

Stop! Look! Listen!

# Projecting a Modern Britain: Music and Fashion

## Beatles (1st item), London Line No.2

Director: Jim Allen

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Relations Office

Producer: John Hall

Production Company: Keith Ord Productions Ltd

Presenters: S. Hamilton, June Imray

1964, 3 mins

## Pull Away Dress/Gerry and the Pacemakers (two final items), London Line (Colour series 1) No.1

Director: Peter Yolland

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office

Producer: John Hall

Programme Editor: Adam Leys

Camera: Peter Thierry

Sound: Mike Barton

Writer/Researcher: Margaret O'Donald

Presenters: Carol Binstead, Howard Williams

1966, 5 mins

## Kingston College of Art (5th item of 6), Roundabout No.43

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office

Production Company: Associated British Pathe

Commentary: Brian Cobby

1965, 3 mins

## Nova – Amusement Arcade Story (2nd item of 4), London Line No.5 (Colour series 1)

Director: Peter Yolland

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office

Producer: John Hall

Programme Editor: Adam Leys

Camera: Peter Thierry

Sound: Mike Barton

Writer/Researcher: Margaret O'Donald

Presenters: Carol Binstead, Molly Parkin

1966, 3 mins

## Mermaid Theatre fashion (final item), Calendar No.214

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office

Commentary: Leonard Martin

1967, 3 mins

## Billy Fury (1st item), New Year Party, London Line No.218 (African version)

Director: Eric Beecroft

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Producer: Janice Willett

Programme Editor: Renee Serlin

Film Unit: Al Films

This evening's programme will be introduced by Linda Kaye, BUFVC.

The general perception that the Central Office of Information (COI) failed to make any films of significance after the demise of the Crown Film Unit in 1952, preoccupying itself instead with public information films designed to show how dangerous living in Britain might be, could not be further from the truth. In the 1960s the COI made thousands of short films with the sole purpose of projecting a modern Britain onto the large, and increasing number of small screens throughout the world. Although millions of people across the globe saw these films about Britain, they were never shown here. Tonight's programme on music and fashion brings to a close the series *Projecting a Modern Britain*, which has explored different aspects of this contemporary image and perhaps more importantly has served to bring these films back home to the people that paid for them.

By the late 1950s the concept of 'projecting Britain', first articulated by Stephen Tallents in 1932, was a fundamental part of the government's overseas communication policy. The opinion of the world, particularly post-Suez, now mattered and mass communications were seen as the primary means of influencing it. The form that particularly suited this subtle assault via national television stations and cinemas of the world was rooted in the cinemagazine, a popular staple of the cinema programme in Britain since the arrival of *Pathe Pictorial* in 1918. Government information officers specifically identified the magazine format, adopted by these short film series to present topical material, as a means of informing millions of people from Latin America to South East Asia about a progressive Britain. It enabled government propaganda to be communicated as entertainment and more importantly, as a series, they were shown on a regular basis, thus operating as a visual drip-feed promoting Britain across the globe.

This programme draws substantially from several major series produced by the COI during this period; *Calendar* (1959-1968), *London Line* (1964-1978), *London Line (Colour series 2)* (1967-1969), *The Pacemakers* (1969-1971) and *Roundabout* (1963-1974), all of which increasingly drew on popular culture, particularly music and fashion to portray a modern Britain. The distribution of these series was extensive with many, such as *Roundabout* and *London Line*, produced in a variety of different language versions with much of the content specifically tailored for the audience. *London Line*, for example, was made in colour (after 1966) for the United States, Canada and Australia and in black and white for sub Sahara Africa in English, classical Arabic, Latin American Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese. In *Roundabout*, which was produced specifically for South and South East Asia, visitors from say Pakistan and Sarawak were often featured to help the audience identify more readily with it. With the African version of *London Line* the presenters, 'African Correspondents Reporting From London', performed this function, with many, John Bankole-Jones and Israel Wamala for example, becoming popular figures in countries such as Uganda and Kenya. The exception here is *The Pacemakers* in which the subjects of the film, in this case Barbara Hulanicki and Mickie Most, would often present their views and opinions direct to the camera.

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Presenters: John Bankole-Jones, Margaret Busby, Glenna Filo, Israel Wamala  
1969, 6 mins

**Children's Fashion (3rd item), London Line (Colour series 2) No.51**

Director: Robert Morgan (Bob)  
Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office  
Producer: Adam Leys  
Camera: Peter Thierry  
Sound: Phil Jay  
Presenters: Marion Foster, Margaret O'Donald, Michael Smee  
1968, 3 mins

**Kellie Wilson Wears Chain-Store (2nd item), London Line (Colour series 2) No.75**

Director: Mark Lawton  
Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Producer: Adam Leys  
Camera: Peter Thierry  
Sound: Chris Wilden  
Presenters: Ian Morrison  
1969, 4 mins

**A New Sound – A New Sensation (final item), London Line (Colour series No.2) No.2**

Director: Peter Yolland  
Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office  
Producer: Adam Leys  
Camera: Peter Thierry  
Sound: Mike Barton  
Presenters: Ian Morrison  
1968, 3 mins

**For the Gypsy in Your Soul (extract – 2nd item of 4), London Line (Colour series 2) No.48**

Director: Robert Morgan (Bob)  
Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office  
Producer: Adam Leys  
Camera: Peter Thierry  
Sound: Chris Wilden  
Presenters: Margaret O'Donald  
1968, 5 mins

**Roy Harper (final item), London Line No.213 (African version)**

Director: Eric Beecroft  
Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office  
Producer: Janice Willett  
Programme Editor: David Lytton  
Camera: Peter Thierry  
Sound: Chris Wilden  
Researcher/Writer: Ruth Steele  
Presenter: John Bankole-Jones  
1968, 4 mins

**Biba, The Pacemakers No.11**

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Producer: Adam Leys  
c1970, 14 mins

Tonight's programme is compiled from a number of extracts from these series and moves chronologically between live performance and specific items on fashion. It begins with an item from one of the earliest editions of *London Line* focusing on the dollar earning success of the Beatle's records in 1964. In the first colour edition of *London Line* the novelty of a knitted dress that can be transformed into a jumper by pulling a single thread is demonstrated on model Pat Wellington, followed by Gerry and the Pacemakers singing 'Girl on a Swing', one of many live performances recorded at the Granville Studios in Fulham for inclusion in the series. The next item from *Roundabout* focuses on students studying fashion at Kingston College of Art, finishing with an informal show of their creations which, in the words of the commentator, are 'as modern as tomorrow'.

The first few colour editions of *London Line* released in 1966 featured a regular slot on the current styles and trends introduced by Molly Parkin, fashion editor of *Nova* magazine. In this film she focuses on affordable jewellery for teenagers with an array of geometric plastic and silver rings, all of which should be worn together. The Mermaid Theatre hosts a fashion show by new designer Tina Camperes in a rare colour *Calendar* item from 1967 followed by Billy Fury rushing to catch a London river boat to sing 'Phonebox' as part of *London Line*'s New Year celebrations on the Thames. The studio is transformed into a playground as a group of children demonstrate their Spacehopper skills and reveal the latest fashion for the under-tens '...gorgeous clothes – frills, ribbons, rainbow colours – real grown-up fashion brought down to small sizes'.

Marks & Spencer is the subject of the next item from *London Line* with American model Kellie Wilson showing us why she loves their clothes and how we should wear them. Procol Harum sport the entire colour spectrum for their performance of 'Homburg' proving more than a match for the vibrant gypsy styles described in *For the Gypsy in your Soul*, a title more akin to the subject of the next item, Roy Harper. Here, in a rare live performance from 1968, he sings 'Last Day in April'. In *Biba*, Barbara Hulanicki and Stephen Fitz-Simon talk about the day-to-day operation of their new Kensington store and their unique approach to selling clothes in *The Pacemakers*. Sounds Incorporated then transform the *London Line* studio into a disco for 'How Do You Feel' and finally we see record producer Mickie Most at work in the Olympic Studios with Joe Jammer in 1970.

Linda Kaye Senior Researcher 'Cinemagazines and the Projection of Britain', BUFVC.

The research for this programme was conducted as part of 'Cinemagazines and the Projection of Britain', funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council at the British Universities Film & Video Council. [www.bufvc.ac.uk/cinemagazines](http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/cinemagazines)

**How Do You Feel – Sounds Incorporated (2nd item of 3), London Line No.201 (African version)**

Director: Eric Beecroft  
Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs Office  
Producer: Janice Willett  
Programme Editor: Renee Serlin  
Camera: Peter Thierry  
Sound: Phil Jay  
Researcher/Writer: Ruth Steele  
Presenters: John Bankole-Jones, Glenna Filo, Israel Wamala  
1968, 2 mins

**Mickie Most, The Pacemakers No.23**

Production: Central Office of Information for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Producer: Adam Leys  
1970, 14 mins



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