

Transcript of interview conducted December 14 2017

Interviewee: CHRIS TRENGOVE (CT)

Interviewer: JAREK ZABA (JZ)

Kingston upon Thames, England

Transcription: JAREK ZABA

[00:08] JZ: So this is Jarek Zaba at the Creative Youth office in Kingston upon Thames on the 14th December. I'm here with...

CT: My name is Chris Tregrove. I was born just after the end of the war in August 1945 in Surbiton Hospital. Which is about a mile from here I think. And was brought up in Kingston til the age of 13 and then not far away down the road in Esher from another 5 years from then onwards. So I've been pretty familiar with the area and have fond memories of Kingston actually.

[00:50] JZ: Yeah I mean that starts me off nicely because my first question was going to be what does - if I say Kingston upon Thames, what does that evoke to you?

CT: Well above all probably the river actually. We were lucky enough - my parents actually - we had a house on the river which was by - I don't even know if it's still there - Turks Boathouse. Just beyond Canbury Gardens. And [laughs] we had one house where there are now two enormous blocks of flats overlooking the river. And yes it was - I can - I strongly remember the bugle calls of the Twickenham sea scouts I think it was there. And we used the river a lot. I used to kayak on it. Walks up to Teddington Lock. Very much that. I'd [laughs] - I've just remembered something. I managed to persuade my parents to buy me a canoe for - I think it might have been my 12th birthday or something like that. And they were too busy to - so I actually - they dropped me off at Bentalls at Kingston. Which was then of course just a department store. And I had some cash in my hand, went to the sports department, bought a kayak in the sports department of Bentalls. And got one of the assistants to help me walk it out down to the river which I then paddled it home. [Laughs] It was health and safety, my God, think of the issues actually but yeah, that. Kingston also actually in those days was quite - it was quite hip actually. Probably because we had Kingston Art School actually. I have memories - I mean I was rather young - I was too young to be a beatnik. But what I do remember is - there used to be by All Saints Church which is still there the - one of the places there was a Kenco coffee house which was before there were coffee houses everywhere. It was literally the only one in town. And I used to enjoy - feel very grown up going there for a coffee and looking at the beatniks on the wall who were all depressed in their black clothing and so on. Occasionally strumming guitars very very badly indeed. So yes, yes - I mean I went to school not far away in Surbiton at a kind of second string prep school. [Laughs]

[03:30] JZ: Which school was it?

CT: Shrewsbury House. I've no idea whether it's still there or not.

[03:35] JZ: Shrews-bury is that it?

CT: Shrewsbury yeah.

JZ: Shrewsbury House.

CT: As in *Shrews-bury* I suppose.

JZ: Yeah. I'm not familiar with it.

CT: Again I have no idea if it's still there. It was in Ditton Lane I think.

JZ: Oh OK.

CT: And yeah my early life was centred around Kingston. I remember persuading my brother to take me to go and see Jailhouse Rock at - what was it, the Kingston Odeon. Or the Kingston Empire, I can't remember. But one - Kingston used to be well equipped with cinemas and indeed theatres actually in those days. My first job ever literally was at Bentalls. As it then was. The department store. Selling socks in the mens department for the princely sum of four pounds ten. By which I mean four pounds fifty of course, four pounds ten a week that is by the way. So yeah, I was - as a child I used what facilities Kingston sort of had to - as a young child it was walks in Canbury Gardens. From where we lived down to the power station, which again - is that still there? The enormous chimneys.

[04:58] JZ: I think the chimneys are, I'm not sure.

But it used to be a sort of mini Battersea.

JZ: Round the back of Canbury Gardens you mean?

Yeah.

JZ: Yeah, I know there's something that I always clock. I'm not often round that way, but when I see it -

CT: It used to be a sort of mini - it was almost like Battersea Power Station but on a smaller scale. So yeah. What else?

[05:24] JZ: Let me just row back a bit to your house on the river. Is this - you brought up with just your parents? Siblings?

Ok. Right. I'm pretty rooted in Kingston actually. I was thinking about this on the way here. My parents were born in Bexley. But as they prospered they moved closer to London. And they first had a house on the Kingston bypass. And my father became a successful self made businessman. And by the time I came along my parents were actually quite wealthy. And we had [laughs] - looking back on it. The house that I remember was a kind of five, six bedroom detached house with a kind of a flat over a double garage. I would think these days you'd probably be looking at - I don't know, my guessing, five or six mil, something like that. Of course as a child you don't care, you think nothing of it really. I just thought of something else. The swimming pool which my parents had built. When I said had built, we actually dug some of it ourselves. Is still there, and serves the two blocks of flat which have taken up the space of what was the one house. We were within - actually cheering distance, because we used to hear it every Saturday - the Kingstonian football ground. Which again I'm - still there or not?

[07:04] JZ: Kingsmeadow? Yeah. Kingstonian don't play there anymore. Was it the one that was in Norbiton essentially?

CT: It was on that - the road from Ham, that main road - the road that sort of comes in. From Ham you'd end up at Kingston station, that long - Richmond Road would it be?

JZ: Right. I wonder if that's a different -

CT: Probably long gone now.

JZ: I wonder if that's a different location. But they were playing up in Kingsmeadow which is sort of Norbiton way until last year. Unfortunately they have now been booted out of their own ground and now play their home games in Leatherhead.

CT: I don't think they were terribly successful even then actually. [Laughs].

[07:45] JZ: But yeah I was just wondering - the reason I ask about your upbringing essentially, was there music in your house growing up? Do you remember your parents -

CT: No. None. None whatsoever. Absolutely not, no, no. No this is -

JZ: Is that just because it wasn't an interest?

CT: [Pause] No. My parents were busy, not cultured people. They were both business people. They devoted most of their life - lives to running businesses. Actually my mother owned and ran a patisserie and sort of cake shop just around the corner from here in what is now Jones the Bootmaker there. I had a look at that when I was in having a coffee in Pret. So yeah, so she was sort of bedded particularly into the area as a kind of businessperson. But no, moving on to the music thing. No - zero. No records to speak of in the house other than [pause] the several albums that all middle class people, My Fair Lady probably. Really, that was the kind of level of things. But no, they had a gramophone and very few records. [Laughs] But of course for my age group, you were coming into a sort of period when it was the first wave of rock n roll. I mean just to give some background here. And a think a lot of people my age would say the same thing. Growing up in Britain in the 50s, in the suburbs. Even as a sort of 10 year old - I remember [laughs] This is so boring, this is such a boring place somehow. You kind of intuitively felt that. And the key event actually for me and - I'll come onto mine contemporaries from the area as well - was the coming of - I was gonna say actually it was the coming of rock n roll. It was that but it was as much as anything else the coming of skiffle. I mean Lonnie Donegan - I can't overemphasise the influence that he had on sort of - and I'm talking really young. I was like 10. And that was enough. You would see him on crappy tele like Sunday Night at the London Palladium and so, it seemed sort of very exciting at the time. I managed to persuade my parents to buy me an acoustic guitar - a little nylon string thing. I also - bless them, managed to - persuaded them to get me some basic lessons. So at the age of 10 I was kind of learning the guitar. And was able to play the hits of the day, I mean everything from Jailhouse Rock to crappy ballads like The Story of My Life and stuff like so that was how I sort of got into it. That was the thing. And of course again via the medium of sort of records and TV the whole thing burst upon the unsuspecting suburbs. It was like a sort of rocket going off actually. I can remember for the first time hearing Peggy Sue by Buddy Holly where I'm in my father's car and he's got on the radio on. And I suddenly heard this [imitates tunes]. "Bloody hell, what's that?!" And that was the kind of impact it had. And I mean just going - in a way for people like me, The Beatles revolution wasn't so exciting because this first one just was kind of unbeatable, where out of the blue you had Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis obviously. With this kind of - over the course of a kind of two year period putting out all these kind of amazing records which really just sort of stood us back on our heels. And again for someone brought up in the white bread suburbs of London it just made you sort of think bloody hell. There's a kind of exciting world out there. It's got something to do with sort of music and Americans and black people and sort of something that doesn't - it didn't exist in this environment which we were. [Laughs]

[12:39] JZ: You mentioned your parents brought you that guitar and paid for the lessons. Were they generally positive on your interest in music?

CT: I'd [laughs] they were sort of amused by it I think. It was sort of 'oh look what he can do', sort of our parrot can talk kind of thing. I'm not one for slagging off my parents. It's - they're long dead anyway. They didn't - they neither encouraged nor discouraged it. I mean again bless them, I went off to boarding school and decided I wanna play the saxophone. And they [pause] pitched up for it. They didn't sort of question it or anything, they bought me an instrument so I can't complain really. In that sense.

[13:32] JZ: The reason I ask because when you hear about the rock n roll revolution and later the 60s movement, you quite often hear about these generational gaps where the parents would be very disapproving and wouldn't want you getting involved in this rock n roll business. But that wasn't so much for the case for you?

CT: Well they were disapproving of all sorts of other things and very sort of controlling. They were sort of in a way typical parents of the 50s, of the era. Again it's not something I can say - "they were such bastards" - that's what parents were like then. It wasn't all touchy feeling and being friendly with your kids and stuff like that. I saw so little of my father - I can remember the kind of times I did almost because he was off running a business, he used to travel the country promoting it and so on and so forth. So it was in a way it was - in some ways a kind of classic arms length sort of 50s British childhood if you like. But I say to give them credit they didn't discourage music. They didn't actually actively discourage it. And they encouraged it to the extent of paying for lessons when I asked for them, buying instruments and stuff like that. And being sort of I think vaguely entertained when I could go "here look what I can do" sort of thing.

[14:54] JZ: So they didn't turn their noses up at rock n roll or skiffle or anything like that?

CT: Well they didn't really know anything about it to be honest. It didn't really impinge on their world. Now possibly if it had impinged on their world they might have been more upset, I don't know. But I mean they didn't take any notice of popular culture. It wasn't - it was something - if you saw Buddy Holly on the Sunday night at the London Palladium they'd probably sniff a bit and "go what's all this?" Or "is this the kind of thing you like, Christopher?" That sort of thing. [Laughs]

[15:26] JZ: So on that subject, you mentioned about hearing Lonnie Donegan when you were at a young age. Is that your earliest memory of what we might call popular music or would it have been someone like -

CT: Well even a bit before that of course - I had an older brother, old by quite a long way, by about 11 years. And he had - I mean he wasn't really a music fan but he had sort of lots of kind of semi jazz records by people like The Dutch Swing College Band. And of course not to forget that parallel to the kind of skiffle thing and rock n roll there was the trad boom as well. Which was a kind of such a specifically sort of British - weird British thing. And when I started to play reed instruments, saxophone. The school jazz band was like a sort of a trad jazz band, although with a kind of strange instrumentation. And of course there was the Jazz Boat which you've got on your list, sort of over there with [?] bands. And I remember seeing Acker Bilk at the Surbiton Assembly Rooms. So it was all going on sort of simultaneously which actually was amazing really. You're thinking all these genres of music [hesitates] sort of jostling for the ears or the attention of sort of young people. But of course I can also remember before that sort of the kind of fairly awful straight pop music of the Anne Sheltons. [Hesitates] The sort of dance band singers and stuff like that which was kind of swept away really by this kind of new thing.

[17:16] JZ: What was it about skiffle or rock n roll later on that spoke to you, appealed to you?

CT: Excitement. Excitement. Creating heat. Just - excitement I think actually as much as anything.

JZ: In contrast to the music that was alternatively available?

CT: Yeah yeah very much so. I mean now looking back of course - and also a big jazz fan, I appreciate the - music's, it's all a continuum if you like. When I started to learn saxophone at school my teacher kind of introduced me to the great American Songbook if you like. Which I didn't really know much about until then. And then I thought 'actually this is good as well, it doesn't deserve to be sort of swept away for good,' and of course it hasn't been in the end. Sorry what was the question again?

[18:05] JZ: That was just about the appeal of rock n roll and skiffle to you and -

CT: Yeah, yes, I think it was exciting. And also it was sort of simple enough that you could think 'oh maybe I could do that actually'. Whereas when you're very young - I used to listen to jazz a lot as well and I thought 'yeah, hmm, dunno how they do that, that sounds kind of impossible'. However I do understand that the rock n roll and R&B and blues because it's basically sort of three chords. And you don't have to be a kind of technical genius to do it.

[18:43] JZ: My understanding of skiffle is that it was meant to have this DIY element. I think Lonnie Donegan said he wanted to democratise the existing folk music that made -

CT: That's right, that's right, yeah. It's interesting looking back because all he was doing was kind of recycling Lead Belly and the kind of American folk. And both black and white stuff. But of course it was new to us. It was new to us. And again looking back on it - his band was kind odd cause he had an extra guitar player who sounded quite sort of jazzy, with sort of little licks and stuff like that. Whereas some of the others really were sort of straightforward with the washboard and the tea chest bass and all the rest of it.

[19:31] JZ: So at what age would you have been really have developed this interest further - to the extent of buying records, or I suppose if you've already got a guitar on that age -

CT: Well I remember being I think 10. So this was the kind of mid-50s. But I had a big accomplice in all of that. He was my lifelong friend, John Dummer, Tony Dummer his name is but John Dummer is his stage name, who - we - well we're still in contact now, I was talking to him on Skype the other day - but we met at our prep school, aged I suppose about 8 or 9 or something like that. And we sort of egged each other on on the kind of musical thing. He - I think he had an uncle who was a jazz fan and his uncle would sort of lay something, listen to his, and he'd say listen to this. And we used - because it was sort of so difficult to get hold of records and stuff like then, we would sort of kind of egg each other on actually, say 'I've discovered this record, I've found somewhere where you can get that record,' and so on and so forth. Because that's the other thing of course. Unless it really was top 10 stuff, it was hard to get hold of American stuff then. There was however - there was a shop - actually I passed the site of it just now - in Fife Road. Just opposite the station there. Which used to import them actually. I remember - I think we got - I can't remember whether he bought it or I did - but we had one of the first Otis Redding records. Which was - the American imports always had this really thick cardboard - really high quality sort of extra 2 mil cardboard or something like that so you really had a kind of piece of stuff there. And I can remember us sort of carrying it home and playing the hell out of it one time after another.

[21:26] JZ: I think that store has come up in the past with other interviewees.

CT: Has it? I don't remember what it was called. Oddly I can remember the name of the men's store next to it which was Bold. Which was in itself a tremendous titter at the time because this was the time of Round the Horn where one of the catchphrases used to be - with Kenneth Williams - [imitating] "any bold, any bold". Every time you saw 'Bold' that in itself somehow it was kind of amusing. Anyway that's by the way. The record shop was just by that. [Laughs]

[22:03] JZ: How did it work in terms of how would first access this kind of music? Would you hear it through the radio first or would it be radio first and then you seek out the record? What order would it have been?

CT: I mean I can remember - I can remember the first two records I ever bought. And the first one was a misfire because what I wanted was That'll Be The Day by Buddy Holly and the Crickets which I'd heard on probably on Radio Luxembourg actually I dare say. And I went to Woolworths which I think was in the Apple Market there at the time. Asked for That'll Be The Day, took it proudly home, until I then realised it was the Woolworths version. They used to do these Embassy cover versions. So I ended up with the cover version of That'll Be The Day which was a great disappointment. And I think this was a time where you couldn't really take things back if you got the wrong thing. But then the next one after that I remember

being a kind of Pye Nixa EP of Lonnie Donegan and it had Cumberland Gap on it and sort of three other songs. So that was the beginning of my record collection. Then it '78s for a couple of years, before '45s came in.

[23:24] JZ: So you mentioned Radio Luxembourg. Was radio an important source for discovering music? And was Radio Luxembourg the leading proponent?

CT: I could be getting confused with timings here. I [pause] if I say yes it was Radio Luxembourg and then you go 'but that didn't start up until...' so I'm having a sort of false memory syndrome. But I certainly can remember listening to Radio Luxembourg under the sheets classically. And all that. But there was - oh Christ it was the Light Programme then I think, the BBC, which didn't play much [pause] there was a TV show called [pause] Again, an old bloke called Jack Jackson who must have been 50. And I can remember seeing Buddy Holly on that. And again I couldn't have been more than 11 or 12 I don't think. But yes, the - you've put your finger on it there. It was hard to get to listen to stuff. Although of course by then you had all these kind of American hits. And I'm thinking there must have been top 20 radio I suppose. I don't - I'm a bit hazy about that to be honest.

[24:49] JZ: And how important was television or cinema to music? Because you mentioned going to see Jailhouse Rock. Do music related film an important thing?

CT: Well I didn't tear up any seats or anything like that. [Laughs] We didn't do that in Kingston [Laughs]. Although there quite a lot of Teds actually. There was quite a big Teddy Boy population.

JZ: I've heard some pretty scary stories about the Teddy Boys.

CT: Well again I can remember walking down - I don't know what - it's the - as you go almost to the left opposite the station which was - there used to be Kingston Bus Station there. And I can remember walking along and then a dozen Teds coming the other way. And me feeling partly 'oo err' - a bit scared. But partly 'mm, yeah, blimey, look at them, crikey, wow, I wouldn't mind looking like that'. I did manage to persuade my mother to buy me a pair of crepe-sole shoes actually. [Laughs] With some continual nagging. [Laughs].

[25:53] JZ: But yes. Cinema. Was that important to -

CT: Well I can certainly - yeah I remember seeing Jailhouse Rock. Now did I get to see any of the others? Rock Around the Clock. I think I did.

JZ: My understanding is that these were quite significant in pushing forward rock n roll as a cultural thing.

CT: Yes that's right, that's right, yes yes. I think I saw Rock Around the Clock. But I think the other thing - it was a sort of word of mouth thing as well. Just people - even quite young - 12, 13 year olds egging each other on with records, have you heard this, have you heard that and so on.

[26:37] JZ: And television? Were there Top of the Pops style shows?

CT: Well again I can remember the Jack Jackson Show as I said. Which extraordinarily I think Jack Jackson himself was by then quite an old chap actually. I'm trying to remember how far back Top of the Pops went.

JZ: I think that was 60s.

CT: Oh, OK, you jogged my memory. Of course of course of course. You've got shows in the 50s like Six-Five Special and Oh Boy! I thin Six-Five Special was probably the first one.

JZ: Six-Five Special is that what it was called?

CT: Worth - have a look on YouTube. Because it does seem really quite astonishingly clunky. It actually started off - God, isn't it weird - I can remember the tune now. It was something like - [sings] Six-Five Special's coming down the line; Six-Five Special's rights on time. And then there was actually one of these kind of speeded up things of like a train going along a track.

[27:45] JZ: Is that what the Six-Five is meant to be?

CT: It was on at five past 6. So it's the Six-Five Special. And the other thing - actually you're very good at jogging my memory because I'm remember stuff I forgot I knew. Because it was - I think - because TV was essentially run by old showbiz people then. Not your young creatives today. It was people who drifted into TV I think from old style showbiz. And they didn't really get it I don't think. [Pause] And I remember that the house band on Six-Five Special - Don Lang & his Frantic Five, right. And Don Lang played the trombone! [Laughs] Not an instrument you see much in rock n roll to be honest. [Laughs]. And yes I think on that show you could see Tommy Steele and the all - and again the whole British stable of Larry Parnes managed acts like, what are all their names, Vince Eager, Dickie Pride...

[29:00] JZ: This is rock n roll is it?

CT: Yeah yeah. And very much copyist of the Americans. Ballad singers like Craig Douglas. All pretty weak gruel I think by - Tommy Steele again. I can't knock him, he's had a 60 year long career. But I don't remember actually seeing the Americans much on it although there must have been. I think the big leap forward was once Oh Boy! came on which was a couple of years later. And I think there were more Americans on that and it wasn't quite so clunky either.

[29:41] JZ: What was the format of these shows? Was it them playing in a studio kind of thing, just a series of -

CT: Well I think if I remember rightly the Musicians Union at that point insisted on, A on live performance, and B if there was any kind of backing involved that it would be Musicians Union members, I mean there actually in the studio, sort of sawing away.

[30:07] JZ: Interesting. You mentioned a friend of yours that was your ally in this music world. I just wonder if - when you were at school were your peers also listening to all of this stuff?

CT: Yes, yes, yes. Oh yes.

JZ: So you weren't in any way -

CT: So I would say - no, I would say in the last 2 or 3 years of prep school, people starting to talk about Lonnie Donegan and rock n roll and stuff like - and particularly you always have a little, don't you, a little peer group, sort of 'got this record'. In a kind of idiotic 11 year old kind of way. And very much so - once we all got sent off to our various kind of boarding schools because not least - it's again, it's a sort of tedious and a sort of authoritarian enclosed regime. And of course I'm now talking - it was kind of 60 years ago. It's not boarding schools now where they put on Hair and they've got IT departments. This was far more like a sort of like a cross between a prison and a nunnery kind of thing. However [pause] there was a trend of sort of camaraderie around music. Because again if you weren't crazy about sports. If [pause] it was a way of having a kind of underground if you like which the authorities didn't actually try and stamp out. You could play records without being severely thrashed or anything like that [laughs]. And actually of course again I think a lot of people would say the same. Bands formed as well. Because of course you got instruments, you got practice rooms. It's odd. Probably more than I'm thinking of came out of public schools. The only one I can think of is Genesis actually. And that's going on a couple - a few

years later. But it wasn't actually not a bad environment for sort of learning an instrument and messing around with bands actually.

[32:30] JZ: And - it's interesting you say camaraderie as a word for bringing people together music-wise. So was it a case of sort of people were divided based on the type of music they listened to? Your trad jazzers -

CT: Well we had a strange - I can very much remember the traddy vs modernist divide.

JZ: There was that yeah.

CT: And each thinking the other's music was rubbish. [Pause] That was the key one. I think it was - there was a general fanship of [hesitates] the rock n roll guys I think actually.

[33:09] JZ: And you also mentioned two things that have constantly come up when I interview people about this era. Art school and coffee house. They're quite important localities for music? Cross-pollination -

CT: Yes. Well I think - I was a little bit too young to hang out but I was kind of aware of it. And it sort of set the atmosphere for the town a bit I think. This whole area. And of course Richmond just the other side very much so, with Eel Pie Island just across the bridge. And there used to be a coffee bar in Richmond called the Auberge which I think closed down only relatively recently actually. And again it was a sort of - not so much a hippy hang out - because it was a little bit before that. This was more of a art student beatnik type hang out. And again that would be where you would sort of meet up before trudging across the bridge to get to Eel Pie Island. I mean Kingston if I can make a kind of wild generalisation - I mean the impression I get now, this is an extremely prosperous London suburb. A kind of dormitory town with a kind of racetrack for a main road. It was much smaller scale then in many ways. [Pause]. Hard to put my finger on it. All the shops were individual shops. I mean they really were. Nothing different from other towns in that sort of way. But it seemed more of a sort of human scale actually in a way.

[34:53] JZ: But the way these coffee houses worked in relation to music, is it where people would bring records and listen to them together? You said you were a little young yourself.

CT: I was a little bit young for that yes. Not that there were many of them to be honest. As I say the only one I kind of recall was the Kenco Coffee House opposite All Saints there. Which - there would be a sort of beatniks tripping in to have coffee and then sit on the church wall and look miserable. And sort of me as a kind of 10 year old going [makes gawkish noise; laughs].

[35:27] JZ: And you mentioned your first job was in Bantalls. Did you have the record store at the time? Because I know Bantalls did eventually have its -

CT: I think it did, I think it did, yes. I don't remember much about it actually to be honest.

[35:41] JZ: Cause what age were you when you got that job?

CT: Well I think I was 13 actually, maybe 12. Or even younger. All the child labour laws in those days I don't know. [Laughs]. And I was very young actually.

[35:20] JZ: What were you doing, were you working on the shop floor?

CT: Yeah. Actually I was selling socks in the mens department.

[35:29] JZ: The record aspect of the shop was not on your radar really?

CT: No, no, no. Where Bentalls come in in terms of my personal [pause] sort of musical [pause] journey if you like. It does come quite prominently into it actually for this reason. My long time friend Tony, brackets, John Dummer also did a stint there. We've now moved on a bit to me being, say, 16 or 17. Left school.

JZ: Early 60s.

CT: Yeah. Exactly. Left school at 17. Tony was working at Bentalls, again I think in the mens department. And there was another guy there called Alex McCleary who [pause] legendarily they had a - they used to have a competition between each other, who could ignore the customers for the longest. And that was sort of worth a drink at the end and the amount of - the largest amount of customer complaints. Anyway this guy Alex McCleary played piano. And I had [hesitates] left school by then. I was working at Foyles in London. The book shop. And living at home with my parents who by that time had moved to Esher. And these two - actually what I omitted to say was Tony was playing drums by then. And he'd been playing drums at school. And ran into this guy who was a piano player. And said to me well why don't we form a jazz group? And with the sort of [mumbles] it must have been terrible. It must have been really awful. We didn't know what we were doing. But the piano player brought in another guy which was a tenor sax player. And we actually advertised for a bass player and got someone out the Melody Maker. And we used to rehearse at my parents' house. But the odd thing is we sort of skipped several stages of jazz development and we thought we were sort of avant garde. Which kind of - what amounted to is you'd sort of play some tune and then play whatever you felt like. Which again I thank God that there is no - there's no record of that. Because it must have been appalling! [Laughs]. However what it did - what did happen was it - oh, actually I thought of a side story. [Pause]. While we were doing this I had a call from a friend of mine from school. This is quite interesting. He - a guy called Dennis Lavarack who was in the school jazz band with me. It was a kind of - the rudimentary guitar player. But a great - a tremendous hustler. And he got the school jazz band - which was absolutely shit because it was all these [hesitate] private party gigs during the holiday, sort of paid and everything. Anyway the thing is this guy then went on to become Denny Cordell who - I mean again worth just checking out on Wikipedia. I mean he was one of the key figures of the 60s. He discovered the Moody Blues, he discovered Joe Cocker. He produced Georgie Fame. He set up Shelter Records with Leon Russell. He went on to become a sort of major music biz figure. But the time I was talking about which was 1962 - a sudden phone call from him saying 'are you still playing jazz?' 'Yeah'. 'Because I'm running a club under the Establishment Club' - which again had just been set up with Peter Cook in London - 'and I'm looking for a jazz group to play there'. So it sort of shows how [pause] stupid I think is the word that comes to mind - how completely idiotic we were to go - he said 'would I come up and audition', so we went up and auditioned. And of course we were playing this [laughs] nonsensical rubbish which must have sounded absolutely awful. And to his everlasting credit afterwards he said 'oh come on Chris, we'll take a walk around Soho Square'. And he said to me 'if you wanna do this for your own amusement' [laughs] 'that's absolutely fine, but I think you're gonna frighten the customers if you do that' [laughs] so that was that. My only - the only plus of that is the people who actually did get the gig turned out to be the Dudley Moore Trio. I suspect we wouldn't have got it even if we were any good. But I'm now digressing again. Here's the thing that this sort of crazed jazz group - we thought 'OK, that was actually a bit of a downer'. And I think we sort of realised that actually that this was idiotic, what we were trying to do. And this was at the time when sort of rhythm and blues was just starting to be felt with sort of Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley and that whole thing. And to a lesser extent the kind of - the sort of horn driven version which would be a Georgie Fame, your Zoot Money, based upon on a sort of Ray Charles type of sound. And with me playing a horn and we had another horn player from the jazz group, we had the sort of nucleus of a sort of R&B band if you like. Which at various times involved the piano player switching to organ. So we ended up with a pretty ramshackle actually version of a sort of horn type band which was hammond organ, two saxophones. Bass guitar. Drums. With - Tony and I took turns with singing, so we had a singing drummer and a singing sax player as well which again not all that good. But this was a thing where [coughs] we had a kind of succession of sax players. One of whom was Elton Dean who went on to join Soft Machine. And become quite renowned actually finally as a kind of advanced jazz player. And Top. Who as I say for the life of me I can't remember where we got him from. But it was certainly a good thing anyway.

[42:44] JZ: Let me just get the chronology right. Is this the first band you play in, or had you played in bands -

CT: Well I'd played in school jazz bands. But yes this would be the first band outside that environment.

JZ: And what did you call yourselves?

CT: Well this - I'm embarrassed to say - Lester Square, spelt Lester L-E-S-T-E-R, Lester Square and the GTs. Which sort of embarrassingly - someone somewhere has got hold of a - again, our one demo from that time - there's actually a track up on YouTube. I've no idea how it got there. It's an instrumental so it's - there's no embarrassing vocals on it and it's sort of - I don't want to shoot myself when I hear it at least. But it does as recorded in the middle of a sort of hailstorm. This [Laughs].

[43:40] JZ: When do you recall your ambitions to actually be in a band forming? Was it at soon as you first picked up that acoustic guitar at age of 10. Or did it take a bit more time for the band idea to develop?

CT: Well I sort of developed the band idea at school in so far as - as I say the various in school outfits. And we did some gigs with one of them. The Denny Cordell led band. So I'd become accustomed to playing with outfits if you like. So when - this would have been 1962 I think when we formed Lester Square and the GTs. So by that time I'd kind of sort of knew how to do it in a way. We didn't really have a leader but if there was one, saying why don't we do it in this way, why don't we do it in that way, that probably would have been me. But actually John Dummer and myself were the sort of the co-leaders of it. So that all came out of really of a chance meeting in Bentalls. We were rehearsing in Esher and we played quite a few local gigs. But the other weird thing I always think of as I was wandering around earlier on - it was quite late on in the day that we did a demo. And we did quite a lot of gigs before that. And I remember saying to Tony quite recently, 'how on earth did we get those gigs?' Because we didn't have any tapes, we didn't have anything like that. And I think what we did actually was just go to the venue and say, well, 'can we have a gig?' And actually mostly they'd go, 'oh alright then'. Because I think what you would do - you'd come along and you'd do one and if they thought you were crap, they wouldn't ask you again. And if they thought you were alright you were suddenly kind of on the list. So it was extremely informal actually. And as I say the - we played at the Cellar Club several times. And I think that was - that's how we did it. Just go along and say 'eh, can we do a gig please?' 'Alright'. We played at the Crowdaddy at [pause] by then Richmond Athletic Ground I think. Which I've got one picture - which is the band with Top. And I think it's the only known picture of the band actually performing. And we did quite - we - there's a place called the Chuck Wagon, played there several times. And further afield actually - we played at the Klooks Kleek in West Hampstead which was of course quite a big London venue and again I think it must have been simply by sort of going there [mocks nasal adolescent voice] 'Can we have a gig please?' [Deep voice] 'Oh alright, put you in March.' And sort of going on - we played there several times there actually and we supported Zoot Money once I remember. Another band called Jimmie Nicol and the Shubbubs. Jimmie Nicol was famous for stand in for Ringo in the Beatles for about 2 weeks. With the money he earned he formed this band which was actually very good. We supported them and a couple of other types of thing.

[47:06] JZ: One of the interesting things in my mind that all of this is a kind of network. I assume Top presumably had some kind of contacts with some of these venues because of his experience with the Yardbirds?

CT: I'm guessing that yeah. I'm sort of thinking probably that's how we got the gig at the Crowdaddy. I think that would be - I would think that would be -

JZ: Yeah. Cos I know he had links to Giorgio Gomelsky and all of that sort of world. I met Zoot Money bizarrely when I went to see Alan Price of the Animals. He was playing up in Barnes. And Zoot Money was there and sort of met him. They're all just - all these kind of links from this world.

CT: He's still gigging, old Zoot. He's older than me and he's still on the road.

[47:53] JZ: Yeah. He signed our charity guitar, we've got an electric guitar signed by a lot of these stars.

CT: He does once a month at the Bulls Head at Barnes actually. I keep meaning to go.

JZ: That's where I met him. It was Alan Price playing there.

CT: It's a kind of pretty stripped down version of the Big Roll Band. Because from what I remember the Big Roll Band had two horns, and it was a sort of seven piece I think or something like that. No I know him slightly because I worked in music business in the early 70s and he did some sessions for one of our artists so I know him enough to say hello anyway.

[48:32] JZ: But yeah Crawdaddy and Cellar Club are not ones to have on your band's CV.

CT: When I consider what a ramshackle band it was. I mean looking back at it, we started off without hardly any amps actually to be honest. We had a really really kind of basic amp system and I think it was only by the time we finished that there was anything even remotely adequate. Having said that I think people's expectations were sort of far less then. And I think bands were far less loud actually. I don't remember - as going to gigs for example - sort of thinking Christ, my eardrums are bleeding. Which I felt many years later going to see a Led Zeppelin gig and thinking God, my ears are gonna fall off! Kind of thing. I don't think it was like that then. And actually trad bands for example [pause] I think at the Jazz Boat just played acoustic. I don't think there was any mics or amplification whatsoever.

[49:03] JZ: But yeah I mean if those venues you could say you've shared the same stage as the Rolling Stones and the Animals and Cream and all these people.

CT: That's right. And the other thing is that when our band was getting going we were hearing along the grapevine about this band at the Station Hotel in Richmond I think. That was really sort of causing ripples. I remember someone saying 'oh yeah yeah, you could feel the bassline coming right up through the floor'. To my eternal regret we never got - I didn't get along to see them at that stage when they were still playing Richmond. I think partly because we - thinking about the band, we were just trying to keep this one going sort of thing.

[50:27] JZ: Do you think it was the Stones that precipitated that increase in volume? You mentioned you saw Led Zep and it was -

CT: Well that was - well I suppose. I don't know because I remember with our band [pause] and bizarrely I've no idea how this happened. I've still got the poster and I look at and think 'how did this happen?' [Laughs]. Because it was something like [hesitates] the Camberley Young Conservatives Annual Barbecue. Or something. [Laughs]. And what I do remember was - it was in a field actually. Which in our puny amplification system - whatever sound was wafted away on the wind. And they had a band called Bern Elliott and the Fenmen. They had proper stuff. Proper Marshall amps and stacks. And for the first time I thought 'oh yeah, OK, I can see where this is going'. Because it's loud. We're in a field and it's still loud. And actually sounds kind of really good. I think it was [pause] a war of attrition. I think isn't it one of those things where you have to have it because everybody else has got it. I mean again, I can remember doing - bloody hell it's all coming back - Basingstoke Town Hall. Which actually an Oxford band called The Falling Leaves who you might expect were almost an exact copy of the Rolling Stones. Calling themselves the Falling Leaves. But they were sort of professional and they had shedloads of amps. Which we thought - we've got to come to and build our setup because everyone else is. So I think that's pretty much how that happened. Yeah a kind of war of attrition really between the groups I think.

[52:32] JZ: So we've segwayed nicely onto the live scene. I just want to go back a bit. Do you remember when you first started appreciating live music? Do you remember your first gig? The first - the first live music you saw in Kingston? The first venues you became familiar with?

CT: Well horrifyingly I think the first proper gig I ever went to was Chris Barber at the [pause] at the Marquee I think. It was either the Marquee - no I think it must have been the 100 Club. Because the whole school jazz band went there to see Chris Barber. Ha-ha! Yeah that's right. But [pause]

[53:11] JZ: He was a big name in jazz at the time wasn't he?

CT: He's still around, it's amazing. He's 90 or something you know. Yeah that's right. And of course Lonnie Donegan came out of his band as well. It was the - that was again the other sort of weird thing. But round here - no, I'm trying to think.

[53:33] JZ: I mean would you have been playing venues before you started visiting them as a punter?

CT: I remember - if we're talking about around here, I can remember seeing Acker Bilk at Surbiton Assembly Rooms. When he was a - that must have been - he was at his height. I used to go quite regularly actually to the Jazz Boat. Again I was a bit young for it and I was certainly underage drinking and all the rest of it. If anyone had dropped a fag in there, there would have been a major sort of tragedy I think. Because my memory of it is - it was literally a barge. Where - with sort of one way in and one way out. If it had caught fire everyone would have been burnt to death without any doubt. But there - from what I can remember, it was a selection of what you might call kind of second string jazz bands. None of whose names I can recall really. But I think - no, we started to do a lot of gig going around this time when [for instance] I would have been 17, 18. Where we used to go up to London and go to the Flamingo and go to the Klooks Kleek and other club called The Roaring Twenties Club in Carnaby Street. The Flamingo and the Roaring Twenties were essentially black clubs. [Laughs]. Gigantic blokes on the door saw these little twerps. [Laughs; mocks high pitched voice] "Can we come in?" [Laughs]. [Deep voice] "Oh yeah go on." So then what [pause] yes I'm trying to think what else around here actually. Remind me of some other venues in the area.

[55:25] JZ: Well I was just thinking in my mind from what I understand is that you'd sort of have the bigger kind of showpiece concert venues - and that'd be the cinemas, so the Granada Cinema, the ABC Cinema. I don't know if you ever went to any of them - but I know your Cliff Richards and your Cilla Blacks used to play in there. Everly Brothers. Roy Orbison. That sort of thing. I don't know if you ever went to any of those.

CT: No I didn't. I think probably by then - I think I sort of missed the pop boom in a way. What with being sent to school and so on. I do remember seeing the Crazy Gang at the Kingston Empire because my father took us actually. I've got - I mean again that's bizarre and that's only a sidebar really.

[56:12] JZ: And then in terms of the smaller venues - you've got your very genre specific like the Grey Horse, the Fighting Cocks that were trad jazz specifically I think. So you didn't go to any of those?

CT: Well again not that I can remember. It's sort of - I say you're making - digging stuff out of my own memory which I kind of forgotten all about. But the one I do remember is the jazz-

JZ: The Jazz Boat yeah.

CT: Actually no cause we did go to gigs at the Cellar as well. But I can't remember them. Except the main thing I can remember is that it wasn't a cellar.

[56:47] JZ: Yes, you had to go up some stairs to get to it.

CT: Yes that's right. A tremendous ball ache for people carrying kit actually. We didn't have any burley roadies or anything. We were just carrying our own.

[57:05] JZ: And then you've got the uni. I don't know if that's a bit later that the Kingston Polytechnic started hosting things.

CT: Oh yes. Yes, yes. Well actually I got to those rather later, again once I was in the music business. I remember a couple of our bands played there. People we were managing. So they had stuff on regularly I think didn't they? Rock bands. This is more now getting up into the - probably into the 70s actually.

[57:32] JZ: Yeah and on the 70s. What then came - there was the Toby Jug in Tolworth. I don't know if you're familiar with that at all. But that's where Bowie launched Ziggy Stardust. But that - you look at the list of gigs with the venues I mentioned beforehand, and then the Toby Jug and you see how music evolves because by the Toby Jug stage it's David Bowie, Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac - so things have got more psychedelic shall we say?

CT: Yes, yes. But I was just thinking of that area. I have a series of black and whites of our band which we took on top of the Tolworth Tower. Which only just been built then. The other thing again I remember living on the river there as well is on almost daily basis you would have actual jazz boat, where the steamers - not steamers, but they would ply the river with trad jazz bands onboard and you get this sort of - people would skip jive as they sort of floating down the river.

[58:37] JZ: Was folk music important to you at all? Because you've got the Surbiton Kingston Folk Club and the Folk Barge which I think is different to the Jazz Boat but - I don't know you're familiar with it but that's where John Martyn used to play quite often. That was a little later on.

CT: Yes. I can remember going to [pause] Surbiton Folk Club several times. Again if you ask me to say who the artists were I would - I'd get no further than 'slightly depressed looking bloke with sort of black woolies on...' [Laughs]. That was pretty much the regular fair there I think. But again I think in cultural terms it was sort of well supported by - I don't know - I could be completely out of turn here. I don't know whether there's any such thing as a kind of Kingston Folk Club or Surbiton Folk Club now. Dunno.

[59:39] JZ: Not that I'm familiar with.

CT: But it's sort of - the [pause] there was enough of a, how can you call it, a sort of alternative young population then to keep a place like that going. I mean what I do remember is going and it being full every time. And yes I'm sure there probably were artists like John Martyn there and so on. But I can't recall the names unfortunately.

[1:00:09] JZ: And then one venue which you have mentioned already. It's technically outside the borough's borders but is so fundamentally important that you can't ignore it is Eel Pie Island. And so you used to go there regularly or-

CT: Well actually I got there a little later because - OK, to go on the musical journey. What happened to Lester Square and the GTs in the end was it sort of fell apart. [Chuckles]. My friend John Dummer took the - actually had an offer to work in Hamburg with the band. As a sort of a well trodden pathway if you like. For various reasons to do with girlfriends and other stuff I didn't go but he did. And the whole thing sort of fell apart while he was out there. So that was that, that was the kind of full stop to Lester Square. So [hesitates] now [pause] let's get the timeline right. Must have been about '63 or 4. By that time John Dummer was a trainee journalist on the Surbiton Borough News. Still exists, I don't know. Does it? It was a proper local paper then.

[1:01:36] JZ: I don't believe so.

CT: No. It wasn't a free sheet. It wasn't an advertising sheet. It was a proper local paper. With the sort of court news and stuff like that. Anyway by this time I'd gone off to university but he met a guy there called Iain Thomson who's still in the area actually, I think he lives in Teddington or Hampton Wick or something like that, who played bass. And they discovered a mutual love for blues. And decided to form a blues band. [Hesitates]. With various - varying line ups. Until finally [pause] so yeah the local thing here is that this actually happened just down the road where the nucleus of the John Dummer Band - John Dummer Blues Band formed. And then over the next few years they had sort of various line ups and then finally - at one point they had a sort of split lead singer and lead guitar with Dave Kelly who's still around and gigging, plays with the Blues Band amongst other things. And Tony McPhee who's still with us - I think just about. Widely regarded as superb slide guitar player. And then of course the blues boom started. It was - I don't know what it is with British music, there always has to be a boom of some sort. And so the blues boom - which I suppose would be - what are we now talking? '64. '65. John Mayall and all that sort of stuff. It kind of overlaps with the Zoot Moneys and the Georgie Fames. It's sort of going on simultaneously actually. But -

[01:03:31] JZ: And the Rolling Stones at the same time.

CT: Yeah, yeah. That's right. Of course. And then you also started to get tours from people like Howlin' Wolf and Chuck Berry and so on and so forth. The whole thing was kind of very big for a while. And actually [pause] so what happened there was I used to often sit in with the John Dummer Band. And actually that's where I played at Eel Pie several times. And I have - the thing I remember about it was the floor seemed to be made of earth actually from what I can say. It was a kind of - it was like - this is the ground, it's not the floor. [Laughs]. And again a massive ballache getting equipment over to this place and so on. And by now we're sort of - we're segwaying from beatniks into sort of hippies. This now being '66 or something like that. And then - so I used to - while away at university it was sort of vocations and stuff like that and knowing John I used to very often sit in with them actually. And by - in another one of those strange things - via one of my university friends who knew someone - we - I actually was instrumental in getting them a manager. And the manager actually got them a record deal. And they ended up putting out four, five albums, something like that. And even today are sort of well thought, particularly in the Dave Kelly, Tony McPhee stage kind of thing. So again that's another [pause] that's another sort of band thread which starts sort of right here actually if you like. And then the final part of that particularly thread is after running the John Dummer Blues Band for quite a while and then going through various other things and working in music business, John Dummer and Thumper Thomson - the original two who met at the Kingston - Surbiton Borough News. Ended up being the rhythm section of Darts, who were of course huge in the mid 70s. Multiple hits, nine piece band which is why - I don't think he ever got much money out of it actually. [Laughs]. But again it's sort of forms part of that thread if you like.

[1:06:06] JZ: And when we look back at this period and you can pick numerous periods out of it. The rock n roll revolution if you like. The sort of later 60s hippie movement and rock music which largely emerged because of venues in this sort of region.

CT: It's the sound of the suburbs. Eric Clapton was born in Ripley.

JZ: But did you yourself consciously feel you were part of some kind of revolution? Or was it not as sort of conscious as that?

CT: [Pause]. OK. OK. [Long pause]. I can remember something else. I can remember something else. Which was that all of a sudden the R&B clubs became psychedelic clubs. [Pause]. I can't think of any of the places I mentioned but there was somewhere else near - across the river. Hampton Wick or Teddington or something where we'd been before. And before there'd been sort of blues band on and the next time we went there was all this kind of light going and kind of orange dayglow and all the rest of it. And overnight everyone was dressed completely different. I mean almost overnight actually. And I

remember John saying 'cor, this is a weird thing, a youth cult that's all middle class' which of course it was. The hippies was sort of middle class. And I can remember that suddenly people weren't dancing anymore, they were sort of sitting down. Or if they were dancing it was sort of [audio quiet as imitates dancing] not really dancing is it? [Laughs]. So yeah, what I can remember thinking around that period - actually Britain seemed it sort of - it really seemed like a great place to be from. And I'm kind of extending this now not so much from here but just in general as kind of young person if you like around '64, '65, that sort of period. Because there was just so the hell much going on, particularly of course in music. And I can remember at university I was reviews editor of the university paper. And I used to get the record companies would send me free records. Which as a 20 year old [sound of hands rubbing] couldn't be better you know. And I can remember getting Procol Harum, Whiter Shade of Pale, put it on, 'bloody hell, what's this?! This is just - this is out of left field, this is just so sort of different and kind of creative and' - I mean it was only later that I discovered that my old school chum, Denny Cordell, was the man behind it again. So yes. Yes. I think we felt very much part of something going on. I mean - it's swinging London for goodness sake. Again I know this sounds incredibly twerpish I managed to persuade my mother to take me to Carnaby Street where I suppose I was 16 or something like that. And kind of pestering her into buying me sort of orange loon pants. [Hesitates]. That sounds amazingly weedy.

[1:09:48] JZ: Well you bring me onto another point that has come up time and time again in these interviews is fashion. How important was fashion related to music?

CT: Very. Very. Very. Very.

[Laughs] That's the answer everybody gives.

CT: Very very important.

It's the most unequivocal answer that anybody ever gives.

CT: Very very important. Even without our sort of limited resources. The little black and white pics I've got of Lester Square and the GTs. I've shown them to people who've gone 'woah, sharp'. And other people 'woah, wow, mods'. And I'm now looking at - because this was slightly before the hippie thing. And if you see pictures of us then in '62, it's much more [pause] that the kind of seersucker jacket, the thin tie, the [pause] tie clip underneath, the sort of mod look. And no no, it was extremely important. There was - there used to be a place - in fact Top Topham put me onto it - cause he actually was very much a sort of mod stylist actually. He also had the right hair for it as well which was [laughs] you either lucky in that respect or not. But there used to be a shop in Shaftesbury Avenue called Austin's. And they imported American clothes including arrow shirts. And they were incredibly expensive. But an arrow shirt with the button down - not unlike - no, actually, it is unlike, forget that remark - but the arrow Oxford shirts with the button down was sort of de rigueur with the sort of the mod look. So yes I would say that was very important. And oddly it's sort of when - it sort of melted away with the sort of the blues and hippie thing. Where suddenly it's sort of went entirely in the opposite direction and really the idea was to look as much like a pile of shit as you could. Look as if you'd woken up in a squat. And sort of I've only got one set of clothes and the first thing you did in the day was reach for a joint kind of thing.

[1:12:03] JZ: But would those clothes you wore indicate what music you listened to?

CT: Sort of, yeah. Kind of actually yeah. I mean I think to me the mods thing was very important because the original derivation, being modernists came out of modernist vs traddies. Where the thing was the kind of Italian suits and - kind of sharp. A sharp look. Which you sort of took some care to do actually. I mean there's a - somewhere there's a picture of me with the nearest I've got to the look I think. And this was just before it was the kind of hippie thing. [Pause]. With a kind of Italian jacket. Tin tie, tie clip. Desert boots, very big of course at that time. And there was a certain look. And it was important. It was important and then it suddenly wasn't important. Yeah? Does that make sense? And you know what I think that is, is because the mod thing sort of came out of the kind of dance culture which was kind of working class. It

wasn't college educated kids. It was - they weren't building labourers. They weren't - because those guys tended to be Teds and rockers and stuck with rock n roll. But the mod thing was very much connected to motown and of course the original Jamaican ska and rocksteady stuff. Very much to do with sort of dancing. And very much male led fashion actually. Sort of male kind of peacocks. A sort of uniform but a carefully put together uniform. And then I think what happened with the sort of blues and the sort of hippie thing actually [pause] it [hesitates; chuckles] - it was as if rock music was kind of [pause] it suddenly rock music went to college. And that went - that classic thing of - in their leisure time the middle classes dressed down and the working classes dress up. And I think that's had something to kind of do with that. And then the whole mod culture thing kind of went underground of course. Particularly in the north and it sort of remained - kept going with northern soul. To this day actually. But yes, the hippie thing sort of conquered all and then to an extent you look back on it now and you think 'oh yeah, I see the look was looking like an idiot in fact!' [Laughs]. It makes me cringe some of the sort of footage you get know of sort of - I remember going to - for my sins, John and I went to - we went to see Alan Ginsberg was over here and he'd had a 'be in' in Hyde Park. And I remember driving up in our Mini and I think we put a big bunch of flowers on the front of the Mini to sort of show we were down with it. But we couldn't bring ourselves to take it seriously actually. Loads of people sitting around going 'ommm'. And we sort of thought 'ehh, we've had enough of this omm caper', I'm thinking 'let's go and have a drink' [laughs].

[01:15:38] JZ: Ginsberg brings me onto my next question. We touched upon it with the 50s stuff, but going further down the line into the 60s - to what extent is Britain - and whether this is fashion, whether this is music, let's just call it popular culture - to what extent is Britain taking its cue from America at this stage? Or was it more - is it - cause you have the Brit Invasion and all that sort of stuff. Is it the other way around at this stage? Is Britain more -

CT: Ok, Ok, well that's a good one isn't it? [Pause] It's interesting isn't it, because if you look at - I mean I can remember very - I remember very clearly the first couple of Beatles albums. I mean there was a point at which entire parties were run on With The Beatles, the black one. I mean I can remember [chuckles] a friend of mine, his parents used to run the Marquis of Granby down by the - the Scilly Isles there on the way to - big pub on the roundabout. And they used to have regular sort of teenage parties there. And I can remember one of them - well I don't think any other record was played except for With The Beatles back to back, sort of turned over, OK turn it over again, turn it over again. And if you look at that now of course a lot of it is covers. Largely black American pop kind of thing. And then I guess if you take that the Beatles as the paradigm - with each album you see less covers, less - until finally it's kind of all original stuff and so it goes on. And I suppose by the time you've got to Sgt. Pepper then - well and of course the whole Beatles thing - I mean that was sort of taking coals back to America, coals Newcastle back to America. But yeah again it changed the whole thing. Amongst other things I mean sort of [hesitates] black music, soul music, R&B and stuff like that, which was all this stuff that I always loved, sort of fell out of favour, rather. Motown - which I always thought was absolutely brilliant and still sounds brilliant today - was sort of regarded kind of commercial pop and you got these guys like the Beatles doing Sgt. Pepper and these kind of massive kind of orchestral lengthy tracks and so on and so forth. So I think by then actually - I think by then you could sort of say the Americans were sort of copying - like the Beach Boys are going, 'well we've got to our Sgt. Pepper' and so it goes on. It's an interesting period, that sort of cross pollination I think.

[01:18:29] JZ: Yeah and I think I've heard the Brit Invasion referred to as essentially the likes of the Beatles and the Stones taking American music, repackaging at and selling it back to the Americans.

CT: Oh absolutely. Because of course I think again what - I mean give them full credit here, they were also bringing the blues back to America. It's sort of the Rolling Stones going and recording in Chess Studios where all their heroes record. And being interviewed they talk about Howlin' Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson and all of that. And sort of taking it - cause I think white America had completely lost touch with black music which of course is frankly America's biggest contribution I think.

[1:19:21] JZ: Yeah there's all sorts of stories about the Rolling Stones sort of saying to people 'this is Howlin' Wolf, he's from down the road, and you guys are totally unaware of him' -

CT: Yeah that's right, that's right. Exactly.

JZ: Right, we're ready to wrap up soon. We're on an hour 20. That's reasonably lengthy.

CT: Well you've made me remember stuff I thought I'd forgotten actually. [Laughs]

[1:19:40] JZ: I just want to, on the Beatles - before we wrap up - do you recall your perception being of a regional divide with the Beatles up there and the music down here being separate? Or was it all part of one scene as far as you were concerned?

CT: I think the - if I'm [pause] call this as it were, it's all - it's London and the suburbs isn't it? I think frankly it was as important. Because - which is not to forget - I mean the Beatles came out of London but so did also lots of perfectly forgettable outfits like Gerry and the Pacemakers and Freddie and the Dreamers and the Merseybeats and so on and so forth. And of course London to this day is the musical centre of the - of Britain I think. So - I actually didn't take that much notice of the Beatles at the time. Partly because I was sort of concerned with other genres and sort of [hesitates] running bands or whatever the case may be. [Pause]. Although I did go to the Cavern after - I must have been one of the last ones before it got torn down. [Laughs]. Because again - once I was walking in the music business we managed a band called Harpoon who were all from Liverpool. And they were one of the regulars at the Cavern so I think we were some of the last people to actually go there as kind of punters. Nothing special about it to be honest actually. Just like a cellar. A cellar which actually was a cellar and not up some stairs. [Laughs]

[1:21:28] JZ: So Beatlemania that wasn't particularly noticeable thing in your life.

CT: Well Beatlemania was a big thing in my sister's life, who's four years younger than me. Now there you're talking about someone who went off her head. Sort of had acres of memorabilia and Beatles stockings and Beatles jumpers and Beatles badges and Beatles hairbrushes and so on. So she would have been then 13 or something like that I guess. So -

[1:22:02] JZ: And was there the Beatles Stones divide, was that a thing? You're either Beatles or you're Stones.

CT: Yeah I think it was. I think it actually that sort of was. Of course it's interesting things isn't it. Amongst musicians - I mean musicians are far less - are for more forgiving than fans and punters who are very unforgiving actually. Like - as we know - people shouting Judas at Bob Dylan cause he got an electric guitar on stage. And yes - I think that was a - the Stones were thought to be a bit more edgy and a bit more sort of - a bit more rebellious. Longer hair. Which of course you look at it now, was that long? [Laughs].

[1:22:46] JZ: I was told - and this is going back to an olden era - was Cliff or Elvis was a kind of divide, which I guess might be like the homegrown hero against the American-

CT: Yeah I've gotta say, I don't know anyone who gave a second's credence to Cliff Richard. He - he made one good record which was the first one. But even then he seemed - he did seem like a sort of posturing in a way, with all this sort of lip curling stuff and all the rest of it.

[1:23:19] JZ: I mean outside Jailhouse Rock Elvis hasn't come up so much in your testimony, was Elvis important?

CT: I mean I'm now of the opinion - you get all the Elvis you need on his first two albums really. But then of course he did such a huge amount of dross didn't he? The dreadful films, one after the other. Was it oh

my Wooden Heart? And all the rest of it which is kind of - the guy clearly was [inaudible, laughter] but I think if you look now at skinny brilliant Elvis, you're looking at the first couple of years of his career. And that had sort of gone by hadn't it, by this time. I mean I was always a Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis man actually. Because I - well first of all, they were players and I always enjoy people who play as well as sing. And they both seemed sort of completely original and sort of wild and just kind of exciting. What I do remember is thinking - 'now was it about Little Richard that I'm not quite getting here? What's -' - and I sort of, it took me quite a lot of time to realise he was wearing makeup. And then - even more [inaudible] 'oh Gosh, he must have been gay!'. [Laughs]. It took an awful long time for the penny to drop. [Laughs]. But different times. That was when you can marry a 13 year old cousin. [Laughs]. Not very well thought of that sort of thing. Very bad! [Laughs].

JZ: Excellent. Well I'm happy with that Chris. Unless there's anything else that comes to mind?

CT: No I've - I don't know whether that's any help at all really.

JZ: That's a hell of a lot of help. That's fantastic, thank you.