of long hair, but also finds that "hair rebels" were supported by many parents and some teaching unions, and received largely sympathetic coverage from the popular press. This thesis, then, sits alongside more recent historical accounts which have complicated and problematized the idea of a post-war "generation gap", such as Gillian Mitchell's analysis of adult attitudes towards rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s, and Selina Todd and Hilary Young's exploration of the close and supportive relationships that often existed between parents and children during the 1950s and 1960s.[66] Furthermore, it also supports Arthur Marwick's suggestion of the increasing influence of youth over wider culture during the 1960s and early 1970s, with the young 'dictating taste in fashion'.[67] While this shift was contested, not least by some hairdressers, by the early 1970s British men well beyond their teens were cultivating longer hairstyles, often carefully groomed but clearly influenced by the fashions of the young.

As with the increased profile of youth culture, men's hair was perceived as both symptomatic and symbolic of wider social, cultural, economic and political change. The meaning of these shifts were, of course, passionately debated and contested. Did they represent progress towards a more enlightened and just society, or mark unmistakeable and potentially irreversible decline? Narratives of national decline – economic, geopolitical, and moral – permeated through British culture during the period covered by this thesis, which stretches from the humiliation of Suez in 1956 to the oil shock of 1973-4. The extent of the diminishment of Britain's economic and industrial position is the subject of considerable historiographical debate – accounts emphasising decline, written

[65] Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, Roberts, 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', p.16.
[66] G. A. M. Mitchell, 'Reassessing 'the Generation Gap': Bill Haley's 1957 Tour of Britain, Inter-Generational Relations and Attitudes to Rock 'n' Roll in the Late 1950s' in *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (2013), pp.573-605; S. Todd, H. Young, 'Baby-Boomers to 'Beanstalkers': Making the Modern Teenager in Post-War Britain' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2012), pp.451-467. See also: A. Horn, *Juke box Britain: Americanisation and youth culture, 1945-60* (Manchester and New York, 2009), pp.115-141.
[67] A. Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford and New York, 1998), p.17.

from the perspective of the new right in the 1980s by authors such as Martin Wiener and Correlli Barnett, have been challenged by historians such as David Edgerton who argue that the post-war settlement represented a relative economic and social success.[68] Decline, however, also existed as a cultural concept, a prism through which social and cultural changes were understood and interpreted. As Andy Beckett suggests in his survey of seventies Britain, the supposed symptoms of moral and cultural decline were 'ambiguous' and highly subjective – the answer to the question of whether the rise of youth culture, lessening deference, shifts in sexual norms and changing fashions 'represent[ed] decadence or progress' very much 'depended on your morals'.[69]

'I don't believe you can wear long hair, long sideburns and goodness knows what', a local resident told the film-maker Murray Lerner during the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970, 'and still say that you're somebody who believes in Great Britain. And it is Great Britain, whether we like it or not.'[70] Shifts in male hair fashions were often cited by those who perceived a growing decadence within British culture, attacking what they saw as an increasingly "permissive society". Here, a declinist narrative combined attacks on legal reforms in relation to the state's relationship with the individual – the decriminalisation of abortion and male homosexuality, the liberalisation of divorce law and the abolition of the death penalty – with a broader critique concerning public morality, railing against what was perceived as an increasingly pleasure-driven society, and the lessening respect afforded to traditional figures of moral leadership.[71] In the late 1960s and 1970s, such jeremiads often intersected with hostility towards immigration and a growing politics of post-colonial white grievance. As Camilla Schofield has persuasively argued in the case of Enoch Powell, the rise of post-colonial nationalism and anti-immigration politics were inescapably intertwined with concerns regarding the wider 'break-up of institutional and social structures of authority of a post-imperial Britain'.[72] Men's hair acted as a constant reminder of these changes, evidence of the shifts in understandings of gender, class and generation, and an everyday testament to the decline

[68] M. J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge, 1981); C. Barnett, *The Audit of War: The Illusion and Reality of Britain as a Great Nation* (London, 1986); D. Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-century History* (London, 2018).
[69] A. Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies* (London, 2010), pp.15-16.
[70] M. Lerner (Dir.), *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970* (USA, 1997).
[71] M. Collins, 'Introduction' in M. Collins (ed.), *The Permissive Society and its Enemies: Sixties British Culture* (London, 2007), pp.3-4.
[72] C. Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge and New York, 2013), pp.11-12.

in deference and the impact of consumerism and the welfare state, visible in classrooms and workplaces, on high streets and in leisure venues, and pictured in the newspapers and on television screens. This thesis provides plentiful evidence of criticism of the changes in men's hair fashions, often explicitly linked to wider concerns regarding social and cultural change; however, it also documents reactions characterised by tolerance and enthusiasm, and a suspicion of self-appointed moral guardians and those who wished to regulate the personal appearance of others. As Marcus Collins has argued, during the 1960s and 1970s shifts in fashion, the arts and culture were welcomed by many as remaking the British national character for the modern world, offsetting concerns of geopolitical decline.[73] Furthermore, the holistic nature of the anti-permissive critique meant that those attacking the new hairstyles worn by young men were often – fairly or not – assumed to hold other illiberal and intolerant opinions. Camilla Schofield has dissected letters written from members of the public to Enoch Powell to demonstrate how the popular memory of the Second World War was reframed and reformulated in the late 1960s by Powell and his fellow-travellers, to portray a victimized working-class whose wartime sacrifice had been betrayed by an uncaring elite.[74] However, as this thesis demonstrates, memories of the war could also be mobilised against the opponents of permissiveness. Attempts to regulate the appearance of others, or penalise or exclude young men on account of the length or style of their hair, were often criticised as illiberal, authoritarian, and un-British, described as behaviour more suited to the nation's wartime Nazi foe.

As well as exploring the ways that post-war cultural and social change was received, welcomed and rejected, historians have debated the extent to which these changes impacted upon everyday life, particularly during the 1960s. While Arthur Marwick writes of a 'cultural revolution' taking place during the 1960s, representing a '"transformation" in material conditions, lifestyles, family relationships and personal freedoms for the vast majority of ordinary people', others have struck a sceptical note, questioning the extent that these shifts affected the majority of the British population until at least the mid-1970s.[75] Dominic Sandbrook, for instance, suggests that '[c]hange often came slowly to provincial towns and rural villages [...] the joke that everything 'reached

[73] Collins, 'Introduction', pp.10-11.
[74] Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain*, pp.19-20.
[75] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p.15.

Hull about five years after it reached everywhere else' carried more than a ring of truth.'[76] Through the study of men's hair, however, this thesis demonstrates that broad social and cultural changes were finding expression in provincial Britain throughout the period. From the early 1960s teenaged boys attending schools from Cornwall to Cumbria to Edinburgh were challenging their teachers' rules over their hair, asserting their right to be fashionable, and questioning the boundaries of "respectability" and the authority of the school over their personal appearance. Seaside communities such as Brighton, Newquay and St Ives were the site of passionate debates regarding the tolerance of non-conformity, the impact of capitalism on the natural environment, and the threat of an authoritarian populism. Fashionable, upmarket male salons, embracing the concept of a newly liberated masculinity, began to appear in provincial towns and cities from the late 1960s, closely echoing developments in "swinging" London, rather than lagging years behind. The study of men's hair then, helps us to rethink our understandings of the pace and nature of social and cultural change in post-war Britain.

Methodology and Sources

In recent years historians of gender have begun to adopt what Laura King describes as a 'socio-cultural' approach, anchoring their analysis of representation and discourse with a renewed focus on subjectivities and lived experience. 'Combining the approaches and methods of cultural history with those of social history', writes King, 'can result in a more comprehensive historical analysis of masculinities and femininities.'[77] Such methodological approaches have emerged, in part, as a response to a series of critiques of earlier works published in the wake of the late-twentieth-century "cultural turn", that were predominantly concerned with deconstructing discursive representations of gender.[78] This thesis, then, employs a socio-cultural method, combining an analysis of cultural discourse concerning men's hair with a focus upon the 'questions of behaviour

[76] D. Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), p.xvii.
[77] King, *Family Men*, p.8.
[78] See, for instance, K. Harvey and A. Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500-1950' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (April 2005), pp.274-280; M. Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914-1950' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (April 2005), pp.343-362; J. Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?' in J. Arnold and S. Brady (eds.), *What Is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp.17-34.

and agency' that John Tosh argues are central to understanding how masculinity was lived in the past.[79] The following chapters have been written with the understanding that cultural historical approaches allow us to interrogate changing norms, ideals and stereotypes, but that these analyses are immeasurably strengthened by remaining attentive to the experiences and actions of individuals, and that cultural sources should always be located within their historical context. By approaching sources in this manner, and paying attention to their production and diffusion, we can, as Peter Mandler has suggested, construct more nuanced, rounded histories, cognisant of the ways in which the meanings of texts and symbols can shift across time and circumstance.[80]

In order to follow this approach, material has been drawn from a wide range of sources. The press features prominently throughout. Newspapers provide valuable insights into shifting cultural ideals, but also can provide a window into the actions, experiences, thoughts and feelings of individual men and women. Popular newspapers are, of course, sources which need to be handled with care. As the product of commercial enterprises owned by the rich and powerful, newspapers are often keen to reinforce existing power structures at the expense of marginalized groups, distorting events and stereotyping minority groups.[81] Yet, as Adrian Bingham has argued, during the mid-twentieth century the British popular press was 'more complex, diverse and unpredictable than many critics have admitted'. Newspapers, Bingham suggests

> were not invariably reactionary and negative, but could be progressive and generous; they did not merely pander to majority opinion, but sometimes provided a powerful voice for it against vested interests; they undermined stereotypes as well as consolidated them, and provided a platform for a wide range of contributors and sources.[82]

A number of national newspapers have been studied for this thesis, in an effort to reflect the broad range of perspectives offered by Fleet Street, and the differing audiences that each paper might attract. The centre-left *Daily Mirror* and the centre-right *Daily Express* have been surveyed as the best-selling titles during the period covered by the thesis, offering a window into the coverage offered by mass-market titles which sought to attract

[79] Tosh, 'An Outdated Concept?', pp.18, 25.
[80] P. Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2004), pp.114-115.
[81] A. Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press 1918-1978* (Oxford and New York, 2009), pp.5-6.
[82] Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, p.6.

working- and lower-middle-class readers.[83] The *Mirror* adopted a broadly positive attitude towards the rise of youth culture and wider social change, keen to attract younger readers and wary of appearing "old-fashioned" or out of touch.[84] As conservative titles, the *Express* and the *Daily Mail*, also studied here, have been described as offering a more critical reception to social change, 'far more nostalgic for the Britain that had disappeared' in the words of Bingham, and often viewing "permissiveness" as a result of moral failure and declining standards, particularly in terms of sexual behaviour.[85] However, as this thesis shows, the *Express* and the *Mail* also viewed themselves, and their readers, as defenders of individual liberty; their attitudes towards changing male hairstyles between the 1950s and 1970s could reflect a tension between these rhetorical positions. Did shifts in fashion represent a challenge to authority, or were they best understood as matters of freedom of expression? These were questions that were also considered by the elite press, accounted for here through the study of *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* (rebranded as the *Guardian* from 1959) and the *Observer*. Hundreds of articles from these titles, published between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, have been analysed, an approach facilitated by conducting keyword searches of the databases which electronically archive newspapers. Discussions or representations of men's hair might appear in almost any section of a paper, featured prominently in news stories, commented upon in cartoons, editorials, columns and letters pages, and the subject of advertisements for products designed to aid with its styling, or to disguise its gradual loss. Local newspapers have also been studied, providing further detail and alternative perspectives on events reported in the national press. The use of material from the regional press is central to the second chapter of the thesis, revealing the nuances and complexities of local attitudes towards the presence of long-haired "beatniks" in seaside towns, but also adds valuable depth to chapters one and four.

Trade publications and records are another important source base. The *Hairdressers' Journal*, a weekly trade paper, has been surveyed over a twenty-year period, from 1955 to 1975. The leading British hairdressing trade publication, the *Journal* estimated in 1965 that it reached an audience of almost 120,000 men and women employed in hairdressing

[83] In 1965 over 5 million copies of the *Daily Mirror* were sold each day, while the circulation of the *Daily Express* stood at just under 4 million. C. Seymour-Ure, *The British Press and Broadcasting since 1945* (2nd Edition, Oxford, 1996), pp.28-29.
[84] Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, pp.122-123.
[85] Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, p.123.

– dissemination to the wider public was strongly discouraged – and provided comment and guidance on shifting fashions and commercial trends.[86] The *Hairdressers' Journal* is an invaluable resource for any historian wishing to study hair or hairdressing in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century Britain, always keen to place developments in "the Craft" in a wider social and cultural context. While scholars who have drawn from the *Journal* to produce post-war histories of hairdressing, such as the fashion historian Kim Smith, have analysed the women's trade and salons located in the West End of London, this thesis instead focuses predominantly on material relating to the men's craft and casts its eye beyond the capital to analyse developments in the provinces.[87] Although the *Hairdressers' Journal* devoted the majority of its pages to the women's side of the trade, men's hairdressing received significant coverage throughout the period, presented in its own weekly section, 'Men's Side', from 1967 onwards.[88] It also published stories and regional surveys reporting on commercial and fashionable developments from towns and cities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, material which throws into question widely held understandings concerning the pace and nature of change in provincial Britain during the 1960s and early 1970s, particularly in relation to norms of male appearance.

The *Hairdressers' Journal* was, of course, hardly a neutral observer of developments in British hairdressing during the fifties, sixties and seventies. Throughout the period studied here, the *Journal*'s editorial stance consistently advocated 'progressive' hairdressing, calling for better training, more sophisticated styling, and the modernisation of salon premises. As Kim Smith notes in her study of women's salons in the West End of London during the 1960s, the *Hairdressers' Journal* saw itself as 'both a messenger and a mediator' for the hairdressing community, promoting the professionalisation of the trade.[89] Modernisation, it was argued, would lead to public acceptance of hairdressing as a profession, leading to higher takings and, importantly, greater respect for salon owners. While this line of thinking ran throughout much of the *Journal*'s coverage, the voices of

[86] 'Come Shopping for New Ideas', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 1st May 1964, p.11; In May 1967, for instance, the *Journal* reminded its readers that it had 'always been, and must remain a professional publication available only to professional hairdressers […] We do not supply newsagents on a sale-or-return basis; if we did they would clearly sell copies to the public and this we will not allow.' 'Style plates for you', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 19th May 1967, p.7.
[87] K. Smith, 'Strands of the Sixties: A Cultural Analysis of the Design and Consumption of the New London West End Hair Salons c.1954-1975', unpublished PhD thesis, University of East London, 2014.
[88] 'Men's Side', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 24th November 1967, pp.31-36.
[89] Smith, 'Strands of the Sixties', p.23.

those who were less enthusiastic about change and "progress" can be found in the letters pages and the reports of local meetings of the National Hairdressers' Federation (NHF). The *Hairdressers' Journal* may have been keen to provide reports of shiny modernised salons and forward-thinking, ambitious men's hairdressers, but they were also quick to despair at the state of the premises of many British barbers, and the conservatism of their owners. Through detailed and careful examination, then, the *Hairdressers' Journal* offers a nuanced record of change in men's hairdressing in Britain between the 1950s and the mid-1970s.

Each of the chapters of the thesis explores how and why men's hairstyles changed during the immediate post-war decades, and seeks to explain reactions to these shifts in fashion. Research undertaken by Mass-Observation, sociologists, journalists, youth workers and other "experts" is referred to throughout, providing a vital window into the wider social and cultural context. A broad range of contemporary social studies have been consulted throughout the thesis. Works such as T. R. Fyvel's *The Insecure Offenders* (1961) and *The Paint House: Words from an East End Gang* (1972), edited by Susie Daniel and Pete McGuire, consider the behaviours, attitudes and challenges of certain sections of British youth, and working-class, urban youth in particular. Reflecting the "youth as problem" trend prevalent in twentieth-century British social research, some of these texts are familiar to historians of youth in Britain; others, such as the *Brighton Archway Ventures* reports, compiled by youth workers operating on Brighton seafront during the late 1960s, have yet to be analysed in any detail in historical accounts.[90] Other texts reflect the mid-century challenge to this focus on social problems in British sociology and anthropology, seeking instead to identify the habits and beliefs of the "average" citizen.[91] This concern with the ordinary and the everyday lay behind the establishment of Mass-Observation during the late 1930s, as well as providing the focus for localised studies conducted during the 1950s. Accounts such as *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957) by Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (1961) by Ferdynand Zweig and *Coal is Our Life* (1956) by Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter, all sought to explore how the welfare state, full employment,

[90] These reports are briefly mentioned in Bill Osgerby's *Youth in Britain since 1945*, p.84. The sociologist Stanley Cohen, who was conducting his own research in and around Brighton during the mid-to-late 1960s, also refers to the project and its findings: S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (3rd Edition, London, 2002), pp.126-127, 166, 174.
[91] Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c.1930-1964', pp.275-279.

reconstruction and rising living standards were impacting upon the lives of British men and women.[92] Young and Willmott, and Dennis et al, place a particular emphasis on the home and the private sphere, exploring gendered norms of behaviour in relation to work, leisure, courting and family life.

These texts should not, of course, be read as unproblematic accounts of the past "as it was". Sociological accounts which addressed questions of youth, and adolescent delinquency in particular, reflected pre-existing assumptions concerning class, race and gender, while post-war studies of everyday life were also often shaped by the methodologies, preconceptions and political priorities of the researchers involved.[93] These texts, therefore, remain of great value to historians of twentieth-century Britain. Firstly, while obviously mediated by the researchers, studies of youth or everyday life in working-class communities often contain rich ethnographic detail, offering descriptions of behaviours and attitudes which are otherwise rarely available to historians. Treated with care alongside other source material, these accounts enhance our understanding of the past. Just as importantly, however, sociological and anthropological studies should also be treated as cultural texts, not only reporting contemporary social norms in post-war Britain, but also helping to shape wider discourse. Mike Savage points to the increasing influence of social research in post-war British society

> affecting mundane practices and attitudes: people's sense of identity and belonging and their attitudes towards place, locality, expertise, education, learning, science, and art. We see the emergence of a language of social group and relationship, and a concern with delineating change and modernity.[94]

Sociological and anthropological understandings of society, then, were increasingly widespread in the Britain of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, disseminated by popular accounts such as *Family and Kinship in East London*, the printed press and the BBC. Changes in male hair fashions were often understood within the frames of reference set by social researchers, as representative of wider social and cultural shifts. In seeking to make sense of eye-catching new styles, contemporary observers offered sociological and

[92] Young, Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*; N. Dennis, F. Henriques, C. Slaughter, *Coal Is Our Life: An analysis of a Yorkshire mining community*, (London, 1956); F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London, 1961).
[93] L. Butler, 'Michael Young, the Institute of Community Studies, and the Politics of Kinship' in *Twentieth-Century British History*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2015), pp.208-209; Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c.1930-1964', pp.276-282; M. Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940* (Oxford, 2010), pp.156-162.
[94] Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940*, pp.10-11.

psychological explanations, often focused on questions of gender, class and self-expression.[95]

While the sources outlined above – the popular and regional press, trade journals, social studies – are referred to throughout the thesis, the chapters also draw on a wide range of additional material. These include local government records, pamphlets issued by campaigning groups such as the Schools Action Union, teaching union magazines, material from the Boots Company Archive, as well as films, television programmes and radio broadcasts. As with the popular press, the latter are vital to understanding how discussions of men's hair permeated throughout British popular culture during the 1960s and 1970s – indeed, each of the chapters opens with an illustrative example from television or the popular press, demonstrating how shifts in male hair fashions were understood to be inescapably intertwined with wider social and cultural change. Post-war Britain was a mediated society; as Stuart Hall writes, the mass-media offered citizens of an increasingly pluralistic, diverse and socially fragmented country images, narratives and representations which allowed them to make sense of 'the lives, meanings, practices and values of *other* groups and classes', and of the nation as a whole. The media played a central role in ordering a potentially chaotic modernity, helping to define whether behaviour was socially acceptable or deviant.[96]

There are, of course, multiple valid methodological approaches to tackle a socio-cultural historical project such as this. In recent years historians of gender, sexuality, emotions and youth have all found that oral history interviews have offered rich and valuable insights into lived experience and individual subjectivities.[97] Incorporating an element of oral history into this thesis was considered, but ultimately rejected. The reasons for this decision were twofold. The first concerns questions of memory. As historians who have utilised such material have often pointed out, correctly handled retrospective interviews are no more or less reliable than any other source base.[98] All of the sources that we use as

[95] In her study of twentieth-century British fatherhood, Laura King emphasizes the significance of 'newly popular psychological ways of seeing the world' during the mid-century period, disseminated through advice literature and the press, and impacting upon how men and women understood their lives and relationships. King, *Family Men*, pp.4, 15, 194-196.
[96] Emphasis in original. S. Hall, 'Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect'' in K. Nash, A. Scott and A. M. Smith (eds.), *New Critical Writings in Political Sociology Volume II* (Farnham and Burlington, 2009), pp.366-367.
[97] See, for instance, King, *Family Men.* Smith, *Masculinity, Class and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895-1957*.
[98] P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (3rd Edition, Oxford, 2000), pp.118-126.

historians are, after all, mediated in various ways, with in-built biases and limitations. Nevertheless, in the specific case of this thesis, it was considered that memory, and the shifts in perception and attitudes that we all experience as the years pass, would prove to be an issue. In matters of fashion, taste and personal appearance, time is rarely kind. What is considered to be stylish, attractive, progressive or modern in one decade, can often be viewed in retrospect as bad-taste, laughable, or a fashion mistake. The 1970s – its décor, its food, its fashions, its hair – is a regular victim of this particular form of the 'condescension of posterity'.[99] Men's hair fashions of the period are often the subject of scorn in this manner. In an episode of the BBC popular history programme *Back in Time for School* (2019), the musician Adrian Stranik presents a photograph of his school, taken in 1974, to a class of twenty-first-century pupils, pointing out the 'stupid' haircuts worn by himself and his classmates.[100] This comment is made, in part, in jest, yet it also speaks to a dismissal of some fashions of the past, particularly those associated with young people. It seems safe to assume that Stranik and his friends did not consider their haircuts to be 'stupid' in 1974. The aim of this thesis is to understand what men's hair meant to men and women living in Britain during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and how changes in fashion and style were received during this period, rather than in the decades after. The overwhelming focus, therefore, is placed on the contemporary sources outlined above; while retrospective accounts, such as memoirs and material from the post-1980 Mass-Observation project, are occasionally referred to, these are interwoven with texts produced during the period of study. A secondary reason for not following an oral history approach was one of practicality. Time and funding constraints meant that identifying possible contributors, carrying out interviews, and transcribing the recordings – in addition to detailed archival research – would not be feasible as part of this project.

The contemporary sources drawn upon throughout the thesis – the popular press, trade journals, social research, representations on film, television and radio – tell us much about how changes in male hair fashions occurred and how they were understood, particularly within wider debates concerning class, gender and broader social and cultural

[99] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working-Class* (London, 1980), p.12. See, for instance, James Innes-Smith and Henrietta Webb's book of hairdresser's model photos from the 1970s and 1980s, *Bad Hair* (New York, 2002). For a recent example of this phenomenon, see also: A. Pallai, *70s Dinner Party: The Good, the Bad and the Downright Ugly of Retro Food* (London, 2016). Pallai's book originated as the successful Twitter account '70s Dinner Party' <https://twitter.com/70s_party>, accessed 13th June 2019.

[100] R. Jardine (Dir.), *Back in Time for School*, BBC2, 7th February 2019.

change. Largely neglected by these sources, however, are the attitudes and experiences of non-white men. There are occasional, tantalising glimpses. In 1972, for instance, the *Guardian* reported from Yorkshire on the school and social lives of teenagers whose parents had moved to Britain from the Indian subcontinent, some of whom, it was suggested by a community relations officer, struggled to balance the expectations of their parents with the interests they shared with their white classmates: 'pop culture, beat music, or the wearing of long hair'.[101] While intriguing, material such as this, written by white journalists for white audiences, is not sufficient to adequately consider the cultural politics and meanings of men's hair within non-white communities. Important questions concerning the role of male salons or barbers' within immigrant communities, or how the fashioning of men's hair intersected with wider questions of identity, are in need of their own detailed, in depth studies, using a different source base.[102] This does not mean, of course, that race is ignored in this thesis. As is discussed above, some of the most thought-provoking historiography concerning the history of hair, which this work builds upon, engages directly with questions of race and identity in the context of the United States of America. The following chapters, while focusing on the hair of white men in Britain between the 1950s and the mid-1970s, are attentive to questions of race, exploring how hair acted as a constant indicator of whiteness and, in particular, how reactions to the hair worn by white males could intersect with debates concerning Commonwealth immigration and racial prejudice.

Chapter Outlines: Delinquency, Dirt, Effeminacy, Vanity

The following chapters examine how the cultural meanings of men's hair were contested and redefined in Britain between the late 1950s and the mid-1970s, while remaining attentive to wider questions concerning class, masculinity and the nature of post-war social and cultural change. Each takes one of the labels commonly applied to men who wore hair that could be considered long, flamboyant or "flash" during the first half of the twentieth century as its starting point and, through the use of a case study approach,

[101] M. Parkin, 'The two cultures, Asian style', *Guardian*, 12th January 1972, p.12.
[102] Important work exploring the history of the hair of BAME men and women in post-war Britain is being conducted away from the academy, by local community groups and heritage organisations. See, for instance, the 'Afro Hair Party' organised by the National Caribbean Heritage Museum at the New Art Exchange, Nottingham, 20th November 2016.

demonstrates the ways in which these understandings were challenged, subverted or reformulated in the decades following the Second World War. Chapter one explores the suggestion that the wearing of long or "flash" hairstyles by young men was a likely indicator of juvenile delinquency. Drawing on reports from the local and national press, sociological texts, and representations in film and television, it focuses upon battles between teachers, pupils and parents, prompted by the attempts of some schools to regulate the length or style of teenaged boys' hair. The bodies of young men, and their hair in particular, had long been read by observers for signs of deviance and disorder. From the late 1950s, as anxieties concerning rising rates of youth crime began to place a critical focus on the effects of consumerism and "Americanisation", some schools took steps to prevent their male pupils from wearing hairstyles – such as the "DA" or the "Tony Curtis" – that they considered to be inspired by "fads" or fashion. By the mid-1960s, however, in the wake of the emergence of the mop-topped Beatles and the Rolling Stones, the idea of "fashionability" was increasingly cited as a defence against "long hair bans" by pupils and parents who argued that the freedom to follow such trends, and self-expression through hair, was a question of individual liberty and an act of participation in a modern democratic society. By the mid-1960s disagreements between head teachers and pupils, often supported by their parents, had become a staple of the popular press; during the latter years of the decade, this coverage increasingly focused on the acrimony unleashed by such disputes, and the ways in which hair protests offered a clear challenge to the authority of the school. Rather than a mere observer, the press was often an active participant in these disagreements, providing a platform for all parties involved to make their arguments to a wider audience. The classroom disagreements over schoolboys' hair explored in chapter one offer new insights into the ways in which narratives which linked fashion with delinquency were contested, as well as demonstrating how a post-war 'erosion of deference' could play out in the context of the everyday. The chapter also throws new light upon the complexities of press attitudes towards youth in the immediate post-war decades, and contributes to a growing historiography concerned with the social history of British education, focusing on the experience of pupils rather than institutional structures and pedagogical approaches.

It was not only in schools that long-haired or bearded young men faced hostility during the 1960s and 1970s; leisure spaces such as night clubs, ballrooms, cafes and pubs often denied entry to those it considered to be unacceptably hirsute. Chapter two explores this

discrimination within the context of the English seaside town, a symbolic site of leisure during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and considers the tensions that surrounded the presence of long-haired, bearded and scruffily-attired young travellers, commonly labelled as "beatniks", in Brighton and the Cornish resort towns of Newquay and St Ives. In particular, the chapter examines how local officials, tradespeople and residents often labelled hairy young visitors as dirty, unclean not only in body but also in morals, in order to justify attempts to exclude them from leisure venues within their towns. As a wider narrative of blight and decay took hold within seaside communities, long-haired "beatniks" were grouped with other ills – litter, sewage, uncontrolled development, traffic fumes – as a pollutant which threatened both the prosperity of resorts and the picturesque beauty of the natural environment.

The response to the presence of the travelling youths within these communities was far from unified, however. Some residents felt that it was "municipal capitalism" that bore most responsibility for the spoliation of the coastline, and that the "beatniks" were either a mere distraction, or victims of an apparently endless pursuit of profit by the business interests that tended to dominate local government in these resorts.[103] Efforts to expel youths who failed to meet expected standards of appearance were criticised by some residents and onlookers as revealing deep-seated prejudices and authoritarian impulses; a language of "dirt", "filth" and "vermin", aimed at a minority accused of not "belonging", enabled comparisons with racist and segregationist policies in South Africa, Rhodesia, the southern states of the USA and, most commonly, Nazi Germany. The suggestion that those opposed to the beats were in fact most exercised by their hair was often central to these counter-arguments, which centred on the implication that it was an intolerance of visual difference, rather than anti-social behaviour, that lay behind local opposition. By the late 1960s, amidst a wider context of the rise of Powellism, it was the small-town populists, rather than the "beatniks", who most alarmed liberal journalists and government ministers. Through the use of local and national press reports, local government records and sociological studies of countercultural youth, the chapter provides a new perspective on the British beat movement, a subculture that has been largely overlooked by post-war historians. It challenges accounts which suggests that

[103] For a discussion of 'municipal capitalism' as a defining characteristic of the British seaside town, see John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2000), pp.16-17.

"beats" were predominantly middle-class, and illustrates the complexity of the reactions prompted by their arrival in coastal communities.

The third chapter shifts the focus from concerns about delinquency to other forms of deviance. Taking its lead from Quentin Crisp's observation that articles of appearance, such as long hair, which would have once been considered markers of effeminacy had been recast as youthful, fashionable, aspirational and heterosexual by the turn of the 1970s, it argues that long-term, underlying cultural and social shifts enabled new readings of hirsuteness in relation to gender and male sexuality. Greater affluence, changing consumption habits and the continued ascendancy of the companionate ideal and a home-centred masculinity coalesced during the 1950s, 60s and 70s to facilitate the gradual – if partial – heterosexualisation of longer hair for men. The chapter illustrates this process of cultural change through the evaluation of a series of products designed for male use – Brylcreem hair cream, hairsprays which were introduced to the UK market in the mid-to-late 1960s, and hairpieces, which experienced a boom in sales in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Brylcreem provided men with a method of constructing a slicked down appearance which demonstrated seriousness and control, while also displaying a pride in appearance. Advertising for Brylcreem explicitly aligned the brand with a technological modernity and the companionate ideal, with models portrayed as family men, photographed alongside smiling wives and children. While these images located male sexuality firmly within marriage, they also helped to position the presentation of men's hair first and foremost as a matter for negotiation between men and women. By the late 1960s the cultural and commercial dominance of Brylcreem was being challenged by products which offered a "natural" look, with male hairsprays claiming to offer a man "undetectable" control of his hair, better suited to the newly fashionable longer styles. Advertising for brands such as Cossack offered a message of liberation, from both the controlled, greased down look and a buttoned-up male (hetero)sexuality. While marketing materials could portray an aggressive, sexually domineering masculinity, many commentators greeted the new, longer-haired male aesthetic with approval, explained as a response to a more independent femininity. A male embrace of "natural" hairiness, it was hoped, would allow British men to better fulfil the promise of the companionate ideal, as happier, more loving husbands and boyfriends. The growth in demand for male toupees during the late 1960s and early

1970s demonstrates the cultural reach of the new hirsuteness and the new "peacock" masculine ideal. Yet the uncertain cultural position of the male hairpiece – regularly the subject of jokes and condescension – demonstrates the precarious nature of any reformation of male appearance. The chapter concludes by considering the cultural and gender politics of the skinhead subculture which appeared in British cities during the late 1960s, and argues that its emergence offers an important reminder that both shifts in male appearance, and the wider changes which drove them, were partial, uneven and contested. Indeed, in its rejection of the long-haired aesthetic as effeminate and dirty, skinhead demonstrated that the old prejudices remained, even amongst younger generations brought up in communities thought to have been transformed by affluence and reconstruction.

The fourth and final chapter considers the impact of these shifting masculine identities upon the men's hairdressing trade, and focuses upon the rise of the upmarket male salon between the 1950s and the mid-1970s, not only in "swinging" districts of London, but across provincial Britain. In identifying the salon as a space where the masculine image was not only constructed, but also performed and contested, it further explores the shifts in post-war masculinities addressed in the previous chapters. A detailed examination of the leading British hairdressing trade publication, the *Hairdressers' Journal*, reveals the conflicting responses from those working within "the Craft" towards wider social and cultural change, as they sought greater profits and prestige while maintaining the "respectability" of their trade. During the 1950s and early 1960s youth was portrayed as presenting both an opportunity and a threat to men's hairdressing. Teddy boys who demanded eye-catching styles could be a source of lucrative business for the men's hairdresser, yet many feared that the Teds' deviant image – delinquent, vain, flamboyant – would give their trade a bad name. Worse still were the growing numbers of long-haired teenaged boys who deserted their barbers in the mid-1960s, in the wake of the emergence of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, perceived by some as presenting an existential challenge to the future of men's hairdressing. Throughout these years, the prized customer was the upwardly mobile young professional, discerning and willing to spend for the treatments demanded by the Teds, such as styling and permanent waving, in order to create an altogether more restrained and moderate aesthetic.

By the late 1960s these figures had, to an extent, coalesced in the form of the hip young business executive, shaggy-haired and more adventurous when it came to his self-

presentation, yet still essentially respectable. Anxieties remained, however, for hairdressers and clients alike; the fear of being labelled as "effeminate" continued to haunt male customers indulging themselves with treatments popularly understood to originate with the women's side of the trade. Masculinity as performed in the hairdressing salon, therefore, was often vulnerable and self-conscious, with the open layout of the salon leaving the client exposed to the gaze – and judgement – of other waiting customers. One solution offered by men's hairdressers was to remove the client from view, so that "sensitive" treatments could be offered in privacy, behind a screen, within a cubicle or in a separate room. The growing numbers of women working in men's salons were also increasingly portrayed as bolstering the masculinity of clients, performing the emotional labour of offering reassurance on matters of style, while also being tasked with bringing "glamour" to the salon, their bodies subjected to a sometimes leering male gaze. The final chapter, then, provides the most detailed historical account to date of men's hairdressing in Britain between the 1950s and the 1970s, while also exploring how cultural discourses concerning changing masculinities and the rise of the (hetero)sexually-liberated "peacock male" played out in the everyday space of the salon.

While each of the chapters has its own thematic focus these, of course, overlap and intersect at various points. Chapters one and two both deal with fears surrounding delinquency, disorder and youth, and young people's interactions with institutional authority and the press. Chapters three and four explore shifting masculine identities and how these were expressed through men's hair and consumption habits. Questions of deviancy, conformity, class, gender, youth and generation run through all of the chapters. The chapters also share a concern with casting an eye beyond fashionable elites and trendy districts of London, focusing on the 'everyday' and drawing upon examples and perspectives from across the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. All of the chapters engage with cultural representations and discourse but also, as far as is possible, explore how men's hair was lived, felt and experienced in Britain between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s.

Chapter 1 – The 'great hair problem': long-haired schoolboys and classroom rebellion in Britain, c.1955-1974

In the early hours of Monday 18th November 1974, John Luget was woken by the sound of shattering glass, as a paving stone crashed through his bedroom window. Pulling back the curtain to investigate, Luget, the headmaster of Bristol's Henbury Secondary School, was confronted by a figure 'with his head bandaged in invisible man fashion', brandishing a garden rake. 'I will get you, you bastard', shouted the man, as he struck Luget in the face with such force that he knocked out two of the headmaster's teeth, one of which was discovered 'nine feet from the point of impact'. It was a shocking and violent attack, which could have had even worse consequences – as Luget told the local newspaper, had the blow struck him any higher on the face he could well have lost an eye.[1]

The smashing of the window and the shout of the attacker suggested that this was not a burglary gone awry, but a deliberate and targeted assault. Luget thought he knew his assailant's motive. Earlier in the month there had been a sit-in at the school, one of Bristol's largest comprehensives, with press reports suggesting that '200 fifth-formers' had 'occupied a teaching block'.[2] A ruling banning male pupils from wearing moustaches or beards was said to have prompted the protest, opposing 'school rules concerning long hair, moustaches and trouser suits.'[3] In the aftermath, the headmaster had declared that all involved should acknowledge the school's authority by registering with their form tutor; if they declined letters were sent home to their parents, 'asking them to assure the school that their children would obey the rules.'[4] A small number of families had refused that request, resulting in their children being excluded from school and a public row breaking out between the parents and the school in the local press and the *Daily Mail*.[5] While Luget did not think one of the suspended pupils was the masked

[1] P. Fluck, 'Attack on head: Police to interview pupils', *Evening Post* [Bristol], 19th November 1974, p.3.
[2] 'Head faces row over beard ban', *Daily Mail*, 14th November 1974, p.27.
[3] 'Head lifts the classroom ban on four students', *Evening Post* [Bristol], 20th November 1974, p.1.
[4] 'Head faces row over beard ban', p.27.
[5] It is unclear from press reports precisely how many children were excluded from Henbury Secondary School. The *Daily Mail* reported that seven pupils had been suspended, while Bristol's *Evening Post* gave the initial number as six. However, in the aftermath of the attack the same paper announced that, following a meeting with parents, 'three boys and a girl' would return to the school, indicating that this was the end of the matter. It is possible, of course, that parents of two (or three) other pupils had provided the 'assurances' required by Luget prior to the attack on November 18th. 'Head faces row over beard ban', p.27; 'Barred pupils' parents seek school talks', *Evening Post* [Bristol], 11th November 1974, p.1; 'Head lifts the

attacker, he was 'convinced' that the assault was connected to the furore, a belief that was also reported to be shared by Avon police.[6]

The events surrounding the sit-in at Henbury Secondary School in November 1974 were perhaps the most dramatic example of a phenomenon which had become visible in the British popular press during the preceding couple of decades – the public disagreement between schools and teenaged boys (and, often, their parents) on the subject of their hair. Between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, dozens of stories appeared in newspapers detailing disputes where headmasters had ruled that boys' hair was too fancy, too effeminate, too long, too severely cropped, or, in the case of facial hair, too visible. The reports from Henbury exhibited many characteristics typical of this genre. A ruling by the headmaster had provoked resistance rather than acquiescence from pupils, resulting in an impasse. An appeal to parents to uphold the school's authority on such matters had been, at best, only partially successful, with some families siding with their children rather than the headmaster. The press had not only acted to report the events but had also in effect been an active participant, providing a platform where all parties could present their arguments to the public, in an attempt to pressure the other side to back down. Where the Henbury affair differed, of course, was in the violent assault inflicted upon John Luget. However, the spectre of violence, and of juvenile delinquency in particular, loomed over many of these disputes. Indeed, at Henbury School, both parties agreed that the row over moustaches and hair was in fact symbolic of wider concerns. For some headmasters, such as Luget, upholding "standards" when it came to their pupils' appearance was essential to maintain discipline and protect the reputation of the school. Rebellion on the subject of boys' hair, they argued, presented a fundamental challenge to what they saw as an essential hierarchy, with the school holding authority on such matters over the pupils and their parents.[7] To some teenagers and their families, however, bans on fashionable haircuts demonstrated that the headmaster was "out of touch" with the styles worn by the young, as well as their values. Moreover, unyielding declarations that pupils and parents should unquestioningly accept the school's authority on such matters were often rejected as unreasonable, inflexible and, in the words of one Henbury parent,

classroom ban on four students', p.1.

[6] Fluck, 'Attack on head: Police to interview pupils', p.3; 'Sit-in school staff back head', *Evening Post* [Bristol], 21st November 1974, p.1.

[7] J. Coe, 'Barred boys' parents meet', *Evening Post* [Bristol], 9th November 1974, p.1.

'thoroughly dictatorial'.[8]

Between the 1950s and 1970s, then, the cultural meanings of schoolboys' hair were furiously debated in classrooms across the country, clashes which made their way into millions of homes through the pages of the popular press, as well as via representations in cinema and television sitcoms. The following chapter focuses on how the meanings of teenaged boys' hair were contested by teachers, pupils and parents, and how these disagreements intersected with wider debates concerning class, deference and authority in post-war Britain. In particular, it explores how these clashes were reported in the press, framed by journalists as reflecting wider tensions concerning youth, consumerism, and deference to authority. All parties involved in these disputes agreed that young men's hair meant *something*; that it held a wider significance within post-war British society, and was worth taking a stand over. Where they differed was in their readings of the hairstyles or facial hair worn by schoolboys. New hair fashions viewed by some headmasters as effeminate, scruffy or just thoroughly disreputable, might be justified by pupils (and, often, parents) as stylish or progressive, an aspirational act of participation in a fashionable modernity. Such disagreements in turn revealed differing perspectives on the nature and extent of teachers' authority over their pupils – running alongside campaigns against corporal punishment, debates over rules regulating boys' hairstyles questioned the limits of *in loco parentis* and challenged the legitimacy of the state's authority over the bodies of its schoolchildren. These debates took place against a backdrop of education reform and amidst constant concerns regarding juvenile crime and disorder, as educationalists, commentators, teachers and parents all considered how best to produce happy, well-balanced future citizens and prepare children and teenagers for the Britain of the late twentieth century.

Affluence, delinquency, and adolescent males' hair

'The middle-aged have always found fault with the young, disapproving of their appearance and worrying about their behaviour', wrote the sociologist Peter Willmott in the late 1960s, '[b]ut in the past decade or so, these complaints seem to have turned into something more serious. Many older people now think that the young are more different

[8] Coe, 'Barred boys' parents meet', p.1.

than they have ever been in the past, more at odds with society, more a cause of anxiety.'[9] It was an astute observation, on both counts. As Christopher Breward has illustrated, the dandyism and conspicuous consumption displayed by working-class monkey-paraders and mashers alarmed some Victorian observers, and fears of urban hooliganism can also be traced back at least as far as the seventeenth century.[10] Yet post-war Britain was a society that was especially concerned about the behaviour of its youth, and its young men in particular. The disruption and dislocation of total war had led to a moral panic concerning the behaviour of young people during the early 1940s, accompanied by a sharp increase in both the number of juvenile convictions and the use of the birch as a punishment.[11] In the years after 1945 the number of youths found guilty of indictable offences continued to increase; crime statistics for England and Wales showed spikes in the level of convictions of under 14s between the late 1940s and early 1950s, and again during the late 1950s, while the number of 14 to 17-year-olds sentenced in England, Wales and Scotland rapidly rose from the late 1950s onwards.[12] Crime statistics are, of course, unreliable indicators of the actual behaviour of young people, dependent on the inclination of the public to report incidents, and the appetite of the police to press charges rather than issue an informal caution.[13] However, as Louise Jackson has written, during the post-war period 'the labelling and measuring of 'delinquency' […] served to construct and thus constitute the very problem that [it] sought to solve'. As Jackson points out, crime statistics 'formed a discourse through which particular and partial narratives about youth offending were circulated.'[14]

The causes of this apparent outbreak of juvenile lawlessness were much-debated. Perhaps inevitably, observers pointed to other legal, social, cultural, and economic changes as enabling youthful hooliganism. The abolition of flogging in British prisons in 1948 was often cited by conservative moralists and newspaper letter writers accusing the authorities of indulgence and naïvety – within the popular culture of the early 1950s, as Jackson and Angela Bartie demonstrate, physical punishment delivered in the home

[9] P. Willmott, *Adolescent Boys of East London* (Revised Edition, London, 1969), p.7.
[10] C. Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914* (Manchester, 1999), pp.189-236; G. Pearson, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (Basingstoke, 1983).
[11] M. Tebbutt, *Making Youth: A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (London and New York, 2016), p.63.
[12] L. A. Jackson with A. Bartie, *Policing Youth: Britain: 1945-70* (Manchester and New York, 2014), pp.8-9.
[13] T. Morris, *Crime and Criminal Justice since 1945* (London, 1989), p.4; Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p.63; Jackson, *Policing Youth*, pp.9-10.
[14] Jackson with Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p.10.

continued to be lauded as a strategy for returning young male tearaways to the straight and narrow.[15] Mothers were often blamed, accused of either coddling their children or neglecting them by leaving the home to go out to work.[16] During the inter-war period poverty, urban deprivation and mass unemployment had often been cited as the predominant causes of urban disorder and youth crime; that recorded levels of juvenile delinquency continued to increase alongside the introduction of more comprehensive social services and full employment goes some way to explain its resonance as an issue in post-war Britain. As the journalist and author T. R. Fyvel wrote, by the late 1950s 'as far as the general public were concerned, the causes of the whole phenomenon [of juvenile delinquency] seemed to remain inexplicable; wasn't incomparably more being done for the education and welfare of young people than ever before?'[17]

With the widespread – if misplaced – belief that the welfare state was largely eradicating poverty, middle-class observers seeking environmental causes of juvenile misbehaviour were, by the late 1950s, turning their attention to the rising "affluent society" and its impact on the young, and working-class youth in particular. As the crime historian Terence Morris writes, these 'anti-hedonists' suggested 'that indulgence in consumer goods produced a sapping of moral fibre' in young people.[18] Integral to such analyses was the argument that delinquency was inescapably intertwined with the fashions, clothes and hairstyles worn by young men. Fyvel's study of the problem of juvenile delinquency, *The Insecure Offenders*, first published in 1961, suggested that youth violence itself 'seemed to have become curiously stylized, to have become a fashion'. '[T]he spirit of rebellion denoted by the costume and the rise in youthful criminality have noticeably gone together', wrote Fyvel, suggesting that, far from a distraction, analysing the significance of the styles adopted by young Teddy boys was key to understanding the wider problem.[19]

Young male bodies, then, were read for signs of delinquency, with clothes and hairstyles studied as potential indicators of disorder. This, in and of itself, was not a new

[15] P. Addison, *No Turning Back: The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2010), p.96; D. Kynaston, *Family Britain: 1951-57* (London, 2009), pp.259-260; Jackson with Bartie, *Policing Youth*, pp.148-149.
[16] Jackson with Bartie, *Policing Youth*, pp.148-149; Addison, *No Turning Back*, p.96.
[17] T. R. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders: Rebellious Youth in the Welfare State* (Revised Edition, Harmondsworth, 1963), p.57.
[18] Morris, *Crime and Criminal Justice since 1945*, p.94.
[19] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, pp.18, 22.

development. Since the nineteenth century long, untidy, or roughly cropped hair had stood as a cultural symbol of urban deprivation and neglect, associated with the ragged street children who roamed about the Victorian cities. Seth Koven writes of the 'spectacular and iconic poverty of torn clothes, bare feet, and unkempt hair' of the children that featured in the photographs and illustrations widely disseminated by the philanthropist Dr Thomas Barnardo, which became 'fixed in the British cultural imagination as a synonym for the ragged child'.[20] The images were intended to tug at the Victorian moral conscience, yet, as Koven notes, these children could also be simultaneously viewed 'as dangerous threats to the social order.'[21] Such iconography persisted throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In his study of *The Young Delinquent,* first published in 1925, the educational psychologist Cyril Burt described

> a typical street-arab of thirteen and a half […] His clothes were in tatters; his face and hands were cleaned only on the portions more exposed; one polished cheek had a bar-sinister of smut and smudge across it; and a brown wisp of dishevelled hair trailed over one eye.[22]

Crucial to these readings were, of course, understandings of class. In popular fiction, few boys were scruffier than Richmal Crompton's William Brown, protagonist of the *Just William* series of novels, published between 1921 and 1970. Crompton portrayed William's untidy hair and grubby face as part of a "natural" boyishness, and an aversion to all things feminine held to be common in most 11-year-old boys. The environment within which William existed, a pastoral vision of upper-middle-class England, rendered his rebellion amusing rather than threatening.[23] In the world created by Crompton, the social order was secure and hierarchies were well-established – for all his indignation, once instructed by his mother to wash his face and brush his hair, William complied.[24] Yet even for a middle-class boy, scruffiness carried dangers. In one of Crompton's stories, first published in 1936, William's untidy hair led to him being mistaken for a gardener's young assistant.[25] The presentation of the hair of young males, then, could be

[20] S. Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford, 2006), p.133; see also: D. Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (London and New York, 1988), pp.19-26.
[21] Koven, *Slumming,* p.131.
[22] C. Burt, *The Young Delinquent Volume One* (4th Edition, Revised, London, 1957), p.339.
[23] D. Buckingham, 'Just William: 'The most popular boy in fiction', <https://ddbuckingham.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/just-william.pdf>, accessed 24th January 2019.
[24] R. Crompton, 'William Joins the Band of Hope' in R. Crompton, *Just William* (London, 2015), pp.244-245.
[25] R. Crompton, 'William and the Bugle' in R. Crompton, *Sweet William* (London, 1986), p.96.

portrayed as central to the maintenance of class boundaries.

In the years immediately following the Second World War, the hair of urban working-class youths continued to be read for signs of social disorder. Accounts which made associations between unkempt or long hair and neglect continued to circulate in the popular press. A story published in the *Daily Mail* in December 1947 described a father who had helped his son abscond from a remand home, arguing that the boy was being ill-treated, dressed in threadbare clothes and 'with his hair grown as long as a girl's.'[26] Other narratives made a link between eye-catching hair and criminal behaviour. 'A 15-year-old boy defiantly swept long hair back from a sullen face yesterday' began a 1950 report documenting the juvenile court appearance of one of the 'Diamond Boys', a gang said to be 'terrorising' the East End. At this point, amidst continuing austerity, the blame was placed on worklessness, said to be caused by the disruption of impending National Service.[27] By the mid-1950s, however, the hair of young working-class males was being read for evidence of ill-directed and conspicuous consumption, rather than deprivation. In *The Uses of Literacy* Richard Hoggart despaired of the 'juke box boys' in their drape suits, foregoing the pub for the new surrounds of the milk bar, 'their clothes, their hair styles [*sic.*], their facial expressions' all symbolising the advance of a 'myth-world' of faux-Americana and threatening, in his view, an "authentic" British working-class way of life.[28]

By the mid-1950s, long-standing anxieties surrounding urban violence and disorder had coalesced with these newer concerns regarding consumerism and Americanisation around the figure of the Teddy boy. Press attention was attracted by incidents of violence, such as a fatal stabbing that took place on Clapham Common in July 1953, yet, as Melanie Tebbutt argues, what differentiated the treatment of the Teds from earlier "street gangs" was the focus that was placed upon their appearance, style, and consumption habits.[29] With their bricolage aesthetic combining upper-class, neo-Edwardian fashions with heavily greased "DA" haircuts, 'plainly derived from America and the films', Teddy boys symbolised an upending of established hierarchies.[30] For middle-class intellectuals such

[26] 'Father helps son flee from school', *Daily Mail*, 26th December 1947, p.3.
[27] 'Parents', suggested the report, 'blame the National Service Act. They say employers will not take boys due to be called up.' 'Diamond Gang is One Down', *Daily Mail*, 6th June 1950, p.8.
[28] R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life, with a Foreword by Simon Hoggart and an Introduction by Lynsey Hanley* (London, 2009), p.221.
[29] Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, pp.96-97.
[30] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.41.

as Fyvel, the rise of the Teds, from districts of London previously characterised as being home to the 'submerged tenth' of society, 'showed that in the new post-war English generation even unskilled young workers were no longer ready to be excluded from society and what were deemed its pleasures.'[31] The rise of mass youth culture more broadly, he suggested, reflected a 'whole change of social order':

> the great bourgeois age, which went with exclusive middle-class privilege and middle-class culture, is passing. As it recedes, it is being gradually replaced by a new affluent society based on mass consumption, and the increasing *participation* of practically everyone in a new good life and many other things alongside.[32]

In describing the new youth culture, Fyvel quoted the observation of the social scientist Mark Abrams, that the 'aesthetic of the teenage market is essentially a working-class aesthetic'; a mark of affluence, he thought, that now separated working-class youths from their middle-class counterparts, just as poverty had once done.[33] While welcoming social reforms and rising living standards for working-class people, Fyvel was suspicious of the advertising and commercialism of the burgeoning "affluent society". Although fascinated by the appearance of young working-class men, describing the Ted aesthetic in great detail, he suggested that such dandyism – the 'flowery waistcoats' and 'tight-fitting trousers', 'aggressive sideboards' and 'masses of hair' – was a symptom of a younger generation led astray by the forces of consumerism.[34] Fyvel wrote approvingly of a visit to a London remand home where youths who had arrived 'in tight jeans, with fancy haircuts' were provided with a uniform of khaki shirts and slacks. This, he argued, was part of the remand home creating an informal atmosphere, while also providing the boys with guidance and a sense of structure; it was 'the sort of life these boys ought to be living, namely quite simply as *boys*: to dress like boys, to play and learn like boys, to be guided by adults as boys should be.' In contrast, the flash haircuts and suits that the youths had arrived wearing were identified as symbolic of corrupting forces, representing the

> influences of an acquisitive society, a society dominated by grasping mass entertainment, which had forced these boys into a false maturity, a moneyed life long before they were ready for it, a pseudo-adult life which for many of them had proved far too great a strain.[35]

[31] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.44.
[32] Emphasis in original. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, pp.111-112.
[33] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, pp.133-134.
[34] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.41.
[35] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, pp.217-218.

By the late 1950s an intricate web of cultural meanings could be attached to the hair of British boys and young men. Hair that was considered long, untidy or unkempt could still conjure up the image of the ragged street child. Within the context of the welfare state, improved social provision and full employment, however, such an appearance could be taken to represent fecklessness as much as poverty or neglect. Meanwhile, styles which were considered "flash" – long, greased, or permanently waved – presented a new image of delinquency. The popular association between these styles and the Teddy boy subculture meant that the wearer could be viewed as a potential hooligan. Yet, it was not only the threat of violence that provoked objections. The haircuts themselves were taken by critics as symbols of disorder, of a new Americanised, working-class mass culture, and of the uncomfortable social and cultural consequences of affluence. For some the fashionability of certain hairstyles was, in and of itself, a problem, regardless of whether or not the wearer was carrying a flick knife. Ostentatiously styled hair, it was suggested, was a symptom of a generation hopelessly searching for meaning in a fast-changing world, ill-prepared for the temptations of consumerism. Fyvel argued that the perceived danger posed to the nation's youth by affluence could, and should, be tackled through the intervention of the state. While approving of the ways the remand home had acted to distance its charges from the corrupting influence of commercialism, Fyvel encouraged politicians to 'look beyond penal issues' and focus on 'the much larger question of education in the affluent society.'[36]

Schooling in post-war Britain: classroom culture and reform

The suggestion that schools could play a central role in combatting juvenile misbehaviour was consistent with what Louise Jackson refers to as the 'educative approach to delinquency prevention', dominant in criminology and child welfare through the middle of the twentieth-century.[37] During the post-war period concerns regarding the behaviour, attitudes and appearance of young people increasingly focused on the role of schooling in producing functioning and law-abiding citizens. In the decades after 1945 education became widely perceived as a universal public service, and the subject of far-reaching and fundamental institutional reform in response to growing parental demands for a more

[36] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.231.
[37] Jackson with Bartie, *Policing Youth*, pp.11-12.

equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.[38] As Laura Tisdall has argued, growing public discourse concerning the structure and culture of schools, often dominated by parents and teachers, shaped wider understandings of British youth.[39] The 1950s, 1960s and 1970s witnessed long-running debates not only regarding how secondary education should be organised, but also about how pupils should be taught, and the relationship between teachers, children, and parents.

Secondary schooling in Britain had been reorganised in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The 1944 Education Act, passed by the wartime coalition and implemented by the Attlee government, compelled local education authorities in England and Wales to provide secondary school places for all children over the age of eleven and raised the school-leaving age to fifteen (from April 1947 onwards).[40] While the provision of this schooling was officially devolved to local authorities, Labour education ministers encouraged the adoption of what became known as the "tripartite system" of grammar, secondary modern and (rarely built) technical schools. A product of a 1943 report written by Sir Cyril Norwood, a former headmaster of Harrow, the tripartite system was founded upon the principle of selection and the eleven-plus examination, which was supposed to evaluate a child's abilities and direct them to the most suitable school. In reality, the scarcity of technical schools meant that most local authorities ended up constructing what the historian Paul Addison describes as 'a bipartite system'; grammars for those judged through the eleven-plus to be academically gifted, and secondary moderns for everyone else. Despite platitudes about the existence of a "parity of esteem" between the two types of school, the distribution of funding from the state was heavily skewed to benefit the minority of children who attended the grammar schools.[41] As the 1944 Act had abolished grammar school fees, many Labour MPs had supported their continued existence, envisioning that they would provide a path for social advancement for bright working-

[38] P. Mandler, 'Educating the Nation I: Schools' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 24 (2014), p.13.
[39] L. Tisdall, 'Inside the 'Blackboard Jungle': Male Teachers and Male Pupils at English Secondary Modern Schools in Fact and Fiction, 1950 to 1959' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2015), p.492.
[40] All children in Scotland had received some form of secondary education since the late 1930s, a state of affairs that was consolidated through the Education (Scotland) Act in 1945. In Northern Ireland, universal secondary education was guaranteed by the 1947 Education Act, which established a tripartite model of grammar, technical and intermediate schools. See L. Paterson, 'Schools and Schooling: mass education, 1872-present' in M. Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford, 2001), pp.566-569; S. Farren, 'A lost opportunity: education and community in Northern Ireland, 1947-1960' in *History of Education*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1992), p.71.
[41] Addison, *No Turning Back*, pp.38-41.

class children. While this no doubt occurred in individual cases, it is hard to argue with Arthur Marwick's assessment that the tripartite system 'essentially selected those from deprived backgrounds to go to secondary modern schools, and those from relatively privileged backgrounds to go to grammar schools.'[42] The independent fee-paying or "public" schools, the preserve of the upper and upper-middle-classes, were not abolished.[43]

While there exists an extensive historical literature considering the history of education in Britain, this has overwhelmingly focused upon questions of organisation, politics and assessment, rather than social relationships that existed within the classroom. As Laura Tisdall has observed, there is a scarcity of historical studies of the relationships between teachers, pupils and parents in post-war British schools.[44] Explorations of the culture of grammar and secondary modern schools have largely been restricted to broad historical surveys of the post-war period, which draw upon memoirs and autobiographies, or contemporary ethnographical studies conducted by sociologists or journalists. Grammar schools, while often praised for their academic excellence, are portrayed as strictly regimented institutions, built upon deference, hierarchy and order. The historian David Kynaston writes of 'the teachers (often Oxbridge-educated) in their long black gowns, the boys in their caps and blazers, the undeviating rigour of the whole performance'.[45] Where some saw rigour and order, however, others perceived a stifling and oppressive atmosphere. Kynaston suggests that, for many pupils, school seemed to 'set the tone' in a fifties Britain that could often resemble 'an authoritarian, illiberal, puritanical society'; a world of 'smelly lavatories', 'institutionalised bullying', corporal punishment and, in the words of grammar school boy Mick Jagger, '[i]ncredible petty rules about uniforms and stuff.'[46] Certainly, within the culture of the grammar school a heavy emphasis was placed on the importance of conformity and respect for authority. The journalist Roy

[42] A. Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (2nd Edition, London, 1990), p.151.
[43] As Addison notes, almost a quarter of Labour MPs elected in 1945 (including Attlee himself) had been educated at public schools. Addison, *No Turning Back*, pp.40-41.
[44] Tisdall, 'Inside the 'Blackboard Jungle'', p.491. Recent historical work has begun to redress this imbalance. See, for instance, Tisdall, 'Inside the 'Blackboard Jungle''; L. Tisdall, 'Education, parenting and concepts of childhood in England, c. 1945 to c. 1979' in *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2017), pp.24-46; A. Burchell, '*In Loco Parentis*, Corporal Punishment and the Moral Economy of Discipline in English Schools, 1945-1986' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (2018), pp.551-570.
[45] D. Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (London, 2007), p.566.
[46] Kynaston, *Family Britain*, pp.544-545.

Greenslade recalls that at his grammar in Dagenham in the late 1950s, 'dissent [was] the school's dirtiest word'.[47]

For the working-class children who did pass the eleven-plus, the overtly middle-class culture of grammar school often came as a shock. In the mid-1960s the sociologists Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden interviewed 88 working-class children who had attended grammar schools in Huddersfield since the introduction of the 1944 Act, and found that many felt that they had been forced to choose 'between school and neighbourhood'. Some working-class children, suggested Jackson and Marsden, instinctively 'recoiled against common images of 'dominance' or 'leadership': school uniform, teachers' gowns, prefects, the Honours Board'. School uniform, in particular, was objected to by some working-class children and their families, resented as one of the 'aspects of 'school' that did not have to do with 'work', but had to do with the school as an alternative community, as a particular code of living together and growing up.'[48] Some teenagers, and their parents, felt that the school specifying their dress infantilised them, reflecting the fact that some working- and middle-class communities could have differing perceptions of when adolescence might end, and adulthood might begin:

> Boys felt they belonged to the world of men when their uniform kept them in the world of boys; and their parents supported them. Mrs Proctor [a parent] said of the headmaster, 'He used to send me notes about how our Allan shouldn't go to Speech Day in his trilby hat when he was still a schoolboy. Why, there was nowt wrong with it. He looked daft with a little cap perched on his head.[49]

If grammar schools were understood as sites of strict, even stifling discipline and regimentation, by the late 1950s secondary moderns were gaining a reputation for increasing lawlessness. In *The Insecure Offenders* T. R. Fyvel suggested that 'something like a genuine breakdown of discipline has in recent years occurred in a number of the more difficult secondary modern schools', a 'danger sign', he wrote, 'of a sort of cultural 'downward pull' as one of the trends of the affluent society.'[50] A 1960 manual on classroom discipline, written by teacher Richard Farley, emphasized the importance of controlling secondary modern pupils, who he described as 'the duller, less responsible,

[47] Quoted in D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain: Opening the Box, 1957-59* (London, 2013), pp.211-212.
[48] B. Jackson, D. Marsden, *Education and the Working Class* (Revised Edition, Harmondsworth, 1966), pp.122, 125.
[49] Jackson, Marsden, *Education and the Working Class*, p.125.
[50] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.240.

maladjusted and potentially criminal young people.'[51] Sensationalist press coverage also portrayed secondary modern schools as 'blackboard jungles', with exposés written by London-based teachers alleging rampant disrespect, weapon-carrying and violence from older male pupils.[52]

As has been noted elsewhere, both contemporary research by the National Union of Teachers and retrospective accounts of secondary modern education suggest that this was a grossly exaggerated portrayal.[53] While, as Laura Carter has illustrated, some secondary modern schools experimented with progressive classroom practice, most retained strict disciplinary regimes, and school logbooks provide evidence of parents complaining at the brutality of the physical punishment dished out by some teachers.[54] The quality of the education could be better than popularly imagined, with the progressive schools explored by Carter (admittedly, a minority) offering diverse activities which held 'the potential to create space for self-discovery and self-understanding.'[55] Fyvel himself visited a new secondary modern school for boys on the outskirts of London with modern buildings, green spaces and playing fields and 'machine workshops which an expensive public school might envy.'[56] The image of the secondary modern as a den of hooliganism, then, tells us less about the behaviour of British school pupils in the 1950s and early 1960s, and rather more about broader anxieties concerning youth and social and cultural change. Tisdall argues that the promotion of the 'blackboard jungle' narrative by some male teachers was instead driven by perceived threats to their masculinity and social position; the concept of "child-centred" learning challenged their authority, while their inter-war position as upwardly-mobile members of the working-class had been lost, their pay and living standards overtaken by those of the industrial workers whose children they taught.[57]

By the early 1960s demands from local authorities in England and Wales for the Ministry of Education to permit the building of non-selective "multilateral" or "comprehensive"

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[51] R. Farley, *Secondary Modern Discipline: With Special Reference to the "Difficult" Adolescent in Socially Depressed Industrial Areas* (London, 1960), p.20.
[52] Jackson with Bartie, *Policing Youth*, pp.88-89.
[53] Jackson with Bartie, *Policing Youth*, pp.89-90; Tisdall, 'Inside the 'Blackboard Jungle'', p.493.
[54] L. Carter, ''Experimental' Secondary Modern Education in Britain, 1948-1958' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2016), pp.23-41; Tisdall, 'Inside the 'Blackboard Jungle'', p.493.
[55] Carter, ''Experimental' Secondary Modern Education', p.26.
[56] Such a school was, of course, atypical in the investment that it had received – a 'showpiece for the Middlesex County Council' as the author described it. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.248.
[57] Tisdall, 'Inside the 'Blackboard Jungle'', pp.490-491, 497-498.

schools were growing. These calls were prompted in part by the costs and inconvenience of providing each community with two schools, but also by increasing doubts over the reliability of intelligence testing, the obvious regional disparities in grammar school provision and parental pressure, not least the anxieties of middle-class parents that their children might fail the eleven-plus and thus be condemned to a secondary modern.[58] The comprehensivisation of secondary education was already underway by the time Labour was returned to power in the 1964 general election, a process which was accelerated in July 1965 by the issuing of circular 10/65 by Anthony Crosland, the Secretary of State for Education, requesting that all local authorities in England and Wales prepare to restructure their schools based on the comprehensive model. A similar request was made to local authorities in Scotland in the same year.[59]

The 1960s and 1970s, then, were to see a continuing process of structural reform in British education. The character and culture of the new comprehensive secondary schools was, however, still to be determined. Some advocates of reform hoped that educating children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds within the same institution would allow the rigorous and disciplined ethos of the grammar school to be shared across a wider spectrum of British schoolchildren. In order to combat juvenile delinquency and counter what he saw as the malign effects of affluence, Fyvel advocated raising the school leaving age and postponing or abolishing selection, writing that '[t]he top stream of boys and girls, who should be the natural leaders in secondary schools, must no longer be so quickly separated from the majority, to leave the latter leaderless.'[60] Reform, he hoped, would drag British schools 'in the direction of middle-class values, ways and speech', justifying the prospect of such a project of social engineering as providing an 'upward pull' to improve the prospects and behaviour of working-class youths 'all the way down to the groups of Teds and Drifters in their juke-box cafés.'[61]

Many of the early comprehensives did follow a grammar school model, with streaming, corporal punishment, uniforms and a focus on academic achievement.[62] However, as

[58] Mandler, 'Educating the Nation I', pp.12-21; Addison, *No Turning Back*, pp.157-160; D. Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), p.314.
[59] Paterson, 'Schools and Schooling', pp.566-569. The system of academic selection at 11 remained in place in Northern Ireland until the twenty-first century: see K. Simpson and P. Daly, 'Politics and Education in Northern Ireland – An Analytical History' in *Irish History Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2004), p.172.
[60] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.242.
[61] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, pp.248-250.
[62] Addison, *No Turning Back*, pp.157-158.

Carter has highlighted, the new comprehensives not only drew on the grammar school tradition, but also on the progressivism that had found expression in some of the secondary modern schools during the late 1940s and 1950s.[63] From the late 1960s, a small number of comprehensives were established which were founded on progressive models of organisation and teaching. At Countesthorpe Comprehensive School in Leicestershire, which opened in 1972, there were no set periods or set punishments, teachers were referred to by their first names, and there was a "warden" rather than a headmaster.[64] In the mid-1970s the journalist Hunter Davies spent a year at Creighton Comprehensive in north London, a school which promoted child-centred learning in mixed ability classes. At Creighton there were no uniforms, only one page of school rules, few punishments, and no rewards or merits. 'The object', wrote Davies, was 'to encourage self discipline, not enforce authority and uphold freedom of the individual'.[65] Unquestionably, this represented a cultural shift away from the grammar school, reframing – if not entirely removing – the established hierarchy which placed teachers above their pupils. At Creighton students and parents had a democratic say in the running of the school – uniforms had been abolished as the result of a referendum of staff, governors, parents and pupils, and sixth-formers had successfully campaigned for representation at staff meetings.[66]

Perhaps inevitably, the introduction of dramatically different pedagogical methods and structures in some comprehensives, alongside the gradual abolition of the grammar schools, gave rise to anxieties concerning a lowering of standards. '[T]here is a great danger that the traditional high standards of English education are being overthrown' wrote the conservative educationalists C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson in the first of their *Black Papers*, published in March 1969, claiming that '[a]narchy' was now 'fashionable' in British schools, and that 'the grammar school concepts of discipline and hard work' were now viewed with 'contempt'.[67] In the same pamphlet the Conservative MP Angus Maude accused 'egalitarians' of 'levelling down the higher standards [in schools] towards a uniform mediocrity'.[68] The insinuation that progressive education methods were

[63] Carter, ''Experimental' Secondary Modern Education', pp.25, 35.
[64] D. Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain 1974-79* (London, 2013), pp.202-203.
[65] H. Davies, *The Creighton Report: A Year in the Life of a Comprehensive School* (London, 1976), p.75.
[66] Davies, *The Creighton Report*, pp.25-26, 221-222.
[67] C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson, 'Letter to Members of Parliament' in C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson (eds.), *Fight for Education: A Black Paper* (London, 1969), p.1.
[68] A. Maude 'The Egalitarian Threat' in Cox and Dyson, *Fight for Education*, p.7.

producing illiterate and innumerate young Britons was, however, not reflected in the exam results of many of the new comprehensive schools.[69] Davies observed that while some former grammar school teachers felt that they taught fewer 'high flyers' at Creighton, the average pass rates in subjects such as maths seemed to indicate quite the opposite – the new school bettered its grammar predecessor, while also increasing the numbers of pupils that progressed to higher education.[70] Yet critics were not solely concerned with exam results. Anxieties surrounding 'standards' in British schools were not only concerned with academic performance, but could be centred on perceived shifts in the culture within schools. Amidst wider fears about the behaviour of British youth, and working-class males in particular, an increasing challenge to the authority of the school from pupils and parents raised broader concerns regarding an erosion of discipline and deference. As the remainder of this chapter illustrates, between the late 1950s and mid-1970s, these issues – the spectre of delinquency, anxieties about social change and institutional reform, and questions regarding the nature and extent of a school's power over its pupils – found expression in passionate debates over schoolboys' hair.

"Tony Curtis" cuts, Beatle "moptops", and the changing meanings of fashion

The suggestion that teachers and schools should regulate the length and presentation of their male pupils' hair predated the 1950s. Appearing in the classroom with uncombed or dishevelled hair – liable to be read as a cultural symbol synonymous with the ragged street urchin – could incur harsh punishment. A Mass-Observation respondent, writing in 2001, recalled an incident at his elementary school during the 1930s where the headmaster entered the classroom 'with no previous warning' and picked out the boys whom he judged not to have combed their hair. Each of these unfortunate nine-year-olds then received a stroke of the cane across their hands. The fact that the author was excused, with the headmaster deciding that his fine hair was liable to be blown about in the wind, suggested that such an exercise might not only involve making judgements about a boy's hair, but also his intellect or wider character. 'I felt that I'd been let off

[69] Cox and Dyson, 'Letters to Members of Parliament', p.6.
[70] Davies pointed out that university entry rates were also impacted by the expansion of higher education during the 1960s. Nevertheless, he concluded that 'it would be possible to say that Creighton, as a comprehensive, was almost three times as successful as the old grammar school-secondary modern system in getting children to university. So much for lowering standards.' Davies, *The Creighton Report*, pp.102, 261.

because he did not want to cane one of his brighter boys', he reflected, 'I felt that it was all very unjust'.[71]

Here, the focus was on scruffiness, untidy hair supposedly demonstrating a lack of care, self-discipline or pride in appearance. By the 1950s, however, concerns were increasingly concentrated upon the *styles* that adolescent boys were adopting. It was from this point, in the mid-1950s, that British newspapers began to report on schools placing bans on certain haircuts for their male pupils. Within these stories, appearing in the press in the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s, questions concerning the hair of adolescent boys were framed in a context of fears about juvenile delinquency and the effects of affluence. Prohibiting boys from wearing haircuts which were perceived as 'exotic' could be positioned as an act which countered a creeping Americanisation of British youth. In September 1955 the *Daily Mirror* reported that the headmaster of Normanton Grammar School, Yorkshire, had told his pupils 'that "Tony Curtis cuts", "D.A.s", "Crew cuts" and other exotic hair styles [*sic*.] were BANNED.' Instead, the head suggested, pupils should adopt '[p]roper English hair cuts [*sic*.], with side partings.'[72] Within these narratives, young males could be portrayed as impressionable, easily led astray by the temptations of the cinema or television. In 1960, for instance, the *Times* printed the story of a 14-year-old who had been sent home from a Roman Catholic secondary school in Nantwich, Cheshire after entering into a wager with three classmates and shaving his hair into a Mohican, a style which, the report was quick to note, had been 'recently shown on television'.[73] Following fashion, then, was portrayed as a mistake for teenaged boys. Eye-catching hairstyles could signify juvenile delinquency – Fyvel identified both the "Tony Curtis" and the Mohican as part of the Teddy boy uniform – but also needlessly harm the prospects of those with promising futures.[74] The headmaster of Normanton Grammar told the *Mirror* that 'I know from experience that employers are not very keen on these fancy hair styles [*sic*.] – they are a handicap to the boy wearing them.' By insisting that his pupils wear 'ordinary' hair while at school, the headmaster was presented as providing leadership and protecting adolescent males from the distractions

[71] 'B2240', Mass-Observation Archive, The Keep, Brighton (hereafter: MOA), Spring Directive 2001: Hair and Hairdressing, SxMOA2/1/62/1/1, p.1.
[72] 'Boys' school Head bans 'fancy' hair', *Daily Mirror*, 21st September 1955, p.3.
[73] 'Schoolboy "Mohican" wears a beret', *The Times*, 31st March 1960, p.6.
[74] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.41.

of the affluent society.[75]

It was a shift in youth fashion, however, that appeared to lie behind a dramatic increase in the frequency of reports of schools banning certain hairstyles, in late 1964.[76] The popularity of what was often described as "long" hair – typically grown out over the nape and ears, with the fringe brushed forwards to meet the brow – was widely associated with the rapid rise in popularity of "beat groups". During 1964 and 1965, journalists reporting on classroom bans on certain styles would commonly make reference to 'Beatle haircuts' or 'the long-haired Rolling Stones pop group.'[77] In some quarters, the arrival of "Beatlemania" in late 1963 was greeted with suspicion and hostility, perceived as representing a further iteration of a debased, commercialized culture that threatened to corrupt the nation's youth, distracting them from more worthy pursuits. In February 1964 the left-wing *New Statesman* magazine published a column by the journalist Paul Johnson on 'The Menace of Beatlism', arguing that fans of the group were 'the least fortunate of their generation, the dull, the idle, the failures', in contrast to 'the boys and girls who will be the real leaders and creators of society tomorrow [who] never go near a pop concert.'[78] While the Beatles' effect on adolescent girls attracted most attention, critics also worried about their impact on Britain's teenaged males. A teacher at a secondary modern school wrote to the *New Statesman* in the wake of Johnson's diatribe, reporting that some young pupils had grown their hair into the Beatle style, an act that was read as a sign of effeminacy.[79]

However, while narratives of cultural decline and a corruption of youth continued to circulate in left-wing intellectual circles, the popular press broadly expressed enthusiasm for the emergence of the Beatles. Indeed, as Dominic Sandbrook notes, the almost unanimously positive reception that the group received from the mainstream press was one of the most striking elements of their rapid rise during 1963 and 1964.[80] Here, then,

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[75] 'Boys' school Head bans 'fancy' hair', p.3.
[76] To give some indication of the sharp increase: nine stories of disputes between schools and pupils over their hair appeared in the *Daily Express, Daily Mirror, The Times, Guardian* and *Daily Mail* between September and December 1964. Previous to this, only two or three stories of this type had appeared in the same selection of newspapers annually between 1960 and 1962.
[77] See, for instance, 'Beatle your Rolling Stone hair!', *Daily Mirror*, 27th May 1964, p.2; 'Head Squashes The Beatle Cut', *Daily Mirror*, 24th October 1963, p.15; 'Long-haired Owen must join girls', *Daily Mirror*, 1st September 1964, p.2
[78] P. Johnson, 'The Menace of Beatlism', *The New Statesman*, 28th February 1964, pp.326-327. Johnson assumed the editorship of the *New Statesman* in 1965 but shifted sharply to the right from the 1970s, becoming a close adviser to Margaret Thatcher.
[79] D. Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970* (Basingstoke, 2008), p.173.
[80] Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p.100.

was a sign of the development of a split narrative in discussions of British youth culture – teenaged culture could be represented as fun, intelligent and creative, as well as corrupting and delinquent. During the mid-1960s, the Beatles were held to represent the former.[81] 'You have to be a really sour square not to love the nutty, noisy, happy, handsome Beatles', insisted the *Daily Mirror* in an editorial published two days after an enthusiastically received appearance by the group at the 1963 Royal Variety Performance. 'They're young, new. They're high spirited, cheerful', it continued, arguing that the Beatles were 'doing a good turn for show business – and the rest of us – with their new sounds [and] new looks.'[82] The Beatles' 'other' were, of course, the Rolling Stones, a group that deliberately cultivated an outlaw image – an initiative that the press were only too happy to cooperate with.[83] '[N]o adult would credit that they come from what juvenile courts term "good homes"', wrote the *Daily Express* of the Stones in February 1964, drawing attention to their 'doorstep mouths, pallid cheeks and unkempt hair'.[84] If the Beatles were seen as the cheeky boys next door, then the Stones were the sort that 'any self-respecting mum would lock in the bathroom'.[85]

The coverage of the emergence of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones in the popular press offered competing readings of "moptop" haircuts. While the Beatles' hair was slightly shorter at the advent of Beatlemania in 1963, and usually well-combed in publicity photos, and the Stones' was perhaps a bit longer and more tousled, the styles worn by the groups were ostensibly very similar (Figure 2, Figure 3). Yet the readings of their hair in the press differed sharply. 'They wear their hair like a mop' wrote the *Daily Mirror* of the Beatles in November 1963, 'but it's WASHED, it's super-clean. So is their fresh young act.'[86] The *Mirror* even went so far as to design a special masthead for its 'Beatlemania' coverage, comprising of a shaggy head of hair and a pair of eyebrows (Figure 4). Four months later, however, the same newspaper described the Rolling Stones as 'the group that parents don't vote for because of their weird dress and fantastic hairstyles'.[87] The hair of the Stones was read as a sign of delinquency and possible

[81] M. Collins, ''The Age of the Beatles': Parliament and Popular Music in the 1960s' in *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2013), p.97; I. MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (London, 1995), p.26.
[82] 'Yeah, Yeah, Yeah!', *Daily Mirror*, 6th November 1963, p.2.
[83] Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.143-146.
[84] J. Simons, 'A new voice of the young', *Daily Express*, 28th February 1964, p.12.
[85] Simons, 'A new voice of the young', p.12.
[86] 'Yeah, Yeah, Yeah!', p.2.
[87] G. Gregor, 'Now the Top Ten is All British', *Daily Mirror*, 3rd March 1964, p.3.

effeminacy. A magistrate sentencing a fan of the group accused of breaking a window was reported by the *Mirror* as describing the Stones as 'complete morons' who 'have their hair down to their shoulders, wear filthy clothes and act like clowns.'[88] In May 1964 a *Mirror* journalist was shocked to find that Mick Jagger washed his hair 'at least once a week', with the singer photographed having his hair washed and dried backstage at the BBC. The reporter Paula James described how Jagger sat in 'a luxurious beauty parlour', his '[l]ong locks washed in sweet-smelling shampoo, combed, primped and coaxed into place under a baby-blue hair-net'. The Stones frontman, wrote James, 'looked rather like a teenage girl under that drier'.[89]

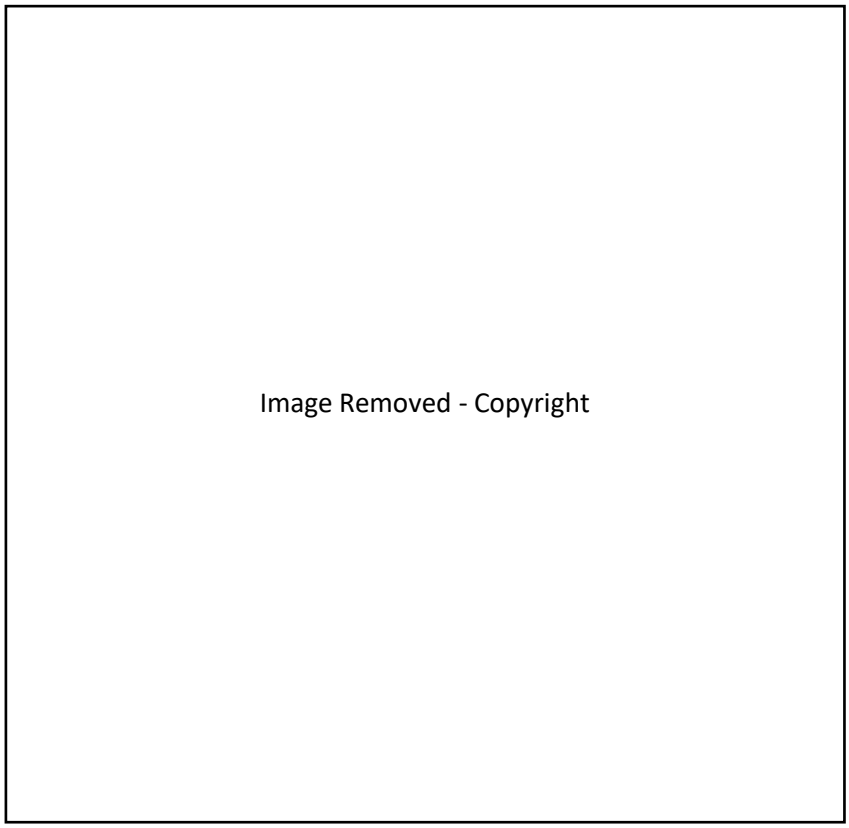


Figure 2: Cover of *Beatles for Sale* by the Beatles, released in the UK on 4th December 1964, <https://www.thebeatles.com/album/beatles-sale>, accessed 28th January 2019.

[88] G. Gregor, 'Stones are Morons – Magistrate', *Daily Mirror*, 7th July 1965, p.17.
[89] P. James, 'There's a whole lot of trouble behind that Stone-age look', *Daily Mirror*, 14th May 1964, pp.16-17.

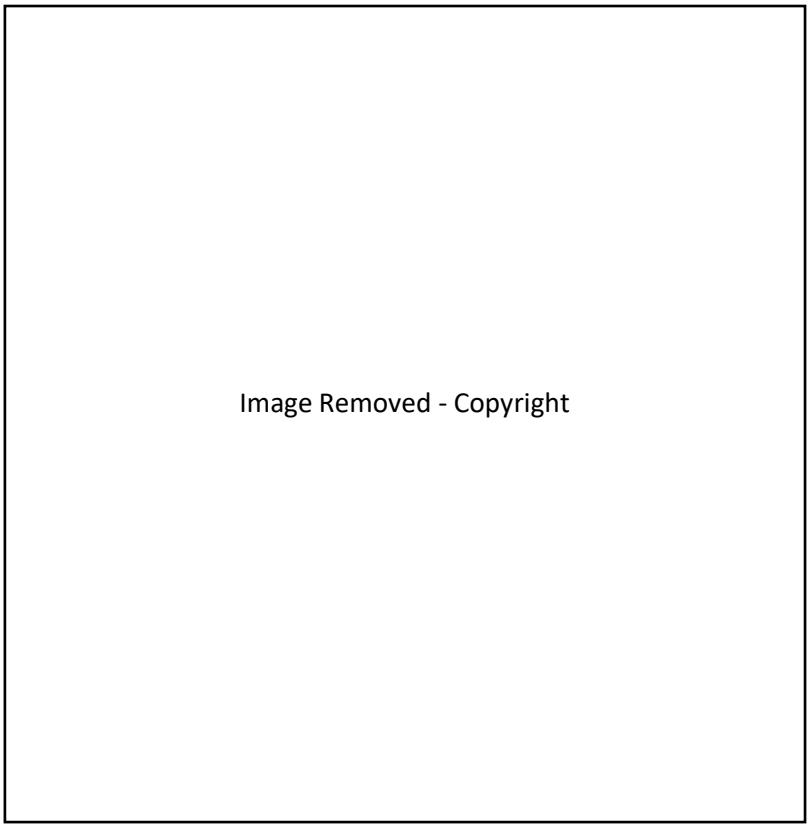


Figure 3: Cover of *The Rolling Stones No. 2* by the Rolling Stones, released in the UK on 15th January 1965, <https://www.allmusic.com/album/the-rolling-stones-no-2-mw0001209960>, accessed 28th January 2019.

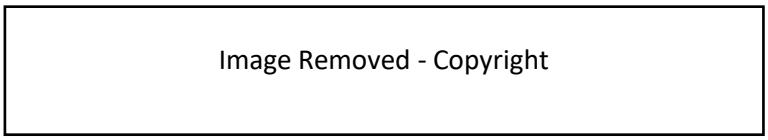


Figure 4: 'Beatlemania' masthead, D. Scott, 'Why It Makes You Tick', *Daily Mirror*, 6th November 1964, p.6

Some schools that sought to regulate the appearance of their male pupils' hair echoed this media narrative. In May 1964 the headmaster of Woodlands Comprehensive, Coventry, was reported by the *Daily Mirror* to have suspended eleven boys for wearing 'Rolling Stones' haircuts, which he described as '[l]ong and scruffy'; the pupils were told they could return, however, with tidier 'Beatle' cuts.[90] Even Beatle moptops were too much for some headmasters, however. 'Teaching standards of dress is an important part of the education we give at this school', explained the headmaster of Darlington's Queen

[90] 'Beatle your Rolling Stone hair!', *Daily Mirror*, 27th May 1964, p.2.

Elizabeth Grammar School, after he had prohibited his pupils from wearing the Beatle style; '[w]e mustn't allow current crazes to lower these standards, Beatles or no Beatles.'[91] Reports that appeared in the press between 1963 and 1965 suggest that many in positions of authority within schools viewed the new haircuts as representing old threats – delinquency and effeminacy. Indeed, it might be suggested that one of the reasons that the arrival of the moptop appears to have prompted a sudden spike in classroom disquiet is that it represented the coalescence of two visions of delinquency – the longish, shaggy hair reminiscent of the ragged street child, combined with the fashionability and vanity of the Teds' DA, and positioned in the media as a symbol of an ascendant, commercialized youth culture.

'Long hair is anti-social because it is a sign of boys associating with groups that are anti-social', declared the deputy head of Harraby Secondary Modern, Carlisle, interviewed by the *Daily Express* in June 1964.[92] Other teachers made similar arguments. In December 1964 the *Mirror* printed excerpts of a letter to parents from the headmaster of Rochester's Temple Secondary School, which suggested that long-haired boys were 'invariably a school's troublemakers', adding that '[b]oys who wear coloured shirts, no caps, boots with Cuban heels, and long hair are nearly always the ones who don't conform to school discipline.' Long hair was positioned as a reliable indicator of other anti-social behaviour: '[t]hey try to be a nuisance and usually appear in court for truanting, being out of control or stealing.'[93] Long-haired pupils were also portrayed as easily-led – '[t]he youngsters see the pop idols on the television and want to copy them' – and, according to the headmaster of Bodmin County Grammar School, Cornwall, their hair was a sign of a defect of character that could harm their chances of passing exams:

> The longer the hair the less the chance of success. This is not to say that the long-haired are necessarily less intelligent, but rather that they seem to be the type of children that neglect the things that really matter.[94]

At other schools, teachers sought to clamp down on long hair on the grounds that it was a sign of effeminacy. The deputy headmaster of Robert Latham Catholic Secondary School in Worksop, Nottinghamshire, told the *Daily Mirror* in October 1965 that he

[91] 'Head Squashes The Beatle Cut', p.15.
[92] 'All shorn and forlorn', *Daily Express*, 5th June 1964, p.11.
[93] 'The bad long-hair boys – by a Head', *Daily Mirror*, 5th December 1964, p.2.
[94] 'The bad long-hair boys – by a Head', p.2; 'Long Hair Harms Boys' Public Examination Chances', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 26th November 1964, p.5.

'hate[d] to see boys with long hair', adding that '[l]ong hair is for girls.'[95] Concern that the fashion would spread was voiced by the headmaster of Dalkeith's St. David's Roman Catholic Secondary School in September 1964, telling the *Daily Express* that 'I do not want this thing to become rampant and spread through the school. We don't want boys looking like girls.'[96] Previously "Teddy boy" haircuts had been cited as effeminate, primarily due to the techniques involved in their production which were popularly associated with women's hairdressing (i.e. permanent waving), and because acts of flamboyant fashionability were gendered as female behaviour.[97] This argument had been made in *The Insecure Offenders* by Fyvel, but had been contested by 'Ron', a young male interviewee: '[a] girl wants her hair to look nice, why shouldn't a fellow?'.[98] Now, however, longer hair introduced a new element of gender confusion and, for some teachers, the new fashion could lead to embarrassing mix-ups on the first day of term. The *Guardian* reported in September 1964 that the principal of Peterborough Technical College 'had severely reprimanded what he thought was a girl for using the men's toilet and was "flabbergasted" to find it was a boy.' 'Some of these people have to be seen to be believed', he complained, '[h]is ears were invisible and you could just see his eyes and nose peeping out from under shoulder-length hair. I didn't know if he was male or female.'[99]

What distinguished the newspaper reports of school edicts regarding moptop haircuts from similar stories that had appeared in preceding years, aside from their sheer volume, was the level of dissent expressed by some of the pupils interviewed, as well as some parents. Those interviewed in reports that appeared during the 1950s had typically complied with their headmaster's ruling. 'I'm hoping the head likes this', a Normanton Grammar School fifth-former confided to the *Daily Mirror* in 1955, referring to the new 'long Crew Cut' he had adopted in the wake of the ban being placed on his previous "Tony Curtis" style.[100] From the mid-1960s, however, the press lost interest in quiet acquiescence and instead began to present accounts of pupils attempting to resist the

[95] 'Longhair schoolboys get skirt threat', *Daily Mirror*, 18th October 1965, p.3.
[96] 'Odd 'girl' out is a boy', *Daily Express*, 1st September 1964, p.5.
[97] In 1958 the *Hairdressers' Journal* had reported that the headmaster of Codnor County Secondary School, Derbyshire, had placed a ban on male pupils wearing 'feminine hair-styles': ''Don't be silly!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 24th April 1958, p.29; On male flamboyance and effeminacy in the twentieth century, see Sinfield, *The Wilde Century*, pp.130-160. For a detailed discussion of the labelling of men's hair as "effeminate", see chapters three and four.
[98] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, pp.35-36, 50-51.
[99] 'College ban on long hair', *Guardian*, 11th September 1964, p.9.
[100] 'Boys' school Head bans 'fancy' hair', p.3.

school's order to cut or in some way modify their hair. Increasingly, boys interviewed – and their parents – contested the meanings attached to their hair by the school authorities. 'It's not fair to ban our haircuts', a 13-year-old boy told the *Mirror* in September 1963 after the headmaster of his grammar had prohibited "Beatle" haircuts, '[t]hey're smart.' His mother agreed, telling the paper that her son's hair was 'tidy', and that she didn't 'think the school should dictate what hairstyle the boys should have.'[101] The idea that the haircuts were "fashionable", sometimes invoked by teachers as a criticism, was being articulated by pupils and parents as a defence, in order to refute other negative labels applied by schools.[102] Examples from youth culture were cited to support these claims: 'Who does the headmaster think he is?', asked one parent. 'Long hair is the fashion – look at the Beatles.'[103] The flurry of newspaper coverage in the early and mid-1960s reflected that schoolboys' hair had become a site of debate, not only concerning the rights and wrongs of fashion in an "affluent society", but also regarding the limits of a school's authority over its pupils.

Dissent, punishments and parents

Pupils and parents who complained about school bans on "long" or fashionable hair not only contested the readings of certain styles which had been used to justify prohibition, but also challenged the head teacher's authority. In some of the earlier cases reported in the press, purely imposing a ban had been sufficient to achieve the school's desired outcome. In such cases, the headmasters could present themselves as magnanimous and generous in victory. The head of Normanton Grammar who had placed a ban on 'fancy' hairstyles in 1955 struck an understanding note when speaking to the *Daily Mirror*, explaining that 'I realise it may take some time to repair the ravages with some of them and there is no question of punishment over this.'[104] Similarly, in September 1964, the principal of Peterborough Technical College, shocked by the sight of the long-haired boys who wished to enrol, told the *Guardian* that he had made 'a gentleman's agreement' with those involved, who had agreed to submit to a trim – '[w]e had a pleasant chat and

[101] 'Head Squashes The Beatle Cut', p.15.
[102] See, for instance, 'All shorn and forlorn', p.11.
[103] ''Army' Haircuts For Schoolboys – By Order', *Daily Mirror*, 5th June 1964, p.3.
[104] 'Boys' school Head bans 'fancy' hair', p.3.

there were no angry words or raised voices', he told the paper.[105] These examples appeared in the newspapers at a point where the suggestion alone that hair was causing disquiet in the classroom was sufficient to attract the attention of the press. Of course, we have no way of knowing how often a quiet, friendly chat was enough to defuse the situation – certainly, as the 1960s progressed the stories that appeared in the press featured greater levels of acrimony, with pupils dissenting against the instructions of their teachers. In such cases, merely imposing a ban had proved insufficient, requiring the school either to back down, or employ further measures to enforce its policy.

The punishments for disobeying school instructions on hair could vary. A pupil might, for instance, be stripped of any privileges that the school had previously bestowed upon him. In March 1963 the *Daily Mail* reported on the case of a 14-year-old pupil who had been removed from his position as form captain at Woollaston Secondary School in Northamptonshire, after refusing to shave off a moustache. According to his mother, interviewed by the *Mail*, the boy had also been 'sent to Coventry', prevented from taking breaks with the rest of the school and being made to take his lessons in 'solitary confinement'.[106] Fears of contagion – the suggestion that, left unpunished, unauthorised hairiness might spread throughout the male population of the school – meant that isolating a child away from his classmates was a popular sanction. Enforcing this separation within the school, however, provided a logistical challenge and would have been difficult to maintain for more than a few days. Perhaps for this reason, the most commonly reported response of a school faced with boys defying rules on hair was to send those in question home, usually with instructions to visit the barber forthwith and to have their hair cut in a style deemed acceptable. Should the boy return to the school with his hair untouched then the school was faced with a decision of whether to design an alternative punishment, or to send him home again. In some instances, this led to boys missing weeks, or even months, of schooling. In a case reported in the *Times* in July 1965, a 15-year-old from Berkshire had missed 40 consecutive days of schooling after being refused admission by the headmaster on the grounds of his long hair.[107]

As a punishment, then, exclusion had its drawbacks. A child refusing to comply with an order to get his hair cut and remaining away from school could represent stalemate, rather

[105] 'College ban on long hair', p.9.
[106] 'Moustache schoolboy says: I've been put in solitary', *Daily Mail*, 1st March 1963, p.3.
[107] 'Bench back ban on long-haired boy', *The Times*, 8th July 1965, p.9.

than a confirmation of the school's authority. Moreover, prolonged absence from the classroom threatened to disrupt and damage the child's education. Some teachers, therefore, sought alternative ways of tackling the problem of long hair. In a number of reported cases pupils suffered enforced haircuts, often performed by a teacher or the headmaster himself.[108] In one case, at Harraby Secondary Modern in Carlisle, the school arranged for an army barber to trim the hair of twenty boys, without the consent of their parents.[109] That these haircuts often took place in front of other children and, in the Harraby case, a photographer (with the resulting shot ending up in the pages of the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror*) suggests that these actions were intended, at least in part, to humiliate the boys involved and act as a warning to others (Figure 5).[110] The same impulse seemed to lie behind punishments that framed long hair as essentially feminine, ordering boys who refused to visit the barber to wear ribbons in their hair, to wear skirts, or to take certain gender-segregated lessons with girls.[111] Such punishments could be defended as less damaging to a child's education than exclusion, yet they also made visible – and physical – the school's authority over the bodies of their pupils.



Figure 5: 'All Shorn and Forlorn', *Daily Express*, 5th June 1964, p.11.

[108] '"Son's hair cut in class" complaint', *The Times*, 20th January 1962, p.5; 'Haircutting head', *Daily Express*, 16th November 1964, p.18. For later examples see: 'Head trims sixth former's hair', *The Times*, 21st June 1968, p.4; ''Barber' teacher may face court action', *Daily Express*, 16th September 1971, p.9.
[109] 'All shorn and forlorn', p.11; ''Army' Haircuts For Schoolboys – By Order', p.3.
[110] 'All shorn and forlorn', p.11; ''Army' Haircuts For Schoolboys – By Order', p.3; '"Son's Hair Cut In Class" Complaint', p.5.
[111] R. Scott, 'Cut your hair or wear a ribbon..', *Daily Mirror*, 18th July 1964, p.3; 'Long-haired Owen must join girls', p.2; 'Longhair schoolboys get skirt threat', p.3.

In some of the reported cases, pupils who had initially resisted backed down when faced with sanction or punishment. The boy who had been removed from his position as form captain and made to take lessons away from his classmates because he refused to shave off his moustache eventually relented, telling the *Daily Mail* that he didn't want to be the cause of 'ill-feeling'.[112] In another instance, a pupil faced with the prospect of being made to wear a skirt by his deputy headmaster was quoted by the *Daily Mirror* in October 1965, explaining that while he had grown his hair 'because it's the smart thing to do these days', he 'didn't fancy wearing a skirt' and had 'got a short-back-and-sides straight away.'[113] Other reports, however, provided examples of continued defiance. Often this involved complying with a punishment that was intended to humiliate by casting the boys concerned as effeminate. In July 1964 the *Daily Mirror* covered the case of three boys at Bude-Stratton Secondary Modern School in Cornwall who opted to wear ribbons – 'under the hair with a bow at the front' – rather than submit themselves to a haircut, with one telling the paper that '[s]ome people say that we look like girls, but we don't mind that. I don't mind wearing ribbon in school.'[114] A couple of months later both the *Mirror* and the *Daily Express* featured the story of a long-haired boy at St David's Roman Catholic Secondary School, Dalkeith, who had been told to take cookery and needlework lessons with female pupils, rather than attending PT with the other boys. The pupil in question seemed unperturbed by this prospect, however, telling the *Mirror* that 'I don't intend to have my hair cut. I like it this way and I only have one more year to do at school.'[115]

The extent to which new styles gave new spaces of expression to queer schoolboys is impossible to determine from the newspapers and other contemporary media sources. Some of the boys interviewed were quick to assert their own heterosexuality and challenge the idea of long hair as a signifier of effeminacy, often by referencing the beat groups which were the subject of screaming female adoration. The 14-year-old in Dalkeith told the *Express* that 'I don't think [my hair] is cissy, I've got a right to wear my hair the way I want it. It'll get even longer by the time I'm finished. I want it as long as the Rolling Stones [*sic.*].'[116] The press were often happy to collaborate in this process of heterosexualisation of male display: when the boy was eventually allowed to return to his

[112] 'Moustache boy shaves it off', *Daily Mail*, 6th March 1963, p.9.
[113] 'Longhair schoolboys get skirt threat', p.3.
[114] Scott, Cut your hair or wear a ribbon..', p.3.
[115] 'Long-haired Owen must join girls' p.2.
[116] 'Odd 'girl' out is a boy', p.5.

usual lessons with his hair untouched, the local newspaper was quick to report that he had received fan mail 'from far and near', including a letter from a girl in nearby Fife who had started a 'fan club' in his honour, and who wrote that she was 'so happy that you have won your case, I think your hair is absolutely fab.'[117] Punishments which singled out long-haired boys as different, then, could result in outcomes unforeseen by the school. For some, after all, the whole idea was to stand out from the crowd. Much like the Teddy boys who had defended the waving of their hair under the questioning of T. R. Fyvel, many of the boys involved appeared to place greater value on their self-expression, on being fashionable, than on the opinions of teachers or other authority figures.[118]

As Laura King and Andrew Burchell have recently highlighted, during the 1950s and 1960s teaching advice manuals and cultural texts which dealt with juvenile delinquency both foregrounded the idea of the teacher as the substitute parent, a concept that was highly gendered – a vision of male teachers providing firm but compassionate guidance to potentially troublesome adolescent boys.[119] The common law principle of *in loco parentis* ('in place of a parent') provided a legal defence for teachers to administer "reasonable" physical correction to their pupils on the grounds of "delegated" parental authority. However, as Burchell notes, as a wider concept it could also form a central part of a teacher's professional identity, an ideal in classroom relations which schools should aspire to.[120] Sanctions for wearing long hair, then, could be justified by teachers as exercises in character-building from surrogate father figures. The headmaster of the secondary modern school in Bude, Cornwall, who had ordered his long-haired pupils to tie their locks up with ribbon ('just like the girls', in the words of the *Daily Mirror*) insisted that he was not a 'tyrant' and didn't wish to 'humiliate' the boys involved, and that he in fact 'like[d] the boys to show a bit of spirit and individuality.'[121] Here non-conformity could be tolerated, but had to be fought for (within permitted limits) and earned. Others saw schools enforcing rules regarding hair as a way of maintaining standards which had been allowed to lapse at home. The account of the hair-cutting affair at Harraby Secondary Modern that appeared in the *Daily Express* included a quote from

[117] The boy's father complained that sending replies to the letters, one of which came from as far afield as West Germany, was 'costing me a fortune in stamps'. 'Owen goes back to the boys' class', *Dalkeith Advertiser*, 17th September 1964, p.1.
[118] Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.35.
[119] L. King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, c. 1914-1960* (Oxford, 2015), pp.69-70; Burchell, '*In Loco Parentis*', p.557.
[120] Burchell, '*In Loco Parentis*', p.557.
[121] Scott, 'Cut your hair or wear a ribbon..', p.3.

the vice chairman of the local education committee, who suggested that while the school might have seemed to have taken a 'drastic' step, it was quite possibly justified as 'sometimes teachers are forced to take over parents' responsibilities.'[122]

Some heads sought to enlist parents' support in enforcing their policy on boys' hair, often by sending a letter home outlining the school's policy and, in some cases, warning of the potential risks of any slippage in standards when it came to personal appearance. In some cases, this approach was broadly successful. When the headmaster of Temple Secondary School in Rochester dispatched a letter home warning of the ills of long hair in December 1964, two parents interviewed by the *Daily Mirror* expressed both support for the school's position and gratitude for the warning. 'My 11-year-old boy is just at the age when he starts thinking about all those long-haired pop groups', one mother told the paper, '[h]e doesn't wear his hair long, but the letter has made me realise that, should he ever want to, it will be wrong for him and his appearance.'[123] Other stories that appeared in the press in the same year also featured families who supported the line taken by the school. Parents of the boys made to wear ribbons in their hair at Bude-Stratton Secondary Modern told the *Daily Mirror* that they would prefer it if their sons would cut their hair. The father of one pupil told the paper that while his son's hair was clean, and he realised he was participating in the latest fashion, he would still 'rather my boy cut it off'. The mother of two long-haired brothers, meanwhile, claimed to have already tried – and failed – to take matters into her own hands: 'On several nights I sneaked up to their bedroom with basin and a pair of scissors […] [b]ut they always woke up in time!'[124]

More commonly reported, however, were instances where parents not only chose to defend their children's hair, but also their attempts to resist efforts by the school to compel them to alter their appearance. Often, mums and dads strongly resented the insinuation from the school that their child's haircut reflected poverty at home or slovenly parenting. Speaking to journalists, parents emphasized that long hair was now highly fashionable, rather than a signifier of neglect.[125] Apparent attempts to humiliate boys also tended to be very badly received. The headmaster of a secondary school in Aveley, Essex, publicly heckling a long-haired pupil at a gymnastics display in December 1964, provoked what the *Daily Mail* described as a 'rumpus', with the resulting argument

[122] 'All shorn and forlorn', p.11.
[123] 'The bad long-hair boys – by a Head', p.2.
[124] Scott, 'Cut your hair or wear a ribbon..', p.3.
[125] See, for instance: ''Army' Haircuts For Schoolboys – By Order', p.3.

between parents and teachers escalating to the point that the police were called 'to break it up.' In this particular incident, the protests were led by other parents, rather than the mother or father of the boy concerned, with one telling the *Mail* that she was 'disgusted' that the head had 'showed the boy up in front of everyone.'[126] The haircutting incident at Harraby Secondary Modern, earlier in the same year, also led to an angry confrontation, with the man who had wielded the electric clippers making what was described as 'a furtive getaway'. The 17-year-old army barber later told the *Daily Express* that '[s]o many parents were looking for me I was advised to nip out the back door.'[127]

The suggestion that many parents sided with their children, rather than the school, in these disputes is consistent with the findings of recent historical work on the dynamics of youth and generation in the immediate post-war decades. In questioning the extent to which a "generation gap" existed within British families during the 1950s and 1960s, Selina Todd and Hilary Young suggest that oral histories and contemporary social research provide 'widespread evidence of intergenerational cooperation between parents and children'. In particular, Todd and Young argue that many working-class mothers and fathers took great pride in the fact their children were able to take advantage of the greater opportunities for consumption, enjoyment and leisure that were offered by post-war affluence.[128] By defending their sons' hair as fashionable, some parents were seeking to protect their children's claims to participation in a new aspirational youth culture. To protest against a headmaster's ruling on the length or style of a boy's hair also contested the extent of the school's authority over the bodies of its pupils. Rules concerning dress and appearance while in school were always likely to be unpopular with some teenagers – the school was, after all, a primary site of sociability and, potentially, fashionable display for adolescents. However, unlike rules that prohibited particular items of clothing, classroom bans on certain styles, "long" hair or facial hair, dictated teenaged boys' appearance at home and during their leisure time. Some parents perceived these rulings as an unwelcome and unjustified encroachment onto their

[126] 'Parents walk out after head tells boy Get your hair cut!', *Daily Mail*, 11th December 1964, p.11.
[127] 'All shorn and forlorn', p.11.
[128] S. Todd, H. Young, 'Baby-Boomers to 'Beanstalkers': Making the Modern Teenager in Post-War Britain' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2012), pp.451-452, 457-458; See also: G. A. M. Mitchell, 'Reassessing 'the Generation Gap': Bill Haley's 1957 Tour of Britain, Inter-Generational Relations and Attitudes to Rock 'n' Roll in the Late 1950s' in *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (2013), pp.573-605.

territory, and suggested that their own parental authority should override that of the teacher.

Disputes over boys' hair, then, raised wider questions concerning the nature and limits of *in loco parentis*. While the principle was based on the assumed delegation of parental authority, parents had no legal right to withdraw consent for teachers or schools to act on their behalf. However, as Andrew Burchell highlights, away from the courts the popular legitimacy of the concept was a subject of constant debate.[129] The right of a school to overrule a parental decision concerning the acceptability of their son's hair was often challenged. The father of the Dalkeith schoolboy ordered to shorten his hair wrote to the headmaster to 'question your right to the use of such authority. So far as I am concerned […] any of my children can have long hair.'[130] Similarly, in October 1965 the father of a 14-year-old boy sent home by the headmaster of Spencefield Secondary School, Leicester, told the *Daily Mirror* that he would be sending his son back to school without a haircut, emphasising that '[i]t is my decision, not [the headmaster's], what length my son's hair is.'[131] In other cases, calls from schools for parental support on questions of adolescent appearance received an unsympathetic hearing from mothers and fathers who would have likely finished their education before their 15th birthdays. As the father of the 15-year-old ordered to remove his moustache at Woollaston Secondary School told the *Daily Mail* in February 1963, '[i]f they will keep boys at school until they grow beards then they must put up with this […] If he wants to keep the moustache he jolly well can.'[132]

Building upon Peter Mandler's suggestion that parents came to view education as a universal public service during the second half of the twentieth century, Burchell argues that the parents who challenged *in loco parentis* sought to recast the principle, 'as less a compulsory delegation of parental authority to the teacher and more as a voluntary contractual arrangement between a service user and public servant.'[133] This growth of a discourse of "consumer rights" in regards to education was expressed through the creation of bodies such as the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), founded in 1960 by the sociologists Brian Jackson and Michael Young, the latter of whom had been the

[129] Burchell, '*In Loco Parentis'*, pp.555-556.
[130] 'Boy Is Put In Girls' Class', *Dalkeith Advertiser,* 3rd September 1964, p.3.
[131] ''Long-hair' Craig in school row', *Daily Mirror,* 6th October 1965, p.25.
[132] 'Trouble for boy with a 'tash like father', *Daily Mail*, 23rd February 1963, p.3.
[133] Mandler, 'Educating the Nation I', p.13; Burchell, '*In Loco Parentis*', p.563.

driving force behind the creation of *Which?* magazine in the late 1950s. In November 1969, in their regular fortnightly *Guardian* column addressing concerns raised by parents, ACE gave a sympathetic response to mothers and fathers who had written to them to complain that schools were persecuting their sons because of their hair. ACE wrote that:

> At several schools boys have been excluded from particular "A" level subject lessons until they have their hair cut. Since boys enter the sixth form to study for "A" levels, exclusion from their classes jeopardises their futures. The boys have to conform or leave and in most cases there is no alternative school available. Isn't it time we decided that no one has the right to interfere with anyone else's hair?[134]

Despite siding with the children and parents in these cases, ACE warned that 'it would be extremely unwise for a lone parent to stand out against a head or local authority over the issue of hair'. As ACE pointed out, there was recent legal precedent of parents who had knowingly sent their sons to school with hair deemed unacceptable by a 'dictatorial head' being found guilty of failing to ensure their children's attendance in education.[135] Collective action, on the other hand, was suggested by ACE as a potential way forward; 'perhaps parents could protest as a group. Clearly they want to protest […] There is clearly a feeling among parents that the present powers of the head are too strong and that a more liberal attitude should prevail.'[136] In the late 1960s and early 1970s, both parents and pupils would begin to organise collectively in order to campaign for a greater say over the extent to which a school could impose its authority onto its pupils. Here, protests against school rules governing boys' hair would coalesce with other issues – calls for the abolition of corporal punishment, in particular – to enable a broader critique concerning the lack of accountability in British schools.

Strike! Schools, hair and protest, c.1969-1974

From the late 1960s the character of reported protests against school bans on male pupils wearing "long" hair or facial hair began to shift. During the early and mid-1960s, newspaper stories concerning hair-related disputes had typically presented situations where a lone "hair rebel", often supported by his parents, was resisting the authority of the school. In these cases, taking a defiant stance and refusing to compromise on the

[134] 'Home and School', *Guardian*, 21st November 1969, p.9.
[135] One such case was reported in *The Times* in 1965: 'Bench back ban on long-haired boy', p.9.
[136] 'Home and School', p.9.

issue of hair often meant tacitly accepting the school's right to punish, and involved complying with a sanction – exclusion, quarantine, wearing a ribbon or being sent to "girls' lessons". From the late 1960s, however, pupils began to protest collectively, in an effort to force schools to change their rules. When Leeds Grammar School suspended 11 boys for refusing to cut their hair, the Leeds Schools Socialist Federation (founded in 1968) helped organise a protest meeting attended by around 150 of the school's 600 pupils. Subsequent negotiations not only resulted in the school backing down, allowing pupils to wear 'hair of whatever length', but also led to the establishment of a school council with student representatives.[137] Pupils at other schools staged occupations to protest against hair rules. A sit-in at Chatham House Grammar School in Kent, the *alma mater* of new prime minister Ted Heath, made the front pages in October 1970, as some fifty boys barricaded themselves into the sixth form common room. As the *Daily Express* explained, '[t]he protestors were demanding freedom of choice for eight boys who had been told to get their long hair cut.' When the headmaster came to negotiate he was initially refused entry to the common room, where the boys were said to be listening to pop records and smoking. While a promise to look again at the school's rules on long hair was enough to end the protests, one pupil vowed that '[i]f the head master [*sic.*] does not allow us to have our hair the way we want it we will stage another sit-in.'[138] And, as described above, similar tactics were employed by pupils at Henbury Comprehensive in Bristol in November 1974, when 200 fifth-formers occupied a teaching block in protest at the headmaster's insistence on a blanket ban on "long" hair and facial hair.[139]

This shift towards direct action can, of course, be placed in a wider cultural context of high-profile protests by university students and increased industrial unrest. Indeed, strikes and demonstrations reported in the media could echo the concerns of schoolchildren, not only when it came to calls for democratic accountability on campuses and in workplaces, but also regarding the right to self-expression in matters of appearance. In April 1969, for instance, more than 100 employees at the York Trailer

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[137] D. Gibson, '"The slogans were 'Head Autocracy Out' and 'Smash the bourgeoisie'!"' in S. Cunningham, M Lavalette, *Schools Out! The Hidden History of Britain's School Student Strikes* (London, 2016), p.108.

[138] A. Wilson, 'Damnable Demo! At Mr. Heath's old school', *Daily Express*, 15th October 1970, p.1; '50 Boys Fight For Long Hair', *Isle of Thanet Gazette and East Kent Advertiser*, 16th October 1970, p.1. Subsequent reports suggest that the headmaster's review was fairly swift, with the existing rules on hair length being reaffirmed the following day. A promise that no boys would be expelled for their part in the protest does seem to have been upheld, however. See 'Rebel hair must go', *Daily Express*, 16th October 1970, p.4; 'Long hair trouble at Heath's old school', *Daily Express*, 20th July 1971, p.11.

[139] 'Head faces row over beard ban', p.27; Head lifts the classroom ban on four students', p.1.

Company in Corby, Northampton, went out on strike when a 20-year-old apprentice was sent home 'on full pay until he got his shaggy hair cut.'[140] The increasingly confrontational stance on hair adopted by some pupils also formed part of wider campaigns for educational reform and children's rights during the late 1960s and early 1970s. While some campaigning organisations were made up of parents and teachers, such as the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment (STOPP, formed in 1968), other groups were established by schoolchildren themselves.[141] The Schools Action Union (SAU), formed in 1969 from various local pupil activist groups, advocated direct action and campaigned for the abolition of corporal punishment, the democratisation of schools and freedom of expression for pupils, including the right for children to wear their hair as they pleased. In the first issue of their London magazine, *Rebel*, the SAU claimed that '[n]umerous reports indicate that school authorities are going to extreme lengths to ensure slavish conformity to outmoded middle class styles of dress' and even argued that '[l]ong hair has provoked reactions so hysterical as to suggest, if not mental retardation then at least acute mental disturbance.'[142] As Nigel Wright points out, for the SAU disgruntlement over hair could be mobilised as a recruitment tool, and to this end the Union attempted to place the matter within their wider leftist critique of both the education system and capitalist society.[143] 'Why can't you have long hair if you wish to?' asked one member, reporting for *Rebel* on hair-related suspensions at Battersea Grammar School. 'Because long hair is non-conformist and not part of the character moulding process of school, which seeks to turn you into a machine, ready for your future employer.'[144] Other SAU material recommended that hair could be a good issue on which to make a protest – 'If 100 students or more were to refuse to get their hair cut (or grow it) […] then the power of the head would be exposed as a paper tiger.'[145] The SAU made the case that discord over boys' hair arose from a lack of accountability and oversight when it came to the position of the head teacher, who, it was

[140] 'Long-Hair Row Is On Again As 180 Strike', *Daily Mirror*, 17th April 1969, p.2; '120 stop work at Corby – over a hair cut', *Northampton Chronicle & Echo*, 14th April 1969, p.1.
[141] Burchell, '*In Loco Parentis*', pp.555-563.
[142] *Rebel*, Vol.1, No.1, 25th October 1969, pp.2-3.
[143] N. Wright, *Assessing Radical Education: A Critical Review of the Radical Movement in English Schooling, 1960-1980* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia, 1989), pp.69-70.
[144] 'Freedom Hair', *Rebel*, Vol.1, No.1, 25th October 1969, p.3.
[145] I am grateful to Owen Emerson for providing a digitised copy of this source. 'Hair and the Head', Schools Action Union pamphlet, c.1969 (from the private collection of Owen Emerson).

claimed, had been provided with 'absolute freedom to impose his own standards and values upon the student body.' This reflected a wider hypocrisy, it was claimed, whereby

> [a]lthough students are taught that Britain is a great democracy the head has the power to victimise and discriminate against students and teachers without having to justify or explain his actions or be subject to any control whatsoever by those who comprise the school community – the students, teachers, and domestic staff. Thus there is NO democracy in schools.[146]

The suggestion that state or school control of adolescent boys' hair was evidence of wider repressive tendencies recurred within popular culture through the mid-1960s and into the 1970s. In *Fahrenheit 451*, Francois Truffaut's 1966 film adaptation of Ray Bradbury's dystopian novel – parts of which were filmed at Kingsdale School in south London – the totalitarian government dispatches 'mop-up squads' to collar long-haired boys in the street and shear them in front of television cameras and crowds of laughing onlookers.[147] Lindsay Anderson's brutal satire of English public schools, *If....* (1968), opens with the protagonist Mick Travis, played by Malcolm McDowell, attempting to hide a moustache grown during the freedom of the summer holidays. Its eventual removal is symbolic of his return to an oppressive, petty, hierarchical system, characterised by the "whips" patrolling the corridors rapping younger boys on the neck with their canes and ordering them to 'get it cut'. Towards the conclusion of the film Travis and his fellow rebels are addressed by the headmaster, who seeks to strike a conciliatory note:

> Now, you mustn't think that I don't understand. It's a natural characteristic of adolescence to want to proclaim individuality. There's nothing unhealthy about that. It's a quite blameless form of existentialism. This, for instance, is what lies at the heart of the great hair problem. I think you boys know that I keep an open mind on most things. And of one thing I am certain: short hair is no indication of merit. So often I've noticed it's the hair rebels who step into the breach when there's a crisis […]

These words, however, are immediately exposed as empty platitudes, as the restricted nature of this "tolerance" is revealed: '[b]ut, of course, there are limits. Scruffiness of any kind is deplorable. I think you'd go that far with me?'[148] One man who apparently agreed was Mr Cromwell, the headmaster of the fictionalised Fenn Street comprehensive, the anarchic setting of the hugely popular ITV sitcom *Please Sir!*[149] In an episode first

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[146] 'Hair and the Head'.
[147] F. Truffaut (Dir.), *Fahrenheit 451* (UK, 1966). Kingsdale School expelled five pupils for staging a picket on behalf of the Schools Action Union in 1970: J. Tweedy, 'The rights of children', *Guardian*, 9th February 1970, p.9.
[148] L. Anderson (Dir.), *If....* (UK, 1968).
[149] Sitcom historian Mark Lewisohn describes *Please Sir!* as 'the top ITV sitcom in its time.' M. Lewisohn, *Radio Times Guide to TV Comedy* (2nd Edition, London, 2003), pp.628-629.

broadcast in December 1971 Cromwell places a ban on long hair for boys, and girls wearing mini-skirts, in an attempt to 'wipe out the suggestion that Fenn Street is a reservoir of spivs and spivesses'. Inevitably, his efforts end in failure after the pupils stage a sit-in in protest, and his ruling is portrayed as a futile and wholly counterproductive exercise, with the deputy headmistress, Miss Ewell, accusing him of 'imposing rules which are completely unworkable in a school like Fenn Street.'[150]

Distinguishing themselves from 'a school like Fenn Street' was a likely motive for many of the heads who chose to persist with strict regulations regarding hair at the turn of the seventies. Protecting the good name of the school was cited as a justification for suspending long-haired pupils – the headmaster of Croydon's Heath Clark Comprehensive told the *Daily Express* in 1973 that 'in order that boys look presentable, hair must be kept at a reasonable length […] If hair is allowed to grow any longer then I consider that is damaging to the reputation of the school.'[151] Concerns about hair symbolising a predilection for violence or delinquency also remained, now attached to skinhead crops as well as shaggy manes.[152] 'This kind of haircut is associated with a certain pattern of behaviour in society', explained the headmaster of Armthorpe High School, Yorkshire, justifying his reasons for suspending four teenagers who had arrived at school with shaved heads in September 1970.[153] Others saw disputes over hair as primarily proxy battles regarding the school's authority and the principle of *in loco parentis*. The furore at Henbury Comprehensive in Bristol hinged not only upon the headmaster's rules concerning hair and appearance, but also on his demand that parents provide written acknowledgement of his right to enforce the rules, as it did upon judgements concerning hair and dress.[154] Parents, insisted senior staff, should agree to 'accept the authority of the school.'[155]

It was increasingly clear, however, that it was not only film-makers and screenwriters who sympathised with the pupils and parents, rather than the teachers, involved in these disputes. Indeed, throughout much of the period studied here, the attitude of the

[150] J. Esmonde, B. Larbey, 'United We Sit', *Please Sir!*, ITV/London Weekend Television, 4th December 1971.
[151] J. Hamshire, 'Ministry calls inquiry over long-haired boy', *Daily Express*, 5th April 1973, p.2.
[152] For further discussion of the popular associations between skinhead style and delinquency, see chapter three.
[153] 'Sent home…four boys whose hair is too short', *Daily Mirror*, 17th September 1970, p.4.
[154] J. Coe, 'Governors will discuss 'barred schoolboys' row', *Evening Post* [Bristol], 12th November 1974, p.2.
[155] 'Sit-in staff back head', *Evening Post* [Bristol], 21st November 1974, p.1.

newspapers towards school rows over hair was often generous to the children and parents involved. Certainly, some newspapers could be more sympathetic than others. When the case of the Dalkeith boy placed in the "girls' class" was reported by both the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Express* in September 1964, there were small discrepancies between the details and tone of the two accounts. The *Express*, for instance, suggested that the girls had 'jeered' at their new classmate, while the *Mirror* insisted that the female pupils were right behind the boy's fashion choice, as well as his protest, quoting one 14-year-old who described his hair as 'fabulous', adding that '[w]e don't mind having him in our class.'[156] Overt comment on these matters was rare, however. The *Times* was alone in publishing an editorial in 1965 which lamented how '[p]arental authority comes down in support of rebellion' in disputes concerning school rules regarding long hair. These displays of 'impudent martyrdom', suggested the *Times*, would only harm the children involved, leading to them missing lessons and ill-preparing them for 'a world that, for all its cushions, is still hard.'[157] However, while the paper of the elite was happy to defend established hierarchies, midmarket titles that sought the readership of working-class and lower-middle-class families were always likely to offer a more sympathetic ear to parents and their children. Titles such as the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mail* tended to remain more or less neutral in their reporting of these cases, typically presenting the points of view of all those involved and providing a platform for the boys and parents to make their case. Even as the character of protests became increasingly militant during the late 1960s, the midmarket press refused to be drawn into moral condemnation. The politics of these disputes was also complicated, particularly for the right-wing press. While the *Daily Mail* was no cheerleader for the activities of the Schools Action Union, its readers also worried about the sort of citizens that would be produced through overly-conformist schooling. A letter published in the *Mail* in 1973 accused headmasters of seeking to create a nation of 'robots' and defended teenagers' right to free expression through hair as a welcome statement of individuality in a world where 'everyone is becoming more and more sheeplike.'[158]

As early as the mid-1960s, it was becoming apparent that some pupils and parents saw speaking to the press as a possible recourse against the otherwise unchallengeable

[156] 'Odd 'girl' out is a boy', p.5; 'Long-haired Owen must join girls', p.2.
[157] 'Cacophony On A Triangle', *The Times*, 5th October 1965, p.11.
[158] Cunningham, Lavalette, *Schools Out!*, pp.111-113; 'Who wants a nation of robots?', *Daily Mail*, 23rd October 1973, p.27.

authority of the school.[159] Some of the stories which appeared in the press during the early 1960s had clearly involved the cooperation of the school, with photographers invited into the classroom to document various punishments.[160] Presumably this was intended as a form of public relations, demonstrating to parents and the local community that standards were being upheld at the school, and as a further warning to other pupils. Some heads were less keen, however, on families contacting the media. After the parents of a 14-year-old boy from Northamptonshire spoke to the *Daily Mail* complaining about his school's insistence that he should remove his moustache, the headmaster held up the offending newspaper article 'in front of the whole school and ordered him to report to his study.'[161] By the early 1970s several teachers simply declined to speak to the press, perhaps believing that there was little to be gained from providing quotes to journalists, or that doing so might only exacerbate the situation.[162]

Furthermore, by the turn of the decade other voices of authority were beginning to criticise schools for intransigence when it came to rules regarding boys' hair. In 1971 both Labour MP Dennis Skinner and future cabinet minister Tony Banks, then a Labour councillor and union official, appeared in the press in their capacity as school governors to criticise the decision of their headmasters to suspend pupils for refusing to cut their hair or attend school clean shaven.[163] The frustration of some local officials at the disruption caused by schools suspending boys on account of their hair was also becoming increasingly obvious. In 1973 both the *Times* and the *Daily Express* covered the case of a 15-year-old boy facing Croydon Juvenile Court for shoplifting, who, it emerged, had been suspended from school for seven months because of the length of his hair. Explaining how such a situation could occur, an education welfare officer suggested that '[t]his particular head teacher is very rigid on the question of long hair', adding that the boy could not be sent to another school as he had been suspended rather than expelled. The welfare officer's exasperation was evident, describing the suspension as 'obviously very harmful to the boy's education over what I think is a rather petty issue.' By the

[159] 'Cacophony On A Triangle', p.11.
[160] See, for instance, 'All shorn and forlorn', p.11; ''Army' Haircuts For Schoolboys – By Order', p.3; 'Long-haired Owen must join girls', p.2; 'Odd 'girl' out is a boy', p.5.
[161] 'Moustache schoolboy says: I've been put in solitary', p.3.
[162] See, for instance, 'Bearded boy of 14 faces ban from school', *Daily Mail*, 25th January 1971, p.5; 'Keep your hair on boys', *Daily Mirror*, 5th May 1971, p.5; 'Barber teacher may face court action', *Daily Express*, 16th September 1971, p.9.
[163] In Skinner's case there was also a personal connection, as the suspended boy was his younger brother. 'Bearded boy of 14 faces ban from school', p.5; 'Keep your hair on boys', p.5.

1970s, then, it was teachers and schools, rather than pupils and parents, who were bearing the brunt of the criticism. The disapproval of the magistrate in the Croydon case was clear, with the *Daily Express* recording the JP's comment that '[t]he Bench finds a situation that stands in the way of a boy having a proper education outrageous.' Rather than deferring to the headmaster's right to impose discipline as he wished, both the local education authorities and the Department of Education saw it as their place to intervene, promising to investigate the boy's case.[164] School efforts to deter juvenile misbehaviour through enforcing strict rules on hair were now seen as enabling, rather than preventing, youth crime. By the early 1970s there was also little sympathy to be found from some teaching unions. A teacher who was threatened with prosecution for assault in September 1971 after cutting the hair of four boys in front of their classmates was also criticised by the chairman of the Professional Association of Teachers – hardly a radical leftist organisation, founded in 1970 on the principle of refusing to take industrial action – who told the *Daily Express* that it was 'high time teachers grew up on this issue.'[165] Writing in the union's journal the following month the chairman, Francis Bennion, argued that '[t]o criticise boys for having long hair and even worse to compel them to cut it does more than anything else to widen the generation gap', only serving to alienate teachers from their pupils, and making the task of producing happy, well-rounded citizens even more difficult.[166]

Conclusion

In his history of Britain in the mid-to-late 1970s, Dominic Sandbrook suggests that a parental challenge to the authority of head teachers in British secondary schools took place in the latter part of that decade, driven by middle-class fears of misguided progressivism and left-wing subversion.[167] Peter Mandler, too, sees questions of "standards" in comprehensive schools driving calls for greater accountability in British

[164] Hamshire, 'Ministry calls inquiry over long-haired boy', p.2; 'Long-haired boy's case outrageous, JP says', *The Times*, 5th April 1973, p.3.
[165] ''Barber' teacher may face court action', p.9; 'Our History', < https://www.voicetheunion.org.uk/about-us/our-history>, accessed 8th May 2019.
[166] 'Let them have long hair', *The Professional Teacher*, No. 2 (Autumn 1971), p.1; 'Let boys have long hair, says teachers' leader', *Daily Express*, 28th October 1971, p.9.
[167] Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun*, pp.207-216.

education during the post-war period.[168] However, this chapter – alongside other recent work concerning opposition to corporal punishment – has demonstrated that the power of teachers was being contested long before the late 1970s.[169] During the 1960s and early 1970s, school rules on hair had raised issues concerning children's rights, as well as the rights of parents, and prompted questions about the extent – and legitimacy – of a school's authority over its pupils. Clashes over hair had also thrown light on what Kathryn Riley has since termed 'the 'Grey' Area of School Governance' – if the head teacher controlled the school, then who controlled the head teacher?[170] Certainly, these questions would continue to be debated throughout the seventies, often in the context of anxieties concerning the rights and wrongs of progressive education. However, before teachers were portrayed as hopelessly naïve idealists or Trotskyite infiltrators, they had been characterised as repressive dictators. Before the newspapers were full of stories of parents concerned about leftie teachers, they had run reports of mums and dads angry at school decrees regarding their sons' hair. The post-war challenge to the power of schools, then, should not be construed purely in terms of a backlash against unwanted progressivism, but as a wider debate about authority, legitimacy and accountability.

Disputes between pupils, parents and schools concerning the right of teachers to prohibit certain hairstyles during the 1950s, 60s and 70s took place against a backdrop of educational reform and ongoing concerns regarding juvenile delinquency and the state of the nation's youth. Secondary schools, often identified by contemporaries as playing a key role in preventing juvenile misbehaviour, were institutions organised around understandings of class, with the "bipartite" system of secondary modern and grammar schools often mapped onto a dichotomy of "rough" and "respectable". Long or untidy hair had been read as symbolic of the "ragged street child" and a sign of disorder since the nineteenth century. Post-war affluence had seen the rise of new fears concerning Americanisation, conspicuous consumption and misspent youth, which again could be read onto the hair of young men.

School bans on boys wearing certain hairstyles were built upon these cultural understandings, as teachers sought to regulate their pupils' engagement with the affluent society, protecting them from the frivolities of fashion and maintaining, as they saw it,

[168] Mandler, 'Educating the Nation I', pp.20-28.
[169] Burchell, '*In loco parentis*'.
[170] K. A. Riley, *Whose School is it Anyway? Power and Politics* (London, 2003), pp.34-35.

their school's reputation within the local community. By the mid-1960s, however, fashionability was being cited by pupils and parents as a justification for freedom of choice in hair, and as a defence of the right of adolescent males to participate in a rising, affluent youth culture. These disputes were reported upon by a popular press which increasingly aligned itself with the interests and aspirations of working- and lower-middle-class families, rather than figures of local authority, such as head teachers.

Classroom protests, then, provide a case study of a post-war erosion of deference. Through the 1960s comprehensivisation, child-centred pedagogy and the growing understanding of education as a public service undermined the cultural authority of head teachers. Pupils and parents not only increasingly rejected the right of schools to tell boys how they should wear their hair, but also challenged the class-based understandings upon which these rules were founded. However, rather than solely perceiving these protests as local examples of a wider cultural shift, we might also consider how issues such as schoolboys' hair helped to shape broader changes in public attitudes in post-war British society. As the mobilisation of the question of boys' hair by the Schools Action Union demonstrated, the apparently unaccountable and arbitrary decisions of schools and teachers, along with punishments that could be characterised as petty or vindictive, on a matter which might easily be contested as primarily the concern of the individual, could serve to discredit wider structures of authority and further undermine efforts to preserve the status quo or moderate the pace of social change in post-war Britain.

Chapter 2 – Hair, hygiene and disorder: "Beatniks" at the English seaside, 1960-1970

In late August 1960, the BBC's early evening current affairs programme *Tonight* dispatched reporter Alan Whicker to the Cornish resort town of Newquay, to investigate a conflict between the Cornish town's Urban District Council and a group of hairy young visitors, labelled as "beatniks". The report, which ran to almost 9 minutes, opened with one of the visitors, the 21-year-old folk musician Wizz Jones, brandishing his acoustic guitar and playing a song in the style of Woodie Guthrie which, for the benefit of viewers, laid out the bare bones of the story. The young travellers, it was suggested, had received a hostile welcome from business owners and officials in Newquay. They had been moved on from their improvised camp sites (*Well you move in, to old Newquay/And you pitch your tent, down by the sea/Along come the law, and they move you away/Say the Urban District Council don't want you to stay*). They had been denied employment, seemingly on account of their unconventional appearance (*Well you smarten up, and you put on some shoes/Try to get a job, to drive away the blues/But everywhere you go they stand and stare/Can't employ you 'cos you've got long hair*). And they had been refused access to the leisure economy which usually sought the custom of Newquay's many visitors (*Well to take a little drink, it ain't no sin/But there ain't a pub in Newquay that will let me in/I search the cafes, for a place to eat/But they can't serve you, 'cos you're a Beat*). Each verse of Jones's song ended with the same refrain, emphasising that – at least to the young Beats – this discrimination appeared to be based on a style choice widely perceived as emblematic of their lifestyle; *It's hard times in Newquay, if you've got long hair*.[1]

Opposition to young British males wearing long hair or facial hair was not confined to the classroom during the immediate post-war decades. Discrimination against men wearing long hair, or beards, took place across Britain during the 1960s and early 1970s. Leisure venues – pubs, cafes, dancehalls – often refused entry or service to those who they considered to be of unacceptably hirsute appearance, and instances of men falling foul of

[1] *Tonight*, BBC Television, 29th August 1960, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3WfXA9JL9w>, accessed 24th October 2017. For a brief retrospective interview with Wizz Jones, reflecting on his encounter with Whicker, see R. Whyte (Dir.), *Bouffants, Beehives and Bobs: The Hairstyles That Shaped Britain*, BBC4, 13th November 2013.

long hair "bans" were regularly reported by the media.[2] In 1967 the documentary maker Jill Craigie interviewed interior designer David Mlinaric, who described sensing 'a kind of resentment in garages and shops, cinemas, restaurants, hotels' on account of his long hair. The authorities, too, were alleged to share such prejudices. Craigie's film featured claims of persecution from young men who suggested that the police assumed that their long hair meant that they were carrying drugs, a complaint that was supported by a spokesman for the National Council of Civil Liberties.[3] If discrimination against long-haired men was justified by some business owners, officials and police officers as being necessary for the protection of the wider community, then others argued that such exclusion represented an unacceptable infringement on freedom of expression and civil liberties.

The following chapter explores these debates within a specific setting – that of the English seaside resort. It considers how and why some business owners and local government officials in three coastal towns – Brighton, and the Cornish resorts of St Ives and Newquay – sought to deny access to leisure spaces (and, in some cases, the entire town) to those they labelled as "beatniks", youths who were often identified as such through their hirsute appearance. Building upon the discussion of the iconography of delinquency and deviancy in chapter one, it considers how these young men were positioned as unclean – in hair and body but also, often, in morals – and how this rhetoric was employed in an effort to defend these policies of exclusion. The suggestion that long hair on men was "dirty" was a concern commonly expressed throughout these years, and a point often argued by head teachers who wished to keep their pupils' hair short.[4] However, suggestions of dirtiness seemed to gain a greater resonance within a setting – the seaside – that was commonly understood (and marketed) as a site of cleansing, good health and hygiene, while also held as being threatened by pollution. A narrative of spoliation surrounded the British seaside during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and long-haired beatniks were often grouped alongside litter, sewage and exhaust fumes as threats to the prosperity of local traders, and the aesthetic beauty of the natural environment. However, while some were alarmed by the hairiness and non-conformity of youth, others – within

[2] See, for instance, 'Pub Ban on Long Hair Starts Student Row', *Daily Express*, 11th November 1968, p.13; 'Long-haired' editor barred from dinner', *Daily Mirror*, 18th April 1970, p.11.
[3] J. Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*, BBC1, 17th August 1967.
[4] See, for instance, 'College ban on long hair' *Guardian*, 11th September 1964, p.9; 'All shorn and forlorn', *Daily Express*, 5th June 1964, p.11.

these communities, as well as those observing from afar – were concerned that efforts to "drive out" young visitors represented nothing more than small-minded prejudice. The persecution of long-haired young men was taken as evidence of the existence of authoritarian and intolerant impulses within British society, prompting comparisons with Nazi Germany and Rhodesia, and American segregationists. By the late 1960s, amidst the rise of Powellism, debates concerning the discrimination against long-haired white men by white residents of seaside towns were being explicitly linked with wider divides regarding race, immigration and the rise of the populist right.

The beatnik

Who, or what, was a "beat" or a "beatnik"? These are terms that appear regularly in popular and historical literature discussing post-war youth culture, often listed amongst a succession of familiar names – Teddy boys, mods, rockers, hippies and skinheads. In recent years, however, historians of youth have placed increasing emphasis on the complexity and diversity of post-war youth cultures, highlighting the ways in which they could be localised, and the misleading nature of interpretations that privilege white, male and London-centric perspectives.[5] The use of terms that imply homogeneity has been challenged; Bill Osgerby, for example, argues that a label such as 'counter-culture' can hinder understanding, suggesting 'a coherent, homogenous social formation', rather than a more productive view of 'a diverse range of loosely related anti-establishment, non-conformist and bohemian factions.'[6] Others have questioned the continued use of familiar terms as categories of historical analysis. In a recent article Sharif Gemie and Brian Ireland ask whether labels such as 'beatnik' or 'hippie' possess any real 'social validity', or if they in fact reflect the prejudices of officials and observers rather than the self-identification of the youths themselves. '[S]cholars should stop accepting these terms at face value', they write, 'and accept that hippies were often no more real than hobbits, they were fantasy figures which others dreamed about.'[7] Gemie and Ireland argue that the beatnik had become little more than a 'folk devil' by the late 1960s, 'a

[5] M. Tebbutt, *Making Youth: A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (London, 2016), p.157.
[6] B. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 1998), p.82.
[7] S. Gemie and B. Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik: The Establishment, Youth Culture and the Beginnings of the Hippie Trail (1966-8)' in *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2017), pp.463-464.

convenient label to identify behaviour and cultural practices of which officials disapproved.'[8] The challenge for the historian, then, is to dissect this "folk devil" image, and to gain a greater understanding of how and why certain cultural practices were assigned to the beatnik. In particular, analysis of the treatment of a figure commonly constructed as a hairy "other", by the law, government, press and public, provides a window into attitudes and prejudices concerning men's hair and hirsuteness in post-war Britain.

Historians and cultural critics have tended to position the "Beat Generation" as a bohemian subculture, often identified in accounts of post-war youth as the forerunner of the 'hippie' counterculture of the late 1960s.[9] These accounts highlight the diverse roots of "beat" culture; from the existentialism and surrealism of 1940s Paris, to the individualism and introspection of American writers such as Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassidy. In the British case, influences closer to home have also been identified, from a tradition of middle-class bohemia that can be traced back at least as far as the 1880s, to the leftist political movements that emerged within the universities during the inter-war period.[10] British beat culture, then, is understood to have incorporated a range of enthusiasms, ideologies and behaviours, including (but not limited to) an anti-conformist outlook, an opposition to consumerism and materialism, a reverence of the "outsider", an interest in avant-garde or marginalised artistic forms (particularly jazz, poetry and the blues) and styles of dress and appearance which expressed alienation from the mainstream through "anti-fashion". A combination of black clothing, old sweaters, jeans, long hair and beards could form, in Bill Osgerby's evocative phrase, 'a montage of studied dishevelment.'[11]

Nigel Whiteley describes the 'unwashed, unlaundered and straggly haired look' of the beats as an act of political dissent, 'a protest against the clean-shaven and clean-cut image of the 'corporation man'.'[12] The use of hair as a statement of identity was, of course, a long-established and widely understood act of bohemianism. In examining the roots of bohemian 'anti-fashion', Elizabeth Wilson draws attention to the emergence of groups of

[8] Gemie, Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik', p.464.
[9] See Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.85; Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, pp.160-161; N. Whiteley, *Pop Design: Modernism to Mod* (London, 1987), p.79.
[10] Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.83; Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p.160.
[11] Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, pp.83-84.
[12] Whiteley, *Pop Design*, p.79.

'hairy artists' such as *Les Barbus* ('the bearded ones') in nineteenth-century France, who were said to have expressed their political and aesthetic non-conformity through their long hair and long beards, as well as unusual dress.[13] Certainly, within British popular culture of the 1950s and early 1960s, hairiness – long hair, facial hair – was commonly read as an act of bohemianism. When Tony Hancock joined an avant-garde arts group ('the East Cheam Cultural Progressive Society') in an episode of his radio sitcom *Hancock's Half Hour*, broadcast in December 1959, he declared that he would be throwing away his razor and allowing his hair to grow long, '[o]ne inch below the shoulders, regulation length.'[14] Hirsuteness, then, was a key signifier of the "beatnik", a marker of appearance which – in the early 1960s – differentiated him or, to a lesser extent, her, from the rest of the population. 'Beards are for Beatniks', staff at Boots were reminded by the in-house *Sales and Selling* magazine in June 1962, as the chemist encouraged employees to heavily promote shaving products to their customers ahead of the holiday season.[15] The "beatnik", wrote the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1964, was 'a devotee of the unwashed look […] completely untrammelled by normal conventions […] directly opposed to ALL ideas on grooming for men.' The *Journal* told its readers that while some 'Beatnik types' or 'spare-time Beatniks' could be persuaded to submit to an occasional trim, they were unlikely to receive any business from the genuine article. While a 'beatnik imitator' might be 'artificial', wrote the *Journal*, the real thing 'lives by a beat philosophy: the term amounts to a way of life.'[16]

Questions of authenticity and artifice, then, surrounded the figure of the beatnik.[17] Was the unkempt appearance – the long hair and the beards, the shabby clothes – a statement of artistic commitment and a critique of bourgeois norms, or the outward signifier of a delinquent personality? Did the seemingly aimless lifestyle of the beats, often drifting across the country without stable employment, reflect their alienation from mainstream society, or merely reveal them as workshy layabouts and scroungers? The answers to such questions were, of course, likely to be heavily influenced by the wider politics and

[13] E. Wilson 'Bohemian Dress and the Heroism of Everyday Life' in *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1998), pp.227-228.
[14] R. Galton, A Simpson, 'The Poetry Society', *Hancock's Half Hour*, BBC Light Programme, 8th December 1959.
[15] *Sales and Selling*, No.42, June 1962, Boots Company Archive, Nottingham (hereafter: BCA), Sales and Selling 1961-1962, WBA/BT/11/38/1/4/7, pp.34-35.
[16] 'Getting With It In 1964', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 21st February 1964, p.2.
[17] See C. Campbell, 'Beatniks, Moral Crusaders, Delinquent Teenagers and Hippies: Accounting for the Counterculture' in M. Collins (ed.) *The Permissive Society and its Enemies: Sixties British Culture* (London, 2007), p.99.

social attitudes of contemporary observers. Historians who have written about "beat" as a subculture have tended to emphasise the middle-class origins of many of the prominent cultural figures associated with the movement. The studies of the British "underground" compiled by Jonathon Green provide an account of the "Beat Generation" as a social network with wider cultural significance, a scene described by its movers and shakers, such as *International Times* founder Barry Miles and the writer Michael Horovitz.[18] While other interpretations attempt to move the focus away from this elite, there has been relative consensus that "Beat" was predominantly a middle-class movement, a suggestion that can be traced from the rejection of counter-cultural claims to classlessness by researchers and theorists working within Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s, through to more recent contributions.[19]

Others, however, have noted the extent to which the British beat movement has remained under-researched, an observation first made by Bill Osgerby in 1998, and repeated with equal validity by Gemie and Ireland in 2017.[20] There is evidence to suggest that the characterisation of the beats as predominantly middle-class may be overstated. Certainly, the majority of the literary and cultural figures that appear in Green's histories were well-educated and came from affluent backgrounds. Osgerby, however, hints that the 'social reality' was that 'beat culture comprised youngsters from diverse social origins, including numbers of young drifters whose impoverishment signified genuine hardship rather than middle-class affectation' – a suggestion which is yet to be explored in any detail.[21] In fact, accounts from contemporary press reports and sociological research suggests a diversity not only of background, but also of generation and experience. The label "beatnik" was applied to the group of well-spoken twenty-somethings who had set up a colony by renting holiday homes in the Cornish village of St Agnes, with the aim (in the words of their "leader", senior in years and a retired naval intelligence officer) of restoring 'that spirit of enterprise and leadership which is […] dismally lacking in this country today'. But it was equally attached to a hapless group of teenagers in nearby St Ives, who were sleeping rough on the beach and found themselves in court after stealing a

[18] J. Green, *Days in the Life: Voices from the English Underground 1961-1971* (London, 1998), pp.14-23; J. Green, *All Dressed Up: The Sixties and the Counterculture* (London, 1999), pp.26-40.
[19] Gemie, Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik', pp.445-446. See also: S. Hall and T. Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in post-war Britain* (London, 1976); Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p.161.
[20] Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.83; Gemie, Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik', p.445.
[21] Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.86.

tin of chicken due to hunger.[22] Reports of court proceedings in areas where "beats" congregated often mentioned the 'good homes' of youths accused of petty theft or other minor offences, as well as educations spent at public, grammar or convent schools.[23] Yet the sociological research undertaken into the youths who congregated on Brighton's seafront during the late 1960s provided profiles of those it defined as 'beats' which told of lives that had been anything but comfortable, blighted variously by addiction, experiences of abuse, and trauma stemming from military service.[24] In their report, the social workers recorded that some of the beats appeared to be 'poor readers', that a small number 'could not write', and that more generally, 'the educational ignorance was appalling.'[25] It was also suggested that many of the beats were living with depression and mental illness. 'It's not a romantic life', one (less than discreet) social worker told the *Sunday Telegraph*, '[m]ost of [the beats] are mentally disturbed.'[26]

If the "Beat Generation" was mythologised by a literary and cultural elite, then the "beatnik" was defined by officials, magistrates and journalists. While the term "beat", derived from "beaten" or "beatific", can be traced back either to Jack Kerouac or the 'world of black jazz musicians and hustlers', via William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, the label "beatnik" was a media creation, originally coined in 1958 by *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen, either a play on the name of the Soviet satellite Sputnik, or an application of the Yiddish suffix "-nik".[27] The new label immediately proved popular with the press and detractors of beat culture on both sides of the Atlantic, possessing, in the words of the writer Norman Mailer, 'a quality of condescension […] which proved agreeable to the newspaper mentality.'[28] The use of these labels in Britain far outlasted the peak of "Beat" culture as an artistic, literary and cultural movement, which Green dates between the mid-1950s and the Royal Albert Hall poetry reading of

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[22] *Westward Diary*, ITV Westward Region, 12th February 1969, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-a-beatnik-community-in-st-agnes-1969-online>, accessed 26th October 2017; 'Nine Shared Stolen Chicken on the Bandstand', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 26th August 1966, p.2.
[23] 'Beatnik camp raided: three are charged', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 13th July 1962, p.1; 'Youth tells Bench about 'my debt to society'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 2nd August 1968, p.1; 'Court Warning for Milk Thieves', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 10th June 1966, p.4.
[24] N. Ashwell, B. Biven, L. Jago, J. Klein, E. Ross, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II* (Brighton, 1971), pp.26, 136-156.
[25] N. Ashwell, B. Biven, L. Jago, J. Klein, E. Ross, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I* (Brighton, 1971), p.104; Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.38.
[26] Quoted in Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I*, pp.94, 152, 157.
[27] Green, *All Dressed Up*, p.26; Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.83; Gemie, Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik', pp.446-447.
[28] Quoted in Green, *All Dressed Up*, p.32.

1965.[29] As Sharif Gemie and Brian Ireland suggest, there were young people in the late 1950s and early 1960s who identified themselves as "beats" or "beatniks", based on codes of appearance, spirituality or, arguably, experimentation with drugs. However, by the mid-1960s (and into the 1970s), the terms "beat" or "beatnik", often used interchangeably with "hippie", were predominantly employed by officials and journalists to denote a social problem which required a solution. As Gemie and Ireland point out, there is little evidence to suggest that the young people to which these labels were attached would have willingly identified themselves as such by the late 1960s.[30] While some of the "beats" who interacted with the social workers on Brighton's seafront in the late 1960s acknowledged the term, others rejected it, 'assert[ing] their individuality by announcing that they are a 'person', 'individual', 'human', 'me', etc.'[31]

A discourse of delinquency surrounded the figure of the beatnik. The Brighton social workers reported that many of the beats that they saw regularly were 'delinquent', with convictions for petty theft, drug use, or assault, 'distinguished […] from other young people [by] their degree of isolation, their alienation from generally accepted behaviour and their inability to think and plan for the future.'[32] In the local context, "beatniks" were often depicted as a threat *to* teenagers from working-class and middle-class backgrounds, rather than as members of those classes themselves. Rather than being described as "beats" or "beatniks", youths from "good homes" who had got into trouble with the law were sometimes portrayed in local newspapers as being led astray *by* "beatniks". To have been 'rubbing shoulders with beatniks' was an explanation, even a mitigating factor, for ending up in front of a magistrate.[33] Rather than a middle-class lifestyle or youth culture in which one could participate, the "beatniks" were presented as a fixed group, a delinquent underclass which threatened to "infect" the young of more "respectable" classes. Similarly, while both young men and young women could be identified as "beatniks", some observers were careful to categorise groups of young women who associated with beats as distinct, noting that many came from 'respectable' homes and had jobs.[34] The social workers based on Brighton seafront in the late 1960s noted that

[29] Green, *All Dressed Up*, pp.38-39.
[30] Gemie, Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik', pp.446-447, 463-464.
[31] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.71.
[32] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, pp.162-163.
[33] 'Youth Who Stole Ring Associated with Beatniks', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 7th June 1968, p.3.
[34] N. Ashwell, B. Biven, L. Jago, J. Klein, E. Ross, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume III* (Brighton, 1971), pp.129-130.

some teenage girls appeared to arrive in the town with 'the apparently expressed intention of being picked up by a beat', and the suggestion that male beatniks posed a threat to young women's 'respectability' was reflected in the – sometimes disputed – accusations of public sexual behaviour aimed at some beats.[35] To become a beatnik, then, was to fall perhaps irredeemably into deviancy, and local police made considerable efforts to return runaway girls to their families, and remove those under the age of 16 or 17 from environments where they might mix with older male beats.[36]

Gemie and Ireland's analysis of the attitude of Foreign Office staff towards young British "beatniks" travelling abroad suggests that officials were predominantly exercised by allegations of petty crime, drunkenness, sex work and, most significantly, drug use. As they concede, however, the extent of drug use was likely to have been overstated by officials and implicit, although largely unexplored, in their article is the hostility of the FCO towards the appearance of those they labelled as "beatniks". This disapproval appears central to concerns that travelling beats threatened British prestige: 'Their presence in Delhi', noted one official, 'is unwelcome as they give Britain a bad name, they make the place untidy, they are generally dirty and unkempt'. Another FCO staffer, working in Beirut, lamented that 'when we hear of long-haired and dirty people begging in the streets and cafes we have nothing to say'.[37] The beats' appearance and, in particular, their hair, was perceived as a central element of their delinquency, contributing to their isolation from the rest of society and other young people. 'Their long hair, dirty appearance and their tendency to be rude in conversation,' wrote the Brighton social workers, 'makes them unattractive to others. Many people find them so repulsive that they talk of terrible ways of getting rid of them.'[38] For some, the hirsute appearance of the beats was, in and of itself, an affront; for others, long, unkempt hair or scruffy beards were the signifiers of other delinquent behaviours. Opponents of the beats were, of course, not only reacting to what they had seen, heard or read about "beatniks", but were also drawing from wider cultural imagery which depicted the delinquent youth as hairy,

[35] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume III*, p.130. See, for instance, 'Couple's 'disgusting' behaviour on Smeaton's Pier', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 23rd November 1968, p.6; J. Cook, 'The mobs of St Ives', *Guardian*, 15th July 1969, p.9; Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.6.
[36] 'Beatnik invasion' puts pressure on Probation Service', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 1st July 1966, p.1; Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume III*, p.130.
[37] Gemie, Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik', pp.453-455, 463.
[38] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume III*, p.127.

unkempt, ragged and unclean.[39]

While fears over long-haired schoolboys were predicated on the idea that young males might fall into delinquency, "beatniks" were often viewed as having already become delinquent, perhaps irrevocably so. Moreover, the long-haired schoolboy was likely to be known: he was a son, a brother, a pupil, a classmate. Beats, in contrast, were *unknown*, outsiders who could be seen as alien or an "other". The schoolboy was part of his community. The beatnik who drifted into town could be positioned as an unwelcome visitor, as someone who did not belong. Nowhere more was this the case than in the coastal resorts where those labelled as "beatniks" tended to congregate, communities which – paradoxically – were economically dependent on short-term migration.

The seaside and the sixties

If the "beatnik" was a folk devil, a hairy, unkempt, apparently aimless youth described by officials and journalists, then where could he or she be found? Certainly, they were thought to exist in the capital. Stanley Long and Arnold Louis Miller went in search of beatniks in their 1965 "mondo" film *Primitive London* and found plenty of folk musicians and long-haired youths, although none who were willing to subscribe to the label.[40] 'I don't like the word myself', replied one interviewee, when asked for a definition of a beatnik. '[I]f you ask the average person in the street what a beatnik is, they'll immediately turn around and say a person who doesn't wash, doesn't work, has just got long filthy hair and is a parasite on society […] it's entirely wrong.'[41] The presence of beatniks in some of London's pubs and cafes was expected and presumed by those seeking to "document" the seedier side of the capital's nightlife; however, the enthusiasm for travel that was understood as fundamental to the lifestyle brought beatniks into spaces where, it was argued, they didn't belong.

Although the experience of travel was considered as important as the destination, if not more so, certain sites came to be identified as popular beatnik haunts. As Gemie and Ireland have highlighted, officials within embassies and the Foreign Office expressed

[39] See discussion of the imagery of delinquency in chapter one.
[40] The term 'mondo' (Italian for 'world') refers to a genre of exploitation documentary films made in the style of the 1962 hit *Mondo Cane*. See V. Pratt, 'Primitive London (1965)', <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1291576/index.html>, accessed 12th August 2019.
[41] *Primitive London* (Dir: S. Long, A. L. Miller, 1965).

anxiety about British beatniks travelling along what would become to be known as the "hippie trail" through Europe, the Middle-East and the Indian subcontinent.[42] The beatnik was not only an international traveller, however. Within the borders of the United Kingdom, British beatniks tended to follow the example of their American cousins by heading to the coast. In place of San Francisco, these youths descended upon the seaside resorts which had dominated the British holiday industry since the nineteenth century. Brighton, long-established as one of the nation's foremost holiday destinations, and Cornish towns such as Newquay and St Ives, which had attracted increasing numbers of tourists since the inter-war period, proved especially popular, with some beats travelling between the resorts.[43]

The seaside was, and remains, a space that held conflicting and contested meanings. On the one hand, coastal resorts presented themselves as sites of good health and clean living, a chance to escape the smoke, overcrowding, grime and, even, the urban degeneration associated with life in cities and industrial towns, to bask in the purifying effects of the seawater and coastal breezes. In his seminal book, *The Lure of the Sea*, the French historian Alain Corbin has shown how the meanings of the coast had been transformed between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, from a site haunted by the threat of monsters, invasions or shipborne diseases, to a location that 'began to appear as a recourse against the misdeeds of civilization'.[44] The association of the seaside with health and hygiene remained common during the mid-twentieth century, at a time when rising wages, paid holidays and improved transport links were opening the coast to a mass audience.[45] During the mid-1960s Newquay was described as a 'seaside holiday and health resort' by the local newspaper, and the town's guidebook described beaches being 'washed clean by the Atlantic Ocean's sparkling surf twice in the twenty-four hours'.[46] The same publicity booklet, issued for the 1967 season, not only highlighted the

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[42] Gemie, Ireland, 'The Consul and the Beatnik', pp.442-449, 453-457.
[43] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.13. 'Beatniks' could also be found in other coastal resorts, particularly in the south of England. In the mid-1960s councils and business associations in Hastings, Bournemouth and Great Yarmouth were all reported to be taking steps to deter beatniks from visiting their towns: S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (3rd Edition, London and New York, 2002), p.65.
[44] A. Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, trans. J. Phelps, (London, 1995), p.53.
[45] N. J. Morgan, A. Pritchard, *Power and Politics at the Seaside: The Development of Devon's Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Exeter, 1999), p.40.
[46] 'L. J. R.', 'Newquay Comments and Notes', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 15th April 1965, p.2; *where else but … Newquay*, 1967, Newquay Heritage Archive and Museum, Newquay (hereafter: NHAM), p.2.

town's striking beaches and cliff formations, but also foregrounded healthy bodies, showing young couples relaxing on the sands, families exploring rock pools and surfers riding the waves.[47] These bronzed, toned and noticeably hairless bodies, topped off by heads of neatly coiffured hair, represented the affluent post-war worker taking a well-earned break, relaxing and engaging in healthy pursuits at the seaside (Figure 6).

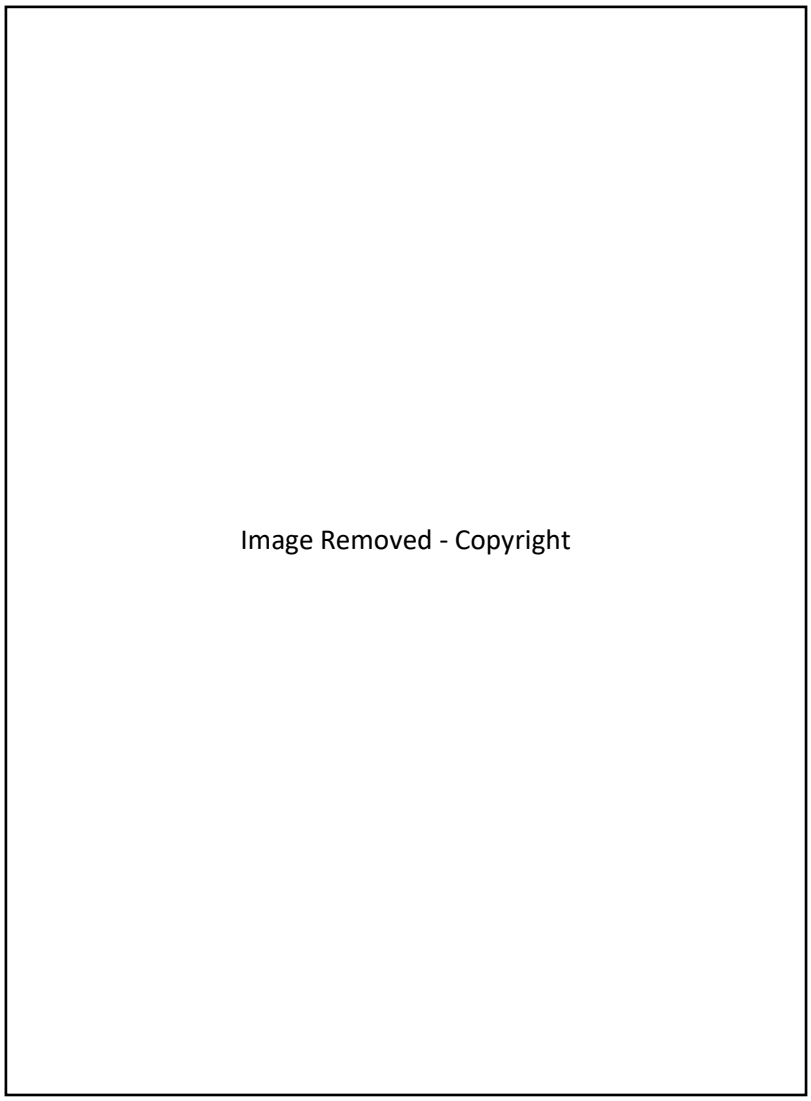


Figure 6: Front cover of *where else but … Newquay*, 1967, Newquay Heritage Archive and Museum.

[47] *where else but … Newquay*, pp.1, 5, 8. For the increasing appeal of sunbathing as a seaside activity, and the growing prominence of the holidaymakers' bodies in promotional material during the inter-war period, see Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2000), pp.102-104.

While those charged with marketing coastal resorts presented the seaside as offering health, hygiene and recuperation, geographers and historians have noted the 'liminal nature' of these spaces, particularly within the wider national context: resort towns are neither truly urban nor rural.[48] The historian John K. Walton argues that, physically located on the margins, seaside towns are spaces where

> the pleasure principle is given freer rein, the certainties of authority are diluted, and the usual constraints on behaviour are suspended, however provisionally, to give a broader acceptability to, or at least tolerance of, variety of sexual partners and practices, or unscheduled bodily exposure, or drink-fuelled raucousness, ribaldry or indelicacy, or the consumption of greasy food with the fingers in the street. The seaside puts the 'civilising process' temporarily into reverse (although the participants understand that they are defying its conventions) and conjures up the spirit of the carnival, in the sense of upturning the social order and celebrating the rude, the excessive, the anarchic, the hidden and the gross […][49]

This transgressive image, 'the spirit of the carnival', was a central part of the appeal of the British seaside, not least to "beatniks".[50] Yet it was still contested by those within resorts who sought to emphasise the "respectability" of their towns. Each of the resorts discussed here offered its own vision of the seaside – Newquay as a site of health and active leisure, St Ives as a picturesque beauty spot, Brighton as a liminal zone of pleasure.[51] St Ives and Brighton, in particular, had developed a reputation for bohemianism, the former as the home of an artists' colony, and the latter as a space of exoticism, comparative sexual freedom and the 'dirty weekend'.[52] Despite these popular understandings, and the differences between the resorts, during the 1950s and 1960s officials and business interests in all three shared a conviction that it was essential to present their towns as respectable and family-friendly, regardless of the potential appeal of the carnivalesque to visitors.[53] As Walton observes, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these two visions of the seaside – the healthy and the respectable, and the transgressive and the libertarian – often came into conflict, with 'culture wars'

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[48] R. Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative geographies of modernity* (London and New York, 1991), p.74.
[49] Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.3-4.
[50] See, for instance, Mass-Observation's findings in Blackpool in 1937: G. Cross (ed.), *Worktowners at Blackpool: Mass-Observation and popular leisure in the 1930s* (London, 1990).
[51] NHAM, *where else but … Newquay*; ''Miracle' of St. Ives Beauty Must Be Preserved', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 27th May 1960, p.1; Shields, *Places on the Margin*, pp.110-111.
[52] Shields, *Places on the Margin*, pp.105-112.
[53] *Tonight*, 29th August 1960; Beatniks will kill St. Ives says tradet [*sic.*], *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 15th October 1965, p.5; Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p.110.

breaking out in towns 'where the prim and Rabelaisian sides of British character come into maritime confrontation, and where the genteel, controlled, symmetrical front of the resort finds itself invaded by the disorder, untidiness and misrule of the back.'[54]

An invasion of disorder and untidiness was precisely how many of those who occupied positions of authority within resorts perceived the arrival of young people whom they identified as "beatniks". The political leadership of seaside towns was invariably dominated by those with business interests in the tourist trade, and resorts were often run in a manner which has been described as 'municipal conservatism' or 'municipal capitalism'.[55] Local authorities, then, were often prepared to adopt an interventionist stance in order to advance tourist interests which, they argued, aligned with those of the town. This could be through public expenditure to invest in amenities or entertainments, advertising and publicity material, but also extended to the maintenance and regulation of public order, enforcing what Walton describes as 'batteries of by-laws', in some cases through the employment of inspectors or patrolmen to control, remove or deter those seen as "undesirables".[56] As late as the 1960s, some local authorities also held direct influence over the policing of their communities; for instance, until 1967, when the town's police was amalgamated with other local forces to form Sussex Constabulary, Brighton's council retained oversight of local law enforcement through the borough's Watch Committee.[57] The leadership of business interests was, however, rarely uncontested, and was often challenged by residents and ratepayers who objected to money from the public purse being spent for the benefit of tourists, and resented the impact that the visitors could have on the local environment.[58] Hoteliers in St Ives were described by other residents as showing little regard for the quality of life of those who lived in the town, 'misdescrib[ing] their own desire for private profit as regard for some collective myth known as "the prosperity of St. Ives as a holiday resort…"', while also seeking to 'make new laws for the police to enforce for their benefit.'[59] Similarly, the 'town fathers' of

[54] Walton, *The British seaside*, p.4.
[55] Morgan, Pritchard, *Power and Politics at the Seaside*, pp.52-53; Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.16-17, 170-171.
[56] Walton, *The British seaside*, p.17.
[57] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume III*, p.166.
[58] Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.178-181; Morgan, Pritchard, *Power and Politics at the Seaside*, pp.49-50, 80-88.
[59] ''A Worse Threat Than Beatniks'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 15th October 1965, p.6.

Brighton were accused of 'bleed[ing] the town of its heritage without contributing anything', allowing 'the beauty of the old parts of Brighton' to be 'spoilt'.[60]

Those on both sides of these debates shared the understanding of the seaside as a vulnerable, fragile space. Towns popular with beatniks appeared to be thriving during the late 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s – Brighton remained one of Britain's busiest resorts, while Newquay and St Ives, on the north Cornwall coast, were still in the midst of a period of rapid growth in visitor numbers that stretched back to the inter-war years.[61] Yet even in these apparently successful resorts a strong sense of precarity remained evident. As early as February 1960 the St Ives Chamber of Trade was warning of the 'Foreign Holidays Threat', calling for more money to be spent on publicity in order to retain a share of the 'class of people who are bent on going to the Continent.'[62] The social composition of the domestic tourist trade was changing; as Stanley Cohen noted in his analysis of the moral panic surrounding the "mods and rockers", by the mid-1960s 'respectable working-class couples in their twenties and thirties' were deserting the British seaside in favour of 'package trips to the Costa Brava.' This much-prized clientele had been replaced by younger visitors, positioned as less "desirable" by those in the trade – the 'affluent hordes' of the mods and rockers and 'scruffs and hooligans', as well as 'long-haired Continental youths' and university students.[63]

Compounding this sense of existential threat was the fact that businesses engaged in the tourist trade tended to be small, relying on the hard work and long hours of owners and their families, and with low amounts of capital with which to survive any downturn. In Brighton, several of the seafront traders who objected to the presence of the beats made reference to the precariousness of their financial situation, complaining that takings were down, that they were considering giving up their lease, or raising the prospect of possible bankruptcy.[64] While these towns were also home to a professional class of solicitors, doctors and the like, employment for many could be irregular and poorly paid, and the seasonal pattern of holiday trade attracted migrant labour from other parts of the

[60] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.168.
[61] Walton suggests that Cornwall's visitor numbers increased from 1.4 million to 2.1 million between 1954 and 1964, reaching 3 million by the early 1980s. Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.34, 44, 163. On the causes and nature of the post-war domestic tourist boom for British coastal resorts during the 1950s, 60s and early 70s, see Morgan, Pritchard, *Power and Politics at the Seaside*, pp.37-42.
[62] ''Foreign Holidays Threat Must Be Met By St. Ives'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 26th February 1960, p.1.
[63] Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, p.165. See also: Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.167.
[64] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I*, pp.16-23.

country.[65] In addition, a boom in tourist business implied the potential for the bust, and a rapid rate of change since the inter-war period suggested to many that the good times would not necessarily last forever.

Anxieties regarding the changing character of the tourist trade, and fears for its future, also focused attention of the vulnerability of the seaside environment – the fragility of the beaches, the cliffs and the sea, as well as the streets, piers and promenades.[66] Pollution of the picturesque was a concern for all in the town and could come in many forms: littering, dog fouling, traffic jams, car fumes, sewage, unsightly advertising hoardings, garish shopfronts, unfettered development, rowdyism and beatniks. To an extent, this was a matter of concern to residents and business owners alike. Councillors keen to protect the interests of the tourist trade were well aware that an attractive environment was at the heart of a successful resort. However, this desire was balanced with the perceived need to provide new amenities, to keep up with changing visitor expectations and head off competition, from both home and abroad.[67] The questions of what should be done about this spoliation, and who was to blame, were more divisive, however. Business owners tended to be particularly exercised by issues thought to inconvenience or deter tourists, and place the blame upon groups, such as the beats, that they identified as troublemakers. Their solutions, as we shall see, tended to focus on removing or minimising their presence from the town. Suggestions for action likely to impact upon a wider (and more affluent) cross-section of visitors – moves to restrict the number of motor cars in St Ives, for instance – tended to be resisted.[68] Other residents, while not necessarily displaying sympathy for those, like the beats, targeted as 'undesirables', were just as likely to place the blame for the 'cheapening' of the town at the door of the business owners and the municipal authorities, and decisions that they suggested had been made with the primary goal of profit, rather than preservation.[69]

A shared preoccupation for many within seaside communities was the 'social tone' of the resort, a concern related to perceived shifts in the "respectability" and social class of

[65] Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.143-168.
[66] For a discussion of tensions concerning the impact of mass tourism on the rural landscape, see P. Gruffudd, 'The Battle of Butlin's: Vulgarity and Virtue on the North Wales Coast, 1939-49' in *Rural History*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2010), pp.75-95; also, D. Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London, 1998).
[67] Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.122, 178-181.
[68] '"Day Visitors' Cars Now a Threat to Town's Wellbeing"', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 1st January 1965, p.2.
[69] ''A Worse Threat Than Beatniks'', p.6.

holidaymakers. The remoteness of the South West from large urban centres meant that resorts in the region had retained an air of "exclusivity" during the first decades of the twentieth century, remaining the preserve of middle-class visitors even as the seaside holiday became a "mass" experience.[70] Indeed, the appeal of Newquay and St Ives to visitors of means who prized exclusivity and seclusion helped to drive the growth of those resorts between the wars; by the 1950s and 1960s, however, rising wages and the advance of the motor car meant that the numbers of working-class visitors to these towns increased, with middle-class tourists turning their attentions overseas, accelerating a trend which had been growing since the Edwardian period.[71] Authorities in larger, established resorts such as Brighton had long governed space to cater to clientele of differing classes, but also shared these anxieties of the decline of 'social tone' during the 1960s and 1970s.[72] The 'mods and rockers' disturbances that took place in Brighton and other towns on the south coast in the mid-1960s, covered in sensationalist terms by the press, gave focus to these concerns, although this was only the latest iteration of worries about deviance at the seaside – the inter-war years had witnessed panics concerning criminal gangs operating in coastal towns, and the 'vulgarity' of predominantly working-class resorts such as Blackpool.[73] Indeed, perceptions of "rough" and "respectable" surrounded the seaside town, with Blackpool and Southend often positioned by those in rival resorts as a disreputable "other".[74]

At a municipal level, those who held such concerns often attempted to pursue policies of exclusion, sometimes through the use of by-laws to prevent behaviour deemed as a "nuisance" and likely to harm the "social tone" of the resort and deter well-heeled visitors. These offences were often sensory – the "din" caused by transistor radios, or the way that street advertising or touting spoiled the aesthetic of the town.[75] As we shall see, objections to beatniks were often framed in similar terms. Pursuing a policy of exclusion

[70] Morgan, Pritchard, *Power and Politics at the Seaside*, p.89.
[71] Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.34, 40.
[72] Shields, *Places on the Margin*, pp.93-94.
[73] Shields, *Places on the Margin*, pp.101-102; P. Gurney, '"Intersex" and "Dirty Girls": Mass-Observation and Working-Class Sexuality in England in the 1930s' in *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (October 1997), pp.260-280.
[74] See, for instance, 'St. Ives Not Really Like Blackpool', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 10th June 1966, p.4
[75] St Ives, for instance, passed a by-law against the use of transistor radios in public places in the early 1960s. The local authority in Brighton implemented a similar ruling, the effect of which was somewhat negated by a later council decision to 'impose piped music on everyone' from loudspeakers mounted on lampposts near to the beach. 'Beatniks will kill St. Ives says tradet [*sic.*]', p.5; Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.168.

towards what might be understood as a lifestyle on the grounds of aesthetics would, however, prove to be more contentious than banning transistor radios.

Hair, dirt and disorder

Newquay's Urban District Council, first approached by the BBC in early August 1960, had hoped that *Tonight* would demonstrate to the rest of the nation 'How Newquay Beat the Beatniks'.[76] However, rather than a puff-piece for the town's hard line approach to their "beatnik" visitors, Alan Whicker's report was instead typical of a programme that had signalled a shift away from the paternalist atmosphere that characterised much of the BBC's television output during the immediate post-war period. As David Kynaston notes, *Tonight* offered a 'tone that was deliberately light, even irreverent, news mixing seamlessly with entertainment', employing less formal methods of broadcasting such as "vox pop" interviews to place 'itself on the side of the citizen and the consumer rather than the minister or the official'.[77]

In his introduction, spoken to camera, Whicker outlined the efforts of the council to 'drive out its long-haired visitors'. Here, a pleasing journalistic contrast could be made between the hirsuteness of the visitors and 'the short-haired burghers of Newquay', with hair acting as a metaphor for the perceived underlying clash of values; freedom vs. authority, liberation vs. repression, and disorder vs. control. All of those involved seemed to accept that the basic premise outlined in the BBC report was correct, that the Urban District Council was following a policy of exclusion towards the beats, and encouraging others to follow suit, with the aim of driving them from the town – this initiative had been publicised through the local press in November 1959.[78] However, the majority of those interviewed who supported such an approach were insistent that hairiness was not the issue. A landlord, who claimed to have ejected some two dozen "beatniks" from his pub, was quick to dismiss Whicker's suggestion that this might be because he 'object[ed] to the length of their hair', with a reply that made a claim to

[76] 'Trading and Catering Executive Committee', 12th August 1960, Cornwall Record Office (hereafter: CRO), Truro, Newquay Urban District Council Minutes, 1960, DCRES/1000, p.19.
[77] D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain: Opening the Box, 1957-59* (London, 2013), pp.16-18.
[78] '"Bohemian Types" Not Wanted At Newquay', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 5th November 1959, p.10.

common sense liberalism; 'No, no, no, a man's got a right to grow his hair to any length or his beard'.[79]

Similar defences were made in other resorts where councillors and business people sought to force out their hirsute visitors. In 1965 a correspondent to the letters page of the *St. Ives Times and Echo* responded to the criticism of anti-beat sentiment from Denys Val Baker, author and St Ives resident, by pointing out that the town, home to an artists' colony since before the war, had long accepted a 'bohemian' element – '[t]here is no question of banning anyone simply because he is a man with long hair and a guitar.' This writer, like others in favour of a clampdown, instead focused his argument on a long list of other allegations – that 'people of a certain type' were guilty of vagrancy and rough sleeping, petty theft, squatting, littering, the fouling of public shelters and sexual activity in public spaces, with the suggestion that men were sharing sleeping bags with far younger girls.[80] The charge sheet against "beatniks" in seaside communities was often a long one, and throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s the focus of the accusations could shift, often in parallel to wider cultural concerns surrounding youth and delinquency, to include fears about "rowdyism", drug use, sexual deviancy and political subversion.[81] While such anxieties were undoubtedly informed by wider moral panics, it seems clear that the arrival of large numbers of unattached youths, often without pre-arranged accommodation or sufficient money to support themselves, did provide a challenge for local authorities in seaside towns where resources were already stretched by an influx of seasonal tourists.[82]

Perhaps the most regularly aired objection, however, and a concern that remained constant throughout the 1960s, was that "beatniks" were dirty, unwashed, unhygienic and

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[79] *Tonight*, 29th August 1960.
[80] 'A 'far-fetched' defence of beatniks', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 17th December 1965, p.6.
[81] For concerns about "rowdyism" and hooliganism, see: L. J. R., 'Newquay Comments and Notes', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 1st October 1959, p.2; 'Police dogs help to maintain order in Downlong' *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 30th July 1965, p.1; Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I*, p.20. Drug use: ''Beatnik-Type' Youth Stole Lamp from Church'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 12th May 1967, p.5; 'St. Ives is a Drug Black-Spot, Police Report Discloses', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 6th June 1969, p.1; Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I*, pp.58-59. Sexual deviancy: 'Couple's 'disgusting' behaviour on Smeaton's Pier', p.6; Cook, 'The mobs of St Ives', p.9; Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.6. Political subversion: 'Beatnik Squatters are Ejected from Huers' Hut After Defying Council', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 11th July 1969, p.3.
[82] In 1966 the annual report of Cornwall's Chief Probation Officer suggested that 'unaccompanied young visitors' during the holiday season provided a challenge for the police, magistrates and probation officers. As well as dealing with a spate of petty thefts, the police had also traced a number of teenage girls, reported missing by their parents, who had been found sleeping rough in St Ives. ''Beatnik invasion' puts pressure on Probation Service', p.1.

posed a threat to public health. This was the justification that was offered by those interviewed by Alan Whicker in Newquay in 1960, with the council treasurer insisting that the town's authorities 'did not so much object to their eccentricities of dress, or even long hair' but drew a line at those who did not wash, suggesting that many beats were 'becoming gradually dirtier and dirtier, eventually becoming filthy and finally stinking'. The publican who had insisted that hirsuteness was not the issue agreed that hygiene, or a lack of, was his main objection, telling Whicker that while a man could be as hairy as he liked, 'I think he owes it to his society to keep himself clean.'[83] In St Ives, the chairman of the borough council's Public Health Committee led a campaign with the stated aim of 'ridding our town of this modern-day tramp'. Once again, the councillor was keen to emphasise the town's tolerance of difference – 'we do not object to beards, peculiarities of dress or difference in thinking, indeed they add to the charm of the town, but we do object to people to whom soap and water is apparently something unknown.'[84]

This idea of dirtiness, that "beatniks" represented a threat of contamination or pollution can be seen to have spread far beyond specific claims of unsanitary living conditions. These themes, of dirt and danger, were returned to again and again in the language used to describe those identified as "beatniks". In an interview conducted for BBC *Tonight* in November 1963, a St Ives councillor referred to 'dirty, verminous layabouts', while at a meeting of the town's Hotel and Boarding House Association in October 1965 the "beatniks" were reported to have been described as 'filthy dregs, the slime and scum of the gutters […] spending nothing and keeping out the holidaymakers who spend money in the town'.[85] A Brighton trader whose premises were located near to the Archways information and rest centre, which was frequented by beats and other "unattached" young people, wrote to complain about the clientele that were now to be found on the seafront; 'they are parasites living off the likes of myself who work, in fact they are human litter on our beaches'.[86]

However, despite the insistence of some councillors, business owners and newspaper letter writers that the opposition towards the beats was not connected to their hairy appearance, the rhetoric that justified discriminatory treatment of "beatniks" often made a

[83] *Tonight*, 29th August 1960.
[84] 'Public urged 'Help repel beatniks'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 21st April 1961, p.1.
[85] ''To-night' interviews Councillors', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 1st November 1963, p.2; ''Beatniks worse threat than closing of branch line'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 8th October 1965, p.5.
[86] Quoted in Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I*, p.19.

direct connection between hirsuteness and dirtiness, pollution, or other anti-social behaviour. In April 1965, the *Cornish Guardian* lamented that the "beatniks" had returned to Newquay for another summer season, 'in greater numbers than before, as long-haired and grubby-looking as ever', and a few months later the same newspaper published a letter from a regular visitor who complained that the town had become 'infested by long-haired louts'.[87] In Brighton, a trader on the seafront complained to social workers about the presence of 'those filthy beatniks, several of whom have hair down to their shoulders', while in St Ives residents wrote to the *Times and Echo* to complain of 'the lazy, unwashed types with the feminine hair styles [*sic*.]' who were said to be loitering around the town's war memorial.[88] Hair-cutting was often advocated by those in authority as a solution to beatnikism. This appears to have been a particular preoccupation of magistrates who passed sentence on long-haired youths accused of minor offences, who were rarely slow to comment on the 'unkempt' state of those who found themselves in the dock. 'It doesn't cost much to get a haircut', the chairman of St Ives magistrates told a 20-year-old rough sleeper who had pleaded guilty to stealing, with a visit to the barber suggested as a 'first step' to finding gainful employment.[89] In Newquay, the magistrate expressed frustration that he was not able to compel young men to follow the same course of action, telling a youth who had pleaded guilty to stealing a loaf of bread that 'I wish it were possible to make an order that you clean yourself up, get your hair cut and dress yourself as a decent citizen, but that can only be advice'.[90] Similar thoughts clearly ran through the mind of a St Ives councillor, who wrote to the *Times and Echo* to share her 'solution' to the "beatnik" issue, which she had also passed to the local M.P., proposing that:

> [a] person under 21 who enters a parish (within 24 hours) [of] his/her arrival, be removed by warrant of the justices to the parish of his/her birth, unless he/she first agree to cleanse his/herself, cut his/her hair, be ready and willing to accept any suitable employment offered […] If unwilling and is consequently removed, he/she shall be taken to a place where strict supervision and discipline is enforced.[91]

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[87] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume III*, pp.78-79; 'Easter Tourists', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 22nd April 1965, p.9; ''Undesirable Element' in Newquay', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 12th August 1965, p.4.
[88] 'Beatniks at the War Memorial', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 19th July 1968, p.4.
[89] 'Stole shoes to give to his pals', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 8th July 1966, p.8.
[90] 'L. J. R.', 'People the Town Could Do Without', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 24th June 1965, p.2.
[91] 'Councillor's solution to beatnik problem', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 2nd February 1968, p.2. This proposal received a less than favourable response in the following week's letters page, with one correspondent suggesting that 'If people keep on much more about it, they may find one day that the "beatnik problem" attracts a social-psychiatric research unit to St. Ives – only it will not be the beats that

Certainly, the authorities within seaside towns had a responsibility to safeguard the health of residents and visitors, and the idea of an outbreak of disease commonly associated with poor sanitary arrangements was not so far-fetched; in December 1964, unrelated to the presence of the beats, St Ives suffered an outbreak of a dysentery type illness.[92] Large numbers of people sleeping in public shelters, with no running water or sanitation, undoubtedly posed a challenge for local health officers. Yet it might also be suggested that concerns about the "dirtiness" of "beatniks" ran deeper than concerns that their bodies might harbour bacteria. After all, beats who had arranged accommodation, complete with running water, could still find themselves subjected to the same stigma. In early 1969 Westward Television, the ITV franchise for the south west of England, reported on a colony of "beatniks" who had rented holiday homes in the village of St Agnes, some 10 miles west of Newquay on the north coast of Cornwall. While the opinions of the local residents interviewed were divided, those opposed to their presence repeated familiar concerns, with one man advocating 'making a big sheep dip across Launceston there [near the county boundary], dip them all in disinfectant and shear them before they even enter into Cornwall.'[93] Dirtiness also appeared to be less of a concern when it was considered to be indigenous. The suggestion of one letter writer to the *St. Ives Times and Echo* that some of the 'old Cornish women' who lived in the town were 'far from clean' prompted several angry responses, with a number of readers arguing that any grime was the result of long years of hard graft; 'the dignity of work sometimes darkens hands, and age brings wrinkles to necks weathered by the years.'[94] Pollution caused by more "respectable" visitors, while a source of dismay to many residents, also seemed to cause less alarm to some involved in the holiday trade. The social workers who ran the Archways reception centre on Brighton seafront remarked upon the lack of attention paid to the general condition of the beach and the promenade, which 'during the summer is always littered with beer cans and ice cream papers.' 'By comparison', wrote the social workers, the presence of 'a few dozen dishevelled and hairy young people seems of no consequence.'[95]

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are the object of their study.' 'Wrong way to deal with beatniks', *St. Ives Times and Echo,* 9th February 1968, p.4.

[92] 'Dysentery outbreak at St. Ives', *St. Ives Times and Echo,* 4th December 1964, p.1.

[93] *Westward Diary*, 12th February 1969.

[94] 'The beatniks don't 'belong'', *St. Ives Times and Echo,* 8th November 1963, p.4; 'Readers Defend 'The Ladies in Rusty Black'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 15th November 1963, p.4.

[95] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.167.

The difference between the beats and the 'old Cornish women' or other holidaymakers was that the latter groups were considered to "belong" in seaside towns.[96] In her book *Purity and Danger*, first published in 1966, the anthropologist Mary Douglas writes that dirt is 'matter out of place'. For Douglas, dirt is symbolic of disorder, 'the by-product of a systemic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.'[97] Adherence to a code of hygiene can depend on 'our state of knowledge'; while 'these rules can be set aside for the sake of friendship', those who sit outside recognised boundaries can be perceived as a danger – Douglas makes reference to 'persons in a marginal state […] people who are somehow left out in the patterning of society, who are placeless'.[98] Beats could be seen as dirty, then, because they were perceived to be "out of place". This was not only because of their status as "incomers" or "outsiders", particularly in seaside communities dependent on migration, but also because they represented disorder as much through their aesthetic as their behaviour – "unkemptness" and hirsuteness disrupted an idealised image of the seaside that was built upon ideas of health and clean living.

The beats were objected to because of allegations of behaviour that some considered to be morally offensive, but also because they were thought to spoil the view, their hairy bodies seemingly out of place with their surroundings. As one visitor to St Ives wrote in November 1963, while some might complain that efforts to deter the beats were an infringement on their 'civic rights', at least other visitors would be able to enjoy the surroundings 'without the restrictions of scruffy layabouts disporting their unkempt figures on the sea wall'. The public 'would rather see the beauties of St. Ives than be subjected to the feeling of repulsion that these beatniks generate.'[99] As one local businessman told Alan Whicker in 1960, the 'dirty appearance' of the beats was 'absolutely against the general normal appearance of Newquay which is […] a clean resort.'[100] In their hairiness, the beats personified wider fears about the pollution of an environment that was idealised as pure, clean and unchanging – 'a place of rare beauty – the property of the nation', in the words of the *St. Ives Times and Echo*, in an editorial which lamented the 'progressive cheapening' of the town since the end of the Second

[96] 'The beatniks don't 'belong'', p.4; 'Readers Defend 'The Ladies in Rusty Black'', p.4.
[97] M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (London and New York, 1984), pp.36-37.
[98] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp.7, 96.
[99] 'The view will be improved', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 1st November 1963, p.4.
[100] *Tonight*, 29th August 1960.

World War and drew direct parallels between the presence of the beats and other threats, such as 'uncontrolled development', littering and the motor car.[101] Perhaps the trader on Brighton seafront had expressed this most succinctly: to him, the beats were 'human litter', detritus which blighted the local environment and threatened the prosperity of businesses reliant on attracting the custom of more "respectable" clientele.[102]

Hair and prejudice

Enforcing a policy of exclusion towards "beatniks" required business owners to make a judgement which was based on appearance, and often, hairiness. While the councillors and businessmen interviewed in Newquay for *Tonight* in August 1960 had insisted that hair was not the issue, it was widely understood that a hirsute individual was likely to be labelled as an "undesirable". Giles included signs reading 'No Beatniks Served' and 'Ban artists in fancy-dress & long-haired interlectuls […] Protect the reglars! [*sic.*]' in a cartoon published in the *Daily Express* in April 1961, after the refusal of a landlord to serve a young couple had led to a brawl in a St Ives pub (Figure 7).[103] Such notions clearly had a basis in reality. Discrimination was noted by the organisers of the Archways project in Brighton, who observed that the 'growing of long hair' by the beats had the effect of rendering them essentially 'unemployable'.[104] In St Ives, the proprietors of the town's first nightclub had reassured councillors, planners and residents that it would not become a haven for beatniks, as 'anyone with unduly long hair, or untidily dressed, would be refused admission.'[105]

[101] 'After the Police Dogs, What Now for St. Ives?', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 6th August 1965, p.4.
[102] Quoted in Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I*, p.19.
[103] 'St. Ives and the Beatniks: Giles gives the bare facts', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 14th April 1961, p.1; 'For whom is there no room at the inn?', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 14th April 1961, p.4.
[104] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume II*, p.73.
[105] ''Noise and Congestion'' Objections to Dance Club Plan, *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 2nd December 1966, p.4.

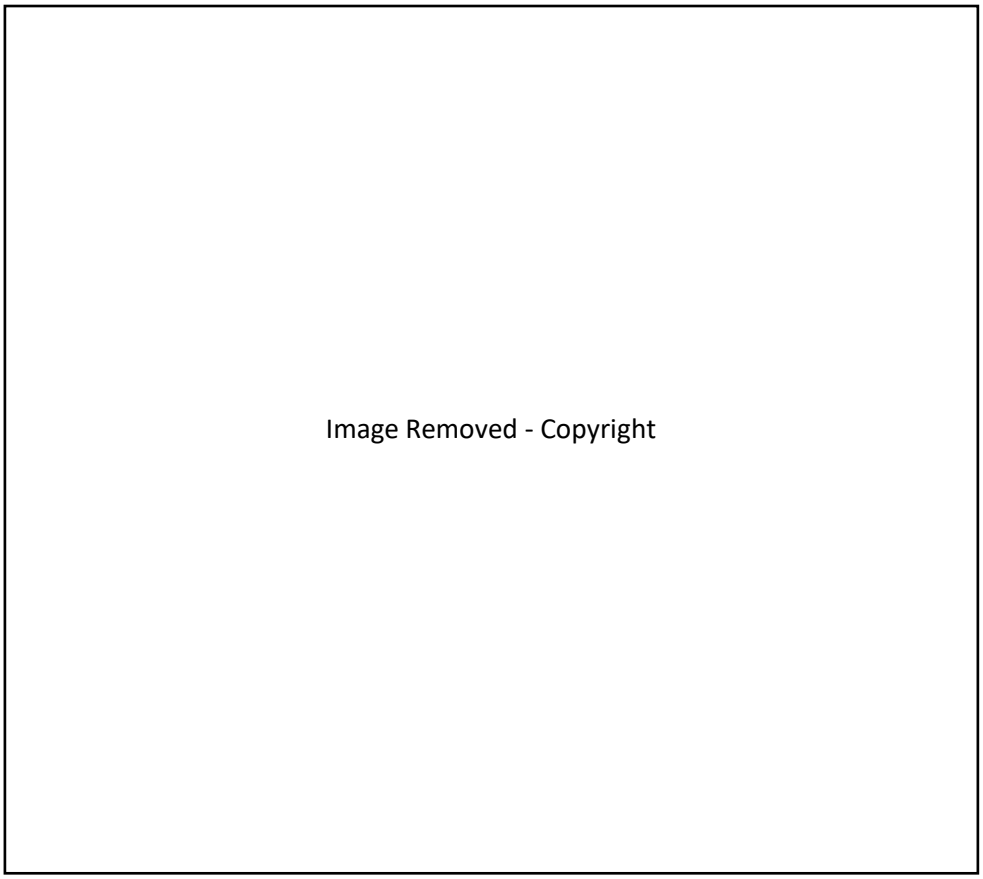


Figure 7: Giles in the *Daily Express*, 11th April 1961, reproduced in 'St. Ives and the Beatniks: Giles gives the bare facts', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 14th April 1961, p.1

Policies such as these, however, could provoke criticism, particularly as fashions changed throughout the 1960s. As one correspondent to the *St. Ives Times and Echo* letters page wrote in July 1969, 'young people who choose to wear long hair and unconventional clothes and so add a little colour to life, are liable to appear to the public as "beatniks" […] it is unpleasant, to say the least, for hard-working young people to be classed with those lay-abouts'. [106] Unpleasant, perhaps, and apparently hard to avoid, judging by letters to the paper from artists such as the potter Bernard Leach, whose students found themselves unwelcome in many pubs and cafes in the town.[107] For those claiming to discriminate on the grounds of behaviour, but profiling by appearance, the task of selecting the "correct" targets, and of deflecting charges of illiberalism and prejudice, remained predictably difficult.

[106] 'St. Ives and the Beatniks', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 18th July 1969, p.4.
[107] 'Pottery students banned', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 11th July 1969, p.4.

It was not only those directly affected who felt uncomfortable with the attitudes and tactics aimed at the beats. Efforts to resist and remove a group of "outsiders", perceived as looking different and labelled as 'dirty' or dehumanised as 'vermin', through the use of barring notices and by-laws, as well as occasional outbreaks of violence, led to some obvious and uncomfortable parallels.[108] For some, such as the novelist and St Ives resident Denys Val Baker, persecution of the beats resembled 'the classic pattern of the movement towards totalitarianism':

> You begin by taking a dislike to someone's race (i.e. the Jews), the colour of their skin (i.e. the Negroes), or maybe the way they dress and grow their hair long (i.e. the beatniks). Swelling with moral indignation you soon manage to convince yourself righteously that simply by belonging to a particular race, having a certain coloured skin, dressing in a particular way, these inoffensive people are somehow committing a crime. It is true that they have not actually broken the law as it stands, but you can soon see to that by amending the law to suit your requirements. Next comes the bans on movements, the burning of books, the introduction of apartheid – and, hey ho, bring out the vigilante gangs and let loose the police dogs![109]

Val Baker was far from alone in making a comparison between racial discrimination and the treatment of the beats. 'Any form of racial prejudice is a dirty thing, dirtier than your worst "beatnik",' wrote the artist Anthony Shiels in 1961, fed up with being turned away by landlords on the lookout for 'bearded strangers'.[110] Such allusions to the colour bar were enabled by the methods and sites of the discrimination; particularly the pubs, cafes and leisure venues defined as 'places of public resort' by the 1965 Race Relations Act which made the refusal of service or admission on ethnic or racial grounds a civil (but not yet criminal) offence.[111] Even some of those opposed to the beats could show unease at some of the tactics employed by the authorities. When an altercation in a public shelter resulted in a youth being 'bitten about the head' by an Alsatian, whose handler had been employed by St Ives Corporation in an effort to prevent rough sleeping on council property, the *Times and Echo* published an editorial arguing that '[t]he use of savage dogs against humans, so prevalent in the negro quarters of American cities, is surely particularly repugnant to many citizens in an inherently peaceful community like St. Ives […] The problem for holiday resorts of young people who lead a beatnik-type of

[108] In the context of post-war racial prejudice, David Kynaston describes 'dirtiness' as the 'inevitable, all-purpose adjective': *Family Britain 1951-57* (London, 2009), p.451.
[109] 'Beatniks – Bad Ones and Good Ones', *St. Ives Times and Echo,* 10th December 1965, p.6.
[110] 'Beatnik trouble: License artists, artist suggests', *St. Ives Times and Echo,* 21st April 1961, p.4.
[111] 'Race Relations Act 1965', < https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/relationships/collections1/race-relations-act-1965/race-relations-act-1965/>, accessed 27th February 2019; S. Saggar, *Race and Politics in Britain* (Hemel Hempstead, 1992), pp.79-82.

existence will not be solved by the use of police dogs, but ultimately by more civilised and rational means.'[112]

Others also made allusions to the civil rights struggle in the United States. A crowd of up to 300 residents and holidaymakers that surrounded a St Ives property which housed 28 squatting beatniks in July 1969 were described as a 'lynch mob' by John Pardoe, Liberal Party MP for the neighbouring parliamentary constituency of North Cornwall.[113] Social workers in Brighton overheard onlookers arguing for hosepipes to be turned on youths that they described as 'filthy' and 'disgusting', a suggestion which played on the associations between the beats and dirtiness, but which also brought to mind the use of high pressure water jets against civil rights protesters in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963.[114] Most common of all, however, were allusions to Nazi Germany. In 1961 a letter writer to the *Times and Echo* drew comparisons between efforts of local landlords to bar hirsute "undesirables" from their pubs with the activities of the Gestapo who, it was suggested, also 'didn't like beards and long hair.'[115] Some felt deep discomfort at the use of barring notices. 'Having lived in Germany from 1933-39 as an 'Undesirable,' I recall my feeling when seeing similar notices at every hotel, restaurant and public place', wrote one St Ives resident in May 1969, expressing shock at seeing 'inhospitable' notices across the town.[116] Was this not precisely the type of authoritarianism and illiberalism that Britain was meant to stand against? 'Why condemn the Beatniks?', asked a self-described 'ordinary housewife' in a letter to the *Cornish Guardian* in September 1961. 'Have we not fought, endured and won wars so that England may remain a free country? Why should they be driven out of the town, because they choose to wear their hair long?'[117] Yet for others, the beats, loitering around the war memorial, symbolised opposition to everything that had been fought for, identified as "scroungers" who undermined the contributory principle upon which the welfare state was understood to rest.[118] As reactions to the beats showed, the legacy of the war was far from settled.

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[112] 'Patrol Dog Bites Youth During Shelter Rumpus', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 25th August 1967, p.1; 'When the Dog Bites', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 25th August 1967, p.4.
[113] 'St. Ives 'lynch mob' is the latest libel', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 27th July 1969, p.4.
[114] Ashwell et al, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume III*, p.86.
[115] 'The Gestapo didn't like beards', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 21st April 1961, p.4.
[116] 'Protest from a former 'undesirable'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 16th May 1969, p.4.
[117] 'The Beatniks', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 8th September 1961, p.2.
[118] ''Beatniks desecrating town's war memorial'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 5th July 1968, p.4.

More immediately, the rhetoric aimed at those identified as beatniks could closely echo that directed at Commonwealth immigrants. A woman interviewed by Westward Television in St Agnes in 1969 argued that the beats were 'people who don't belong, none of them [are] Cornish people. Why can't they stay in their own areas?'[119] Opposition to the beats and a hostility to immigration shared a cultural context – anxieties surrounding decline and social change, economic insecurity, and the value that was placed on the local and the known, which could easily give rise to open hostility to the "foreign". Writing about post-war anti-Semitism in the East End, David Kynaston describes 'an infinite cluster of small, cut-off worlds in which one was either in or out.'[120] As Kynaston suggests, this impulse could be witnessed in areas that did not experience high levels of Commonwealth immigration – the term "foreigner" could be applied to "incomers" to Coventry from other cities or, for that matter, people who had moved to Cornish towns from "up country".[121] Indeed, as we have seen, seaside resorts also experienced these tensions, despite being economically dependent on high levels of short term and seasonal migration. While Brighton had been home to a significant Jewish community since the 1930s, Cornish resorts such as Newquay and St Ives were not racially or ethnically diverse.[122] Nevertheless, race was an active topic, particularly in an imperial/post-imperial context. The letters pages of the local press which played host to long-running discussions concerning the "beatnik issue" were also the site of ongoing debates concerning Rhodesia and the politics of Enoch Powell.[123] Anxieties surrounding race and racism in the national context prompted action in the local setting; for instance, in 1969 the Cornwall Methodist Women's Conference wrote an open letter to Enoch Powell, condemning his remarks on immigration and expressing the 'hope that Britain will take the lead in showing the world that a multi-racial community is a possibility.'[124] Issues of race, then, were present in these communities, and were rarely far from discussions of the beats. At St Ives' annual carnival in 1961 some local youths entered a

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[119] *Westward Diary*, 12th February 1969.
[120] Kynaston, *Family Britain*, p.245. See also: J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London, 1994), pp.166-169.
[121] Kynaston, *Family Britain*, p.245; '"Foreigners" and "Natives" in Padstow', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 15th December 1960, p.3.
[122] Walton, *The British seaside*, pp.160-161.
[123] See, for instance, ''Touching sympathy' of white for black', 'Police state myth exploded' and 'Truncheon-wielding and censorship', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 1st April 1966, p.4; 'The colour problem', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 27th November 1969, p.12.
[124] 'A letter to Mr. Powell', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 20th November 1969, p.1. This item apparently generated a number of letters in response – the two that the editor found space to print in the following week's newspaper were both pro-Powell, and anti-immigration. 'The colour problem', p.12.

float mocking journalists who had portrayed the hostility shown towards the beats as 'St. Ives' racial problem' (Figure 8). The teenagers' effort finished unplaced. The prize for best float was awarded to the Black and White Minstrels.[125]

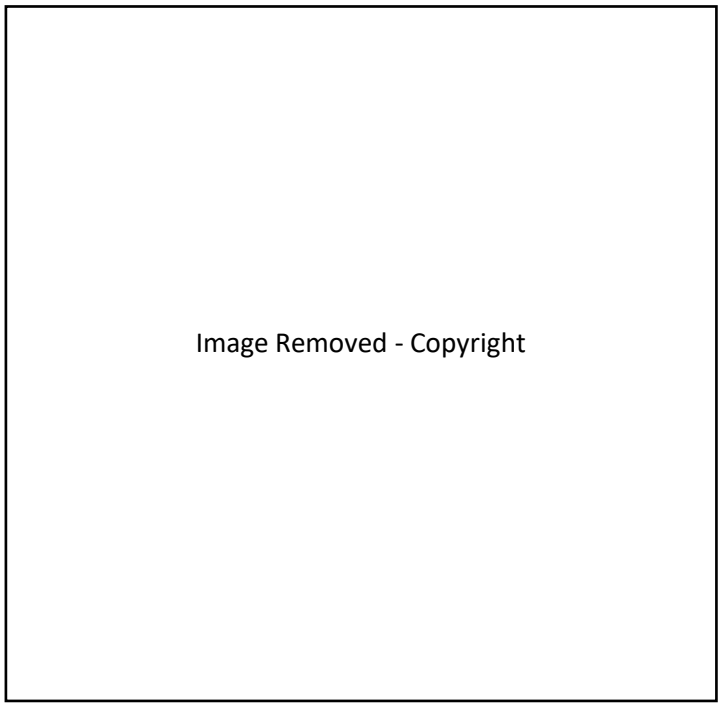


Figure 8: "Beatnik" float at the St Ives Carnival. 'Fisher Boys, Belles and Beatniks on Parade', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 9th June 1961, p.5.

As the "beatnik" carnival float suggested, national or international reporting often framed the hostile welcome that beats faced in coastal communities as reflecting an undercurrent of prejudice and intolerance of difference. This could be seen in the *Tonight* report broadcast in 1960, as the treasurer of Newquay Urban District Council was forced by Alan Whicker to admit that the proposed mass refusal of serving beats by the town's businesses was unlikely to stand up to any legal challenge.[126] As the decade progressed, these suspicions became more pronounced. In 1966, allegations of oppressive policing in St Ives (dismissed by Cornwall's Chief Constable, after a review) attracted the attention of the *Guardian*.[127] Reporter Geoffrey Moorhouse, who was dispatched to the town, was unimpressed by police claims that "beatniks" were responsible for fouling beaches and

[125] 'Fisher Boys, Belles and Beatniks on Parade', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 9th June 1961, p.5.
[126] *Tonight*, 29th August 1960.
[127] 'Police and 'Beatniks' Inquiry Completed', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 6th May 1966, p.1.

shelters and stealing milk bottles from doorsteps, observing that the youths seemed to attract disproportionate levels of hostility; 'A sweet-smelling youth with a cavalier's profile stalked by a grocer's shop and a couple of gossips at once agreed that he wanted his head, not just his long hair, cutting off'. Moorhouse suggested that this reaction was particular to Cornwall, that an explanation could be found 'in the fibres of the place' and that opposition to the beats provided an outlet to 'a perennial hostility to the unorthodox'.[128] The fact that the treatment of the beats was contested within communities such as St Ives and Newquay, and that similar tensions existed in Brighton and other resorts, indicates that Moorhouse was wrong in this assumption. Yet many others agreed with the broad thrust of his argument, that a provincial suspicion of social change was to blame. Writing to the *Guardian* in July 1969 in response to reports of the crowd that had surrounded the squatting "hippies" in St Ives (described as 'mob violence'), a woman complained that while the capital had become used to men wearing their hair long, the same did not apply in the 'provinces'. Writing in reference to her husband, a solicitor, the woman once again made the comparison to racial discrimination; '[o]bviously my husband could avoid further persecution by cutting his hair. The coloured immigrant cannot alter his colour but he could, Mr Powell says, go home. Why should either of them be forced to take such a course?'[129]

In the local press, national reporting could be dismissed as 'shamefully exaggerated or distorted', and even blamed for provoking further disorder.[130] Certainly, as the Moorhouse article suggests, there was an element of metropolitan condescension within the national coverage, whereby "beatniks" and "small town bigotry" could both be positioned as an other, both geographically and culturally peripheral. It was perhaps telling that Judith Cook, a *Guardian* journalist who had reported in St Ives in 1969, later described the 'hysteria' as similar to that 'more familiar now in Northern Ireland'.[131] To an extent, these anxieties can be seen to reflect a metropolitan cultural suspicion of the rural, positioned as a site of superstition, insularity and irrationality. In 1967, as the *Torrey Canyon* oil spill threatened to pollute Cornish beaches, the *People* newspaper wrote of local people 'praying in the streets', a claim that was later retracted and

[128] G. Moorhouse, 'What are they doing in St. Ives?', *Guardian*, 12th May 1966, p.10.
[129] 'The case of the long-haired lawyer', *Guardian*, 18th July 1969, p.10.
[130] 'Topic of the Week', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 11th July 1969, p.4.
[131] 'Cycle of hysteria in Cornwall', *Guardian*, 13th July 1973, p.14.

described as an 'unfortunate error'.[132] In the *Guardian*, Cook described St Ives as 'a strange mixture, with its artists [*sic.*] colony and remnants of strict Methodism', and wrote of the paranoia of some local residents, 'a typical example being one woman who screamed at the beatniks for bringing violence into the town, then turned round and shouted at a cameraman to stop taking her picture or she'd smash up his camera'. Observers such as Cook were shocked by the threats of violence that were directed at the beats, with 'young men screaming "string them up," egged on by a solid mass of people whooped up to fever pitch […] It all showed just how easily ordinary people in a nice quiet town like St Ives can be turned into a dangerous, unthinking mob.'[133] The construction of the rural as a site where brutal violence could be inflicted upon those considered "outsiders" was an image with considerable cultural reach; in 1970 the *St. Ives Times and Echo* reported that '[o]ne of cinema's most expensive international stars, Dustin Hoffman' had been filming in the nearby village of St Buryan.[134] The result was Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* (1971), which cast Hoffman as an American academic who had moved with his young wife to a fictional Cornish village, only to be subjected to a campaign of terror orchestrated by hostile locals.[135]

Cultural suspicion of the rural did not, of course, tend to apply in the case of Brighton, significantly larger in scale than the Cornish resorts and situated in close-proximity to London. Yet, for those who considered themselves to be socially liberal, cases of anti-beatnik hostility and other moral panics were united by the figures that were often found at the forefront of such campaigns. In *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, first published in 1972, Stanley Cohen pointed to the existence of 'moral entrepreneurs' who tended to be at the heart of 'action groups' of the sort that called for measures to be taken against mods and rockers or beatniks. While Cohen identified some of these individuals as 'pragmatists', he suggested others were better characterised as 'crusaders', who saw their campaign as a 'mission'. These campaigners, he wrote, tended to disregard objective evidence, and typically positioned their particular issue as existing within a wider context of moral decline. Cohen provided a profile of one such individual that he had met while completing fieldwork on the south coast in the mid-1960s. 'Geoffrey Blake' (a

[132] The town clerk of Penzance, who complained to the Press Council, described the report as 'an insult to the intelligence of the townspeople.' 'Wrecked tanker echo: complaint against 'People'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 9th February 1968, p.1.
[133] Cook, 'The mobs of St Ives', p.9.
[134] 'Dustin Hoffman films in a West Cornwall 'pub'', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 29th January 1970, p.4.
[135] *Straw Dogs* (Dir: S. Peckinpah, 1971).

pseudonym) was the proprietor of a small hotel and a prominent campaigner for more action to be taken against the mods and rockers; in interviews with Cohen, Blake called for draconian punishments, the return of corporal punishment and public pillories for offenders, while complaining about "the affluent society", a decline of social stratification and deference, the power of the trade unions, and Commonwealth immigration. Blake, noted Cohen, had also been prosecuted by the Race Relations Board for refusing to accept non-white or non-British guests at his hotel.[136] For many social liberals, the bigotry of individuals such as 'Blake' strengthened suspicions that hostility expressed towards the young, their fashions and their habits was potential evidence of deeper prejudice. In July 1969, the Labour MP Brian Walden wrote an article for the *Guardian*, suggesting that those who were racially prejudiced were also likely to oppose 'long hair, drugs, and moral permissiveness'. Such attitudes, wrote Walden, were a consequence of the inability of some older people to comprehend rapid social change: '[t]hey see, or think they see, the values which they were taught to revere as immutable truth assailed on every side.'[137]

A wariness of crusading campaigners appears to have been shared by those in government. During the late 1960s ministers refused calls from local MPs to legislate to grant local authorities increased powers in order to take action against "beatniks". In 1968 John Nott, the St Ives MP, wrote to the Home Office regarding police powers to deal with what he described as 'a public nuisance'. Responding, Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary Dick Taverne suggested that a consultation with the chief constables from south west police forces had revealed little evidence that the beats 'obstructed' members of the public and were in fact 'passive', generally moving on when requested. In the eyes of the Home Office, a lack of prosecutions was not the result of a lack of clarity regarding police powers, but instead due to 'the fact that the behaviour of many beatniks, however objectionable, does not constitute any breach of the law.'[138] When Nott pressed the Home Office again on the matter in January 1970, he received a reply from the junior minister Elystan Morgan, outlining the government's position. While expressing sympathy with residents who were concerned with preserving the

[136] Cohen caveated these observations by noting that such authoritarian impulses and base prejudices were not necessarily typical of moral panics more broadly. He also suggested, however, that the 'central role' that the likes of 'Blake' often played 'in cases of moral enterprise' was significant enough to require further study. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, pp.101-110.
[137] B. Walden, 'The Picture of Prejudice', *Guardian*, 10th July 1969, p.12.
[138] 'Hostel to help the beatnik problem?', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 26th January 1968, p.1.

attractiveness of their town, Morgan rejected calls for drastic new powers allowing local authorities to eject rough sleepers from the borough, describing the idea as 'oppressive' and 'unacceptable to Parliamentary and public opinion.' He also raised the 'particularly unpleasant incidents' that had occurred in St Ives in 1969 (covered in the national media) when a dwelling housing squatting beatniks was surrounded by a large crowd of locals and holidaymakers – 'private citizens', he emphasized, should not 'take the law into their own hands'. Morgan seemed sceptical of the true extent of the problem, citing a recent police report which indicated that 'the number of 'beatniks' in the strict sense' had reduced in recent years, and suggested that 'students and others' – considered likely to be long-haired, bearded, and dressed in "scruffy" clothes – were now being 'regarded as "beatniks" by local residents.'[139] A refusal to introduce measures to target "beatniks", then, was motivated in part by a desire of those in government to uphold civil liberties, but also by a growing awareness that such measures would almost inevitably impact upon a wider cross-section of youth. In May 1970, a subcommittee of the Home Office's Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence issued a report on police powers concerning stop and search in connection with drug offences. The subcommittee, which included a former Conservative cabinet minister, an Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and a magistrate, as well as the editor of *New Society* and the social researcher and campaigner Michael Schofield, unanimously agreed that 'dress and hair style [*sic.*] should never in themselves or together constitute reasonable grounds for stop and search.'[140] While the subcommittee suggested that a majority of drug users were likely to be young and present an 'unconventional appearance', their report stated that it did not 'follow that a majority of young people of unconventional appearance nowadays abuse drugs […] Liberty of the subject must extend to the right to adopt idiosyncratic lifestyles without exciting police attention'.[141]

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, then, establishment voices from across the political spectrum were expressing opposition to those attempting to "profile" or discriminate against men on the grounds of their hair. In the conservative press, such practices were

[139] Morgan did suggest that the issue of 'beatniks' could be considered in any future review of the Vagrancy Acts, but warned that 'I think it unlikely that the Government will be in a position to embark on legislation in this field for some time.' '"Beatnik" Problem: No Stronger Laws Yet', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 16th January 1970, p.5.
[140] Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence, *Powers of Arrest and Search in Relation to Drug Offences: Report by the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence* (London, 1970), pp.22, 29, 43.
[141] Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence, *Powers of Arrest and Search*, p.37.

often depicted as something that happened in other countries. In the *Daily Express* Giles satirised the proposal of the Greek government to refuse entry to long-haired and bearded tourists, with a cartoon that showed junta officials pursuing "beatniks" in front of statues of various hirsute figures – Socrates, Plato, Homer and Zeus.[142] The following month, the 'This is America' column in the same newspaper reported that Lester Maddox, who it described as 'Georgia's racial segregationist governor', had banned long hair, as well as mini-skirts, from his office.[143] The British establishment, in contrast, were portrayed as broadly tolerant and open-minded when it came to matters of appearance. 'Let them have long hair. I have great belief in youth', Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery told the BBC in 1968, comments which were repeated on the front page of the *Daily Express*.[144] Similar sentiments from other senior military figures were reported by the right-leaning papers.[145] While suspicion towards the counterculture remained, by the early 1970s discrimination on account of hair was broadly condemned as unBritish, described by a *Daily Mail* editorial as 'pettifogging nonsense. Since when had a dancehall had the right to decide how long a man's hair should be?'[146]

Such attitudes did not necessarily reflect an embrace of the "beatnik" – in his letter to John Nott, Elystan Morgan wrote that the beats could be 'legitimately resented by many of the citizens of St. Ives' – nor did it suggest that the liberalism of the British establishment was not prone to be abandoned in the face of populist prejudice when it came to other matters, particularly Commonwealth immigration.[147] But it also indicated that for many members of Britain's ruling class, from left-wing idealists to patrician Tories, the white, hairy, scruffily dressed wandering beatniks presented less of a concern than the apparent paranoia, intolerance and authoritarian impulses perceived to characterise many 'moral entrepreneurs'.

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[142] 'Giles', *Daily Express*, 11th May 1967, p.8.
[143] 'This is America', *Daily Express*, 3rd June 1967, p.2.
[144] M. Jackson, 'Monty's Plan for Peace in Vietnam', *Daily Express*, 28th September 1968, p.1. Montgomery had clearly shifted his stance since late 1963, when he had suggested that one positive outcome of retaining National Service would be 'the Beatles having to get their hair cut': M. Collins, '"The Age of the Beatles": Parliament and Popular Music in the 1960s' in *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 27, No.1 (2013), pp.91, 93.
[145] A. Fyall, 'Keeping Peace in Ulster … The good soldier', *Daily Express*, 21st August 1969, p.8; 'Quote', *Daily Express*, 29th November 1971, p.9.
[146] 'Get It Cut', *Daily Mail*, 17th March 1970, p.1.
[147] See, for instance, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act. Saggar, *Race and Politics in Britain*, pp.84-85.

Conclusion

The case of the "beatnik" and the seaside town not only provides valuable insights regarding the ways that men's hair was used to construct and uphold boundaries of social difference, but also reveals the tensions and concerns which surrounded moral campaigns and a growing populist backlash against "permissiveness" in the late 1960s. Long understood as a marker of bohemianism, the wearing of long hair or a beard was widely held to be a central pillar of the "beat" lifestyle. As the social workers stationed on Brighton's seafront discovered, there was often little romance to be found "on the road", with many of the beats having clearly lived troubled lives. However, precious little tolerance or sympathy for their plight was to be found amongst many of the councillors, officials and tradespeople of the seaside towns where the beats tended to congregate. Within these spaces, the cultural baggage of hirsuteness coalesced with other behaviours – rough sleeping and drug-taking, in particular – to cast the "beatnik" as deviant, a hairy folk devil accused of threatening the prosperity of coastal resorts. Most commonly, the "beatnik" was damned as unclean and an eyesore, blighting environments that sold themselves to visitors as offering health, cleanliness and aesthetic pleasure. The label of "dirtiness" that was applied to the beats not only reflected a judgement on their lifestyle and their appearance – their long straggly hair and scruffy dress – but also rested upon the perception that they did not belong, that they were 'matter out of place.'[148]

Those opposed to the presence of the beats often insisted that they did not object to their long hair or their beards, but that these were reliable indicators of other, more sinister behaviours. The hostility of local authorities rarely went unchallenged, however. To many observers, the idea of profiling by appearance and of labelling a group of "outsiders" as unclean or verminous was behaviour reminiscent of Nazi Germany, the apartheid governments of South Africa and Rhodesia, or segregationists in the southern states of the USA. The suggestion that those hostile to beats were primarily exercised by their hairy appearance was a recurring argument forwarded by their critics. In some cases, this may have indeed been accurate. But such a position also served a rhetorical purpose – rather than engaging with more complex and divisive topics, such as how best to address rough sleeping or drug taking, it cast the beats' detractors as obviously illiberal and reactionary, apparently obsessed with policing the personal appearance of the young.

[148] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp.36-37.

Within coastal communities, disagreements over the treatment of "beatniks" often formed part of wider debates concerning the power and influence of tourist interests and the impact of the holiday trade upon the natural environment. While those claiming to represent the tourist trade suggested that the hairy beats represented a blemish on the image of their towns, their opponents presented this apparent intolerance as another example of the malign influence of capitalism on their local communities, with both nature and civil liberties trampled in a desperate pursuit of profits. Those observing from afar, particularly in the national press, tended to overlook the nuances of the local reaction, instead presenting clear divides between "locals" and "outsiders". In the case of Cornish resorts such as St Ives and Newquay, this drew upon long-standing suspicions of the rural as a site of irrationality and potential violence. More broadly, however, such depictions reflected the fears held by social liberals – expressed by journalists but shared by many politicians and government officials – of a small town authoritarianism led by self-appointed moral campaigners. In their hairiness and their unorthodox appearance, the beats represented the increasing diversity of post-war British society. While their emergence was not always welcomed by those in positions of power and influence, it was their opponents, perceived as populists and reactionaries, who prompted the most serious concern.

The first and second chapters of this thesis have explored in detail the efforts of those in positions of institutional or local authority – schoolteachers, councillors and officials, tradespeople – to regulate the appearance of young men's hair in Britain between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s. Both chapters have demonstrated how men's hair was read for signs of delinquency throughout the post-war period, but also how efforts to impose restrictions on its length or styling were proving increasingly difficult to sustain by the late 1960s, as more and more men began to wear longer hair. In the next chapter, our attention turns to this wider shift in fashion, analysing the rise of a vision of a groomed, hirsute masculinity which aligned male display with liberation and heterosexual desirability, and evaluating the extent to which this new ideal challenged established understandings which linked long or flamboyant hair with the deviant performance of class and gender.

Chapter 3 – A peacock age? Gender, sexuality and men's hair in post-war Britain[1]

In July 1970, Granada Television's current affairs series *World In Action*, broadcast nationwide on ITV, featured a 25-minute interview with the writer and raconteur Quentin Crisp. Speaking to the documentary maker Denis Mitchell, Crisp – who had published his memoir *The Naked Civil Servant* two years previously – regaled viewers with tales of his experiences as a self-described 'minority within a minority, an effeminate homosexual' in London during the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Crisp suggested that during the 1930s, the 'great barrier' between himself and 'the outer world' had been his appearance – his painted nails, made up face ('blind with mascara and dumb with lipstick') and his hair, hennaed and worn long, sometimes with 'a fringe so deep that it completely obscured the way ahead'.[2] Crisp's appearance during the inter-war years had, he explained, been his 'protest'. Yet, by 1970, he observed, many younger men were adopting styles of dress and self-presentation not so different to his own: 'They have long hair, they wear bright clothes, they wear beads.' The younger generation, suggested Crisp, did not perceive themselves as effeminate; rather, mainstream fashion had changed to the extent that the social and cultural meanings of long hair, and flamboyant male appearance more broadly, had been altered and, to an extent, heterosexualised.[3] When *The Naked Civil Servant* was dramatized by Thames Television in 1975, this observation formed one of the concluding scenes, with Crisp, played by the actor John Hurt, shown walking down a busy street in present-day London, as long-haired, brightly dressed young people mill around him. 'I'm not merely a stopped clock, I'm a stopped grandfather clock', reflects Hurt's narration. 'The symbols I adopted 40 years ago to express my sexual type have become the uniform of all young people.'[4]

The following chapter explores this process of cultural redefinition, tracing the ways in which the meanings of British men's hair shifted as an indicator of gender, sexuality, whiteness and class between the late 1930s and the mid-1970s. Through an examination

[1] Excerpts of this chapter have been published as: M. Anderson, 'Making Facial Hair Modern: Shaving and Hirsuteness in Post-war Britain' in J. Evans and A. Withey (eds.), *New Perspectives on the History of Facial Hair: Framing the Face* (Basingstoke, 2018), pp.109-130. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave.
[2] D. Mitchell, *World In Action* (Granada Television, 6th July 1970), <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-quentin-crisp-1970-online>, accessed 10th October 2018; Q. Crisp, *The Naked Civil Servant* (London, 1985), p.50.
[3] Mitchell, *World In Action*.
[4] P. Mackie, Q. Crisp, *The Naked Civil Servant* (Thames Television, 17th December 1975).

of contemporary sociological research and advertisements for hair products such as Brylcreem, Cossack hairspray and Crown Topper hairpieces, it argues that the growth of overt hirsuteness for men – suddenly noticeable in the late 1960s and early 1970s – was enabled by underlying long term social shifts, in particular increased affluence and the establishment of the welfare state, and an erosion of a physical and cultural separation between the "masculine" and the "feminine". As romantic love, positioned as the foundation of the companionate marriage, became established at the cultural heart of post-war society, expressions of male vanity – a more eye-catching haircut, or the growth of, say, a moustache – became increasingly socially acceptable. However, while this chapter explores shifts in dominant codes of masculinity within British culture during the immediate post-war decades, it is also conscious that masculinity-as-lived was not always reflected within these cultural texts. In concluding with an analysis of the emergence of the skinhead movement in urban working-class communities during the late 1960s, the chapter reminds us that local cultures were often the site of forms of masculinity which strongly resisted these ascendant codes of manliness. Both changes in male hair fashions, and the social upheavals which enabled them, were uneven, partial and contested. Attitudes condemning male hirsuteness as deviant and effeminate remained visible in the early 1970s, and not only amongst the older generation.

1939: Mass-Observation, hair and male personal appearance

In the summer of 1939 Mass-Observation, the fledgling social research organisation which sought to construct an 'anthropology of ourselves', turned its attention to attitudes and habits related to personal appearance. It was perhaps a surprise that it had taken the organisation two years from its founding to explore such a topic, focused as it was on the "ordinary" and the everyday – 'Beards, armpits and eyebrows' had in fact been included in an initial list of possible subjects for investigation published in January 1937.[5] In its customary fashion, Mass-Observation approached their task by employing a mixture of methods, collecting evidence from social investigators based "in the field" in working-class Bolton, Lancashire (referred to as 'Worktown') and issuing a questionnaire to its broadly middle-class panel of respondents, inquiring about their thoughts and grooming

[5] *The New Statesman and Nation*, 30th January 1937, p.155, quoted in C. Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford, 2013), p.xvi.

rituals related to the face, hands and hair. The data collected by Mass-Observation is, of course, not without its problems; writers obviously self-censored, and the project as a whole tended to privilege upper-working- and lower-middle-class viewpoints.[6] Nonetheless, the research it conducted in 1939 provides a unique insight into the social and cultural values that were attached to men's hair and facial hair, how those opinions and habits intersected with broader understandings of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class, and how, a few months before the outbreak of war, behaviours and norms appeared to be shifting. Within this chapter, the 1939 study demonstrates how during the first half of the twentieth century men's hair was mapped on to wider cultural hierarchies– of rough and respectable, and of masculine and feminine. These were hierarchies which would collapse and reform in the post-war decades; Mass-Observation's research, then, also acts as an invaluable marker, allowing us to both measure and better comprehend post-war change.

In Bolton, Mass-Observation focused upon general opinions regarding appearance, fashion and grooming. A summary of this research identified two conflicting impulses that were common in male attitudes. On the one hand, a strong emphasis was placed on the importance of smart or neat appearance, regardless of income. A man who didn't care for his appearance was suggested to be extremely unusual, described by Mass-Observation as 'the rarest type of deviant […] [t]here are few in our culture who take this attitude'. The high value that was placed on neat self-presentation, however, was counterbalanced by a widely held belief that an overt interest in fashion or grooming was an inherently female trait. Any man who displayed an unusual level of care when it came to his hair or his clothes was therefore running the risk of being labelled 'effeminate'. Mass-Observation concluded that this conundrum – the necessity to appear "respectable" but in no way conspicuous – had resulted in a general dour conservatism in male fashion, and meant that many men experienced feelings of guilt and anxiety in relation to matters of appearance.[7]

If Mass-Observation's initial analysis was based upon its interviews with, and surveillance of, working-class Lancastrians, similar conclusions could be drawn from the

[6] Langhamer, *The English in Love*, p.xvii; J. Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949* (Oxford, 2013), pp.267-278.
[7] 'Bolton 5 13.7.1939', Mass-Observation Archive, The Keep, Brighton (hereafter: MOA), Bolton Clothes 1939, SxMOA1/2/18/1/F/1/C, pp.4-7. For a wider discussion of Mass-Observation's survey of attitudes towards male appearance, see P. R. Deslandes, 'Selling, Consuming and Becoming the Beautiful Man in

testimony of its largely middle-class panel. The report summarising these responses suggested that there were 'rather more signs of vanity in the male attitude to hair' than in other aspects of men's appearance; this, however, was attributed to a desire to conform socially and to appear smart while not standing out from the crowd, be it through perceived effeminacy, scruffiness, or even premature baldness.[8] Smart hair was positioned as respectable, described by respondents as being 'an asset socially', as well as beneficial 'for [the] purposes of work'. A railway clerk, aged 28, wrote that 'a well groomed head of hair' provided 'a feeling of smartness and poise', while a 17-year-old accountant suggested that well-presented hair 'gives one greater self-respect' and was also 'more likely to induce respect from others'.[9] Hair preparations were popular, used by almost 70 per cent of the men surveyed (with Brylcreem the overwhelmingly preferred brand). The use of hair preparations was explained by respondents as necessary to control unruly hair, with the racialized imagery employed by some writers highlighting the centrality of whiteness to mid-century conceptions of respectability:

> I use Brylcreem on my hair because it is uncontrollable otherwise and liable to make me look like a Zulu warrior unless forcibly flattened.
>
> If I do not use any dressing my hair stands up like a golliwog.[10]

As these comments suggest, the perceived boundaries of respectability were narrow. Beards, noted Mass-Observation, were considered by many men to be 'outre [*sic*.] and impossible', despite what appeared to be 'a fairly widespread hankering' for their return, and the fact that many respondents seemed to 'resent the bother involved in shaving'. Reflecting upon the collected testimony, Mass-Observation wrote of 'a common perplexity' of the British male who found 'shaving a painful business' and who was 'not strongly opposed to the idea' of growing a beard, yet was 'unwilling to be the one to start the fashion', for fear of standing out from the crowd: 'Things being as they are, a beard would be out of place!' One young man, a 21-year-old assistant manager, admitted that he had grown a moustache but had stopped short of a full beard for fear that he would

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Britain: The 1930s and 1940s', in E. Rappaport, S. Trudgeon Dawson and M. J. Crowley (eds.), *Consuming Behaviours: Identity, Politics and Pleasure in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London and New York, 2015), pp.53-70.

[8] 'File Report A21: Report by Mass-Observation on Personal Appearance: Part 1 – Hands, Face and Hair, July 1939', Mass-Observation Archive Online, [http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.nottingham.ac.uk/contents/filereport.aspx?documentid=239440], accessed 23rd August 2016, p.66.

[9] 'File Report A21', p.66.

[10] 'File Report A21', p.86.

'look so conspicuous'. Other men shared their fantasies of growing beards, while emphasizing that they were just these, fantasies which were impossible in their day to day existence. One respondent wrote that he would like to grow a beard if he didn't have to work in a factory and was instead a man of 'independent means'. An economics student expressed his wish 'to go on a sea voyage and grow a beard to see what it's like', while an 18-year-old, studying medicine, laid out his plan to grow a beard while 'at Camp'. A return to normality, however, would also mean a return to the razor, with the medical student writing that 'I should remove it on getting back home, because I expect it would be taken as a joke, and a joke can go too far.'[11]

The importance of a mutual male gaze in enforcing these codes of appearance and behaviour was emphasized in Mass-Observation's report. Several of the male respondents stated how much they disapproved of seeing unshaven faces, which were damned as 'dirty and unpleasant', while one man, a 29-year-old secretary, said that he opposed moustaches on young men as he thought they presented 'a "nancy boy" look'. While long hair appealed to some male contributors, offering a respite from the fortnightly trip to the barber (with 'their smalltalk [*sic.*] about football and the superficialities of public affairs', as one man put it), it was also sharply criticised by several other respondents.[12] Some of these comments accused the long-haired of reaching beyond their station, of attempting to cultivate the image of the bohemian. A student, 20, suggested that 'the wearing of long ad [*sic.*] untidy hair is often a stupid affectation by people who wish to look different', while a 19-year-old railway clerk wrote that he 'dislike[d] intensely people with long hair', who he condemned as 'poseurs out to create an impression of being intelectuals [*sic.*] which in most cases they are not and never will be.' Others rejected long hair as a pre-modern throwback, unsuited to the technological age, giving an 'appearance of inefficiency' or, as a 25-year-old teacher put it, 'an affectation comparable with the attempted revival of the crinoline in certain precious Mayfair circles.' Some respondents explained their dislike of long hair in terms which brought to mind the image of the ragged urban delinquent. A clerk, aged 17, described long hair as 'scruffy […] dirty, unpleasant and unkempt', an attitude which he suggested had been 'inculcated into me at an early age by my father.'[13]

[11] 'File Report A21', pp.27, 35-36, 38, 47.
[12] 'File Report A21', p.71.
[13] 'File Report A21', pp.36, 71-72.

Long hair, however, was also popularly associated with other forms of deviancy. A 26-year-old surveyor wrote that 'long or untidy hair' would 'worry' him, explaining that '[i]t would give me the same feeling of dissatisfaction as Waterloo station does at midnight', a reference to the reputation of the station and its surrounding streets as one of the capital's busiest cruising grounds.[14] It was a suggestion that would be immediately understood by many of his contemporaries. 'Throughout the first half of this century', wrote the journalist Nik Cohn in 1971, 'long hair meant homosexuality', describing the 'Soho queens [who] grew their hair down to their shoulders' as one of the few examples of non-conformist male dress in the inter-war period.[15] Indeed, within the urban worlds of early twentieth-century Britain, and in London in particular, spaces existed for men to wear long, coloured or waved hair; such an appearance, however, would cast the wearer as "womanlike". As historians such as Matt Houlbrook and Helen Smith have demonstrated, during the early decades of the twentieth century, masculine identities were often centred upon work and codes of masculine dominance, rather than particular sexual acts or the anatomical gender of a sexual partner. This was particularly the case in working-class communities that, pre-affluence, were often divided and demarcated by gender.[16] "Queens" (or "queans") were identified as such not because they had sex with other men, but because they transgressed other codes of manliness. As Houlbrook writes, '[r]ather than sexual practice, terms like "pansy," "Nancy-boy," "cissy" and "Poof" denoted particular patterns of appearance and behavior [*sic*.]. They were, in the first instance, used to describe those who failed to do what was expected of a man at work, on the streets or at play.'[17]

Those who considered their nature to be 'womanlike' could engage with consumerist feminine beauty culture to create a physical representation of their character, often through the use of make-up or the wearing of long, coloured and/or waved hair.[18] Queans often found acceptance in working-class communities and neighbourhoods, as their long, waved or coloured hair and make-up could be reconciled with widely held understandings

[14] 'File Report A21', p.72; Writing of London's cruising grounds between the wars, the historian Matt Houlbrook suggests that 'the only district that approached the West End's importance was around Waterloo Station.' M. Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago and London, 2006), p.48.
[15] N. Cohn, *Today There are no Gentlemen: The Change in Englishmen's Clothes since the War* (London, 1971), pp.86, 12-13.
[16] Houlbrook, *Queer London*, p.171; H. Smith, *Masculinity, Class and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895-1957* (Basingstoke, 2015), p.189.
[17] Houlbrook, *Queer London*, p.143.
[18] Houlbrook, *Queer London*, pp.143-144, 148.

of gendered character. Such conceptions of gender, however, also cast them as subordinate within wider hierarchies of manliness, the subject of jokes and teasing, which could descend into abuse or violence.[19] For men who considered themselves "masculine", behaviours or articles of appearance which might indicate effeminacy were to be strictly avoided, for fear of mockery, injured pride, or loss of status. Writing in the late 1960s, Quentin Crisp recalled that:

> The men of the 'twenties searched themselves for vestiges of effeminacy as they searched for lice. They did not worry about their character but about their hair and their clothes. Their predicament was that they must never be caught worrying about either. I once heard a slightly dandified friend of my brother say, 'People are always accusing me of taking care over my appearance'.[20]

As Houlbrook notes, Crisp's observation demonstrates how '[t]he quean's prominence in contemporary urban culture shaped the behavior [*sic.*] of *all* men, constraining the clothes they wore, the hairstyles they adopted, and the way they moved.' This was no less the case for queer men who constructed homosexual identities which prized "respectability" and rejected 'visible difference'.[21] The oral histories collected by Kevin Porter and Jeffrey Weeks include the testimony of several such men. 'Gregory', described by Porter and Weeks as 'a pillar of his local community', dismissed Crisp as 'a very stupid man. Absolutely ridiculous to go about advertising himself like that […] I think it was sort of pig-headedness, really, to go about with hennaed hair.' Another man, 'John', who had fought in the army in the Second World War before becoming a civil servant, described Crisp as 'the bravest man in the world', but also confessed to crossing the road to avoid him.[22]

As Mass-Observation's research shows, however, by the late 1930s social and economic shifts were beginning to challenge the understandings which underpinned the world of the quean and had regulated male appearance. Consumerism and increasing affluence was noted as impacting upon the tastes of young working-class men in Bolton, with Mass-Observers remarking on male enthusiasm for fashionable retailers such as Simpsons and Daks, and the new popularity of 'dazzling' colourful clothes, particularly suits and sports coats.[23] Summarising the responses of their panel, Mass-Observation also reported that a

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[19] Houlbrook, *Queer London*, pp.158-160.
[20] Q. Crisp, *The Naked Civil Servant* (London, 1985), pp.26-27.
[21] Emphasis in original. Houlbrook, *Queer London*, pp.149, 266.
[22] K. Porter and J. Weeks (eds.), *Between the Acts: Lives of Homosexual Men 1885-1967* (2nd Edition, London, 1998), pp.44-45, 172, 176.
[23] 'Bolton 5 13.7.1939', p.7.

strong dislike of long hair was 'more typical of the last generation than the new one'. It was even suggested that '[l]onger hair is definitely returning to fashion', a trend thought to originate with 'arty' types and undergraduates – both groups of young people with an unusual level of independence, and therefore somewhat removed from the societal pressures which enforced norms of male appearance – but which was also said to be 'spread[ing] more widely among the youth.'[24]

Perhaps most significant was the increasing weight placed on the opinion of the opposite sex. While Mass-Observation's report showed that the attitudes of other men continued to influence male style choices, many respondents emphasized that the issue of courtship played a decisive role when it came to questions of style or grooming. As a clerk, 24, wrote, a 'well groomed head of hair' was not only a matter of 'social importance', but also 'sex appeal.' Several men wrote of the role that potential female criticism played in upholding a clean-shaven aesthetic, with another young clerk, aged 22, claiming that

> Men, however much they might deny it are sensitive, and the average man, unless he's a Bernard Shaw, Ronald Colman, or a Hitler, cannot hope to get away with any facial decorations. His female friends would soon see to that, for if women have smooth skins, they also have tongues which can be pretty rough […]

Other male respondents made similar points. A 25-year-old commercial traveller wrote that his 'female friends one and all denounce unshaven or badly shaven faces', while a market gardener, aged 20, reported that '[a]ll the girls I know simply hate to see an unshaven face. They always describe the offending male as "horrid" or "beastly".' These observations, shared by members of a rising, non-industrial working class, were echoed by a factory worker, 25, who explained that he made sure to use his safety razor before 'contemplating any intimacy with any female friend', an act of 'necessity not desire'.[25] Such comments spoke of a masculinity which was conscious and considerate of – and increasingly prioritised – feminine preferences. On the eve of the Second World War, affluence, consumerism and growing cultural and social mobility were beginning to combine to change attitudes towards gender, sexuality and male appearance – processes which would continue to accelerate in the decades after 1945.

[24] 'File Report A21', p.72.
[25] 'File Report A21', pp.34-39.

Brylcreem, mutuality and modernity in the 1940s and 1950s

The outbreak of war in 1939 would have a profound impact upon British understandings of masculine behaviour. For some men, the social and cultural dislocation brought by the war offered an opportunity to experiment with their hair and appearance. A departure from their usual surroundings – their families, workplaces, neighbourhoods and towns – would provide exactly the sort of escape from everyday existence that some of the Mass-Observation respondents had imagined in 1939 as a precondition for growing facial hair. The military, after all, had long permitted the sprouting of whiskers within certain limits, with the army and the RAF sanctioning moustaches, and the Royal Navy allowing the "full set" of moustache and beard. More broadly, however, the outbreak of war had a regulatory effect on male appearance; any wider cultural shift in norms, such as the move towards longer hair amongst the young noted by Mass-Observation in the summer of 1939, was effectively halted. Fresh recruits conscripted into the British army received a short regulation haircut and were issued with a razor, which they were instructed to use daily, regardless of official tolerance of the moustache. These were rituals, argues Emma Newlands, that were intended not only to 'standardise men's appearance but to enable the authorities to instil discipline, order and routine through a particular habituated bodily practice.'[26]

Moreover, long hair now acted to signify that the wearer was not conscripted to the military, and was often held up as an identifier of certain groups who were accused of failing to "do their bit" for the war effort. Writing in the *Sunday Chronicle* in 1940, the journalist Beverley Nichols criticised students of Oxford University for showing insufficient interest in the war and displaying a lack of sartorial sobriety, lambasting undergraduates who wore 'hair that needed not only cutting but bobbing'.[27] In the same year the *Sunday Pictorial* ran an article damning conscientious objectors, describing the attendees of a pacifist tribunal as 'long-haired, mental perverts with no chins, no character and no spirit.'[28] This was language that had more commonly been used to condemn the deviant self-presentation of the quean. As Sonya O. Rose writes, those who

[26] E. Newlands, *Civilians into soldiers: War, the body and British Army recruits, 1939-45* (Manchester and New York, 2014), pp.54-55.
[27] Quoted in S. O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003), p.176.
[28] Quoted in Rose, *Which People's War?*, pp.175-176.

were perceived as failing to meet the requirements of masculine wartime citizenship, such as conscientious objectors, were 'often constructed as feminized anti-citizens.'[29]

Rose persuasively argues that hegemonic masculinity in wartime Britain was inherently unstable, defined by its "others" – on the one side, the effeminate pacifist, and on the other the hypermasculine Nazi foe.[30] The result, suggests Rose, was a 'temperate masculinity' which clad the good-humoured inter-war "little man" in khaki fatigues. This focus on the "man in uniform" centred discourses of masculinity upon the male body, presenting a problem for those not serving in the forces through age, disability, occupation or pacifism. Men who did not serve in uniform could find themselves existing outside the boundaries of the hegemonic masculine codes, a judgement made on the basis of their bodily appearance.[31] If excessive male hirsuteness was portrayed, particularly out of uniform, as effeminate and anti-patriotic, then neat, controlled and well-presented hair stood as a symbol of temperate masculinity. The culturally dominant male aesthetic of the war years, and the decade and a half that followed, featured a short haircut held firmly in place with a healthy dab of hair product. Here was an appearance which seemed to embody the values of the temperate hero – controlled, moderate and reasonable, smart but not flamboyant.

Brylcreem, the brand that dominated the British market in men's hair preparations, would become synonymous with this look. As noted above, Brylcreem had been a commercial success in Britain during the 1930s, with Mass-Observation reporting on its popularity with young men in white collar occupations.[32] During the war, the brand became closely associated with the militarised male body, with the "Brylcreem Boys" of the RAF, so named because of the apparent fondness of young airmen for slicking down their hair, presented as an aspirational cultural type; brave, heroic and dashing, and also desirable.[33] This image was one that Brylcreem's manufacturer, the County Perfumery Co. of Birmingham, was only too keen to promote, and images of military personnel dominated

[29] Rose, *Which People's War?*, p.176.
[30] Rose, *Which People's War?*, pp.151-196.
[31] Rose, *Which People's War?*, pp.179-181.
[32] 'File Report A21, pp.84-86.
[33] The exact origin of the term 'Brylcreem Boy' in relation to the wartime RAF is unclear. It was, however, a label which resonated – recalled, for instance, by respondents to Mass-Observation's 2001 directive regarding 'Hair and Hairdressing': 'I2015', MOA, Spring Directive 2001: Hair and Hairdressing, SxMOA2/1/62/1/1, p.2. For a wider discussion of the 'glamour' of the RAF during the Second World War, see M. Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2008), pp.21-26.

the brand's wartime advertising.[34] The war also presented an opportunity to broaden the product's appeal across class boundaries.[35] While earlier print advertising for Brylcreem had carried a distinctly metropolitan, upper-middle-class air, with models in dinner suits recounting tales of trips to the theatre, 'dining in Mayfair' and 'dancing till the early hours', wartime promotional material included images of grinning Tommies and declarations that '[m]en of all ranks prefer Brylcreem'.[36]

Presented in a new egalitarian tone, Brylcreem's wartime advertisements continued to emphasise the aspirational qualities of the product, while also addressing men's anxieties about the appearance of their hair. Early in the war, before shortages meant that Brylcreem became a scarce commodity, print adverts combined reassuring messages, promising to combat dandruff and protect hair against 'the ravages of the tin hat', with text and imagery designed to appeal to ambitious recruits.[37] 'Promotion comes to the man who is smart in his work [and] smart in appearance', ran one advertisement which appeared in the *Daily Mail* in March 1940, featuring an image of a glossy haired sailor.[38] Another advert featured a model with his back to the viewer, drawing the eye to both his glossy hair and the lieutenant pips on his shoulder (Figure 9). Promises of professional advancement could be combined with suggestions that Brylcreemed hair would appeal to the opposite sex, a message that was often communicated visually through the positioning of male and female models. During the 1940s Brylcreem adverts portrayed scenes of polite intimacy, with a couple about to embrace, or with a woman standing above a seated man – in the perfect position to inspect the condition and presentation of his hair.[39] Some

[34] Interestingly, one of the models portrayed as a military 'Brylcreem Boy', Tony 'HB' Gibson, was imprisoned in 1940 as an unregistered conscientious objector. Post-war, Gibson graduated as a psychologist and went on to found the psychology department at Hatfield Polytechnic (later the University of Hertfordshire). 'Brylcreem boy, psychologist, anarchist and conscientious objector', *Irish Times*, 5th May 2001 < https://www.irishtimes.com/news/brylcreem-boy-psychologist-anarchist-and-conscientious-objector-1.306269>, accessed 19th November 2018; Brylcreem's manufacturer, County Perfumery Co., was purchased by Beechams in 1939. 'County Chemical Co', < https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/County_Chemical_Co>, accessed 3rd December 2018.

[35] The occupations of those quoted as Brylcreem users in Mass-Observation's 1939 report were listed as 'commercial traveller', 'Lab. Worker', 'Bank Clerk' and 'Clerk'. 'File Report A21', p.86.

[36] For a late example of the former, see 'Brylcreem The Perfect Hair Dressing' (advertisement), *Illustrated London News*, 22nd November 1939; 'Brylcreem for Parade Smartness' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 31st May 1940, p.3.

[37] In the face of shortages, County Perfumery Co. continued to run print advertisements for Brylcreem during the mid-1940s, exhorting men to 'please make your bottle of Brylcreem go as far as possible.' See, for instance, 'Brylcreem The Perfect Hairdressing' (advertisement), *Illustrated London News*, 25th May 1946, p.584; 'Brylcreem The Perfect Hair Dressing' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 30th March 1940, p.3; 'Brylcreem In Handy Tubes For Active Service' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 21st October 1939, p.51;

[38] 'Smartness counts – Brylcreem your hair' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 2nd March 1940, p.54.

[39] See, for instance, 'Smartly on parade with Brylcreem' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 28th June 1940, p.5; 'Take pride in your appearance – Brylcreem your hair' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 9th March 1940, p.2.

advertisements also made this message explicit via the accompanying text: 'there's something about a soldier – and there's something about every man who has well cared-for hair'.[40] Such aspirational themes could also be inverted, to dwell on potential anxieties of incurring female disapproval. 'Women dislike men with sticky, stiff or starchy hair', warned one advert, published in the *Daily Mail* in March 1940. 'To make sure, ask for Brylcreem…'[41] Wartime advertising for Brylcreem did not only feature a "feminine" perspective in order to remind men of the importance of smart self-presentation, but also occasionally addressed women as consumers, with those with loved ones serving in the forces encouraged to '[p]ut an Active Service Pack of Brylcreem in his next parcel.'[42] It was during the festive season that advertising was most likely to be directed towards female buyers, a trend that had been visible before the outbreak of war and which would accelerate during the 1950s. As early as December 1938 *Picture Post* had carried a Brylcreem advert aimed at women searching for a male suitor, featuring the tagline '[h]e'll thank you again and again!' and accompanied by the comments of a happy recipient: 'It was very thoughtful of her to give me BRYLCREEM'.[43] As post-war austerity eased during the early 1950s, and supplies of Brylcreem became more plentiful, advertisements carrying a similar message and tone, aimed at women shopping for loved ones, regularly appeared in the press in the run-up to Christmas.

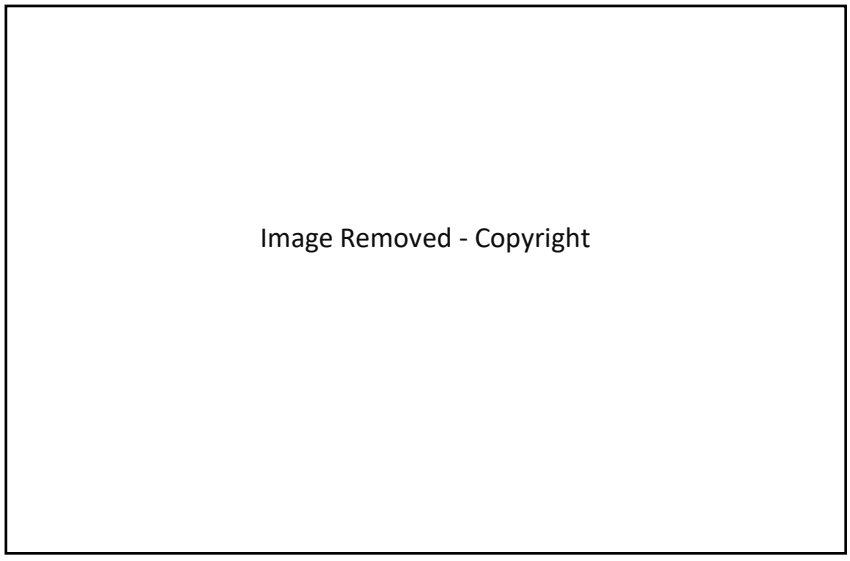


Figure 9: 'Brylcreem The Perfect Hair Dressing' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 17th February 1940, p.52.

[40] 'Brylcreem The Perfect Hair Dressing' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 17th February 1940, p.52.
[41] 'Take pride in your appearance – Brylcreem your hair', p.2.
[42] 'Brylcreem for Parade Smartness', p.3.
[43] Emphasis in original. 'Brylcreem' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 17th December 1938, p.5.

The increased focus on the feminine in Brylcreem's promotional material, both as a presence in adverts aimed at male consumers, and as viewers of material designed to target women shoppers, reflects the increasing cultural influence of what the historian Marcus Collins terms 'mutuality' – an equality of difference within a marriage based on partnership, companionship and reciprocity of affection and desire.[44] Social researchers such as Michael Young and Peter Willmott, who studied family life in Bethnal Green, east London in the mid-1950s, found that 'the old-style of working-class family' was 'fast disappearing', with the idea of an emotionally distant husband and wife living out a semi-separate existence being replaced by 'a new kind of companionship between man and woman, reflecting the rise in status of the young wife and children which is one of the great transformations of our time.'[45] While keen to emphasise that old attitudes remained in some families, and that most men still kept the exact details of their pay packets from their wives, Young and Willmott were struck by the image of young fathers who could be seen pushing prams and playing with their children on weekends, and who were increasingly abandoning the all-male environment of the pub or club for nights in front of the 'tellie' with their families.[46]

Young and Willmott identified a series of underlying changes which had impacted upon family life and male behaviour in Bethnal Green – improved healthcare and education about birth control, declining poverty, better housing, and shifts in the labour market, with men working shorter hours and increasing numbers of women going 'out to work' after marriage and contributing financially to the family unit.[47] Similar findings were presented by Ferdynand Zweig, researching the impact of affluence on the lives of factory workers in Sheffield, Cumbria, Luton, Birmingham and London in the late 1950s. Zweig described fathers who wished to be 'like a big brother to their children' and reported that a majority of male interviewees claimed to reject the notion of patriarchal dominance within marriage.[48] Again, it was suggested that 'there was some correlation between working wives and feelings of equal status' in marriages, an argument which was supported by research undertaken in areas relatively untouched by these broader social

[44] M. Collins, *Modern Love: An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2004), pp.4-5.
[45] M. Young, P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957), p.15.
[46] Young, Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, pp.3-15.
[47] Young, Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, pp.3-15.
[48] F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London, 1961), pp.22-23, 30-32.

changes.[49] In the mining community of Featherstone, West Yorkshire, the sociologists Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter found men and women existing in largely separate spheres, with husbands spending the majority of their leisure time with their "mates" in the pub, while their wives were confined to the home. Reflecting on their research, published as *Coal Is Our Life* in 1956, Dennis and his co-authors noted 'the absence of any marriage corresponding to the ideals of romantic love and companionship' and suggested that '[m]any married couples seem to have no intimate understanding of each other'.[50] Higher wages for the Featherstone miners had only entrenched male behaviour and privileges, they argued, predicting that the character of marriages was unlikely to change until opportunities for women's employment improved.[51]

Certainly, the spread of companionate courtship and marriage through post-war communities was limited and uneven, often dependent on wider social and economic structures.[52] As a cultural ideal, however, mutuality – with the companionate marriage at the heart of the family – lay at the centre of the discursive landscape of post-war reconstruction in the years and decades after the Second World War, eulogised by sociologists, the state and advertisers.[53] It was within this context that Brylcreem's Christmas advertising campaigns featured scenes of happy families and romantic moments, accompanied by messages aimed towards women shoppers. 'Make Dad feel he's really head of the family!' suggested one Brylcreem advertisement published in *Picture Post* in December 1954, showing a father, glossy-haired but slightly older, embracing his wife and young son (Figure 10). Here the father figure was shown as smiling, loving, tactile – an image far removed from that of the stern Victorian patriarch,

[49] Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, p.31.
[50] N. Dennis, F. Henriques, C. Slaughter, *Coal Is Our Life: An analysis of a Yorkshire mining community*, (London, 1956), pp.180-183. Jeffrey Weeks' description of community, family and intimacy in the Rhondda Valleys in south Wales offers a similar, if somewhat more generous, account of life in mining villages during the 1940s and 1950s: J. Weeks, *The World We Have Won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life* (London and New York, 2007), pp.23-33.
[51] Dennis et al, *Coal Is Our Life*, pp.244-245.
[52] J. Finch and P. Summerfield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage, 1945-59' in G. Allan (ed.), *The Sociology of the Family: A Reader* (Oxford, 1999), pp.12-34. See also: C. Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England' in *The Historical Journal*, Vol.50, No.1 (2007), pp.173-196; Smith, *Masculinity and Same-Sex Desire*, pp.188-189; D. Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951-57* (London, 2009), pp.580-602.
[53] Langhamer, *The English in Love*, p.10; Francis, *The Flyer*, p.84; Finch and Summerfield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage', pp.12-13, 25-26.

although masculine pride could still be flattered by making him 'feel' that he was 'head of the family'.[54]

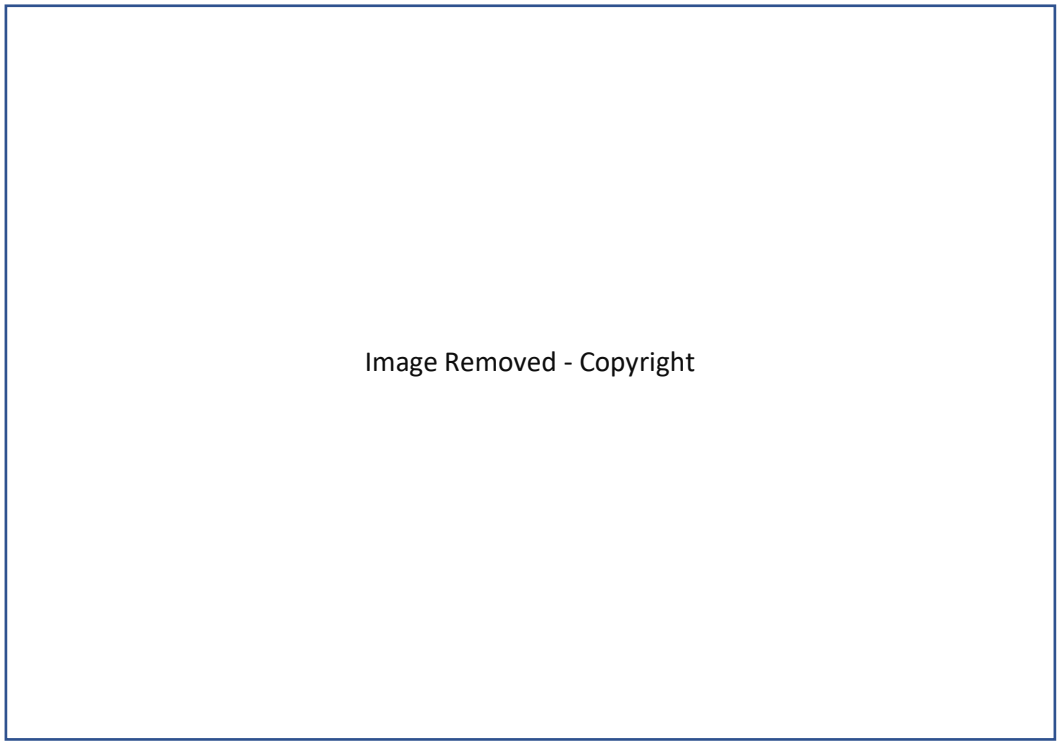


Figure 10: 'Brylcreem The Gift for the Head of the Family' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 18th December 1954, p.37.

While obviously promising the opportunity for greater personal happiness and emotional fulfilment, the ideal of mutuality also brought pressures and anxieties, which advertisers were quick to exploit. Manufacturers such as Brylcreem were only too keen to impress upon women shoppers the importance of picking the perfect present for a husband or sweetheart. Print marketing for the brand often featured images of smiling models accompanied by text which alluded to the emotional labour involved in gift-giving. 'How do I know he'll be pleased?' asked 'Ann', pictured in a Brylcreem advert which appeared in November 1953, vocalising the anxiety of choosing a gift which might disappoint.[55] Another advertisement, published the previous year, showed the perils of making the wrong choice, with England cricketer Denis Compton querying the contents of his stocking: 'What .. No Brylcreem!' Once again, the accompanying text made sure to offer advice on how to avoid such awkward moments: '[g]ive Brylcreem to make sure that

[54] 'Brylcreem The Gift for the Head of the Family' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 18th December 1954, p.37.
[55] Brylcreem, she was assured, was the 'Perfect Gift'. 'Brylcreem The Perfect Christmas Gift' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 28th November 1953, back cover.

your gift will be greatly appreciated'.[56] Brylcreem's Christmas adverts made plain the expectations inherent to the companionate ideal, and positioned their product as one way of fulfilling them, of legitimising a relationship. By the early 1960s this included physical intimacy, as well as understanding the personality, psychology and hidden consumer desires of a significant other:

> earn that extra kiss at Christmas … give him a Brylcreem Home Dispenser.[57]
>
> When he says: "I don't mind what I get for Christmas" – you know different. You know him better than anyone else in the world. Secretly he hopes for a big surprise. Perhaps something he always meant to buy himself .... like a Brylcreem Home Dispenser.[58]

An engagement with the discourse of mutuality and companionate marriage – with men portrayed as conscious of, and responsive to, female opinions on their appearance and self-presentation, and women depicted as understanding male fashionability and consumption habits – also cast Brylcreem as a definitively "modern" product. 'Mutuality', as Marcus Collins writes, 'helped to define what was "modern" about twentieth-century Britain', providing an ideal which could be contrasted against a cultural image of a cold, distant nineteenth-century marriage.[59] Other advertisements emphasized Brylcreem's "modernity" by aligning the product, and its users, with social and scientific progress. Throughout the 1950s the brand's promotional material made efforts to make customers feel that their purchase represented participation in a democratic technological modernity; as one advert, which appeared in *Picture Post* in 1953 put it, 'Men of tomorrow use Brylcreem today'.[60] This could be achieved by listing the 'scientific facts' which were said to 'underlie the clean, smart look for which Brylcreem is famous', a message accompanied by an image of a glossily coiffured head staring through a microscope (Figure 11). Other adverts drew attention to the technological rigour of Brylcreem's manufacturing and quality assurance processes, describing tests on ingredients which were conducted by 'expert scientists', and which were said to be 'even more stringent than those required by normal pharmaceutical standards.' Most important, perhaps, was what Brylcreem identified as their final test, 'public acceptance', with emphasis placed on the brand's enormous commercial success.[61] Here Brylcreem was

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[56] 'What .. No Brylcreem!' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 20th December 1952, p.11.
[57] 'Earn that extra kiss at Xmas' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 4th December 1962, p.4.
[58] 'Brylcreem Home Dispensers' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 8th December 1961, p.2
[59] Collins, *Modern Love*, p.5.
[60] 'Men of tomorrow use Brylcreem today' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 27th June 1953, p.42.
[61] 'The healthy hairdressing that changed the world's appearance' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 9th June 1955, p.5.

positioned as the product of a consumer democracy, its ubiquity and popularity not only reflecting its quality, but also rendering it as a safe choice for a man to purchase and use, joining millions of others in a step towards better hair 'health and appearance'.[62]

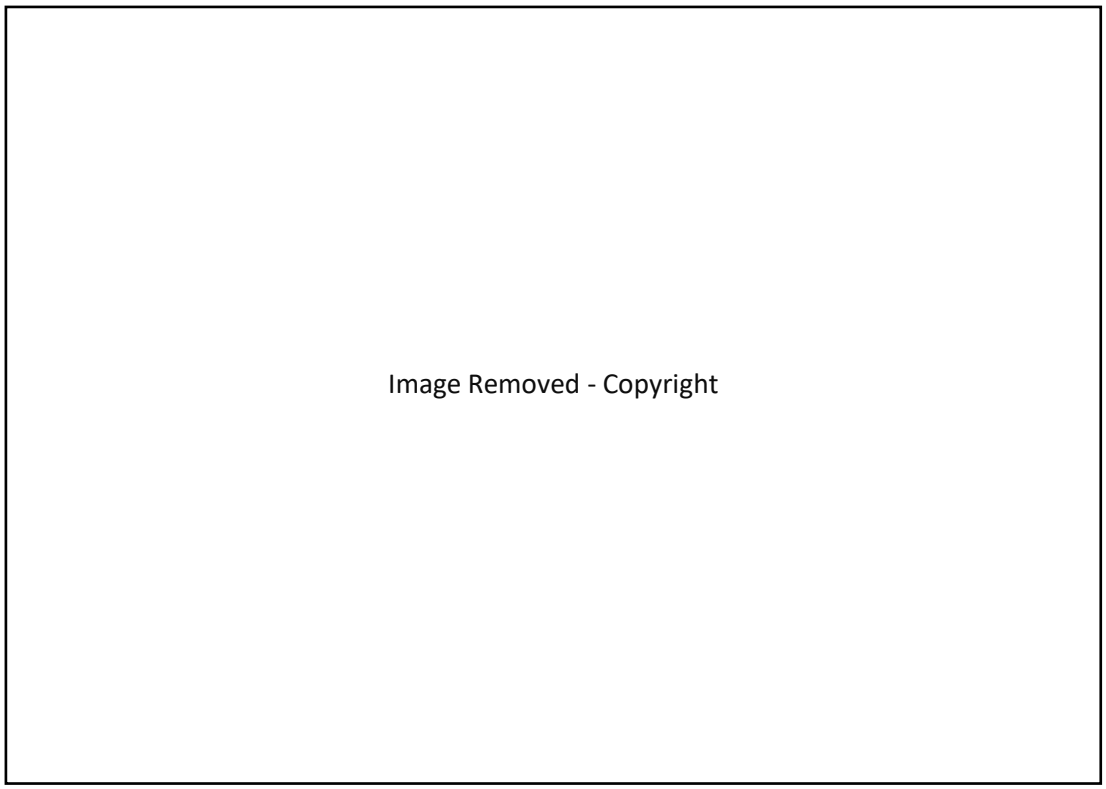


Figure 11: 'All your hair needs!' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 23rd October 1954, p.4.

While many Brylcreem advertisements portrayed well-known male public figures, predominantly sportsmen or broadcasters, the 1959 'man with a plus' campaign instead focused on a series of anonymous professionals, shown at work in aspirational occupations – the navigator of an ocean liner, an air traffic controller, a naval architect, and a 'modern executive', disembarking at London Airport.[63] Each advertisement focused on the skill, seriousness and responsibility of the men pictured, while underlining the importance of good haircare: '[h]e knows, too, that ability must be matched by a smart appearance' which could be achieved with Brylcreem, described as 'the modern hairdressing for go-ahead men.'[64] Despite working in different professions, the men

[62] 'The healthy hairdressing that changed the world's appearance', p.5.
[63] 'Man with a plus…' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 21st April 1959, p.7; 'Man with a plus…' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 3rd June 1959, p.9; 'Man with a plus…' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 8th October 1959, p.13; 'Man with a plus…' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 4th November 1959, p.5.
[64] 'Man with a plus…' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 8th October 1959, p.13.

portrayed presented a shared aesthetic, featuring a dark sober suit, jacket or overcoat, a white shirt, and a neat haircut, held in place with Brylcreem. As cultural figures, these were the successors of the wartime temperate males, upwardly mobile and practical men who took pride in their appearance but also had little time for fripperies when it came to fashion. Several of the adverts made claims regarding the product's durability: '[w]hen you Brylcreem your hair in the morning, you know it looks right – all day long.'[65] Here, then, male vanity concerning the hair was reframed as an upwardly mobile professionalism, a necessary impulse which could help advance a man's career.

Advertisements that carried such aspirational messages could, of course, be read in other ways. If meeting expectations of male appearance could assist professional advancement, then failing to conform to these standards would, surely, have an adverse effect? Adverts which drew upon the companionate ideal and emphasized the desirability of a man with healthy and well-presented hair could raise similar anxieties regarding the prospects of romantic success. Sometimes, Brylcreem advertisements lingered on such concerns – '[d]ry hair never won fair lady', as one advert, published in 1957 put it – while others focused on the thrusting foreheads of models with impressively robust hairlines, despite the fact that many of the men featured appeared to have passed their thirtieth birthdays (Figure 12).[66] Taglines such as 'Sportsmen in the public eye use Brylcreem' reminded men that they were being watched, that their hair was being studied, evaluated and read by others.[67] The importance of presenting a 'neat and smart' look was repeatedly emphasized. Conformity to this aesthetic was not only held as key to professional and romantic success, but was also articulated through a language of self-control. A wartime advert promised that 'Brylcreem disciplines the most unruly hair' through 'gentle persuasion', and similar messages, suggesting that Brylcreem would offer a man 'control' of his hair, featured in promotional campaigns throughout the 1950s.[68] In some cases, it is difficult not to read a sexual subtext, equating untidy hair with unruly sexuality. The copy featured in some of the 1955 'public eye' advertisements not only offered 'firm but gentle control', but also promised 'no over-oiling, no greasing down, no stiffening of the

[65] 'Man with a plus…' (advertisement), *Daily Mail,* 8th October 1959, p.13.
[66] 'Dear Sir, How can I prevent Dry Hair?' (advertisement), *Daily Mail,* 14th June 1957, p.13; See, for instance, 'Brylcreem The Perfect Christmas Gift' (advertisement), *Picture Post,* 28th November 1953, back cover.
[67] See, for instance, 'Sportsmen in the public eye use Brylcreem' (advertisement), *Picture Post,* 27th August 1955, back cover.
[68] 'Brylcreem The Perfect Hair Dressing' (advertisement), *Daily Mail,* 30th March 1940, p.3.

hair', while 'maintain[ing] the normal flow of sebum, the scalp's natural oil.'[69]

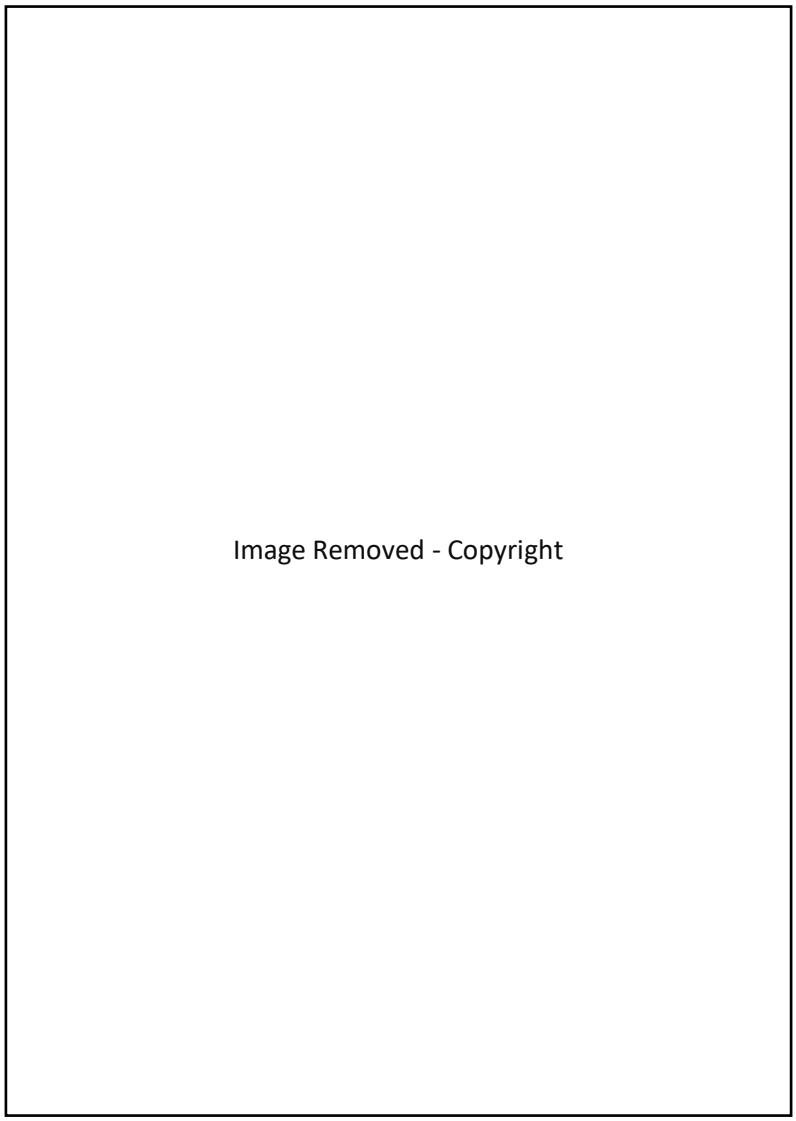


Figure 12: 'Brylcreem The Perfect Christmas Gift' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 28th November 1953, back cover.

In the 1950s the popularity of Brylcreem, and the messages communicated through its print advertising, not only reflected how attitudes towards men's hair were changing, but also how some cultural understandings regarding male vanity were proving slower to shift. In 1951 Boots, the high-street chemist and retailer, issued a pamphlet encouraging branch managers to focus on the retail of hair dressings, noting that '[n]owadays, men, women and children are all very conscious about the appearance of their hair, and will spend a good deal of money on preparations that will improve it.' To back up this claim, Boots pointed towards 'the large amount of advertising that is carried on' for hair

[69] 'Sportsmen in the public eye use Brylcreem' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 27th August 1955, back cover.

products, adding that '[y]ou can rarely pick up a newspaper or magazine nowadays which does not tell you that by using some particular product the appearance of your hair can be improved.'[70] However, the ideals of hair appearance articulated in Brylcreem's promotional campaigns – neat, smart, clean, unfussy – were broadly consistent with those identified as being widely held in 1939 by Mass-Observation. In large part, this controlled, essentially conservative look reflected the persistence of the fear of the label of "effeminacy"; unsurprising, perhaps, in a decade where Sunday tabloids routinely propagated campaigns against homosexuality and official and police hostility intensified, with a sharp increase in prosecutions and convictions for "moral offences".[71] In certain contexts this could still result in a broader aversion to femininity, particularly in relation to the presentation of the male body. In 1959 Boots, while noting an increase in sales of male toiletries and hair preparations, nevertheless advised that store managers should establish a 'Men's Den' as close as possible to the front door of their shops, 'as most males are adverse to trekking across a large shop apparently dominated by vast quantities of the opposite sex on both sides of the counter.'[72]

Nevertheless, throughout the 1940s and 1950s, advertising for brands such as Brylcreem reflected broader social and cultural changes, particularly concerning understandings of gender, and helped to place men's hair within them. Brylcreem's adverts made claims to the centrality of the presentation of men's hair to their wider hopes of professional and romantic success. Such messages could be communicated in ways which were both aspirational and cautionary. In the golden age of mutuality and the companionate ideal, men's hair was positioned as the subject of a conversation between men and women. Men were increasingly, if conservatively, portrayed as desirable figures and subject to a female gaze, while new expectations of psychological, physical and emotional intimacy and fulfilment meant that it was increasingly suggested to women that they should understand the fashionable aspirations of their loved ones – an understanding that could be demonstrated through gift-giving and festive consumption. Through such discursive

[70] 'There's MONEY in Hair Preparations', 12th March 1951, Boots Company Archive, Nottingham (hereafter: BCA), Albany Brilliantine Product File, WBA/BT/9/22/13/4.
[71] Houlbrook, *Queer London*, p.192; A. Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life & the British Popular Press 1918-1979* (Oxford and New York, 2009), pp.180-188; Weeks, *The World We Have Won*, pp.47-55.
[72] It was also suggested that the 'Men's Den' could be positioned next to the photography counter, already understood as a suitably 'masculine' part of the shop. 'The Man's Chemists', *Sales and Selling*, No. 30, Christmas 1959, BCA, Sales and Selling 1959, WBA/BT/11/38/1/4/4, pp.26-27.

practices, the care of men's hair – and male vanity more broadly – was slowly, partially, being "heterosexualised", positioned as an acceptable part of a consumerist modernity.

Men's hair in a "peacock age"

In November 1968, the news pages of the *Daily Mail* carried a report concerning the demise of what it described as 'a British institution'. Some 2,000 Brylcreem hair cream dispensers, found in workplaces and public amenities across the country, were 'about to squirt their last squirt', described by the *Mail* journalist as the 'sad victims of the trend towards longer hair – and less dressing.' Alfred Chismon, the man with the job of servicing and maintaining the machines, was planning his retirement, and was said to be 'philosophic' about the decision, explaining that 'I am afraid young men today do not use as much cream on their hair as their fathers did, and our machines give them more than they want'. It was not only changing male tastes that had led to the death of the public Brylcreem dispenser. 'Many pits are closing down and we have quite a large number [of dispensers] at the pitheads', Chismon told the *Mail*, adding that 'it would cost too much to convert all the machines to decimal currency anyway.'[73] The greased down aesthetic, it seemed, belonged to a world that was slipping into the past.

Brylcreem continued to sell relatively well during the 1960s, described in internal Boots communications in May 1968 as 'STILL the brand leader, with a significant though reduced market share'.[74] However, by this point the cultural hegemony of the "Brylcreem look", of neatly presented, glossy, slicked down hair, had been successfully challenged, a development reflected in the fact that Brylcreem was reformulated and relaunched in 1968 to offer 'light control' rather than a 'plastered' appearance.[75] By the late 1960s British men were being presented with other options when it came to hair dressings. Cossack, launched in 1965 by Derby-based manufacturer F W Hampshire & Co, was described as 'the new non-greasy *spray-on* hairdressing for MEN', supplied, as

[73] W. Greaves, 'A blow for the Brylcreem boys', *Daily Mail*, 2nd November 1968, p.4.
[74] Emphasis in original. 'New Bold BRYLCREEM', 6th May 1968, BCA, The Bulletin, New Lines and Special Announcements, WBA/BT/11/38/1/3/66.
[75] 'New Bold BRYLCREEM'. The emphasis on control in Brylcreem's advertising also lessened, replaced in the early 1970s by the suggestion that 'A little dab of Brylcreem on your hair, gives you the Brylcreem bounce!' – an image of movement and freedom, rather than stasis. See, for instance, 'Brylcreem Commercial: [Barber Bounce]', undated (c. early 1970s), History of Advertising Trust, < https://www.hatads.org.uk/catalogue/record/94fa7243-fc95-4e90-9b99-14728c1d1cfd>, accessed 21st November 2018.

this would suggest, in an aerosol can rather than a jar or tube.[76] In the late 1960s and early 1970s a number of other manufacturers followed suit in launching men's hairsprays, including Gillette and Boots themselves, who offered men's aerosols as part of both their mid-market Albany toiletries range and their premium Jade East brand.[77] These sprays were often marketed as being more suitable for men with longer hair, as well as offering a more "natural" finish than hair "creams" such as Brylcreem. Boots' Jade East aerosol, for instance, was labelled as 'Natural-Look Hair Spray', formulated 'to hold hair in place lightly and naturally.'[78] Advertisements for brands such as Cossack made claims to "naturalness" by portraying the slicked down look as artificial, unfashionable and undesirable. In 1969 a series of Cossack print advertisements featured (fictionalised) letters from women, ending their relationships with their male suitors on the grounds of various hair-based *faux pas*. Some control of hair, and a sense of pride of appearance was still portrayed as important. While 'Janette' could live with 'Harry' 'fancying your football more than me', she drew the line at his 'hair flapping round in the wind like a scarecrow.' Harry's woes, suggested Janette, could have been averted with the use of Cossack, 'that clean, invisible hair spray [*sic.*] men use to keep their hair in control all day'; his failure to do so only went to show that he was 'old-fashioned and pig-headed'.[79] The man who used hair cream fared little better in his love life, however, as 'Mary's' letter to the unfortunate 'Alfonso' demonstrated (Figure 13). As the latter's name might suggest, this advert played on the racialized stereotype of the "greasy" foreigner, with Mary declaring that 'when my friends started calling you "grease-ball", I realized I'd had enough'. The photograph of Alfonso, dressed smartly in a suit and tie with neat hair shimmering with product, bore an uncanny resemblance to the models featured in Brylcreem's earlier advertisements. Here, the obvious artifice of hair cream was contrasted with 'a clean, invisible hair spray that keeps mens [*sic.*] hair natural looking.'[80]

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[76] Emphasis in original. 'The great change-over is to Cossack', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 15th October 1965, p.20. F W Hampshire & Co was absorbed into Reckitt & Colman Products Ltd in 1970. L. Richmond, J. Stevenson and A. Turton (eds.), *The Pharmaceutical Industry: A Guide to Historical Records* (Aldershot, 2003), pp.289-291.

[77] 'DRIVE Men's Spray-on Hairdressing', 8th March 1968, BCA, The Bulletin, New Lines and Special Announcements, WBA/BT/11/38/1/3/66; 'NEW for MEN Albany hairdressing aerosol', 27th October 1970, BCA, Albany Hair Spray, WBA/BT/9/22/23/5; 'Jade East A Year Of Promise', 18th July 1972, BCA, Jade East Product File, WBA/BT/9/22/13/29.

[78] 'Jade East A Year Of Promise'.

[79] Emphasis in original. 'Don't wait till she sends you Cossack. Buy some now.' (advertisement), *Goal*, 26th April 1969, p.17.

[80] Emphasis in original. 'Don't wait till she sends you Cossack. Buy some now.' (advertisement), *Goal*, 22nd March 1969, p.17.

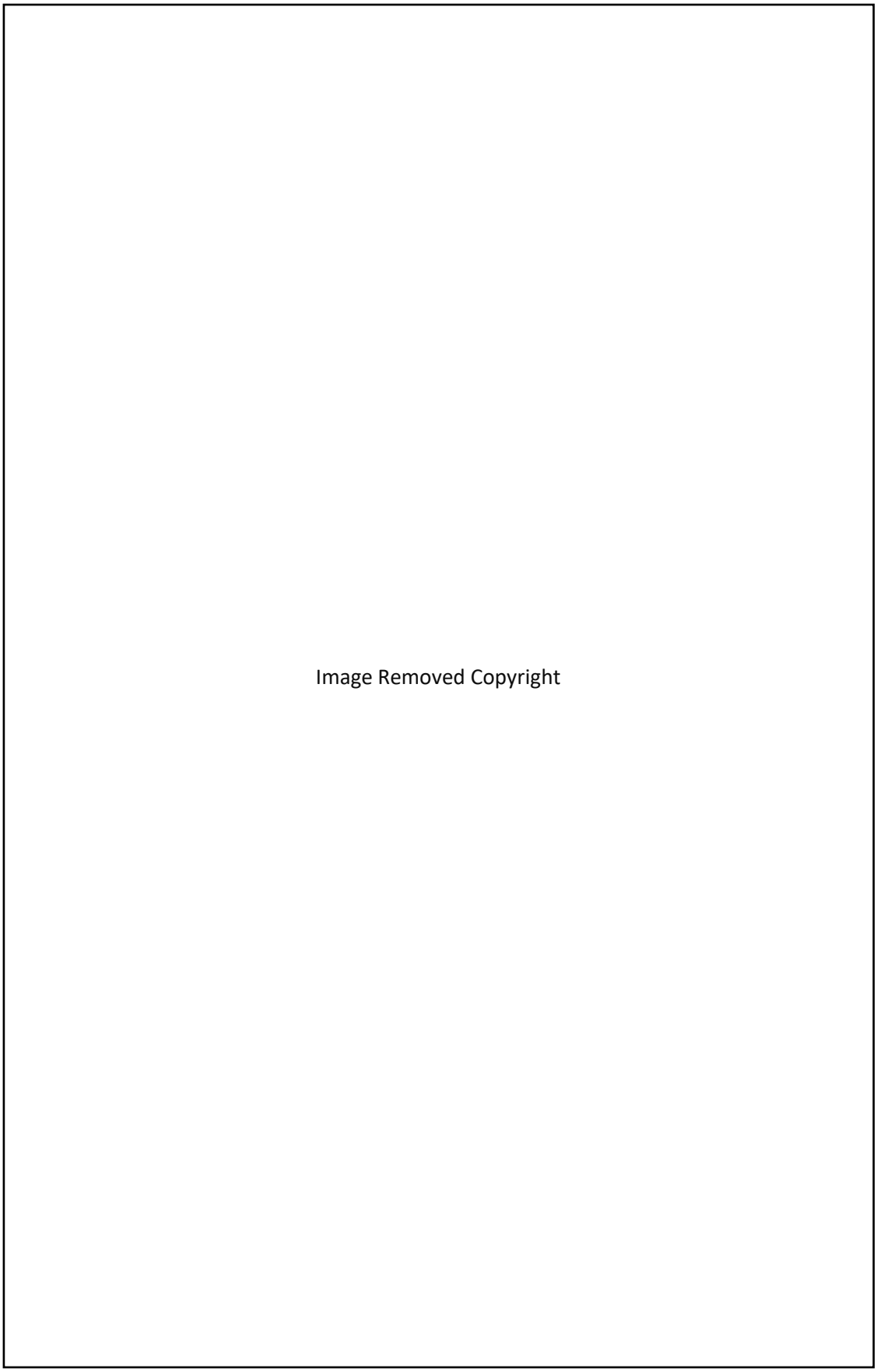


Figure 13: ‘Don’t wait till she sends you Cossack. Buy some now.’ (advertisement), *Goal*, 22nd March 1969, p.17.

Most immediately apparent were the ways in which these criticisms focused on the appearance of hair presented with the aid of cream-based dressings, as well as their texture – the idea that they were greasy. Despite the best efforts of Brylcreem's advertising, which had often stressed that their product would ensure 'a clean, healthy scalp', the idea that the stickiness of such dressings would attract dust or dirt, remarked upon in Mass-Observation's 1939 research, seems to have persisted.[81] More importantly, however, the cultural appeal of 'firm but gentle control' as masculine attributes had diminished significantly. If many Brylcreem adverts of the 1950s had contained symbolism and language which could be read as promising to suppress or regulate a man's primal urges, then Cossack's promotional material sought to communicate a different message. 'All it controls is your hair', ran the tagline of Cossack's print and television advertising during the early 1970s, a campaign conceived, according to the *Hairdressers' Journal*, to attract men through 'a strong emphasis on young and manly attitudes'.[82] A 1971 television commercial showed a Cossack horseman, with impressive moustache and mid-length hair flowing in the wind, pursuing a young blonde woman wearing a contemporary floaty dress (Figure 14).[83] The horseman grabbed the woman by the arm and hoisted her up on to his steed, a shot that was then repeated more than twenty times in rapid succession, the speed of the cuts and the bleeding of the colours creating a hallucinogenic effect. Suddenly the viewer was shown an aerosol can, as a male voiceover announced, 'Cossack, hairspray for men. All it controls is your hair'.[84] Here was a celebration of a primordial, dominant masculinity, and a rejection of the repression of male (hetero)sexuality. Cossack, it was suggested, would offer – almost undetectable – control over a man's hair, while leaving his deepest instincts unhindered. In its brand name and television advertising, Cossack reflected the centrality of "restraint" within white British (hetero)sexual cultures and national identity during the early and mid-twentieth century. The weakening of this "restraint", and the embrace of a liberated male heterosexuality in the late 1960s and early 1970s, then, was often exoticised and portrayed using imagery which drew on racialized stereotypes, through depictions of

[81] 'Sportsmen in the public eye use BRYLCREEM' (advertisement), *Picture Post*, 27th August 1955, back cover; 'File Report A21, p.85.
[82] 'Cossack gets a £100,000 fillip', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 12th May 1972, p.23.
[83] 'Cossack Hairspray For Men, 1970s', < http://www.retrocards.co.uk/index.php?app=gbu0&ns=prodshow&ref=BP168-cossack-hairspray-for-men-1970s&sid=352pptv1d46146935xpxbd7a4m24cpka>, accessed 20th November 2018.
[84] 'Cossack hairspray commercial [horseman]', 1971, History of Advertising Trust, <http://www.hatads.org.uk/catalogue/record/e1098477-97b5-4f4a-a86a-5675a5f6624f>, accessed 20th November 2018.

blackness or Eastern or Southern European cultures.[85] Redrawing the boundaries of male appearance and sexuality only served to reveal the 'ethno-sexual Otherness' that Jeffrey Weeks identifies as 'beginning to haunt the [white] British imagination' from the late 1950s onwards.[86]

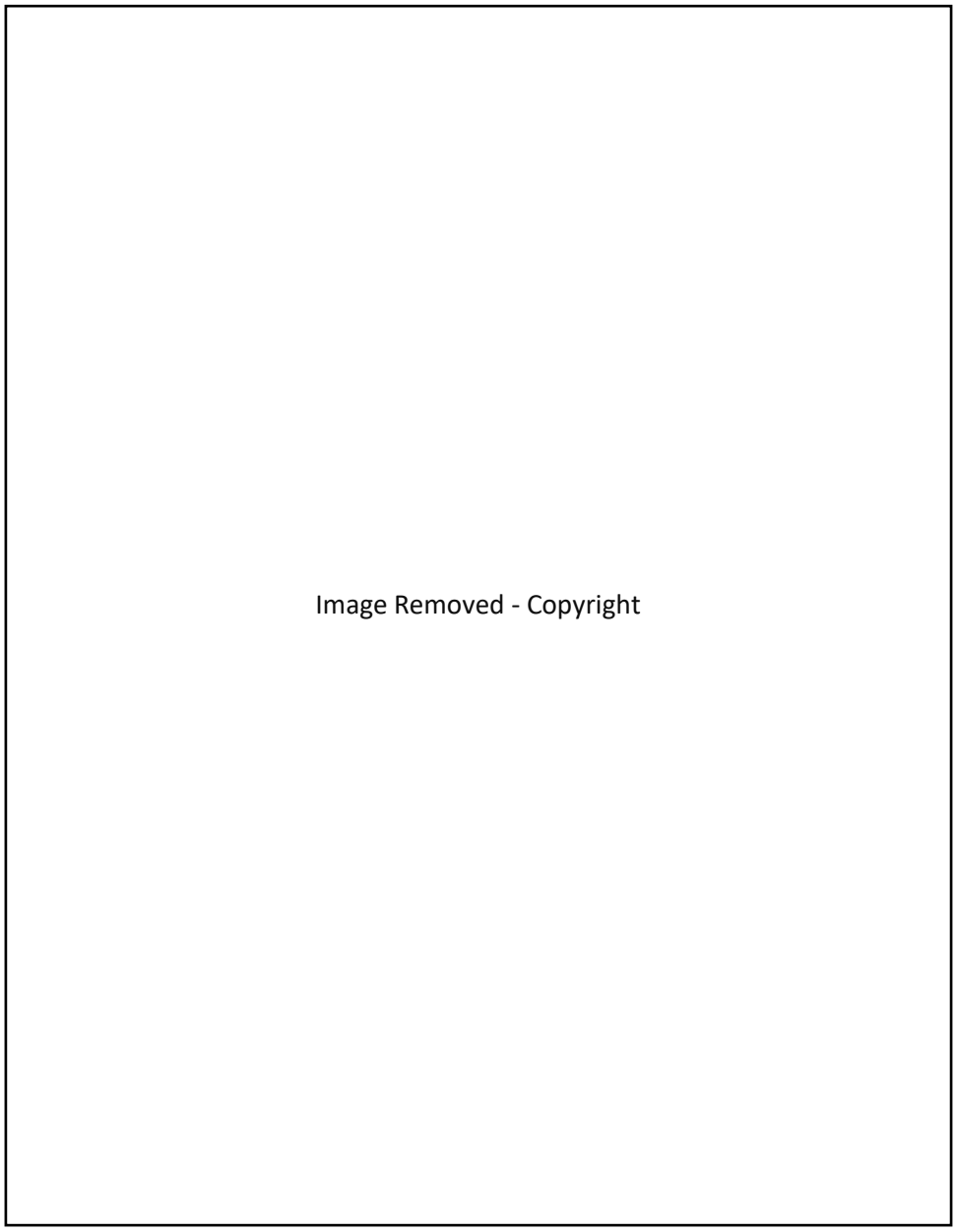


Figure 14: Print advertisement based on Cossack TV commercial, c.1970. 'Cossack Hairspray For Men, 1970s', < http://www.retrocards.co.uk/index.php?app=gbu0&ns=prodshow&ref=BP168-cossack-hairspray-for-men-1970s&sid=352pptv1d46146935xpxbd7a4m24cpka>, accessed 20th November 2018.

[85] The branding for Boots' Jade East range of men's toiletries, for instance, featured Japanese kanji and was promoted with a television commercial featuring battling samurai. 'Jade East – Our Biggest Drive to Christmas!', undated (c.1975), BCA, Jade East Product File, WBA/BT/9/22/13/29.
[86] Weeks, *The World We Have Won*, pp.45-46.

Inevitably, the idea of hairspray for men raised some anxieties concerning effeminacy. In part, the hyper-masculine tone of Cossack's advertising can be viewed as attempting to defuse these tensions. Other campaigns sought to link the brand with what were understood as predominantly male pursuits such as gambling, with free playing cards offered to customers as a promotional gift in the summer of 1972. Perhaps most successful were Cossack's efforts to associate their brand with professional sport. Following the example set by Brylcreem in previous decades, during the 1970s Cossack sponsored both football and motor racing, with hoardings advertising their men's hairspray appearing pitchside at Wembley Stadium at the 1972 League Cup Final, and Britain's Roger Clarke winning the 1976 RAC Rally in a red and white Cossack-liveried Ford Escort MKII.[87] Queen's Park Rangers goalkeeper Phil Parkes, sporting a feather cut and a moustache, also endorsed Cossack in a series of magazine adverts during the mid-1970s.[88] While these marketing strategies sought to counter worries of perceived effeminacy by offering reassuring images of motorcars and successful sportsmen, another Cossack campaign tackled the issue head on. 'Believe it or not, some men still prefer the grease', announced one of the advertisements, printed in *Do it yourself* magazine in 1978, '[t]hey have either never heard of Cossack, or they're still under the impression that hairsprays are effeminate' (Figure 15). The cartoon accompanying this text showed a man holding a dripping oil can above his head, an image of gloopiness which contrasted with the declaration that '[t]oday's Cossack is the cleanest, fastest, easiest, most <u>natural</u> and masculine way to keep your hair looking great all day long […] Unless, of course, you're still into the slicked down look.'[89] The message was clear: a man worrying about effeminacy when it came to hair dressings was old-fashioned and out of date, just like a man who continued to plaster his hair with 'grease'. As the text put it, such men 'still' thought that hairsprays were effeminate, and 'still' liked to slick down their hair.

[87] According to the *Hairdressers' Journal*, Cossack's advertising hoardings were the first of their kind to ever appear at Wembley Stadium. 'Men's Side', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 17th March 1972, p.23. For footage of Clarke's victorious 'Cossack' Escort MKII, see 'RAC Rally 1976', < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEr78F-2acg>, accessed 25th November 2018.
[88] 'Magazine Advert Cossack 1970s', <http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/detail/6709/1/Magazine-Advert/Cossack/1970s>, accessed 25th November 2018.
[89] Emphasis in original. 'Believe it or not, some men still prefer the grease' (advertisement), *Do it yourself*, October 1978, p.26.

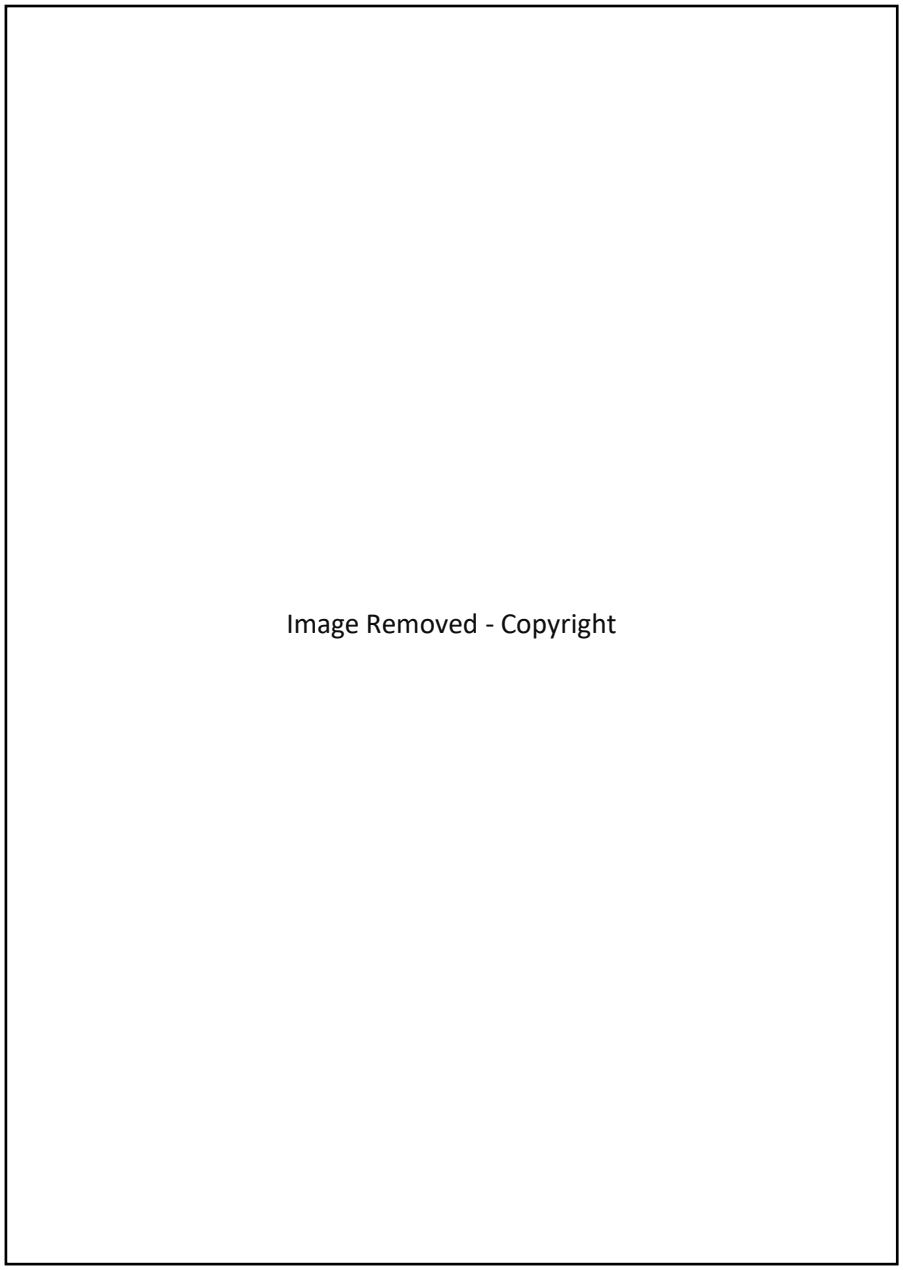


Figure 15: 'Believe it or not, some men still prefer the grease' (advertisement), *Do it yourself*, October 1978, p.26.

Another advert from the same campaign positioned the use of men's hairspray as part of a liberationist narrative, of a gradual progressive shift in male grooming, away from repression and fears of effeminacy (Figure 16):

> "Too effeminate, these scented male colognes", they said. But suddenly smelling fresh and masculine caught on, and splashing on a brisk, refreshing aftershave became part of a man's routine. The same is happening with men's hairspray.[90]

[90] 'There was a time when men even had hang-ups about wearing an aftershave' (advertisement), *Punch*, 11th October 1978, advertising insert, pp.594-595.

Here, the cartoon depicted a male figure lurking in an alleyway, wearing a long raincoat, back against the wall and looking anxiously over his shoulder. Furtively, he was shaking a drop of cologne onto his wrist. It was a striking image, one that drew on depictions of mid-century male homosexuality as existing within the shadows of the metropolis (the adverts appeared, for instance, three years after Thames Television's adaptation of *The Naked Civil Servant*) to make the claim that men were being liberated from worrying that their sexuality would be judged based on the styling of their hair.[91]

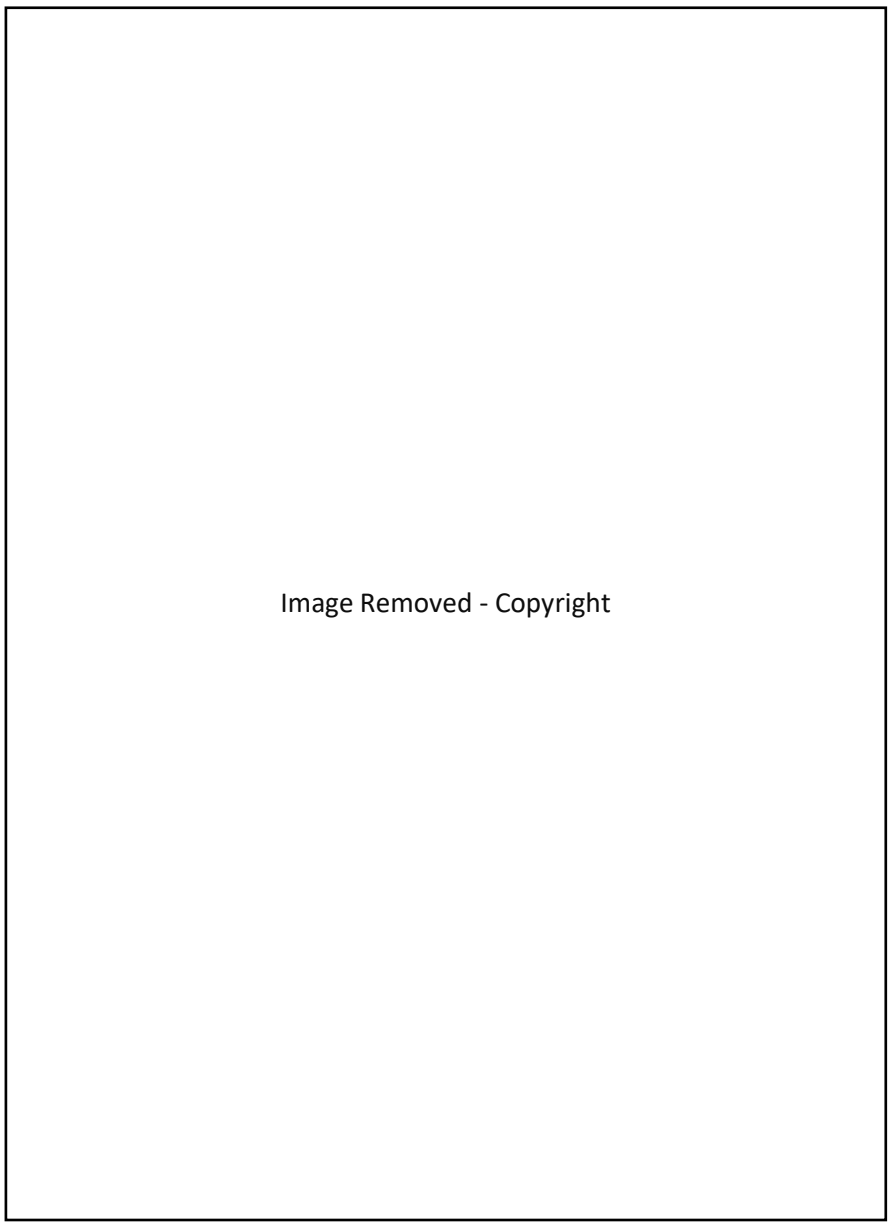


Figure 16: 'There was a time when men even had hang-ups about wearing an aftershave' (advertisement), *Punch*, 11th October 1978, advertising insert, pp.594-595.

[91] Mackie, Crisp, *The Naked Civil Servant*.

By the end of the 1960s, pop-sociological texts, television documentaries, trade journals, and the mainstream British press were all propagating the idea of a "peacock age" or "peacock revolution". These were shorthands used to refer to what was perceived as a reformation of male appearance, a move away from the neat, clean-cut, conservative ideal to embrace longer hair, facial hair, brightly-coloured clothes and flamboyant designs.[92] The themes that ran through Cossack's advertising of the late 1960s and 1970s – an emphasis on the appeal of a primordial, unrestrained masculinity, the idea of men being "liberated" from fears of effeminacy when it came to grooming and the presentation of their hair, and of a femininity that was represented as both more assertive in dating matters, but also passive in the face of displays of primal manliness – reflected this wider cultural and intellectual discourse. Changes in male hair fashions were often understood to symbolise a shift in the balance of power – social, sexual, and economic – between the genders. In August 1967 BBC1 broadcast a documentary film by the director, writer and activist Jill Craigie entitled *Keep Your Hair On!*, exploring the change in hair fashions for young British men and relating this shift to wider transformations in gendered behaviour. Craigie interviewed the eminent fashion historian James Laver, who suggested that the 'erotic principle' which he identified in female dress and grooming throughout history – driven, he claimed, by a male preoccupation with the sexual attractiveness of prospective partners – was now being transferred back to male self-presentation. This, Laver said, was a result of social and economic upheavals, and the decline of the image of the British male as the patriarch and sole-breadwinner:

> it is precisely because that dominant providing male idea is vanishing, more and more, as the state takes over the functions that used to be exercised by the father, and because women are earning their own livings, that they can begin to choose their partner in life by their attractiveness as men. And if they do that, the erotic principle will transfer itself back to male dress […][93]

The arguments forwarded by Laver were soon echoed by other writers and publications. In her 1971 book, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism*, British journalist and writer Wendy Cooper suggested that new male fashions were a result of women's 'improved status and

[92] Writing predominantly with regard to the United States, Jo B. Paoletti suggests that the term, 'peacock revolution', originated with the journalist George Frazier in the late 1960s. However, the use of the peacock as a symbol of male fashionable display was already common in publishing and the press in Britain by the early 1960s. J. B. Paoletti, *Sex and Unisex: Fashion, Feminism and the Sexual Revolution* (Bloomington, 2015), p.59; See, for instance, P. Binder, *The Peacock's Tail* (London, 1958); 'What's this – A Kinsey Report on men's clothes?', *Daily Express*, 17th February 1960, p.8; W. Hickey, 'This era of the Peacock Male …', *Daily Express*, 7th June 1965, p.3.

[93] Quoted in J. Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*, BBC1, 17th August 1967.

financial independence', a consequence of increased access to education and employment.[94] The *Hairdressers' Journal*, making sense of the new demands of clients, wrote of 'old barriers broken down' and '[n]ew feminine freedoms' which had made young women 'much more frank, aggressive […] and choosey.'[95] Increased male hairiness, then, was understood as an appeal for female attention, a secondary sexual characteristic that was necessary in an increasingly competitive dating market. In his 1965 book *Teenage Revolution*, the British writer Peter Laurie suggested that teenage girls, supposedly freed from social pressures of immediately finding employment or marriage, were dictating the appearance and temperament of their male contemporaries:

> [t]he decreasing importance of virility among the boys and the increase of more feminine interests; music, singing, and so on, and on occasion the apparent sexual confusion or indifferent sexuality, like the *Rolling Stones*, who are sexy but not particularly male, can be seen as an adaptation to the self-assertion of this large group of sub-teenage girls […] who resent moreover the traditional man-dominated role prescribed for women, and who demand the freedom to make decisions that boys have.[96]

While Laurie perceived the Rolling Stones as representing the decline of virility, other commentators interpreted changing fashions as statements of sexual display. Increased male hirsuteness, it was often suggested, was a perfectly logical and natural response by men to the reproductive challenge posed by changing demographics.[97] As the *Hairdressers' Journal* informed its readers in May 1970, for the first time since the First World War, there existed an 'absolute surplus of men in Britain' amongst the younger age groups.[98] British men, it was argued, had found themselves in the position of having 'to compete for mates. So, naturally, they become the display sex'.[99] According to the psychiatrist interviewed by Craigie, rather than 'chase', young men's reaction had been to dress up:

> boys, in effect, are now being the birds – the male birds. They are, if you like, being the peacocks, and they allow the rather drab females – and compared to some boys the females are indeed drab – to chase them, and they have to show that they don't really care.[100]

Increased male hairiness, then, was positioned as being part of man reclaiming his role

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[94] W. Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism* (New York, 1971), p.104.
[95] 'Boy Meets Girl', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 7th November 1969, p.2.
[96] P. Laurie, *Teenage Revolution* (London, 1965), pp.151-156.
[97] Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism*, p.105.
[98] 'Why the Men's Boom Will Go on for Years', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 1st May 1970, p.39. In August 1967 social researcher and author Rose Hacker told BBC viewers that '[w]e have more boys than girls in every age group, right up to 44, in the population today. We have about 10,000 a year, of extra men'. Quoted in Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*
[99] 'Last Word on Long Hair', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 14th March 1969, p.4.
[100] Quoted in Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*

'as the natural display animal of the human species […] he is getting back to this by growing longer hair, sideburns, moustaches and beards.'[101]

Such discussions often placed a heavy emphasis on the alleged sexual appeal of male hirsuteness to women. 'Girls always liked long hair, they liked it through history', declared the psychiatrist to Craigie. 'If you talk to a girl nowadays they all agree, they really do like boys with long hair, well groomed, well turned out. They like boys to be handsome. They also like to stroke boys' hair, and it's very difficult to stroke a bristly Prussian crop.'[102] This was a line of argument that the *Hairdressers' Journal* was quick to promote, keen to counter critics who equated hairiness with supposed moral or sexual degeneration. 'The fact is', wrote the *Journal* in March 1969, 'men naturally have a lot of head and face hair. It is naturally attractive to women.'[103] The racial subtext that ran through these discussions of primordial masculinity, nature, and sexual attraction was, on occasion, given full voice. Wendy Cooper wrote of 'young whites' replicating 'the new Afro hair style [*sic.*]', arguing that this not only represented their 'belief in the essential equality of man', but also represented an embrace of 'sexual power, through the style's suggestion of Negro virility'.[104] As Weeks argues, even those who sought to embrace a changing, more diverse culture retained many of the '[e]thnocentric assumptions about sexuality' which were deeply embedded within British society.[105]

In presenting manly hairiness and flamboyant fashion as "natural", conservative dress and the short-haired, clean-shaven aesthetic was in turn portrayed as an "unnatural" state, an unfortunate consequence of the wars of the first half of the twentieth century and the military conscription experienced by generations of British males. 'Short hair for men is not natural. Nature intended men to have hairy heads and faces', wrote the *Hairdressers' Journal* in May 1970, adding that it was only 'military hygiene necessity' that had prompted the rise of the short-back-and-sides, a 'tradition' which, opponents were reminded, was 'only two generations old'.[106] In part, then, the emphasis placed on the idea that longer hair for men was "natural" acted as a critique of earlier hegemonic forms of masculinity. Here, defenders of the new fashions drew on ideas that had been

[101] 'Why the Men's Boom Will Go on for Years', p.39.
[102] Quoted in Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*
[103] 'Last Word on Long Hair', p.4.
[104] Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism*, p.105.
[105] Weeks, *The World We Have Won*, p.46.
[106] 'Why the Men's Boom Will Go on for Years', p.39; 'Last Word on Long Hair', p.4.

circulating amongst writers and intellectuals since the inter-war period. In 1930 John Flügel's *The Psychology of Clothes* had argued that attempts to conceal the 'characteristic signs of maleness' such as 'greater hairiness' were all part of 'a very considerable intolerance of the male body'.[107] For Flügel, along with his fellow members of the inter-war Men's Dress Reform Party (MDRP), norms of appearance that left men feeling drab and uncomfortable were likely to produce 'deep-lying psychological difficulties and inefficiencies'. The MDRP did not survive beyond the Second World War, but the ideas that fed that movement persisted throughout the 1950s in intellectual circles.[108] Charles Berg – like Flügel a Freudian psychologist – argued in 1951 that hair cutting and shaving were symbolic of castration and repression of sexual urges, while the author and artist Pearl Binder wrote in 1958 that the conservatism of appearance seen in British men contributed to male psychological dysfunction, and encouraged hostility towards women who were permitted to display the 'fine feathers' that men were said to be forced to hide.[109]

Changing male hair fashions in the late 1960s, then, were understood to represent man freeing himself from this repression. The slicked down look of the 1940s and 1950s was now positioned as an unfashionably "controlled" aesthetic, apparently superseded by new masculine ideals. Jill Craigie's documentary profiled the lives of four long-haired men: photographer Alan Ballard, interior designer David Mlinaric, boutique owner and fashion designer Michael Rainey, and Nick Charal, presented as working as a car mechanic but who was also on the books of the English Boy modelling agency.[110] These occupations were a far cry from the ocean liner navigators, air traffic controllers, naval architects and business executives that had featured in Brylcreem's 1959 'man with a plus' campaign. Indeed, the world of straight-laced professionalism depicted in those advertisements was presented in *Keep Your Hair On!* as conformist and soulless. In a somewhat less than spontaneous scene, Charal and a young female companion, travelling in an ex-army jeep, were shown arriving outside a brutalist office block. 'I worked for three months in a place like that', said Charal, looking up at the imposing concrete structure, described by

[107] J. C. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (Edinburgh, 1930), pp.117-118, 208-209.
[108] J. Bourke, 'The Great Male Renunciation: Men's Dress Reform in Britain', *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1996), pp.23-33.
[109] C. Berg, *The Unconscious Significance of Hair* (London, 1951), pp.76-77; P. Binder, *The Peacock's Tail* (London, 1958), p.18.
[110] Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*; 'Model Nick Charal', <http://www.modelscomposites.com/getlist.php?list=mod&choice=Nick+Charal&year=all&id=>, accessed 5th March 2019.

the (unnamed) woman as 'like something out of Kafka'. 'That's right', agreed Charal, 'all 9 to 5, yes sir, yes sir, three bloody bags full sir. What do they produce? Masses of paper […] Yeah, well it's not for me babe.' The idea of scientific and technological progress, also prominent in Brylcreem's earlier advertising, was positioned by Craigie and her contributors as threatening and destructive. At the conclusion of the film, conversation turned to global politics and the threat of a nuclear apocalypse – Craigie herself was a founding member of CND – as the young men's interviews were intercut with scenes of bombing in South East Asia. 'People think we're immoral, because we wear long hair', complained Michael Rainey, 'but what can be more immoral than America's war in Vietnam?'[111] The male archetypes portrayed by Craigie, then, differed sharply from the controlled, slicked-down figures of the 1950s and early 1960s – self-employed rather than company men, with an interest in the humanist, the sensuous and the natural, instead of the technological and the scientific.

There were, however, also some continuities. Elements of the mutual ideal which had featured heavily in Brylcreem's advertising remained culturally ascendant, albeit with a significantly reduced focus on the institution of marriage – in the more openly sexualised culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s, desire was increasingly portrayed as existing outside of the wife-husband dynamic.[112] 'Many boys today have long hair because they are letting themselves be sexually attractive to girls […] the short haired, short-back-and-sides boy was needing to deny his tenderness, needing to deny his attractiveness to the opposite sex', declared the psychiatrist interviewed by Craigie in 1967. He went on to suggest that, rather than signifying effeminacy, long hair on men was symbolic of a younger generation that was, in the view of their elders, 'much too successfully heterosexual', apparently free of 'sexual problems' which had 'bedevilled' their ancestors – '[i]t is rare nowadays, I think, to see young people complain of impotence, complain of frigidity, complain of sexual incompetence in a whole variety of ways.'[113] This was, of course, an exaggeration, but the message to viewers was clear; by throwing off the shackles of a cultural taboo against male hirsuteness, and escaping the psychological traumas of denying their "natural" hairy form, the modern British man would be more emotionally balanced and fulfilled, a better lover, partner and parent.

[111] Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*
[112] Weeks, *The World We Have Won*, pp.70-71.
[113] Quoted in Craigie, *Keep Your Hair On!*

Peacock masculinity as lived: hair loss and hairpieces

By the late 1960s male hirsuteness was increasingly culturally ascendant, seen to represent liberation, fashionability and desirability. What, then, were the consequences for men who had lost, or were losing, much of their hair? The boom in sales of men's hairpieces in Britain during the late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrated that the appeal of the "peacock" image existed beyond the musings of commentators, journalists and psychiatrists, affecting the lives of millions of British men. Marketed as symbols of youth, affluence and virility, hairpieces claimed to offer bald or balding men the opportunity to both reverse the passage of time, and participate in the newly fashionable hirsuteness. The mixed experiences of wearers, and the toupee's continued status as an object of comedy, however, show that the performance of male vanity remained a precarious business.

In the early 1970s male pattern baldness, thought to account for 95 per cent of male hair loss, was estimated by scientists to affect one in five men before their thirtieth birthday, with the numbers increasing with age thereafter.[114] The historian Martin Johnes, writing about baldness in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, suggests that 'many men seem to have become more concerned with the issue' during the inter-war period, as the popularity of hat-wearing gradually declined, and hair gained greater prominence as a social signifier in an increasingly image-conscious society.[115] While baldness could be popularly aligned with positive qualities in the early twentieth century – intelligence, wisdom, kindness – it was also often the subject of jokes or pity.[116] Respondents to Mass-Observation's 1939 survey of attitudes towards personal appearance varied in their reactions to the prospect or experience of hair loss, some expressing concern or regret, others accepting increasing baldness as part of the ageing process.[117] However, this popular association, of male baldness with ageing, meant that hair loss also often raised questions of virility and health, particularly for men who were entering early middle age. As youth became increasingly influential as a cultural

[114] Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism*, p.47; for a later scientific study which drew broadly similar conclusions see, T. Rhodes, C. J. Girman, R. C. Savin, K. D. Kaufman, S. Guo, F. R. W. Lilly, R. M. Siervogel, C. Chumlea, 'Prevalence of Male Pattern Hair Loss in 18-49 Year Old Men' in *Dermatologic Surgery*, Vol. 24, No. 12 (1998), pp.1330-1332.
[115] I am grateful to Martin Johnes for allowing me permission to cite his unpublished article. M. Johnes, 'Precarious masculinity: bald and balding British men, c.1880-1939', unpublished paper, 2017.
[116] Johnes, 'Precarious masculinity'.
[117] 'File Report A21', pp.85-86.

category in the post-war period, a lack of hair could be positioned as a decided disadvantage, potentially leaving a man as an onlooker, unable to fully participate in the patriarchal privileges of any "sexual revolution".[118] A photograph included in Wendy Cooper's *Hair: Sex, Society and Symbolism* showed a man sitting on a bench, watching a young woman walk by, and was accompanied with the author's remark that 'at least his bald head does not stop him looking at the long-haired, mini-skirted girl.' The woman, readers could hardly fail to notice, was not looking back at the older man (Figure 17).[119]

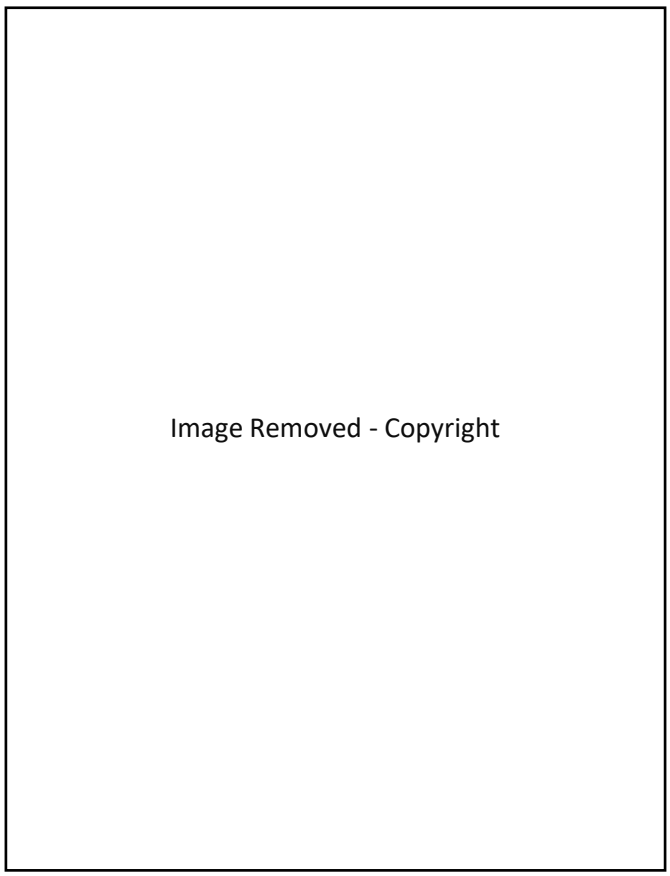


Figure 17: Photograph included in Wendy Cooper's *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism*, pp.54-55.

These narratives were, of course, challenged. Cooper herself wrote that such cultural constructions were 'sad and illogical', highlighting medical research which linked male pattern baldness to 'sex hormones' and arguing that men should wear their 'baldness proudly as almost a badge of virility'.[120] Just as Johnes suggests in the context of the inter-war period, plenty of men in the 1960s and 1970s would have been unconcerned or

[118] A. Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford and New York, 1998), p.17.
[119] Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism*, pp.54-55.
[120] Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism*, p.55

unaffected by their experience of hair loss.[121] Even those who wished to participate in a new "peacock" masculinity could, after all, achieve this through the wearing of fashionable clothes, or by cultivating a pair of chunky sideburns, a beard or a moustache. Nevertheless, by the late 1960s British men were spending unprecedented amounts of money in attempts to disguise hair loss, as the trade in hairpieces boomed. Crown Topper, a British company established by a hearing aid salesman in 1962, was recording annual sales of £1 million by 1969, with the *Daily Mail* business pages reporting on its intention to go public.[122] While not unheard of, few bald or balding men had opted to wear toupees during the inter-war years – those who wished to tackle hair loss had been more likely to turn to a range of tonics which promised to preserve their follicles or even regrow their hair. However, developments in trichology, as well as the first-hand experiences of consumers, meant that products which made such outlandish claims were widely discredited by the post-war period.[123] General acceptance that male pattern baldness could not be significantly reversed also coincided with advances in the design and manufacture of hairpieces. By the 1960s manufacturers and retailers of male toupees were boasting that their products were '[a]bsolutely undetectable', extolling the benefits of innovations such as 'hair-lace front[s]' and 'knotted crown[s]'.[124] As the Consumer Association's magazine, *Which?*, explained to their discerning readers in October 1969, by the late 1960s male hairpieces were complex constructions, featuring a base or 'foundation' made either of firm material such as plastic or glass fibre, or softer fabrics such as silk, cotton or nylon, to which the hair was attached or weaved through. The hair itself was usually of human origin, although animal hair (such as yak hair) might be used to add texture, while partings could be created through the application of a small piece of skin-coloured silk. For all of the skill involved in the manufacture of these hairpieces, however, the method of affixing to the skull was unavoidably basic – strips of double-sided tape, applied to the underside of the toupee, which was then firmly pressed on to the wearer's scalp.[125]

The increase in sales of hairpieces during the late 1960s surprised even informed observers. As the *Hairdressers' Journal* put it, during the early 1960s the male share of

[121] Johnes, 'Precarious masculinity'.
[122] P. Sergeant, 'Hair coming to market', *Daily Mail*, 20th March 1969, p.15.
[123] Johnes, 'Precarious masculinity'.
[124] 'Crown Topper' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 1st April 1964, p.6; 'Suppliers give you the know-how … and the profit', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th April 1968, p.39.
[125] 'Hairpieces for men', *Which?*, October 1969, pp.313-314.

the wig business hadn't been 'worth discussing'; by October 1969 the same publication was reporting the Consumer Council's prediction that 100,000 male hairpieces would be sold in Britain in the following 12 months, with total sales forecast to reach some £15 million.[126] The *Journal* saw the hairpiece boom as an opportunity for men's hairdressers to increase their profits ('it is normal for hairdressers to sell [hairpieces] at around 100 per cent mark-up') as well as the standing of their trade, writing in April 1968 that '[t]he current boom in hair pieces [*sic*.] for men offers the finest opportunity men's hairdressers have ever had to promote themselves to the status of highly paid professional consultants.'[127] Hairdressers, however, faced competition from the high street – the manufacturer Carmen opened outlets in department stores in London, Canterbury, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Sheffield and Leeds in the summer of 1969 – while *Which?* found in the same year that a majority of the consumers they surveyed had purchased their toupee directly from the manufacturer.[128] That many men preferred to place an order for a toupee through the mail, or to invite a sales rep into their own home, said much about the awkwardness and embarrassment some felt at the prospect of making such a purchase in public.

Advances in the design and manufacture of hairpieces could not, in isolation, explain the sharp increase in their popularity in Britain during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and many contemporary observers understood the "wig boom" as another aspect of the rise of the "peacock male". Increased affluence was once again positioned as a key driver. Hairpieces, after all, were far from cheap – in the late 1960s ready-made toupees often retailed at around £20 or £30, with bespoke pieces costing anywhere from £40 to more than £150. Yet these were prices that more men seemed willing to pay. '[T]here is much more spending money in the average man's pocket than ever before', suggested the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1968, explaining the sharp rise in hairpiece sales, '[n]owadays men no longer feel inclined to go without the things they want.'[129] The desire for hair, coupled with the advances in the supposed 'quality and sheer naturalness' of toupees meant 'that baldness among men is rapidly becoming old-fashioned', wrote the *Journal*

[126] 'Profit From The Trend', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th April 1968, p.39; 'Out of Focus on the £15m Wig business', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 10th October 1969, p.50.
[127] 'Profit From The Trend', p.39.
[128] 'Carmen enter ready-to-wear wig market in store departments', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 8th August 1969, p.29; 'Hairpieces for men', p.314.
[129] 'Profit From The Trend', p.39.

in August 1969.[130] The 'peacock-age male' it was suggested, now demanded 'expert wig service' from a salon.[131] Taken alongside the rising sales in hair colouring, permanent waving and toiletries, the boom in hairpieces was perceived as yet more evidence that men were embracing technologies and 'services that traditionally have been confined to the ladies' Trade'.[132] Once again, the female influence was identified as central to this shift in male consumption. 'Get hold of the women if you want to sell toupees to men', suggested the *Hairdressers' Journal* in April 1968, advising salon owners to 'invite the women who have bald escorts to bring their men' to special hairpiece evenings, complete with 'eats and drinks'. Once the men had begun to 'reminisce about when they had hair', it was hoped, the hairdresser could 'sit back and wait for the orders for 100-gn toupees to roll in'.[133] At the Carmen Hair for Men centres, 'many of the initial enquiries' were said to be made by 'women shoppers'.[134] The suggestion that women found a man with hair (even if it wasn't his own) more attractive was a message that manufacturers of hairpieces were keen to promote – to both genders. 'Which man would you rather be seen with?' asked a print advertisement for Crown Topper, which featured a young woman photographed between two "versions" of her husband, one bald, and the other sporting a sizeable toupee, styled into the "feather cut" fashionable in the early 1970s (Figure 18). 'It makes him look a lot younger, doesn't it?' suggested the accompanying text, '[i]f your husband is going bald, it could do the same for him.'[135] The idea that a hairpiece would make a man appear more desirable to the opposite sex was, of course, also presented to male customers, with the manufacturer Hair Master going so far as to produce an advert which included a photo collage of miniature female models clinging to a man's toupee (Figure 19).[136]

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[130] 'A Huge Growth Market', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 15th August 1969, p.30.
[131] 'Men, it is much later than you think', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 24th January 1969, p.9.
[132] 'Why the men's boom will go on for years', p.39.
[133] 'Men's Side', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th April 1968, p.37.
[134] 'Watch the stores!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 15th August 1969, p.32.
[135] 'Crown Topper' (advertisement), c.1970, <http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/detail/13093/1/Magazine-Advert/Crown-Topper/1960s>, accessed 5th April 2019.
[136] 'A Man With A Secret' (advertisement), *Hairdressers' Journal*, 15th August 1969, p.32.

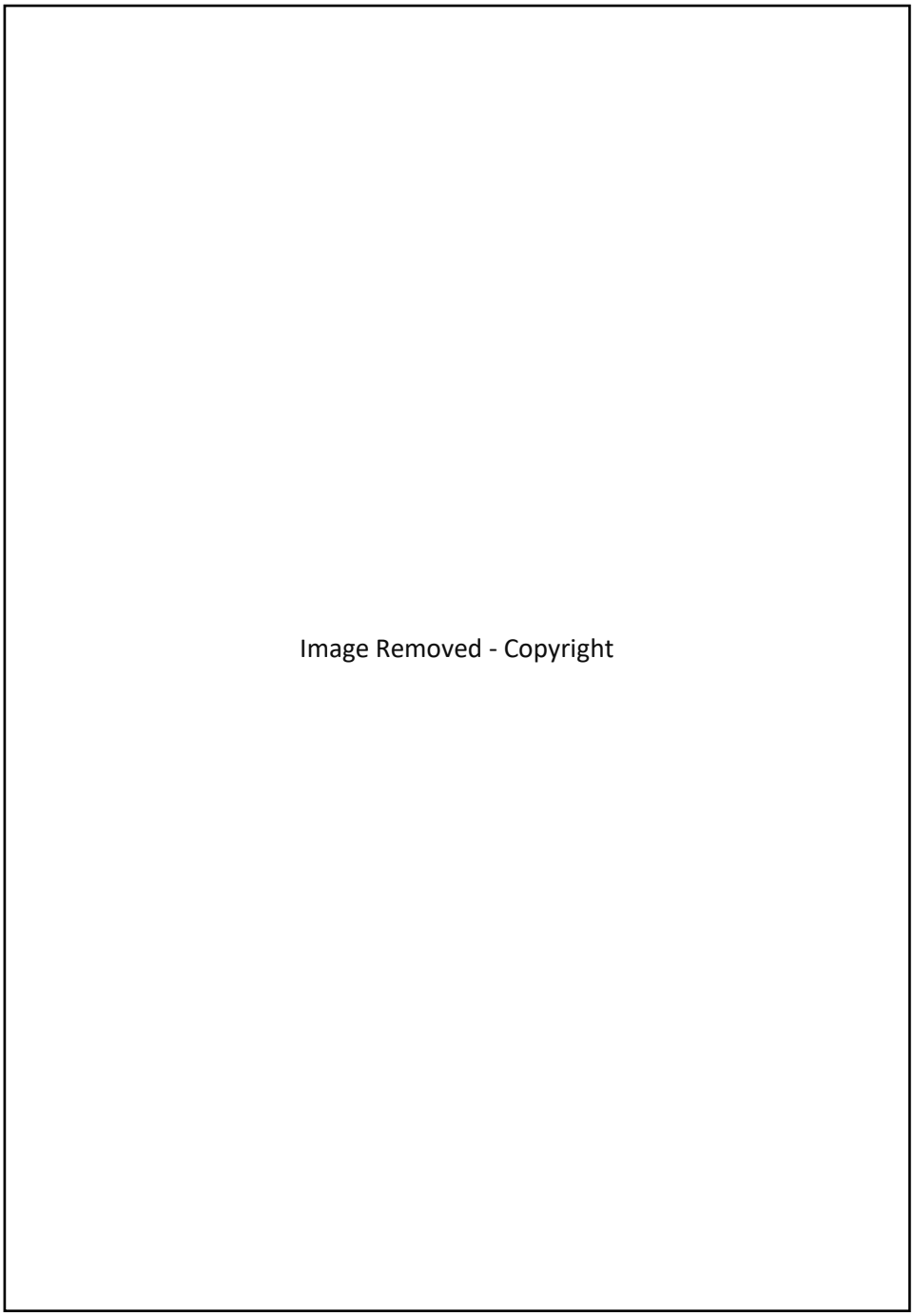


Figure 18: ‘Crown Topper’ (advertisement), c.1970, <http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/detail/13093/1/Magazine-Advert/Crown-Topper/1960s>, accessed 5th April 2019.

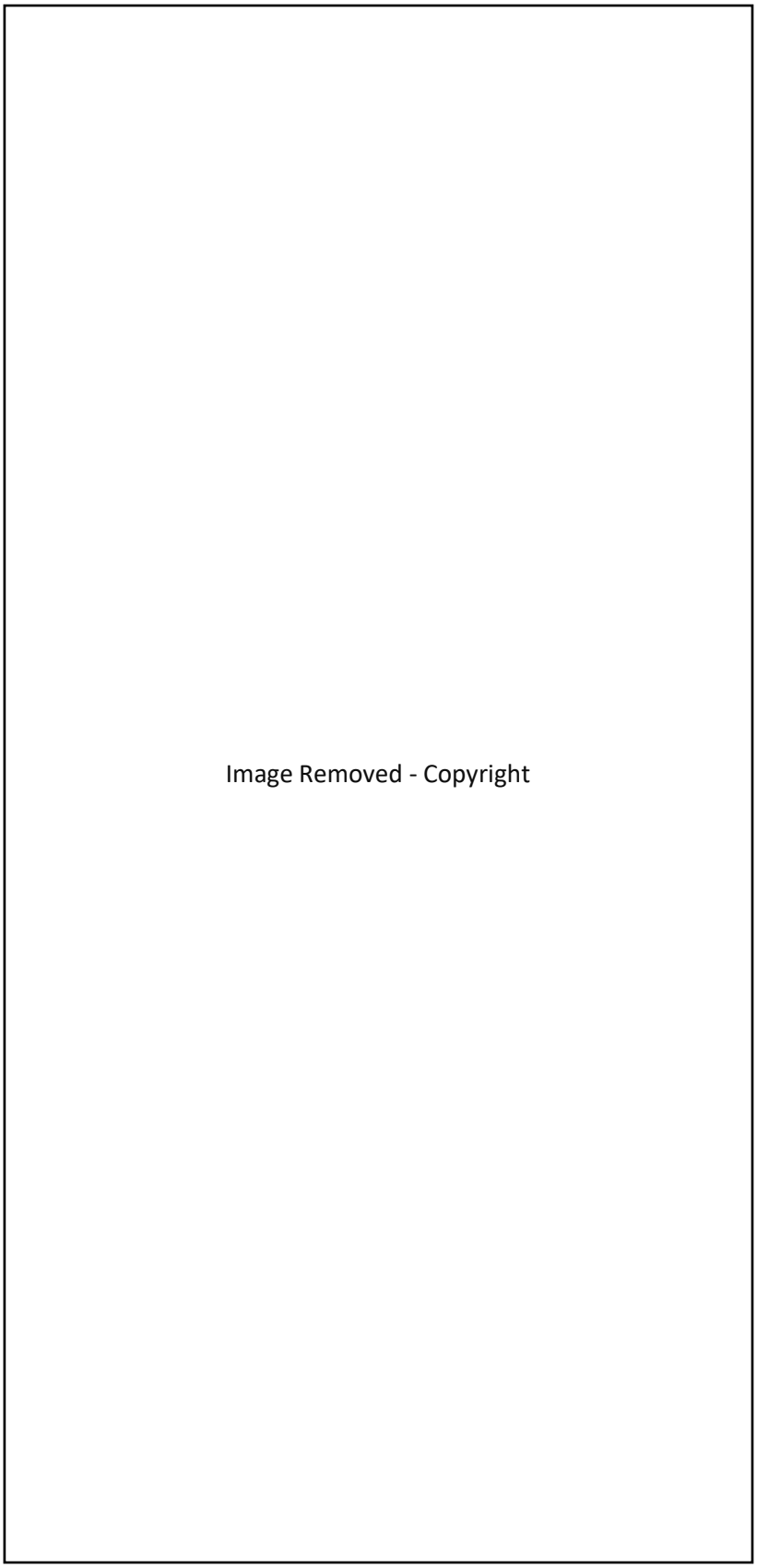


Figure 19: ‘A Man With A Secret’ (advertisement), *Hairdressers’ Journal*, 15th August 1969, p.32.

Much of the promotional material for brands such as Crown Topper sought to explicitly align their product – the hairpiece – with an aspirational and active lifestyle. An early Crown Topper advert, printed in the *Daily Mail* in 1964, claimed that purchasers would 'be wearing the same style hairpiece as many of the leading stars of TV, the Cinema and the West End Theatre', while later advertisements promised that a wearer would be able to 'drive as fast as he likes in an open topped sports car'.[137] Manufacturers' assurances that toupees could be worn while undertaking almost any physical activity – including driving, swimming, running or playing sports – were designed to both inspire confidence in potential customers, and suggest that a purchase would help a wearer uphold an image of physical fitness and virility.[138] Indeed, adverts for Crown Topper promised readers that their toupees could be worn 'even in bed […] Even your closest friends won't know you're wearing a Crown Topper.'[139]

The "undetectability" of hairpieces was the other, almost constant, theme of advertisements. While some manufacturers sought to project the covering of a bald spot or a receding hairline as an exciting act of disguise – Hair Master marketed one of their toupees as the 'Secret Agent' – customers, it was acknowledged, were more likely to feel anxiety at the prospect of their hairpiece being noticed.[140] As a representative of manufacturer Gerry Rex wrote in the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1971, the first question of a man considering purchasing a hairpiece 'invariably is: "Will it show?"' adding that '[a] noticeable hair replacement is worse than none at all.'[141] Unfortunately for some purchasers, the promises of manufacturers were not always fulfilled. In October 1969 *Which?* found that only a quarter of the 196 men they surveyed thought that their hairpieces were never spotted, while around ten per cent said that they were often detected. Poor colour matches and artificial looking hairlines or partings were common complaints, while others found that their toupees were unsuitable to wear while they played sport. Many of those who attempted to sleep in their hairpieces discovered that 'it was difficult to comb them back into place in the morning', or, even worse, that 'the hairpiece came off.'[142] Regardless of the assurances of manufacturers and hairdressers,

[137] 'Bald! …or just receding?' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 21st July 1964, p.6; 'Crown Topper' (advertisement).
[138] 'A Man With A Secret', p.32.
[139] 'Thinning Hair?' (advertisement), *Daily Mail*, 16th January 1968, p.12.
[140] 'Secret Agents Wanted', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 15th August 1969, p.32.
[141] Emphasis in original. L. Stein, 'The growing market in Hair Replacement', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 17th September 1971, p.34.
[142] 'Hairpieces for men', pp.313-319.

ensuring that the toupee remained fixed firmly to the scalp could prove a challenge. One respondent to the *Which?* survey reported that his hairpiece had been 'plucked off' by the 'thorns on a stray rose', while in 1973 the *Hairdressers' Journal* wrote that Glasgow Sheriff Court had ruled in favour of a customer who had refused to pay the balance on his toupee which 'kept rising in the wind'.[143] A football referee had experienced similar difficulties at St James' Park, Newcastle in April 1971, when high winds forced him to disregard his toupee mid-match, prompting much mirth from 22,000 spectators and the *Sunday Express*, who reported his misfortune on its front page.[144]

In spite of the best efforts of toupee manufacturers and the men's hairdressing trade, the wearing of hairpieces remained a common source of amusement and mockery for non-wearers, and a regular subject of gags for comedians and television script writers. When, in a 1972 episode of the BBC wartime sitcom *Dad's Army*, the character of Captain George Mainwaring purchases a wig in an effort to look younger, his second-in-command Sergeant Arthur Wilson is reduced to uncontrollable laughter (Figure 20). The balding Eric Morecambe's insistence that his comedy partner Ernie Wise wore a wig ('you can't see the join') was one of the double-act's longest running jokes.[145] In both cases, these gags found humour in the notion that the wearing of a hairpiece was a somewhat ridiculous act of male vanity, an often futile effort to slow the march of time which in fact cast the wearer as vulnerable, more prone to mockery than a man who accepted his receding hairline. And away from the television screen, male vanity could still be positioned as a failing and a sign of weakness. While *Which?* presented the decision to purchase a hairpiece as a perfectly rational consumer choice that might be made by any modern man experiencing hair loss, *Focus*, the magazine of the Consumer Council, approached the matter with an altogether more sceptical tone. *Focus*'s account, which appeared in the same month as the *Which?* article, quoted an industry insider who described the hairpiece trade as being in the process of 'becoming a racket', and a doctor who spoke of seeing a 'tragic procession' of 'pathetic' men who were concerned about hair loss and considering a toupee: '[m]any of them have become neurotic about it. They are in an anxiety state. They tell me they have failed in life; failed with girls, failed with

[143] 'Hairpieces for men', p.313; '£189 toupee kept rising in the wind', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 12th January 1973, p.19.
[144] 'Getting it taped…', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 30th April 1971, p.23.
[145] In addition to this long-running joke, in 1971 the Morecambe and Wise show featured a sketch where Eric and Ernie visited a hairpiece shop: E. Braben, 'Episode 6', *The Morecambe and Wise Show*, BBC2, 15th July 1971.

jobs. They believe that their baldness is the cause of their failure.' To *Focus*, the suggestion that a woman might influence her husband's decision to purchase a hairpiece represented an ailing and embattled masculinity, with the magazine lamenting that '[i]n many cases men are prodded by their womenfolk into doing something to cover up their baldness.'[146]

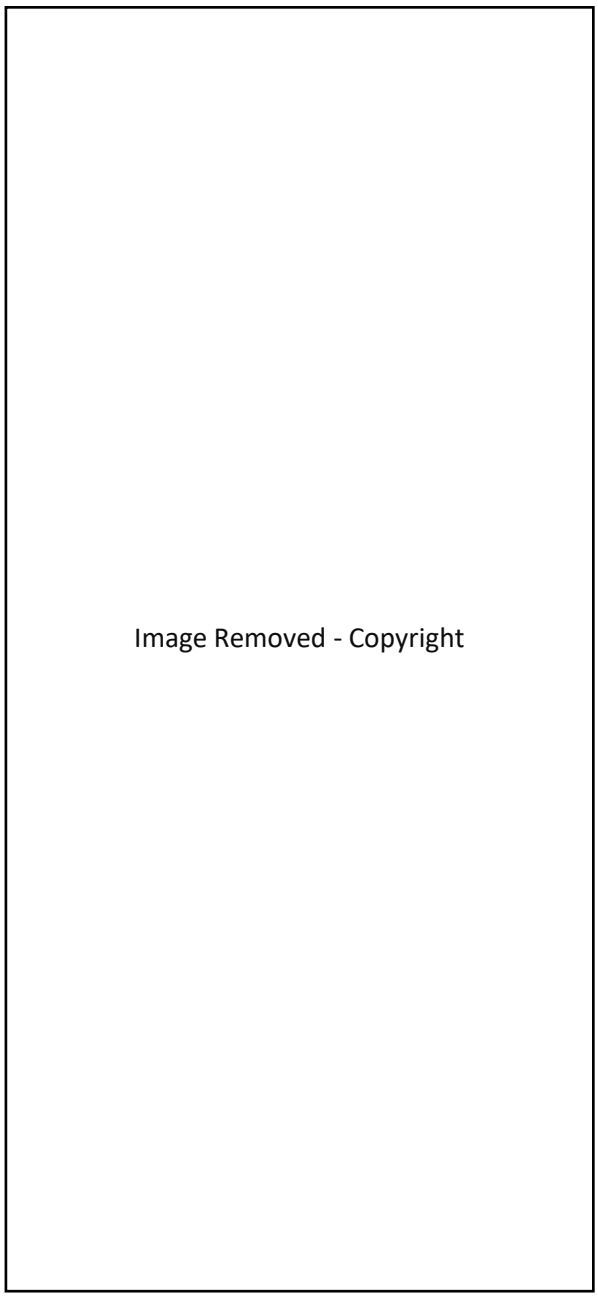


Figure 20: J. Perry, D. Croft, 'Keep Young and Beautiful', *Dad's Army* (BBC1, 13th October 1972).

[146] W. Eyton-Jones, 'The Bald Facts About Wigs for Men', *Focus* [Consumer Council], October 1969, pp.10-11.

The rise of the male hairpiece in the late 1960s and early 1970s, then, offers a revealing insight into peacock masculinity as lived, demonstrating both the appeal of this vision of hirsute, liberated manhood, and the tensions inherent in its performance. The sharp spike in sales in hairpieces for men around the turn of the 1970s shows that the suggestion of a "peacock age" did in some way reflect the lived experiences of millions of British men. Hairpieces offered those who were bald or balding a route to participation in the "hairiness" of the "peacock age", marketed as cultural signifiers of affluence, social improvement, male desirability and an increased female influence on male appearance. However, the promises of durability and undetectability made by manufacturers often led to disappointment, and despite the growing numbers of men who purchased a hairpiece, toupees remained a popular punchline for jokes, viewed by some as evidence of an enfeebled masculinity. The performance of male vanity was inherently unstable, with men faced with the twin pressures of appearing both fashionable and respectable. As will be discussed further in chapter four, in a period of dramatic change this tension meant that many men felt increasingly vulnerable and self-conscious about their hair, with a heightened awareness of being the subject of the gaze of others.

The peacock ideal contested: skinhead

Hairpieces, then, offered balding men a precarious route to participation in the "hairiness" of the "peacock age". During the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the growing trend for greater male hirsuteness, often accompanied by narratives of progress and liberation, was rejected by a new subculture emerging within urban working-class youth. "Peanuts", "Spikeys" or "Brushcuts" began to appear in south and east London during the mid-1960s, their style a fusion of the American "college boy" look (button down shirts, pullovers, Harrington jackets) and industrial workwear (Levi's jeans, braces, heavy Doc Marten boots), topped off by a short, neat haircut, borrowed either from their mod forebears or West Indian "Rudeboys".[147] Over time, the hair became shorter, cropped to a number three, two or even a one, providing the movement with a name that stuck: skinhead. The localised resistance that skinhead presented to the prominence of the

[147] R. Weight, *Mod! A Very British Style* (London, 2013), pp.223, 228.

hirsute peacock image within mainstream culture offers an important reminder of the limited reach of any ascendant form of masculinity.

As historians of post-war youth have observed, skinhead often seemed to be defined by what it stood against, rather than what it supported. 'What are we for? […] Nothing really. We are just a group of blokes. We're not *for* anything', one young skin told a journalist from the *Daily Mail* in September 1969. Skinheads seemed surer, however, of what they opposed: '[l]ong hair, pop, hippie sit-ins and the long-haired cult of non-violence'.[148] Within media narratives, skinheads were often positioned as the natural opponents of other, long-haired youth "cults".[149] A skinhead haircut not only offered a sharp visual contrast to the hairiness of the hippie, but also represented a different set of cultural values. As noted above, the subjection of wartime conscripts to close-cropped, army regulation haircuts was intended to ensure hygiene, uniformity of appearance and instil discipline.[150] For skinheads, a haircut could demonstrate self-discipline and subcultural affiliation. Keeping up the skinhead look required considerable effort, and regular trips to the barber. In 1969, the BBC documentary series *Man Alive* interviewed Steve Thompson, a young skinhead, while he was having his hair cut 'straight to the wood'. This, he explained, could be a weekly task – 'I had it cut last week. Grew a bit too long, so I'm getting it cut again.' Such fastidiousness, however, was essential to uphold a skinhead identity. The haircut was a social as well as a personal act. Thompson explained that prior to becoming a skinhead he:

> didn't know many people. And I thought "well, I'll put on some jeans and stuff and see what it's all about", and I did. That was it really. Then I got my hair cut down. I made a lot of friends. People notice you.

Skinheads, then, shared some of the key characteristics of peacock masculinity – a heightened care in appearance, expressed through consumption, and a keen awareness of being the subject of the gaze of onlookers. Interviewed at home by *Man Alive*, Thompson spoke of the pride he felt at being amongst 'about a thousand of us, almost identically dressed' during a recent bank holiday at Southend: 'you couldn't see anything

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[148] Emphasis in original. D. Zwar, 'Here come the skinheads', *Daily Mail*, 5th September 1969, p.8. Quoted in P. Everett, *You'll never be 16 again: an illustrated history of the British teenager* (London, 1986), p.104.

[149] F. Green, 'Unisex isn't dead – it's just had a short back and sides', *Daily Mirror*, 10th October 1969, p.19. See also: R. Allen, *The Complete Richard Allen Volume One*, (Argyll, 1992). The skinhead pulp exploitation novels, written by the Canadian-born author James Moffat under the pseudonym of Allen, were a huge commercial success in Britain during the early 1970s.

[150] One veteran, recalling the 'skill' of wartime army barbers, remembered that 'They went straight over the top and you looked more like a skin head [*sic.*].' Quoted in Newlands, *Civilians Into Soldiers*, p.54.

but skinheads. You know, tears come to your eyes, really, cos there was so many of us, [it] looked fantastic.'[151] Where skinheads sharply differed, however, was in their rejection of hirsuteness as 'scruffy' or 'dirty', or as part of a wider hostility towards behaviour that they deemed to be indicative of effeminacy.[152] Indeed, it was those groups who were considered to be weak, vulnerable and effeminate by skinheads (and also by observers who condemned their actions but nevertheless shared some of the same racist or prejudiced assumptions) who bore the brunt of their violence – not only hippies or the long-haired, but also the Pakistani community and homosexual men.[153] A spate of killings committed by skinhead gangs were reported in the press from the late 1960s – the murder of 29-year-old solicitor's clerk Michael de Gruchy by four youths in a homophobic attack on Wimbledon Common in September 1969, the killing in east London of kitchen porter Tosir Ali, aged 50, in April 1970, and the fatal stabbing of John George, a long-haired teenager misidentified as a 'greaser', in Weston-Super-Mare in December 1970.[154]

By 1970, then, skinhead had gained a media image synonymous with vandalism, football hooliganism and racial violence.[155] As Johnes notes, while a majority of British men had favoured short hairstyles during the early decades of the twentieth century, severely cropped hair had generally been avoided due to the 'routine shaving of the heads of convicts and lunatics'.[156] This was imagery that observers were quick to draw upon when

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[151] D. Wilcox (Dir.), 'What's the truth about Hells Angels [*sic.*] and Skinheads?', *Man Alive*, BBC2, 10th December 1969, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p04c0lw5/man-alive-whats-the-truth-about-hells-angels-and-skinheads>, accessed 4th December 2018.

[152] See, for instance, Green, 'Unisex isn't dead – it's just had a short back and sides', p.19.

[153] See, for instance, S. Daniel and P. McGuire (eds.), *The Paint House: Words from an East End Gang* (London, 1972), pp.70-82. For an account of how the Pakistani community in the East End resisted both racist violence and racist stereotypes of Asian people as 'weak', see S. Ashe, S. Virdee, L. Brown, 'Striking back against racist violence in the East End of London, 1968-1970' in *Race & Class*, Vol.58, No.1 (July 2016), pp.34-54.

[154] P. Whitfield, 'Skinhead gang boys guilty of ambush murder', *Daily Mail*, 5th February 1970, p.7; D. Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-74* (London, 2010), p.278; 'Life jail for skinhead who killed on revenge raid', *Daily Mail*, 14th May 1971, p.11. As Dominic Sandbrook highlights, 'even after skinheads had faded from the headlines, their attacks continued to blight the lives of immigrant families. In London alone, Gurdip Singh Chaggar was murdered in Southall in 1976, Altab Ali, Kenneth Singh and Ishaque Ali were murdered in Whitechapel, Newham and Hackney respectively in 1978, and Akhtar Ali Baigh was killed in Newham a year later. In the East End, reported a local trade union group, there were 110 racist attacks just in the autumn of 1977, 'an almost continuous and unrelenting battery of Asian people and their property'. Sandbrook, *State of Emergency*, p.280.

[155] Green, 'Unisex isn't dead', p.19.

[156] Johnes, 'Precarious masculinity'. During the early twentieth century it was also common for children suffering from ringworm to have their heads shaved. Joanna Bourke quotes the recollection of one woman who grew up in Glasgow during the 1910s: 'To be a skinhead in our tenements meant only one thing – ringworm!' J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London, 1994), p.161.

writing about skinheads, their appearance, and their values and behaviours. The *Evening Standard* wrote of the 'convict haircuts' of youths who, they suggested, were 'adopt[ing] the ways of the misfit' because 'they know they are failures and resent it.'[157] Wendy Cooper described the skinhead crop as a 'singularly unlovely style', part of an 'aggressively puritanical image' that was worn by 'subliterate rejects, doomed to be unskilled, unqualified laborers [*sic*.]'. Skinheads, concluded Cooper, 'had no politics and no purpose, except bitter retaliation against a hippy youth culture which excluded them and a meritocracy in which they had no merit.'[158]

More detailed examination, however, enabled a more nuanced critique. The sociologist John Clarke argued that, rather than emerging from a supposedly feckless underclass, skinheads were in fact predominantly the children of the 'respectable working class'. In a paper produced for the University of Birmingham's Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), Clarke suggested that the skinhead subculture could only be properly understood within a wider context of rapid social, economic and cultural change within working class communities – the deskilling of industrial work, an education system which left many working-class boys feeling like failures, and the disruption of kinship networks through reconstruction and rehousing programmes.[159] Skinhead, then, could be positioned as a consequence of the inequities of post-war society and the frustrations experienced by working-class youths, with both observers and young skins arguing that the image of classlessness invoked by post-war advertising merely hid the fact that opportunity and outcomes could still be determined by birth, background or accent. Clarke argued that skinhead had splintered from mod in response to that subculture's increasing commodification, 'incorporated into the glossy image of Carnaby Street and nationwide chains of boutiques'.[160] Yet, as Richard Weight has written, skinhead also represented 'an assertion of traditional working-class masculinity and a reaction to the flamboyant, sexually ambiguous aspect of Mod', standing as a rejection of "dandy mod" styles that skins considered middle-class or effete.[161] As one skinhead who grew up in Royton, Greater Manchester, recalled:

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[157] Quoted in Everett, *You'll never be 16 again*, p.106.
[158] Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society and Symbolism*, pp.139-140.
[159] J. Clarke, 'The Skinheads and the Study of Youth Culture' (1975), < https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/history/cccs/stencilled-occasional-papers/1to8and11to24and38to48/SOP23.pdf>, accessed 4th October 2018, pp.2-6.
[160] Clarke, 'The Skinheads and the Study of Youth Culture', p.13.
[161] Weight, *Mod!*, p.224.

> I still remember the first time I heard the term 'skinhead'. A Parka wearing mod at school who I used to have a chat with sometimes told me that the night before he and his mates had been fighting with some 'peanuts' "Who?" I asked, "You know, skinheads" he replied. When he described them to me I was shocked – why was he fighting them, they were mods, same as him? On taking a step back, I could see the difference – there he stood in his flares, Paisley shirt and tie and parka, hair like Ray Davies of the Kinks. I don't think he had any interest in football at all. I knew which camp I was in![162]

Clarke's analysis drew on testimony collected by Susie Daniel and Pete McGuire in their book, *The Paint House: Words from an East End Gang*, published by Penguin in 1972. As they explained in their introduction, rather than seeking to cash in on the "craze" of skinhead, or provide 'a sociological work, or a 'professional' study', Daniel and McGuire – who were both youth workers – instead sought to compile 'the skinhead's truth about skinheadism', recording and transcribing their conversations with their 'friends in Stepney and Bethnal Green who used to be, or still were, skinheads'.[163] *The Paint House* presented a worldview centred upon hierarchies of class, race and gender, through which the fashion choices and behaviours of skinheads could be interpreted. Long hair was rejected as being worn by 'dirty and scruffy' hippies, who were identified as weak: '[e]veryone with long 'air was silly then, everyone with long 'air got beat up.' The spread of the fashion throughout the borough – the way that 'older people started wearing 'ippie styles', was also lamented.[164] Violence, meanwhile, was seen by those interviewed as a necessary performance of masculinity, part of the male role of being dominant and aggressive – anything less would be seen as 'spineless' and effeminate.[165] The ideals of mutuality were also rejected by the skinheads interviewed, who expressed ambivalence when it came to matters of love and sex, professing to prefer the company of their male friends and defending the notion of patriarchal dominance: 'The role of a man is to be domineering and violent […] It is the male instinct to be dominant over the bird'.[166] Further discussion provided revealing insights into why the gang members tended to avoid romantic entanglements – relationships exposed vulnerability and risked humiliation:

> If you 'eard of a bloke asking [out] a bird … silly cunt. Same as if they packed you in, fucking disgrace.

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[162] B. Duffy, 'Bryan Duffy', < https://mod2bootboy.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/royton/>, accessed 25th September 2018.
[163] Daniel, McGuire, *The Paint House*, pp.7-9.
[164] Daniel, McGuire, *The Paint House*, p.34.
[165] Daniel, McGuire, *The Paint House*, p.84.
[166] Daniel, McGuire, *The Paint House*, pp.35-36, 84.

That's one of the reasons you never went out with 'em in case they did pack you in.[167]

Skinheads, then, stood in opposition to the social and cultural changes that had served to undermine old certainties. Social mobility was often presented as the antithesis of the skinhead ethos. Those interviewed by Daniel and McGuire made clear their disdain for their working-class neighbours who sought to climb the social structure, labelling them 'traitors' – 'It's not actually middle class, its people thinking that they are middle class […] they're just a lot of people that think they're better, that's all they are.' Working-class boys who were successful at school were referred to by the gang as 'dummoes', seen as conformists and, in the words of Daniel and McGuire, 'as being on their way out of the local culture and in the future to take establishment jobs.' The growth of an "aspirational" working class, and the perceived introduction of a middle-class element to the borough, threatened to blur a stratified social structure which was seen as offering certainty: 'The working class mix with theirselves and the upper class mix with theirselves. The middle class are arse'ole crawlers.'[168]

While sharply modern in its use of fashion to express subcultural identity, skinhead presented understandings of gender, class and norms of male appearance which harked back to the urban world of the early twentieth century. Skinheads not only condemned hirsuteness as dirty and scruffy or effeminate; in retaining an explicit belief in the primacy of male homosociality and the dominance of the masculine over the feminine, as well as rejecting the idea of social and cultural mobility, they also renounced the rhetoric of progress and liberation which surrounded the concept of a "peacock age" and flamboyant hairiness for working- and middle-class men. The fact that some of the contributors to *The Paint House* hailed from Bethnal Green also offers an important reminder of the complex nature of post-war social change; some of the skinheads interviewed by Daniel and McGuire in the early 1970s could, feasibly, have been the babies pushed in their prams by proud, family-focused fathers observed by Young and Willmott in the same borough in the mid-1950s. Certainly, a masculinity that was more home-centred and more considerate to the wants and desires of the opposite sex became increasingly culturally prominent in Britain during the immediate post-war decades; by the turn of the 1970s these values were often aligned with a new, flamboyant hirsuteness. However, both this reformed masculinity, and the recoding of the meanings of long hair

[167] Daniel, McGuire, *The Paint House*, p.53.
[168] Daniel, McGuire *The Paint House*, pp.73-74, 115-116.

and facial hair, were precarious and contested. Skinhead's narrow outlook and cultural conservatism demonstrates both the uneven nature of the changes brought by affluence and the welfare state, and how a reformation of masculinity and male appearance remained contested throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the apparently sudden outbreak of flamboyant male hairiness in Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s was a bodily manifestation of long term, underlying social and cultural changes which recast previous signifiers of "effeminacy" as youthful, fashionable and aspirational. Mass-Observation's survey of attitudes towards personal appearance in the summer of 1939 demonstrated the strict boundaries of respectable male self-presentation that existed in inter-war Britain, yet also demonstrated the potential for these to buckle in the face of broader social shifts – in particular growing affluence, consumerism and social mobility, and the increasing priority attached to female opinions regarding male appearance. While the Second World War can be seen to have had a broadly regulatory impact on men's fashion choices, the trends identified by Mass-Observation continued during the reconstruction period of the 1950s. Brands such as Brylcreem went to great lengths to align their product with the companionate ideal, with advertising campaigns that suggested that men should be considerate of the desires and preferences of the opposite sex when it came to their hair, and that women should validate this male interest in self-presentation through gift-giving and festive consumption. While Brylcreem's advertising featured a controlled, slicked down look, it therefore also subtly "heterosexualised" male vanity, with the appearance of men's hair cast as primarily a matter between men and women, rather than a judgement made by men about other men.

By the late 1960s, however, the cultural dominance of the Brylcreemed aesthetic had been successfully challenged. Hairsprays for men, which promised "natural" and almost undetectable control, were marketed as suitable for longer, looser male hairstyles. The companionate ideal visible in Brylcreem's advertising of the 1950s was now recast in the guise of a newly liberated male (hetero)sexuality, no longer channelled solely through the institution of marriage. While brands such as Cossack produced adverts which offered depictions of a sexually domineering masculinity, the new, shaggy-haired male aesthetic

was often positioned by journalists, psychologists and commentators as a progressive and welcome development, understood as an attempt to attract the attention of an increasingly independent and assertive femininity. Men embracing their naturally "hairy" appearance, some commentators optimistically suggested, would represent a rejection of repression and help them to be more considerate and loving boyfriends and husbands.

This discourse of heterosexual attraction and liberation provided men with narratives with which to counter older accusations that longer hair on men signified deviancy or effeminacy. Yet, just like the underlying social changes which helped drive it, this cultural shift was limited and contested. Male hairpieces were marketed as a modern solution to the age-old problem of male pattern baldness, and the sharp increase in sales during the late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrated that the peacock image appealed to millions of British men. Despite this, however, toupee-wearers remained popular targets for mockery for comedians and journalists – even in a supposed "peacock age" the performance of male vanity remained precarious, leaving a man open to criticism and ridicule. The growth of the skinhead subculture in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in the midst of the supposed "peacock age", represented a backlash against the growing cultural dominance of this liberated vision of manliness. As a localised example, skinhead shows us that the peacock vision of masculinity – heterosexual and hetero-social, with an emphasis on attracting (and appearing attractive to) the opposite sex – was always contested. Skinheads not only rejected the new codes of male appearance, refuting the hirsute ideal with their closely cropped haircuts, but also lashed out against the changes which had helped shape the new fashions – affluence, reconstruction and slum clearance, immigration, and increased social mobility. Distinctly modern in their embrace of fashion and consumption to create a group identity, skinheads nevertheless clung to understandings of gender, class and male hirsuteness which harked back to the urban world of the early twentieth century. Their emergence in boroughs believed by sociologists to have been transformed by affluence by the late 1950s, such as Bethnal Green, acts as an important reminder of the complex and partial nature of post-war social and cultural change. In the final chapter of the thesis we will continue to examine the tensions inherent within this new "peacock" vision of British manliness, within a space where masculinities were both constructed and performed: the men's hairdressing salon.

Chapter 4 – No hiding place? Masculinities in the hairdressing salon, c.1954-1974

'No Hiding Place', perhaps the most famous episode of Ian La Frenais and Dick Clement's classic 1970s BBC sitcom *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?*, opens with best pals Bob Ferris and Terry Collier dropping in to 'Michelle Gents Hairstyling', a swanky men's salon complete with funky décor, backwash sinks, an impressive range of shampoos, and young female assistants. Back in his native Newcastle after five years spent overseas in the army, Terry is unnerved by the changes that have befallen his city – and Bob, his childhood friend – in his absence. The visit to the salon is just the latest reminder: 'My God, this place hasn't half changed', says Terry as he walks through the door, 'this used to be just a barber's.' While Terry is uncomfortable with the idea of 'girls' in a men's barber's and what he terms 'this shampoo nonsense', the upwardly mobile Bob is in his element in an environment where new concepts of male grooming – shampoos, conditioners, manicures – mix with more familiar topics of conversation, such as football.[1]

As a series, *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* has been understood as a reflection on social change, class, and the impact of affluence on working-class identity. Integral to this, however, are discussions about changing masculine identities in mid-to-late twentieth-century Britain. Terry both represents and advocates a masculinity that prizes authenticity and simplicity, certainty and absolutes, and abhors pretension, but which seems increasingly out of time in the Britain of the early 1970s. Bob, on the other hand, stands for a masculinity that makes a claim to both the present and the future, domesticated, individualised, socially ambitious and even, perhaps, emancipated, from the strict masculine codes of his working-class upbringing.[2]

The scene described above, however, also shows how the hairdressing salon could be central to the construction of these identities. Terry identifies with the authenticity of 'a two bob haircut' in what he calls 'an honest-to-goodness barber's', while the

[1] D. Clement, I. La Frenais, 'No Hiding Place', *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?*, BBC2, February 20th 1973.

[2] For a discussion of the themes of class, affluence and social change in *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* see D. Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-1974* (London, 2010), pp.50-51; and A. W. Turner *Crisis? What Crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (London, 2008), p.127. For Terry Collier representing 'the old, 'rough', defiantly masculine working-class culture', see Sandbrook, pp.50-51.

extravagantly-coiffured Bob embraces the sophistication, comfort and hygiene of the new salon as a symbol of his improved social position, proudly boasting that he uses the same conditioner as Newcastle United's star striker Malcolm Macdonald. The salon, however, is not only a site of construction, but also a stage where masculinities are performed. 'No Hiding Place' plays on the dangers inherent in this performance for comic effect, illustrating how masculinities are regulated by a fear of embarrassment and the criticism of others. Terry, suspicious of the presence of femininity in a masculine space – both in the form of the treatments on offer and the presence of female staff members – scoffs at the idea of a man receiving a manicure and insinuates that the male stylists must be homosexual. Yet it is his hapless attempts to integrate himself into this new masculine environment that bring the most ridicule, mistaking shampoos for drinks and at one point clambering face first over a backwash sink. The open salon, then, could be seen as an unforgiving space – not only revealing how the masculine identities were constructed, but also requiring masculinity to be performed in front of an audience of staff and fellow clients.

The following chapter positions the men's hairdressing salon as a site where masculinities were constructed, performed and contested, and argues that debates concerning the behaviour of clients and stylists, the necessity of privacy and the place of women in the men's salon offer an insight into shifting masculine identities in mid- and late twentieth-century Britain. The study of men's hairdressing reveals a masculinity that cast itself as vulnerable, riven with anxiety throughout this period, yet assumed the retention of many patriarchal privileges – privileges that would be exercised with increasing relish from the late 1960s, particularly when it came to gazing upon young women working in male salons. It explores the ways that unstable conceptions of masculinity intersected with understandings of class and respectability, and the fears and hopes attached to youth during the immediate post-war decades. This chapter also complicates established chronologies and narratives concerning the post-war history of men's hairdressing and the metropolitan dominance of British fashion. Rather than focusing on the capital, and certain bohemian or upmarket districts, what follows aims to tell a national story. In *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?*, the provincial upmarket male salon is presented as a phenomenon of the early 1970s, a legacy of the social and cultural shifts of the late 1960s. While the historiography of men's hairdressing in twentieth-century Britain is slight, what has been written reinforces this interpretation. Caroline Cox's discussion of

post-war change in the men's side of the trade, in her twentieth-century history of British hairstyling, amounts to a brief account of the emergence of a number of hip unisex salons in west London during the late 1960s, while Patricia Malcolmson dates the arrival of similar establishments in the provinces to the mid-1970s.[3] Certainly the men's hairdressing trade in Britain experienced a relative boom during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the emergence of unisex hairdressing is correctly dated to that period, yet this narrative obscures the fact that change in men's hairdressing in Britain was more complex and drawn out, and tends to overstate the lag between developments in the capital and the provinces.

The upmarket salon existed in urban centres across Britain during the 1950s and 1960s, distinguished from the "spit and sawdust" barber's by its atmosphere and décor, and by the range of services and treatments it offered to its clients, as well as the higher prices that it was able to charge. While the trade press regularly lamented the state of many men's hairdresser's, describing 'cracked, stained basins', 'sagging upholstery' and 'peeling paint', it is clear from their news pages that plenty of men's salons, or men's departments in "mixed" – but not yet unisex – salons, were modernised during the 1950s and early 1960s.[4] Often, these refits were focused on improving hygiene, comfort and efficiency, with the installation of sterilizing equipment, telephones for the use of customers and facilities to provide refreshments, coffee in particular.[5] However, it was not only the atmosphere and décor that separated the men's salon from the standard barber, but also the range of services that were offered to male clients. Rather than basic cutting and a succession of standard trims and short-back-and-sides, an upmarket men's salon might offer some or all of the following: permanent waving, blow waving and the tinting of hair, as well as manicures and face massages.[6] As early as June 1954 the *Hairdressers' Journal*, the leading trade weekly, was describing 'A Boom in the Men's Salons', sending a reporter to an establishment where he found all three chairs occupied

[3] C. Cox, *Good Hair Days: A History of British Hairstyling* (London, 1999), pp.193-197; P. Malcolmson, *Me and My Hair: A Social History* (Gosport, 2012), p.203.
[4] 'Invest in the Future', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 8th April 1954, p.21.
[5] 'Everything to Hand at Each Chair – in the Modern Men's Salon', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 29th April 1954, p.26; 'Salon Expansion in Coventry City Reconstruction', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th September 1957, p.25; 'Coffee in the Salon', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st March 1957, pp.43-51.
[6] See, for instance, 'Two PW Systems for Men's Salons', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 16th December 1954, p.22; 'Men's Trade is Happy', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st February 1957, p.41; 'Bright Boys Sell Men Hair Darkeners', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 5th February 1959, p.28; 'Luxury Men's Salon in Exeter', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 18th February 1954, p.14; 'Warm Weather Massage', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 9th September 1954, pp.31-33.

by ‘a good client who was taking a style […] a young man who had no qualms about having a cold wave [perm] in the open; and a rare client who wanted “everything” […] haircut, shampoo, shave and face massage.’[7]

In providing a partial history of men’s hairdressing in Britain between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, this chapter seeks to interrogate the men’s salon as a site of masculinity. It begins by considering how masculine identities were both constructed and performed in the salon. By studying the discourse surrounding the gendered identities of both clients and stylists, we can see the ways in which British masculinity was understood to be changing, but also cast as unstable and vulnerable in a shifting social and cultural context. The emphasis that was placed on the possibility of client embarrassment, the importance of privacy and tact when dealing with customers receiving treatments, and anxieties surrounding accusations of effeminacy, further emphasizes this perception of vulnerability. However, as the final part of the chapter shows, while a more relaxed, more liberated “peacock” manliness was articulated around the turn of the 1970s, this was achieved in part through the introduction of female bodies – and a blatant heterosexual male gaze – into the formerly homosocial space of the salon. The redrawing of masculinity in the late 1960s and early 1970s led to the reinforcement, rather than the erosion, of many patriarchal assumptions.

Client masculinities in the salon

During the post-war period, the men’s hairdressing salon was a space where masculinities were constructed and given form. Within the hairdressing trade press, discussion was often focused on two particular masculine identities – the fashionable youth, and the smart professional or business executive. Taken as symbols of social change and social mobility, these personas certainly shared some characteristics and could be linked as part of a broader redrawing of masculine attitudes towards appearance and self-expression – displaying, to varying degrees, a greater appetite for “individuality” in matters of fashion. However, while the *Hairdressers’ Journal* would enthusiastically embrace and promote the idea of a “peacock age” during the late 1960s and early 1970s, in earlier years it displayed a far more conflicted attitude towards apparent shifts in the tastes of young

[7] ‘A Boom in the Men’s Salons’, *Hairdressers’ Journal*, 17th June 1954, p.22.

British men. In the 1950s and early 1960s the successful young businessman or professional – in his twenties, thirties or even forties – was identified as the prized client. These men were perceived as requiring excellent service in modern surroundings, while preferring a haircut that was sophisticated and skilfully produced, but ultimately neat, conforming to a certain concept of respectability. The youth, in his mid-to-late teens, was treated with suspicion – Teddy boys, it was feared, would scare off more "respectable" clientele. The concern expressed here was not only related to media moral panics about juvenile delinquency, but also driven by demands for flamboyant styling, longer hair and deep waves, which transgressed codes of respectability and seemed to hint at an unruly sexuality. A growing commercial obsession with the figure of the teenager, however, would lead to a gradual if grudging accommodation between self-styled progressive hairdressers, and young men who wished to wear their hair in longer and more ostentatious fashions. By the late 1960s, the two groups would largely coalesce in the figure of the hip young business executive, with progressive voices in men's hairdressing perceiving a direct path between the long-haired teenager and the groomed but shaggy-haired and sideburned businessman.

For the *Hairdressers' Journal*, the post-war priority for the men's hairdressing trade was to increase the "hair consciousness" of the British male population by introducing more clients to "styling" and a range of more sophisticated cuts and services, in place of the standard trim. This, it was hoped, would not only offer greater financial rewards for the hairdresser, but also raise the prestige of hairdressing to that of a "profession" rather than a "trade".[8] As early as 1954, the young and the professionally ambitious were identified as great sources of hope, sections of the population where the hairdresser could make progress in this mission. In an article published in May of that year, the *Journal* suggested that while many men considered hairdressing a 'tiresome necessity […] not even "hairdressing" but "haircutting"' and a chore comparable with 'cutting the lawn', it was increasingly fashionable for youths to 'demand special styles' while the 'business-executive' would always be keen to patronise 'hairdressers who understand that appearance still counts'.[9]

[8] See, for instance, 'Top Stylists in Men's Fellowship', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 10th May 1956, p.25; 'Trade's Growth Through Six Reigns', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 9th May 1957, p.30.
[9] 'Appeal to Men's Pride', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 20th May 1954, p.20.

While the business executive would remain an idealised client for the "progressive" male hairdresser, the fashionable youth would soon appear as a more problematic figure. In November 1953 the *Manchester Guardian* had published an article describing the 'immense attention paid to hair styles [*sic.*]' by young 'Edwardians' who brought together 'a strange mixture of influences', some emulating the hair worn by 'pseudo-existentialist youth around the Boulevard St Germain' and others sporting a "DA" with 'the side hair […] grown long and brought around the sides until it meets.' It was reported that '[a] West End barber who gives these haircuts says that van boys, young Underground porters, and office boys will spend anything from 5s 6d to 32s 6d to get their hair "styled".' Vanity, conspicuous consumption and working-class youth made for an uncomfortable combination, and growing fears of "Teddy boy" violence provided further concerns for the British fashion trade – the *Guardian* article was printed under the headline, 'Savile Row Embarrassed by the Spivs: "New Look" Imitators Imperil Fashion'.[10]

Hair was, of course, central to the Ted aesthetic, their 'greatest glory' in the words of the journalist Nik Cohn, and Teddy boys could make good customers for men's hairdressers, willing to pay for cutting, shampooing and even permanent waving, and making regular visits to the salon.[11] Within the trade press, however, Teds were often portrayed as a threat to men's hairdressing's prospects for advancement. The popular associations that were often made between flamboyant hairstyles and Teddy boy-ism, delinquency and proletarian "flash", that so alarmed many head teachers, were also of concern to men's hairdressers. Teddy boy enthusiasm, it was feared, would reduce the appeal of "styling" to more "respectable" clientele. The *Journal* published an editorial in July 1955 suggesting that '[n]ewspapers increasingly tend to couple men's styling with Teddy Boys and delinquents' and condemning 'those who lend themselves to stunts designed to amuse for a moment, but ending by ridiculing men's styling'.[12] The question of whether men's hairdressers should even serve young Teds divided opinion, with one hairdresser

[10] 'Savile Row Embarrassed by Spivs: "New Look" Imitators Imperil Fashion', *Manchester Guardian*, 14th November 1953, p.3.
[11] N. Cohn, *Today There Are No Gentlemen: The Changes in Englishmen's Clothes Since the War* (London, 1971), pp.29-30; In 1955 the *Manchester Guardian* reported that Teddy boys in the city would pay 4s for a 'crew, bop or Tony Curtis' haircut, or 10s for a permanent wave. 'A Taste for High Wages and Little Security: Youths' Choice of Work', *Manchester Guardian*, 26th August 1955, p.3.
[12] 'Teddy-Boy Trouble', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 7th July 1955, p.27. For the sort of 'stunt' the *Journal* may have had in mind, see British Pathé's film of a hairdresser providing a young man with an artificial 'elephant's trunk' to support a gravity-defying quiff: 'The Elephant's Trunk? 1950s men's hairstyles (1956)', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGqrr-RMXRY>, accessed 1st July 2018.

writing that 'catering for "Teddy-Boy" and other maladjusted types would lower our prestige', although another mounted a partial defence of those who were 'cashing in' on the Teds' enthusiasm for styling, arguing that it was 'right and proper that we cater for such a service.'[13]

Wariness of the young male customers ran deeper than a concern about Teddy boy delinquency. The flamboyance of the styles requested could also be taken as cause for unease. '[N]ow enthusiasm for curls and waves in men's hair has gone too far', suggested a *Journal* editorial in December 1955, arguing that men's hairdressers who produced 'excessive blow-waved styles' were giving styling a bad name with 'professional and business men' who didn't want to be 'made into curly-headed boys'.[14] The solution, it was suggested, was to offer styling 'with restraint', such as that offered by Twickenham hairdresser Lou Gilbert, who told the *Journal* that '[w]e do not encourage the Teddy Boy type here […] It is a question of smarter, better styling for the smarter, better type of client.'[15] Fashionable youth, then, presented a dilemma for "progressive hairdressers". Certainly, Teddy boys could provide lucrative and profitable business, prepared to pay high prices for styling. Yet prominent voices in the trade remained hostile, keen to promote the message 'that styling is for every man' and not just the preserve of 'young manual workers'. In reality, this meant a focus on professionals and businessmen, identified as a 'better type of client' not only because they might ultimately present a greater constituency for styling than certain youth subcultures, but also because of their class status and perceived respectability, and how they might in turn bestow some of this prestige on men's hairdressing, helping to raise its own status towards that of a profession.[16]

In the mid-1950s, free-spending fashionable young males were portrayed in the hairdressing trade press as potentially problematic – customers that the stylist should not prioritise at the expense of more "respectable" business. During the first half of the 1960s, this line began to shift. A broader cultural focus on the non-delinquent teenager as a consumer, a figure of affluence with money to spend, meant that turning away the fashionable young male was no longer deemed to make long-term commercial sense.

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[13] 'Getting Rid of the Teddy-boy Label', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th August 1955, p.39; 'Make Men's Styles More Dignified', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 11th August 1955, p.39.
[14] 'Styling for Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 8th December 1955, p.21.
[15] 'The "Teddy-Boy" Label Under Attack', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 14th July 1955, p.14.
[16] 'Teddy-Boy Trouble', p.27; 'The "Teddy-Boy" Label Under Attack', p.14.

The *Hairdressers' Journal* began to feature more articles on teenaged clients – their tastes, fashions and role models – from the early 1960s onwards, highlighting the research conducted by the social scientist Mark Abrams, who had published his influential pamphlet *The Teenage Consumer* in 1959.[17] Of course, teenagers existed as a force within markets before the late 1950s; however, as Daniel O'Neill has recently written, 'Abrams's research was significant not because the consumers it detailed were a new phenomenon, but because this research helped to assemble the teenager as a social type which advertisers and manufacturers could target through their promotions.'[18] Young "baby boomers" were increasingly understood as a market that manufacturers, retailers and service industries could not afford to ignore, their demographic significance ("the bulge") and spending power repeatedly emphasized in the trade and popular press.[19]

The reaction of the hairdressing trade press to the increasing numbers of long-haired young male clients from late 1963 onwards, in the wake of the emergence of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and other "beat groups", bore some similarities, but also stark differences, to the reception afforded to the Teddy boys in the mid-to-late 1950s. Understandings of youthful masculinity as unpredictable, often irrational, and almost primal in its urges, continued to circulate, with the *Hairdressers' Journal* describing the long-haired teenager as a 'young lion' that had to be tamed by the hairdresser, and persuaded 'to have a groomed mane, not a shaggy one.'[20] By the mid-1960s, however, these perceptions were accompanied by an insistence that the men's hairdressing trade, for its own survival, would have to compromise with the demands of young men, many of whom, it was observed, were 'achieving startlingly different hair simply by staying away from the hairdresser'.[21] Faced by young men who seemed content to avoid the hairdresser entirely, or reduce their attendance to once or twice a year, stylists were advised by the *Hairdressers' Journal* that they should offer 'groomed extremism'. This recommendation was included in a supplement which attempted to educate stylists by offering pop-sociological descriptions of various youth subcultures – mods ('ultra-smart,

[17] See, for instance, '£1,000 Million to Spend', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 12th January 1961, p.13; 'Enterprise Appeals To Youth', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 17th January 1963, p.13.
[18] M. Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer* (London, 1959). For criticisms of Abrams, see D. Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (London, 1995), pp.93-110; D. O'Neill, ''People Love Players': Cigarette Advertising and the Teenage Consumer in Post-war Britain' in *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.28, No.3, (2017), p.416.
[19] See, for instance, 'Teenagers cash in on boom industries', *Daily Mail*, 17th November 1961, p.14; 'Enterprise Appeals To Youth', p.13.
[20] 'Getting With It In 1964', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 21st February 1964, p.2.
[21] 'Getting With It In 1964', p.1.

ultra-fashionable, ultra-modern […] prepared to spend their money on extremes of fashion'), rockers ('may be a perfectly genuine and likeable person […] can easily be misunderstood by the older generation'), as well as 'beatnik types' ('will probably need to be handled politely but firmly').[22] A special 'styling party' organised by the *Journal* to bring together disaffected young clients with a group of 'progressive stylists' resulted in the same conclusion: that in order to keep younger male clients, stylists would have to produce 'styles that many may feel are extreme'. The same feature also included a stark reminder, that 'the young men are in a position to enforce their demands. They are not afraid, as previous generations were, of their parents or their employers showing them the door because of their appearance.'[23]

Calls to indulge the 'extreme' tastes of young clients who wished to wear long hair still sat uneasily with some, who voiced concerns about maintaining respectability. Robert James, a men's hairdresser who often provided styling demonstrations for *Journal* readers, insisted that '[w]e must be wary of encouraging gimmickry by pandering to the extremists', lamenting 'the many ridiculous gimmicks and uses that hair has been put to by a purely sensation-seeking section of the younger community.'[24] Even for those men's stylists who were considered to be "progressive", long-haired clients could provide a challenge. In October 1965 the *Hairdressers' Journal* ran a guide to dealing with these 'problem heads', presenting 'a young Mod stylist' with a long-haired youth to restyle. The hairdresser's initial reaction – '[t]he stylist shook his head with dismay, as well he might' – could be contrasted with that of the model, who was described as 'entirely unabashed', cheerfully admitting that he hadn't attended a salon for seven months and hadn't been planning to until he was invited by the *Journal*.[25] This idea – perhaps even fantasy – of providing a long-haired young customer with a shorter but styled haircut appeared in the *Journal* at various points through the mid-1960s. 'Mod means modernity and moderation', ran the heading to one such feature, published in January 1965, as James provided the drummer of a pop group with a new look, removing '[s]everal inches of excess hair-length', sculpting the rest 'into a reasonable modern shape.' These features expressed a hope that young men would come to their senses as they entered the

[22] 'Getting With It in 1964', pp.1-2.
[23] 'The Men Who Came Back', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 20th August 1965, pp.19-20, 24.
[24] 'Moderating the Mods', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 16th February 1965, p.16.
[25] Despite this inauspicious start, the model was described as being delighted with the final style and 'could not wait to rush away and show the re-style to his family and friends.' 'Cutting Today's Problem Heads', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 1st October 1965, pp.31, 33, 35.

world of work: 'The young man whose hair is styled for this feature was a member of a pop group. Then his thoughts turned to the future and to longer-term prospects of success […] First impressions mean so much in business, he realised.'[26]

During the mid-1960s, it was suggested that the men's hairdresser could help young men navigate the journey from school to work, and from youth to adulthood. '[T]he haircut – or lack of cut – that is passable amongst a few hundred students is not always the smart style that will win the approval of an employer', wrote the *Hairdressers' Journal* in December 1966, while reminding readers that 'the younger client wants to look modern. He does not want a too-controlled look, or a too-close crop.'[27] Descriptions of new styles – '[l]ong – but under control' or '[n]eat but not severe' – emphasized the idea of compromise, between the young client's perceived demand for longer hair, and the hairdressing trade's concerns about respectability.[28] By offering polite service and "modern" styling, it was hoped that the hairdresser could succeed where schoolteachers appeared to be failing, by banishing the 'long-haired cult' and transforming unruly youths into smart, ambitious young businessmen, the idealised clients for the men's trade.[29] By 1968, however, it was being observed that longer hair was also gaining in popularity with these clients. In the June of that year, a *Journal* style guide under the heading 'Long Hair – Big Business' showed a model well-removed from his teenage years with his hair hanging over his ears and on his collar, his fringe brushed forwards across his forehead (Figure 21). 'Not so long ago if you saw this in the street you would have thought you'd found a Beatle', ran the accompanying text. 'Today it would just mean you had met a young business executive.'[30] As the 1960s progressed, attention gradually shifted from the potentially problematic figure of the long-haired youth, to how to best capitalise on the newly hirsute young professional. Central to this process was an increasing focus on the figure of the men's hairdresser himself – not only his competence and his skill, but also his age and his attitude towards change.

[26] 'Mod Becomes Model', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 15th January 1965, pp.1-3.
[27] 'Andrew', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 2nd December 1966, p.28.
[28] 'Long – but under control', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 30th September 1966, pp.42, 45.
[29] '*Please* – I Want It Cut Shorter', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 24th June 1966, p.34.
[30] 'Long hair – big business', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 28th June 1968, p.42.

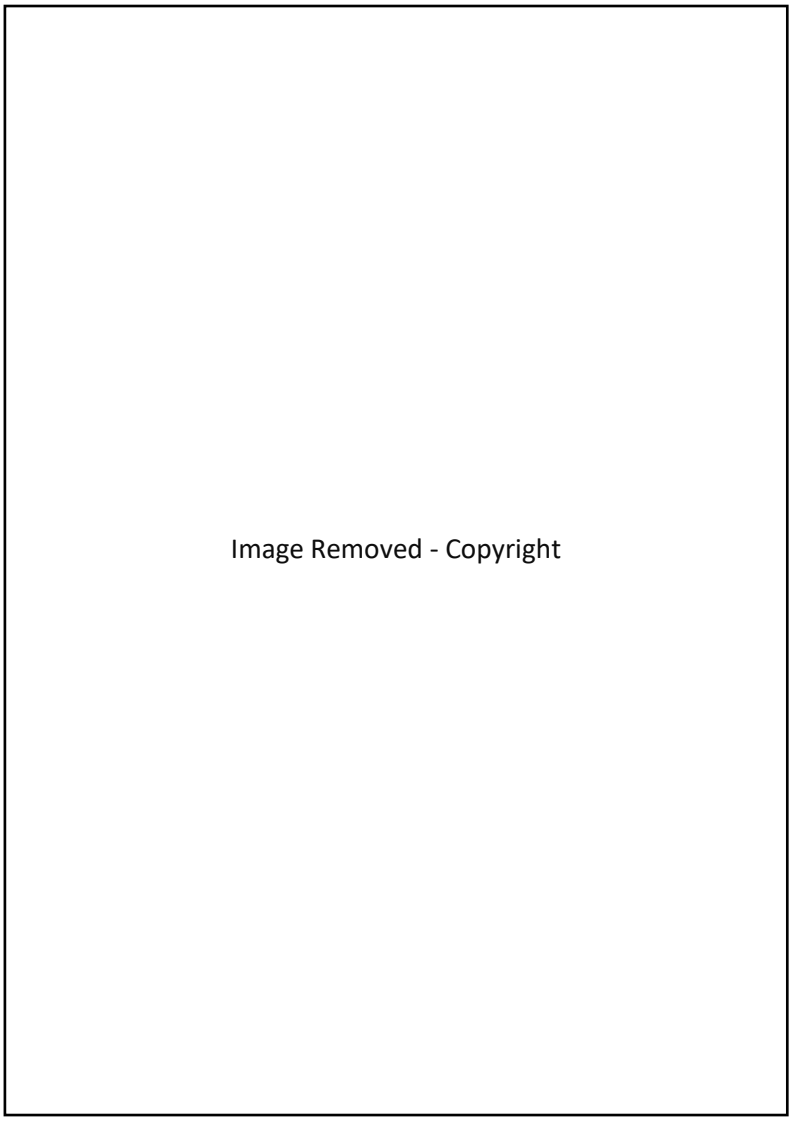


Figure 21: 'Long hair – big business', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 28th June 1968, p.42.

The men's hairdresser: from barber to stylist?

Rebuilding the popular image of the men's hairdresser was considered fundamental to raising the prestige of men's hairdressing. Prominent voices within the trade often expressed concern at the mockery the hairdresser could face, particularly as a male working in a service industry. In August 1956 the *Hairdressers' Journal* observed that 'for thousands of years the personal servant has been a figure of fun on the stage', arguing that it was high time that this 'Figaro complex' came to an end.[31] The *Journal* suggested that this stereotype, 'as outdated as jokes about mothers-in-law and kippers',

[31] This was a reference to the lead character of Pierre Beaumarchais's play *The Barber of Seville* (1773).

could be consigned to the past through a process of professionalization and an embrace of post-war modernity.[32] This not only involved men's hairdressers improving their public relations, avoiding 'grotesqueries that merely make them look absurd in reasonable eyes', but also asserting their position as the expert on all matters relating to hair and male fashion.[33] As Becky Conekin, Chris Waters and Frank Mort have written, the "expert" was a figure central to the project of post-war reconstruction, and the men's hairdresser was encouraged to align himself with this wider cultural trend.[34] 'The future must bring a more scientific, more elaborate service for men – given in a way that all men are prepared to support', insisted the *Journal* in July 1957, advocating 'men's salon service in the modern manner – not stunt styling, but individual attention within the broad field of fashion, personality and manner of life.'[35]

As this might suggest, expertise could be exercised in multiple ways. Men's hairdressers were encouraged to embrace new technologies, such as the electric shaver. 'I consider the men's hairdresser the man most qualified to sell and advise on shavers, more so than an electrician or a chemist', one stylist told the *Journal* in June 1957, interviewed as part of a report describing his success in diversifying his East Dulwich salon to incorporate the retail of dry shavers. Other reports highlighted the rapid expansion of the dry shaver market in the light of easing austerity: 898,000 units, with a sales value of £3,574,000, were produced in Britain in 1956, up from 184,000 (£538,000) in 1950.[36] While the sale of shavers promised to benefit the bottom line, heavy emphasis was also placed on the ways in which a move into retail would reinforce the hairdresser's position as the expert on all matters relating to hair, its styling, and its removal – when it came to shaving, the men's hairdresser was described as 'the natural specialist in this market, not just another retailer.'[37] Readers were encouraged to complement their salons with "shaver centres", for the retail and maintenance of electric dry shavers. In August 1965 the *Journal* reported approvingly from Mansfield where, in thoroughly modern surroundings ('white

[32] 'The Comic Barber', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 30th August 1956, p.19.
[33] 'The Comic Barber', p.19.
[34] Conekin, Mort and Waters 'identify the period from the middle of the war to the mid-1960s as one that witnessed a quantitative expansion of experts and their forms of knowledge […] By the 1950s the authority of experts had become central not only to economic management and social policy, but also to the areas of cultural tastes, the urban and rural environments, consumer behaviour and the psychological well-being of communities.' B. Conekin, F. Mort, C. Waters, 'Introduction' in B. Conekin, F. Mort and C. Waters (eds.), *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* (London and New York, 1999), pp.14-15.
[35] 'Dawn of a Golden Era in Men's Service', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 11th July 1957, p.43; 'New Outlook for Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 11th July 1957, p.31.
[36] 'Eighteen million men need dry shavers', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Supplement, 17th April 1958, p.39.
[37] 'Eighteen million men need dry shavers', p.39.

ceiling and silver-grey pegboard walls, with orange and yellow tile flooring, and a sapelium-finish Formica working front'), an ambitious hairdresser was employing his expertise to benefit the client and make the sale. Each consultation began with 'a thorough inspection of a customer's skin and beard characteristics', after which a number of suitable shavers were identified with the assistance of a selection chart. Each of these models was then trialled 'on a small section of beard' to allow the customer to make his choice.[38] The use of this language of science and expertise not only emphasized the hairdresser's skill and knowledge, but also placed the trade firmly within a technological modernity.

As well as demonstrating knowledge of new technologies and how they might be applied to the hair and the body, the forward-thinking hairdresser was also expected to possess an understanding of the psychology of his clients. In 1956, the *Hairdressers' Journal* ran a series of articles introducing the concept of 'personality styling'. Intended for the hairdresser who was already familiar with advanced techniques of cutting, waving and tinting, the aim here was to observe the 'character of the client' and produce an individualised style 'which fits the man's features, his type of personality and his station in life.'[39] The Mayfair men's hairdresser Albert Saphier provided a guide to these methods, using Sir Anthony Eden as an example ('this study', he wrote, 'reveals the potential irritability of one who resents his well-meaning activities not being understood'). Saphier, who also gave talks on hairdressing on the BBC, was held up as an ideal for the ambitious stylist – not only technically accomplished, but also 'a reader and a thinker. He is an acutely observant man. He has developed more than most the ability to assess a man through his conversation as well as his appearance.'[40]

Within the pages of the *Hairdressers' Journal*, the successful modern men's hairdresser was portrayed as ambitious and progressive, welcoming wider technological, social and cultural change as presenting new opportunities to improve profits and prestige and keen to diversify and adapt his business to meet new commercial challenges. The successful stylist, it was suggested, would not only possess sound technical skills when it came to the cutting and handling of hair, but also have knowledge of relevant scientific and technological developments, as well as an understanding of the male character and the

[38] 'One salon in 1958 – now John Miller owns four', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 13th August 1965, p.21.
[39] 'Albert Saphier Shows The Art of Personality Hair Styling', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 13th September 1956, pp.24-25.
[40] 'Albert Saphier Shows The Art of Personality Hair Styling', pp.24-25.

vagaries of the British class system. The list of desirable qualities did not stop there; sound business sense was considered essential, and it was recommended that the hairdresser should keep a close eye on contemporary trends in interior design, men's toiletries and fashion.[41] Those who were less receptive to change, who were content to continue producing a steady stream of basic cuts and did not wish to invest in refitting their salons or reinventing their businesses, were of less interest to the *Hairdressers' Journal*, their voices often restricted to the letters page or the reports of local branch meetings of the National Hairdressers' Federation (NHF). 'Too many men's hairdressers still have shabby, and often dirty salons', wrote the *Journal* in early 1965, repeating a criticism that was voiced at regular intervals throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[42] As hair fashions for young men began to change dramatically from the mid-1960s, these hairdressers – often labelled as "barbers", rather than the preferred "stylist" – came under increasing criticism. As we have seen, while young men could be viewed as potentially unpredictable clients, their perceived importance increased substantially from the early 1960s onwards. As some men's hairdressers began to experience difficulties, the *Journal* offered little sympathy, often suggesting that these "barbers" were in large part responsible for their own misfortune.

'Economics force your choice – buck up or pack up', ran the *Journal* headline accompanying an article summarising the state of men's hairdressing in 1967, reporting approvingly on remarks made by the managing director of salon supplier Henry Serventi at the London College of Fashion, warning that men's hairdressing faced 'dying out' if it did not reform its business practices 'in these days of rising rates and rents'. Unsurprisingly, the man from Serventi recommended modernising salon fittings and décor, but this suggestion was accompanied by the argument that younger clients, particularly those between the ages of 20 and 30, should be prioritised – the older customer would have to adapt 'his personal spending habits' accordingly.[43] The conservative hairdresser was often blamed for alienating these younger male customers from the trade. While the long-haired youth was eyed with suspicion by those who considered themselves 'progressive' within hairdressing during the mid-1960s, his arrival

[41] See, for instance, 'Service for Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 29th May 1964, p.5; 'Pointer from America: Bigger Business Can Be Done in Men's Toiletries', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 4th February 1966, p.16; 'Fashion Scene', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 16th February 1968, p.42.
[42] 'Service for the busy executive', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 26th February 1965, p.21.
[43] 'Economics force your choice – buck up or pack up', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 10th February 1967, p.33.

was commonly explained as a consequence of the failure of the majority of the men's trade to provide more sophisticated styling, what the *Journal* described as 'a real hairdressing service'.[44] Barbers who had 'shorn every customer' had driven young customers to abandon the hairdresser altogether, suggested one contributor to the *Journal*'s letters page in January 1965, adding that youngsters who had failed to obtain the styling they were looking for had finally 'decided that a long look is better than a shorn look.'[45] The reception afforded to young "long-hairs" was also widely held to have made bad matters worse. When young men had started to grow their hair longer, suggested the *Journal*, 'men's hairdressers cursed and rejected them, instead of offering the right service.'[46] Readers were instructed that there was nothing to gain by 'being impatient with these long-haired ones – above all it is not the slightest use insisting on a right to cut men's hair short.'[47] While a level of apprehension was considered normal for a men's hairdresser faced with a hirsute young customer, stylists were reminded that '[y]ou cannot reject these clients – you must work with them, or lose their business altogether.'[48] 'Derogatory remarks about Beatles and Rolling Stones' were said to have made things worse, and it was suggested that '[b]y their attitude, men's hairdressers have only further damaged their business.'[49] Service should be provided 'without fuss *and without sarcasm*' wrote the *Journal*, emphasising to readers that as long as these standards were met, then it was 'quite proper' to charge a higher fee for the amount of work performed.[50]

Struggling hairdressers were assumed to have failed to heed this advice to engage with younger customers, either through a misplaced sense of pride or through a lack of knowhow. Often, they were characterised as being part of the dying breed of the barber, and most of all as being *old*. As early as 1964 the *Hairdressers' Journal* wrote that it would be younger stylists who would popularise 'real masculine hair elegance […] Many of the older ones will simply go on chuntering away about anything but hair as they drift through the years turning out thousands of standard crops.' It was regrettable, thought the *Journal*, that 'large numbers of older members' shared the attitude 'that they must

[44] 'Getting With It In 1964', p.1.
[45] 'This is the way to make Mods hair-conscious!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 29th January 1965, p.10.
[46] 'The Men's Craft At War With Show Business', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 8th January 1965, p.8.
[47] 'Cutting Today's Problem Heads', p.36.
[48] 'Long – but under control', p.42.
[49] 'Styling – how to deal with long hair', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 19th February 1965, p.17.
[50] Emphasis in original. '*Please* – I Want It Cut Shorter!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 24th June 1966, p.34.

somehow force the male public in general to return to the old conventional neat trim' – a concept dismissed as 'hopelessly unrealistic' in 'this swiftly-moving world, in which being right up-to-the-minute counts more and more'.[51] Hostility towards long-haired customers was often explained as being motivated by insecurity, and that many older men's hairdressers did not possess the necessary technique to handle long hair. 'Millions of young men know that a great many men's hairdressers cannot, or will not, adapt themselves to new demands, and will simply resort to insulting the client instead', wrote the *Journal* in early 1964.[52] The following year it was noted that it was common to hear 'stories of older men's hairdressers retiring or leaving the Craft rather than change from conventional trims to modern styling service.'[53]

This narrative was rejected by some hairdressers who wrote to the *Journal*, emphasising the skill required to create a short haircut and attacking what they perceived as the de-skilling of their trade. Responding to an editorial, published in November 1969, which suggested that 'the right surroundings' now mattered as much as the quality of cutting provided within, a Norwich men's hairdresser with 50 years in the trade dismissed the 'estimation that men choose salons where they are made to feel good (but not like men)', instead advocating the importance of 'quick service'. The letter predicted that 'these so-called stylists will be lost when the old short-back-and-sides is back', criticising the new, longer styles – '[s]houlder cuts are for butchers, not for me.'[54] Another letter, published in the same week, echoed these criticisms, praising a short German men's style modelled in the previous issue, and asking 'how many of our much publicized *avant garde* stylists could execute similar dressing?'[55] The following year a hairdresser from Rutland lamented the popularity of longer styles, which he suggested could be easily maintained by a girlfriend rather than a professional. The skill required to produce a good short style, he argued, would protect the future of the trade: 'I have yet to see a dolly girl attempt a crew cut, and very few amateur hairdressers can successfully graduate the hair.'[56] The subject of skill had become a point of contestation, with those who saw themselves as part of the "progressive" end of the trade advocating the adoption of new techniques such as waving and colouring, as well as placing an increased emphasis upon the importance

[51] 'Getting With It In 1964', p.1.
[52] 'Man, You Just Cannot Beat A Beat Style!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 3rd January 1964, p.10.
[53] 'The Long Way Back To The Men's Salon', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 11th June 1965, p.14.
[54] 'Down with all these long haired men …', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st November 1969, p.41.
[55] '… forward with this sane style!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st November 1969, p.41.
[56] '30s men's stylists are in the minority', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 17th April 1970, p.28.

of salon atmosphere. Their opponents dismissed this as '*avant garde*', faddish and feminine, restating the skill involved in short haircutting.

Of course, some long-serving hairdressers embraced the changing nature of men's hairdressing. Peterborough stylist Ron Rudkin, who had spent more than 30 years in the trade, told the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1965 that as the majority of his customers were young men, he made sure that he kept abreast of teenage culture 'even to the extent of studying the hair styles [*sic.*] of pop groups appearing at the local *palais*.'[57] In 1969, the owner of 'a super-modern country salon', 60-year-old Wilfred Taylor was described as 'the answer to the complaint that the older hairdresser can only chunter about the days of short-back-and-sides slavery.'[58] These cases, however, were perceived to be the exceptions that proved the rule, and the fact that these men were considered notable suggests that the older hairdresser was assumed to be conservative in his methods and his attitudes. Criticism of longer styles often provoked responses which focused on the age of the hairdresser. The Norwich stylist who wrote to the *Journal* in 1969, attacking longer styles, was told by other correspondents that he 'should retire, he is older than his years' and needed to '[m]ove with the times […] or get left behind.'[59]

As economic circumstances became more challenging during the late 1960s, older salons providing basic services were seen as increasingly likely to fail, while businesses that offered more expensive treatments were said to be prospering. In October 1969 the *Journal* reported from Wolverhampton where conventional barber shops seemed to be struggling to survive on charges of 5 shillings. At the same time, several 'styling centres' in the city were reporting healthy business when it came to shampoos, colouring and toupees.[60] By the early 1970s, the *Hairdressers' Journal* was featuring cases of long-serving hairdressers dismissed from their positions as salons changed ownership. In February 1972 a man who had lost his job of 16 years due to what was described as 'his inability to cut modern long hair styles [*sic.*]' had a claim for redundancy pay rejected by an Industrial Tribunal. The man, described by the *Journal* as a 'traditional barber', told the Tribunal that he had tried to avoid the longer hair clients as he felt unable to serve them: 'I just can't do it, and I am too old to start learning now.' His former employer

[57] 'Ron has a Waiting-list for Jobs!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 20th August 1965, p.18.
[58] 'Never Too Late To Get Up To Date!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 12th December 1969, p.24.
[59] 'Down with all these long haired men …', p.41; 'Storm still raging!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 5th December 1969, p.36.
[60] '5s Failure … or 35s Success', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 31st October 1969, p.45.

described the man as 'one of the best hairdressers I know, but he can't do styling in the modern way on long hair', leaving him with no choice but to dismiss him to make way for a new stylist who could meet customer demands.[61] Skill that had been valued, now seemed without worth.[62]

Craft organisations, aware of the challenges faced by older men's hairdressers, made efforts to mitigate the effects of swiftly changing fashions and shifting customer expectations. In 1969 the London Men's Academy, which had previously focused on training young entrants to the hairdressing trade, switched their focus to cater for established 'hairdressers of up to middle-age who are realizing they must modernize their services – and their prices – or close down.' In order to protect their pride, older men would be taught new techniques away from new entrants to the trade. Training would not only include advanced techniques such as waving, colouring and hairpiece fitting, but would also try to 'persuade older students that they *must* make the change of mental attitude that will enable them to prosper in this era of ultra-long hair for men.' Students, it was said, would be trained to see themselves not just as hairdressers, but as 'part of the male fashion scene.'[63] During the 1960s, then, changing male hair fashions challenged the masculinity of the men's hairdresser, raising questions about his skill, expertise and his ambition. Yet it was not only the "barber" who found himself under surveillance in the salon during the post-war decades. The growing number of British men attending progressive, upmarket men's salons during the post-war decades also found themselves under observation, as they attempted to fulfil their desires for fashionability while avoiding accusations of "effeminacy".

Embarrassment, privacy and tact

From the perspective of the trade press, achieving success and prosperity in post-war men's hairdressing meant embracing the changing nature of masculinity. As was discussed in detail in chapter three, the idea that the British male character was

[61] 'Traditional Barber Is Not Redundant', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 18th February 1972, p.35.
[62] In a similar case, another stylist was awarded compensation by a Tribunal after being told by a new employer that he 'did not fit into the organisation', which was being refurbished to attract a younger clientele. 'Stylist did not suit a 'trendy' West End salon', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 13th October 1972, p.6.
[63] Emphasis in original. 'At last – older hairdressers can join the pace-setters', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 29th August 1969, p.31.

undergoing significant shifts – expressed through his tastes, attitudes, expectations and consumption habits – was suggested periodically from the mid-1950s, with discussion intensifying during the late 1960s. In October 1956 the *Journal* observed a 'widening crack in the resistance to modern styling for men', citing the theories of the costume historian James Laver to argue that enthusiasm for more adventurous treatments would 'climb the social scale', moving beyond the Teddy boys and into the 'higher income bracket'.[64] Reports of increasing demand for new services could be explained in terms of changing male attitudes and behaviours. Demand for new styles and blow-waving in Aberdeen in 1957, for instance, was said to demonstrate that the city's men were 'shedding their traditional conservatism'.[65]

Changing attitudes were understood to be manifesting themselves through shifting ideals of masculine appearance. 'Gone is the day when the well-dressed young Englishman was so judged because his clothes didn't notice', wrote the *Hairdressers' Journal* in February 1964, and by the early 1960s understated British elegance was perceived to be under threat from youth subcultures and pop fashions which favoured immediate impact over sartorial subtlety.[66] When it came to hairdressing, it was argued, many men had ceased to be content with a standard trim; 'still more fundamentally, they don't even want any longer to be *neat* in the old sense.'[67] In 1964 the *Hairdressers' Journal* was explaining this heightened male interest in self-fashioning in terms of a return to 'primitive instincts', 'young lions' and 'groomed manes', and suggesting that in the 'machine age' British men were reconnecting with a timeless, primal need for display.[68] An enthusiastic embrace of the idea of a "peacock age" in the late 1960s and early 1970s therefore came as no surprise, with the *Journal* welcoming the concept of a reformed, consumerist masculinity that was more in touch with its feminine side – 'the all-male man and the all-female woman are very rare birds', suggested an editorial in November 1969, adding that '[t]here's a bit of both in most.'[69] Changing male attitudes to hairdressing were also explained as part of a break with the "martial masculinity" of the earlier twentieth century

[64] 'A New Era For Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th October 1956, p.31.
[65] 'Scotia', 'Blow-Wave Boom in Aberdeen', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th September 1957, p.40.
[66] 'Getting With It in 1964', p.2.
[67] Emphasis in original, 'Getting With It in 1964', p.2; These interpretations drew on earlier polemical writings concerning male fashion. See, for instance, J. C. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (Edinburgh, 1930), and P. Binder, *The Peacock's Tail* (London, 1958). For a more recent historical account of nineteenth-century fashion which complicates these narratives of male 'renunciation', see C. Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914* (Manchester, 1999).
[68] 'Getting With It in 1964', pp.1-2.
[69] 'Boy meets girl', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 7th November 1969, p.2.

and a consequence of a quarter century of peace, accelerated by the abandonment of National Service in Britain at the start of the 1960s.[70] The repression of male display and the basic short-back-and-sides was now described as unnatural and unhealthy. As the *Hairdressers' Journal* wrote in 1970, '[n]ature intended men to have hairy heads and faces'.[71]

As Marcus Collins observes in his discussion of British softcore pornography during the same period, the image of the "emancipated man", living a consumeristic and individualistic lifestyle, was a fantasy that could be hard to live up to.[72] Constructing this new masculine image was far from straightforward, fraught with tensions, complications and anxieties. In the pages of the trade press, assertions of a reformation of manliness sat uneasily alongside a suspicion that, for many British men, masculinity-as-lived remained largely unreconstructed. In March 1963 the *Hairdressers' Journal* even went so far as to issue a warning to readers – it was important to 'sell to the client's vanity. But do not, *ever*, think that you can ignore the average man's deep-down loathing of effeminacy.'[73] The move away from notions of masculinity that rested upon a renunciation of the feminine was not a linear process, nor was it uncontested and, as many male hairdressers were only too aware, cultivating "hair-conscious" male customers and offering more sophisticated services often involved employing techniques and technologies – permanent waving, colouring, manicuring – still widely understood as feminine.

During the 1950s and early 1960s the suggestion that a man submitting himself to such treatments might be effeminate – and should certainly be prepared to be labelled as such – was common currency in popular culture and the popular press. On New Year's Day 1958 *Educating Archie*, the BBC's hugely popular, if unlikely, radio comedy following the adventures of ventriloquist Peter Brough and his puppet Archie Andrews, featured jokes at what the *Hairdressers' Journal* described as 'exaggerated, effeminate styling for men'. With Brough searching for a salon where he could get a fancy haircut, his housekeeper Grimble (Dick Emery) warned him to stay away from a 'Monsieur Bertini, of Bayswater', recounting his own traumatic experience: 'Oh, you don't want to go there

[70] On shifts between 'martial' and 'domesticated' masculinity, see A. Wills, 'Delinquency, Masculinity and Citizenship in England, 1950-1970' in *Past & Present*, No. 187 (May 2005), p.168.
[71] 'Why the Men's Boom Will Go On for Years', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 1st May 1970, p.39.
[72] M. Collins, 'The Pornography of Permissiveness: Men's Sexuality and Women's Emancipation in Mid Twentieth-Century Britain' in *History Workshop Journal*, No.47 (Spring, 1999), pp.105-109.
[73] Emphasis in original. 'Study the Psychology of the Male Client', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 7th March 1963, p.42.

[...] it's embarrassing. I went there once and there was a chap in the next chair to me with his hair in curlers [...] another chap was having his hair bleached, and another one had his hair in a net and was having it kiss-curled.' This was played for laughs, of course, but Archie's suggestion that Grimble should have given the hairdresser 'a punch on the nose' reflected the reality that male vanity could provoke strong, even violent, reactions.[74] Disapproval of styling often appeared in the national newspapers. In 1957 the *Daily Express* ran a piece on the Paris salon where 'the big stars wear hair nets and never blush', complaining that 'not one of them looks shamefaced. They just look smug', and the following year the *Hairdressers' Journal* reported that 'effeminate styling for men' was being 'vigorously attacked in the national Press.'[75]

Certainly, the trade was sensitive to such criticisms and offered a multi-faceted response. Those in positions of administrative authority within men's hairdressing, particularly within organisations such as the National Hairdressers' Federation (NHF), took steps to discourage behaviour that might be perceived as "camp". Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s entrants to men's hairdressing contests were instructed to execute styles 'with no tendency towards effeminacy'.[76] Failure to follow this guidance was likely to incur the ire of the judges – G. J. Greaves, a former national competition winner, was left unplaced in the men's hairstyling trophy at the Blackpool National Hairdressers' Federation Contest in 1958 after spraying gold dust on the hair of his model.[77] Within the space of the salon, hopes were expressed that scientific and technological progress would allow for methods of hair styling that differed from those used on the women's side of the trade. In 1957 the *Hairdressers' Journal* noted that the 'immediate post-war era has seen the setting of men's hair under nets [and] the fixing of styles under hood-dryers'. This, it was implied, was restricting the growth of men's styling, with the *Journal* suggesting that '[i]f the vast majority of men will not have those particular methods, then it may be that men's stylists will have to abandon them in the end.'[78] Occasionally, "progress" in this regard was reported. The following February the *Journal* featured the comments of a

[74] 'I would have done too … but I had my mudpack on at the time!' replied Grimble. 'Exaggeration Attacked', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 9th January 1958, pp.21-22.
[75] J. Harrison, 'Men's Hair-do 'Temple' Booms', *Daily Express*, 21st November 1957, p.6; 'Exaggeration Attacked', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 9th January 1958, pp.21-22.
[76] 'First Free-Style Contest in Scotland?', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 20th February 1958, p.19; 'Contest will show they're switched-on', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 6th August 1965, p.21.
[77] 'Blackpool NHF Contest a Sell-Out' *Hairdressers' Journal*, 27th February 1958, pp.15-17.
[78] 'Dawn of a Golden Era in Men's Service', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 11th July 1957, p.43.

Lambeth hairdresser who was running styling classes, reassuring readers that men's hair could be waved '*without* using hair-nets or anything else that suggests effeminacy.'[79]

While the growing popularity of techniques such as blow-waving provided some differentiation from the women's trade, some still believed that the idea of hair styling for men carried a stigma of effeminacy.[80] The vocabulary attached to styling was a recurring source of anxiety. Men's hairdressers were advised to employ tact and sensitivity when talking to clients about treatments, and to take particular care when it came to their choice of terminology. In short, they should 'devise a whole new language acceptable to *masculine* people' avoiding terms such as waving, colouring or tinting and instead offering 'grooming', 'conditioning', or 'designing'.[81] 'Until men's hairdressers can talk to their men clients as man to man, there will be no mass market for elaborate men's hairdressing treatments in this country' argued the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1963, and as late as 1971 a 'provincial men's stylist' was being quoted approvingly, suggesting that '[w]hatever salon service you are selling to men, the most important thing is to use masculine language.'[82] The hairdresser drew on his own experience of selling hair colouring treatments to support his case: '[i]f you call it tinting a man may refuse it, but I have sold dozens of colour rinses to men by asking if they would like to try hair brightening. If they ask what it is, I tell them it will make the most of their natural hair colour.'[83]

Most of all, however, emphasis was placed on the importance of offering clients privacy, so that potentially embarrassing services could be provided away from the prying eyes of other customers. This could be achieved through various methods. Installing curtains or screens between chairs offered "semi-privacy". Screens were often constructed of distorted or "bottled" glass, although some hairdressers found more inventive ways to separate their customers – for instance, a Birmingham salon, refitted in 1967, employed giant folding fans between each chair to provide privacy as required.[84] During the

[79] Emphasis in original. 'Keeping It Masculine', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 27th February 1958, p.24.
[80] The use of a hand dryer to wave the hair was said to cause 'no embarrassment to the sensitive client'. 'Permanent Blow-Waving', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 1st August 1957, pp.12-15.
[81] Emphasis in original. 'Study the Psychology of the Male Client', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 7th March 1963, p.42.
[82] 'Study the Psychology of the Male Client', p.42; 'Colour market is growing fast', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 20th August 1971, p.29.
[83] 'Colour market is growing fast', p.29.
[84] 'A Science, a Craft – and a Business', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st January 1954, p.19; 'Privacy for clients – and no sales talk', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 23rd September 1966, p.47; 'Unconventional in Birmingham', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 22nd December 1967, p.18.

hairdressing boom of the 1950s, many women's salons had ripped out their 1920s cubicles in favour of open-plan layouts, improving both capacity and profits and reflecting the increasingly public nature of female beauty culture.[85] At the same time, some men's hairdressers began to install cubicles in their own salons, in order to protect the privacy of their clients who visited for special treatments.[86] In certain cases, this process took place within the same business. In December 1955 the *Hairdressers' Journal* reported from an Edinburgh salon which served both men and women in separate departments. Previously female clients had been served in four cubicles with the male customers occupying a large open room – now the owner had reorganised his salon so that the men were seen in privacy, while the women were served in the open.[87] Alternatively, an entirely separate room could be used for treatments. As well as offering complete privacy, this had the additional benefit of separating styling clients, who made appointments, from walk-up trade and avoid grumbling from those waiting their turn for a free chair.[88] Again, the use of terminology was important, and a cubicle or treatment room might be referred to as a 'surgery' or 'VIP section', giving the impression of medical use or an air of exclusivity, while attempting to dispel the notion that anything "unmasculine" might take place inside.[89]

'We certainly didn't want to cause clients any embarrassment by sticking rigidly to an open-plan layout', the manager of the Figaro salon, on London's Victoria Street, told the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1964.[90] For those who wished to move into the styling business, offering privacy, either through screens, curtains, cubicles or a separate treatment room, was considered essential. Men, it was suggested, became less shy once removed from the gaze of other male customers, and were therefore likely to ask for additional services. As early as 1954, the manager of Plymouth's Maison Terry salon reported that he had found that offering customers in the men's department semi or full privacy 'results in the timid male becoming more and more interested in treatments he

[85] 'Building for the Future', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 17th July 1954, p.15. On the post-war boom in ladies' hairdressing, see Malcolmson, *Me and My Hair*, pp.129-135. On the public nature of female beauty culture in 1950s Britain, see R. Hornsey, ''The modern way to loveliness': middle-class cosmetics and chain-store beauty in mid-twentieth century Britain' in *Women's History Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2019), pp.111-138.
[86] 'More Cubicles for Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 17th September 1955, p.22.
[87] 'Edinburgh Stylists Change to the Open Plan', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 22nd December 1955, p.24.
[88] 'Appointments Increase Men's Trade', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 14th February 1957, p.27.
[89] 'Contemporary Décor for Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 19th May 1955, p.22; 'Super-Salon Points Way to the 1970s', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 28th November 1969, p.27.
[90] 'Service for Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 29th May 1964, p.5.

would not dream of accepting in an open salon.'[91] The suggestion that privacy was necessary to sell services such as permanent waving, colouring or hairpiece-fitting, even to the most fashionable of clients, was repeated throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. Even Samson and Delilah, the ultra-fashionable salon which opened in Mayfair in 1967 was fitted with 'a treatment cubicle for perming, tinting, massage and sun-lamp services.'[92] New establishments, catering for the newly "emancipated" male still found that privacy truly liberated a man to focus on his own appearance. In 1973 the *Hairdressers' Journal* reported from the new town of Bracknell, Berkshire, where a new 'super-salon' for men had opened, with each position self-contained within a cubicle (Figure 22). 'A man does not come to his hairdresser wanting to talk about football, sex, or cricket', argued the owner. 'He comes here wanting to talk about hair. But he will not do so in front of other men. The cubicle totally changes the situation.'[93]

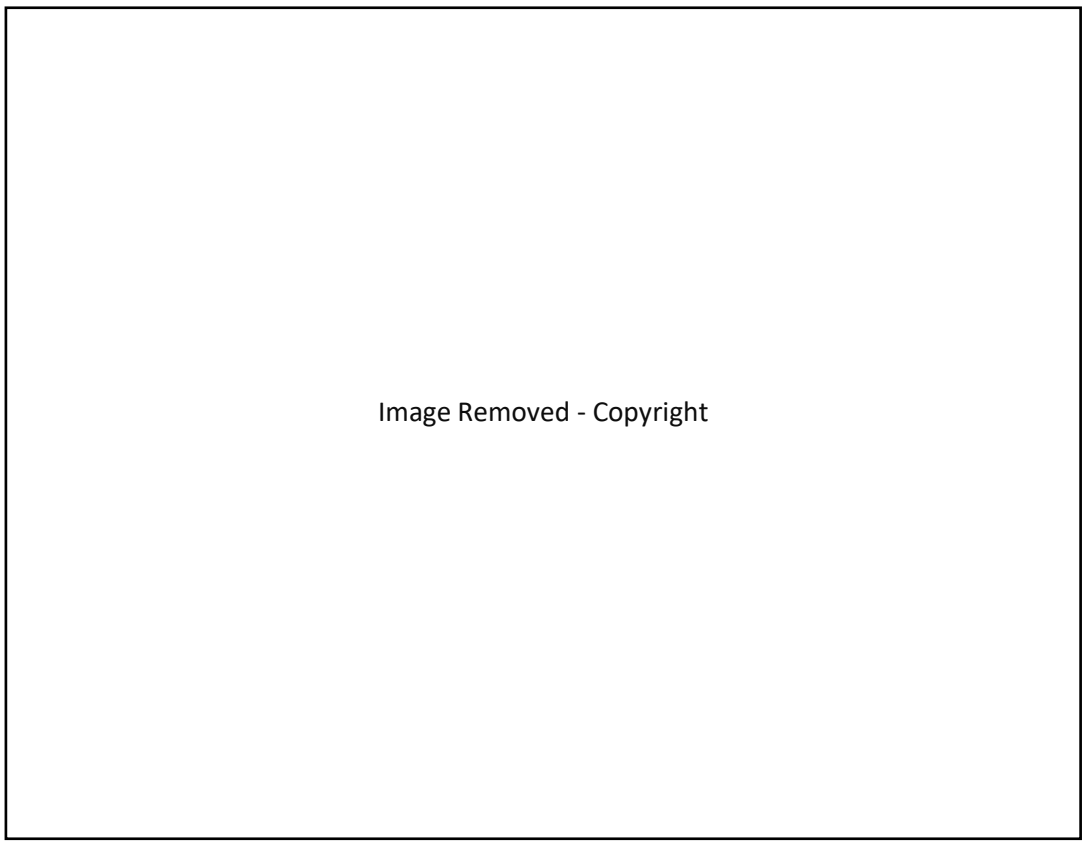


Figure 22: 'Cubicle concept at super salon', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th May 1973, p.25.

[91] 'A Science, a Craft – and a Business', p.19; 'Cubicle concept at super salon', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th May 1973, p.25.
[92] '25s cut-shampoo at Samson and Delilah', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 28th July 1967, p.25.
[93] 'Cubicle concept at super salon', p.25.

'The simple fact, that is being proved more emphatically every day,' wrote the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1973, in reference to the Bracknell 'super-salon', 'is that a male client wants to consider all kinds of hair treatment and services, but is too embarrassed and sensitive to discuss these in front of other men.'[94] Between the 1950s and 1970s, the hairdressing salon was a site where masculinity appeared insecure and vulnerable. During these years the hairdressing trade press reflected the anxieties of hairdressers and clients, that offering more sophisticated grooming to men might bring male hairdressing uncomfortably close to practices and routines now well-established as belonging to the women's side of the craft. Ambition for greater profits and prestige had to be balanced with a fear of accusations of effeminacy. If the men's salon was a stage, then its traditional open-plan design meant that the performance of masculinity could be precarious, with an ever-present risk of embarrassment in front of a watching audience of male peers. The response of the hairdressing trade was to try to mitigate these threats, through the policing of the use of language to create a terminology distinct to male hairdressing and therefore to remove associations with the women's side, and by redesigning the space of the male salon to hide the customer from view, where he could then indulge his vanity unrestrained by the gaze of others. The idea of "the feminine", then, hung over the male hairdressing salon. In the last part of this chapter, we will turn our attention to the position of the growing number of women who worked in these establishments.

"The feminine" in the men's salon

During the 1950s, 60s and 70s, "the feminine" was not only present in the men's salon in the form of certain practices and hairdressing technologies. While hairdressing had once been male dominated, the number of women engaged in the trade increased sharply during the post-war years. Initially, this shift largely took place on the women's side of the trade. In 1957 the *Hairdressers' Journal* noted that while women's hairdressing had recently been 'largely a family trade, to a great extent in the hands of men […] with an extremely limited knowledge of the world', it was now the case that '[m]any small salons are owned and entirely staffed by women'.[95] Although the number of women working on

[94] 'Yes – Cubicles', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 31st August 1973, p.28.
[95] 'Big Business Moves In', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 19th December 1957, p.13.

the men's side remained small in the mid-1950s, it was predicted that this was likely to change in the coming years, not least because it was proving increasingly difficult to recruit male assistants. In 1954, the *Journal* reported from Edinburgh where a shortage of young men entering the trade, blamed on the disruption of National Service and a lack of appetite for working a six day week, had raised the prospect that 'women barbers might be taking over.'[96] During the 1950s this idea was met with a degree of hostility, and some scepticism. Would clients accept the introduction of women workers into a homosocial space? Some customers in Edinburgh were reported to be steadfast in their refusal to let a woman touch their hair, although others were said to be ambivalent. Other questions, however, remained. Would women be able to strike up conversation with male clients?[97] Would training women to cut men's hair not open up the possibility of future competition from "backroom trading" once, as it was commonly assumed, they had married and left the salon? In 1954 this threat prompted the chairman of the Hastings branch of the NHF to call for a five-year ban on women working in men's hairdressing; a step, he suggested, that would also allow the male trade to 'regain its prestige.'[98] The growing visibility of women within salons could be taken as a reminder of the low standing of men's hairdressing, and that young men would much rather enter trades that offered shorter hours, higher wages and better prospects.[99] Regardless of these concerns the number of women working in men's hairdressing continued to grow through the early 1960s, with the *Hairdressers' Journal* estimating in 1964 that there would soon be hundreds of female staff on the male side of the trade.[100] The ability to pay female staff lower wages, pointed out the *Journal*, could boost a salon's 'profit ratio' as 'girls might take more money from the public in proportion to their wages than any man ever could.'[101]

To some men working in male hairdressing, however, women – inside and outside of the salon – were perceived as providing an existential threat to the future of their trade. Young women could be portrayed as enabling the long-haired trend for boys, through their screaming adoration of mop-topped pop stars and their willingness to hack away at

[96] 'Men's Salons Close for Lack of Staff', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th November 1954, p.32.
[97] 'Girl Barbers … A New Look in Men's Salons', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 29th May 1964, p.14.
[98] 'A Man Says: 'Ban Women Assistants'', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 1st April 1954, p.47.
[99] 'Men's Salon Staff Crisis Now Nation-Wide', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th November 1954, pp.1, 49.
[100] 'Girl Barbers … A New Look in Men's Salons', p.14.
[101] H. Rhodes, 'Business Training for Men's Stylists', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 29th May 1964, p.9.

their boyfriends' fringes, rather than directing them to the local barber.[102] However, while progressive voices within the trade despaired at amateur haircutting, it also was suggested that competition from women hairdressers would be welcome, providing a much needed impetus for modernisation on the men's side. A report that some mods were getting their hair trimmed by girl-friends who were apprentices in women's salons, published in the *Hairdressers' Journal* in February 1964, contained little sympathy for the local hairdressers who were losing out on trade – 'if the boys stay out of the salons who can blame them, when they can get the fashionable styles *they* want – free?'[103] The *Journal*, despairing at the attitude of some men's hairdressers, consistently argued that the male side of the trade had much to learn from women's stylists, even predicting in May 1964 that 'the real build-up on the men's side of the Craft will come when it is mainly run by women.'[104] The following year it was noted that '[m]ore and more cases are being reported to the JOURNAL of long-haired men who prefer ladies' hairdressers to their own', and throughout the second half of the decade increasing numbers of women's stylists began taking on male clients.[105] Often this would start with one or two men, seen after business hours, before word spread and numbers increased, requiring more formal arrangements to be made. In March 1965 a female stylist from Wakefield told the *Journal* that such was the growth of her male clientele that she had 'set aside special evenings and my half day to cope with them, so that they are never in the salon at the same time as my female customers.'[106] As this suggests, initially male customers were typically seen separately from women clients, either during evening styling sessions which were open to men only, or in a separate space such as the 'men's snug' installed at a ladies' salon in the suburbs of Sheffield.[107] The motivation here was to provide privacy for all concerned. 'It would probably be embarrassing on both sides if men came during the day', a women's stylist told the *Journal* in November 1966, after she had opened her salon in the evenings to male clients.[108]

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[102] See, for instance, 'How to Tame a Beatle', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 29th May 1964, p.15.
[103] Emphasis in original. 'Look Out, Men!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st February 1964, p.10.
[104] 'Girl Barbers … A New Look in Men's Salons', p.14.
[105] Emphasis in original. 'Styling – how to deal with long hair', p.17.
[106] A 16-year-old male client was also interviewed and asked if he would prefer to go to a male salon: 'Not on your life! They'd ruin it completely!' 'At Long Last … A Look Beyond the Fringe', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th March 1965, p.13.
[107] The 'snug' was described as 'a 10-ft. square cubicle with, so far, one chair, for men's styling and cutting.' 'Sheffield's face-lift is good for the suburbs', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 2nd July 1965, p.31.
[108] 'Emancipation is Coming in the Men's Trade', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 25th November 1966, p.14.

High profile figures in British hairdressing agreed, with celebrity stylist Raymond arguing in 1970 that men did not want to be on display in a women's salon, adding that '[t]he mere fact that today's male client may want colour, blonding, highlighting, waving, is more than enough reason for him to want complete segregation.'[109] However, by the end of the 1960s there was also a growing number of "unisex" establishments, serving men and women customers side by side, with the *Journal* observing in March 1969 that while some women's hairdressers were accepting men's appointments 'secretly by night', others were happy to serve male clients 'openly' during business hours.[110] Some unisex salons were completely new establishments, such as the 'Romeo and Juliet' salon on King's Street, Manchester which opened in early 1969, and reported as being 'specifically designed to cater to male and female clients *at the same time*'.[111] In other cases, established women's salons simply started serving male customers alongside their female clients – in May 1969 a hairdressers in Loughborough was described as 'the latest provincial salon to open its doors to men', with the *Journal* noting 'no objection from women clients […] to the invasion of males!'[112]

By the early 1970s the idea that women could – perhaps even *should* – cut men's hair was well-established. In the trade press female salon owners and stylists were regularly complimented for their knowledge, skill and business-savvy. A step-by-step guide to cleaning and conditioning long hair, published in the *Hairdressers' Journal* in January 1970, featured '17-year-old Janet' who took just 'seconds to decide what this mass of hair needed', and also reminded readers that men would pay high prices 'for the skilled, artistic treatments the girl stylists are qualified to give.'[113] Female successes in men's competition hairdressing were also reported. For instance, the City of London branch of the Fishers hairdressing chain entered an all-woman team for the firm's annual inter-branch contest in 1968, winning the senior competition and placing third in the juniors.[114] However, while tribute was paid to the technical abilities and knowhow of female stylists, greater emphasis was placed on the idea that women's "femininity" made them better suited to men's hairdressing than many male barbers. In October 1969, the *Journal*

[109] 'Unisex salon is out – Raymond', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 11th November 1970, p.23.
[110] 'Breaking down the sex barrier in the salon', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 14th March 1969, p.15.
[111] Emphasis in original. 'New salon brings the sexes together', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 18th April 1969, p.37.
[112] 'Loughborough Ladies' Salon Welcomes Men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 30th May 1969, p.37.
[113] 'Clean and well-conditioned', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 16th January 1970, p.32.
[114] 'Girl Wins Men's Styling Contest', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 13th December 1968, p.21.

issued what it characterised as a 'warning' to men, writing that 'girls are coming very near to beating you at modern men's hairdressing'. Despite the headline – 'These girls have skill as well as charm' – this was not suggested to be the result of any superiority of technique or artistry, but because women were perceived as 'better at the *new art* of doing the hair as the client wants.' This was compared with those male hairdressers who failed to provide service as requested, 'not because they can't, but because they *won't*.'[115] Masculine pride was positioned as a restriction on commercial success, contrasted with feminine understanding.

Women were identified as being naturally better equipped for the psychological and emotional aspects of men's hairdressing, providing the "character" and "individual" styling advocated back in the mid-1950s. There was a logic at work here, based on an understanding that men were becoming more "feminine" in their habits, behaviours and tastes – 'boys are behaving much like girls today – and vice versa' observed the *Hairdressers' Journal* in November 1969.[116] If women were perceived as being more comfortable with public beauty culture and the idea of being the subject of the gaze of the opposite sex, then it made sense that they would better understand young men thought to take greater pride in their appearance. 'Far too many men's hairdressers simply see their work as hair cutting', wrote the *Journal* in September 1973, '[b]ut the girls understand the male instincts *behind* the grooming and styling the men ask for.'[117] The director of Birmingham's 'Raymond Manside' salon reported that he had found that 'girls have the right psychological attitude to men clients', adding that '[w]omen have more insight into the desire of a man to wear long hair […] women have worn long hair for generations, and would be most reluctant to have it cut off.'[118] Moreover, women were positioned as not only understanding the impulse to wear longer, styled hair, but also as driving this change in masculine appearance. While this argument was often made using demographic evidence, with much talk of gender imbalances in the birth rate and an excess of young men who needed to appeal for female attention, it also could be illustrated through the use of local anecdotal examples.[119] In Surbiton, Surrey, for

[115] Emphasis in original. 'These girls have skill as well as charm', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 3rd October 1969, p.39.
[116] 'Boy meets girl', p.2.
[117] Emphasis in original. 'More and More, it's a Girl's World', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th September 1970, p.37.
[118] 'Try the Feminine Approach', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 9th February 1973, p.29.
[119] See, for instance, 'Why the Men's Boom Will Go On for Years', p.39.

instance, it was said in 1972 that '[W]omen in the town insist that their office-working husbands grow their hair longer, and have it properly styled'.[120] The opinion of a wife or girlfriend was considered particularly influential – not only when it came to securing return business from a new client, but also when it came to convincing men to seek out more sophisticated hair treatments in the first place.[121] Men could be portrayed as reticent and nervous when it came to grooming matters, requiring women's encouragement to take the final step over the threshold. The owner of a Folkestone salon which specialised in selling hairpieces told the *Journal* in 1971 that men would often 'hang around [the] window display of hairpieces on successive days' before being 'almost pushed through the salon door by their wives.'[122]

Part of the appeal of employing female assistants and stylists, then, lay in the emotional labour that these women were expected to perform, and the assumption that they would bring "feminine" understanding and tact to men's hairdressing. This was not all they were seen to offer, however. Women's bodies were also regularly described as bringing a new appeal to the men's salon. A woman's hands were often considered as being better suited to handling hair – '[a]sk any man who has his hair shampooed by a girl,' wrote the *Journal* in 1964, 'and he will say he never wants to be shampooed again by a man. It's too much like returning to being handled by a bare-fisted boxer.'[123] While the 'soft touch of a woman' was often used as an encouragement to employ 'shampoo girls', the same argument could also be made in favour of female stylists. 'Note how gently feminine hands handle the hair', instructed a *Journal* style guide published in 1969, demonstrating how 21-year-old Rosalind, stylist at the Miss Selfridge unisex salon on Oxford Street, produced a long style for a happy male client.[124] Most often, however, a woman's body was described as bringing glamour and sex appeal to the men's salon. While the *Hairdressers' Journal* often featured articles that offered advice to young women who wished to enter the hairdressing trade, or female stylists who wished to set up their own

[120] 'Big unisex chain is planned for Home Counties', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 20th October 1972, p.6.
[121] 'It's when a man gets back home that the big verdict on his hair style is cast – by the woman in his life', wrote the *Hairdressers' Journal* in July 1970. 'Win back clients by skilled electric styling', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 10th July 1970, p.22.
[122] 'Wig service adds cream to salon takings', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 1st October 1971, p.34.
[123] 'Girl Barbers … A New Look in Men's Salons', p.14.
[124] 'The stylist who knew how much NOT to cut off', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 12th September 1969, pp.44-45.

salons, it was unquestionably written from a male perspective and with a male gaze.[125] It was standard for an article describing a woman working on the men's side of the trade to pass comment on her appearance, using a select set of adjectives – usually "pretty", "glamorous" or "attractive".[126]

In a publication such as the *Journal*, that was so dedicated to the cause of improving the aesthetic appearance and commercial fortunes of men's salons, the introduction of female staff members was often spoken about as a step an owner could take in terms of improving their salon environment, one part of a refurbishment process that might also include installing new fixtures and fittings and some more fashionable furniture. In 1967 a trade event held at the London College of Fashion, focused on the future of the men's craft, encouraged salon owners to improve their décor, provide better uniforms for stylists, and install a 'friendly, efficient female' as a receptionist.[127] In the late 1960s and early 1970s, descriptions of new or modernised salons would often linger on the latter suggestion, sometimes in detail – at the Spencer Crue salon in Portsmouth, readers were told that a new customer's 'first impression, most likely, will be Heather', the salon's manicurist, 'a 20-year-old golden blonde with a face and figure that many a model would be glad of.'[128] In other cases, a photograph told the story – on more than one occasion in the late 1960s the *Journal* published photographs of mini-skirted young stylists, perched on the knee of grinning male clients many years their senior (Figure 23).[129]

[125] For examples of advice aimed at women, see: 'A Closer Look at the Men's Side of the Trade', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Supplement, 24th May 1968, p.11; 'Getting Yourself Organized', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 1st July 1966, pp.21-25, 27.
[126] See, for instance, 'A Boon to Business-men', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, 12th November 1965, p.33; 'Making Tyme at Victoria', *Hairdressers' Journal*, Magazine Section, p.21; 'The All-Girl Men's Salon is Here!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 24th May 1968, p.17.
[127] 'Economics force your choice – buck up or pack up', p.33.
[128] 'Luxury image at Portsmouth', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st July 1967, p.38.
[129] 'Home and Dry', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 22nd December 1967, p.12; 'Men's Side', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 5th July 1968, p.31.

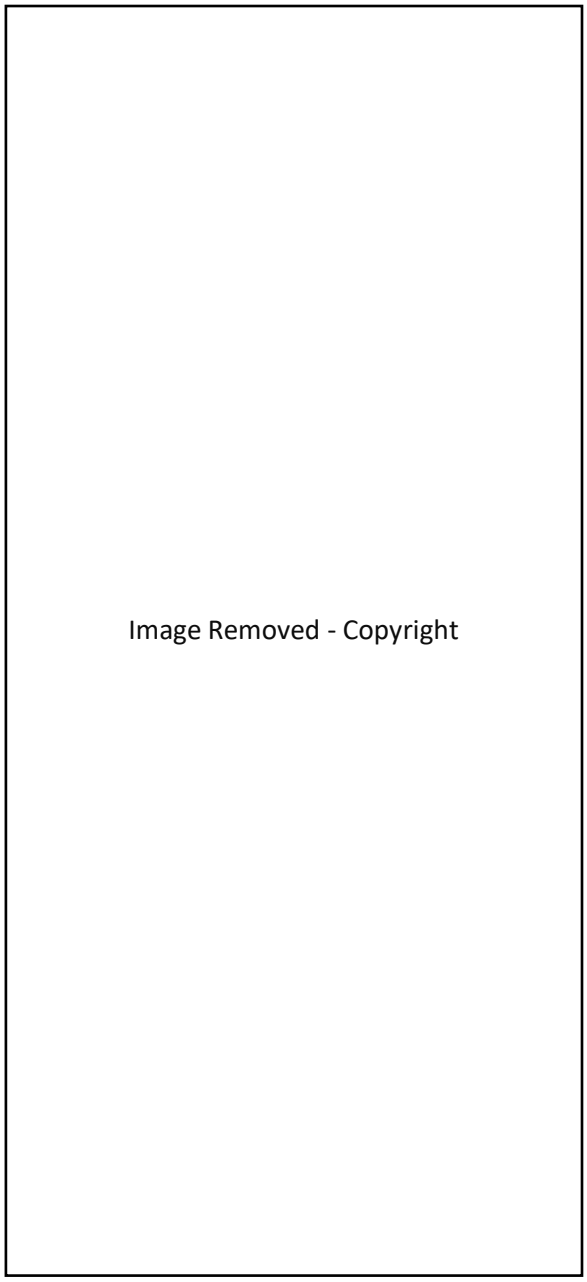


Figure 23: 'Sally the Barber', Lincolnshire, 1968. 'Men's Side', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 5th July 1968, p.31.

Some salons took the idea of the introduction of an element of sexuality into the salon further than others. Perhaps the emblematic example of this trend was Samson and Delilah, which opened in London's West End in 1967 under the leadership of stylist Denise Karen, and where male customers were attended by what was described as an 'all-girl staff', dressed in loincloths and bikinis.[130] Other examples placed an even greater emphasis on the power dynamics at play. At a salon in Edgbaston, Birmingham,

[130] C. Cox, *Good Hair Days: A History of British Hairstyling* (London, 1999), p.195.

'attractive girls' were said to wait on men 'hand and foot', with a young female trainee, dressed as a geisha, given the job of polishing clients' shoes.[131] Perhaps the most extreme example could be found in Gillingham, Kent, where in 1971 a (male) salon owner advertised for, and eventually employed, a topless female hairdresser (Figure 24). Faced with local opposition, there then followed a seemingly unlikely sequence of events with the owner staging a "counter-protest" featuring the woman in question (in a state of semi-undress) cutting the hair of her boyfriend on the back of a truck, which was driven through the centre of the town on a Sunday morning. This escapade was only brought to an end after a low-speed pursuit by the local police.[132]

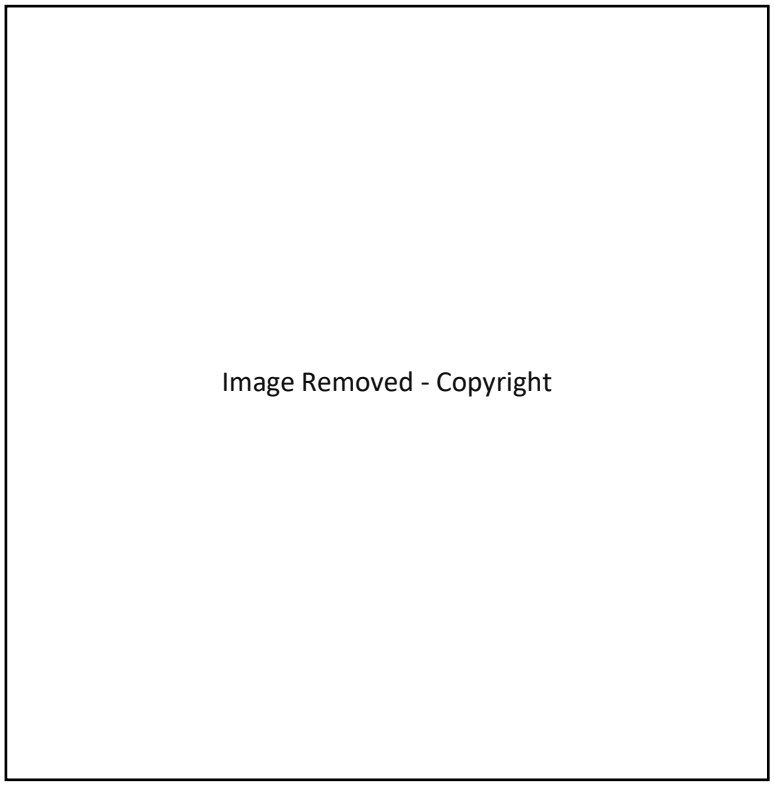


Figure 24: Topless hairdresser in Gillingham, 1971. 'His wife's topless', *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 23rd July 1971, p.15.

These examples were in some ways exceptional, of course, gimmicks designed to attract publicity. The reaction of the Gillingham branch of the NHF, with the local branch chairman criticising the idea of a topless female hairdresser as '[d]isgusting' and complaining that 'it lowers the tone of the whole trade', shows that many men's

[131] 'Waited on hand and foot', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 4th September 1970, p.38.
[132] 'Police chased topless girl barber after she shocked a church's congregation', *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 13th August 1971, p.17.

hairdressers continued to worry about the respectability of their craft.[133] Nevertheless, the appearance of salons such as these on provincial high streets reflected the fact that a discourse of "attraction" regarding the presence of women in men's or unisex salons had become pervasive by the late 1960s and early 1970s. The salon had become a site where an atmosphere of definite, if controlled, (hetero)sexual fantasy might be created. In 1970 the journalist Rodney Bennett-England wrote of the pleasure of visiting London's new hairdressing salons, commenting that '[n]ow […] you are just as likely to have an attractive blonde or appealing brunette easing comb and scissors through your hair. You may even date her afterwards.'[134]

For some in the hairdressing trade, the introduction of ideas of fantasy and attraction aligned neatly with a wider modernising project. Accepting a more active sexuality, and adopting a more liberal outlook towards such matters could be seen as part of getting "with it" – in January 1969, a slightly bewildered *Hairdressers' Journal* was predicting that after 'the rush to "take your clothes off and live" (see John Lennon and Yoko Ono, "Hair", and the see-through blouse), 1969 may well become the Year of the Nudies.'[135] Of course, it is important to consider how fashions which might appear sexualised to twenty-first-century observers may have been perceived very differently by the wearer at the time. For example, during the early 1970s a number of salons employed female stylists and assistants attired in hot pants. The fashion historian Valerie Steele has written that by the mid-1970s hot pants had gained popular associations linked to street prostitution, yet in 1971 they could still be viewed as new, fun and modern.[136] After the *Hairdressers' Journal* had printed an article suggesting that a London hairdressers was the first to introduce hot pants as part of their uniform, the female owner of a Bradford salon wrote in on behalf of her staff to contest the claim, explaining that they had been wearing the same uniform 'for some time now', adding that they wished to 'make this point to prove that Northern girls are not left behind when it comes to fashion and originality in the hairdressing world.'[137] It would be wrong to deny the agency of these

[133] The salon owner was reported to be unrepentant in the face of such criticism, although he did suggest he would make sure service provided by the woman in question was on an appointment only basis – a move which seems unlikely to have made the arrangement appear any more wholesome. 'Topless row splits the men of Kent', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 30th July 1971, p.25.
[134] R. Bennett-England, *As Young As You Look: Male Grooming and Rejuvenation* (London, 1970), p.106.
[135] 'Colourful Future', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 3rd January 1969, p.30.
[136] V. Steele, 'Anti-Fashion: The 1970s' in *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1997), p.283.
[137] 'It's hot news!', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 19th February 1971, p.5; 'Hot pants in Bradford', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th March 1971, p.35.

women and others like them; it is also clear, however, that the opportunity for men to gaze upon the female form was commercialised within the space of the salon. In 1968, for instance, the new 'Picador' salon in Birmingham was advertising itself as 'staffed by young, attractive girl hairdressers' and even the *Hairdressers' Journal*, which was always keen to emphasise the skill and qualifications of female stylists, would be explicit about the sex appeal that a female stylist could provide.[138] In 1969 a step-by-step guide to styling longer hair by 'Sharon, 21' featured a nudge-nudge observation, printed below a photograph of hairdresser and client: 'Be honest, men – wouldn't YOU like her to do your hair? There's business in men's styling by the right kind of girl.'[139]

Within the men's hairdressing salon, the introduction of technologies with feminine associations – waving, colouring, skin treatments, hairpieces – challenged established masculine codes of behaviour surrounding vanity, appearance and grooming, raising the spectre of effeminacy. The increasing presence of female bodies allowed these spaces to be recast as sites of glamour and (hetero)sexual fantasy, therefore helping to ease these anxieties. The use of glamour within the men's salon brings to mind Peter Bailey's account of the Victorian barmaid and what he terms 'parasexuality'. In Bailey's definition, parasexuality operates in the public sphere as 'an inoculation in which a little sexuality is encouraged as an antidote to its [sexuality's] subversive properties'. It is an 'acknowledgement and accommodation' of sexuality (particularly male sexuality), and a system of management rather than denial.[140] In the nineteenth century Bailey sees this as channelling a controlled public sexuality towards certain spaces – pubs, music halls, theatres. The men's salon of the late 1960s and 1970s, identified as a site of controlled fantasy and flirting, was also a space where an increasingly obvious male gaze was justified as a healthy corrective to the repression of "natural" (hetero)sexuality. Moreover, in the context of the salon, a discourse of heterosexual fantasy served to manage sexuality *within* the space. If male sexuality was to be acknowledged, rather than denied or suppressed, then the presence of a desirable femininity served to 'inoculate', to use Bailey's term, against the associations of effeminacy attached to the various treatments on offer, and frame male vanity as solidly heterosexual. Masculinity in the

[138] 'The All-Girl Men's Salon is Here!', p.17.
[139] Emphasis in original. 'These girls have skill as well as charm', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 3rd October 1969, p.40.
[140] P. Bailey, 'Parasexuality and Glamour: the Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype' in *Gender & History*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer 1990), pp.148-149.

hairdressing salon may have been articulated in a language of fragility and vulnerability – of embarrassment, privacy and cubicles – and of responding to the changing expectations of male fashionability from a newly assertive femininity, yet women in the salon were also identified as subjects of the male gaze, helping to defuse anxieties surrounding male vanity and effeminacy. The liberation of male heterosexuality, and the heterosexualisation of male display, was built on the assumption that women in public spaces were available to be leered at, to offer reassurance and to engage in flirtatious interactions. Bailey describes parasexuality as 'constitut[ing] a reworking rather than a dismantling of hegemony', and this is a useful perspective through which to best understand the so-called "peacock male" during the 1960s and 1970s – as a bolstering, rather than an erosion, of patriarchal privileges.[141]

Conclusion

The period between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s witnessed a transformation in men's hairdressing in Britain. Progressive voices within the trade consistently encouraged the modernisation of both salons and services, urging the creation of spaces that were luxurious as well as highly functional where men could have their hair shampooed, waved or coloured, their nails manicured, faces massaged and 'their egos re-established.'[142] Modernisation, it was hoped, would improve the circumstances of the men's hairdresser, boosting profits but also importantly increasing the prestige of the trade. It was also articulated as being a necessary commercial response to the changing nature of masculinity. British men were understood to be taking more interest in grooming and their appearance. The aim of producing a uniform series of crops in as short an amount of time as possible was replaced by a new ideal, of providing a man with a relaxing experience, and creating a style that expressed his personality, character and position in society. The idea of a mass society was becoming superseded by something altogether more individualistic.

Within the salon, however, masculinity was articulated as being unstable and vulnerable. During the 1950s, youthful masculinities were perceived to pose as many problems as

[141] Bailey, 'Parasexuality and Glamour', p.149.
[142] 'Boy meets girl', p.2.

they did opportunities, with Teddy boys offering both the potential for profits, but also the risk of harming the respectability of the hairdresser and his trade. From the early 1960s, the changing fashions embraced by many young men, for longer hair, were seen to threaten the future existence of men's hairdressing. However, the growing prominence of the teenager as a consumer meant that it was the masculinity of the barber, rather than the young customer, that was the subject of increasing focus. Throughout the period, the idea of youth intersected with understandings of masculinity – by the mid-1960s the progressive, successful men's hairdresser was seen as understanding and embracing youth, while the failing barber was portrayed as being behind the times, hostile to the young and very much yesterday's man, hamstrung by misplaced male pride.

Faced with the logic of the market, respectability became less of a concern during the late 1960s and early 1970s, swept away by the thrill of the new and the perception that social and cultural change was moving at a rapid pace. As Caroline Cox notes, the image of the hairdresser also shifted from that of a sober but scientifically accomplished technician, to that of a more expressive artist.[143] Behind this bravado, however, anxieties remained, particularly concerning accusations of effeminacy and certain treatments which were primarily associated with the women's trade. The threat of embarrassment remained, and even the hippest salons of the early 1970s offered cubicles for the privacy of their clients. The growing numbers of women working in men's salons were perceived as striking a further blow to the masculinity of the barber, yet they were also portrayed as bolstering the masculinity of the client, performing emotional labour to understand his "psychology" and positioned as subjects of an often leering male gaze. Studying the men's salon, then, not only shows us how masculinity was being reformed, but also how patriarchal privileges were being upheld and reinforced during the 'sexual revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s.

[143] Cox, *Good Hair Days*, p.196.

Conclusion: Revolution on the head?

In June 1967, the *Hairdressers' Journal* published a letter which ruminated upon the shifts in fashionable male styles that had taken place during the preceding half-decade. Pondering the causes of this change, Christine and Richard Shaw, who gave their address as 'Old Bond Street, London', made approving reference to a recent *Evening Standard* feature by the Northern Irish journalist Polly Devlin, which had claimed that '[m]en who grow their hair long want it long because they look better – and indeed, like the dandies of old, they do.'[1] Men wearing their hair longer was positioned by Devlin and the Shaws as a welcome sign of men embracing their vanity and responding to female tastes and desires, as well as reflecting the emergence of a more 'relaxed' British culture as society moved on from the war 'and the troubled years that followed'.[2] Yet these writers will also have been keenly aware that this shift in style was opposed and contested, not least of all in the letters pages of the *Hairdressers' Journal*, which continued to give voice to those who complained of dirtiness and effeminacy, and who wrote of the desire to 'make some of these layabouts and louts sit up […] and make them look like men.'[3] 'The historians of the 21st century', concluded Christine and Richard Shaw, 'are going to find us all very interesting studies.'[4]

During the 1960s and 1970s contemporary observers recognised that change in hair fashions for British men, and the debates that surrounded this shift, held wide significance. Historians of post-war Britain, however, have been slow to fully grasp the potential of men's hair as a topic of study. A transformation in the hairstyles worn by men has been noted by post-war historians, cited as an example of social and cultural change, but has not been explored in any depth or properly understood.[5] This thesis has provided the first detailed, critical social and cultural history of white men's hair in Britain between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s. This, in and of itself, represents an important contribution to our understanding of the recent past – the detailed study of change in male hair fashions, and the surrounding discourse, expands our historical

[1] P. Devlin quoted in 'Ask women about men's styling', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 26th May 1967, p.39.
[2] 'Short hair for men is a recent trend', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 30th June 1967, p.16.
[3] 'Down with all these long haired men…', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 21st November 1969, p.41.
[4] 'Short hair for men is a recent trend', p.16.
[5] See, for instance, J. Weeks, *The World We Have Won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life* (Oxford and New York, 2007), p.64.

knowledge of post-war British culture and society.

The thesis has argued that during the immediate post-war decades men's hair acted as a 'faultline' within British culture; that the explosion of discourse about men's hair between the 1950s and the mid-1970s reflected wider cultural fissures concerning class, gender, ethnicity and age.[6] The stories that were told about men's hair in Britain during the 1950s, 60s and 70s were shaped by understandings of, concerns about, and hopes for this wider moment of social and cultural flux. Crucially, however, hair itself acted as a text, through which men could communicate their own stories about their lives, their aspirations, their gender and sexuality, and their self-image. Journalists, film-makers and scriptwriters, advertisers, hairdressers, sociologists and a whole host of "experts" told stories about men's hair during these decades, inflected with wider understandings of the changing character of post-war Britain. But individual men also told their own stories about British society, communicated through their hair. Men's hair not only reflected wider social and cultural change – it was part of that change.

Dominic Sandbrook has suggested that the fashion for longer hair amongst Britain's male population 'slowly filtered down the social pyramid from upper-middle-class hippies to ordinary working men' during the late 1960s and early 1970s.[7] The preceding chapters have found that the process of fashionable change was far more complicated, and that working- and lower-middle-class men displayed a greater degree of agency, than Sandbrook's interpretation would suggest. From the early 1960s, working- and lower-middle-class boys at grammar, secondary modern and comprehensive schools were claiming a right to fashionable expression, resisting the efforts of schools to regulate the length and appearance of their hair. There existed, of course, a long tradition of fashionable working-class male display, often viewed with suspicion by middle-class observers and guardians of "respectability", who viewed such behaviour as evidence of wayward consumption, unregulated sexuality and potential delinquency – such concerns lay behind opposition to the flamboyant hairstyles such as the "DA", associated with "Teddy boys" during the 1950s.[8] The resistance to school bans on long hair by working- and middle-class teenagers – and, significantly, many of their parents – demonstrates that

[6] A. Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford, 1992), pp.46-47; A. Sinfield, *The Wilde Century* (London, 1994), pp.4-5.
[7] D. Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-1974* (London, 2010), pp.399-400.
[8] C. Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life, 1860-1914* (Manchester, 1999), pp.202-215.

such conceptions of "respectability" were being increasingly challenged by the early 1960s, with pupils and parents determined to assert their own understandings of fashionability and the right to self-expression within a wider cultural context of rising affluence and living standards. The growing fashion for longer hair amongst working-class and lower-middle-class men, which played out across the 1960s and early 1970s, did not only represent the cultural influence of a bohemianism which, as the social workers working on Brighton seafront found, should not be defined as exclusively upper-middle-class.[9] It also represented a "filtering up", as the social strictures which had long constrained fashionable male display for working- and lower-middle-class men began to loosen.

As well as being driven by shifts in the dynamics of class, deference and conceptions of "respectability", change in male hair fashions for British men was enabled by the spread of new ideals of masculinity. As British society and culture increasingly coalesced around the nuclear family during the post-war period, with a focus placed upon heterosexual love and the companionate marriage, a greater premium was placed on male attractiveness and display.[10] Codes of appearance, such as long hair, which would have been damned for their flamboyance and widely identified as reliable evidence of "effeminacy" during earlier periods, were gradually heterosexualised, a process which accelerated during the 1960s and 1970s. Long, eye-catching hair was, by the late 1960s, cited by cultural commentators as allowing the male gender to appeal to a femininity that was described as possessing an unprecedented degree of economic and sexual independence. These contemporary interpretations were perhaps overdrawn, yet they reflected the fact that questions of male appearance were now perceived as a matter of negotiation between men and women. As the gender-demarcated world of the earlier twentieth century slipped into the past, and the associated understandings of gender and sexuality gave way to the idea of a homo/heterosexual binary, the stigma of a man wearing long hair denoting a "feminine character" lost some of its potency.[11]

[9] N. Ashwell, B. Biven, L. Jago, J. Klein, E. Ross, *Brighton Archway Ventures: Volume I* (Brighton, 1971).
[10] On the centrality of heterosexual love and marriage to post-war British society, see C. Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford, 2013); M. Collins, *Modern Love: An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2004).
[11] On shifts in understanding of gender and male sexuality, see M. Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago, 2006), pp.269-271; H. Smith, *Masculinity, Class and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895-1957* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp.188-195.

Shifts in male hair fashions were, however, contested throughout the period. Young men who grew their hair found themselves punished by their teachers, barred from leisure venues, and the subject of rough treatment from conservative barbers. While this opposition was felt through countless everyday interactions, those hostile to the new fashions struggled to halt or slow their progress. As with other anti-permissive campaigns, those who objected to men wearing longer hair were portrayed in the popular media as killjoys, nostalgic for a more deferential past. As Marcus Collins has suggested in relation to the broader anti-permissive movement, efforts to deny freedom of expression to young men through their hair seemed to represent 'a paternalism verging on authoritarianism'.[12] Aligning such impulses with the cultural legacy of the Second World War, and the resulting discursive emphasis placed on personal freedom and liberty, would prove difficult, with opponents of men wearing longer hair often described as 'dictators'. In the early 1960s this use of language perhaps primarily reflected the prominence of the war within British popular culture; by the end of the decade, however, amidst the rise of Powellism, journalists, politicians and ordinary citizens were expressing concern that efforts to discriminate on the grounds of hair were another strand of an increasingly authoritarian politics of white grievance.

Men's hair fashions continued to change, then, in spite of this opposition. By the early 1970s British men far beyond their teens were wearing their hair longer and cultivating beards, moustaches, and sideburns – a shift evidenced by the spread of a new wave of fashionable male and unisex salons across the towns and cities of provincial Britain from the late 1960s, the boom in sales of male hairpieces, and the faces of male relatives that stare back at us from family photo albums. For many men, however, the performance of male vanity was precarious and unstable. Despite a sharp increase in sales, male hairpieces remained a source of humour for comedians and joke-writers, while upmarket salons installed private cubicles to protect men who were having their hair waved or coloured from the prying eyes of fellow-customers. While the wearing of longer hair by men had become, by the early 1970s, to a large extent heterosexualised, the engagement with certain hairdressing technologies still carried a stigma of effeminacy. The concept of authenticity remained at the heart of understandings of masculinity, even in the age of the so-called "peacock male", and anything that revealed the artifice of its performance –

[12] M. Collins, 'Introduction' in M. Collins (ed.), *The Permissive Society and its Enemies: Sixties British Culture* (London, Chicago and Sydney, 2007), p.31.

such as a rising hairpiece or the sight of a man with his rollers in – had to remain hidden from view. This obsession with masculine "authenticity" also found expression in the skinhead subculture that emerged in London and other urban centres during the late 1960s, and which embraced "peacocking" and fashionable display, but rejected male hirsuteness as artificial, effeminate, or dirty. A street iteration of the politics of white grievance which also fuelled Powellism, skinhead offers a reminder of the limits and uneven nature of the social, cultural and psychological changes brought by post-war affluence.

This thesis has argued that change in hair fashions for British men between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s was enabled by wider social and cultural upheavals during the post-war period – rising affluence, declining deference and shifts in dominant codes of masculinity. Through the study of men's hair, however, the thesis also makes a series of interventions regarding our wider historical understanding of Britain during the decades following the Second World War. Firstly, it contributes to a growing literature which explores the decline of deference in post-war British society and culture.[13] While Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite has recently illustrated the impact of an erosion of deference on politics and popular discourses of class between the late 1960s and the turn of the twenty-first century, the preceding chapters have highlighted the lessening weight attached to the judgements of a range of local authority figures – teachers, councillors, hairdressers – from the early 1960s onwards. The study of hair reveals the challenge posed to those that occupied these positions, and the ways in which the validity of their knowledge, and the legitimacy of their authority, was increasingly contested: protests by pupils and parents over school bans of long or fashionable hair, moustaches or beards; the dissent shown by some ratepayers towards councillors and officials in seaside towns who sought to "drive out" long-haired beatniks; the insistence of some young men that they wished to wear their hair in long or flamboyant styles, regardless of the opposition of many men's hairdressers during the early 1960s. This thesis, therefore, supports the recent suggestion by Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and her co-authors Emily Robinson, Camilla Schofield and Natalie Thomlinson, of the emergence of a 'popular individualism' during the post-war period, with young men increasingly keen to express their identity through

[13] See F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, *Class, Politics, and the Decline of Deference in England, 1968-2000* (Oxford, 2018); E. Robinson, C. Schofield, F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, N. Thomlinson, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s' in *Twentieth-Century British History*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (June 2017), pp.268-304.

their appearance, and displaying greater resistance to attempts to deny them that right. The campaigns waged against school regulations of teenaged boys' hair during the late 1960s and early 1970s also reinforce the claim of Robinson, et al, that this popular individualism could find collectivist outlets, and did not inevitably have to lead to neo-liberalism and Thatcherism.[14] However, this thesis also challenges the chronology suggested by Robinson, et al, and suggests that 'popular individualism' was already visible within British society and culture at least a decade prior to the early 1970s.

Secondly, the study of men's hair in the immediate post-war decades provides a new perspective on the history of British masculinities. While the inter-war 'little man', the 'temperate hero' of the war years, the home-centred British male of the 1950s, and the 'new man' of the 1980s have all been explored by historians, far less attention has been given to the emergence of a "peacock" form of masculinity during the 1960s and 1970s.[15] Characterised by his hirsuteness and flamboyant appearance, as well as his overt heterosexuality, the peacock male was a prominent cultural figure, feted by trade journalists and advertisers, and hailed by social commentators as representing a liberation of British manhood. While Marcus Collins is correct to point to the contradictions and tensions inherent to this vision of a fashion conscious, sexually emancipated masculinity, this thesis has found that aspects of this ideal were reflected in the behaviours of men living in towns and cities across Britain around the turn of the 1970s; as testified by changing hair fashions, the sharp rise in sales of hairpieces, and the spread of upmarket hair salons that offered clients the latest styles and the chance to have 'their egos re-established.'[16] While the rise of the peacock male was, in many ways, a reaction to shifts in popular understandings of female sexuality, it is too simplistic to suggest, as James Obelkevich has written, that changing norms of male appearance and grooming habits represented British men '[y]ielding to pressure from women'.[17] As the discourse of "sex-

[14] Robinson et al, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s', pp.302-304.
[15] A. Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London, 1991), pp.210-211; S. O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003), pp.151-196; F. Mort, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 1996); S. Nixon, *Hard Looks: Masculinities, Spectatorship and Contemporary Consumption* (London, 1996); T. Edwards, *Men in the Mirror: Men's Fashion, Masculinity and Consumer Society* (London, 1997).
[16] M. Collins, 'The Pornography of Permissiveness: Men's Sexuality and Women's Emancipation in Mid Twentieth-Century Britain' in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Spring 1999), pp.107-109; 'Boy meets girl', *Hairdressers' Journal*, 7th November 1969, p.2.
[17] J. Obelkevich, 'Consumption' in J. Obelkevich and P. Catterall (eds.) *Understanding Post-War British Society* (London and New York, 1994), p.149.

appeal" and "glamour" that surrounded the presence of female staff in men's and unisex salons during the late 1960s and early 1970s shows, the "peacock age" could represent a reinforcing, rather than an erosion, of patriarchal privileges, attitudes and behaviours. The rise of the peacock male, then, is better understood as part of a wider sexualization of British society during the 1960s, a process which, as Jeffrey Weeks has observed, was predominantly focused on the bodies of women rather than men.[18]

Finally, through the study of men's hair this thesis has found evidence to suggest the fabric of everyday life was constantly shifting through the middle-decades of the century, with ordinary men and women living in towns and cities across England, Wales and Scotland active participants in processes of social and cultural change. From the early 1960s teenaged boys and their parents challenged school rules regarding hair length and facial hair at secondary schools across Britain, from Cornwall to Cumbria, and Dalkeith to Derbyshire.[19] The counterculture, in all its hirsute glory, was not only drawn to bohemian Brighton, but also small Cornish seaside towns, its presence debated in local newspapers alongside post-colonial discussions of Rhodesia and the rise of Powellite politics.[20] From the late 1960s, as a new wave of hip, fashionable men's and unisex salons were opening in the west of London, establishments offering to indulge a similar vision of liberated masculinity were also appearing on provincial high streets across the country. This was social and cultural change – the way men looked, and how they behaved – that was noticeable and tangible, and brings into question blanket assertions that 'change often came slowly to provincial towns and rural villages' during the 1960s and early 1970s.[21] It is hard to conceive that the Gillingham church-goers who, in August 1971, were confronted by the sight of a topless hairdresser cutting her husband's hair on the back of a truck, in protest at her employer being served notice by his landlord, felt that this was community life proceeding much as it always had done.[22] An extreme case, perhaps, but one that is emblematic of the intersection of a reformation of masculinity and male appearance, the (hetero)sexualisation of public space and everyday life, and the

[18] Weeks, *The World We Have Won*, p.68.
[19] R. Scott, 'Cut your hair or wear a ribbon..', *Daily Mirror*, 18th July 1964, p.3; 'All shorn and forlorn', *Daily Express*, 5th June 1964, p.11; 'Odd 'girl' out is a boy', *Daily Express*, 1st September 1964, p.5; 'Bearded boy of 14 faces ban from school', *Daily Mail*, 25th January 1971, p.5.
[20] ''Touching sympathy' of white for black', 'Police state myth exploded' and 'Truncheon-wielding and censorship', *St. Ives Times and Echo*, 1st April 1966, p.4; 'The colour problem', *Cornish Guardian*, Newquay Edition, 27th November 1969, p.12.
[21] D. Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), p.xvii.
[22] 'Police chased topless girl barber after she shocked a church's congregation', *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*, 13th August 1971, p.17.

contestation of notions of respectability that took place in Britain during the 1960s and early 1970s. These changes could be liberating, alarming, disorienting; they not only impacted upon Soho and the West End of London, but were experienced and lived by men and women in towns and cities across the country.

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