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**The Role of the Beatles Phenomenon in  
the Culture of the 'Swinging Sixties' in Britain**

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**Bakalářská práce**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The 'Swinging Sixties' represented a fascinating decade of British history, a decade of far-reaching changes in various fields, not only in the popular culture but mainly in people's minds.

The Second World War had ended only 15 years earlier and despite the fact that the United Kingdom (and especially London) had been heavily damaged by German bombing, it quickly recovered. 30 years of economic boom, called the "Golden Years" [1], completely changed the face of the United Kingdom. As British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said in his speech in 1957: "Let's be frank about it; most of our people have never had it so good. Go around the country, go to the industrial towns, go to the farms, and you will see a state of prosperity such as we have never had in my lifetime – nor indeed ever in the history of this country." [2] There were, of course, some problems like the decolonisation of Africa, as a result of which Britain lost a substantial part of its influence and also the decolonisation of India, 'The Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire'. Other controversial issues were a large wave of immigration and the topic of nuclear weapons as well.

Nevertheless, the Sixties were the time full of optimism for the majority of British people. The labour supply was enormous. There was almost no unemployment, people were not afraid of losing their jobs. This made the trade unions extremely powerful organisations. This period was also full of political changes and reforms, such as the legalisation of abortion or the decriminalisation of homosexuality. After 13 years of conservative governance, the Labour Party won the election and replaced the Conservative Party in the leadership of the state. The majority of British families could afford to buy a television and almost every family owned a radio. The expansion of mass media helped to develop other areas of society, such as fashion, music, art or even science. People had

enough time and money to spend so they could afford various forms of entertainment.

This is the reason why this period is not just another decade in British history. It gained the name 'Sixties' instead of just the number 60s and it gained also its own attribute – 'Swinging'. The verb "to swing" acquired a new meaning during the Sixties. Besides the original meaning "cause to oscillate" or "bring about", it shifted to "enjoy oneself unconventionally" (1957) and even a few years later "engage in promiscuous sex" (1964). [3] This shows a rapid mental shift that people underwent within a few years.

People were discovering new possibilities and a new way of life. They were looking for self-realization and music and art in general represented one of the most attractive ways. A large number of music groups emerged in this time; not many of them existed for a long time, but one of them became an international phenomenon. The music group The Beatles conquered the music charts in and outside the UK influencing and inspiring not only the music scene but also the other cultural spheres.

In this bachelor thesis I would like to compare British society before and after The Beatles. My objective is to demonstrate that the band's influence was so extensive that it even had an impact on the subsequent generations.

The first two chapters of this thesis deal with the lifestyle of the Brits before the Sixties. British society is characterised with emphasis on the political life and social problems and conflicts. The thesis also focuses on family life, leisure time activities and fashion. The third chapter is dedicated to the beginning of The Beatles and its 'discovery'. Next, an attempt is made to discover the causes and describe the fan frenzy called the Beatlemania, which began in 1963 in Britain and spread all over the world. The thesis studies the fundamental changes in a lifestyle of



the British Sixties society as well. The following chapters deal with the characteristic of the British society and politics during the 60s and at the turning point of the decade. The final chapter of the thesis is dedicated to an international survey concerning the influence of The Beatles 44 years after the break-up. In this practical part respondents of different age groups and occupations have been asked about this music group. The objective of the survey is to discover the current extent of persisting popularity of The Beatles. The target group of the survey are primarily young people who do not have the first-hand experience of the Sixties.

The topic of the Beatles phenomenon may be of interest even for people who are not interested in music or British history. The Beatles became involved not only in the music scene but also (mainly John Lennon) in politics and charity. They inspired and are still inspiring people all over the world, even 44 years after their break-up. This thesis aims to provide background knowledge about this period of time and also about this music group, and it attempts to provide evidence that the Sixties were indeed a remarkable time. It also intends to answer the question whether The Beatles had a transformational effect or just took advantage of the appropriate time.

## **2 BRITISH POLITICAL LIFE BEFORE THE SIXTIES**

### **2.1 Interpretation of the term 'culture'**

If we look at the word 'culture' as a broad term, not only within the meaning of art, this word covers a wide range of values created by humans. It contains "the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society" [4]. Generally, British culture can be broadly understood as everything that British people have created over the centuries.

From the point of view of modern history, British territory counted among the developed and influential areas. Nowadays, the influence of Britain is not as decisive as it used to be for example in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. Britain had dominated the world then and the area of its colonies was several times more extensive than the British Isles.

In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Britain lost much of its political power; nevertheless, it still plays a significant role, not merely in popular culture. British culture is a deep source of inspiration in many fields.

### **2.2 Britain's position on the international political scene**

Many international affairs influenced the development of Britain in the 20th century. Britain participated in World War II, it was one of the founding members of NATO and the UN, and it established new political relations within Europe, which led to the accession of Britain to the European Union, or more precisely the European Economic Community, in 1973. [5]

Britain was also influenced by the affairs in which it was not involved directly, for instance the Korean War in the early 50s. The United Kingdom did not participate in the war as a state, only as a member of the UN. [6]

Shortly after the World War II a new serious international tension emerged between the USA and the USSR – the Cold War. After the war in Europe the United States became a crucial ally of Britain, and Russia lost its reputation despite the fact that Russia and Britain had had a close political relationship in the past. Even in the middle of the war, British supplied the Soviet Union with tanks during the Tanks-for-Russia Weeks, declared by the British Government. [7]

### **2.2.1 Suez Crisis**

British control of Egypt was very economically advantageous because of the territory of the Suez Canal, a major transportation route for British trade with India. In 1956, the conflict erupted when the company operating the Suez Canal (whose shares were owned mostly the British and the French) was nationalized by Egypt. Britain and France decided to intervene but after a few months the states ultimately decided to withdraw from Egypt, under the pressure of society. The consequences for the British government were not satisfactory at all. The canal could not be used because of tens of sunken ships. The British position as a political power in Africa was weakened and the government also lost support of the British citizens. A sharp drop in the pound was another shock, which influenced the international market. [8]

### **2.2.2 Decolonisation**

The Second World War accelerated the process of decolonisation. The colonies were economically dependent on Europe so they were significantly affected by the decline of economy during the War, which supported separatist tendencies and local liberation movements. Britain as a colonial power was greatly struck by decolonization. Soon after the war, in 1947, Britain granted independence to India. This enormous event was absolutely shocking. Britain lost a vast territory of which it was very proud; it was called the “Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire”.

[9] The independence of India was followed by a secession of the other colonies in the Middle East and Africa. In 1949, Britain founded the association The Commonwealth of Nations, which associated Britain and its former colonies in a political organisation, beneficial for all parties. [10]

### **2.3 British political life**

The 50s was a period of the Conservative party in Britain, the Conservatives ruled the country for 13 years, until 1964. The post of the Prime Minister was held by four conservative politicians. The first of them, the war hero Sir Winston Churchill, was elected for the second time in 1951. He continued with the politics of the welfare state and nationalisation, although he was not a great supporter of it. He was replaced in the office in 1955 by his colleague Sir Anthony Eden. [11]

Eden stayed in the office only for 2 years. During his governance he had to handle the Suez crisis, which sharply decreased his approval rating. He was forced to resign due to his health condition. [12]

The successor to Sir Anthony Eden was Harold Macmillan, who had to face several difficult affairs. He led the country out of the Suez crisis and sped up the process of decolonisation. He also had to deal with the immigration wave and resulting race riots. He was dubbed 'Supermac' thanks to the satirical cartoon depicting him as a superhero. [13] Nevertheless, he was popular among people. His strong political position was even reinforced by the persisting post-war economic boom. Macmillan led the Conservative party during the election in 1959 and remained in his function until 1963 when the Profumo affair broke out. [14]

Harold Macmillan was replaced in the office by Sir Alec Douglas-Home. He served as Prime Minister only for one year; the Conservative

Party lost the general election in 1964. Nevertheless, he was generally respected. [15]

Despite playing no more than a representative role, the British Royal Family enjoyed considerable popularity in the 1950s. Loyalty to the monarchy was a part of the patriotic enthusiasm of the British. To a great shock of the public, King George VI died prematurely in 1952 and was succeeded by his young daughter Elizabeth. [16]

### **3 SOCIAL LIFE**

#### **3.1 Social tensions**

##### **3.1.1 West Indies immigration**

Immigrants had been arriving to Britain long before the World War II. They were not only religious immigrants, such as Jews, but especially the people of the British colonies who came to Britain with a vision of a better life, people from South East Asia, i.e. the present India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and people from the West Indies (the Caribbean). However, their numbers were limited. They worked at specific posts such as musicians or sailors. As an unknown black writer stated, racism was greatly common: "Some of these girls will make fun of you by throwing kisses at you when not making hisses at you while others shout 'Go wash your face gov'nor', or sometimes call out 'nigger, nigger, nigger'." [17] The immigrants could not imagine their situation in Britain and before they came there, they had had no experience of racism. It was difficult for them to rent a flat and with the rising number of immigrants the situation got worse. Moreover, they were not able to adapt and it led to the formation of ghettos. The majority of immigrants were found in large, especially port cities such as Cardiff, Bristol or London. [18]

The arrival of the Empire Windrush passenger ship in June 1948 from Jamaica is considered the symbolic beginning of mass immigration to Britain. In the colonies there was a lack of work, but Britain, damaged by the war, needed cheap labour. During 8 years, the number of West Indian immigrants rose from 3,000 to 66,000 per year and the British Nationality Act allowed all citizens of British colonies to obtain British citizenship. [19]

Different habits and lifestyle increased racial tensions among communities. After several violent attacks in 1958 the tensions led to the conflict in the London area of Notting Hill in early September.

The members of the subculture Teddy Boys were engaged in these riots; they were young and whites, often with tendency towards anti-social behaviour. [20] As a result of the riots, various organisations supporting black integration or, conversely, the end of unlimited immigration emerged within few months. Since 1964, the annual carnival has been organized "...as a symbol of multi-racial harmony". [21]

### **3.1.2 Nuclear weapons**

In 1952, Britain as the third country in the world had developed and tested the first atomic bomb. This issue, while strengthening British position on the international scene, was poorly received by the public. People assembled into the protest organizations and established an anti-nuclear movement. In 1958, the organisation CND was established and it gained tremendous support. The organisation was able to assemble tens of thousands of people for the Aldermaston marches against the atomic bomb. These marches were held annually between 1958 and 1963 and they brought the debate on banning the bomb into the centre of political life. The partial ban on nuclear tests was signed in 1963. [22]

### **3.2 Welfare state**

In 1945, Labour Party came to power and began to implement a revolutionary transformation of British society - welfare reforms. This social packet included reforms such as free medical care, unemployment and health insurance, retirement pensions, better housing, assistance to pregnant women and a change of education system. The biggest improvement appreciated by society was the establishment of NHS (National Health Service) providing free medical care for everyone. The British are so proud of this organisation that it appeared on stage for 5 minutes during the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in London 2012. [23]

### **3.3 Trade unions**

The situation of trade unions also changed after the World War II. The number of job positions was rising and so was the number of new members; more and more people joined trade unions. In 1951, trade unions had approximately 9.5 million members; ten years later the number increased to 10 million members, and in 1971, more than 11 million people were members of trade unions. Due to low unemployment and the increasing number of members, trade unions were becoming more powerful. They benefited from their right to strike and their actions led to effective results. [24]

### **3.4 Inventions and innovations**

Owing to economic growth and low unemployment, the salaries began to rise. Living standard of the fifties population and also their purchasing power were higher due to the welfare reforms, and this consumer lifestyle further supported the economy. Available technical improvements for households were of great importance. Domestic appliances, such as refrigerators or washing machines, became the most demanded goods that greatly facilitated the life of housewives and caused a revolution in family life. Radio constituted an ordinary part of the household but television sets were spreading across Britain and the BBC company contributed to this rapid expansion. Soon British TV viewers began to watch not only the British movies and TV stations but also the American ones. This was the actual beginning of the mass culture. [25]

During the fifties, science was significantly developing and it brought an extensive number of new inventions, which were not yet mass-distributed, but they fundamentally influenced subsequent decades, such as computer or contraceptive pill. [26]



## **3.5 Lifestyle**

### **3.5.1 Fashion**

Fashion also became an important part of everyday life. With the development of production techniques and materials not reserved only for the rich it became easily accessible for the masses. [27]

#### **3.5.1.1 Women's fashion**

The fifties' women fashion is typical for its glamour. One of most influential and world famous fashion designers was Dior, who put the emphasis on femininity. Narrow waistline and wide skirt highlighting the female figure were his favourite elements, and his style was broadly reproduced. At that time, dressing style also began to vary with age. Although young women also wore wide skirts with tight waists, they used more colourful and wild patterns. Women also wore tight trousers with narrow legs for casual wear and circle skirts for dance parties. [28]

#### **3.5.1.2 Men's fashion**

Men usually wore tailor-made clothes. The suit in neutral colours was the most important part of their wardrobe, suitable for every occasion. However, a less formal style appeared in the fifties. The other option to the suit was a blazer, sports coat, or blouson jacket with non-matching trousers, nevertheless a tie was an integral part. [29]

Another style called "Teddy boys" emerged in the fifties. It was a style of youths inspired by the Edwardian style and trying to break the uniformity of this period. They were excessively considered a violent gang of opium smokers with a fondness for rock and roll. Teddy boys' fashion consisted of jackets with big shoulder pads, narrow trousers and typical pomaded hairstyle. This style was popular among young people, despite the opposition from their parents. [30]

### **3.5.2 Leisure activities**

Sport was an important part of life, whether it was practised in active or passive way. The most popular sport was football. Before the World War II, every factory had its football team, but football suffered a big blow during the War. Because of a lack of players, it became a female pursuit as well. In the fifties its popularity was restored and the matches were highly attended. Another popular sport to watch and play was cricket. [31]

The traditional leisure time activity was gardening, which was popular particularly among men. People also liked going to the cinema; the attendance was ten times higher than today but it suffered with the arrival of television. Favourite activity of young people was dancing in clubs and listening to music and the film celebrities began to have increasing influence on them. [32]

### **3.6 Music scene**

Jazz and swing represented typical music for the early Fifties. It was played on saxophones, trumpets or the piano. People in Britain listened to artists such as Perry Como, Frankie Laine and Eddie Calvert. Music Revolution occurred in Britain in the mid-fifties, after the screening of the film *Blackboard Jungle*. This film featured the hit "Rock Around the Clock" by the performer Bill Haley. [33]

The new style 'rock and roll' was popular especially among young working-class people, who identified themselves with this music, and considered this music a revolt against the modest older generations. "Bill Haley took negro music from the US and gave it a white face. Rock and roll was negro slang for sex in 50s America." Besides Bill Haley, there emerged one new international idol – Elvis Presley.

Apart from rock and roll, another music style appeared in Britain, already known in America – skiffle, which gradually evolved from folk and

jazz. There were often used homemade instruments like washboards or tea chest bass, but also guitars and banjos. The best known representative of this style was Lonnie Donegan. [35]

## **4 BIRTH OF THE PHENOMENON**

### **4.1 John Lennon**

John Winston Lennon was born into a middle-class family in Liverpool in 1940. He was not excellent at school, but still he had another talent; he was very creative, with ability to write and draw. He was born with chronically poor eyesight, so when reading, he was changing words into others but similar ones, and he liked different puzzles and word games; later this impairment greatly helped him with writing lyrics. [36]

His first band 'The Quarry Men' was founded together with his fellow student Pete Shotton. They both sympathized with skiffle, they usually imitated the most famous songs of that time and John's favourite activity was creating his own lyrics for the popular tunes. They also posed as Teddy Boys and they had a reputation of school troublemakers. The band was relatively successful, particularly because of John's skilfulness and keenness (other members were Nigel Walley and Ivan Vaughan, Rod Davis, Eric Griffiths, Colin Hanton, Len Garry, they were playing in various line-ups); on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1957 the band was invited to play at St Patrick church's garden fête. [37]

### **4.2 Paul McCartney**

James Paul McCartney was born on 18th June 1942. Unlike John, he was born into a working class family and he inherited his musical talent from his father. Although the family often suffered financial difficulties and his parents did not have time to spend with their children, Paul was, however, an excellent student. He was admitted to a grammar school, where he was very popular, and his classmates started calling him only by his second name – Paul. At the age of 14, after his mother's death, he also began to pose as Teddy Boy, and the encounter with Lonnie Donegan encouraged him to play music – to play the piano,

the trumpet, the guitar or to sing. On 6th July 1957, Paul was invited by his friend Ivan Vaughan at the church garden fête, where he stunned John Lennon with his musical skills being better than anyone of John's band. [38]

### **4.3 George Harrison**

On 25th February 1943, George Harrison was born as a fourth child into an ordinary working-class family. From an early age he had an excellent memory, but indifference and introversion were his characteristic traits. Like the others, he loved the style of Teddy Boys and long oiled hair was his trademark. He was also inspired by Lonie Doneghan but he found it difficult to master playing the guitar, unlike Paul did not have the innate talent. George was brought to the band by his friend Paul, first as a substitute when one of the players could not play, and he gradually fitted in to the band. [39]

### **4.4 The Beatles**

In 1957, the skiffle era was slowly ending and both known and unknown artists and bands moved from skiffle to rock and roll. Several members of The Quarry Men left the band and it seemed that the band had no future; they lacked money for tools and equipment as well as ideas for a new music style. However, a new impulse soon occurred with the U.S. performer Buddy Holly. The band drew inspiration from his simple songs based on only a few chords and they began to compose their own first songs (the first one was John Lennon's Hello Little Girl). [40]

Their first demonstration record was recorded by John, Paul, George and John Lowe in 1958 and it served as promotional material. Because all of them were students with no money, they were deprived of opportunities to play in other cities, at competitions, etc. After repeated modifying the band's line-up it eventually settled in 1960 on the trio

of John, Paul and George and their friend Stuart Sutcliffe. The band was also changing its names, from The Quarry Men, through Johnny and the Moondogs, to the Silver Beetles. The final name was created by John Lennon by combining the word 'beat' (in the meaning of rhythm and pounding) and 'beetle' and created The Beatles. [41]

However, the band was worried because of the absence of a drummer. For a short time Paul played the drums, but it did not satisfy him; after all he was a guitarist. Thomas Moore and Norman Chapman also played briefly in the band but The Beatles did not gain a permanent drummer until 1960, when Peter Randolph Best joined them. [42]

In August 1960, a mutual friend Alan Williams offered the band their first engagement at a nightclub in Hamburg, Germany. "In the Indra club they played full 48 nights in a line-up consisting of: John Lennon – guitar, Paul McCartney – guitar, George Harrison - guitar, Stuart Sutcliff – bass guitar and Pete Best – drums. According to the contract The Beatles played on weekdays for four and a half hours and for six hours at weekends." [43] They received for the job 30 German marks per day from the club owner. For the members of the band this was their first journey abroad, they were young and inexperienced and easily succumbed to temptations such as alcohol, sex and stimulants. After two months the band gained another engagement in the Kaiserkeller club. Hamburg, as a port city, abounded with British rock and roll bands. [44]

#### **4.5 Ringo Star**

On 7th July 1940 Richard Starkey was born in Liverpool. He was an only child, his father left the family and Richard lived in poor conditions only with his mother. He almost did not attend school because from the age of six he was chronically ill and he spent nearly all of his childhood in hospitals. He could read and write poorly and despite his cheerful nature he had been considerably weakened by his diseases.

Richard began to play music once he obtained first drum kit and soon he became a member of a successful band of that time, 'Rory Storm and the Hurricanes'. There he changed his first name to Ringo - because he liked to wear rings, and surname to Starr - as shortened Starkey. Ringo first played with The Beatles on an amateur recording in Hamburg when Pete was missing, and he made a good impression on them. Ringo was a great drummer, however, Rory Storm and the Hurricanes were far more successful than the band The Beatles at that time. [45]

#### **4.6 „The Fab Four“**

After a forced return to Liverpool, the band nearly broke up, after all, only Stuart left the band. The Beatles, however, stood out at their first concert at home. The Cavern Club became their central stage, where they were performing together until 1963. During this engagement The Beatles first met with Brian Samuel Epstein, an owner of a music store, who was so amazed by their music that he offered the band to become their manager. The contract, which was signed in January 1962, provided him 25% of the profit. The Beatles were regularly performing in clubs in Liverpool and nearby towns, and in the meantime Epstein was trying to arrange the first recording but the band was ultimately rejected by DECCA record companies as well as by the other companies such as Phillips, Pye and Columbia. [46]

When The Beatles left for another engagement in Hamburg in April 1962, meanwhile in London, Brian Epstein managed to convince a producer, George Martin, the representative of the record company EMI to listen to his band. On 6th June 1962, The Beatles met with George Martin at Abbey Road studios and the band recorded there four songs with better studio equipment. Under the condition that the drummer would be replaced because of his unsatisfactory skills, a contract was signed

with EMI. On 18th August, Pete Best was replaced by Ringo Starr and the 'The Fab Four' were born. [47]

#### **4.6.1 The Beatles' image**

Thanks to Stuart Sutcliffe's girlfriend, Astrid, The Beatles obtained their own image. She cut fringe to all members (except Pete), combed their hair into their foreheads and shaved their sideburns, this hairstyle later became typical for them. She also suggested that they should wear black leather rebel outfits which they favoured. Still in Hamburg, she took photos of them, unusually in an industrial environment - in the docks, or on the roof of a station, which, at that time, were not conventional places for taking promotional photos. [48]

Brian Epstein then modified their dress style; he was convinced that the band would be listened to by more young people, if they succeeded in convincing their parents. He provided the band with tweed suits and ties for more professional look, although the band poorly reconciled themselves to their new, polite image. [49]

#### **4.7 From the first single to the hit**

The first single recorded by The Beatles contained two songs, 'Love Me Do' and 'PS I love you'. George Martin was doubtful about the new drummer so he decided to replace Ringo in the song Love Me Do by EMI's drummer Andy White and Ringo was playing only the tambourine. After the single's release, EMI made no attempt to promote the band, neither in the press nor on the radio, so Epstein himself probably bought 10,000 records to get the single into the charts; however, according to some sources this is only a hoax. Nevertheless, Epstein ordered his employees and friends to bomb the BBC and the Radio Luxembourg with requests for the song 'Love Me Do' and he was successful. Once it appeared on the radio, the single soon moved up from 49<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> place in the magazine New Musical Express. [50]



Although the repertoire of the band was still based on cover songs, the second single was recorded on 26th November 1962. There appeared their own song 'Please Please Me', which utterly enthralled George Martin that the very first record was used for the album: "Gentlemen, you have just made your first number one." [51]

## **5 BEATLEMANIA AND THE SIXTIES' SOCIETY**

### **5.1 Beatlemania**

Because the company EMI failed to ensure The Beatles any promotion, Epstein turned with the second single to a publisher Dick James, who got the band into the greatly popular British TV show 'Thank Your Lucky Stars'. In February 1963, The Beatles won the charts for the first time with the song 'Please Please Me'. They also managed to record their first long-playing record, which still contained cover songs, in only one day. The band was adored mostly by young people, even a monthly magazine 'The Beatles Monthly Book' was published regularly as their official fanzine. Their popularity was increasing so rapidly that in April The Beatles played their last concert at the Cavern Club in Liverpool and in September their album occupied the top position of the British charts. Their second LP immediately broke the world record for the number of pre-orders, which amounted to 270,000 pieces. For this album The Beatles got their first gold record. [52]

At that time, The Beatles were so popular that during the concerts lasting unusually only 30 minutes, each time mass hysteria broke out. Tabloids were stalking the band's every step and they were publishing detailed information about their lives, which was disturbing their work as well (John Lennon was already married and had a son). After winning the U.S. charts on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1964, The Beatles conquered also more conservative press and they overshadowed the British political happenings. [53]

In America, the band underwent two other tours and thanks to great advertising campaigns and the participation in Ed Sullivan show it gained tremendous support of fans. The organizers later sold their used towels or even the air from their dressing room. They met there with the only comparable celebrity of that time, Elvis Presley, and following his

example they decided to make their first movie – ‘A Hard Day’s Night’. Their popularity had, however, a darker side, at the concert in Las Vegas they were first threatened with assassination. [54]

At that time, The Beatles reached the absolute peak of their career. Their return from the USA was broadcast live in the BBC news and in October 1965, the band received the Order of the British Empire. Nevertheless, there was an evident shift in their output, from frivolous lyrics and simple melodies to more sophisticated and complicated ones. In August 1966, the album called Revolver was released with brilliant critics; although it did not celebrate such achievements as the previous albums, still the success was enormous. The Beatles moved from pop music to more artistic musical expression: “The bullet that The Beatles fired in the spring of the sixty-sixth year from their Revolver pointed far beyond the horizon, to the places where popular music had never ventured before.” [55]

In May 1966 The Beatles set out on a tour of Europe and Asia, which was highly anticipated. On this tour, there was a serious incident due to a misunderstanding with an invitation to a charity luncheon organized by the wife of the Philippine President. Due to the lost invitation The Beatles did not arrive and the whole band including managers were physically attacked by a mob of fans. After this experience, The Beatles decided to quit the tours and the concerts altogether. Other reasons also contributed to this decision: their music had changed a lot from their beginning and was now more difficult to perform live, and it was even not audible at concerts. Moreover, three out of four members (except for Paul) already had families and needed more spare time. [56]

At the same time one more incident occurred when John Lennon said in an interview with the Evening Standard: "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink... We're more popular than Jesus now. I do not know which will go first - rock and roll or Christianity." [57] This statement

provoked (mainly in the United States) the anti-Beatles campaign, their records were burned, several radio stations ceased to broadcast their songs and the Ku Klux Klan even threatened them with death. John was forced by his manager Epstein to apologize for this statement but immediately afterwards angered by the journalists John criticized the United States for involvement in the Vietnam War, which made the crowds even angrier. Therefore, all the planned concerts in the USA were terminated prematurely. [58]

The band gained a new impulse and again it started recording a new album named Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. This album was exceptional for several reasons. The recording lasted four months (as opposed to the previous recordings made within hours or days at maximum). There is not a pause between the songs, The Beatles were experimenting with various (not only) instruments and the album was accompanied by the lyrics of all the songs. The album is still historically the best-selling album in the UK. In June 1968 The Beatles performed in the show 'Our World International', watched by 400 million viewers in 24 countries. Their song 'All you need is love' became extremely popular with the hippie movement. [59]

On 27th August 1968, the band's manager Brian Epstein suddenly died and the band slowly began falling apart. John Lennon got divorced and replaced his wife with an artist Yoko Ono, who controlled him and who was present at every rehearsal of the band. The Beatles also established their own company Apple but due to the disunited leadership it did not have any significant success. The band members were becoming more and more solo artists. They were constantly arguing and John and Yoko even released their own shocking solo album 'Two Virgins' and later in Amsterdam initiated their peace campaign. Nevertheless, they released together the last two commercially viable albums – 'Let it Be' and 'Abbey Road'. The Beatles officially broke up

in April 1970, when Paul McCartney announced his leaving, even though it was originally John's intention. [60]

## **5.2 Music of the Sixties**

The Sixties brought a change not only in music style; while in the fifties majority of popular musicians came from the United States, in the Sixties on the contrary the British preferred more the British artists, mainly guitar bands came into fashion. Moreover, many of them became famous also in the USA, the largest expansion occurred in the mid-sixties, which is called the 'British Invasion'. It was not only about one band The Beatles, who started this wave, other groups such as the Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Animals and many more also achieved tremendous success. [61] These bands became enormously popular in both countries and they simultaneously conquered the British and the American charts. Some British bands, for instance The Who, even participated in the American free music festival in Woodstock in 1969 attended by approximately 450,000 people. [62]

According to the top-selling singles between 1960-9, other popular British performers of that time were Cliff Richard, Elvis Presley, The Shadows, or the Hollies. The Beatles occupied the second position of the chart, however, according to the top singles charts, the favourite single of the Sixties 'She Loves You' belonged to them. [63] "Most potently of all, perhaps, The Beatles are the so-called 'swinging sixties' incarnate." [64] Thanks to them, other Liverpool bands, which had previously been overlooked, were suddenly taken more seriously; their music style was referred to as the Merseybeat, after the Liverpool river Mersey and the rhythmic concept. In this regard, the band popularised also the city of Liverpool, Scouse accent and the 'Mersey Look' consisting of wet look coats and fishermen's hats. [65]

However, the music scene was composed from more than one band, particularly the Rolling Stones became the major competitor for The Beatles. The Rolling Stones had the advantage of origin, as they came from the centre stage of that time, from 'Swinging London'. [66] A characteristic feature of that time is also the beginning of differentiation between the two musical terms, 'pop music' and 'rock music'. It is difficult to determine a precise definition of these terms, but the main distinction between them was the perception of music, whether it was intended solely for amusement (and related earnings) - pop, or it was rather an artistic expression – rock. The Beatles can be regarded as an example of both groups. [67]

### **5.3 Fashion and lifestyle**

In the Sixties, the babyboomers' children grew up to the age of teenagers and they were large in number. They began to be seen as a large separate category to which certain businesses were targeting (for example the fashion industry, the music industry, certain newspapers or magazines). Music and fashion became the means of self-expression and certain defiance against older generations and various subcultures were experiencing an explosion. They occurred particularly among young men, women were rather avoiding to be publicly categorized. In October 1960, the end of compulsory conscription signified the further liberalisation which became apparent in men's haircuts, it was not necessary to cut them. The youths went straight from school to work (especially the working-class youths) at the age of fifteen and they preferred to spend money on fashion and leisure rather than apartments, houses or white goods. London became a symbol of the sixties, it was the largest city, where the media, job opportunities, cultural activities were centralized, tourists and immigrants gathered there and the city transformed these influences into new fashion. [68]

### **5.3.1 General women's fashion**

The Sixties retained some elements of the fifties, especially regarding older generations, for example Jackie Kennedy served as a torch bearer for clothing style for women. Nevertheless, new revolutionary elements were appearing, such as mini-skirts, which became a symbol of loosening of moral standards, and shift dresses with tights instead of stockings. Bright colours were still fashionable, now in geometrical patterns, also occurring in hairstyles. A major personality of women's fashion was designer Mary Quant, who had an immense influence, although she focused on wealthier young women. Her store 'The Bazaar' in London was renowned as well as the 'Biba Boutique' for less affluent. Regarding younger generations, the fashion models such as Twiggy of Jean Shrimpton were the examples of ideal woman. The unisex style also emerged in the late Sixties, men and women wore simple T-shirts and jeans, as the opposite of the fifties' fashion emphasizing the femininity. [69]

### **5.3.2 Men's fashion and the subcultures**

#### **5.3.2.1 Mods**

The expression 'Mod' originated from the word modern, the Mod style became dominant in the early Sixties. The Mods were partial to the elegant Italian style. They usually wore mohair suits with silk ties, tapered trousers and stripped blazers, using scooter as a means of transport. They were mostly young white-collar workers with sufficient financial resources, partying in the evenings in London clubs, occasionally taking amphetamine drugs called 'purple hearts'. Carnaby Street became the centre of their fashion and a place of their encounters. [70]

### **5.3.2.2 Rockers**

Rockers were working-class people, who got inspired by the American gang Hell's Angels. Their typical appearance consisted of narrow jeans and leather jackets and also a motorcycle was an integral part of their image. They encountered at gas stations and set off for rides. [71]

### **5.3.2.3 Skinheads**

Skinheads emerged among working-class youths in the late sixties; originally, they had cropped hair instead of familiar shaved heads, they wore braces, jeans and Dr. Martens boots. Although the Jamaican reggae music was popular among them, they were "involved in racist violence, as well as petty crime and acts of vandalism." [72] They also became infamous for hooliganism during football matches. [73]

### **5.3.3 Hippie movement**

This movement did not spread in Britain as much as in the United States, still it had adherents in both sexes. Although the Hippies were also challenging conventions and consumerism and they wanted to lead different lives, most of them continued working, as they could not afford to live otherwise. However, they were mostly middle-class people wearing typical flared trousers, floral shirts, kaftans and long hair as the opposite of the Mods. Hippies were also known for taking drugs, especially cannabis and LSD. [74]

### **5.3.4 The Beatles' influence on fashion**

Trendy fashion was of great importance for The Beatles; it was the integral part of their image imitated by their fans and also other musical groups. Their fashion style had modified in the course of the decade, but it was always innovatory and reflected the style of



emerging subcultures. In early Sixties, the band was posing as Rockers with their leather jackets, jeans and tall boots, later, on request of their manager, they replaced this style with tailored tweed collarless suits with ties and the 'Beatle haircut', the same style the Mods were wearing. Around 1968, having visited the country several times The Beatles became inspired by India, inclining to wear paisley pattern tunics and shirts, typical hippie clothes. Naturally every member dressed differently in privacy, Paul preferred the mod style, George was more attracted to the hippie style, but the three terms originated at that time on the basis of their characteristic image - the Beatle haircut, John Lennon glasses and the Beatle boots. [75]

The Beatles became favourable article and the most convenient time to commercialise them arrived before the Christmas period in 1963, when the band released their official brand. It was possible to buy things such as wigs, characteristic clothes, photographs, musical instruments or toys, any Beatles-themed item. The brand aroused tremendous interest in Britain, so it immediately expanded to the American market with a great success as well. [76]

### **5.3.5 Leisure activities**

After British sporting failures at the fifties' Olympics, sport tended to be more supported by the government in the Sixties as a significant component of the welfare state's program. In 1965, the Sport Council was established and large amounts of money were flowing there in order to restore the prestige of sport in Britain, as Prime Minister Harold Wilson said: "...sport was essential to Britain's economic and social development". [77]

Rugby, cricket and football remained major spectator sports in Britain, however, a large scale of other popular participatory sports remained popular, for example fishing, although the youths were not

engaged in them. The national sport of the United Kingdom – cricket was developing into an old fashioned game and also attendance of football matches considerably decreased during 16 years, from 41 million visitors to 28 million per year in 1964/5. [78] Nevertheless, football substantially benefited from television broadcasting for which cricket was not suitable with five-day match duration. Football matches were also growing into more frequent battleground for group violence. [79]

Apart from sport, other popular activities among the youths were listening and performing pop music, and watching TV, especially music channels; they also enjoyed dancing in music clubs. [80] Gardening and do-it-yourself were greatly popular with older generations; between 1950 and 1970, the number of gardens rose from 6 to 14 millions. Some goods previously affordable only for upper-class people were now affordable even for the lower classes - not just fashion, but also more frequent visits to restaurants or holidays abroad. Thanks to immigrants and closer links with Europe, new food or drinks, such as fruits, wine, or curry, penetrated to Britain for example from France, Italy, the Caribbean and Asia. [81]

## **6 SIXTIES' SOCIETY**

### **6.1 Changes in society**

In the course of the fifties a new social group emerged, separating adults and children – youths, who desired to distinguish themselves from their parents' generation. The generation gap had been widening due to the fact that young people could afford to spend money on self-fulfilment, they could afford to spend on technical innovations, fashionable clothes or cultural activities. [82] Young people's interest in religion had been gradually surpassed by the so-called "pleasure culture". [83] They were not constrained by rationing or saving as their parents and wanted to live for the moment. Religion, which was on increase after the war, in contrary experienced a steep fall in the Sixties, during five years the number of Anglican churchgoers decreased from 9.9 to 5.4 million. [84] It played a decreasing role in life, however, youths were discovering 'new' religious movements and influences from other parts of the world, such as Zen or Sufism. [85]

### **6.2 Status of women**

The laws passed by the government in the course of the Sixties contributed not only to loss of moral standard, but also to promotion of women's and minority rights, for instance the Abortion Act in 1967, Sexual Offences Act, Betting and Gambling Act 1960. [86] Women's position in society had been greatly changing since the World War II. Although domestic violence was still occurring in privacy, women became engaged in crucial family decisions about the number of children or wife's employment, formerly exclusive male issues. [87] In the Sixties, women began to fight for equal rights, inspired by the feminist movement in the United States.

The act of 1967, which allowed abortion through the NHS, signified a turning point for women, as they could make decisions about their own body and were not forced to use illegal and dangerous 'back-street abortion', which was usually performed by amateurs and often led to infertility or even death. [88] The Divorce Act from 1969 was another welcome change, which gave women better conditions for divorce; according to the former act, the conditions of divorce were highly favourable for divorce for men. At that time, women also succeeded in literature and music, for instance Margaret Drabble, the author of novels about women, and Cilla Black and The Supremes, who conquered music charts. Another important change for women was availability of the birth-control pill provided through the NHS, and the creation of the Family Planning Association. [89]

### **6.3 Homosexuality**

Male homosexuality had been considered a private issue, it was a criminal act until 1967, female homosexuality was not followed up at all. The Sexual Offences Act, approved in July 1967, decriminalized homosexuality only under specific conditions, namely between two men over 21 years in private. British society remained hostile to homosexuality as it was considered unnatural. A survey, conducted in 1969 by an English Anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer, stated that "...only 12 per cent of his sample [under-45s] displayed even a 'tolerant' attitude towards homosexuality, meanwhile 24 per cent expressed 'revulsion' and a further 22 per cent 'pity'." [90]

### **6.4 Sexual behaviour**

As it is difficult to measure any sexual behaviour, it can be compared only on the basis of surveys, according to which the rate of promiscuity in the Sixties did not rise dramatically. The sexual revolution, that took place in the sixties in the USA, did not reach such an extent in

Britain; it was more about the attitude towards sex. Reserve and shyness were slowly changing to a more open approach, also through literature and film. [91] According to the Gorer's surveys "...only 11 per cent of the unmarried population, usually young men, were even relatively promiscuous, having had three or more sexual partners." [92] It was also relevant to distinguish between the sexual behaviour of women and men; during the Sixties, men dominated the society and women were rather forced to be sexually willing, they were under the pressure of society. [93]

## **6.5 Drug use**

Liberalisation of society was one of the factors contributing to the expansion of drugs. The young generation favoured a hedonistic lifestyle, which was related to the use of recreational drugs. During the fifties, drug and alcohol use was most common among middle-aged people, especially elderly women taking antidepressants, sleeping pills, also amphetamines and heroin. In the Sixties, when drugs were spreading among youths, it was more about cannabis, because of its easy availability, and psychedelic drugs, particularly LSD. [94]

Recreational drug use became popular for the stimulating effect, therefore large number of artists (such as the Rolling Stones or The Beatles) were experimenting with drugs. The Beatles did not hide drug use and some traces could be found in their lyrics; for example, the song 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' whose lyrics reflected the psychedelic state of LSD ingestion although the band had not intended to do it [95], or the song 'Got to get you into my life' whose lyrics, as Paul McCartney said, referred to marijuana, which was personified in the role of a woman. [96] Jevgenij Brjun, drug expert, even claims that The Beatles are responsible for the mass popularization of drugs in the Sixties, because they served an example to the young generation.

[97] According to the estimates, in 1970, there were approximately 1-2 million cannabis users in Britain. [98]

## **6.6 'Classless' society**

Thanks to the economic situation and new 'white-collar job' opportunities, social mobility of working-class people was relatively rising. This fact is related to a new term 'classlessness', which appeared in the Sixties, as a representation of the atmosphere of 'Swinging London'. Besides the fact that it was possible for original working-class people to become celebrity (as David Bailey, Michael Caine or Elvis Presley), working-class began to be perceived in a different way, not only as a stereotype. Popular music itself also helped to remove boundaries between groups of youths, the rock music style, combining the elements of rock and roll, folk, jazz etc. offered something to everyone. [99]

## **6.7 Education**

The development in all education sectors played an important part in the growth of personal freedoms; in the primary education sector, the atmosphere became more relaxed with less formal clothing, putting greater emphasis on creativity. The selective system of eleven-plus exam was abolished after a long debate, and grammar schools were replaced by comprehensive schools. Universities were being expanded, some colleges gained a quasi-university status, some of them became a full university or entirely new universities originated, such as University of Sussex or University of York, characterized by a new design. The Open University specialised in distance learning was founded in 1969. [100]

## **6.8 Inventions and innovations**

During the sixties, technical inventions from various fields of interest were invented. Their importance was more relevant for the future decades, as they had not appeared on the market yet; in the computer

field, there appeared the first compact disk, the arpanet (the forerunner of the Internet), the first computer mouse, and also the first handheld calculator. Regarding the medicine sphere, silicone breast implants and artificial heart were invented. Considerable progress were achieved in space flights, in the early Sixties people reached the Earth orbit, and after a decade in 1969, the first human set foot on the moon. [101]

As regards the innovation in everyday life, in 1966, the Barclays issued the first credit card, which further supported spending habits; within one year, the sales on credit accounted for one tenth of the total expenditure. [102]

The Sixties are also a period of the so-called 'brutalist architecture' emphasizing simplicity and austerity strongly contrasting with massive lines of a building. This style also benefited from the natural contrast between the materials used – concrete and glass. This design could be seen on for example the Trellick Tower, the University of East Anglia, or the Centre Point in London. [103]

Despite the development of mass media, science, economy etc., for many people the Sixties did not represent a great change. These were mainly people living in small towns and rural areas far from the centre stage 'Swinging London'. Greater buying power and larger choice of goods were the only noticeable change. As a contrast to the emerging subcultures, numerous young people shared the same values as their parents, for example the number of marriages remained approximately the same. [104]

## **7 SIXTIES' POLITICS**

### **7.1 British political life**

In the 1964, the General election was held, where the Labour Party, led by Harold Wilson, won a narrow majority after 13 years of

the Conservative governance. [105] Wilson served as Prime Minister for two terms, between 1964 and 1970 and again from 1974 to 1976. His intention was to modernize British society by stressing the promotion of science; he emphasized his aims in his speech known as the 'White Heat of Technology', which was delivered at the Labour Party Annual Conference in October 1963: "...in all our plans for the future, we are re-defining and we are re-stating our Socialism in terms of the scientific revolution. But that revolution cannot become a reality unless we are prepared to make far-reaching changes in economic and social attitudes which permeate our whole system of society. The Britain that is going to be forged in the white heat of this revolution will be no place for restrictive practices or for outdated methods on either side of industry." [106] This program for prosperity and progress was labelled 'New Britain'. During his first term he introduced several significant liberalising laws, namely the Divorce Reform Act, the Sexual Offences Act, and the Abortion Act, which are mentioned above, then the Race Relations Act, Theatres Act, which abolished censorship, and the Murder Act, abolishing the death penalty. [107] Since the Labour Party won a narrow majority of only 4 seats, Wilson decided to call an election again in 1966 in order to gain larger majority. His Party succeeded beyond expectations and won the election with the majority of 97 seats. [108]

## **7.2 Immigration**

The issue of immigration was mainly a matter of working-class people; they were in daily contact with immigrants, unlike the upper-classes, which usually did not meet them in everyday life. Britain did not intend to limit the number of immigrants in order to maintain good relationships with its colonies, moreover, immigrants had valid British passports as full British subjects. Nevertheless, the number of immigrants was constantly growing. [109]



After the government had announced its intention to reduce the number of immigrants in early Sixties, a huge influx of immigrants of approximately 113,000 people arrived to Britain within a few months. The first 'Commonwealth Immigrants Act' entered into force in February 1962, and it limited the number of immigrants via special government vouchers; this step was supported by 90% of the British. [110]

In 1966, Wilson's government set up the first act dealing with the Discrimination of Immigrants – the 'Race Relations Act', which outlawed the public discrimination based on race. Two years later, the act was amended with the prohibition of discrimination in employment, housing or in commercial services. Conservative politician Enoch Powell responded to this by a controversial speech called by journalists the 'Rivers of Blood speech', in which he warned the British against the consequences of immigration: "We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descendent population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre." [111] This speech earned him tremendous support of three quarters of the population, yet he was immediately dismissed from his post in the Conservative Party. [112]

### **7.2.1 Trade unions**

Trade unions managed to make considerable pressure on the government and strikes were powerful and frequently used means to achieve their objectives. In the course of the Sixties, the number of stoppages remained constant, about approximately 2,300 stoppages per year, nevertheless, it was a relatively large number. [113] During his term, Harold Wilson was trying to fight against strikes and the power of trade unions; in 1969, he issued a report 'In place of Strife', which required for example a cooling-off period before the announcement of a strike,

however, the report did not become a law at that time, as trade unions were too powerful. One year later, in the general election of 1970, Wilson's Labour Party was defeated again by the Conservative Party. Although trade unions were successful in the fifties and sixties, it was during the seventies that they achieved the greatest power. [114]

### **7.2.2 Nationalist tensions**

During his governance, Wilson also had to deal with the growing nationalism in some parts of the United Kingdom, inspired by events in London and in the USA. Nationalist tensions were apparent particularly in Scotland, where the Scottish National Party had just gained historically first considerable support, and also in the Northern Ireland, where the social conflict between the 'original Irish Catholic minority' and the 'original British Protestants' escalated into dangerous extent, because of their discrimination in jobs, (Catholic unemployment rate was three times higher) or in politics (Protestants were using unequal electoral practice called gerrymandering to restrict the Catholic influence). [115] In 1969, several street battles broke out in Belfast and Londonderry and British troops were called into those areas. The conflict eventually resulted in a demonstration in 1972, in which British soldiers killed 13 Catholics by shooting into crowd. [116]

## **7.3 Britain's position on the international political scene**

### **7.3.1 Commonwealth of Nations**

The Sixties represented the ongoing decolonisation, the most British colonies had become independent between 1960 and 1965, for example Kenya, Nigeria, Republic of South Africa or Uganda. In these new states, numerous unrests broke out related to the new political order of the country, or to the border demarcation, such as between India and Pakistan. Nevertheless, despite the declaration of independence,

the newly established states remained in the Commonwealth. In 1970, the Commonwealth of Nations consisted of 30 members. [117]

### **7.3.2 Relations with the USA**

The American support was essential for the British, not only in terms of foreign affairs, but also the stability of the currency; in addition, Britain was still repaying the money received from the Marshall Plan. The United States, however, demanded in return the British support for the Vietnam War, which was not reciprocated, according to surveys, two thirds of the British disapproved of the War. Thus, Wilson undertook to help the United States, however, he refused to send military forces to Vietnam and was trying to achieve peace. As a reaction to the British support for the Vietnam War and the involvement of Britain in the Nigerian conflict, John Lennon decided to return his Order of the British Empire. [118]

Britain stayed in a close relationship with the United States, not only political but also social. Thanks to mass media, music, movies and also ideas were flowing between Britain and America. The movements, emerging in the Sixties in America (whether it was the feminist movement, the Civil Rights Movement or the hippie movement) had inspired and encouraged similar movement in Britain and mainly the youth culture. Since their mass media were interconnected, Britain was also struck by the assassination of American President J. F. Kennedy and a memorial was built in Runnymede. [119]

### **7.3.3 European Economic Community**

The European common market had become more attractive for Britain than the Commonwealth markets, and its interest in joining the European Economic Community was growing. In addition, the United States was supporting Britain in joining the EEC as an opportunity to strengthen the border between the United States and Communism.

In 1963, Britain first applied for accession to the EEC, but the accession was vetoed French President Charles de Gaulle because the British interests did not correspond with the EEC ones and he was also worried about the tight cooperation with Americans. In 1967, Britain applied for accession for the second time and it was rejected again. Britain finally joined the EEC in 1973, despite contradictory opinions of British society. In the mid-sixties, the support of the accession to the EEC prevailed, but the support was descending until 1975, when Britain was considering secession from the EEC. [120]

## 8 SURVEY

This survey was implemented in order to find the impact of the musical group The Beatles on different generations. It was based on a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions aimed at music in general and The Beatles in detail. The survey involved 132 people of different age and different interests and it was conducted particularly through an online questionnaire.

The respondents came mainly from the Czech Republic; however, the survey included respondents from other European countries, such as Spain, France, Italy, and also non-European countries, such as Mexico, Madagascar or Senegal. The age range went from 8 to 82 years but the survey was focused more on younger generations so the average age of a respondent was 26.5 years and the median value was 22. The respondents were not aware of the topic in order not to influence their answers.

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire consisted of 10 questions. First three questions were posed in order to establish how the respondent is familiar with music in general. At the survey it was important to address respondents of various interests. The fourth question was discovering the familiarity with the contemporary international music scene. The survey illustrated that the majority of the respondents often listen to music, however they do not play a musical instrument, and they are not considerably familiar with the contemporary music scene or the history of music.

In question number five the respondents were asked to enumerate musicians or musical groups performing in the Sixties, if they were capable of doing so. The result was remarkable: three fourths out of 64% of the respondents, who wrote down the answer, mentioned The Beatles, in figures it means 62 respondents out of 84. In the sixth question, when they were asked specifically about The Beatles, only 1% of respondents

stated that they had not heard about this band before. The second most frequently mentioned band was the Rolling Stones with thirty mentions, and then Elvis Presley who was mentioned twenty times. Some of the respondents had been mistaken and wrote down popular musical groups from the seventies.

The subsequent three questions went into more detail. In the seventh question, the respondents were asked about The Beatles members' number and names; almost 75% of the respondents mentioned at least one band's member, mostly John Lennon. The following questions studied the knowledge of The Beatles' songs, and again more than 75% were capable to remember at least one; the best remembered songs were Yesterday, Let It Be and Hey Jude. Yesterday was also the most cited song in the ninth question, which concerned a short extract from the lyrics of any of their songs. The last question concentrated on popularity of The Beatles' music.

The objective of this survey was to examine the extent of popularity of The Beatles at the present time, especially among young people, and the questionnaire affirmed a wide-ranging fame of The Beatles, although 84% of the respondents did not have the first-hand experience of the band. The survey aroused positive feedback, most frequently in people of the age category between 46 and 55 years; completed questionnaires were accompanied by emails with their personal memories connected to this topic. For the survey questionnaire, see Appendix 1.

## 9 CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis deals with the changes in British society during approximately one decade which significantly transformed Britain. It needs to be emphasized that society is constantly evolving. Nevertheless, the late fifties foreshadowed the exceptional nature of the Sixties, which lay in the rapidity and in the extensiveness of the change.

This change was supported by several new phenomena, societal, cultural and political. During this period Britain lost the status of colonial power and it also definitively lost the status of world power, which was then partially regained in the cultural field. The development of technology played a significant role in the Sixties when enabled the interconnection of the world through mass media. Mass media were not directly responsible for the changes in society, but the speed of provision of information and the extent attributed to the evolution of natural human desire for new things and played the major role in acceleration of the transforming process.

New technologies and economic development also enabled the growth of generational differences between the young and adults and this gap deepened due to the effect of mass media. Society began to loosen personal freedoms, which was reflected in new attitudes in politics, obviously it had been being prepared some time before, but the Sixties accelerated it. However, the faster the change came, the harder it was to deal with some aspects, such as immigration or drug use.

The objective of this thesis was to demonstrate an irreplaceable role of the musical group The Beatles for the formation of the Sixties' society and its direct effect on culture. Originally it was assumed that The Beatles gave rise to something completely new; however, during the research it was found that the band was more likely to benefit from being in the right place at the right time and that it popularized already

existing ideas; this can be demonstrated by fashion or their music. The Beatles did not invent a new style, however, their influence especially on younger generations could not be denied.

The topic of the thesis has been selected for its far-reaching impact exceeding the subsequent decades, constantly, new books or magazine articles are being published (as for example the book *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics* published in 2013) about the band which broke up 44 years ago. The far-reaching impact has been proved in the last chapter; the results of the survey, which dealt with the knowledge of this band, were unexpected, in view of the fact that it was focused on the generation of people in their twenties, far less knowledge of this musical band had been assumed.

To conclude, it is necessary to point out the fact that a large number of events took place in the course of the Sixties, so it is not possible to cover all of them in the thesis. This bachelor thesis outlines the most significant ones from the perspective of British society.



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## 12 ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis is to outline the significant events and changes in society in the course of the Sixties in the United Kingdom and to describe the effect of the musical group The Beatles on this period. The thesis is divided into seven chapters which focus on the period before the Sixties and the Sixties itself.

The first and second chapters provide information on political and societal situation before the Sixties and capture emerging changes in society. The chapters discuss the fifties in general, but focus mainly on the areas in which the changes were later evident, such as fashion or the issue of immigration.

The following two chapters focus on the group The Beatles, specifically on the formation, the expansion and the fan frenzy which broke out in Britain. These chapters also describe common lifestyle, especially of young Brits, and the impact of this musical group on its formation.

The fifth chapter deals with the liberalization of society and the release of personal freedoms. It pursues the significant changes in the Sixties' society, such as the status of women or the decriminalisation of homosexuality. The following chapter discusses the changes introduced by the British government and political affairs of Great Britain.

The last chapter concerns a survey that has been conducted to determine the public awareness of the musical group The Beatles. The survey results are enclosed as the Appendix 1.

## 13 RESUMÉ

Cílem této práce je nastínit významné události a změny ve společnosti v průběhu šedesátých let ve Velké Británii a popsat vliv hudební skupiny The Beatles na toto období. Práce je strukturována do sedmi kapitol zaměřených na období před šedesátými lety a na šedesátá léta.

První a druhá kapitola podávají informace o politické a společenské situaci před šedesátými léty a zachycují počínající změny ve společnosti. Kapitoly pojednávají o padesátých letech obecně, nicméně soustřeďují se zejména na oblasti, ve kterých byly pozdější změny patrné, jako například móda nebo problém imigrace.

Následující dvě kapitoly se soustředí na skupinu The Beatles, konkrétně na její vznik, působení a fanouškovské šílenství, které vyvolala v Británii a v USA. Cílem těchto kapitol je také popsat běžný životní styl zejména mladých Britů a vliv této hudební skupiny na jeho utváření.

Pátá kapitola se věnuje liberalizaci společnosti a uvolnění osobních svobod. Zabývá se významnými změnami ve společnosti, ke kterým během šedesátých let došlo, například postavení žen ve společnosti nebo dekriminálníci homosexuality. Následující kapitola pojednává o změnách uvedených Britskou vládou a o politických záležitostech Velké Británie.

Poslední kapitola se týká výzkumu, který byl proveden za účelem zjištění povědomí veřejnosti, zejména mladší generace, o skupině The Beatles. Výsledky výzkumu jsou přiloženy k práci jako Příloha 1.



## 14 APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Questionnaire

##### Sex

- Male
- Female

##### Age

##### Nationality

#### 1) Are you interested in music?

- My occupation is music
- I often listen to music
- Music is of peripheral importance to me
- I am not interested in music

#### 2) Can you play any musical instrument?

- I am very good at it, I attended a music school
- Fairly well, I attended a music school
- Yes, I am self-taught
- I do not play any musical instrument

#### 3) Do you have some general knowledge of the history of music?

- Yes, I have
- My knowledge is limited
- No, I do not

#### 4) Are you familiar with the contemporary international music scene?

- Yes, I am
- I know only the most popular personalities
- I have no idea

#### 5) Can you think of a musician or a band from the Sixties?

If yes, please write it down

**6) Have you ever heard of the musical group The Beatles?**

If not, please, do not answer the following questions 7-10

- Yes, I know them very well
- Yes, I have heard about them
- No, never

**7) How many members did the band have? Can you name them? (at least their first names)**

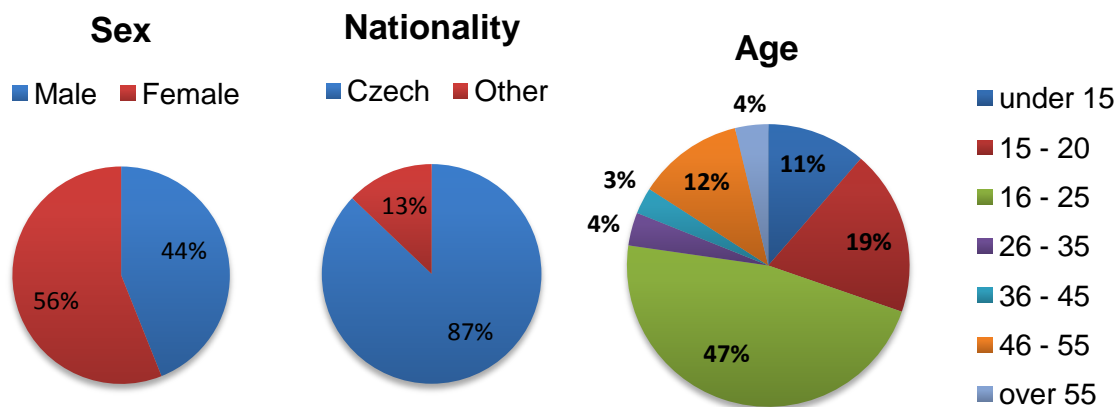
**8) Can you remember a name of some song by The Beatles?**

You can write down more than one

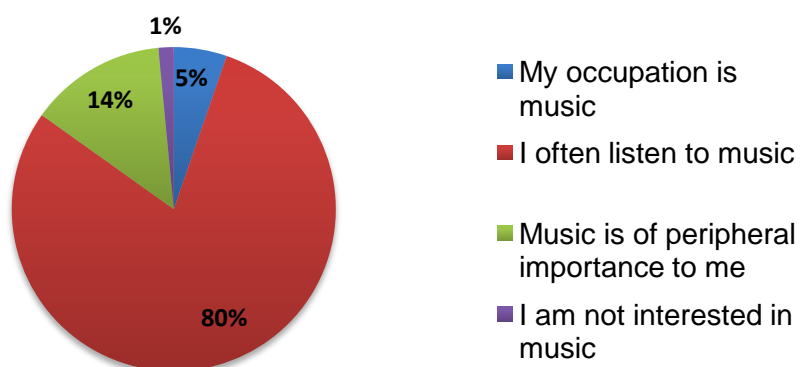
**9) Can you cite a part of the text of some of their song?****10) Do you like the music of The Beatles?**

- Yes, I do
- I have nothing against their music
- I do not like this music

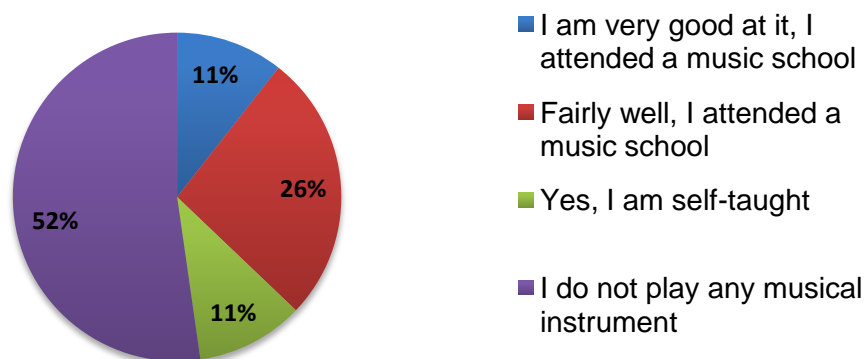
## Answers



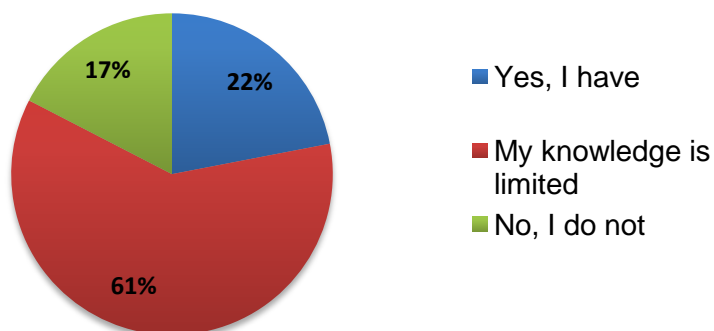
### 1) Are you interested in music?



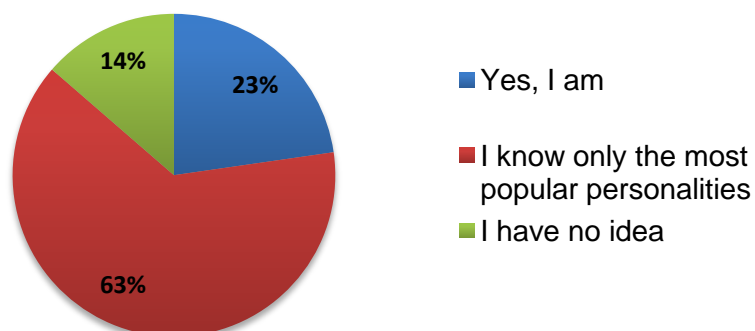
### 2) Can you play any musical instrument?



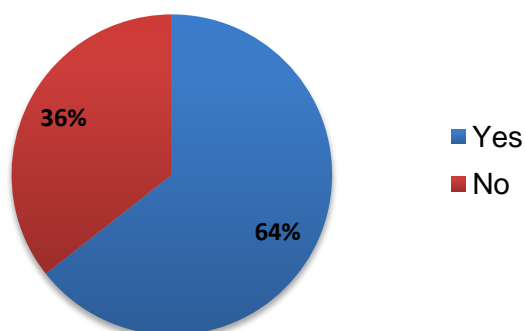
**3) Do you have some general knowledge of the history of music?**



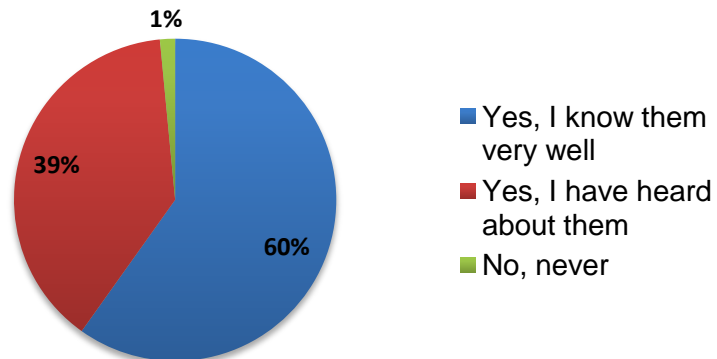
**4) Are you familiar with the contemporary international music scene?**



**5) Can you think of a musician or a band from the Sixties?**  
(open-ended question)

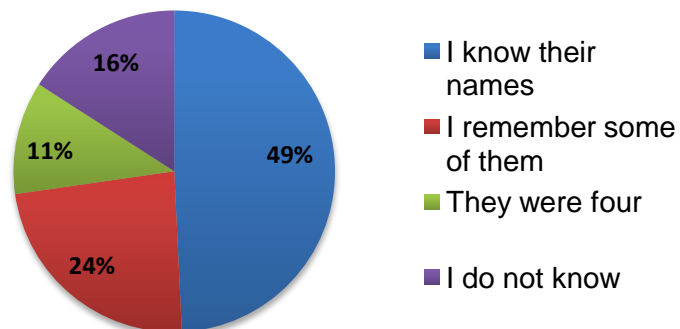


**6) Have you ever heard of the musical group The Beatles?**



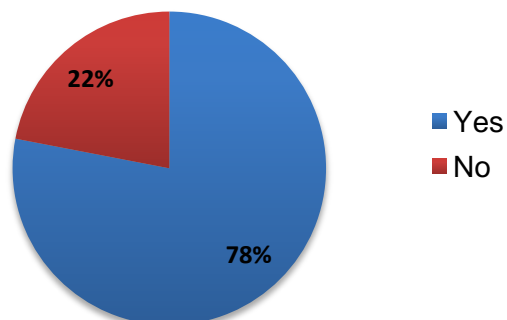
**7) How many members did the band have? Can you name them?**

(at least their first names, open-ended question)

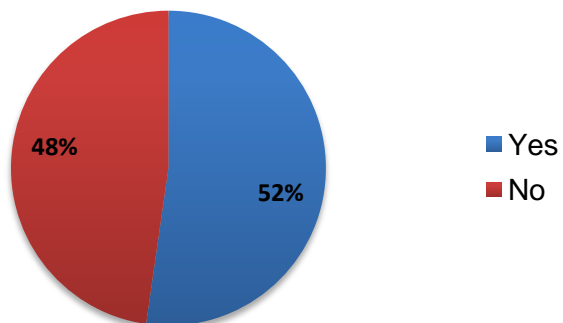


**8) Can you remember a name of some song by The Beatles?**

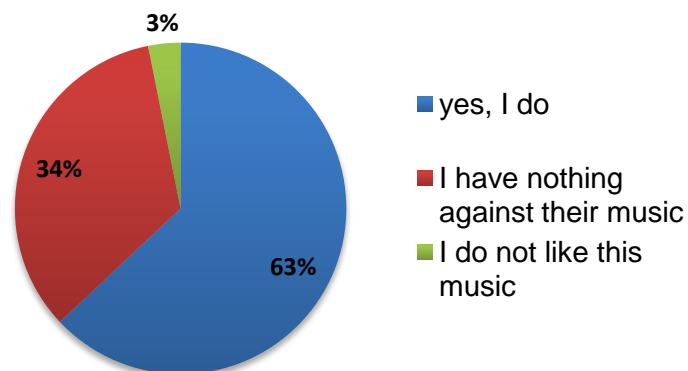
(open-ended question)



**9) Can you cite a part of the text of some of their song?**  
(open-ended question)



**10) Do you like the music of The Beatles?**



## Appendix 2

From: Impact of Beatlemania (see Bibliography)

**Letter from the British Embassy in Prague to the Northern  
Department of the Foreign Office in London, May 1964  
(FO 371/177493)**

### Transcript

RESTRICTED  
BRITISH EMBASSY  
PRAGUE.  
May 13, 1964.

My dear Nason,

It affords us some amusement to record that Prague also suffers from the equivalent of Beatlemania. The local variety goes under the name of "Big Beat" and its enthusiasts are apparently moved by it to spontaneous breaches of the peace in much the same way as their Western contemporaries. There are hundreds of professional and amateur bands throughout the country. More than 20 theoretical articles on the origin of Big Beat and its musical and social aspects have appeared in musical publications since the vogue started last year. Guitars have become virtually unobtainable in the shops. It has been legitimised much earlier than the Twist, which was only endorsed and taught by the Party Youth Clubs in the winter season 1962/3 when it had already passed its peak in the West.

2. Večerní Praha of May 7 reports, in horrified indignation, disturbances occasioned at a "Big Beat" band contest in the City Congress Hall the previous evening. According to the paper, after the police had cleared the hall of "the noisy and riotous section" of the audience "young hoodlums roamed the streets, molesting people and provoking brawls"; five "rioters" were arrested as a result. The parade of winners, due to be held in the Park of Culture on May 10 was summarily cancelled.

3. Večerní Praha comments that "there is nothing against Big Beat as such, as long as the standards of decency are preserved". It is a little

ironic that the contest which led to the disturbances should have been a part of a nationwide competition "youth and the Creative Arts" organised by the Union of Czechoslovak Youth. But perhaps the chief point of interest is that the reactions of teen-age groups to jazz music here, in spite of the supposed superiority of a socialist education, should be so similar to those in other West European countries.

Yours sincerely  
Roger Hervey

(R. B. R. Hervey)

J. P. Nason, Esq.,  
Northern Department, Foreign Office,  
London, S.W.1.  
RESTRICTED



### Appendix 3

From: ALDRIGE, Alan. *Beatles v písních a obrazech* (see Bibliography)

#### Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds lyrics

mentioned on page 39

Picture yourself on a boat in a river,  
With tangerine trees and marmalade skies  
Somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly,  
a girl with kaleidoscope eyes.

Cellophane flowers of yellow and green,  
towering over your head

Look for the girl with the sun in her eyes,  
and she's gone.

Lucy in the sky with diamonds,  
Follow her down to a bridge by a fountain  
where rocking horse people eat marshmallow pies,  
everyone smiles as you drift past the flowers,  
that grow so incredibly high.

Newspaper taxis appear on the shore,  
waiting to take you away.

Climb in the back with your head in the clouds,  
and you're gone.

Lucy in the sky with diamonds,  
Picture yourself on a train in a station,  
with plasticine porters with looking glass ties,  
suddenly someone is there at the turnstile,  
the girl with kaleidoscope eyes.

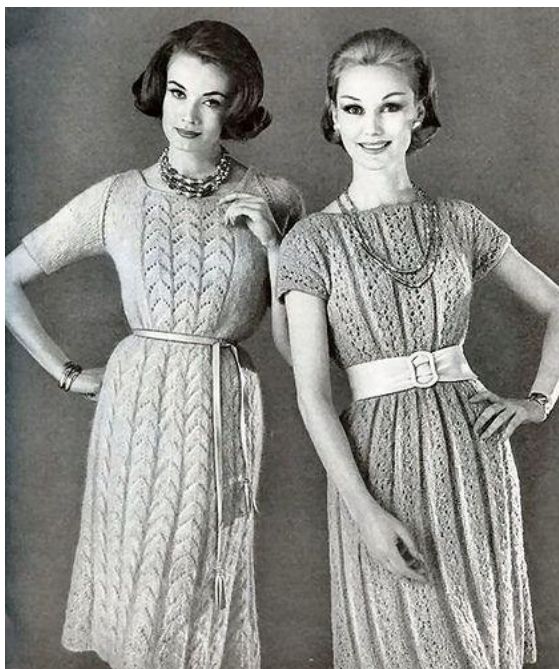
Lucy in the sky with diamonds.

## Appendix 4

From: TOMÁŠKOVÁ, Zuzana. Fashion of the 50s and the 60s (see Bibliography)

### Photographs

Picture 1: Women's fashion of the 50s



Picture 2: Men's fashion of the 50s



Picture 3: Teddy Boys



Picture 4: Women's fashion of the 60s



Picture 5: Rockers



Picture 6: Mods



Picture 7: Hippies



Picture 8: The Beatles as Rockers



Picture 9: The Beatles as Mods



Picture 10: The Beatles as Hippies

