

Transcript of interview conducted September 7 2017

Interviewees: ALAN GREENWOOD (AG)
Interviewer: ALISTAIR CARTWRIGHT (AC)
Also present: JAREK ZABA (JZ)
Kingston-upon-Thames, England

Transcription: JAREK ZABA

[0:00:00] AC: So today is the 7th of September 2017 just for the record. And was are in the Creative Youth offices in Kingston in Millennium House. My name is Alistair Cartwright, I'm a volunteer. And I'm speaking with Alan Greenwood. Alan, do you mind spelling your name for the record and also date of birth if you wouldn't mind?

AG: A-l-a-n. G-r-e-e-n-w-o-o-d. And I was born 31st March 1946.

[00:37] AC: Place of birth?

AG: East Finchley in Middlesex. It was the county of Middlesex then although it had a London postcode it was in Middlesex. Not many people would remember that wonderful county.

[00:49] AC: So I believe you worked at the Bentalls record store for a time. What was that like?

AG: It was quite a exciting time. I worked previously - to Bentalls I worked in a record store in Hayes in Middlesex where I used to live. And my parents moved to Kingston when I was about 18. And they took over a newsagent shop on Elm Road. And after a while of helping them to move in and settle in I looked for a job and because as I'd been working in a record store and the big record store in Kingston was at Bentalls I applied for a job. And I got it, working for a rather smart trim lady that used to run the department. Can't remember her name but I know she was a miss. And it was quite a good time - the type of customers they had in Bentalls were all types. It was a very salubrious place. A lot of people with money went there. And it also had a very eclectic selection of records. Which was similar to the whole music scene at the time. One of the things I have to say about the 60s was the ease of which access to which music there was and total variety of music. And that happened in the store as well. And if I just say - when I say variety of music - we'd gone through the 50s with skiffle and rock n roll and so by the time the 60s came we'd gone through various stages at the turn of the - into the 60s. Trad jazz was very very big. And as the 60s progressed there was - dominated by the American music industry - and then of course in the 1963 it all suddenly went English with the Liverpool invasion. But it was so varied. We could get trad jazz - if you went to Richmond you got modern jazz. You went to Surbiton Assembly Rooms you had folk music. And of course in Kingston we had the Cellar Club which was big place for all the bands and the thing went - the music scene went from the early 1960s where everybody was to be a soundalike to the middle of the 1960s where the English thing came up and people didn't want somebody to sound like somebody else, they - the buzzword was I found the new sound. So it was quite different. But in Bentalls they had a big oblong area - it was quite large. And they were unusual in that they sold quite a lot of LPs. You had three types of sizes - you had the 45s, which had a maximum of about three minutes of tunes on them. Then they introduced EPs - extended plays - they were again seven inch 45s. But they managed to get more tracks on - usually you got about four tracks to each side. And then you had LPs - mainly 12 inch, though there were a few 10 inch, I've got a nice Elvis Presley 10 inch which was on his original label, the RCA label, not - sorry not RCA. HMV. Because RCA was originally released in this country on HMV. And people came in for all sorts of things.

[04:45] AC: It's great to hear about all that variety of music and then you started to touch on the different types of records and recording methods and so on. Just to - I want to go back to all that -

but just to go - say a bit more about the store. You said it was salubrious place - what did you mean by that?

AG: It was the centre of trade in Kingston. And I remember, as I say, my father had taken over a newsagent shop in Elm Road. And I remember one of the reps coming round - I think the trick is we were a wholesaler distributor and they were offering something and I think he took one or two. And the chap said you'll need more than that, Bentalls have taken 500. And this was the difference about the turnover that Bentalls had, the traction that it had. And it had a very upmarket clothes - for instance there was a menswear group, Great Universal Stores, which had the cheap end which was Weaver To Wearer, then it had middle range, John Temple's. And then it had another company called Hector Powe's. So you can guess that the uprange one was Hector Powe and you could guess where that would have been. That was in Bentalls because Bentalls was an upmarket place to go to. So they sold a lot more LPs and the LPs would have been Sinatra and Dean Martin and people like that.

[06:18] AC: And what was the atmosphere like in the shop?

AG: Very - years ago they had a television series called Are You Being Served? And Are You Being Served? was very much a parody on the types of real life characters that you met there. And each department had a buyer and a manager and a supervisor and it was very disciplined and structured. I was at the lower of echelons - salesperson. But because I'd been working in record store before I knew all about how the record numbering system went. I've got a record and you'll find all the records have got a code number on them and you ordered them like that. And you ordered them from the distributors - two of the big ones - there were others. There was EMI which was quite a big distributor. There was also a company called Selector. And it was quite efficient - I think you could order Tuesday and probably have them delivered late Wednesday, certainly by Thursday.

[07:34] AC: So you were involved in that distribution process of that? [inaudible]

AG: Yes I'd done it before when I run a smaller record shop at Hayes. So when I came to Kingston - I think the name of the lady was Miss Haslip now I come to think of it. And she would have had the overall decision.

[07:56] AC: And can you talk through maybe some of the details of that process. Of getting the records, getting in touch with distributors.

AG: We - it was quite a organised system in some ways. You had the pop record magazines, New Musical Express, Melody Maker. And they would print charts and I think they came out on Thursday. And so they came out and then the - maybe the New Musical Express was Friday - because that's when the latest top 10, top 50 chart came out then. And the top chart were based on the returns from people like EMI and Selector. And we had a trade magazine which [] out on Thursday, that's right, so that we knew what the result was going to be probably the day before. And you used to - because you knew what was going to be in the chart you knew what records were going to sell. And so you made sure that you had in stock so many of number 1, number 2 3 4. And if it was going up you would have it more of it than if it was coming down, where it was coming down because it was a sliding downwards and sales were reducing. So you knew that you had most of ones in so that if anyone wanted to buy the latest hit record, they would come in and nine times out of ten you would have it in. There were regional things like all the areas had their own local favourite pop groups. I lived in originally in Hayes where Brian Poole and the Tremeloes - a big group here - I can't remember who the big ones in Kingston were. But your little local area would obviously know who your local favourite band were. And would have them in. So they would do things like that.

[10:04] AC: So would you say there was a sense of loyalty or there was a regional kind of sense of specificity [inaudible]

AG: A very localised regionality - from Kingston to Richmond would be different. Teddington probably different. Because you had different venues - we had the Cellar Club here in Kingston which would certainly go for the latest popstars so that when Go Now reached number 1 from The Moody Blues the Cellar Club had got them in straight away. But if you went over to Twickenham where you'd have Eel Pie Island they were more on the rhythm and blues type front with the Yardbirds. So Yardbirds would have been very big over there. I can't remember as I say which was the big group here in Kingston. But it was also boosted by the fact that some of the cinemas here took - closed down - removed their screen for concerts. Travelling concerts. And I remember twice seeing Dionne Warwick at the cinema which turned into the Gala. I think it was called the Gaumont originally, up by Canbury Park Road. And the other cinema was the - well there was four cinemas - well the Odeon was another big one and that was where the Cellar Club was, down by The Ram where the brewery was.

[11:42] AC: I mean you mentioned the Cellar Club a few times. Was it a place that you went?

AG: The Cellar Club, I went to the Cellar Club. And I managed a band and they formed at the Cellar Club as well.

[11:52] AC: Who was that?

AG: It was a band called Two Third Left. Yes. And it was sort of a -

[11:59] AC: For the record you're bringing out a photo now.

AG: Yes that's just a band sort of posing -

AC: Which shows the band?

AG: - in Kingston -

AC: Leaning on some railings.

AG: - yeah which was near the -

JZ: They look like a band.

AG: - the Barclays bank [Laughter] down opposite Bentalls. There was Barry as all along Clarence Street at times there as well. And so not only did I go there to watch the bands, we also went there to see my band play. And you went there for the girls as well which was an important part of the scene at the time.

[12:37] AC: And so this band - sorry the name of it again?

AG: They were Two Third Left.

[12:42] AC: Can you tell me a bit more about them?

AG: They were similar to a lot of bands. Everywhere were having bands - they'd start off in the youth clubs and church halls. And then aspire to do things like Cellar Club where you got better money and got good crowds in. The Two Third Left were a band that I met up when I was in the record and music shop at Hayes in Middlesex. And they were a little bit unusual, they tried to be a combination of the jazz and rhythm and blues doing popular tunes like Wade In The Water. But they also went out on a limb and tried to present to the pop music thing like a pop - or a beat version of Dave Brubeck's Take Five. So they tried to do some unusual things. They do actually still perform even 50, 60 years later on a very localised basis. Some of the band went on to do very well I think - one of them, Chris in the middle there, became a managing director of a - or a chief executive of a very large national company.

[14:00] AC: What was his name? Chris -

JZ: We can come -

AG: Yeah I'll come back to that one. And all these groups sort of tried to be a little bit different, a little bit original. Some of them would go for the popular blues stuff. I mean the Rolling Stones and Beatles were still playing tunes that other people did. They weren't big composers themselves at that particular time, that was something that evolved into but at that time they had their influences and they played all sorts of popular styles from rhythm and blues to ska - I mean this was another type of music, ska. Georgie Fame was very very big at that time. He could pack all of the places in. And introduced quite a style of organ, wind organ playing. That was quite good.

[14:58] AC: So you mention this kind of mixture of styles like the pop take on Dave Brubeck. And you say that these popular styles - I mean what did you kind of understand by pop at the time? I know it's difficult to pin down.

AG: It's always been difficult to identify pop because it moves round. I would class pop in its original American teeny bop style of things done by Neil Sedaka. And the lady who's got a show up in London at the moment called Beautiful. Her name will come back to me. Carole King, that was it. They were short poppy numbers - Adam Faith of course in this country did that type of thing. And then you got this undertone of jazzy things - Kenny Ball had lots of hits with his trad version. So it all got lumped together into pop but the pop itself was still departmentalised so you had the trad jazz. Georgie Fame was more on a sort of modern jazz type theme.. Even Cleo Laine and Johnny Dankworth were having hits. And then the same time you'd get - they released Sound of Music and you'd get Edelweiss going to top of the charts. You had pop records - sorry, comedy records from Charlie Drake and Benny Hill. So everything went into what we would call pop music. But the people in it would sort of identify themselves and say oh no, we're not pop - we're blues. We're jazz. But collectively all came into the top 50 and it all came under pop music.

[17:06] AC: So the band, Two Thirds Left, that you managed. How did you meet? How did that come about?

AG: When I lived in Hayes I ran the record store which was also a music store and sold instruments. And they - all - a lot of the local bands came in to buy their instruments there. And I got to know them and these people I got on with quite well, I quite understood them and I put myself down as manager and they thought that was a good idea. But it wasn't an easy mix because they didn't want to make - sell records and be big hits because they thought that was below them. So [laughs] it was not easy trying to get somebody to make their way to stardom when they didn't really want to do it. So it was a little bit difficult. But everybody - so that particular band - we played around a bit. We got some good gigs. We played with people like Manfred Mann, Alex Korner and his blues band. Manfred Mann was another - Manfred Man was somewhere a little bit towards this Two Third Left because although they had some pop hit records, they were very much - they were quite jazz orientated too. There were lots of things that caused bands to sort of split up at the time where they wanted to go in different musical directions. You know you got bands like Oasis and they break up because of personality clashes. In those days yes the personality was more spent on the music - they wanted to take the music in one direction or another direction. And it was a very fluid pop scene. As I say you had so many different types of things that if floated around from trad jazz to heavy metal almost.

[19:13] AC: And were you close with them personally or was it -

AG: Yes, yes. We were all unsure of where we were going and what we were doing. [Laughs] Which I'm sure a lot of people, the same today - they would like to do well but people are still never too sure what they really want to do - I still don't know what I want to do when I grow up and I'm 71.

[19:40] AC: And - so you kind of said it was a fluid scene. Were there other bands that you were connected to in some way?

AG: Not that - not in terms of running them. But I did do - what was attached to modern jazz? Say Richmond on the ninety, sorry 65 bus route away, you got there quite easily and quickly. And in Richmond there was quite a good modern jazz scene which I thought would take off. And one of the jazz venues there - it's pulled down now - was a bar called the Palm Court. And there was a chap there who got some big stars along. His name was Ed Faultless and he played the bass. And I thought this modern jazz was really good, people use to get there and we'd be all hippy like, nodding their heads in time with the music. And I thought well this could really go well so I got to know Ed and we decided to start running modern jazz concerts at Surbiton Assembly Room. And we had quite a few people along. Until we finally got Tubby Hayes who was one of the big jazz saxophonists of the time. And unfortunately on the day he was supposed to appear or the day before he had too much to drink or something and he got rushed to hospital so it was all in the newspapers, he was in hospital. And so the tickets that we expected to sell collapsed. He did actually discharge himself from hospital to come because he had a commitment for - to play for us and he did turn up. Which was very credible for him.

[21:38] JZ: But none of the fans thought you were going to.

AG: We'd lost a lot of momentum. And I always remember there was one chap Stan Tracey and I know he did a famous jazz piece of work called Under Milk Wood and I remember doing the announcement the week before he came. And I was so concentrated on trying to say it, instead of saying Stan Tracey I ended up saying Spencer Tracey here next week which brought howls of laughter from the audience there.

[22:07] AC: Do you remember - you've mentioned a couple of nights at this venue in Surbiton.

AG: Surbiton Assembly Rooms, it's now part of the school. But it was a hall where - you could hire it for anything, from dances to concerts. And there was a big following for the folk scene there. They had - it was a big hall, it was pretty much full every time. And I remember going there once and seeing some people and one chap got up and he sang this new piece of music by an American called Bob Dylan. And I think it was the Lonesome Death of Hattie Carrol. But you could hear a pin drop, he did it so well. Better than - he did it better than Bob Dylan.

[22:56] AC: And was Dylan well known at that point?

AG: No. Dylan wasn't so - Dylan was coming up because - another thing we used to do, we used to meet in coffee bars. And there were a couple - there was I think the Rose up at Queen Street. Or Park Road rather. And then there was a very popular one in Canbury Park Road called Cellar [La Capone] which was a coffee bar and wasn't very expensive. And it was a bit bohemian. And what we used to do, was to take our own records along to play there. And I remember getting my new Bob Dylan LP because he was just sort of getting a buzz then it was. And I took my Bob Dylan down and it was played on - they didn't - they got rid of the jukebox and they just had a record deck. And you took your record and it was played round the coffee bar. And people would take all their new records, whether it was The Animals, The Beatles, Bob Dylan.

[24:03] JZ: Which Dylan record did you put on? Do you remember?

AG: I think I took the LP - it could have been Freewheelin'. But we all sat round and we smoked like - we smoked chimneys - like chimneys. It's like - you can't really go back to the 1960s but if you ever went into a pub and they just painted it, they never painted the ceilings white because within 24 hours it was covered in nicotine stains. So always - the pubs were always painted yellow.

[24:36] AC: So this coffee bar. Do you remember any - do you remember the kinds of things that people talked about?

AG: Well it was - as I say the Cellar [La Capone] and I tell you where it was. If you go into - it was right at the start of Canbury Park Road. There's a few - there's a little pub that used to be called the Railway Tavern, the Jolly Rodger and now it's closed. Then I think it was a hairdressers and then it was the - it was next to that. So it was only a small shop, the crowds that got in there. And there were just sort of benches that you sort of sat on - it wasn't the most comfortable place. And they had a coffee percolator and we all drank coffee. And we sat round and we - I don't know what we talked about now. We talked about the latest music. Probably what type of work you were doing. And highfalutin stuff. We probably talked a bit about some sort of political thing at the time. Although it would have all been about - it wasn't Kennedy, he'd already been shot by that time, hadn't he? But Harold Wilson for instance was the Prime Minister then. And I rather liked him irrespective of what his politics was he was a great comedian. And when he had his political rallies - people don't like hecklers, Theresa May didn't want to do the tour - Harold Wilson used to go into places and he used to want the hecklers to come in because he used to treat it as part of his thing. And the more he could put down a heckler, the more his status went up. So he really -

[26:34] JZ: Was politics important to young people at that time? Or for yourself personally?

AG: Yes it was but it was a different type of politics to what we've got now. The American influence was very strong. America and Cuban crisis had been and gone. Khrushchev was probably still in America - in Russia rather so there was the Cold War. And I think you sort of thought in terms of politics like that. There weren't political correct politics like there are now. It was international or - politics and things like that. It was before a lot of the student riots period as well so I don't think there were that sort of thing. But there must have been politics coming along because as we evolved through the 1960s, coming up to the 70s, of course there was flower power. And anti war and things like - so politics, yes, must have been part of our national thinking.

[27:54] AC: You mentioned your opinion of Harold Wilson at that time. What did you other people - did they have political allegiances? Other friends of yours in the coffee bar and so on?

AG: Yes, we were all quite fluid I think in our thinking. Politics at that time was very traditional. People - there was no logic to why you voted socialist or Tory or liberal at the time. Other than the fact that your parents had done it and if it was good enough for your parents, it was good enough for you. I wouldn't say there was a lot of free thinking. People followed their traditions. There were as many - my father always used to say - more cloth capped Tory than there were the posher people if I could put it like that, or more intellectual people, not posher, intellectual people. Probably more left leaning - with the right leaning being the non intellectual people. But it was a different era. We - pubs were very popular. And I always relate a little story - there's nowadays we look at so many pubs which are all closing. And we wonder why, we can't understand why. Back in the 60s, I remember there used to be a television programme called Coronation Street.

[29:31] AC: I still remember it.

AG: And the - there used to be these three old biddies. Ena Sharples, Martha Longhurst and Minnie Caldwell. And these three old ladies would go and sit in the snug of the Rovers Return drinking their milk stout. And you wondered why but they did it because they went - they couldn't afford the coal for their fires at home. So by going to the local pub they could get a bit of social communication, they got cheap beverage, they got the warmth of the landlord's fire, which was a lot more practical than they could do at home. Whereas in your homes now it's all so evolved that now we've got - your home is - got central heating everywhere. It's got its media players. Why do you - no need to go to the pub. But in those days it was the pub that held all of your things that you would enjoy.

[30:45] AC: These social spaces were very important.

AG: So we went - we didn't really drink that much as youngsters. We weren't big drinkers. We mainly went to these coffee bars. And also another misconception I think is that it was very much a drug orientated time. It wasn't really. Purple hearts had made an appearance which was sort of just like pep pills. Like vitamin pills almost, gave you a bit of a lift. But it wasn't a big drug scene. It was big for coffee and I think we drank coke probably more than anything. So when we went to the - all these places - I mean music dominated everything. It dominated why we went to the coffee bars. If there was - you didn't take your own record, you had a jukebox. You went to the clubs. And you could go to the cinemas. You could go to lots of church halls, we'd get a group in. And the groups would when there was a hit record, the groups would soon learn them and so you'd sort of have your own - in the evening all the latest tunes played by the group live which was great for us.

[32:06] AC: So at some of these venues, apart from the coffee bars and the pubs, did people not drink?

AG: Oh people always did drink because pubs were very popular but us young people -

[32:17] AC: At the venues themselves? I mean at the [inaudible]

AG: No, not a great - I think the Cellar Club must have been licenced. But it wasn't a big - see there weren't - there wasn't a great deal of lager drunk in those days. So if anything we probably had - if we did have an alcoholic one, it would probably be coke with a whisky in it. Because it - I can't remember what else it sold, but I do remember drinking plenty of cokes there. I mean we were 18 to 20 year olds.

[32:57] AC: How did that affect the atmosphere?

AG: The drink? The coke?

AC: Yeah or what was the atmosphere like in [inaudible]

AG: Oh the atmosphere was very buzzy. The fellas would all stand round the edge and the girls would stand in the middle and dance around their handbags. And when the girls were at the side, you'd mosey over and have a chat to them and talk to them. And one thing would lead to another if you liked each other - you might take them home.

[33:35] AC: Did you meet people that way? Meet girls that way?

AG: Oh yes, everybody did. The girls met the boys and the boys met the girls.

[33:45] AC: And strictly no dancing from the boys?

AG: No there was some dancing but it was - but it's always been the case, boys don't dance as much as the girls. I mean there were some dancing - it was evolving from being the jive of the 1950s - it had gone through - in the early 60s you had - the twist came in. And that led to a whole plethora of dance records. The twist came in, the locomotion came in. So many dance routines really - it was a new dance routine coming out almost every week. So people would do things like that and men and women would do it because they were a bit of fun.

[34:37] AC: Do you want another drink or anything or are you alright?

AG: No, still got half a cup.

[34:42] AC: So yeah, just a bit about - the way young men and young women and how they

interacted back then. Could you say a bit more about that? [Inaudible]

AG: The girls in the 1960s looked fabulous. They were all quite slim and quite trim. We had - growing up in the 50s and 60s so we'd all got nice shapes I suppose, you can say it. And then - the other thing that all happened was this great fashion sense that also hit in the 1960s. They invented the shift dress which was great for girls because it showed up the being slim, it looked great on them, moved very well. And us fellas went for the - end of the 1950s, where we had - beginning of the 60s, where we had what was known as Italian suits. The jackets were cut a little bit shorter and the trousers were quite tight. We used to call them drainpipes. And we had Winklepickers. But when the 60s came in it - the girls wore the shift dresses and also their hairs changed because at the end of the 50s into the 60s, women either had perms or beehives. That probably leaves you completely strange, what on earth is a beehive? But for girls it was hair that was backcombed and then gelled so it would look like a soldier's busby on their head but not that high.

[36:32] JZ: Ronnie Spector had a classic beehive, of the Ronettes.

AG: Yeah. And Bet Lynch from - again from Coronation Street. She wore a beehive years after they sort of disappeared because she was stuck in a time warp. But when the Mary Quant with her fashion, she - one, she took - shift dress wasn't new but she took it and repackaged it in new colours, new - sort of shape and patterns. And she, along with Twiggy, had a different type of haircut which was a sort of bob. And after the perms and the beehives this free flowing short cut hair was quite stylish and quite new. So the girls all looked fantastic.

[37:32] AC: And was this important for you, fashion?

AG: Yeah we sort of had narrow ties and then it evolved in the - later in the 60s where you sort of got the Carnaby Street type colourful things. So yes fashion was quite - I had a Saturday job working in John Temple's, the menswear. And so I was quite keen on fashion at the time. And the - you could have a nice cut suit which really looked good. I wouldn't say it went straight into the Carnaby Street thing straight off - that sort of evolved later in the 60s. But even if you - on Saturdays you wore bells and whistles and your jacket from Carnaby Street and colours and kipper ties and what have you. You still for your day job had a smart suit so you sort of could separate them. I mean nowadays you wear probably the same thing for work, for casual, for anything. Have you got a suit?

[38:52] AC: [] honest, I've got a tie,

AG: Whereas then you had a suit for your work and you had your casual clothes.

[39:04] AC: And this relationship between work life and then music and other things []

AG: Everybody worked. I mean there was a lot of work going around after the war, it was all being built up again. And I remember as a youngster people saying to us children, keep quiet now, Mr So and So nextdoor is on shift work. And the factories literally had a night shift and a day shift to keep production going. So it was - there was a real shortage of workers and people to do the work so we were never out of jobs.

[39:44] AC: And what kind of hours were you working at the various places you worked?

AG: When I first started work here I worked in a laboratory - as a laboratory assistant in a dyestuff company in Hounslow. And once a month you weren't only expected to do from 9 to half 5, you were also expected to do a Saturday morning once a month as well. And then they were trying to make the hours shorter, the unions were coming in and shorter hours were creeping in. Because the workers had quite a lot of power. There were more jobs than there were workers so you couldn't be sacked all that easily.

[40:27] AC: Did you enjoy your work?

AG: Yes and no. Does anybody ever enjoy -

AC: So for example taking you back to the records store at Bentalls. Did you enjoy it?

AG: I did because you were - knew people were coming each day, you were meeting. There were some nice people there, there were some quick sharp people. Some people just came in and said I want the latest record which were about six shillings and eight pence I think. They were six and eight for a long time. And then other people wanted to be a bit more selective and look through your albums. People would come in and ask for all sorts of things. There were still remnants of - there was a big star in the 1940s called Al Bowly. And I remember still people would come in and ask if we'd got any Al Bowly records in the 1960s. He was English. Very big star. He died in the war. I think he was somebody that was killed in a bomb strike somewhere in London.

AC [inaudible]

AG: But if you Google Al Bowly.

[41:40] JZ: Is he a crooner type is he?

AG: Yes, yes. He was a crooner type singer. We had lots of other singers as well. David Whitfield, I remember David Whitfield. Ronnie [pause] oh what was his name? I can't remember. David Whitfield, Ronnie... I'll think of maybe some more names in a moment. But Eydie Gormé - she was American. In England Alma Cogan was big. Helen Shapiro had made a big star, Helen Shapiro had become very big. She came out of nowhere. She had her first record at 13 years old. Don't Treat Me Like A Child. [Laughter] Just because I am in my teens and I still go to school, don't think you can treat me cruel, I'm nobody's fool. I think was how it went. So whatever you do don't treat me, bum bum, like a child. And Helen Shapiro had a great voice. It wasn't high pitch voice, it was a lower pitch voice. Loads and loads of power. And she was a big star. And appeared - and then unfortunately she had like Adele would be now, her voice wasn't dissimilar to Adele in pitch. And back then she was singing left right and centre all the time. And she got nodules on her throat which meant that she had to have an operation which slightly changed the pitch of her voice whereas now when Adele gets that sort of thing, she's told to stop and they've got better treatment for it. But Helen Shapiro was a big star. And started off at 13, went on. Alma Cogan was another big star. Her - she appeared on the - television was very important for pop music in those days. You used to get Top of the Pops, Thank Your Lucky Stars, Three Two One I think it was. BBC had them, ITV had started and they wanted their records. It was another thing - another thing I was saying - telling you about earlier on, the record stores, we looked at the charts. But the important thing that was - was who was going to be on Thank Your Lucky Stars or Top of the Pops because if you knew they were appearing you knew they would sell a lot more records so you'd get a lot more.

[44:24] AC: So you'd monitor all of these things?

AG: Oh you'd have to monitor all those.

AC: And whose job was that? How did that work?

AG: Well it was whoever was in charge of ordering the record stock. It was my job when I worked at the record store in Hayes. When I moved to Bentalls it was the manager that - I think sometimes you would talk back to them, feed back and say people have been asking for this. So they would get something in. Bentalls have a lot of clout, they probably didn't get stuck with many records, they could send them back. Whereas smaller companies couldn't.

[45:04] AC: And are there any particular days at the store that you remember that stand out for

you now, anything?

AG: Do you mean incidents or just any -

AC: Yeah. In terms of your day.

AG: It's 50, 60 years ago. [Pause] No I think we did have guest appearance - it may have been Georgie Fame came in. In the record store I worked at at Hayes we had local celebrities come in.

AC: Like?

AG: One of the big people in Hayes - a chap called Cliff Bennett, Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers. And he came in to the store and people said, Cliff Bennett was just in.

[45:53] AC: What was that like?

AG: It was quite a nice buzz. It was all part of the local scene. Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers - they were actually a very big group within a group, they were a group's group. And a lot of Liverpool groups used to say oh, one of their favourite groups was Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers. And he stood on stage in a very strange way. He stood up very straight and sort of had his arms behind him in a fist. Sort of like this. So with the arms behind you and he leant forward into the microphone and he had quite a powerful voice. Long John Baldry was going round.

[46:37] AC: So when these guys came in - they came into the store. What would then happen?

AG: Well sometimes they were recognised and sometimes they weren't. But very occasionally a celebrity came in for a feature to make an attraction. Not very often but occasionally some would come in. Being Bentalls there were also I think a demand for classical music as well. So we were just as likely to have a classical pianist come in as much as a popstar.

[47:14] AC: And then you publicise that?

AG: I think it probably was publicised, probably in the Surrey Comet which was the main local paper then.

[47:24] AC: And would people come?

AG: I think so. Whether they did or they didn't it was still something that sounded impressive so that the bosses of Bentalls could say we've had somebody.

[47:40] JZ: I was just going to ask. Working at the record store, was the presence of Decca Records, the factory in New Malden, was that ever a consideration, a factor? Were you aware of it?

AG: Yes we was aware of it, Decca were there. But no - I'd moved from Hayes - I keep mentioning Hayes but I'd moved from there. But Hayes is where EMI were based so I moved from Hayes there to Kingston, New Malden where of course Decca was the dominant company. But no. I don't think - the recording studios weren't at Hayes or at - it was the pressing plants. I think Decca Records studios were probably on Albert Embankment up near Southwark. We - for our pop music we mainly listened to a radio station called Radio Luxembourg. Which only broadcast in the evenings. And it was a commercial station. And the record companies would buy quarter of an hour or half hour slots, and they would play their latest records with Alan Freeman, Peter - Pete Murray. Who was DJs of the time. And they would buy a slot. And they would only play half the record. So they could get twice as many records into their slot. And that's how the records were promoted really through Radio Luxembourg. Radio Luxembourg was probably the most important thing - radio station that time to establish things. And then of course the

television channels - the Thank Your Lucky Stars, Top of the Pops and those other ones. Can't remember all the names of them now.

[49:41] JZ: If the - presumably a lot of the records that were actually pressed at the pressing plant in New Malden would have ended up at the Bentalls store itself.

AG: They were supplied to the distributors, EMI or Selector, and we ordered through them and they would bring everybody's record along. There was another type of record that was competition and they were sold by Woolworths. And they were Embassy Records. And Embassy Records were copies. For instance there's one there. They were actually made or recorded by a small record label called Oriole especially for Woolworths. And Woolworths sold Embassy ones. And they were people that just had contracts with Oriole in their own right and then when they'd finished recording their own, they would go in, then record their covers of the day. Which were sold at Woolworths for half the price. And some of them were so good they were - as good in their own right. Like that one there, you've got - this was Bud Ashton, I don't know who Bud Ashton was but it was probably somebody like - one of the big guitarists of the day. And on one side you've got Wheels, which was a cha-cha one. And on the other side you've got F.B.I. which was a big Shadows hit. So you've got two hits for half the price of an ordinary record. And a lot of these records were sold. A lot of the people went on to record for actually went on to have hits themselves. Like Maureen Evans who went on [inaudible]. So the Woolworths scene was quite an important factor of the record disc scene of the 1960s.

[51:44] JZ: What was more important for a band, having a good record or playing a good gig live? Or one would follow from the other or -

AG: One followed from the other. You liked the buzz of being number one in the charts, or in the top 10. But I can't say that many of the popstars of the day got a lot of money from their records. They got a pittance in actual fact. And they were employed by the - contracted to the record company who had an A&R man - artist and repertoire manager who would choose the songs for them and arrange it and then arrange the recordings. So I have to say that a lot of the recording artists didn't have to work all that hard. They didn't have to write their own music because it was all presented for them. They didn't have to record it. They just went in - they were given the tune. The recording time and they went in and recorded it, probably quite quickly. The arranger would have done all the recording so the musicians would go, play it from the score. The singer would have been - gone through the tune. And the conductor, the arranger, would have told him how to sing it. And that happened to all the big stars, from Shirley Bassey, Helen Shapiro, to everybody else. Whereas now of course the stars have got a lot more say in what they want to record and how they do it but then they didn't at all. And the A&R man was very skilled at choosing the right tunes, the right music for getting somebody in. And the - sometimes some of the performers would do the B side. In fact the people that wrote the tunes probably did - got more money than the people that performed it because it every time it was played on the radio I think they got about - the - I don't know how much the artist got but the writer would get about £1.50 or one pound ten shillings. Which was quite good if you got your record played a few times in the hit parade. So - and I suppose the artist, the arrangement with the BBC at the time would have been that if you got your record into the top of the charts and it was played on the radio then you got quite a royalty from - you got more of a royalty from having your record played on the radio then you did from the selling of it or the live gig.

[54:34] AC: It's interesting those mechanics - you mentioned the distributors before which distributed records including Decca's. What were they like to deal with?

AG: As I say I don't know if Decca - I think Decca may have owned Selector who I think were the other - one of the other big record distributors. But they were just number crunchers - they were just stockists of them. And they didn't do any promotion - the promotion was done by the record labels who did posters and things like that. I notice you've got a Rolling Stones one there - in the 60s it became quite important to have a well designed record label. On the LPs and on the EPs. The singles were all just like that, there's one there.

[55:37] AC: Just for the record you're pointing at a record in a paper sleeve.

AG: Yes that's right.

AC: [inaudible] striped paper sleeve. [Inaudible]

AG: There we are. Jazz one there. This is quite plain but it's quite eye catching, this black and white Pye jazz ones - The Green Leaves of Summer by Kenny Ball. That was a big hit. Side Saddle by Russ Conway. It was so eclectic, you had everything in the pop music.

[56:06] AC: And did you have any contact directly with the record companies?

AG: Me personally, I went along for an interview with Oriole Records to try and be an A&R man [laughs] which I failed the audition on. But I met up - I was - met up with a chap called John Barry. Who was - got me the interview, I bumped into him one day. And John Barry was riding high. He'd started off in the pop music with the John Barry 7 doing a - he'd call Hit and Miss which was a sort of musical one. And then he did the backing for a lot of stars like Adam Faith, people like that. And then somebody asked him to write some film music. And - or he got - job taken over of doing film music. On a film that somebody had started to do the music on but hadn't finished it - they got as far as doing the main bit. And that film was James Bond's Dr No. And from then on John Barry became famous as a film music writer. Wonderful composer.

[57:19] AC: I just - do you need to take a break at all?

AG: Only if you do.

AC: I just want to go back to some of the things you said earlier. Sorry if this is jumping about a bit. But - it was fascinating hearing about the kind of - your involvement with the bands and the kind of events that you organised. I was wondering - could you talk through the organising of one of those?

AG: [Laughs] Chaotic. You would contact the venue where - [Southall] Community Centre for instance would have a band - bands on every week. They'd have a star band and a second band. Same as the Cellar. And lots of places like [South] Community Centre would have a stage and a big hall. And they would just put the band on the stage and all of us youngsters would go into the hall and sort of bop around to the band. So you'd contact the person that had hired the hall because [South] Community Centre was just available for anybody, same as Surbiton Assembly Rooms. So you would contact whoever was putting on the gig and say I've got a new band - they are really good. And you would try to talk them into saying how good they were, and they might say well I'll give you a try. And they put you on as the second band for a next to nothing fee. And if you went down well then you could put the fee up next time. Sometimes you could go along and say well we've appeared here, there, there, and there. And that sounded impressive so you could perhaps get a higher fee. And then you'd have to go along to your band and say guys, I've got a gig for you. We're doing such and such a place. And then you'd have to get to the gig in time to get your equipment. And in those days the equipment was not as reliable as now - they were speakers and amplifiers with valves in, not transistors. You had to be very careful about how you moved them because you could break a valve and find that you've got no volume. And sometimes the microphones would work and sometimes they wouldn't work. So you'd get there - I remember we did one gig with - and we were playing second to Alex Korner. Who had a big sort of blues band and none of ours mics worked so he let us use theirs and then unfortunately at the end of the evening we somehow found that when we got back we'd got all his mics in our bags. So we had to send them back. But so once you'd got the gig, once you - then you had to get the band there, we had vans that might get there or might not because they were sort of beat up old vans that went on a wing and a prayer. And then you'd have to lift it all in, get it set up, try to get the sound right. They didn't have modern day sound systems where you had somebody at the back fiddling with the thing. You tried to get your speakers adjusted right

so you could hear somebody. But the bass player may not have been as well off as the guitar player or the singer. So they would only - they had their own mics, their own mic and their own amplifier. And you might find that their amplifier wasn't as loud - there's nothing worse than finding your singer had got a low powered amplifier and you couldn't hear the singer but you could hear the bass going bum bum bum a lot of the time. So -

[1:01:35] AC: So all these things could go wrong?

AG: Oh all these things could go wrong. And then you might find that somebody didn't turn up because they were going their own way there separately. So then you'd go on the stage and you'd try and perform and then before you disappeared you had to get hold of the promoter who put the gig on because you probably didn't have any money other than what paid on the admissions on anybody coming through. So hopefully they'd had a good evening and enough money to pay you. Which you then have to distribute it around to the band afterwards going home.

[1:02:11] AC: Do you remember any gigs that went particularly well? Any stand out nights.

AG: [Laughs] Well we like to think they all went well. But - you thought it was good if people liked your type of music yes. And if all the equipment worked. [Laughs] And - so that was how it went. You were still struggling for identity and to try and provide the sound of something new that people wanted.

[1:02:50] AC: And you mentioned the money side of it.

AG: Yes I think we may have had anything from £15 to £50. You've got to bear in mind in the last 50, 60 years £15 would be quite worthwhile now. And £50, you were doing very well. Mind you when split between a 5 piece band it wasn't going so well. The manager wanted a little bit as well. Because he's done all the hard work.

[1:03:22] AC: So what was your - how did you split it?

AG: I think we split evenly. Yeah. Although you got people like The Beatles where their manager got 20% I think of everything they earned. Brian Epstein.

[1:03:40] AC: Were there - yeah £50 sounds like a lot - were there several gigs where you kind of managed to take in that much?

AG: Yes I think so. We started to get around to some places. And some of them paid reasonably well and people were boogying around and - we did quite well at the Cellar Club actually. It went down quite well.

[1:04:07] AC: Do you remember your biggest gig?

AG: No. No, we - I don't think [pause] If we were a star band for the night, it was because it was probably a church youth hall and we were the only band on. And I can't say that we - the bands that went to the Cellar Club were bands that had hits like The Animals, The Yardbirds. Moody Blues. And their names would attract people in - I don't think that they actually advertised it very much. Everybody knew the Cellar Club. And everybody knew that if you went to the Cellar Club he would be getting in somebody that was on the rise. So he had a lady I think called Twinkle who was there. I don't know if Twinkle was a protege of Jimmy Savile at the time. But could well have been. Jimmy Savile was surprisingly quite well known at that time. I remember being in the record store and a policeman coming in one day and he was off duty and we were just chatting. And I remember him saying that Jimmy Savile was doing one of the clubs. And he'd got his young girls with him. And this was going back to the 1950s, well before - so it was already known that he was doing things. But of course nobody said anything or did anything in those days. And somebody like Jimmy Savile was so manipulative and influential that even when the press tried to tie him down to these things, well if you want to print that story you can do it but you'll deprive the hospital where

I collect all the money from of about 2 million pounds worth of charity.

[1:06:17] AC: Did you meet him?

AG: No, I saw him perform because he was at the South Community Centre. He was quite unusual, as a performer he was quite good. He was a DJ of the time. But that didn't mean he was like a modern DJ, he just played records on the stage. And then he would slip classical tunes into it as well. Just for the effect. So people quite liked his choice of music. Had his finger on the button. But he was going round as a presenter and - so he was quite big for many years

[1:06:56] AC: And he had this entourage of girls?

AG: No, not - I wouldn't say an entourage. A girl or two. That sort of - that always seemed to be quite young. Which - I think a lot of us didn't know what it was all about in those days.

[1:07:19] AC: And just staying on the Cellar Club for a moment. Can you describe the space of that?

AG: Yeah. It was round the back of the Odeon where the Rose Theatre now is. And it was called the Cellar Club but it wasn't a cellar, it was upstairs - you had to go up the stairs to get there. And - I don't know what the original origin of the place was but it was - it had wooden floors. It wasn't particularly high. It wasn't particularly high room. Had an almost a makeshift stage at the end which was only a couple of feet off the ground, it wasn't a high stage. I mean if you went somewhere like the Assembly Rooms or the South Community Centre or something they had a stage which was well off the ground so you could - everybody could see. But the Cellar Club wasn't that high. And so the stage was only a couple of feet off the ground. It had a bar at one end, as I say I can't remember very much in the way of beers, maybe it sold bottled beers. But it sold spirits and it sold lots of Coke. It was quite warm. It was probably a room that either previously - being so close to the old brewery it may have been one of the out buildings of the brewery. Or it may have been a ship - there was some ship building places there. So I'm not sure what the origin of it was. It was probably 60ft by 20ft wide. And the sound carried well. So you didn't need lots of big amplifiers then. The sound of it would have been quite loud. But we didn't have the hundred watt speakers that you've got now. And everybody just mingled there. Yes it was a - I know you could meet people there and it wasn't loud enough that you couldn't talk. You could talk to each other which - if you got to a lot of discos now, the last thing you can do talk to anybody. It's just too loud.

[1:09:51] AC: And another thing that you talked about was these social spaces. And you gave the example from Coronation Street to kind of talk about the importance of that.

AG: I talked about Coronation Street as why people went to the pub.

AC: Yeah why they went out. Was that your relationship to it in terms of home versus these pub spaces?

AG: No, we youngsters then and - you didn't have big houses. Us youngsters wanted to be out and about. And so we were out and about. We did go to the pubs. But they weren't our main centre. We sort of evolved there. Originally we went to the coffee bars, it was the older people that probably went to the pubs. But yes we liked to get out and, being a boom generation, there were an awful lot of us youngsters about. So there was plenty of places wherever you went - there was plenty of us, there would always be people that you would be bumping into it and knowing. Whole big atmosphere and network going.

[1:11:11] AC: And your - that place where you were living, your home. Was that -

AG: That was in Elm Road. Two up two down. It was - Elm Road - in Kingston at that time you had a lot of businesses that were run - those businesses have now been converted into houses. But for instance we

were at 78 Elm Road. And that was a tobacconist shop and it was a shop next door to it as well I think. And just down the end of the road, 124, was another group of shops which was a greengrocers and a hairdressers. There were lots of people that ran businesses and lived over the shop. So we did that. And yes -

[1:12:02] AC: So that was living with your parents?

AG: Yes. I know by being a newsagents, I remember getting up in the morning at half past 5, 6 o'clock, to do newspaper rounds because newspaper boys hadn't turned up. And then in the evening being out til 12, 1 o'clock with the band or with friends. So it was quite a -

[1:12:30] AC: Whilst working at the record store as well?

AG: And then go and do a day job. [Laughs] You could do a lot when you're wrong. The adrenaline going.

[1:12:47] AC: And did friends and the kind of music scene ever mix in their own houses as well?

AG: Yeah we - my father then somehow ended up - acquired a second tobacconist shop at 124 Elm Road. So we didn't live there but the back of the shop, my friends would have come round and we smoked cigarettes and play music. Of which I had a rather peculiar liking for a chap called Marty Robbins who was a singer of cowboy, western songs. Which nearly every - somebody would die in them at some point at the time. El Paso was a big hit, if you've ever heard El Paso.

[1:13:45] AC: So you'd play this on the record player at the back of the shop.

AG: Yes you'd have a Dansette record player and put it on like that. Just trying to think if I've got anything.

[1:13:58] AC: No, go for it. Flick through your notes.

AG: [Pause] Yeah I made some notes. I've mentioned about Oriel.

AC: I just wanted another point to return to was this talking about politics and the conversations that were in the air. How did - what was the relationship between music and politics?

AG: It didn't - wasn't very much at the beginning. But it did evolve. Because at the end of the 60s, into the 70s, politics and music really fused together because you had the flower power, drug taking, the anti war era. And it was probably led quite a bit by the Americans. We mentioned about Bob Dylan - Bob Dylan came in on the folk scene. But he was very political in his early ones about social matters, as well as war matters. And he wouldn't have really come around if it wasn't for a group called Peter, Paul and Mary. Have you ever heard of them? Peter, Paul and Mary had got big on the folk scene. And Bob Dylan hit on the folk scene and it was Peter, Paul and Mary that took this gravel voiced unsingable singer, Bob Dylan, and took his songs like Blowin' In The Wind and made them musical and made them acceptable to get into pop music. And from there we started listening from Peter, Paul and Mary's version of it to Bob Dylan's one and realised that although he was this gravel voiced person who couldn't play a harmonica, you could actually see that underneath it there were musical songs. And then other people sort of got in on it and the flower power.

[1:16:05] AC: So Dylan and Peter, Paul and Mary were important for you in that way?

AG: Yes they were personally for me and I think Peter, Paul and Mary were a very big group both here and in America. And in the England you had groups like the Springfields. They did more the folky thing, they didn't really get into the politics. But of course it did get political after a while because when The Springfields split up, their main singer was a girl called Dusty Springfield. And she had a great voice. Not only a great voice, Dusty Springfield was somebody that could analyse the lyrics of a song and bring them

out. If you've ever heard her Jacques Brel version of If You Go Away there is nobody that actually brings out the pathos of that song as well as Dusty Springfield. And she was somebody that could bring out the meaning of words. And she was very popular and she had a - it comes back again to how important television was. And a lot of the celebrities, the singers of the days would have a television programme so in addition to the Top of the Pops and things like that you had celebrity programmes. Lulu had her weekly special, Dusty Springfield had her weekly special.

[1:17:36] AC: Her own dedicated -

AG: It was the Dusty Springfield Show. And Dusty Springfield would have her guests on it which would be anything from a comedian and a juggler to another singer. And they always had another singer so they could do a duet at the end and they were sung live. They weren't miming. And Dusty Springfield had quite a few seasons with the BBC. And then of course it all went pear shaped when she became - she didn't come out. You weren't allowed to come out with your sexual orientation at that time. It could kill your career. And all the rumours started coming out so she went off to America. And then came back again later on. But it was a great loss. She was just a fantastic singer.

[1:18:35] AC: And before she did that and when it was the Springfields and they were there in terms of the mix of music and politics.

AG: They - and the mix of music and politics then was songs about tax rises. And riding on the M.T.A. which I think was a railway system in Boston in America where prices were going up so fast and you had to pay if you'd gone through so many stations and somebody got on and by the time he got to the station he wanted to get to the price had gone up so he couldn't get off the train because he couldn't afford it. So he kept going round and round and round and he was known - he kept going round, he was the man that never returned. Because he couldn't afford to pay to get off. So he had to stay on it. And you had sort of - sounds a comedy situation know but the pop music of the time - Pete Seeger was another one. He did a big hit called Little Boxes. Because all the houses being built in the 60s were all little boxes. There was no character in them, they were just little boxes. And so people had these social comments which came out in the songs whether they were - and they were sung by the Springfields, Pete Seeger, Peter, Paul and Mary and other things like that. So the politics was about, was there - but you didn't always know it was quite political. You thought it was amusing when somebody wrote these songs about little boxes.

[1:20:16] JZ: And it was tied it seems quite exclusively to the folk scene and not so much jazz and blues and that sort of thing.

AG: Yeah, the blues - yes, the trad jazz was more musically orientated. And same with the modern jazz. The pop scene wasn't really political. Although some of the pop records might - like Lance Percival brought some out which had a - there was a television programme called That Was The Week That Was which parodied political scenes, and that had Millicente Martin doing the singing. And people would write pastiche songs which was of the political climate at the time. But they didn't really go - they weren't really sold as that. They were sold as novelty records. But they were actually people making their political points.

[Interruption in recording; resumes on separate file]

[00:00] AG: I should have brought a friend of mine, Tessa I remember, she's got a much better memory than I've got.

JZ: So let's see how many of these you've already mentioned.

AC: Shall we turn this - you've already turned it back on.

JZ: Yeah it's back on.

AC: So for the record we're looking at a map of Kingston and as far north there is an arrow saying to Eel Pie Island and at the bottom south end is the Toby Jug.

JZ: Toby Jug in Tolworth yeah. You've got the Jazz Cellar - the Jazz Cellar is what you've been calling the Cellar Club I think. I think - was it also known as the Jazz Cellar?

AG: Yeah I think it was because as I say the start of the 60s a - the in sound was trad jazz. Kenny Ball. Chris Barber. Lots of jazz - traditional trad jazz - I remember we all went one night up to Alexandra Palace where they had all the jazz bands playing there so it would have started as the Jazz Cellar Club yes.

[01:04] JZ: And there was this thing called the Jazz Boat that I've heard people talk about. Does that mean anything to you?

AG: Yes I used to see it there, I do remember a boat being there.

JZ: It was a - as far as I'm aware it was a sort of permanently moored one that sort of doubled up as a music venue.

AG: Yes, yes. It was like the - just near the Granada there was the coffee bar, the Cellar [Le Compagnie] which was - a lot of us youngsters went to it, it wasn't very big. But it was open from six perhaps til 1 o'clock in the morning or 12 o'clock at night. And it was quite vibrant for our music thing. I've mentioned Surbiton and Kingston Folk Club. That would have been the one at Assembly Rooms.

JZ: So that's the same place, yeah.

AG: I never went to the Coronation Hall but I think they did do -

[02:05] JZ: That's actually on the wrong location. That's an error on the map so that's actually where the Coronation Hall the pub currently is in Surbiton, but actually Coronation Hall the venue was further up round the back of the uni. Denmark Road I believe.

AG: [inaudible] swimming. It was where the original swimming pool was. Because what a lot of places did they had a swimming pool there and then in the winter months they would cover over the swimming pool and they would have dances. That's what the Coronation Hall did.

[02:32] JZ: Toby Jug, did you go to many gigs there?

AG: Yes. Not til later ones. I don't remember it being a big venue for bands at the early 60s.

JZ: Yes. No, from our research I believe it came along in the late 60s. And it was kind of when the music started going down the psychedelic route with your Fleetwood Macs and Led Zeppelins.

AG: Bells Musical Instrument, they were really accordion, melodeon makers. They weren't a big - I'm trying to think if there was a music - I think there was a music store in Kingston. It wasn't Hands, that was a later generation but I think there was a place that sold guitars and music.

[03:22] JZ: Because the reason we have that and Hollyfield School marked on there because we had - we interviewed Top Topham who founded The Yardbirds. And they all sort of met at Hollyfield School and Clapton was there and Dreja and all that. And Bell is where apparently Clapton got his first guitar and they bought a lot of their stuff so they were significant points even though they're not venues, they're significant points.

AG: Yes they must have done guitars as well as having their accordion type ones.

[03:53] AC: I'm fascinated by this swimming pool covered over for the dances.

AG: Oh yes.

AC: How did that work?

AG: Well lots of places had it. I think they still probably even do it at Cheam. You know Cheam? They had halls and literally the swimming pool was only a dip in the ground. So in the winter time when people didn't go they would cover over the swimming pool with boards. And you would have dances. And I don't know if you ever watched Strictly Come Dancing on television and they talk about going up to Blackpool because it's got a spring floor, well it gave you the benefit of the spring floor as well. And lots of places - and the other thing is I moved to Kingston when I was 18. But certainly a lot of places like the Coronation Hall and I don't know if it was the Coronation Hall that did it as well - lots of houses didn't have bathrooms. So places like the Coronation Hall - they would be a swimming pool and attached to it would have been public baths. So once a week you could go and have a public bath. Dip in - you didn't have a bathroom at home, you went to the bathroom there. And for a few pence you could get a towel and have a proper clean. People only used to have a bath or a shower once a week because - I think we did, you didn't want to light the boiler up to heat up the water every day because you couldn't afford the coke or the coal. So you had it probably Sunday night, everybody had their bath [laughs] it would last them for the week.

[05:44] JZ: And Eel Pie Island - did you ever go up river up there?

AG: I went to Eel Pie Island a few times. And our band played there. We played there and I think we may have played there - we certainly saw the Yardbirds there.

JZ: Would that have been -

AG: Again they often - they would intermit bands like the Yardbirds with trad jazz. Chris Barber.

JZ: I think it was originally a trad jazz venue before anything else.

AG: I see you've got the Granada on there and the Granada was - that's the one where they would remove the screen. And they would have shows on with celebrities like Dionne Warwick. Gene Pitney.

JZ: The other visual thing here is actually is just this timeline for gigs, that's down here. So as you can see you've got some of the cinema gigs - Roy Orbison September 1963 at the Granada. Cilla Black October 1963. So it kind of shows you - the Kinks there, the Who came later on - and this is what I mean about the Toby Jug then being the sort of coming a bit later on - but yeah I thought I'd show you this, I don't know if any of these specific gigs might mean anything to you or - but it just - what it shows you is just how vibrant and lively the scene was.

AG: Oh you could go anywhere and you could get something. And it was just such a variety, you could have the modern jazz, you could have trad jazz, you can have the pop stuff, you could have the blues. And it was all available sort of almost everywhere. Every night you could have done something.

[07:27] AC: Was there anything you wanted to show us in terms of things that you've -

AG: No I would have bought along - I did have some posters somewhere of the modern jazz things that I did at Surbiton Assembly Rooms. I got here a few discs. And you can see what an eclectic mix it is with things like Kenny Ball's Jazz Men. Russ Conway on Side Saddle. Emile Ford and [inaudible].

[07:52] JZ: I don't know if we've asked at any point. We've spoke about all these different styles of

music. But what is your personal favourite or did you have one?

AG: Yeah I liked all types. But I love pop music. Just plain raw pop music. Particularly when it was done by a group. I was - one group that I really liked was The Marauders. There was - I might have some here. There's - I've got a Marauders one here.

JZ: That's on Decca. Might have been pressed just down the road.

AG: Could well have been.

JZ: We do have a method of identifying whether it was pressed at the New Malden factory, it's to do with the serial numbers and all that sort of stuff. Unfortunately I don't know it if off the top of my head, how you do it.

AG: There was TNT by - Google Eye by the Nashville Teens. Here's a group that I used to love though nobody will ever remember them. It was a group called Erkey Grant and the Eerwigs. And it was the -

[08:59] JZ: It's a memorable name.

AG: He had a blonde crew cut. And his - when he started singing his face would go quite red. It was very much of a comedy era. And this was one was I'm A Hog For You and I Can't Get Enough Of You.

JZ: Hog For You.

AG: It actually exists, I've got proof there. On Pye.

[09:26] JZ: I wonder if I'm A Hog For You predates I Wanna Be Your Dog.

AG: Helen Shapiro. I Apologise. And Tell Me What He Said. I loved The Merseybeats. Mister Moonlight.. They were a Liverpool group. They came down here. Brian, Paul and the Tremeloes. Do You Love Me? Joe Brown went onto have big hits. He was - he used to sing on the stage at one of the church halls he went to. They had big stars - and when I say church halls, I don't want to make out they were just sort of youth clubs things. They were intended to entertain the youth but they had top stars of the day and Joe Brown was there until one of the - it was church or hall that they hired the venue for. And then one of the priests went in one day and so Joe Brown on the stage sort of sitting there swearing at the audience and the audience swearing back at him and he got banned basically, they said they don't want him here anymore. Oh there's one - Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers or as we used to say Cliff Bennett and the Rubble Rousers. Julie Felix was a Canadian girl that came over and she did folky type things. Go Now, The Moody Blues, again on Decca.

[10:41] JZ: A lot of Decca records. They had a big chunk of the market, didn't they, Decca?

AG: No they weren't as - EMI were quite big. And another big company was Philips who also owned Fontana. And there was Cleo Laine's big hit, You'll Answer To Me, that was 1961. Pye also became very big. And the record companies had big competition amongst themselves to have the best artists or the biggest drawing artist. And the best A&R people. They went on that. Nero and the Gladiators. Hall of the Mountain King. Was based on Greek I think. Helen Shapiro and Johnny Kidd & the Pirates. He was a big band at the time. You had loads and loads of -

[11:39] JZ: And would have got the records from the Bentalls store or your store in Hayes or a combination?

AG: No. I mean some of them I probably bought from Bentalls on a staff discount. [Laughs] Staff discount was always useful. But some of them I got from Hayes. And some of them I'd have bought from - six

shillings and eight pence as you paid. It wasn't til 1971 I think we went to decimal. 71 I think. And it was all pound shillings and pence.