

**MIDDLE-CLASS MODS and WORKING-CLASS SODS
*Quadrophenia and the Construction of Popular Histories***

**“In the mid-’60s if you were young and working class
you were either a Mod or you were a nobody”**

Hewitt 2000 p 79

This paper contributes to an AHRC-funded, University of Portsmouth research project about British film, television and cultural life in the 1970s. In the project, a major area of interest for me is the relationship between British cinema and popular music. As I have been doing the work on a broad range of films and recordings, a more specific interest has emerged partly in relation to two of my previous publications. The first (Allen 2004) examined the film *Woodstock*, which grew from documentary practice in the USA - particularly the work of Robert Drew and his peers. Despite the array of leading musicians in the film, a great deal of footage focused on the festival audience and other participants.

In 2007 I published a paper about the Mike Figgis film *Reds, Whites & Blues* concerning the British ‘blues’ scene of the 1960s in which I argued that the music it is better considered by the broader generic term rhythm & blues. However, my main critique of an often enjoyable film was that it offered a limited explanation of how such an apparently ‘foreign’ music had such a powerful cultural influence at that time. I observed that the film

drew wholly on the performances and recollections of musicians but offered no clear explanation of the infrastructure of club owners, promoters, record companies, critics, historians and – most importantly for my interests.....the fans and audiences, without whom no British blues scene could have existed. (p. 142)

Two fictional cinematic examples of the kind of (London) clubs and fans to which I referred can be seen in the recreation of the (real) “Ricky Tick” club in *Blow Up* featuring a performance by the Yardbirds, and at the start of *Quadrophenia* when Jimmy and his peers dance to a typical British R&B group performing covers of “Hi Heel Sneakers” (Tommy Tucker) and John Lee Hooker’s “Dimples”. While I can still enjoy a 1970s rock film like *The Last Waltz* for the performances of some of my favourite musicians, in a research context my particular interest is the depiction of fans, consumers and subcultural groups and how this depiction – especially in fictional works – represents and contributes to our accounts and cultural memories of these young people. In that respect, these two extracts are fascinating because they show the shift in ‘mod’ fashions from the short-haired, relatively regimented look of 1964/5 and the rapid transformation into colour, pattern and sense of flow by 1966/7 – a look which we can now see as moving towards ‘Pop Art’, the (briefly) ‘swinging’ sixties and embryonic hippie.

Such depictions are varied and not of course exclusively British, since films like *Rebel Without a Cause* and *The Girl Can't Help It* focused on teenage fashions and behaviour. In the 1950s and 1960s, these films or British equivalents like *Beat Girl* or *The Leather Boys* offered contemporary narratives of the new teenagers although the nearest to a contemporary representation of the mods was probably in the documentary *The Lambeth Boys*. The problem with contemporary depictions was that feature films took too long to plan, produce and distribute by which time the fashions depicted had changed.

However, by the 1970s, the new pop culture had been around long enough for film-makers to offer nostalgic accounts of the recent past. In 1973, George Lucas offered us a pre-Beatles narrative about the end of adolescent innocence in *American Graffiti* accompanied by a lively soundtrack. In the same year Claude Whatham directed a British version of the same subject, *That'll be the Day* in which David Essex like Richard Dreyfuss, abandons a promising academic career but in contrast to Dreyfuss leaves home for a life of Rock & Roll and – in the sequel – a mixture of *Stardust* and tragedy. Although the two Essex films are about pop music I would argue that the major interest in the first British film is how ordinary young people responded to the possibilities of this previously unimagined world from the mid-1950s onwards. One of the most fascinating scenes is when Essex, now a rough rocker, meets up with his former school pal (Robert Lindsay) who is now a beer-drinking 'trad' jazz loving student and they discover how, in a short time, they have become alienated from each others' (class-based) worlds.

In 1978, Derek Jarman's *Jubilee* was a film 'about' punk, which paid very little attention to any of the key punk acts of the day. Unlike those previous films it was courageous because contemporary and only nostalgic, if at all, for the England of Queen Elizabeth I. Sadly it was not greatly loved by the punks although whether it ever set out to be an accurate depiction is doubtful (see Allen 2008). There have been those who have suggested that in the following year, Franc Roddam's film of Pete Townshend's 'rock opera' *Quadrophenia* was more indicative of the punk sensibility although it is apparently a fiction about mods and their clashes with rockers in the mid-1960s.

A key characteristic of the film is that the leading protagonists are clearly working-class, especially Jimmy who we see at home and work, as well as in the clubs and other favourite mod locations including hairdressers and tailors shops. We also see them gate crashing a suburban middle-class teenage party in which the differences between the hosts and the unwelcome guests is very clear. While *Quadrophenia* is a fiction, I draw attention to this class issue precisely because it contradicts the account offered by Sandbrook whose two recent books on the period from Suez to 1970 have established him as a leading current historian of the 1960s.

My attention was drawn to his views when he visited our project to lead a seminar and spoke to us of the difference between middle-class mods and working-class rockers. It surprised me because unlike Sandbrook I was old enough to have experienced the period and indeed to have

participated in a localised mod scene and I did not share his view. Sandbrook and I engaged in a brief, amicable disagreement about this issue of class but it was not the focus of the seminar so we did not pursue it. I have considerable admiration for his archival research and very clear writing and I recognise that the matter of the mods is not a major element of Sandbrook's impressive overall account of the period. Nonetheless it is of interest to me *as a subject* while my disagreement with Sandbrook's account raised an equally interesting and more important issue about methodology. In broad terms my question is, how do we seek a clear definition of mods and what evidence will we accept in that process?

Sandbrook offers about seven pages of some detail about mods (and rockers). He makes use of what he calls "anecdote" although these he has gathered from other literature. For example, he offers one (p. 189) which exemplifies his central (social) thesis that "the experience of the sixties was marked as much by continuity as by revolutionary change". In his focus on mods he draws upon contemporary newspaper accounts and otherwise on most of the well-established writers on the topic including Cohen (1972), Cohn (in Hewitt 1999), Levy (2002), Barnes (1979), Rawlings (2000) and Melly (1970) as well as the 'classic' fictional exploration of modernism in London *Absolute Beginners* by MacInnes (2001). Interestingly he does not draw upon the well-known theoretical work on 1950s and 1960s subcultures by Hebdige (1979) and others.

In respect of the latter's theoretical approach, Muggleton (2000) published a focused study on subcultures which was more directly empirical and broader historically than either Hebdige or Sandbrook. He described the "expressive ethic" which informs so many subcultures as "historically" characteristic of the "upper middle classes" but he also argued unsurprisingly that since 1960

There has been a cultural convergence between sections of the middle and working classes, as the new expressive professions and cultural industries have expanded (p 160).

He added that it is not easy to come to any clear conclusions about the "cross-class membership of a subculture" but referred to "evidence" that "punk, mod, goth and metal" cannot be regarded as "specifically *working-class* subcultures". What he did assert was that whoever he interviewed, regardless of class, there was a constant commitment to "individual freedom and autonomy" (p 161). While I am comfortable with this view, I would like to suggest that one of the problems of asserting anything general about class which seeks to cover the early 1960s (mods), the late 1970s (punks) and later (Goths) is not straightforward. In so many respects including education, home ownership, leisure activities and consumption, these decades were very different. If there were (as I suspect) more working-class mods than punks it is perhaps because the working-class was larger and more visibly distinct in the early 1960s than it was 15 years later. Indeed in many respects I would suggest that the 1960s mods were the subcultural group which in many respects was most obviously working-class aspirational in terms of class and consumption,

exhibiting all the characteristics of the people who would carry Thatcher to power, in the year that *Quadrophenia* was released to remind them of a past which they recalled with affection but wished now to transcend.

By contrast with Sandbrook whose archival research led him to describe mods as middle-class, Muggleton suggests that the "orthodox version" of subcultures (e.g. from CCCS, Birmingham University) identifies 1950s and 1960s subcultures, teds, mods, rockers and skins as "highly cohesive, group-centred (and) working class". He contrasts these historical groups with (among others) "middle-class hippies" adding that classic studies could not envision members of one group joining "any other subculture". The key break for him was punk which plundered, recycled and "straddled class boundaries". In fact I believe that many first generation hippies in England were often transformed mods. Crucially for my purposes, Muggleton identifies CCCS (and others) as producing an "artificially pure version of subcultures" which has "obscured the disjunctions, confusions and complexities" of the period before punk – including mods in the 1960s (p. 163).

Muggleton comments that he knew about the complexity of subcultural life in terms of his own experience of being a punk in the 1970s which is of methodological interest to me since I wish to ask whether we are comfortable allowing personal materials into our published research? In addition, Muggleton's thesis seeks to disrupt the typical and simple distinction between modernist and (from punk onwards) postmodernist subcultures by asserting the value of a

Postmodern re-reading of a supposedly modernist period, a re-evaluation in which 'pure' subcultural forms now become fragmented and diversified. (p. 164)

Muggleton has since edited a Reader on "Post-Subcultures" (with Weinzierl 2003), which warrants acknowledgement here although it is more concerned with recent theory and post-1960s subcultures. In a sense I am here participating in his previous re-reading although perhaps naively, I see no particular need to label what I am doing 'postmodern' and to some degree rather than re-reading I am wishing to offer new – or perhaps more precisely additional – writing. I propose to offer a brief, geographically-specific and largely untold tale of mods which may offer a new perspective on this 'subculture', not only in terms of the 1960s but also its revival in the following decade when as an NME publication of 2005 suggested

As the 1970s came to an end, parkas, scooters and target T-shirts were once again seen on the streets of Britain, all inspired by (the Jam) and the timely release of *Quadrophenia*. (p. 86)

I want to suggest that if there was ever a 'pure' version of mod subculture it was in fact not what we know of mods in the first half of the 1960s which always reveals so many contradictions and competing claims, but the version that was created from the emergence of *Quadrophenia* and Paul Weller. By 'pure' I don't mean 'authentic' – I mean rule-governed and

conventional. My disagreement with Sandbrook is a consequence of the impressive scale of his enterprise and the relative unimportance of subcultural matters which leads him to offer a highly generalised and insufficiently complex account of a particular phenomenon.

Let us consider a few of the contradictions in his account before exploring through my case study how things were different. Firstly Sandbrook is content to draw upon the best known 'popular' writing about the period including George Melly's 1970 publication on the pop arts which Sandbrook uses to justify his claim that "Modernist fans or mods" enjoyed "markedly middle-class" experiences (p 196). But Melly's section that Sandbrook quotes is actually about Modern Jazz not mods, in a section subtitled "before Tommy Steele" and almost wholly about the musicians who emerged "immediately after the war" (p. 22) – not as part of the later mod subculture. Melly says

(The Modernists) understood not only the musical complexity of bop but the spirit that created it and within that emotional means *they tried to play it* (p. 24 – my emphasis)

There is a common account of early English mods (late 1950s onwards) which identifies their fondness for modern jazz although this is generally thought to be the cooler version of Miles Davis that followed bop or the funkier sounds of some of the current Blue Note acts. But very few accounts of mods describe them as musicians for they are far more often consumers than producers of culture. Sandbrook's conclusion from Melly's writing is just wrong.

Sandbrook's other source here, Cohn wrote contemporary magazine articles about mods and in a famous piece which Sandbrook uses he does describe the "roots" of mods in "a few dozen" middle class "sons of clerks and small businessmen" who were "purists". But the roots are not the whole (or generally visible) thing and a few dozen middle class teenagers did not – as Cohn notes – attract any media attention or any representations and "their influence was only local" (p 139). If we are able to talk about mods as a subcultural group and a part of English social history it is not because of a few dozen highly stylish young men in London but because what they did, spread widely and quickly and was disseminated through the mass media.

I have said English, but while Sandbrook uses Cohn's account to support his view of mods as middle-class he ignores his view that as it grew

It spread all over London and established a new Mecca in Shepherd's Bush, and then swept on the south coast and up as far as Nottingham, although it never amounted to much above the Trent. (p. 140)

By contrast, Sandbrook says that the mod scene "was generally associated with London but while he ignored the rest of southern England he added that

Liverpool, Birmingham and Newcastle all boasted Mod populations but perhaps the largest concentration north of London was found in Glasgow. (pp. 197-8)

His main source for this is the often derided commercial magazine *The Mod* and an article by Scotsman George Marshall acknowledging that the mod movement began in London in the late 1950s "but had taken a *lot longer* to catch on in the sticks north of the Watford gap". In fact, Marshall's main focus was on the emergence of skinheads from the sub-subculture of "hard mods" (p 155) but Sandbrook uses Marshall to offer a strange and otherwise unsubstantiated view of the major mod locations – and not one that is found commonly anywhere else.

I would prefer to consider Cohn's view that the mod movement "swept on the south coast". We know that Brighton and other Bank Holiday seaside towns were a focus for clashes between mods and rockers but I would to look in some detail at my home city of Portsmouth which had a very lively mod presence in the mid-1960s.

This has hardly been documented anywhere in any systematic way and I do not wish to make any particular claims for Portsmouth but I have three reasons for this focus:

1. To consider in more detail questions of subcultures and class
2. To examine the various often hierarchical mod groups emerging from the late 1950s onwards
3. To make an opportunistic use of very particular 'evidence' as a way of examining methodological questions in the construction of social and cultural history

In this latter respect I wish to return to Sandbrook and point out two key differences between us. The first is that I participated in a version of the 'swinging sixties', including to some extent the mod movement and Sandbrook, who is much younger than me, did not. For example I became a teenager in the week that the Beatles released their first record ("Love Me Do") and by the last hours of the decade I was singing professionally in a psychedelic rock band. I do not assume for one moment that this makes me a better historian of the 1960s in any respect but I am interested in how our different perspectives and experiences might produce different kinds of histories. The second key difference is that in the pages preceding his account of mods, Sandbrook suggests that

DIY was one of the great success stories of the sixties and probably tells us more about ordinary life than a thousand psychedelic records...But popular as DIY was, it did not come close to competing with the most widespread pastime of all, gardening. (p 191)

Sandbrook has good reason to wish to redress the balance in histories of the 1960s away from the sometimes exaggerated claims for its special qualities and I share his interest in ordinary people and previously 'hidden' histories. However, what fascinates me is how ordinary young people participated in and constructed innovative cultural experiences which were

unprecedented in volume and scope. By definition, 'hidden' histories have to be uncovered by making use of a variety of sources.

This brings us to Portsmouth. We have seen that Sandbrook does not report the south coast's involvement in the 1960s mod movement. I wish to assert otherwise although I will not be helped much by other academic histories – even with a local focus. A number of publications about Portsmouth have looked at topics like leisure, culture and the arts but none pay any serious attention to the huge impact of popular music or teenage groups since the 1950s. I cannot say why (e.g. Stapleton & Thomas 1989, Webb *et al* 1989, Riley 2005).

There is some evidence however, to support the claim that Portsmouth was an active city for young people and participated actively in the mod movement of the mid 1960s. For example, in October 1965, the British popular music paper *Record Mirror*¹ carried a full page report with five photographs on page 3 about the failure of the leading pop act the Walker Brothers to meet a performance commitment at the official opening of Portsmouth's *Birdcage Club* which also involved Jimmy Saville, the Vagabonds and the Action. The popularity of the group and the media appetite for controversy may have encouraged the story's prominence but it was nonetheless a significant media coup for a provincial club which was the centre of local mod activity in what tended to be a London-focused world.

It was not the only time during the so-called 'swinging' sixties that Portsmouth's *Birdcage Club* was recognised as an important venue on the English scene, despite the dominance of clubs like the Marquee, Flamingo, Crawdaddy, Scene and Ricky Tick. In Portsmouth there was some surprise at the choice of the Walker Brothers to top the bill and Jimmy Saville to present them, since this was clearly a brief flirtation with the 'pop' market in a club that featured the leading club acts of the period – often more 'cult' attractions than straight pop acts. The club, run by Rikki Farr² had opened originally some three miles to the west of its new Eastney location in the spring of 1965 and had already featured a number of acts popular with mods before the official opening night (see Appendix One)

On the so-called 'opening' night the support acts Jimmy James and the Vagabonds and the Action were two of the leading club acts of that time and the two most popular regular visitors to the club. When the first Vagabonds album *The New Religion* was released it featured images from the Birdcage on the front cover and a long piece on the back by the band's manager and leading London mod Peter Meaden in which he described how the band had initially made a major impression in Portsmouth. In late 1966, fans of the band were invited to London's Marquee Club for the live recording of the album *London Swings* which

¹ Similar in format and competing with *New Musical Express*, *Melody Maker* and *Disc Weekly*. All four reported on pop(ular) music but *Record Mirror* had a particular interest in Black soul music and R&B.

² Rikki Farr son of boxing heavyweight champion Tommy Farr, brother of British R&B singer Gary Farr (the T-Bones) and MC/promoter at the Isle of Wight Festivals 1968-1970

also featured the Alan Bown Set while the *Birdcage* sign appeared on the album cover.

Jimmy James confirmed the importance of Portsmouth for his band in an interview in *Melody Maker* in August 1966 likening the band's live gigs to "a party...a reaction that started in places like Portsmouth and has now spread..."

One month after the opening night, *Melody Maker* reported that the Action were well supported in "London, Manchester and Portsmouth". By February 1966, *Disc Weekly* was reporting that Rikki Farr was now managing the band and comparing them with the Who - although they were recording for Parlophone with the Beatles' producer George Martin. Sadly the band never achieved any major success while by 1968, the *Birdcage Club* had closed and Rikki Farr was running a new 'progressive'/ blues/rock club at the original venue in Southsea.

One of the few published accounts of Portsmouth's *Birdcage Club* and its local Mod scene was "Weekend" by Ian Hebditch, which appeared in the same anthology as the chapters by Cohn and Marshall cited by Sandbrook (Hewitt 1999). Hewitt described Hebditch as "an original Mod, hailing from Portsmouth" and his account was written 30 years before this publication so his memory had been sufficiently fresh to recall the "the strange inferiority complex we had as regards London" (p 134)

This was unsurprising for a number of reasons. Firstly the Portsmouth mod scene was largely an imitation of London and the older, leading Portsmouth mods would travel to the capital regularly to bring back information about fashions, music and dances. By 1964 in comparison with those earlier, few middle-class mods, the movement had become somewhat regimented and imitative with individual 'expression' generally limited to subtle differences in image and taste. This is evident from the many photographs published by Barnes (1979) in the same year that *Quadrophenia* presented a visual representation of the period when mods were beginning to make an impact in the English media.

In a sense of course a degree of conformity is as important in identification with any subcultural group although as I have suggested, the more flamboyant elements of mod culture transformed very quickly into Pop Art and early Hippy where there was greater opportunity for individual expression in terms of style and musical taste.

With respect to music, Hebditch describes a gig by the Action and also records on the juke box and in the *Birdcage Club* by Otis Redding, the Impressions and Sam & Dave - well known Black American soul acts popular on the mod scene. He describes how at around midnight, many Portsmouth mods would ride to Bognor for the all-nighter at the *Shoreline Club* sustained by a variety of amphetamines. He might have described the one anomaly in Portsmouth's mod scene which occurred on Sunday afternoons. In the London region the influential mod television show *Ready Steady Go!* was broadcast on Friday evenings with the opening line "The Weekend Starts Here". In Portsmouth and the rest of the Southern

Television region it went out after Sunday lunch which had slightly less impact although it still informed us about the latest fashions, music and dance styles.

So in all these ways there was a clearly established mod scene in Portsmouth. It certainly followed London and cannot claim any particular innovations but that is not a precondition for being a local version of a subculture.

I am comfortable with Muggleton's view that trying to locate subcultures as specifically working-class is too simplistic but I would like to use Hebditch's article as a way of exploring the issue in some detail. This is partly to examine the question of how we decide which evidence is acceptable in constructing cultural histories – especially these kinds of reminiscences, alongside contemporary press reports, oral histories, documentation of the club gigs and personal artefacts. As an example of the latter, I have attached some verbatim extracts from the diary of a young man who went regularly to the *Birdcage Club* and knew many of the characters identified by Hebditch in his article (see Appendix Two). I too knew most of Hebditch's characters at the time and in some cases they have remained friends of mine. I attended the *Birdcage Club* regularly, dressed as close to mod styles as I could afford and learned to love the music, rooted in post-war black American urban music.

I did not know Hebditch in the 1960s but we became friendly in later years and I contributed to a book he was planning about the Action. Like me, Hebditch pursued an academic life in the arts and cultural studies but sadly he died in his fifties and the book was not completed. The fact that we were both grammar school boys who attended the *Birdcage* dressed like mods and became academics seems to support Sandbrook's view that mods were middle class. I would not deny that I now exhibit most of the characteristics of the 'intellectual' middle class and in the 1960s I was a grammar school boy, but my maternal grandfather was a coal miner, my father a local government clerk and while we owned our own terraced home we never had a car or a holiday abroad. Further, my grammar school was direct grant which meant some (very small) fees for those of us whose parents were not wealthy. It was absolutely *the* major middle-class school for Portsmouth boys and I will assert with some confidence that fewer than 10 boys from that school went with any regularity to the *Birdcage Club* or involved themselves in the local mod scene. Of those that did, the majority, including Martin Richman, Les Gerry, Glyn Fielding, Nigel Grundy and I all had average academic records but were good at art and in most (perhaps all?) cases pursued that into a career. The majority of Portsmouth's *Birdcage* mods, male and female, attended the local state schools, whether grammar, technical or secondary modern, and most left in mid-teens and went into paid employment.

Hebditch wrote his account in 1969 as part of his degree studies and perhaps five years after the events he was describing. The first person he mentioned, Harry was by 1969, a close friend of mine. His mother was Italian having married and settled in England after the war and Harry who was at one time a technical illustrator, became a successful brush

salesman running his own business. Elsewhere, Hebditch describes how Fred Lverage and "his crew" were picking on "a Southampton bloke" – Fred is still in Portsmouth where he has lived his life as a painter and decorator and like many former mods has been sufficiently entrepreneurial and aspirational to build a decent business, own his own home with his family, thereby transcending his working-class roots.

Towards the end of his piece Hebditch writes about Jim Lush who has been a good friend of mine since the 1960s. In many respects he is a perfect example of a typical working class mod who took advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves during the 1960s. His father ran fruit and vegetable stalls in the local markets and Jim was educated at one of the long defunct Technical High Schools after which he followed many of his peers into Portsmouth's Dockyard. These apprenticeships and subsequent jobs were the core of the city's dominant working class culture and Jim still works from that base for the Ministry of Defence. But he is also a talented painter and designer, a fine cook, an articulate lover of music – most especially Frank Zappa and a fan of science fiction literature. He is delightful, entertaining company and in appearance and habits apparently middle-class. But that's not where he began.

Jim's wife is a schoolteacher and one of her teaching friends Amelia is married to Ted Brooks, who is, like Fred Lverage, a painter and decorator and former *Birdcage* mod. Jim, Ted and I meet up socially a few times every year, sometimes with others who shared our experiences of the 1960s and I told Ted about my Sandbrook experience. He was surprised and recounted details of his early life some of which were new to me. I knew that he and his brothers had grown up in a council house on the notorious Paulsgrove estate in north Portsmouth where they shared a bed for many years. In the early 1960s Ted began imitating the later generation of Teddy Boys who were assiduous in their attention to fashion, There is a fine exchange in the film *The Lambeth Boys* when similar 'boys' - in 1958 – discuss the importance and value of fashionable suits and clothes in a way that seems to me to exemplify the interests of someone like Ted around that time. Later his general interest in fashion became a more specific involvement in the clothes, music and clubs of the mods.

The change to the specific and very smart mod style was a part of the discovery of new music in new clubs. Although *The Birdcage* opened in 1965 it had been preceded in the city by other venues including *Kimbells*, *the Pomme D'Or* and most notably *the Rendezvous Club* where mod fashions first surfaced in Portsmouth in 1964 while the fans watched R&B acts like Graham Bond Organisation, Georgie Fame, the Clique, Downliners Sect, the Spencer Davis Group and the Moody Blues. Another of my best friends from those days Dave Pittard grew up around the corner from me quite close to Fratton Park. He was sufficiently older to have been involved in all those Portsmouth scenes and as a Dockyard apprentice he could afford a scooter – which most of us could not and, being inner city, did not actually require. But Dave suffered a serious crash on his and still has signs of the injuries sustained. When I told him about Sandbrook's view more than 40 years later, his response was

humorous but more concise than Ted. He asked how Sandbrook 'knew' these things before suggesting "he needs to read different fucking books, mush".

I noted above that by-and-large the only school friends of mine from the middle-class grammar school who were involved in *The Birdcage* and local mod scene were those who were interested in art (although the reverse was not always true). I remember only one exception, Brian Jones, but we might account for his particular interest primarily in musical terms since his father was a huge jazz fan who generously shared conversations, records and American magazines like *Downbeat* with his son's friends. Brian's father Vic was a Dockyard 'chippy' and they lived in a council flat, which was not at all middle-class.

These shared interests in music and art extended to many of the mods I knew. I have noted that although Jim Lush has always worked in or from the Dockyard he is an artist and designer in his free time and interested in music and literature. Ted Brooks often spends his spare time visiting art exhibitions locally and in London, while Dave Pittard was an accomplished drummer who played regularly for many decades. Among those I have not mentioned was Geoff Allman who attended one of the state grammar schools and went on to Art College where he and my school friend Martin Richman formed an accomplished late 1960s light show. Martin worked for many years in the music industry, obtained a fine art degree and is now a successful artist working mainly in light. Geoff Allman established his own design company in the early 1970s in Manchester and is still there.

From 1968 many of these young mods moved into what I am calling the first phase of the hippy culture. I do not mean the political counter culture that centred on 'the events' of 1968 but rather that world which explored new music and art, psychedelic drugs instead of amphetamines and in some cases the 'new' spirituality, which in Portsmouth included an active Buddhist group. I remember waving Jim and Harry away on their trip to India in perhaps 1970, by which time our carefully cropped mod hairstyles were much looser and much longer.

I am focusing here on a small group of people who I once thought of as mods – and I am conscious that this is only a boy's story – to suggest that collectively they moved towards another lifestyle that did become far more middle-class in its next phase. I am equally conscious that these young men shared a genuine interest in creative and cultural practices which was perhaps less typical of what became known as the 'hard' mods who perhaps evolved into skinheads. I am glad to have been a part of the former group although I am not here making a value judgement. What I have offered is no more than a case study of a few people in a specific city. Like Sandbrook I am interested in redressing the balance in 1960s' histories towards 'ordinary' people but, unlike Sandbrook, my interest in establishing the extent to which the more extraordinary events of that decade did have an impact outside a small 'swinging' part of the capital.

Methodologically, my question is whether these local accounts can contribute to the stories that emerge from fictional works like *Absolute*

Beginners or *Quadrophenia*, contemporary journalism, and theoretical work by Hebdige, Muggleton and others. I have suggested that in this specific instance Sandbrook is wrong but I wonder if that is partly because he limits himself to archival sources which have not necessarily any more authority than my human witnesses. Or have they? Does anything change if you discover that the diary entries (which are entirely genuine) are mine? How does Hebditch compare with Hebdige?

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Music Papers

- Disc Weekly* - "The Action – Ravers Just Like the Who" 19 February 1966 p 10
- Melody Maker* – "Jimmy Spreads the Gospel of Good-Time Music" 27 August 1966 p 9
- NME Originals* "Mod" Volume 2, Issue 2, 2005
- Record Mirror* – Richard Green "The Great Let-Down" in 30 October 1965 p 3

Filmography

<i>American Graffiti</i>	Director George Lucas	1973
<i>Beat Girl</i>	Director Edmond T Greville	1959
<i>Blow Up</i>	Director Michelangelo Antonioni	1966
<i>The Girl Can't Help It</i>	Director Frank Tashlin	1956
<i>Jubilee</i>	Director Derek Jarman	1978
<i>The Last Waltz</i>	Director Martin Scorsese	1978
<i>The Leather Boys</i>	Director Sydney J Furie	1963
<i>Quadrophenia</i>	Director Franc Roddam	1979
<i>Rebel Without a Cause</i>	Director Nicholas Ray	1955
<i>Reds Whites & Blues</i>	Director Mike Figgis	2003
<i>Stardust</i>	Director Michael Apted	1974
<i>That'll be the Day</i>	Director Claude Whatham	1973
<i>We are the Lambeth Boys</i>	Director Karel Reisz	1959

Appendix One: BIRDCAGE CLUB, PORTSMOUTH - GIGS

Thursday 25 February 1965, the club opened at Kimbells Ballroom Southsea with Gary Farr and the T-Bones

Major acts appearing each month:

March 1965 Chris Farlowe & Thunderbirds, Champion Jack Dupree, Ronnie Jones
April 1965 Paramounts, Zoot Money, Goldie & Gingerbreads, Chris Farlowe, T-Bones
May 1965 Paramounts, Brian Auger Trinity
June 1965 Rod Stewart, Brian Auger Trinity, Chris Farlowe, T-Bones, Jimmy James & Vagabonds, Moody Blues, Ronnie Jones & Blue Jays
July 1965 The Who (Savoy Ballroom), Jimmy James & Vagabonds, the Action, Chris Farlowe, Charlie & Inez Foxx, Moody Blues, Ronnie Jones & Blue Jays
August 1965 Sugar Pie DeSanto, Alex Harvey, Herbie Goins, In Crowd, the Action, Vagabonds

Thursday 26 August 1965: *Birdcage Club* opened in its permanent residence in Eastney with the Steam Packet and the Action (5/-)

September 1965 Georgie Fame & Blue Flames, Moody Blues, Vagabonds, Cliff Bennett & Rebel Rousers, In Crowd, T-Bones, Action, Herbie Goins & Nightimers,
October 1965 Bo Diddley, David Bowie & Lower Third, Ben E King, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Steam Packet, Action, Vagabonds, Chris Farlowe, Mark Leeman Five
November 1965 Wilson Pickett, Zoot Money, Vagabonds, Chris Farlowe, Action, Peter Bs Looners
December 1965 The Who, Geno Washington & Ram Jam Band, Major Lance, Alan Price, VIPs, Action, Vagabonds, Simon Dupree & Big Sound
January 1966 The Drifters, Spencer Davis Group, Paramounts, VIPs, Action, Vagabonds, Birds,
February 1966 Small Faces, Alan Price, Geno Washington, Action, Vagabonds, Herbie Goins
March 1966 The Who, Alan Price, In Crowd, Shevelles
April 1966 Georgie Fame & Blue Flames, Vagabonds, Arthur Alexander, Graham Bond, the Clique, Cliff Bennett, Alan Bown Set.
May 1966 Chris Farlowe, In Crowd, Action, Gary Farr & T-Bones

Closed for re-vamp until July 1966

July 1966 Small Faces, The Move, Action, Vagabonds, In Crowd (more record/DJ nights)
August 1966 The Hollies, The Move, Vagabonds, Alan Bown Set,
September 1966 The Move, Action, In Crowd, Graham Bond, Vagabonds, Alan Bown Set
October 1966 Ike & Tina Turner Show, The Move, Vagabonds, Chris Farlowe, Alan Bown Set
November 1966 Little Richard, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Zoot Money, Merseys, Birds, T-Bones
December 1966 Cream, In Crowd, Action, Vagabonds, Graham Bond, the Gass
January 1967 Pink Floyd, Inez & Charlie Foxx, Art Woods, Geno Washington,
February 1967 The Who, the Knack, In Crowd
March 1967 Chris Farlowe, the Drifters, Amboy Dukes (UK version)
April 1967 Pink Floyd (7/6d), The Move, Geno Washington, Tony Blackburn (DJ)
May 1967 Georgie Fame & Blue Flames, Prince Buster, Amen Corner, Joyce Bond Show

From June, *The New Birdcage Club*

June 1967 Denny Laine, the Herd, Action, Alan Bown Set, Geno Washington
July 1967 Procul Harum, Herbie Goins, Graham Bond, Vagabonds, Denny Laine
August 1967 Aynsley Dunbar Blues Band, Vagabonds

The Birdcage Club finally closed on Saturday 26 August 1967 with the Joyce Bond Show.

On the weekend of 16/17 December the venue reopened as *The Brave New World* with Ronnie Jones, the Q Set and the Harlem Speakeasy.

That club survived for about ten months before changing to a cabaret venue called *The Pack*.

Rikki Farr moved back to Kimbells and opened a new British blues and progressive club in November 1968. He was co-promoter and MC of the three Isle of Wight Festivals 1968-1970.

Appendix Two: **DIARY - 1966 (Age 16-17, Male, Schoolboy)**

(italicised comments are additional and explanatory)

<p>Saturday 1 January Last night at the Birdcage (<i>Club</i>) watching the Action into the New Year. Up at 9.0 and read <i>Up the Junction</i>. Later recorded BBC Light Programme "Jazz Club" with Brian Auger and Georgie Fame</p>
<p>Saturday 8 January I have a cold. To Commercial Road to buy blue shirt with white collar and cuffs (39/11d). To Birdcage to see Action again (6/-) with Pete & Alan.</p>
<p>Friday 14 January Designed a cover for my new notebook. To Birdcage with Martin, Pete and Alan to see Vagabonds (6/-) – big fight with Southampton mushes.</p>
<p>Friday 11 February Wally (art teacher) encouraged me to apply to Art College. I borrowed Leadbelly and Muddy Waters LPs from Jonas. Went to the youth club where Porteous was selling Valentine cards.</p>
<p>Saturday 19 February List of top ten R&B records from <i>Record Mirror</i> : 1. Uptight – Stevie Wonder, 2. Get Out of my Life – Lee Dorsey, 3, Harlem Shuffle – Bob & Earl (etc)</p>
<p>Thursday 24 February <i>Melody Maker</i> extra large this week – great! Rained – drag of a day. Revision all morning, Geometry Exam in afternoon, 2 hrs, bloody terrible. Revised in evening for history. Pretty vile day, left bike out all night.</p>
<p>Friday 25 March Snow this morning. Watched Spencer Davis Group on (<i>BBC TV</i>) <i>Crackerjack</i>. Stayed in in evening, did work and painting.</p>
<p>Friday 1 April Labour won election – great! Went to Commercial Road with Jonas and bought shoes (69/11d). Went to party at Donna's, great. Got drunk, so did Jonas – home at 11.45</p>
<p>Saturday 9 April (Easter) Listened to BBC "Saturday Club" – Alan Price. Had short haircut and went to scooter rally and Commercial Road. Sunny afternoon – Pompey won again. Saw Steve and 'Dedge', went to Birdcage – Vagabonds – great!</p>
<p>Friday 22 April Went back to school, rain etc. Bloody bore. Stayed in evening and had bath.</p>
<p>Sunday 1 May Hayling (<i>Island</i>) with Mart, Jonah, Russ, Morris, Steve, Paul, Valerie. Sun tan, went for swim – great day</p>
<p>Tuesday 31 May Bought Paul Butterfield (<i>Blues Band</i>) LP and two rings. Sunny & hot. Worked in morning. Went to 'flicks' to see <i>Morgan a Suitable Case for Treatment</i></p>

Monday 11 July Worked (<i>selling newspapers</i>) bad day – sold 6 dozen – 8/2d. To Birdcage in evening (free – <i>records</i>) Good.
Saturday 30 July England won World Cup! Sold 5 doz (7/-) Bought coat (£8: 9/6d) tie & handkerchief (30/-) and Rod Stewart "Shake" (7/4d). Went to Funfair.
Wednesday 24 August Bought shirt ("Hym" – 19/11d) and Otis Spann LP (32/6d). Went to cricket v Essex, bit of a drag. Evening, saw Pompey lose 4-5 to Birmingham
Saturday 3 September Stayed in morning and watched cricket knock-out cup final – Warwickshire won. Went up town with Bruce and Steve, bought belt (9d) and Fats Domino record (6d). Went to Fred's party. Pauline.
Monday 3 October Rained – went to Art College and round Vi's – Won!! (see above – <i>Football</i>)
Monday 10 October Bicycle puncture. Went to art college and then to Verrechia's (<i>coffee bar</i>)
Wednesday 2 November Went to London and met Mart at Design Centre (good). National Gallery (had lunch there). Saw beatniks, went to Kings Road Chelsea to Chelsea Antique Market. Great furs £2 – £5, army jackets - £4. Went up Wardour St and saw Tiles, the Marquee, Flamingo (<i>all clubs</i>). Caught 6.50 home
Thursday 3 November Very cold. Went up Lake Road, Mart bought fur (10/-) but couldn't keep it. Went to Vi's in afternoon and evening. Watched "Top of the Pops" (Chris Farlowe, Four Tops, Spencer Davis)
Wednesday 9 November Went up Manhattan and Bistro (<i>coffee bars</i>) and round Smith & Vospers (<i>bakery</i>). Jonas (birthday) and Mart (wore fur). Lost rugby v Tech (<i>High School</i>) 27-13.
Tuesday 15 November Stayed in evening. Fairly drag day. Cold
Friday 25 November Saw Little Richard at 'Cage (<i>Birdcage</i>) Free – Tremendous! Crowded with thicks! Great gas! Cold. Four art periods in morning.
Saturday 3 December Played rugby for Price's (<i>college</i>) v 4 th XV, won 14-9. Saw Cream (<i>Birdcage</i>) Great (see notes at front – <i>list of songs</i>)
Thursday 15 December Stayed in morning writing and drawing. Work (<i>GPO</i>) from 2 – 10. Not bad
Wednesday 28 December Rain, Bought 1984, BB King "Don't Answer the Door" and <i>Jazz Monthly</i> . Saw (<i>film</i>) <i>Khartoum</i> with Steve and Mart. Went to Jenny's at Emsworth
Saturday 31 December Went for swim with Steve in morning (<i>in sea</i>). Quite warm. Stayed in in afternoon and wrote blues book. Listened to football. Went up 'Cage with Jenny, Keith, Mart, Jonas (bought coats in London) 12/6d In Crowd & Graham Bond. Got better. Home at 1.10 am.