

**STRANDS OF THE SIXTIES**  
**A Cultural Analysis of the Design and Consumption**  
**Of the New London West End Hair Salons c. 1954-1975**

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## Abstract

This thesis is a study of the under-researched subject of British hairdressing, focussing on the growth of London's West End hair salons from 1954 to 1975. It challenges dominant historical accounts that have focussed on Paris and examines developments in London, leading to its centrality as a centre for hairdressing creativity in the 1960s. It culturally contextualises these shifts in the consumption of hair dressing in Britain from 1954 to 1975 by analysing the leading trade paper, the *Hairdressers' Journal* signalling how salon design and management, and hair dressing's fashionable consumption during this era related to wider socio-economic and cultural developments.

This study is divided into four chapters. Chapter One examines the emergence of the public ladies' hair salon in the late nineteenth century and the developments in its interior design up to 1950s evaluating the hair salon as a gendered public space in Mayfair, the heart of elite West End hairdressing. Chapter Two explains why Mayfair became established as a place of luxury and elitism and how this was manifest in the style of the salons and hairdressing performed there and through its perception as such in British provinces. Chapter Three identifies the major innovations in cutting and colouring techniques which elevated London to its position as a world leader in these practices. Furthermore, Black hairdressing and its professionalization as a result of mass-immigration, is analysed. Chapter Four investigates why smaller, intimate spaces including hair salons attracted fashionable youth audiences and it examines the salon's suitability as economically viable entrepreneurial space aimed at young consumers. It contends that economic changes coupled with more informal social attitudes led to the formation of unisex salons.

My conclusion argues that these developments in British hairdressing and hair salon design from 1954 to 1975 evidence an important transitional moment in hairdressing history and in its consumption. It maintains that while West End hairdressing was an elite part of the national hairdressing trade in Britain, nevertheless, it was keenly responsive to broader socio-cultural and economic changes, which directed and shaped its practices and consumption patterns and its international standing.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is original and the result of my own work and investigation, and that it has not been previously submitted for any degree. All sources used are acknowledged through the proper referencing procedure and listed in the bibliography.

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## Abbreviations

FHA	Fellowship of Hairdressing Associates.
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Hairdressers' Journal</i> (used for in-text citation).
<i>HJi</i>	<i>Hairdressers' Journal International</i> . For the sake of brevity, it has been abbreviated to ' <i>HJi</i> ' for in-text citation. This is the online version of the <i>Hairdressers' Journal</i> and I have followed their logo for guidance.
<i>HWJ</i>	<i>Hairdressers' Weekly Journal</i> (used for in-text citation).
HRC	Hairdressers' Registration Council.
ICD	<i>Internationale des Coiffeurs de Dames</i> which eventually became contracted to <i>Intercoiffure</i> .
' <i>Journal</i> '	For ease and flow of discussion, <i>The Hairdresser's Weekly Journal</i> and the <i>Hairdressers' Journal</i> may be shortened to 'the ' <i>Journal</i> '.
NHF	National Hairdressing Federation.
<i>Syndicat</i>	<i>Le Syndicat de la Haute Coiffeurs</i> . Again to facilitate flow of discussion, this may be shortened to ' <i>Syndicat</i> '.
'The Craft'	This is a term frequently used by the <i>Hairdresser's Journal</i> to indicate and cover all aspects of hairdressing and hairdressers, barbers, hairdressing organisations, etc.
'The Trade'	This is often used by the <i>Hairdressers' Journal</i> to indicate the wider hairdressing community and would probably include organisations such as wholesale suppliers, product manufacturers, etc.

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## **Dedication**

To all the unsung heroes of hairdressing but especially to the late Joshua Galvin, ‘the hairdressers’ hairdresser’.

# Introduction

## Aims of the Thesis

This thesis examines the development of women's hairdressing in Britain from around 1954 to 1975, with a particular focus on London's West End. My reason for concentrating on the culture of hairdressing in London in this period is that within the comprehensive literature that addresses the London fashion scene and society in the 1960s, there is little sustained examination of women's hairdressing. As a distinctive element within fashionable consumption during an era when British fashion itself was undergoing a revolution, it is my claim that hairdressing needs to be given greater prominence. The history of hair as part of the history of fashion was key, as today, to achieving a desired fashionable look. In the available literature, despite some notable exceptions, hairdressing and hair itself has largely been marginalised in importance and there has been little sustained historical examination of the development of salon culture in Britain during these years or any detailed analysis of the infrastructural changes in the approach to and dissemination of knowledge about hair styling. For this reason, my thesis proposes to examine the developments in women's hairdressing through a detailed consideration of how such changes are registered, disseminated and discussed in the leading British trade journal, the *Hairdressers' Journal*.

Furthermore, my research proposes to look at the ways in which the West End commercial salons were re-organised and relocated to respond to these altering demands by women for fashionable haircuts and to commercial imperatives. Beyond this, I believe that these changes were socially and culturally motivated and need to be framed within broader socio-cultural trends and as such my analysis will offer an alternative account of the period in opposition to many of those currently available. It

will, in my title's terms produce a different 'strand of the Sixties' by engaging with an under-examined form of fashionable consumption in the Sixties that demands to be seen as more central and important to the development of women's identity as modern consumers of fashion.

The Sixties in hair has been chiefly remembered through the centrality and not inconsiderable achievements of one man, Vidal Sassoon and whilst Sassoon was a pioneer in many ways, this lionisation has served to occlude the achievements of his predecessors and overshadow the efforts of his contemporaries. Sassoon's dominance in the literature has intensified with the passage of time and this is an aspect which my thesis hopes to re-examine and revise. While hair was not exactly excluded from mainstream fashion history, hairdressers have rarely been accredited with the important role that they played in refashioning women's identity and signalling their self-conscious modernity. Many hairdressers, from the studied accounts, did not feel as if they were considered as an integral part of London's fashion community (in the way that couturiers and milliners were). This thesis aims to clarify how this understated self-perception and professional marginalisation in historical annals came about and to offer ways through an examination of the *Hairdressers' Journal*, salon archives and hairdressers' interviews, of producing a more balanced narrative. My intended overall aim in these respects is not merely a reappraisal, but to foster a broader cultural understanding of West End hairdressing culture at this chronological juncture and provide a fuller analytical account of hairdressing and salon culture's historical context in Britain, to establish a basis for future investigation. Additionally, I will demonstrate that although London's West End constitutes in many ways a distinctive social and geographical case study, it can be seen to invoke a combination of shared factors that eventually brought more elitist forms of hairdressing much

closer to the rest of the country. To study the West End hair salons, their commercial imperatives and cultural context is revealing in that it mirrors broader shifts in wider British society, and as a result, demonstrates that what was once an exclusive culture gradually became more egalitarian.

This period represents an exciting phase for British hairdressing and it has been selected precisely for this reason. After a period of post-war austerity when war-time rationing had curbed production and limited fashionable consumption in almost all areas of daily life, the United Kingdom entered into a period of peace and ever increasing prosperity. The gradual disappearance of rationing overlapped with greater affluence marks the beginning of my period of study in 1954 when many hairdressers found it within their means to make improvements to their salons and to confidently build up their businesses. For most West End hairdressers this increased prosperity and investment came in the form of expansion into the provinces. Furthermore demographic growth and the expanding number of ‘baby boomers’, the result of the post-war bulge of a new generation, impacted on society in such a way as to revolutionise many areas of life. The growth of youth culture and these liberal changes were especially prevalent in the arts, fashion, music, and education, and they registered in their altered approaches to society and socio-political matters. Whilst this thesis engages with such trends and contexts, it is not meant as a general history of the Sixties since many already exist. Rather, my intention is to investigate how this ‘new order’ had a definite effect on hairdressing, particularly in London’s West End and how this updated approach to hair and hair design was disseminated across Britain and even to the rest of the world, as a sign of Britain’s fashionable modernity.

While there were many changes to men’s hairdressing during this period, my primary focus is upon women’s hairdressing and on hair salons devoted to women as

their main customers and consumers. Only with the advent of unisex salons in late 1960s-1970s towards the end of this thesis, do I include, as appropriate, some discussion of men's hairdressing. My focus on women's hairdressing is premised on a number of beliefs. Firstly, that at this time women's hairdressing was innovative both in hair styling and in its salon interior design. Secondly, that women's consumption of hairdressing as a fashionable form of conspicuous consumption was more established, extensive and commonplace than men's. Historically and in setting the precedence of hairdressing before the Sixties, my account emphasises the elite culture of white women's experiences of high-class hairdressing and its production chiefly in Mayfair. While I use examples of suburban and provincial hairdressing to provide secondary comparisons and I refer to the development of hairdressing salons for black women, these examples are included to contextualise the points being made about West End, particularly Mayfair hair salon developments, which due to historical and socio-economic factors were largely consumed by white women.

I am also aware of the issues of typicality in the selection of London's West End as my case study. As the *Hairdressers' Journal* was keen to point out, Mayfair was only a very small part of 'the Trade' and unrepresentative of London as a whole. However, its social, economic and symbolic importance as a reference point for the nation's hairdressers cannot be underestimated and this is represented in the attention that it receives in the *Hairdressers' Journal* aimed at its professional trade readers.

The inclusion of Black hairdressing has been warranted partly because of its emergence during the period under investigation as a result of rapidly increasing, ex-colonial mass immigration into Britain from the late 1940s and partly because of the particularity of its historical development, prompted by one woman's celebrity. Winifred Atwell's successful professional music career put her in the midst of the

cream of society, the aristocracy and royalty and she attracted considerable press attention. Atwell's public appearances required a very high standard of hairdressing and her stature undoubtedly had no small influence in publicising and promoting the ensuing efforts of Black hairdressers to professionalise hairdressing styles aimed primarily at black women consumers.

Beyond the history of hair styling, my thesis examines the architectural layout, interior style, technological innovation and spatial design of hair salons in this period seeing them as important indicators not only of changing fashions, but as being responsive to gender shifts, generational imperatives and commercial factors. In my examination, I wanted to ascertain what connections existed between the salons' small spaces and youth culture seen as a method of counteracting the encroaching developments of large-scale impersonal buildings which were justifiably planned to overcome the problems that a growing post-war population had created. My research argues that small spaces were not merely economically viable and attractive to young entrepreneurs who wanted to demonstrate individuality, but that they provided appealing and more informal places to meet like-minded customers (often unisex) which were discussed using terms and language in currency elsewhere that demonstrated a very strong identity connected to youthfulness and glamour.

### **Periodising the 1960s**

John Tosh (1991) in a discussion on the writing and interpretation of history, outlined some fundamental qualities of historical analysis, one of which was the ability to observe patterns within a mass of data and then to be able to organize and account for these patterns efficaciously. He considers periodisation to be a pattern which encompasses the connection of events and ideas that give rise to conceptual

categorizations, collectively organized and understood by such terms as ‘the Renaissance’<sup>i</sup> which are vaguely situated, but not defined by opening and closing dates. Specialist histories of such a period may have more exactly defined dates within which they operate and each history may start or finish earlier or later than another, but they still fall under the hypernym of Renaissance. The categorisations become difficult when the umbrella term is that of a set numerical period such as a particular century or a specific decade. In this section, I will attempt to clarify not only how these may be interpreted but also to justify the dates set by my own specialist history of ‘Sixties’ hairdressing.

In Arthur Marwick’s (2000) discussion about periodisation, he refers to his book *The Sixties* and the methods he used to define the term relatively. ‘The Sixties’ is essentially a chronological historical term which, when evoked, might conjure up a whole series of meanings either separately or collectively. It can be, but is rarely qualified through decadism. For Marwick, who was attempting to define causal points of change both at the beginning and the end of the Sixties, decadism was too simplistic and illogical as a categorisation. Marwick cited a number of examples where dates did not exclusively determine the length of time such as ‘the Medieval Period’ and ‘the Modern Period’ (Marwick, 2000:18). In these cases, the terms covered a determinate historical period, predicated on and broadly connected through ideological, cultural and material manifestations, which had obvious syntheses. These frameworks are then the umbrella terms, encompassing a wide range of concepts, to which Tosh previously alluded.

Marwick, following the path of other historians such as Hobsbawm (1994) has used a combination of both styles to demonstrate more lateral thinking, i.e. while dates can pinpoint precise chronological intersections, period description can produce

a more realistic contextual view. Hobsbawm, who had titled this particular book *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth century 1914-1991* indicates points of change which suggest a more apposite understanding than the delineation 1900-1999. In this case, Hobsbawm's significant points are the beginning of the First World War and 'the collapse of the Russian and Eastern European Communist regimes' (Marwick, 2000:35). These dates, which fall within the century's parameters, thus determine the ideological boundary of Hobsbawm's 'short twentieth century'.

Marwick has applied this same formula to his own definition of the Sixties. He suggests that the period is extended at both ends beginning in 1958 and finishing at 1973. Marwick's argument for this expansion is explained as:

contain[ing] a certain unity, in that events, attitudes, values, social hierarchies within the chosen 'period' seem to be closely integrated with each other, to share common features and in that there are identifiable points of change when a 'period' defined in this way, gives way to a 'new period' (Marwick, 1998:5).

Erwin Panofsky (1995) makes a similar observation when he alludes to the concept of cultural simultaneity which he states may only occur when the comparative phenomena fall within one frame of reference. Panofsky was focussing on the study of art objects, but it is through this that he referred to an ability to recognise periods and that these periodisations are meaningful and significant. This view is evidenced in Thomas Crow's art historical text *The Rise of the Sixties* (1996) which defines the changes in art practise that constitute the Sixties period, (and these will be discussed later in this section). Like Crow, Marwick maintains that not all historians will identify the same periods in precisely the same way, being dependent upon factors such as their approach and particular geographies and their moment of writing. This last point is of particular importance when dealing with specialist histories, which

may or may not share the same geography and spatio-historical determinants as they, in turn, affect the temporal position of a particular period.

Marwick contends that the critical point of change in socio-cultural developments was 1958-9. This is set against most economic historians' notion of 1945, the end of World War Two, as being the crucial point of economic recovery and expansion (Marwick, 1998:8) and in opposition to political histories which invariably cite the 1956 Suez crisis as the turning point. In Marwick's view of a 'long Sixties' he employs three sub-periods: 1958-63; 1964-68/9; 1969-74. The first Marwick describes as 'The First Stirrings of a Revolution'; the second, 'The High Sixties' and a third less determinate title 'Everything Goes and Catching Up' (Marwick 1998:xii-xv; Marwick, 2000:37).

Marwick's periodisation has been critiqued by Dominic Sandbrook (2005) as flawed, despite its initial attraction and persuasiveness. Sandbrook argues that from a British perspective (rather than the international one Marwick adopts) 1956 is a more logical starting point since the mid-fifties saw the end of rationing and austerity, the escalation of consumerism and the death knells of empire, of which the Suez crisis was the harbinger.

Sandbrook acknowledges that Marwick uses the term 'the Sixties' as a metaphor for a much broader 'international cultural revolution' (2005:xxiv). However, it is worth noting here that three of the four countries Marwick focuses on (Britain, France and the USA) were involved in the Suez crisis with loyalties bitterly divided by the Atlantic. It has also been suggested by Andrew Marr that the events of Suez and the oil crisis led to one of the great innovations of the Sixties, the Mini car, apparently invented as a fuel-economic vehicle (Marr, 2007). Whether or not these facts contribute to the justification of 1956 and Suez as the general 'birth' of the

Sixties is a matter of opinion, but neither does Marwick specifically state his asserted reasons for 1958 as the starting point. Marwick only declares that as a result of economic expansion in the Fifties, the social benefits were reaped in the Sixties (Marwick, 1998:8).

This specificity could be reasoned through another simpler explanation: namely that the majority of babies born during and in the immediate post-war period were teenagers, many of them at work. However, Marwick is clear that in his study which also covers Italy, 1958 is an arbitrary date, the period beginning earlier or later depending upon a variety of factors and in which country they occur (Marwick, 1998:8).

Marwick is not the only academic writer to have considered the ‘birth’ and ‘death’ of the Sixties in this fashion. Anthony Frewin wrote in 1997:

You can ask a dozen different people and you’ll get a dozen different starting dates. The sixties, I always think, didn’t really get going until about 1964, and didn’t end until about 1972 or 1973. The early 1960s were, in every way, the fag end of the Fifties – post war austerity, drab, predictable ... and not very imaginative or stylish. You see the 1940s didn’t end until about 1956. Then it was the 1950s until about 1963 or ’64 or so. (Green, 1998: ix)

Jonathon Green who cites Frewin in *All Dressed Up* (1998) positions himself more closely with Marwick who he acknowledges as inventor of the term ‘the long 1960s’. Green’s periodisation is slightly longer than Marwick’s, ‘from the chronological mid-Fifties to the early Seventies’ (1998: xii) being prepared to extend this to 1979, up to the moment when Margaret Thatcher came into political power. Like Marwick, Green breaks up the period but only to highlight the core period which he believes runs from ‘the Albert Hall poetry reading of 1965, known as ‘Wholly Communion’ to

the trials of OZ magazine in 1971' (Green 1998:xiii) and almost paralleling Marwick's 'high Sixties', he sees the periods before and after as a preparation and a wind-down.

Sandbrook, as already noted, argues that the start of the Sixties in Britain at least, should be firmly positioned at 1956 as a central position of continuity rather than dramatic change. He argues against Marwick's 1974 endpoint considering it too late, as he does the generally acknowledged 1973 OPEC oil crisis. Sandbrook believes that the events of the early Seventies have a completely different and darker atmosphere compared to the upbeat vibrant mood of the Sixties and he suggests that 1970 for both political and social reasons is a more apt endpoint. In writing his history of the period, Sandbrook breaks it up into two periods, the midpoint of which is 1963. He sees the first period (1956-1963) as belonging to Conservative Macmillan affluence and the Beat generation, followed by Wilson's Labour 'white heat' technologies and Youthquake from 1964-1970 (2005:xxv).

By contrast, Jeffrey Weeks in considering the links between sex and capitalism (1985) dismisses such calendar decadism and suggests instead that the conjunction of social and political elements which manifest as 'the permissive moment' is periodised as approximately between 1955-1975. Like Marwick, Weeks is keen to point out that its timely emergence and its nature varies from country to country (Weeks, 1985:20-21).

Reviewing popular cultural developments, Shawn Levy classically identifies 1956 as the date when Britain's economy re-launched itself, but suggests that 'London hit full swing – sometime, more or less, in August '63' seeing its descent as starting around 1967-8 (Levy, 2002:4-5, 309). He accounts for this curtailment as

marking out a geographical shift from London as the socially fashionable epicentre, to the West Coast of America at the point when hippy culture flowered.

The slightly earlier commencement date in the late 1950s cited by the above authors is reiterated in more specific histories of art and fashion. Thomas Crow's (1996) book *The Rise of the Sixties*, states clearly in its subtitle, the period 1955-69 as 'the Era of Dissent'. While Crow's study focuses on art, the designation might well be applied to more general concepts relating to society which he encompasses within the realms of the book, concurring with some of those historians already discussed. Crow believes 1955 to be the seminal date in modern art's development, distinguished by the artist Robert Rauschenberg's artwork entitled *Short Circuit* (1955) created for a group exhibition. *Short Circuit* was a hybrid work, which consisted of a collage of popular culture images. Crow's argument and validation for such a claim, is that this was the first work of its kind which, as he says, 'presented a coded defiance of the values that then dominated advanced art in New York' (Crow, 1996:15). From this point until 1969, a variety of artistic tactics began to shift and challenge the notion of what 'Art' could be from a more traditional practise to one incorporating more popular contemporary content.<sup>ii</sup>

Fashion, the ephemerality of which is often constricted by the rigidity of decadism<sup>iii</sup>, has recently been subjected to more searching periodisation. Christopher Beward (2004a), in a paper on the period, refers to a retrospective exhibition on Mary Quant held by the Museum of London in 1973. He states that 'the exhibition was careful to set its chronological boundaries outside of the measure implied by the duration of a standard decade' and through his own investigations, Beward proposes that the turning point is 1955, 'the year in which Quant opened her first boutique on the Kings Road in Chelsea' situating his version of the Sixties as being 'c. 1955-1975'

(Breward, 2004a:1,2,6). Considering that his approach is through consumerism, the abrupt changes in the social and economic climate of the early Seventies highlighted by Sandbrook, might suggest an earlier cut off point than that which Breward has chosen, but which is not elucidated in his text.

In a further examination of fashion periodisation within my own scope of study, Sixties hairdressing mirrors much of what the above-mentioned authors have stated: namely that its origins lie coiled and embedded within the 1950s. In taking Vidal Sassoon as the pioneer of new haircutting, 1954 became the key turning point for his vision of change when he opened his first salon at 108 Bond Street (Fishman & Powell, 1993:33-34). Consequently, my thesis starts around this date of 1954. Determining an endpoint for this study of Sixties hairdressing is a more knotty problem. Sassoon's revolutionary haircutting, once started, did not simply stop, but it did in fact become the springboard for a whole host of hairdressing innovations which continued to appear up to and beyond the end of the Sixties. The pinnacle of Sassoon's success also coincides with the juncture of Marwick's first and second sub-periods (1963-64), outlined above. This confluence signals the creative axis of 'the Quant Bob' in 1963 and 'the Five-Point Cut' in 1964 (Fishman & Powell, 1993: 41-42).

However, the realisation of the technologies of haircutting that commenced in the 1950s, the dissemination of West End techniques to the provinces and further afield and the merchandising of commercial by-products that promoted improved hair healthcare, were firmly established by the mid to late 1970s. Nevertheless, the validity of 1975 as an appropriate point for drawing this study to a close is that in October that year, the *Hairdressers' Journal* reported that it was twenty-one years since Vidal Sassoon had opened his first salon – a sort of 'coming of age' that

celebrated his summative achievements over this lengthy period (*HJ* 1975:10:3; *HJ* 1975:10:16-17). From one little shop in the West End, Sassoon had created a successful hairdressing empire which included salons, training schools and hair care products, on both sides of the Atlantic. Significantly, 1975 is also cited as the year when Sassoon had virtually ceased cutting hair (Reed, 2012). In transition, aiming to take up permanent residence in Los Angeles, Sassoon's imminent departure from the UK metaphorically closed the door on his 'Sixties' fashionable hairstyles and geometric cuts which were by then already legendary. At this historical moment, it is clear that hairdressing had already entered a new phase; one that used Sassoon's revolutionary methods as a launch pad and, that there existed a legacy that his protégés developed employing their own imaginative creativity. Therefore, I take 1975 as my end point of this thesis.

In summary, my argument is that the Sixties can be considered to be a distinctly longer period than just the decade itself and that such a periodisation is evidenced in hairdressing history as well as in broader fashion, art and cultural histories. It begins roughly in the mid-Fifties, when various socio-historical factors and aspects of culture that would grow in the Sixties were already in place. Given the combination of political, cultural and social events which gave rise to these cultural shifts and which engendered an altered notion of collective consciousness, it is not surprising that innovations in hairdressing and fashion generally begin to change at this point. What was especially noteworthy was the burgeoning area of youthful interest in fashionability as a conspicuous sign of the modern and as demonstrating an emerging and distinctive youth culture in which consumption played a significant role. This view has culminated in a generally acknowledged position on the part of most cultural historians, that the 'Sixties' maybe considered as a period which extends

either side of its chronological boundary to a greater or lesser degree depending on location and discipline, or a combination of both. For my study, the commencement, development and refinement of 1960s hairdressing and its associated enterprises, correlates with Sassoon's twenty-one years in the West End, namely from 1954 to 1975.

## **Terminology**

### **Modernism**

My understanding of Modernism is rooted in design and cultural history. The theory of Modernism (or Modern Movement) is complex to define because it covers such a broad spectrum. When used with lower case, modernism signals an awareness within societies of accelerated social change that made individuals and societies in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries aware of themselves as being contemporary and 'of the moment'. Modernism with an initial capital characterises a historical categorisation in which key historical thinkers and practitioners were incorporated into a theory for the development of modern art, architecture and culture, and who were retrospectively formed into a tradition of understanding and shaping the modern within a more selective historical tradition.

According to Paul Greenhalgh (2004), rather than a single manifesto by one group, Modernism has a shared aesthetic or ideological tendency, which would be able to cross boundaries regardless of whether they were geographic, class-based or even different disciplines, such as architecture, music or literature. Modernism then is a utopian concept that has many different forms of expression, but which clearly demonstrated recognisably understood aesthetics, regardless of where in the world it was found. It is for this reason it is also understood as International Style. As a general guide, Greenhalgh cites the following general aesthetics to be found in

Modernist design. This is the use of steel, concrete and glass in architecture and new industrial materials in designed objects; the suppression and abstraction of colour and ornament and exposure of structure (2004:141).

Anne Massey reiterates Greenhalgh's definition when describing the Modernist interior, but adds that it rationalised and standardised by erasing superficial decoration and creating lighter, spacious, healthier and more functional interiors (2001:63). Greenhalgh explains that Modernism attempted to bring a sense of order and clarity into design through a coherent set of principles which self-consciously rejected the past; that it did not see 'artistic endeavour and technical and mechanical practice as being mutually exclusive' and that 'architecture and by extension design, was expressive of national culture – national types therefore subsequently provided the basis for accepted cultural standards' (2004:140).

This is significant in the history of hair design when considering Sassoon's own hair 'designs', which he self-consciously translated from his interest in Modernist architecture. Sassoon's haircuts represented a trope of received British Modernism and at the same time, elevated this form of hairdressing as a result of the cuts' designed and structural elements, particularly since hairdressing was generally defined as a 'Craft' which has always been afforded a lowly status. In fashion and youth culture, the term Modernist is particularly usefully applied to the formation of the subcultural group who were the forerunners to the more ubiquitous and commercialised Mods.

### **Youth culture and Youthquake**

Classically defined by Hall and Jefferson (2006), youth culture is understood as a phenomenon which appeared in the post-WWII period and which was a visible manifestation of social change. Youth culture, as distinct from the dominant and

parent cultures developed its own distinct life patterns which were expressed socially and materially. In the 1960s, youth culture generally speaking was identified with consumerism and characterised a new consumer group that chose to articulate its difference through the clothes, hairstyles, music, socialising, magazines and other accoutrements such as cosmetics and portable record players. Such style and tastes marked it out as different to the previous generations. Subcultures, of which both the Modernists and 'Mods' pertain, form part of the 'parent' youth culture, but they identify themselves with more particular forms of its attributes as smaller 'sub-sets' that were more localised and differentiated since not all youth were Modernists or Mods.

'Youthquake' on the other hand was a term coined by Diana Vreeland of *Vogue* magazine<sup>iv</sup> and this was seen as a fashion, music and cultural movement, located in Britain with London as its centre, that was dominated by teenagers and headed by designers such as Quant and pop groups such as the Beatles. Sassoon's close connection to Quant would have put him at the helm of Youthquake hair fashion. However, in my study, it is clear that very few teenagers were regular clients of Sassoon, being mostly made up of young women who were probably in their twenties or even thirties. For these clients, it was their youthful approach which aligned them with the modern tastes and contemporary styles of the younger generation often comprising teenage girls and it is their changing attitudes which associate them with youth culture.

### **Hairdressing**

There can be a great deal of confusion as to what 'hairdressing' actually means and describes, and this is a term that I wrestled with on various occasions. 'Dressing' hair originally appears not to have meant 'cutting' it and this was particularly noticeable in

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when salons were just emerging as the main sites for hairdressing. Women generally were not going to have their hair cut but, rather, to have it styled in a particular fashion.

‘Dressing out’ was also understood as styling in my focus period even if the hair had been cut. After the procedures of cutting, shampooing, colouring, perming and drying (usually with rollers to force the hair in desired directions) had been completed, the styling usually involved brushing and combing and often backcombing maybe with the addition of postiches (hairpieces) and decorative ornaments. This process was understood as ‘dressing the hair’. However, to complicate matters further, the Hairdressers’ Registration Act of 1964 included its own interpretation under Section XIV as “shaving, cutting, shampooing, tinting, dyeing, bleaching, waving, curling, setting or dressing of the hair upon the scalp or face” with or without the aid of any apparatus or preparation’ (*HJ* 1954:1:12). My assumption, therefore, is that unless a particular practice is stated such as colouring or cutting, then this constitutes hairdressing as a generic term encompassing all these different areas of practice.

## **Style**

Within the context of fashion and design, the word ‘style’ generally means a recognisably and distinctive appearance. In fashion, this term could refer to the style of a particular designer such as Mary Quant who in this period of study created an entirely different style of clothing for young people to that of her mother’s generation (1966:656). Dick Hebdige (2006) uses Quant’s style, along with other of her contemporaries, as examples of ‘mod’ in the sense of a distinctive style. In defining ‘mod’, Hebdige saw it as being an umbrella-term for a variety of several distinct styles, each of which could claim to be part of the mythical swinging London.

However, the common denominator in these styles is the importance of its consumption and in particular, as Hebdige's study of the Mods demonstrates, the consumption of style is seen as socially and culturally significant achieving an enhanced level of youth self-definition which had not been experienced before. In this case, sub-cultural style is linked to the growing affluence of youth. In design, the word 'style' has a similar meaning, in that its surface appearance may or may not be linked to the product beneath it, but that it is recognisable through its surface features and characteristics as being linked to similarly visually aesthetic objects and can be meaningfully labelled as such.

In hairdressing, style can be applied in a similar way either separately or collectively so that hairstyles can be grouped together as 'longer' or 'shorter' styles. While they may vary from hairdresser to hairdresser, they are, nevertheless, recognisable as being styled in a similar way, such as 'bouffant' or 'beehive' for example. Similarly, style refers to the ways in which recognisably distinctive or signature styles of a particular hairdresser (such as the 'wild styles' of Freddie French) are described and understood. At its extreme, the notion of a signature style is one that becomes instantly recognisable and unique to one hairdresser such as Sassoon, in which case they were referred to generically as 'Sassoon style', 'Sassooning' or 'Sassoonery.'

## **Black**

As part of this study, I have had to negotiate the meaning of the terms 'white' and 'black' in relation to race which as Carol Tulloch (2004) has observed, are terms related to ethnicity that are surrounded by intellectual sensitivity. Considering 'black', Tulloch outlined her definition for the purposes of her book *Black Style*, and set this against other interpretations stating that the categorisation of 'black' was part

of an ongoing redefinition of what it meant to be racially black in a variety of contexts. My aim in acknowledging the incursion of racialized hairdressing into mainstream hairdressing practice in Britain is to recognise and acknowledge that the terms used historically in describing hair culture from non-white communities namely 'black', 'Black' and 'coloured', are themselves underpinned by racialized categorisations, sometimes derogatory. The terminology mainly used during the period of study to describe peoples of the African diaspora and other non-white races, was 'coloured' which today, has become an unacceptable and unsophisticated term of racial categorisation. However, this term is used indiscriminately throughout many articles in the *Hairdressers' Journal* by both white and black people as a form of self and other identification. The *Journal* did point out that 'not all coloured people are negroes' (*HJ* 1967:5:8), however the currency of the term 'black' is not used discernibly until 1973, by which time the term 'coloured' has become a highly contentious description and does not appear in the articles from that point on. In this thesis, the term 'black' will be the general form of identification used and 'coloured' will only be included when used in quotation. The term 'Black' will be used to signal the professionalization of Black hairdressing.

### **Professionalism and professionalization**

My contention is that the *Hairdressers' Journal* is a source that determines the public consumption of hairdressing through professional hairdressing's methods of production. In terms of readership, I am aware that the journal is primarily addressing a professional body of skilled hair practitioners and it is precisely because of its engagement with these workers and with their developing professional identity and sense of themselves, that it is significant. The professionalization of hairdressing was marked by two conspicuous features. The first is the constant spectre that 'home'

hairdressing presented to public understanding and to which professional hairdressers and the *Journal* alike were adamantly opposed. In their eyes, it brought their professional status and skill practices into disrepute by lowering its status (often to a craft or amateur level and one that was unpaid). The second impulse was the drive to get the Hairdressers' Registration Bill passed as an Act of Parliament which, after ten years of lobbying, finally happened in 1964. The intention of such legal recognition was that the registration of lawful businesses would, as a result, 'outlaw' those amateurs who were hairdressing for casual gain in their own or their clients' homes, or regularise those shops which had not achieved the necessary health and hygiene standards required by the Act. It was outlined however, that in passing the Registration Bill, this did not necessarily mean that 'the Craft' would become a profession or that it could prevent home hairdressing (*HJ* 1962:8:12). While this regulation never became compulsory, the *Journal* campaigned vigorously to encourage hairdressers to register.

Over the course of the period that I am examining, hairdressing became increasingly more important within the context of a modern fashionable appearance and in terms of social standing, economic return and culturally symbolic significance. Its recognition by the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers in 1956<sup>v</sup> marked an important advance in its professionalism. As a consequence, the *Journal's* promotion of the advances in hairdressing and changes in the status of professional practitioners becomes more marked, particularly when Mayfair's hairdressers are credited with being in the vanguard of world hairdressing innovation. As the *Journal* realises the importance of what is happening to the British profession, particularly in the context of a more global hairdressing economy, so it self-consciously uses its position as the leading professional journal to promote British hairdressing's newly

elevated status and to disseminate down to suburban and provincial hairdressers higher standards of expectation, skill and training in order that they will elevate their own professionalism.

One conspicuous feature is the growing confidence in the way that hairdressing is reported not only in professional journals but in the British and international press at large. As London's innovatory status becomes increasingly acknowledged in the eyes of the world's press and by hairdressing communities abroad, this rising status is substantiated through the changing tone of language used and in the mode of address employed. The new position of London as a leading fashionable city and fashion trendsetter during the Sixties is the point at which these shifts are noticeable and even after such a position has peaked, the *Journal* continues to promote British hairdressing as world leader and innovator in hairdressing. For example, even in December 1969, the editorial threw down the gauntlet, by asking 'Who will be the Craft fashion leaders to keep Britain out in front during the Seventies?' (*HJ* 1969:12:4) and while acknowledging that France, Italy and the United States were all capable of taking over this mantle, it asserted that there must soon be another 'Sassoon' to keep up the British momentum.

## **Methodology**

The methodology used to investigate this subject has largely been shaped by the archival resources of the *Hairdressers' Journal* examined over the course of a twenty-one year period from 1954 to 1975. The archive, housed in the E-Map Special Collections at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London, constitutes the most comprehensive collection of this trade paper<sup>vi</sup> which was published weekly from its inception on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1882 up to the present day and is still

flourishing. Its full title upon first publication was the *Hairdressers' Weekly Journal*, but by 1954 this had been reduced to the *Hairdressers' Journal*. In the first issue, the editor set out the *Journal's* direction which was to provide an independent trade organ that would communicate and represent the shifting needs of British hairdressers and hairdressing's cognate trades. While it was a specialist trade journal, the *Hairdressers' Journal* largely followed the format found in general interest magazines of the period. It included an editorial on a range of subjects specific to hairdressing by leading members of the trade; it had reports of all trade meetings; it outlined the latest movements in the market and new innovations. It also reproduced some correspondence, raised readers' queries and grievances as well as usefully providing 'translations of all valuable articles appearing in the Continental fashion papers' (*HWJ*, 1882:5). In this respect, like many professional journals addressing a national readership in the modern period, it had both an external relationship to an imagined readership and it had one to the world of commerce and commodities: to the financial requirements of its own sales, advertisement revenue and distribution costs.

The *Hairdressers' Journal's* structure had not altered discernibly, however by 1954, the beginning of my period of study it clearly reflected the changing concerns of hairdressers and their clients. It addressed the latest fashions in hairstyling outlining the effects of social changes upon the profession, and it signalled how new technologies and scientific discoveries had led to the creation of new products and changing styles in salon design amongst many other topics. The *Journal* is also important in that it reflected and reconstructed many national, regional and local issues and concerns. It debated many of the burning issues of the day. It conducted nationwide surveys region by region. It informed hairdressers of any recent government legislation that would affect their businesses and it gave advice on the

day to day aspects of running a successful commercial salon. Over the course of this period, its editorials, articles and illustrations allowed me to build up a nationwide picture of the changing state of hairdressing in Britain and to identify many specific significant changes in the commercial conduct of its businesses that were seen as significant. In this sense, the *Journal* clearly saw its role as both a messenger and mediator and it offered a centralised channel through which all members of the hairdressing community could have access to a range of information and to the representation and promotion of themselves as a professional community.

This growing awareness of their professional status was especially evident in the *Journal's* increasing concern with the education of hairdressers, from the apprentice upwards, even organising nationwide 'Teach-Ins' in order to enable stylists to learn the new and radical forms of hairdressing that had emerged in the British capital in the Sixties, as demonstrated by leading West End stylists. In relation to this imperative, its mantra 'Cut, Colour and Condition' epitomised the change in approach to hairdressing and professionalism that had become established amongst its practitioners by the beginning of the Seventies.

It is significant that the *Journal's* physical appearance also changed in the years between 1954 and 1975 reflecting broader changes in the professional press and journalism in terms of layout, typeface, cost and periodicity of publication. From the outset it was always a weekly paper. As a result of war time rationing, the *Journal* was forced to reduce its page size by half and this saving in scale continued until it was restored to full size in 1961. This increased size allowed for greater variety in page layout which until then had been quite tightly organised with small regular typeface. In 1955 the cost of a single issue was 7.5d and an annual subscription was 30s (post free) (*HJ* 1955:6:19). By 1972 the annual subscription rate had increased to

£8.50 (*HJ* 1972:7:3) but it did not detail the cost of single issues and at the end of the period of study (1975), even the annual subscription rate was omitted. Its advertising ranged from small classified advertisements of staff vacancies, to half or full page advertisements of hair care products and salon decorators. It was rare for a hairdresser to take a full page as the cost was probably prohibitive. The Journal made little reference to its distribution, but it was understood that each issue purchased by a salon would be seen by more than one person and probably clients as well as staff. Colour reproduction had been unusual and it was limited to graphics in its 'Magazine' section from the mid-1950s. The early 1970s evidences a marked increase in colour images, either in articles, front covers or back-cover headshots of hairstyles that could be cut out and used by salon owners as styling ideas and this is reflective of innovations in colour illustration use and improved reproductive technologies occurring across the British press.

The prioritisation of the *Hairdressers' Journal*, as a means to trace the shifting concerns of the hairdressing community as a whole, is significant although as with any archival or periodical source, there are issues of how representative it was; how its commercial orientation affected editorials and how imperatives related to selectivity were affected by its size and cost. Nevertheless, the *Journal* provides a bifocal and revelatory archive. On the one hand it offers a narrow focus on professional hairdressing and hairdressers' concerns whilst, at the same time, it is an important way into the broader cultural analysis of how hairdressing reflects other social and cultural trends in Britain during these years. As a consequence, my desire to contextualise the changing interests and professional networks of hairdressers in the West End of London in relation to socio-historical factors has necessitated an interdisciplinary approach, and it self-consciously encompasses fashion, design,

commercial and economic histories, and cultural geography with an attention to architectural design and spatial analysis .

One of the most prominent features in my historical analysis is the examination of the shifting constituencies of consumers of hairdressing across this period and the importance of architectural and spatial designs and technological innovations of hair salons in attracting younger groups. In this investigation, my approach has been informed by the insights and methods of design history and theory paying particular attention to the impact of gender and class distinctions upon hairdressing practitioners and upon the perception of salons, their fashionability and the demands of their consumers. The design historians Penny Sparke, Anne Massey and Lesley Jackson have been especially useful in this regard.

In particular, the history of interior design has pointed up the complex socio-economic and psycho-social conditions that shape the construction and impartial narrative of any social history. For these aspects, Anne Massey and Penny Sparke have been predominantly useful particularly in the area of gender and interior design. I am aware of these limitations and the way in which I bring my own interpretative strategies and agenda to this material and interpretation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in accounts of black and unisex hairdressing and whilst not my central preoccupation, these are discussed briefly given their historical importance as they intersect with women's hairdressing.

In order to supplement the evidence and insights provided by my close examination of the *Hairdressers' Journal* I have used a range of additional sources which have included fictional and factual films; online and printed journals, magazine and newspaper archives; exhibition catalogues; and a range of historical and theoretical texts. Another source of useful information was oral history accounts, in

the form of interviews with West End hairdressers and their clients. Whilst aware of the limitations and conflicting protocols that these forms require and bring with them, they, nevertheless, deliver many different perspectives to the dominant ones disseminated in academic, press and official media views of hairdressing, and they have provided factual verification in support of other sources and archival material that, I hope, make my findings fuller and more convincing.

## **Literature Review**

At the beginning of this introduction I stated that hairdressing was largely absent in the wider historical accounts of 1960s with the exception being the invariable focus on Vidal Sassoon. This bias has made the location of information on other West End hairdressers problematic. In her foreword to *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion* (2008)<sup>vii</sup> Caroline Cox notes that the careers of some of the key figures in the hairdressing world have gone unrecorded and argues that they remain virtually unknown to the public, academia and the industry itself. When the book, edited by Geraldine Biddle-Perry and Sarah Cheang, was published in 2008, this was certainly the situation and it remains largely correct today, although the rapid growth of the internet has given much greater access to archival material posted by hairdressers of the period,<sup>viii</sup> as well as hairdressers' personal recollections often included in fashion web pages.<sup>ix</sup> The web has also facilitated the retrieval of very useful film footage from British Pathé which has just recently put its vast archive of material on YouTube. This source included short news-clips of some of the long-forgotten hairdressers that Cox identified, albeit largely focused on Mayfair and the West End, and this is informative. In addition, there are also rare clips of provincial hairdressers

who were considered unusual or entertaining enough to warrant the attention of British Pathé's camera crew.

To supplement these resources, the BBC recently screened some useful documentaries on the history of hairdressing. The first was part of the *Imagine* series (2011) 'Vidal Sassoon – A Cut Above' which included the film made about him and produced shortly before his death. The second was *Bouffants, Beehives and Bobs: The Hairstyles That Shaped Britain* (BBC4, 2013) a programme which was broader in scope, but nevertheless provided some useful analyses of British hairdressing, including some discussion of Black hairdressing.

There have also been a number of fictional films which have used West End hairdressers' locations as part of the film narrative, thereby indicating the growing interest amongst filmmakers in their use of fashionable London environs; salons being one of them. Added to this were the availability of documentary television programmes which provided supplementary information and analyses of design history such as *The Genius of Design*<sup>x</sup>, and these sources informed many aspects of my knowledge and discussion.

While much of the information I have derived has come from the *Hairdressers' Journal*, I have also mined some useful autobiographical accounts by the better known hairdressers. Vidal Sassoon had twice written his autobiography, the first being *Sorry, I Kept You Waiting Madam* (1968) followed by *The Autobiography* (2010). The books are separated by forty-two years and the first was written at the height of Sassoon's hairdressing career and it is factually very detailed and useful. The second account by and large repeats a great deal of the first publication, but it has revised some elements and it has included other additional facts which were not in the

first; evidently those events post-1968 but also some aspects which Sassoon may not have felt were appropriate or worthy of attention at the time.

*Leonard of Mayfair* (2000) written by Leonard Lewis, erstwhile protégé of Sassoon who went on to open up a very successful business in Mayfair, is much less clearer in its composition and recollection of events. Lewis, who suffered from alcoholism and bulimia, was later struck down with a brain tumour and so his recollections are much less ordered and a great deal more anecdotal in content. However, this book in certain parts provided some extremely clear and valuable information, particularly on his salon and its clients. The social whirl in which Lewis immersed himself offers a fascinating insight into the life of a celebrity hairdresser at this time and it names the famous people with whom he came into contact and who frequented his circles. Similarly Raymond's autobiography, *Raymond: The Outrageous Story of the Celebrated Hairstylist 'Teasie-Weasie'* (1976) is largely an anecdotal account, but does impart some useful information on his career, his working practices and his salon's design.

Whilst hairdressers' autobiographical accounts of the 1960s are few in number, it was useful to incorporate information from three oral interviews with leading hairdressers. The first was an interview with Leslie Russell conducted by Linda Sandino over the course of 2003/4 which was part of the oral history project for the British Library<sup>xi</sup>([www.catalogue.bl.uk](http://www.catalogue.bl.uk)). I later discovered that Russell was partner to Keith Wainwright who I had interviewed earlier in 2005. Russell's interview was much longer and more detailed than Wainwright's but collectively they reinforced one another's recollections. Russell's, in particular, was extremely valuable in its descriptions of their unisex salon, while Wainwright provided me with period photographs of the salon from his own archive. Finally, I was fortunate to

have interviewed the late Joshua Galvin who had worked with Sassoon during the 1960s for approximately thirteen years and to gain his recollections on a wide range of hair related topics which proved extremely enlightening.

As this thesis is concerned with examining consumption, other interviews with three clients of West End hairdressers in the 1960s also proved useful and these are listed in the bibliography. They had all been either to Sassoon's, Leonard's, or Smile, but their backgrounds and preferences in hairdressing styles were completely different thereby providing me with a critically balanced perspective of their individual experiences. While very informative these accounts have been used sparingly to provide additional sources of information.

While there is a substantial literature on oral history methodology, the most useful for me was Trevor Lummis' (1987) *Listening to History*. His point, that 'to attempt to recapture the past through oral evidence is an ambitious goal' (Lummis 1987:21), indicates that this practice is problematic. However, it can and has provided me with useful insights which could otherwise not have been gained. Lummis argues throughout his book that the positivist (social survey) approach is not a useful methodology for the historian, proposing that it is possible to gain a full understanding of the social milieu and interpersonal relationships from one single interview. Lummis states: 'one does not have to have the resources for a large project in order to make a significant contribution to history through oral evidence' (Lummis 1987:135). Lummis also cites Bertaux's theory that fixed numbers are irrelevant; it is the 'saturation of knowledge from a contingent number of individual accounts from a specific milieu,' which is the necessary outcome (Lummis 1987:134). Lummis' description of the ethno-methodological approach is the one used by Sandino where interviews are open-ended but adopt a concrete and an open, conversational manner

when recording the experiences and I have taken on board these reservations in my use and interpretation of oral interviews (Lummis, 1987:51).

There are very few books written specifically about British hairdressing and its salons as opposed to the continuing expansive historical literature on hair culture and hair fashions in general<sup>xii</sup>, which have dealt with earlier historical periods or with particular aspects of hair styling, such as wigs<sup>xiii</sup> or the nineteenth century cult of jewellery made of hair.<sup>xiv</sup> The anthropologist Grant McCracken (1995) has approached the subject through a mixture of popular culture and history. His publication *Big Hair: A Journey into the Transformation of Self* explores a variety of themes in hair using a form of socio-cultural psychology to analyse and interpret their meanings. McCracken's text was particularly useful in identifying and analysing the wider notion of the differences between Fifties and Sixties in terms of hairstyling.

The examination of British hairdressing in the twentieth century has been less extensive and critically revealing.<sup>xv</sup> Most of the texts that address salons are manuals, explaining in detail how to commercially run and equip salons. Gilbert Foan's (1931) *The Art and Craft of Hairdressing* was probably the first comprehensive overview of every aspect of the hairdressing industry, and it considers its development historically and contemporarily. From this publication I was able to gain great insights into the working of hair salons in the 1930s and this study was particularly useful for my first chapter. Equally useful in this respect was Emma Gieben-Gamal's unpublished MA Thesis (RCA, 1999) which investigated the design of 1930s salons as gendered spaces positioned as sites of modernity. Her interpretation of the 'Moderne', as the prevalent form of salon interior styling, corroborated many of Foan's descriptions and his interpretation of the fashionable nature of 1930s salon interiors.

The book which most extensively covers the development and practices of British hairdressing is Caroline Cox's (1999) *Good Hair Days* from which I drew valuable factual and historical information about salons and their hairdressing proprietors. While the book covered a longer duration than this thesis, namely from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century and therefore could not embrace every element in sufficient detail, it proved to be a mine of information and its proposals have been supplemented in my research. Set out in chapters that dealt with each major change in hairdressing as well as investigating hair issues relating to science, technology, health and politics, Cox's book was invaluable, especially in its references to salon types and layouts.

The literature examining the historical development of British salon interior design was limited to the above and its stylistic decoration had to be approached through other sources on interiors. Two books by Penny Sparke were invaluable, *As Long As It's Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste* (1995) and *An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present* (2004). The first text discusses the contradictions that Modernist interiors offer when coupled with histories of femininity and Sparke argues that there is a need to approach such venues using a method that acknowledges a hybrid conservative modernism; one in which the attributes of softer interiors and a mediated modernism are aligned more closely with feminised modernity and with its spaces. The latter text discusses the need to develop an understanding of how modernity is mediated within shop design and consumerism, throwing light on the importance of the fashionability of these commercial and retail spaces, particularly in the later 1960s. For this period, Marnie Fogg's (2003) *Boutique: a '60s Cultural Phenomenon*, also provides important examples of fashionable shop spaces and it draws upon a wealth of contemporary sources that facilitates revealing comparative

analyses. The illustrated articles in the contemporary magazine *Design*,<sup>xvi</sup> several of which featured and critiqued actual hair-shop interiors along with boutiques and bistros, and drew comparisons between these small spaces, were invaluable. Produced as a mouthpiece for the Design Council, the journal's main concern was to select and publish examples of 'good design'. Its usefulness for me lay in its articulation of contemporary design discourse since the magazine's articles were written with a feeling of detachment even if they were not completely objective, and in a tone that addressed a broad and informed readership.

Two important concepts that demand consideration in relation to salon design and its space address the opportunities they afforded for socialisation and consumption. In considering these terms in relation to the sociological sense understood by consumption, Ray Oldenburg's (1989) *The Great Good Place* helped me to conceptualise the meanings attached to a familiar social space which was outside the domestic sphere of home and beyond work. Karen Stevenson's (2001) chapter 'Hairy Business: Organising the Gendered Self' also provided additional insights into how these spaces created an arena for identity performance that was meaningful and significant.

In the area of consumerism, Christopher Breward's examination of fashion and consumption in 1960s London,<sup>xvii</sup> provided critical insights into the way there emerged a new mood amongst tastemakers who recognised that they were both the producers and the consumers of fashionable modernity (and that this role was interchangeable) and that the West End, particularly Chelsea, was a highly fertile ground for these creative encounters and for their public performance (Breward, 2003:150). Breward's findings that examined how the consumer 'consumed' provided an innovative way into reappraising the dynamics of fashion, consumption,

performance and economic theory in this period. More specifically the relationship between style and subculture, is particularly important with regard to Quant's early years and for her subsequent effect upon Sassoon, and this correlation has been set out by Dick Hebdige in his 1979 book, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Hebdige argues that in situating it within subculture, style is a form of 'refusal', identifying a resistance to the dominant culture. In Sassoon's case, his refusal to be coerced into following traditional hairstyling and his quickly developing friendship with Quant who also rebelled against the norm, demonstrates Hebdige's notion of defiance in appearance (and behaviour) as a testament to personal or group bonding resulting in the construction and use of style very differently to what had gone before.

The broader historical analysis of the dynamic nature of West End consumption and its coordinates were considered in Erika Rappaport's (2000) *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End*. This study was extremely useful in setting up the nineteenth century's consumption patterns for women and in indicating the various venues that were available to them prior to the period under examination. This account contrasted with Bronwen Edwards' (2006) study, 'Shaping the Shopping City: Master Plans and Pipe Dreams in London's West End 1945-1979', which investigates the later period and the problems created by wartime destruction and the imminent planning reconstruction which might have changed the face of fashionable West End streets irreconcilably. Both analyses consider the effects of elite consumption in a spatio-geographic context and offer valuable insights into the distinctive role that the West End occupied in such patterns and imaginings. While Edwards reflected on the imagined post-war reality, Rappaport conjured up the West End of female consumers' imagination, and both

texts helped me to understand how the psycho-geography of the West End was affected by gender, architecture and socio-political factors.

Finally, when considering the salons within the framework of the changing context of Sixties society, the most elucidatory texts in my view were those that effectively interweaved social and cultural histories together with economics and politics. These publications included Dominic Sandbrook's studies of the 1960s: *Never Had It So Good* (2005) and *White Heat* (2006). Unlike many other social and cultural histories of the period, Sandbrook includes key aspects of politics and economics seeing them as important elements which affect and shape people's lives and perceptions, in either positive or negative ways. Examining the move from austerity to affluence, it is clear that economics and politics undoubtedly had an effect on commercial enterprise and retailing, allowing salons and hairdressing businesses to flourish in ways that it had not been possible immediately before the war and this is a salutatory lesson.

In contrast to Sandbrook's texts, Shawn Levy's (2002) *Ready, Steady, Go! The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London* provides a more focussed discussion of, for want of a better phrase, 'the Scene' and it focusses particularly on those participants who were at the heart of this very fashionable environment. Levy's discussion was predicated on the individuals whose talent and energy in the world of fashion and media collectively created the myth of the 'Swinging City' and it is the only social history that has devoted any sizeable space to the importance of Vidal Sassoon who shares a chapter with Mary Quant. Jonathon Green's (1998) *All Dressed Up: The Sixties and the Counterculture* similarly focusses on the London scene and it presents a balance to Levy's largely positive bias.

## Structure

The structure adopted for this thesis follows a chronological pattern, from the emergence of modern salon culture in the late nineteenth century. This organisation acknowledges that histories of modern consumption take this historical moment as their starting point, and incorporates the development of the department stores and modern consumption practices. My belief is that this offers the best way of understanding the historical development of hairdressing and salon culture as it occurs within a British cultural context. This structure also provides a way of understanding the distinctiveness of the development and growth of British hairdressing as opposed to ways of approaching similar developments in France, the USA and elsewhere.

Chapter One traces the origins of the public ladies' hair salon from the latter part of the nineteenth century up to the mid-1950s, the starting moment of the period of focus for this study. It demonstrates the various factors which facilitated women's general appearance and participation in the public arena and examines the relationship of this changing context for women's visual and personal identity through the growth of magazines, theatre, education and other opportunities for new forms of employment and careers which resulted from the rising tide of women's call for greater equality and electoral reform. Women's growing public confidence and greater social emancipation achieved through wider access to education and professional employment enabled improved access to London's public spaces which had previously been denied them by the restrictive respectability etiquettes of their social class and inherited gender role models. The close association of hairdressing and salon culture with other public leisurely activities such as theatre and cinema-going, art gallery and museum attendance and to West End shopping circuits also

helped to generate greater confidence regarding the negotiation of public forms of urban interaction.

One aspect of this broader public presence was to allow access in the inter-war period to forms of popular culture and design styling as seen in dance halls, cinemas, restaurants and hotels. Consequently, salon design was constantly updated to reflect and correlate to these emerging fashionable architectural and design features in which fashionable modernity was evidenced in new materials, updated technology and more scientific innovations. The impact of careful space management and efficient layout incorporated within a Moderne style was a key aspect of maintaining not only fashionability and attracting clients, but enhancing hygienic conditions. This chapter also demonstrates how the dominance of Paris influenced hair culture and salon design and protocols, and it signals how it affected West End establishments and by proxy national hairdressing, particularly influencing the changing power relations between the clients and the Master hairdressers.

Chapter Two focuses on why Mayfair was traditionally seen as the epicentre of British hairdressing and, in order to examine this, it investigates the significance of the location and its historical origins within London. My research also highlights the social and imaginative connotations that were built up around it as a wealthy residential neighbourhood and as a centre for elite consumption. The growth of Mayfair as a wealthy residential area spawned and housed many lucrative service trades, supporting the lifestyles of the residents. Many of these were not only situated in this prestigious address but became elevated in symbolic status as a result. In determining the route through which women's hairdressing became established in that exclusive, male-dominated stronghold and in detailing the types of luxury services offered to Mayfair's wealthy elites, and which distinguished its salon culture from

other urban, suburban and provincial salons, this chapter situates its appeal and its lure as a primary site for and of luxurious consumption. What this meant in terms of defining the status and prestige of a ‘Mayfair’ salon and stylist will become evident. While the reality of Mayfair’s geography and social standing is explored, this chapter also references the ways that it accrued greater symbolic status with its ‘illusoriness’ being also vital to the notion of an imaginary luxurious Mayfair which was used in a variety of ways by salons throughout the country to connote the notion of elite fame and celebrity frequently disseminated in positive accounts in the press and media. The chapter finishes with two in-depth case studies of Mayfair stylists, Raymond and Freddie French, as exemplars of all that Mayfair signified.

The main focus of Chapter Three is the revolutionising of West End hairdressing, which is demarcated by the differing retail and consumption practices of the older and newer worlds of hair developing in London. This chapter is broken down into three sections, the first of which investigates the changes to traditional Mayfair hairdressing in this period after 1950s. In the section entitled ‘White Revolution’, the philosophy of Vidal Sassoon is seen to jettison old-fashioned methods of hairstyling and shows that this shift was influenced by Raymond and Freddie French’s techniques in styling and attitude. Whilst Sassoon’s new ideas and innovative styling methods were to grip the hairdressing community, this discussion also demonstrate that Sassoon’s approach was in part reflective of a much broader and more complex set of socio-cultural factors. It will also argue that London’s growing rise to importance took advantage of a weakening Parisian authority in the field and that its generational social fluidity, popular energy and street style fashionability engendered the conditions for such a takeover.

The section entitled 'Colour Revolution' describes the change in attitude in Britain to colouring hair by both hairstylists and clients which up until the Sixties had often been seen as a 'shameful' practice. It examines how the various scientific discoveries and technological improvements pioneered in the period helped to make the process safer and cleaner achieving better results and increased popularity. With the emergence of Daniel Galvin, the profession of colourist was elevated from the bottom of the hairdressing hierarchy to the top. In the final section, entitled the Black Revolution, this chapter discusses not only the professionalization of Black hairdressing in Britain, but it demonstrates how for the first time, it became part of the 'Mayfair' hairdressing scene. The vast numbers of black people who migrated to Britain during this period of study, coupled with changing social and racial attitudes meant that not only were black entrepreneurs eager to invest and set up businesses, but that they demanded greater professionalization and they called for and won properly certificated courses in Schools and Colleges run by both black and white hairdressing staff.

Chapter Four focuses on the social and symbolic relationship between four small fashionable spaces: the salon, the boutique, the bistro and the discotheque and it demonstrates the fashionable correlation in the eyes of the younger generation between smallness and youthfulness. This concept will be set in opposition to the Establishment notions of post-war regeneration in Modernist architecture which was large-scale and offered a reduced level of intimacy and informality. The chapter argues that blanket Modernist schemes needed to allow urban rebuilding and regeneration after the devastation of World War Two, were found to be inappropriate models for West End shopping areas despite the much needed renovations to Oxford Street. This chapter also demonstrates that changes in affluence and society powered

a resistance to dominant authoritarian schemes and encouraged the setting up of small and distinctive entrepreneurial businesses of the types mentioned above in which small size, distinctive interior design and fashionability was linked to the tastes of young people. In part this responded to changes in the retail economy and to the effects that socio- economic forces had on inner city retail geographies. Moreover in particular relation to hair salons, this shift meant that the adaptation and cost-effectiveness of salon design resulted in one of the most significant forms of hairdressing salon of the period – the unisex salon.

My conclusion draws together many of my arguments, contending that any convincing examination of London's West End salons and hairdressing culture needs to be approached and understood within a set of wider socio-cultural and economic frameworks than have been previously been suggested. Hairdressing during this period fought for recognition as an integral part of the fashionable image and this through various factors was eventually and convincingly achieved. It is also clear that this recognition was the result of the concerted efforts of the elite hairdressing community while conceding that without Sassoon, there might have been a very different outcome. The transformations in 1960s hairdressing led to important developments in hairdresser training which demonstrated that good cutting was the secret of good hairdressing. The new attitudes that pervaded 1960s society in London permeated the world of hairdressing in social, cultural and aesthetic terms, through radical revisions, which resulted in new and exciting concepts in both hair and salon design. It can be concluded that the *Hairdressers' Journal* played a major part in the dissemination of these ideas from the West End to hairdressers in all corners of the British Isles, making positive improvements to the culture of hair and salon design.

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<sup>i</sup>Tosh sees this ability to recognise and make the ‘best sense of the past’ as an intellectual quality of abstraction and conceptualisation and so he lists some examples such as patterns of cause and effect; patterns of periodisation and patterns of grouping as the means to provide meaning that can be understood through certain similarities and therefore justifies labels such as ‘Renaissance’ or ‘Medieval’ (1991:126). In some respects this is a form of connoisseurship – to be able not only to understand the links but to recognise the points at which these start to change. These junctures may be imprecise and more gradual so that numeric dates become vague rather than irrelevant.

<sup>ii</sup> Other recent art historical periodisations of modern art practises can be found in the following publications. David Mellor pinpoints the dates as 1956-1969 in his text Mellor, David A. (1993) *The Sixties Scene in London*, London: Barbican and slightly differently in a later publication which includes France, Mellor, David A. & Gevereau, Laurent (eds.) (1997) *The Sixties: Britain and France 1962-1973 The Utopian Years*, London: Philip Wilson. There is closer agreement on Britain’s art periodisation as 1956-1968, identified in Stephen, Christopher and Stout, Katharine (2004) *Art and the Sixties: This was Tomorrow*, London: Tate. The Victoria and Albert Museum’s Exhibition ‘British Design 1948-2012’ which ran from 31<sup>st</sup> March to 12<sup>th</sup> August 2012, also identified British modern art and design practise within the confines of a sixty year period, from the 1948 ‘Austerity Games’ Olympics, to the 2012 Olympics ‘Friendly Games’ both held in London. The basic premise of this exhibition was that this was a period during which tradition and modernity stood cheek by jowl and that they defined a period of British Modern Design (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/exhibition-british-design/>).

<sup>iii</sup> As an example, I reference here the series of source books of John Peacock which look at fashions of the ‘30s, ‘40s, ‘50s, ‘60s, ‘70s, etc.

<sup>iv</sup> *Vogue* (1965) 1<sup>st</sup> January, p.112.

<sup>v</sup> This is outlined in Chapter Two, ‘Advance to Mayfair’.

<sup>vi</sup> Katharine Baird, now retired EMap Archivist, confirmed that even the *Hairdressers’ Journal* itself did not have as complete a set as the London College of Fashion. This undoubtedly has much to do with the background history of the College whose origins can be traced back to the Barrett Street Training School which taught hairdressing.

<sup>vii</sup> Biddle-Perry, Geraldine & Cheang, Sarah (eds) (2008) *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion* Oxford/New York: Berg.

<sup>viii</sup> John Santilli who worked for Vidal Sassoon as a stylist and then had much closer connections with Joshua Galvin in the field of demonstration and education has put up a large personal collection of photographs on pbase which has encouraged comments and queries from a huge number of ex-staff around the world. This can be viewed at:

[http://www.pbase.com/john\\_santilli/santilli\\_at\\_sassoons&page=1](http://www.pbase.com/john_santilli/santilli_at_sassoons&page=1).

<sup>ix</sup> Leon Simmons who was the son of one of Sassoon’s first employers has posted his memories of that period in Romaine’s of Park West which included some very useful information. This is to be found at the Sixtiescity fashion website <http://www.sixtiescity.net/Fashion/Hair.htm>.

<sup>x</sup> *The Genius of Design* which was a series shown in 2009 on BBC2 covered the history of design from the industrial revolution to the end of the twentieth century. Part 4 covered the 1950s and 1960s and focussed on the new technical and material innovations such as plastics and the transistor.

<sup>xi</sup> This is a sound recording but they also hold a copy of the typed transcript. There is a copy of the written transcript in the Emap, at the London College of Fashion and the quotes included have been transcribed from that document. Otherwise details are on the British Library catalogue website and is available at:

[http://catalogue.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=moreTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=BLLSA6729009&indx=2&recIds=BLLSA6729009&recIdxs=1&elementId=1&renderMode=popUp&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dsent=1&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BLCONTENT%29&frbg=&tab=local\\_tab&dstmp=1411070807828&srt=rank&mode=Basic&vl%28488279563UI0%29=any&dum=true&tb=t&vl%28freeText0%29=Leslie%20Russell&vid=BLVU1](http://catalogue.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=moreTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=BLLSA6729009&indx=2&recIds=BLLSA6729009&recIdxs=1&elementId=1&renderMode=popUp&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dsent=1&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BLCONTENT%29&frbg=&tab=local_tab&dstmp=1411070807828&srt=rank&mode=Basic&vl%28488279563UI0%29=any&dum=true&tb=t&vl%28freeText0%29=Leslie%20Russell&vid=BLVU1).

<sup>xii</sup> See Richard Corson (1965) *Fashions in Hair: The First 5000 Years*, London: Peter Owen Ltd.

<sup>xiii</sup> Examples being the renowned costume historian, Janet Arnold’s (1970) *Perukes and Periwigs* HMSO: London, or James Stevens-Cox (1965) *The Wigmakers art in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Hairdressers Registration Council: London.

<sup>xiv</sup> See for example, Helen Sheumaker (1997) “‘This Lock You See’: Nineteenth century Hairwork as the Commodified Self” in *Fashion Theory* Vol.1, Issue 4, pp.421-446.

<sup>xv</sup> Harold Leighton’s (2004) *From Salon to Celebrity: The British Hairdressing Story* comprises a collection of thumbnail biographies of the most famous protagonists rather than a comprehensive analytical catalogue of major hairdressers.

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<sup>xvi</sup> The online copies of Design from 1965-1974 are available at the VADS website  
<http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/diad/index.php>.

<sup>xvii</sup> Christopher Breward and Caroline Evans (2005) *Fashion & Modernity* Berg, Oxford; Christopher Breward (2004) *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* Berg, Oxford; Christopher Breward & Edwina Ehrmann (2004) *The London Look: Fashion From Street to Catwalk* Yale Univ. Press, London, USA.

## **From Style to Place: The Historical Emergence of the Hair Salon up to the Early 1960s<sup>xviii</sup>**

### **Introduction**

As a site of production and consumption, the modern ladies' hair salon can be seen as the concrete sign of a craft whose work has no permanence; its exterior and interior design mirroring the changing concerns of both hairdresser and client. The salon may be viewed similarly to the atelier of the fine artist or couturier: as a space in which creative ideas are formulated and consolidated into a fashionable product ready for display and consumption. While fashion is created away from the catwalk and the artwork usually made at a distance from the gallery, the salon space is simultaneously a site of industry and of its exhibition. Within this commercial environment, the act of creation and the practices of consumption become inextricably fused: the hair salon itself not only accommodates the cutting and styling processes, but is also seen as indicative of the hairdresser's skill, creativity, status and fashionability.

This chapter focuses on the emergence and development of the ladies' hair salon up to the early 1960s, which has received little academic attention, being only briefly incorporated into larger works on hair culture (Corson 1965; Cooper 1971; McCracken 1995; Cox 1999; Zdatny 1999). It is complex why any examination of this vital element has been largely neglected because in the twentieth century, the salon became central to women's' hairdressing in a way that it had never been before. Its function as a public commercial space was mitigated by the interior decoration which reflected the transitional bridge between that and private hairdressing. In this it was not dissimilar to the domestic space of the *boudoir*, which was a fusion of the more formal rooms of the private house and the more intimate space of the bedroom, drawing on these references to facilitate this transition. The delay of its appearance

until the latter nineteenth century is one that very few writers have attempted to explain and then only in varying degrees of depth or success. Buckley & Fawcett (2002) mention it in passing as part of an expanding democracy of fashion, set within a wider discussion of approaching twentieth-century modernity in which the commodification of fashionable femininity was rapidly disseminated through new media technologies to a much larger audience, thus increasing the awareness of women's beauty culture. That this new emphasis on beauty culture was driven by media advertising is their explanation for the appearance of hair and beauty salons. However this rationale is too simplistic as it does not explain how women were lured out of their homes to have their hair dressed in public.

Cox's study (1999) argues that the advent of women's salons in the West was largely determined by socio-political factors and she focuses on the shifting practises and priorities of middle-class etiquette as the prime factor. However, this account does not fully explain the circumstances leading to the appearance in the nineteenth century of small hairdressing businesses, which catered for working class women. Stevenson (2001) sees the acceptability of public hairdressing for women, within a wider frame of female emancipation, as being more particularly linked to celebrity culture and higher class patronage. While recognizing that these businesses came into existence and were operating, Stevenson does not explain their development, in an era when public *toilette* was socially unacceptable.

Cooper (1971) takes an anthropological approach proposing that while barbers' shops had proliferated from ancient times there has been no equivalent for women until relatively recently. Like Cox, Cooper believes that greater female emancipation was responsible for the salon's genesis. However, she has specifically pointed to moral and religious intervention thwarting its arrival and expansion.

Cooper's cursory speculations remain frustratingly elusive even though she has correctly argued that the increased blurring of the gender divide, rising male interest in hair cosmetics and greater democracy between men and women contributed not only to unisex styles in hairdressing, but also to the development of unisex salons in which it was created. Drawing on their evidence, this chapter will attempt to offer a more cohesive, historical explanation, in order to demonstrate that the advent and development of ladies' salons in the West was determined by a combination of factors, which both limited and accelerated their growth until and during the twentieth century. This chapter explores how these new, dedicated locations were a feature of the emergent metropolis in the twentieth century and, how such commercial sites provided for the altering social dynamics between hairdresser and client.

Furthermore, it will examine how moving the activity of hairdressing from the private and domestic to the commercial and public spheres, involved a constant consideration of how interior and exterior spaces were conceived and designed, affected by wider developments in science, technology, art and fashion and the emergence of a modern consumer culture in the period up to the early 1960s<sup>xix</sup>.

## **The Historical Origins of the Hair Salon**

Prior to the late nineteenth century, the dressing of women's hair was only considered acceptable if performed by other women and the notion of a solitary male ministering in public to what was a very private part of a lady's *toilette* was unthinkable (Trasko 1994: 11)<sup>xx</sup>. However, records indicate that a seventeenth century, French peasant named Champagne, protégé of a French noblewoman, opened the first ladies' hair salon in Paris (Cooper 1971:164) and he quickly acquired an amorous, dubious, moral reputation. As a result of the Catholic Church's condemnation of them on the

grounds of immorality, any rapid expansion in the number of Parisian salons was halted. As one contemporary critic observed, the Church may have had good reason to be concerned about the vulnerability of young women to the attentions of male advances since,

“This prig Champagne, by his cleverness in dressing the hair, and by his pushing ways, was run after and caressed by all the ladies ... Some he left with their hair half dressed; with others he dressed their hair one side, and then demanded a kiss before he would do the other side.” (Talleyrand des Réaux cited in Cooper 1971:164; Trasko 1994:43)

The Church’s success in preventing any further establishments from opening on these moral and religious grounds delayed the salon’s advent until the late nineteenth century (Cooper 1971:164; Trasko 1994:43; Stevenson 2001:138). Nevertheless, as a succession of male *artiste-coiffeurs* at the French Court continued to attend the female members of the royal family most famously Léonard, hairdresser to Marie Antoinette (Radford 1968), it is clear that it was unable to suppress masculine involvement in hairdressing all together.

Compounding these moral and religious issues there was greater control of the gendered interactions involved in hairdressing, effectively enforced by the progressive constraints of class etiquette and strict social protocols that emerged in the nineteenth century. These became increasingly important with the cultural and political shift of power from the old aristocratic elite of court society to the emerging new urban middle class, which was a much more clearly defined group than its eighteenth century predecessor. This emerging, more compact middle class sought to emulate the gentry, but having no protocol precedents, created their own which distinguished

them from the aristocracy and more particularly from the class below them. One feature of these changes was that they devised and enforced stricter rules of etiquette which resulted in numerous freedom limitations to the women of this class. Perhaps one of the most noticeable restrictions was the unacceptability of un-chaperoned middle-class women's access to public places, such as the city streets (Davidoff & Hall 1987; Ledger & Luckhurst 2000; Rappaport 2000). As a result, ladies hairdressing largely continued to be performed at home usually by women themselves, or by a maid, or in the case of wealthier women, by hairdressers.

However, from the mid-nineteenth century changes began to occur, partly motivated by what were increasingly seen as the impositions of etiquette and partly as a consequence of the wider impetus of progress through a growing political and social awareness of women's general lack of rights, as individuals and small groups of women became proactive in realising social freedoms (Wilson & Taylor 1989: 25-28). The arrival of the department store, in particular, is often presented as the vehicle for nineteenth century female emancipation, although to suggest that these stores alone facilitated the public appearance of genteel women is too simplistic. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (2000) have argued that feminist campaigners, in a bid to rid the city streets and public entertainment spaces of prostitution and general vice, enabled 'respectable' women access to the late nineteenth century metropolis. They also assert that a collective female challenge to the mid-Victorian ideal of the separate feminine domestic sphere resulted in an increasingly varied and visible presence of women in the city, which included,

... lady shoppers in the new department stores ... dancers ... philanthropists ... platform speakers ... clerical workers ... New Women ... shopgirls, typists, theatre-goers [and] music-hall stars (Ledger & Luckhurst 2000:54).

Clearly the influx of women into the public urban environment was not solely for the purpose of shopping. Nevertheless, department stores were an important contributory factor in female emancipation and the historical development of ladies' hairdressing. Housing a variety of 'shops' under one roof, the department store was considered a private space within the public sphere, and therefore suitable for middle-class women to visit alone (Nava 2000:50). Amongst the perfumery and haberdashery departments there appeared hairdressing salons; the first one in England is recorded in 1876 at Whiteley's in Westbourne Grove (Durbin 1984:28). Consequently, hairdressing within the newly appropriate space of the department store became an acceptable, fashionable practice and other stores quickly followed. Moreover, these spaces provided training grounds for some hairdressers who later established their own salons; the great 'Antoine of Paris' began his career in the Galeries Lafayette salon in 1901 (Zdatny 1999:6).

While the nineteenth century department store salons provided a legitimised stepping stone to the later establishment of independent ladies' hair salons of the twentieth century, small, one-man operated businesses had already begun to appear. There is little surviving evidence of the type and location of these enterprises, but it can be reasoned that as public spaces, they would not have been frequented by the middle or upper classes. From the evidence available hairdressing was often a subsidiary part of another business, for example (on a sliding scale of suitability) hat-shops, fancy goods and toyshops and less appropriately tobacconists shops, located at the rear of the premises in a 'back-room' (*HWJ* 1882b:5)<sup>xxi</sup>. No doubt these were primarily for the sale, maintenance and fitting of postiches. There is proof that a ladies and men's salon had existed in the Midlands since at least 1854 (*HJ* 1963:8:12) although aside from a ladies' hair tonic receipt (a relic originally issued by the

owner's grandfather), it is not known what sort of business was conducted there.

Recording the first meetings of the Hairdressers' Guild in 1882<sup>xxii</sup>, *The Hairdressers' Weekly Journal* (as it was then known), clearly indicated that ladies would find a hairdresser through advertisements in one of the women's magazines.

### **New Journalism, New Women, New Consumers**

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, magazines for women had proliferated in a way that could not have been imagined a century earlier. The history of women's magazines has been well documented<sup>xxiii</sup> but it is worth summarising the main points to gain a better understanding of their influence in disseminating techniques of femininity. Jennifer Craik argues that with the development of the class system as a result of the Industrial Revolution, the new middle class women 'were the visible correlate of the economic and social standing of their menfolk' (1993: 47). In order to demonstrate their husbands' wealth and status they had to learn the techniques of femininity. While there were prescribed etiquette manuals that dealt with taste, manners and the rules and appreciation of social intercourse and hierarchies, most women acquired a fuller range of feminine attributes through periodicals or magazines which started to appear in the early eighteenth century. The *Lady's Magazine* first published in 1770 (Adam Matthew Digital, no date) is generally acknowledged as the precursor and blueprint of modern magazines, comprising features such as:

... the agony aunt, occasional news reporting with a 'woman's' slant, features on famous women (past and present), cookery recipes, sewing patterns, medical advice, readers' letters, regular contributors. Like the modern women's magazine ... the *Lady's Magazine* was not constructed to be read

from beginning to end, but rather according to the reader's interest and priorities, article by article.' (Ballaster et al cited in Craik 1993: 48)

The characteristics of miscellany of writing and seriality, became firmly established between 1770 and 1830 (Beetham and Boardman, 2001). Magazines not only catered to the upper classes but new titles were launched which were targeted at the classes below them. These were largely didactic in nature and as Craik puts it, were 'akin to training manuals for the masses' (Craik, 1993:48). Through the editorial and visual imagery, social etiquette and deportment could be learnt, together with moral, domestic and personal advice (Craik, 1993 47-48; Breward, 2003:116-117).

The Victorian era saw a drive to increase general readership of all types of ephemera including women's magazines. This was achieved by updating older magazines for a wider audience and by production of completely new forms that were aimed at different groups and classes of women (Beegan, 2008; Beetham & Boardman, 2001). The magazines were largely dictated by the domestic ideal but there were also those that focussed on fashion and beauty creating a dichotomy between the notion of dutiful wives and mothers and beautification of the body (Craik, 1993). However, it was toward the end of the nineteenth century that social and technical catalysts wrought marked changes to women's magazines. Ledger and Luckhurst (2000) have defined the *fin de siècle* as an era which saw traditional types of literature overlooked for the more immediate gratification of popular cultural forms. Much of this new literature and New Journalism<sup>xxiv</sup>, as it became known, was channelled through magazines (Beegan, 2008), with the added benefit of new printing and photographic processes which transformed the culture of print (Ledger &

Luckhurst, 2000). Magazines had relied on woodcuts for imagery in the mid-Victorian period but with the advent of the half-tone process, publications from the upper to lower ends of the market profited from this new innovation through lavish illustration (Beetham & Boardman, 2001).

Gerry Beegan, in *The Mass Image* (2008), provides a detailed study of the half-tone process and the impact it made on print culture. Beegan states that it was a process derived from a number of methods which ‘used photography to transfer originals onto metal plates that were etched to produce raised surfaces that could be printed alongside letterpress type’ (2008: 9). The half-tone process was able to depict the unbroken tones of photography and painting through the use of variable sized dots which when looked at from a distance blurred into a facsimile of the real image. Beegan differentiates between the photographic print and the half-tone as having very different properties; while the photograph is an object in its own right the half-tone simply lifts the photographic image from its material base and in reproducing the surface alone, ‘emphasises the image at the expense of the photograph’s other qualities’ (2008: 14). Its ability to be mass-produced relegated it to the ordinary and ephemeral and it was therefore perfect for magazines which were not intended to be kept. While other forms of illustration and methods of printing them were still in use, the half tone image expanded the possibilities of simultaneity, enabling the late Victorian reader to visually connect the written content with the image on the same page.

The readership for this expanded New Journalism of the 1880s and 1890s was probably the first generation to have gained by the 1870 Education Act (Ledger & Luckhurst 2000). Prior to this there had been no public education system (Hobsbawm, 1987: 150, 178). The Act was the culmination of repeated lobbying by

the National Education League for free, non-denominational, national schooling. Just as important had been the pressure brought by Industrialists, who saw mass education as vital for the future of commerce, further persuading the Government. It wasn't until the 1890s when basic primary schooling became completely compulsory and without fees (<http://www.parliament.uk>), that young women of all classes were able to enjoy reading for pleasure. British literacy levels increased significantly in this period. In 1850 approximately one third to one half of the population was illiterate; by 1913 this had dropped to below ten percent (Hobsbawm, 1987: 345). Beetham and Boardman (2001) have identified that even those who were 'quarter-educated' had been targeted by publishers of the new, cheap, illustrated domestic magazines which offered the same miscellany of articles found in other women's magazines. The authors have documented the wide range of genres available and the myriad magazines that fell within them and it is clear that women readers, far from being simply a gendered whole, all came from different backgrounds with different interests and opinions.

However, the Women's Movement and the advent of the New Woman would eventually cut across all boundaries. The Women's Movement and its adjunct ideology of feminism, was essentially a middle-class development, which slowly began to recruit the lower-middle and working class women below them. Beetham and Boardman have stated that the term 'feminist' is problematic in this period but can be used as a form of shorthand for the journals which strove 'to provide a critique of contemporary culture and women's place within it' (2001: 61). Feminist periodicals were largely written and produced by women for women and may be categorised into two groups: the campaign journals which were intended for activists and the more general feminist titles which recorded these activities but included other

common features, such as letters, short stories or reviews. Both types may be considered as forms that educated women about their rights as well as the increasing prospects in the area of women's work (Beetham & Boardman 2001: 61). Women who had grown up in the lower-classes where illiteracy was high were now given access to socio-political information through mass education.

The term 'New Woman' had been coined in 1894<sup>xxv</sup> and by the end of the century was a familiar and public turn of phrase. Ledger and Luckhurst describe her as 'a cultural phenomenon made possible by the burgeoning women's movement of the late Victorian years' (2000: 76). While the 'New Woman' wasn't necessarily a feminist, she was a woman who was displaying growing independence and confidence<sup>xxvi</sup>. Eric Hobsbawm's (1987) thoroughly elucidating chapter on the New Woman explains in detail the socio-economic factors which traditionally denied women any rights. This situation eventually altered especially in the workplace through technology, accelerating the numbers of women in employment in occupations which became principally feminine, such as typists and shop girls. Women still tended to opt for more traditional female careers in entertainment but more ambitiously, careers in New Journalism and literary writing (possibly the largest body of female professionals) together with professional positions in teaching were now attracting females at the end of the century. Ironically, the very space which had relegated women to the margins and effectively denied them access to the public arena was turned to their advantage. Women used their autonomy and experience in domestic aesthetics to become interior decorators and it was formally professionalized when Candace Wheeler 'advocated interior decoration as an appropriate profession for women' in 1897 (Sparke, 2004: 63). The most famous of these female interior designers was the American Elsie de Wolfe, who had previously had a career as an

actress (Sparke, 2004). Hobsbawm (1987) argues that the phenomenal growth of daily, periodical and illustrated press together with the arrival of the advertising industry had facilitated opportunities for both sexes to become ‘professional creators’ and while this level of work may not have fulfilled the literary and artistic ambitions of these women they provided them with relative independence.

Hobsbawm also deems especially significant for middle class women, the *literal* freedom of movement, through the changes in fashionable dress advocated by the Dress Reform movement and the increased participation in sport, particularly cycling. The stereotype, much ridiculed in the press, was commented on in an article in the *Humanitarian* magazine by M. Eastwood in 1894: ‘[her detractors] point to the audacious young person who, seated astride a bicycle, dressed in knickerbockers and peaked cap, shoots past them on the public road. Their grimly prejudiced humour sees in her the fast woman ...’ Eastwood intimated that the nineteenth century was not quite ready for ‘her’ by counter-attacking with ‘The New Woman of today will be the woman of the future...’ (Eastwood, 2000: 91). While this description portrays a somewhat negative view of the New Woman, most significantly in terms of the new niche marketing of magazines, publishers realised that a new generation of young women, re-characterized as ‘girls’, were ripe for publications aimed specifically at them. Beetham and Boardman’s study of Victorian women’s magazines reiterates that late Victorian girls were in a position ‘... to consider work opportunities, university education and sport’ and that ‘the definition of girlhood constructed in the pages of this type of magazine’ was evidently affected by the Women’s movement (2001: 71).

Eastwood’s New Younger Woman, was not only verbalised in prose but visualised in illustration. This vision of female fin-de-siècle modernity with her new-

found confidence echoed the rapidly changing characteristics of metropolitan society. The quickening pace of daily life and the broad spectrum of innovation that emerged throughout society would have provided a momentum with which urban dwellers were expected to keep pace. To this end, late nineteenth century magazines adopted a friendly, editorial style helping late Victorians negotiate the cityscape, keeping them informed of the most important issues and the latest events. It has been noted that one of the methods able to document these rapid changes was the use of illustration. The speed with which hand-drawn sketches were executed, were equal to the fast paced changes in the metropolis. The illustrator, as Beegan puts it, was ‘intensely engaged with the visible surfaces of the modern city ... [his] “eagle eye” able to pick up on the slightest changes in the cut of garments or the styling of hair’ (2008: 21). Nowhere is this more evident than in the drawings of Charles Dana Gibson, whose ‘Gibson Girl’ (see Fig.1.1) became the epitome of the New Younger Woman. His pen and ink sketches with their rapidly hatched, open lines convey immediacy of subject; his youthful girls are both seductive and demure.

Techniques of femininity were constantly being updated and owing to the illustrated press, female consumers were taken through a new route. The interview, which became one of the most successful forms of illustrated editorial and staple of women’s magazines in the Nineties (Beetham and Boardman, 2001) made the connections between consumers and fashionable appearance through the rising cult of the celebrity. Depictions of actresses, society beauties, aristocrats and royalty had been incorporated into magazines over the course of the century but in the 1890s, the new photographic images together with the interview brought the subjects and personalities to life on the page. Women could and did use fashion plates to inform them but now, those being interviewed became advertisements for hairstyles, dress

and stylishness – living fashion, to which ordinary women out of the limelight could either relate or aspire. The type of beauty and model of femininity favoured at the end of the century was vastly different to that in the earlier part of Victoria’s reign which had been one of well-bred young women who were dainty and delicate in demeanour (Buckley & Fawcett, 2002: 19). It could trace its origins in part to the Pre-Raphaelite feminine ideal of the mid-nineteenth century which was represented through pronounced features and strong jaw-lines, dark or red hair and deeply reddened lips against pale, porcelain skin. This colouration was not dissimilar to the artificial appearance achieved by actresses and even more alarmingly by prostitutes through the use of cosmetics (Craik, 1993:158). The Pre-Raphaelite woman was deeply disturbing to mid-Victorian sensibilities in that she visibly portrayed all the indicators of dubious sexuality. By the end of the century all of these elements had become an acceptable part of the construction of femininity. Dainty physiques were replaced with the ‘Junoesque’; sexuality was particularly and visibly flaunted through the curvaceous, voluptuous silhouette, emphasised by décolleté necklines and cinched waists accentuating hips. Perhaps the women who most embodied this ideal were the actresses of the West End stage, particularly those in the music halls and varieties, whose rising popularity and fashionable appearance was communicated in the magazines and daily papers. Their customary use of cosmetics and their sexual allure became part of the rhetoric of the new feminine ideal.

The start of the Nineties heralded ‘The Golden Age’ of theatre, spawning new forms of light entertainment and bringing new writers, actors and actresses into the limelight. In the pre-film and television era, going to the theatre was an important social leisure activity and one which was easily taken advantage of in the big cities. While those who worked in the theatrical world generally came from the lower

echelons of society, it was the largely middle and upper classes that came to see their performances (Hobsbawm 1987:236). Women of all classes thus became exposed to a wide variety of feminine styling including American, French and those of the colonies from which a number of these actresses came. The diaries of the London middle-class couple, Linley and Marion Sambourne, are littered with references to theatrical performances they attended, going several times a week when they were in town. Linley Sambourne who worked as an illustrator for *Punch* magazine had strong connections with thespians and playwrights; *Punch's* editor, Frank Burnand, had written several hit plays, collaborating with Arthur Sullivan on at least one occasion as did George du Maurier, Burnand's colleague at the magazine, whose novel *Trilby* was adapted for the stage. The Sambournes had eclectic tastes, enjoying a wide variety of productions including concerts, pantomimes, plays and musicals (Nicholson, 1988: 63, 125-127).

While the department store structure mirrored the format of women's magazines, in its realisation of the commodities represented in their pages (Buckley & Fawcett, 2002:18), the new musical comedies of the theatre could also be compared to the miscellany of illustrated periodicals in their variety of content (Beegan, 2008: 25). Theatres and music halls proliferated due to the enthusiasm for light entertainment and the contemporary content was vividly complemented in the fashionable clothing of the glamorous female stars that graced the stages of these establishments. Frank Burnand's 1881 production *The Colonel* was the first to have sets and costumes in the Aesthetic style, while *Trilby* started a new craze and became a generic term for the hat worn by the lead actress, Dorothea Baird. Marion Sambourne's notes on plays in her diary include references to the loveliness of the dresses (Nicholson, 1988:125-127). The impact of actresses during this period cannot be underestimated. They were

much more accessible to most ordinary women than society hostesses or the aristocracy and in an era which had not yet developed film and cinema, they were the objects of idolisation. Actresses were judged on their ability, beauty and style rather than their backgrounds, the stage being their *tabula rasa* from which they could project a chosen variety of identities. Erika Rappaport reinforces this idea by observing that ‘Commodities, particularly clothing, provided the basic tools for playing with one’s identity’ and ‘In musical comedy, nationality and class [were] as easy to change as one’s hat’ (2000:210).

Popular actresses of the day were often interviewed in ladies’ magazines which served two functions; they brought familiar, famous faces into the private domestic space and they informed their readers of new upcoming stars of the stage. Articles on subjects such as the theatre companies and the plays these actresses performed in; methods of theatrical gesture and thespians public and private lives, appeared in all classes of magazine, avidly consumed by the readers who were able to emulate their style and fashion through the accompanying images. They were often pictured in their own homes (see Fig.1.2) and illustrations could incorporate the interiors as further indicators of modern taste (Beetham & Boardman, 2001). Rappaport suggests that the partnership of magazines, fashion and the theatre, created a visual and textual rhetoric that tapped into and fed upon the desires of women (2000:185) each aiding and abetting one another to increase product consumption. As the theatre gained in respectability and with it the actresses who had traditionally been viewed as dubious and immoral, it increasingly became the method through which women consumed a variety of fashionable goods. The support of high class dressmakers, milliners and furnishers improved the prestige of theatres and their companies by agreeing to provide costumes and stage props. Play reviews in

women's magazines were often accompanied by illustrations which taught the readers how to look and dress like the actresses portrayed and the sets demonstrated the latest styles in furnishings (Rappaport, 2000:185-187).

The intersection created by actresses in theatrical productions as fashion tableaux was summed up by the theatre critic William Archer after an 1896 performance of *The Gay Parisienne*. Noting the detailed attention given to the sets and the actresses' costumes he made the visual connection between the play and illustrated magazines, saying 'Consider its charms as an animated fashion plate' (Beegan, 2008:25). Indeed, fashion designers and couturiers such as Lucile were actively engaged in creating fashionable costumes for theatre performances, particularly in London's West End which had the greatest cachet (Buckley & Fawcett, 2002: 21; Rappaport, 2000:187-188). In this way, theatres, productions and the performing actresses acted as shop windows of fashion which was then reproduced and consumed via magazines and department stores.

Hobsbawm (1987) observes that societal changes for women directed greater public attention towards them as a consumer group and this was grasped by the press. Magazines began to cater for specific groups through structured appeal and content, but they were also determined by group incomes (Craik, 1993:49). Rappaport (2000) too has noted that consumption and femininity were not treated identically in all magazines and projected a range of contradictory femininities. While being careful to treat their readers as individuals, editors were fully aware of their class, economic position and aspirations, tailoring magazine content toward their assumed consumption tastes (Beegan, 2008). This undoubtedly would have affected the type of advertising placed in the periodicals. The punitive taxation costs and very strict controls by the press had meant that advertising before 1853 had been minimal,

uninteresting and confined to the end-papers of magazines (Beegan, 2008; Beetham & Boardman, 2001; Rappaport, 2000). Advertising was revolutionised after the 1880s as a result of print and technology innovations, coupled with the sudden increase and range of women's papers.

The increasingly metamorphic model of femininity at this time embraced a new guise: that of the consumer. Women were now being courted by the fashion and beauty business both in the editorial pages and through advertising whose illustrations and text were complementary to one another. At the end of the 1870s, editorials began advertising specific places and products through writers who presented themselves as 'urban strollers' or 'flâneuses'. These 'advertorials' as they became known, took the reader on an imaginary journey through the streets of the city, particularly London's West End, to acculturate them in the most fashionable places to shop and the correct commodities to buy, making direct links to the advertisements placed in the magazines. While a visit to the West End was not absolutely necessary, magazines, as a result of their strengthening association with business advertisers, implied that only the best goods and services were to be had there (Rappaport, 2000: 126-127). The West End in particular owed much of its high reputation as a shopping and leisure centre to the intensity and manner in which it was portrayed in magazines.

In the 1890s magazines began mixing adverts with editorial on the same page and many advertisements made reference to the articles or advice columns within which they were situated. The fusion of editorial and adverts together with illustrations which conveyed the new appeals of fantasy, emotion and aspiration, commodified the magazines themselves (Beegan, 2008). Towards the end of the century, there was growing criticism of the amount of advertising which now started to intrude the editorial pages; nonetheless many magazines began to rely upon it to

cover their costs. By the mid-1880s, half of *The Queen's* pages were filled with adverts but in fairness, they were visually more alluring and much more closely allied to the issues raised in the editorial (Beetham & Boardman, 2001). Advertising had by then almost shaken off its negative association with quack remedies; consequently businesses together with product manufacturers saw its potential through reputable magazine pages as a method of reaching a mass audience. Unlike the daily papers, the magazine might be kept indefinitely, thereby securing much greater chances of advertising revenue (Beegan, 2008). Beegan states that magazines rapidly became 'essential link[s] between the production of commodities and events and their consumption' (2008:18), the editorial playing as great a part as the new illustrated advertising. Readers were kept informed of:

Department store sales, theatrical performances, book publications ... new technologies, entertainments and fashions ... enabl[ing] readers to keep abreast of the rapidly changing world of goods and become skilled modern consumers' (Beegan, 2008:18).

The strong connection of fashionable spectacle that developed between the theatre, department stores and illustrated magazines, encouraged a greater democratic consumption through the miscellany of commodities produced and advertised by these organisations. Women's magazines cleverly bombarded their readers with the vicarious consumption of the metropolis and its commodities, stimulating 'new consumer-oriented anxieties' (Rappaport, 2000:132) which they then alleviated by guiding their readers safely through this maelstrom, to become cognisant and shrewd female consumers. Magazines, however, did not simply visualise the construction of femininity, they told their readers that it was their *duty* to be beautiful and instructed them in various ways in the techniques which would help them to achieve the ideal

(Buckley & Fawcett, 2002). Advertisements reinforced this type of instruction by offering products and facilities which enabled women to do so. With such a wide range of commodities and services presented via editorial and advertising, hairdressers would have taken advantage of magazines as an effective way of finding new clients and getting custom.

### **The Birth of the Modern Independent Salon**

Despite late nineteenth century hairdressers having their own premises, they or their assistants would invariably attend women in their own homes. Indeed, one of the hotly debated issues at those early Hairdressers' Guild meetings was 'how to get the ladies to come into their shops' (*HWJ* 1882:7:167). This may be why Karen Stevenson argues that Marcel Grateau, (Fig. 1.3) whose hairdressing salon established in Montmartre in the 1870s, was 'the only real forerunner of the feminised salons of the twentieth century' (2001:138). Yet it was by no means prestigious, since it served only poorer women upon whom he tried out his newly developed, 'Marcel' waving technique. Replacing popular but time-consuming curls and ringlets, the Marcel was a temporary wave or *ondulation* created with heated tongs pressed parallel to a comb. It produced a cascade of ripples in less than twenty minutes, and lasted until the hair was washed (Cox 1999:135-8). Not until Grateau 'waved' the hair of the celebrated actress Jane Hading (Stevenson 2001:139; Zdatny 1999: 21) and attracted widespread publicity, did the clientele change to those of the rich and famous who began to visit his salon instead of having their hair dressed privately (Zdatny 1999:21; Corson 1965:492-3).

Grateau's innovations marked the beginning of a gradual change in hairdressing experience with the balance of power tipping from the dictate of wealthy

clientele to the artistic talent of the individual coiffeur. Grateau became so sought after, that clients allegedly bid for appointments at the salon (Stevenson 2001:39; Zdatny 1999:21). Inevitably this transformed a previously ‘dubious’ public space into not only an acceptable, but also a highly fashionable place to be seen in. As Stevenson maintains: ‘The [hair]style itself, which could easily be copied, became a less important item of consumption than the place in which one was styled’ (2001:139). Grateau’s salon was hugely influential in establishing the links between stylistic and technological innovation and an integral relationship between salon and proprietor, becoming the blueprint for what was to develop into a middle-class, public, feminised space. That these salons, and those of department stores, were an urban phenomenon is hardly surprising since their success would have been dependent upon accessibility within, but not limited to, capital cities such as London and Paris. Emma Gieben-Gamal’s study of trade literature demonstrates that the growth of new salons in the interwar period extended to major cities and towns in Britain (1999:11). Cooper (1971) also notes their further expansion into suburbs and villages.

Perhaps the final consolidating factor in the expansion of the ladies’ salon was the increasing importance of haircutting rather than styling and dressing. Until the 1920s little or no cutting took place in the salon; women’s stylists waved, dyed or dressed their clients’ long hair with false hairpieces and padding. By the Twenties, the elaborate pre-World War I hairdos were considered cumbersome and outmoded, and the ‘bob’ – a style that was club-cut below the ear creating a blunt-edged, geometric look – became ubiquitously fashionable. While Cox acknowledges the correlative significance of the 1920s ‘bob’ cut as a signifier of the shift from dressing to cutting (1999:56), it is Stevenson who analyses the cut as instrumental in the

transformation of large numbers of barbershops into 'salons' to cater for the massive surge in female clientele (2001:143). Steven Zdatny also equates the global rise in hairdresser numbers between 1896 and 1936 to the diminishing number of barbers since the demand for this new cut, as it filtered from the cities to smaller towns and villages, encouraged existing barbers to adapt their premises to accommodate the more lucrative market for ladies' hairdressing (Zdatny 1999:14, 27).

There was another aspect to this expansion. The First World War had created new arenas for work by women in a variety of occupations. As a result, women's visibility in the workplace had become even more prominent but until the early 1970s, these female employment histories were ignored in the history books. Sheila Rowbotham's (1973) influential text and now famous phrase *Hidden from History*, not only refers to the way that women have been excluded from the standard historiographical canon but by proxy, to their lived experiences. Women's subordination was not simply tethered to the more popularly addressed histories such as class or politics; deeper and alternative examinations used the relationship between men and women to make sense of this subordination. In the area of work, socialist historians approached the subject of women's employment through 'the concept of patriarchy to help make sense of the fact that 'women have not only worked for capital, they have worked for men'' and that the 'social construction of heterosexuality in the late 19th century helped to maintain male power' (Hannam, 2008).

This underpins Cox's discussion of women in the hairdressing workplace as being both gender-related and equally invisible through subservience (Cox 1999:68). There had been great resistance from male hairdressers to the entrance of women into the profession and this no doubt was due to wider societal prejudices. In the first

place, Buckley and Fawcett reiterate that late nineteenth century culture generally saw the woman's role as being maternal and domestic, despite women's efforts to the contrary. Buckley and Fawcett also noted the parallel 'threatened but highly constraining patriarchal order' whose dominance imposed limitations and financial dependence on many if not all women (Buckley & Fawcett, 2002:45). Secondly, this was seen as inappropriate work for a lady (Cox 1999:68). The types of acceptable occupations for women such as housekeepers, governesses, schoolteachers, nurses and seamstresses still implied domestic and maternal vocations, while other employment outside of these spheres were either office or shop work. However, female shop work had its own distinctly acceptable boundaries and the area of hairdressing slid between the margins of suitability and inappropriateness. This was further exacerbated by the confusion between barbers and hairdressers. Cox notes the ambiguous opinions in the late nineteenth century articles of the *Hairdressers' Weekly Journal*. Cutting hair and shaving, ergo barbering, was man's work and 'women were too 'little' and thus too delicate to enter such a masculine preserve' even though some women did. The *Journal* denounced the latter as razor wielding 'viragos' and 'if they could shave they must be suffragettes!' (Cox 1999:70).

Hairdressing was supposedly the realm of women but the accounts infer that this was a 'profession' almost exclusively available to men. It is the idea of the professional that was really the dividing line between the two genders; women, as second-class citizens, could not be considered professionals. Besides, attitudes by the mid-nineteenth century towards female workers were largely negative (Cox 1999:9, 68, 71). More tellingly, an article from the *Journal* itself disclosed the very adverse attitudes to women practitioners before World War One. The article spoke of how the war had robbed the Trade of foreign men who had contributed so much to the overall

ethos of British hairdressing. The ensuing shortage of male hairdressers meant that there were difficulties 'in the endeavour to meet the demand for capable workers, and in the result the long despised **Female Labour was Enlisted**' (*HWJ* 1935:5:2482).

In the male dominated world of hairdressing, the shortages created by conscription as well as the deportation and internment of 'undesirable aliens', allowed women to 'gain a foothold' in the profession as hairdressers in salons for the first time; ninety-seven percent of master hairdressers were ascertained as foreign in a survey conducted before the war (Cox 1999:71, 73). While there had been a female workforce within the industry prior to the conflict, most women were only employed as cashiers or in menial jobs such as shampooing and drying assistants (Trasko 1994:43,155), despite there being a number of successful female-run and owned hairdressing businesses outside of London. With the popularity of the bob in the Twenties, and as demand outstripped supply, female hairdressers and assistants proliferated. It also resulted in the setting up of technical training schools specifically aimed at women, such as the Barrett Street School and employment bureaus for those women who wished to enter the Trade (Cox, 1999:71-75). These factors combined began to alter the production of hairdressing from a divided to a better integrated practise. From the perspective of the 1930s, Gilbert Foan states that 'All hairdressers became of necessity ladies' hairdressers, with a consequent rise in status' (Foan 1931:5). By this, he meant that for those who had pursued this new course of hairdressing, not only the division in practise between barbers' and hairdressers' had almost ceased to exist as a result of greater client democratisation, but also that the practise itself was not merely levelled but improved and modernised (Cox 1999:57).

## Salon Design

Changes in hairdressing practises and processes cannot be seen as isolated from parallel shifts in social context and the increasing accessibility of exterior physical spaces to a female clientele, but they must also be understood in relation to parallel developments within the interior spaces of the salon itself. The late nineteenth-century consolidation of ladies' hairdressing had seen the progressive addition of 'ladies' rooms' to some entrepreneurial barbershops, which could be discreetly entered via a separate doorway in order to avoid contact with male clients (Cox 1999:68). The arrival of the cubicle system before 1914 also introduced a further element of privacy for female clients but this was not universally adopted until the interwar period (Gieben-Gamal 1999:18). Sources indicate that most turn-of-the-century interiors were 'open' salons where clients waited, and cutting or dressing took place in full view of everybody (Foan 1932:8). Cox's description of them as mostly dark and dreary places with heavy furnishings (1999:86), is supported by photographs of Dickensian receptions and interiors in trade publications such as the *Hairdressers Journal* (*HJ* 1954:11:30-31). The opulent luxury of salons such as the one opened in Harrods in 1894, stood in sharp contradistinction to the many small salons such as Raoul's in Great Portland Street, London (Fig.1.4) that had to cope with unsuitable or cramped interiors and clumsy, old-fashioned furnishings. Pictured before and after modernization and conversion in the 1950s, Raoul's was featured in the *Hairdressers' Journal*, which commented that, 'it bore the air of an old, well-established, conservative business where few things had been altered for half a century' (*HJ* 1954:11:31). Raoul's was typical of the claustrophobic interiors of early salons with their customary use of heavy counters, showcases, wall cases and stock drawers. The

furniture made a spacious reception appear stuffy and cluttered (Foan & Wolters 1950:643) with the cubicle system simply compounding the feeling of being closed-in.

The most notable difference between the images of ‘old’ and ‘new’ is the dramatic change from dark to light. It is as if the shutters have been thrown open at the windows to allow light to stream in, bathing the interior in a dazzling glow. Penny Sparke (1995) discusses this introduction of light in the context of aesthetic modernisation as relative to Modernist ideology, which was reaching its zenith before World War II. Modernism’s pre-occupation with letting in light and air, was tightly knitted to the notion of health and hygiene and the visual distillation of cleanliness was manifested through the dominant use of white. In the eyes of the Modernist architect, Le Corbusier, the wholesale adoption of plain whitewashed walls was akin to spiritual and bodily cleanliness; disease lurked only in dark, dusty, dirty corners (Sparke, 1995: 116-7). This is further reinforced by Paul Overy (2007) who demonstrates that much Modernist architectural design drew on the early sanatoria, built at the turn of the twentieth century in response to the growing concern about tuberculosis, which killed more adults in the Western world than any other disease in the late nineteenth century. Medical opinion at that time laboured under the belief that plenty of sunshine, rest and fresh air, was the proper treatment and to that end the buildings were designed to facilitate these cures. Overy says that the new sanatoria were amongst the most technologically advanced buildings of their time and held tremendous fascination for Modernist designers, influencing their choice of materials in both exterior and interior design. More particularly the simplicity of the structures and their decoration of white painted walls were ‘potent visual symbols of health and hygiene ... designed not only to be easy to clean but also *to appear to be spotlessly*

*clean*' (2007: 29). Overy makes another important link between the early snow-covered mountain resorts in which the first sanatoria were situated and the decoration of the institutions built later in geographically lower suburban areas, which were probably painted dazzling white to evoke the natural snowy settings of their mountainous counterparts (2007:26). This, together with the clinically white interiors created a feeling of healthy living and as Overy states, 'merging it organically with the garden and surrounding landscape ... contrast[ed] with the old idea of shutting out the outside world'(2007:35).

While Raoul's conversion largely follows Modernist principles of light, airy, hygienic, uncluttered spaces, which Sparke argues are determined through masculinity, there are feminising, decorative influences which are at odds with and pre-date these ethics. The softened, sweeping curve of the reception desk; the graphic sketches of eighteenth century hairstyles on the wall behind it and the vases filled with fresh flowers on either side; these elements are extended to the salon workspace where more flower-filled vases are visible and a vine-covered trellis diffuses the area above the rear door. This feminisation harks back to the turn of the twentieth century interior designs of Elsie de Wolfe who drew on eighteenth century France for her ideas. Her insistence on the inclusion of flowers in all her interiors was to eliminate the atmosphere of coldness (Sparke, 1995: 148), even going so far as to include trellis work to invoke a garden feel.

The decoration of these little salons was also redolent of the lady's domestic *boudoir*. De Wolfe's book, *The House in Good Taste* (1913) stated that '*boudoir* furnishings are borrowed from both bedroom and drawing-room traditions' and this meant that it included furniture associated with both relaxation and work (see Fig. 1.5). The *boudoir* according to de Wolfe had 'lost its proper significance', being

often confused with the bedroom or dressing room, but had ‘evolved into a sort of office *de luxe*’ where the mistress could conduct a range of domestic business activities (de Wolfe, 1913). De Wolfe described it as being different to the large, general reception rooms in the house because it was usually a small, more intimate space; its informality was not to be confused with any sense of impropriety. This was a ‘dignified’ room where a woman could work, rest and receive her chosen friends (De Wolfe, 1913). Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman Jr’s earlier book (1898) *The Decoration of Houses*, similarly defined the modern *boudoir* as having little commonality with its eighteenth century predecessor, being more like a private sitting room which would indubitably include a writing desk and ‘a *lit de repos* for resting and reading’ (Wharton & Codman, 1898:130). However because it was a feminized, private room its decoration was less formal, lighter and more delicate, in keeping with the associated Rococo style, suggested by its name (Wharton & Codman, 1898).

The Rococo style became fashionable in the mid-eighteenth century. Often described as being lighter and more delicate, it was a retaliatory response to its heavy and dramatic predecessor Baroque, much favoured by King Louis XIV. According to Frederick Litchfield (1893), the gradual reduction in size and grandeur of both exterior and interior decorative devices was the result of changes in the social condition of the French upper classes. Litchfield states that the extravagances of the old King had impacted on the finances of the nobility and these large gestures in decoration and furnishing were seen as part of that decadence. The *grand salon* or reception room which had been a significant and integral part of the architectural layout of Baroque houses gave way to suites of much smaller rooms, in which the elegant and pretty *boudoir* (see Fig. 1.6) assumed much greater and more fashionable importance, in keeping with the more modest demeanour of French high society

(Litchfield, 1893). As the reign of Louis XV progressed, so the interior decoration of these smaller rooms altered quite conspicuously. The majestic grandeur of the furnishings and trappings of Louis Quatorze style were replaced by smaller-scaled decoration; furniture was designed with more ‘sweeping curves’ and often upholstered in ‘soft colored silk brocades or brocatelles’; the lightness and delicacy of the highly decorative furniture, was better suited to the smaller, effeminate apartment (Litchfield, 1893). The use of finely detailed marquetry inlay and Chinese lacquerware was also prominent; while delicate Sèvres porcelain plaques decorated the dainty tables and cabinets gracing the *boudoirs* of the upper classes. The ‘curved endive’ carving in woodwork which had started to make an appearance toward the end of Louis XIV’s reign now became ubiquitous along with the appearance of:

doves, wreaths, Arcadian fountains, flowing scrolls, Cupids, and heads and busts of women terminating in foliage ... carved or moulded in relief, on the walls, the doors, and the alcoved recesses of the reception rooms, either gilded or painted white; and pictures by Watteau, Lancret, or Boucher, and their schools, [as] appropriate accompaniments (Litchfield, 1893)

Indeed, when Louis XVI and his Queen Marie Antoinette came to the French throne, the style was further pared down and made less ornate, in keeping with the Queen’s taste for greater simplicity. The lighter Rococo style with its delicate decorative elements was often found in the new and fashionable *boudoirs* of the female French aristocracy and in due course became associated with feminine taste. Penny Sparke notes that the Rococo Revival in mid-late nineteenth century interior decoration became an aesthetic vocabulary which signified an understanding of ‘good

taste', particularly in America, where it was avidly taken up by interior decorators and widely imitated. However, the gilded '*Pink and White Tyranny*' of neo-Rococo was too much for some as its popularity spread (Sparke, 1995:46). By the time Wharton and Codman were writing, elements of Rococo were still considered a necessary component of *boudoir* style (Fig.1.7). As they pointed out however, the *boudoirs* so often described as elaborately furnished and ornately decorated were those usually found in palaces and large aristocratic houses. Their research showed that the private eighteenth century house *boudoir* tended to be much simpler in its decoration (Wharton & Codman, 1898:131). In discussing the decoration of the modern late nineteenth century house, Wharton and Codman advocated this simpler style, as it was perfectly adaptable to the new ideas on health and hygiene with plain painted or panelled walls and washable materials such as chintzes and cottons rather than gildings and silks (Wharton & Codman, 1893:170).

Nevertheless, this did not seem to be a primary concern where de Wolfe was concerned. De Wolfe emphasized the importance of the *boudoir* as a feminine gendered space which differentiated itself from the formality of other public rooms in the house. She stated that it was a room where women could have free reign in feminized decoration that might not be appropriate elsewhere in the home:

Here you may have all the luxury and elegance you like, you may stick to white paint and simple chintzes, or you may indulge your passion for pale-colored silks and lace frills. Here of all places you have a right to express your sense of luxury and comfort (de Wolfe, 1913).

De Wolfe pre-empted the Modernists with her use of white painted walls and muslin curtains to let in light and air but it was her feminising touches which differentiate her intentions from the calculated coldness that was to underpin the future Modernist

aesthetics. Sparke identifies de Wolfe with conservative modernism<sup>xxvii</sup> which aided women in the interwar years to adjust to and negotiate modernity in design (1995:150).

The rise in women's status as burgeoning consumers was matched by the rapid expansion of ladies hairdressing and hair salons in the 1920s, which Zdatny describes as 'monument[s] to the bright new age of fashionable consumption' (1999:18).

Modernisation was reasoned in principles of design that incorporated new materials and technologies into the physical appearance of salons. Zdatny conjures up a mental picture of a typically up-to-date salon of 1920 with electric lighting; marble-topped sinks with hot running water; banks of gas or electric hairdryers; recliner chairs; electric curling irons and a new linoleum floor. While no known examples of these fashionable ladies' salons exist in London, a comparable example for men can still be seen in the basement barbershop of the former Austin Reed store in Regent Street (Fig.1.8)<sup>xxviii</sup>. The oval-shaped interior is dominated by 'a continuous wave-scroll ceiling light' (Friedman, 1988:19) beneath which a central island dressing station is situated and while it does not cater to women, the interior decoration and materials are indicative of the type of décor found in ladies' salons. The use of Travertine marble floor tiles and pale blue vitrolite wall panels, together with more obvious Art Deco devices such as chevron-embellished screens and geometric bevel-edged mirrors complete with chrome fittings, gives some idea of the stylization in female salon interiors that Zdatny describes.

These new 'modern' salons that embraced the technology and materials of the future attracted but also reflected the changing ideal of the New Woman. Modernity and the New Woman were symbiotic, irrespective of the period in which they appeared but the fin-de-siècle version, having rolled up her sleeves in war work,

emerged in the Twenties if not thinking, certainly looking very differently to her previous incarnation. Sumiko Higashi describes her thus: ‘... the postwar new woman, unlike the athletic but curvaceous Gibson girl, was boyish. She was, in [F. Scott] Fitzgerald’s words, “lovely and expensive and about nineteen”’ (Higashi, 2002: 299). Sally Alexander’s description of the young working girl of the period, ‘– lipsticked, silk-stockinged and dressed ... like an actress’ (1994: 203), was linked to J. B. Priestley’s (1934) ‘third England’ modernity which he felt, as a concept, had more in common with America though probably confined to the London environs. The hybridised Anglo-transatlantic elements of his list – giant cinemas, dance-halls and cafés, cocktail bars and swimming pools, wireless sets, film star magazines, swimming costumes, tennis rackets and dancing shoes (Priestley, 1934: 375-6) which, according to Alexander, appeared to be feminising England (1994: 204) - conjure up a vision of playfulness and fun juxtaposed against a sophisticated sensibility, to which young women eagerly aspired. The modern, youthful, fashion silhouette was ‘Deco-ised’ becoming more geometric in line while transforming the body shape to resemble something akin ‘to the modernist machine aesthetic’ (Sparke, 2004: 30).

Above all, Priestley’s third England egalitarianism meant that not only were film and radio arbitrary in who they addressed, but also the inexpensiveness of these new media meant that many more women had access to them. Cinema and advertising especially were instrumental in visualising a modernity that ordinary women had probably not dreamt of before, with tantalising images that offered alternative romanticised femininities to those encountered in real life (Alexander, 1994: 205). Perhaps nowhere more than in early film was the embodiment of the new modern woman captured and so widely disseminated. Higashi lists just a few of the films which offered a model of the post-war New Woman – *The Flapper* (1919);

*Wine of Youth* (1924); *The Plastic Age* (1925) and *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928) whose lead actresses such as Joan Crawford, Clara Bow, Theda Bara and Louise Brooks, personified the changing aspirations of young women (Higashi, 2002: 299). In the introduction to *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*, Jennifer Bean and Diane Negra note that across the essays of the anthology, the post-war New Woman has been reiterated in a variety of guises appearing as ‘childish tomboy, *garçonne*, athletic star, enigmatic vamp, languid diva, working girl, kinetic flapper and primitive exotic’ demonstrating the diverse ways open to women to construct early twentieth century modern identity, stretching from America to Shanghai (2002: 14, 21). However they all adhere to internationally recognisable motifs of modernity which define them as a group. In the Chinese film industry based in Shanghai in the Twenties and Thirties, the New Woman’s modernity ricochets between East and West. The first female Chinese film star Wang Hanlun, described as ‘one of the few rare “modern girls” of the time’ (Zhen, 2002: 522), demonstrates her modernity by wearing Western fashionable attire, makeup and even had her long hair ‘bob-cut’ on screen which was seen as a metaphoric break with the traditional past. Most significantly for the Chinese audience (especially young women) it is her unbound feet, shoed in fashionable Western footwear which announces the complete detachment from Chinese tradition and these things combined, project her as symbolic of the modern world (Zhen 2002:522).

Silent film stars as a new phenomenon were closely scrutinized by the press and public, their appearance having as much impact on female audiences if not more than the films themselves. Gloria Swanson’s screen debut provoked the now customary responses in terms of her acting but the fan magazines eulogised over her fashionable looks, and (in an inverse of Wang Hanlun’s Westernised appearance)

wrote about ‘the oriental look of her exotic hairdos’ and how the changes in coiffure altered the personality of the film character. For example *Motion Picture Magazine* commented that Swanson’s hair bobbed, immediately transformed her into a playful child while an upswept ornamented hairstyle altered her personality to that of sophisticated society woman (Higashi, 2002:320). While the magazine maintained that Swanson believed in the psychology of clothes, interestingly the emphasis is firmly on her changing coiffures.

Cosmetics also played a crucial part in creating character in early silent films, aside from their obvious function of retaining and accentuating facial features under powerful studio lights (Craik, 1993:160). The type of make-up used in the theatre was not suitable for cinema, especially close-up shots, as it set like a mask and limited facial expression because it cracked. The new tungsten lighting which appeared as a result of the introduction of sound<sup>xxix</sup> was much more intense, further exacerbating the problem. Max Factor initially created a pancake cream to replace the theatrical ‘stick’ which facilitated freedom of expression and then further refined it for the new lighting which emphasised every detail (Massey, 2000:78). The close-up shot, which had been a regular feature of early film, was designed to draw attention to and focus upon a particular object or aspect. It became a crucial cinematic technique to convey facial expression (Landay, 2002:237) and when concentrated into the extreme close-up, would focus on a facial feature such as eyes or lips.

With the new camera techniques, there was a need to emphasise and define specific facial features; actresses like Theda Bara employed the services of beauty consultants such as Helena Rubinstein to find solutions to the problems caused by close-up film shots. According to Rubinstein, the use of any kind of eye make-up was unheard of in America in 1917 but she drew on her skills and knowledge of

cosmetics, to create a streak-free mascara which ‘drew attention to [Bara’s] lovely eyes so that they dominated her whole face ... [and even] added a touch of colour to her eyelids. The effect was tremendously dramatic’ (Craik, 1993:160). The smouldering eyes and dark lips of the vamp, the cupid-bow shaped lips and seductive eyes of the flapper girl, the long fluttering lashes and rosebud mouth of the demure heroine, were all looks created by cosmeticians such as Helena Rubinstein, Elizabeth Arden and Max Factor for Theda Bara, Clara Bow, Joan Crawford, Mary Pickford and other actresses of the silent movie era. ‘Hollywood’s manufacture of female screen stars’ made vibrant cosmetics acceptable in real life (Craik, 1993: 160). Ann Massey extends this idea by stating that the creation as well as acceptance of make-up was a result of the process of filming itself in that Hollywood cinema developed it primarily to overcome technical problems (2000:78).

The attraction of these individual film star ‘looks’ meant that female cinema-goers were influenced by their on-screen appearance. The film industry created a commercial demand for the cosmetics; Max Factor launched a range called ‘Society Make-Up’ in the late 1920s which was much more palatable for respectable young ladies (Craik, 1993: Massey, 2000). Women reproduced the looks of their screen idols by buying or making copy outfits, purchasing make-up and altering their hairstyles to create their own version of a glamorous image (Massey, 2000:77). Cashing in on this appeal, magazine adverts constantly linked beauty products and services to film star looks in a drive to promote their consumption. Lori Landay (2002) discusses ‘the power of the flapper’s gaze’ as being pivotal to selling mascara and eye make-up, noting how often adverts used the strap-line ‘eyes that speak’ - an incongruous but compelling notion for the would-be consumer (Landay, 2002: 226) but one which would instantly have been recognised as a cinematic reference.

Adverts enhanced by actresses' photographs transferred that power from the screen to the consumer via the product which became indispensable in its attainment.

Women's interest in hair, cosmetics and fashionable dress increased therefore, encouraged by Hollywood films and disseminated in a variety of women's illustrated magazines. In an effort to attain this aura of Hollywood glamour, women eagerly assimilated the appearances and gestures of their screen idols and then looked to magazines for the products and services to help them accomplish it. This meant that hairdressing and especially the salon experience became integral to the attainment of a sophisticated and glamorous, feminine identity. Salon designs reflected this shift.

During the interwar period the most prevalent but diametrically opposed styles were Art Deco, a highly decorative and luxurious form and Modernism, which eschewed decoration, having a functional, pared-down appearance. Neither one was entirely suited to the needs of ladies' salons which required a degree of glamour as well as basic functionality. The Moderne however, defined by Emma Gieben-Gamal (1999) as a hybridisation of Art Deco and Modernism, featured the use of new materials, especially chrome, coupled with decorative elements. It is a style most frequently associated with cinema design of the period. There are discrepant views amongst academicians and writers about the classification and terminological use of the designation 'Moderne'. Fiona Leslie refers to the Moderne style slightly differently to Gieben-Gamal as a synthesis of 'Art Deco materials with the minimalist lines of the Modern Movement' (2000:16). Sparke refers to the Moderne style as 'French-derived', differentiating it from American streamlining which was occasionally labelled as 'modernistic', both being in complete contrast to the austerity of High Modernism (2004:30). Anne Massey contradicts Sparke by defining the Moderne style as being 'based on the inspiration of streamlining [and] deliberately

sold as being American' but diverges from Gieben-Gamal in her claim that although it combined 1920s Art Deco chic, it did so with the smooth, sheer surfaces achieved by the new industrial manufacturing techniques rather than Modernism's aesthetic (2000:79, 82).

Howard Mandelbaum and Eric Myers (1985) have a very different perspective on the Moderne, arguing that it is a progressive development within 'Art Deco' which they theorise is an all-encompassing description of interwar design aesthetics. This probably derives from their allusion to Richard Guy Wilson's hypothesis:

If we can use the term Art Deco not to designate a specific style, but rather in the sense that it is inclusive and connotes the tremendous fertility of ideas, culture and design, beginning in the early 20th century and reaching a peak in the 1920s and 1930s, we will better serve our purpose. (Wilson, cited in Mandelbaum & Myers 1985: 4)

The moniker Art Deco (a contraction of the 1925 Paris exhibition title *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs Et Industriels Modernes*) was not coined until the mid-Sixties and it was simply known as the Moderne style in its heyday.

Mandelbaum and Myers surmise that the misuse of the term has meant a number of styles including 1920s Modernism, Bauhaus and Russian Constructivism have variously been subsumed into this generalisation. They state that art historians have categorised Art Deco as the style that emerged from the 1925 Exhibition till the early 1930s and that 'Streamline' or 'Art Moderne' should more properly denote the mid-to-late Thirties transformation from the ornate, detailed Twenties form to much cleaner simpler lines. However, this categorisation is also questionable. Alistair Duncan maintains that Art Deco was already waning by 1925 having begun life much earlier, emerging circa 1908-12 and that while the term *Moderne* was used at the

inception of both Art Deco and Modernism, they are separate styles (Duncan, 1988: 7-8).

Mandelbaum and Myers do however provide a useful and effective definition of 'Streamline Moderne' which emphasises what they call 'more Spartan curvilinear forms' and a 'marked reduction in ornamentation' (1985:2). This means that the intricately detailed, multi-faceted surfaces of earlier Art Deco (rooted in Art Nouveau) were ironed out to create broader, smoother curves and in favouring the colour white, had more in common with Modernist aesthetics. The transition was effected through streamlining which still retained decoration (a distinctly anti-Modernist principle) but smoothed and flattened it into the compositional structure. More compellingly, the authors point to the impetus of technological advances generated prior to and during World War One, which created a general awareness of power, energy and speed (Mandelbaum & Myers, 1985:1). In turn, industrial, technological modernisation itself affected the aesthetic changes in Art Deco style. Early Art Deco in its use of precious materials was associated with Parisian luxury and wealth, while the more easily mass-produced Streamline Moderne democratised it, by using cheaper, more industrial materials such as plastics, chrome and aluminium.

Duncan notes that in Britain in the Twenties, new building types such as cinemas that had no architectural tradition 'tried to be self-consciously modern (or *moderne*)', which often resulted in indiscriminately applying elements from both the International Style and Art Deco (in its strictest sense) making it difficult to determine from whence individual features derived (1988:179). However, by the 1930s, the word *Moderne* had registered in the British psyche and was understood as a clear and distinct style which suited mass-consumption in its paradoxical aesthetic inferences: simplicity of design which conveyed a 'luxurious atmosphere of comfort' (Massey,

2000:137). That the Moderne was indicative of the glamour and modernity of Hollywood, suited the taste of the general British public far more than Continental Modernism which appealed to an intellectual elite minority. In this case, Gieben-Gamal's definition is justifiable not simply on the grounds that there appears to be many different and indecisive definitions, but that popular taste dictated a look which appealed to the masses in their day-to-day surroundings whether at home, work or play. This was especially so in the spaces dedicated to women such as beauty and hairdressing salons which were fundamental to achieving a modern, fashionable, glamorous appearance. Women probably felt that the design of these shops was in some way indicative of the work carried on there and should support and reflect the image they desired. Massey also makes another important observation that the Moderne style was linked to hygiene as it was often used in domestic bathrooms and tied-in to Modernist notions of cleanliness by using the colour white or cream (2000:122, 124). Drawing on the evidence outlined, it is my opinion that the Moderne (with a capital 'M') can be defined as a style which has been shaped by selective elements of Parisian early Art Deco, the International Style (Continental Modernism) and American industrial streamlining. Because the aforementioned authors have effectively argued that it defies categorisation as any one of these forms, it should be considered as a distinctly separate style and because of its association with glamour and the cinema, might fare better as 'Hollywood Style' to avoid confusion. Even more significantly for the period, Massey has evaluated that it was a style which could be easily applied to retail exteriors, thereby being a more economical modernisation than a complete rebuild (2000:83). This meant small businesses like hairdressers could afford to update their establishments to keep pace with modern fashions.

Undeniably, in whatever shape or form it appeared, Art Deco was used to adorn a wide range of architecture, not simply those establishments catering to women. However in contrast to Modernism, Art Deco was seen as a glamorous style, predominantly associated with women. Duncan (1988) notes that many commercial and industrial buildings built in Britain in the period, were necessarily more restrained and while their construction might be simple, their applied decorations were not only lavish but, in many instances feminising, using intricate and curvilinear flora and fauna in the relief. He describes these aforementioned decorations as ‘decidedly Parisian shapes’ (Duncan, 1988:182) which, as I explore later in this chapter, links Paris to the notion of femininity. This idea probably relates to what Katharine McClinton has postulated as a gender division in Deco style. McClinton argues that there was a difference between the more ‘masculinised’, geometric aspects of the style and the ‘“feminine” curvilinear mode’ (Fischer, 2002:481) which derived from its predecessor, Art Nouveau, but was less sinuous and meandering. This feminine side also incorporated the use of motifs traditionally associated with femininity, such as flowers and looped garlands, depictions of ‘tinkling’ fountains, small birds and biches as well as the female nude. Many of these devices may be observed in the previously discussed Rococo style and its revival in the late nineteenth century for the feminised space of the domestic *boudoir*. It can be seen that the use of such feminising motifs persisted in the decoration of hair salons whether Rococo or Art Deco.

The youthful, nymph-like female form was a fundamental motif in Art Deco design and, in film, the Art Deco vehicle invariably starred female protagonists. Greta Garbo, erstwhile Bergstrom hat department salesgirl turned Hollywood film star, was Art Deco incarnate; in her silent movies attention focussed on her visual

image and surroundings. In her first American film, *The Torrent* (1925) she is transformed from country girl to city fashionista, using striking Art Deco costume and surrounded by stunning Deco stage sets (see Fig.1.9). Her appearance in full length lamé evening coat with black and white chevron patterned fur collar is described by Lucy Fischer (2002) as glamorous, through its identification with modernity and chic. Her hair, slicked back and cut very short bordered on shocking in its urbane ultra-modernity. It echoed the fashionable illustrations drawn by French graphic artists such as Georges Barbier, Erté, Paul Iribe and André Marty, found on the front covers and in the pages of *La Gazette du Bon Ton*, *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. At MGM, she was costumed by Adrian and her sets designed by Cedric Gibbons, both Art Deco enthusiasts. Gibbons had been the only Hollywood set designer of any importance known to have attended the 1925 Paris Exposition and its influence was clear in his subsequent film set productions. It was Gibbons belief that the set should augment the narrative and Art Deco's high stylization perfectly complemented Garbo's acting and dramatically clothed appearance (Fischer, 2002). Added to this, the colour reductionism of the more streamlined high-tech Art Deco to black, white and silver was perfect for monochrome film, enhancing the dramatic effect through sharp, clearly defined lines. If this aesthetic is translated to the hairdressing salon, female clients would have proactively interacted with their surroundings, not simply emerging as glamorous modern women but having been the stars of a production, played out in the theatre of the salon interior.

Taking all of the above considerations into account, it is reasonable to propose that the Moderne style connoted Hollywood glamour in the public imagination and its inexpensiveness to produce helped to democratise the notion of luxury. Its streamlined surfaces considerably facilitated cleanliness while still being decorative.

Gieben-Gamal contends then, that the ‘Moderne’ style ‘was found to be more prominent in hair salon design than in other retailing sectors’ (1999:13-14) because it was less decorative and luxurious than French Art Deco, which was more difficult and costly to maintain and less austere than Modernist design, which often had a severe functional aesthetic. Capturing the balance between function and fashion was tricky, as one magazine advertisement in *The Queen* in the Thirties revealed, ‘It is well-known that your lady clients prefer a boudoir to a power station ...’ (1935: 40). The Moderne style’s appearance was able to overcome this problem. Linked to American designers of the mid-1930s such as Norman Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy and Walter Teague who were associated with industrial styling and more particularly the concept of streamlining with its close association to ideas of the body beautiful and hygiene management (Sparke 1995:131), salons employed new, cheaper materials such as plastics, aluminium and chrome to give the appearance of fashionable luxury.

Gilbert Foan’s chapter ‘Designing and Fitting Hairdressing Salons’ lists six key areas in modern salon design as linked to a successful business operation: the premises; shop-front; front shop (now known as the reception); hairdressing saloons<sup>xxx</sup>; the workroom/laboratory/storeroom; offices and toilets. Throughout Foan, himself a hairdresser, discusses fixtures and fittings as being lighter, modern, more sparsely fitted and utilitarian, signalling a ‘masculine’, scientific modernism. In contrast, he uses words like *artistic, attractive, tasteful, dainty* and *appealing* (1931:643) to evoke a feminine, middle-class domesticity. This feminine/masculine juxtaposition is interesting because it also denotes the difference between the leisurely area of reception and the functional, salon work area. In reception, Foan advocated softer, cosier furnishings, similar to those in a domestic lounge, comprising easy chairs, occasional tables, ashtrays, magazines, railway timetables, telephone

directories and - the epitome of 1930s modernity, Foan insisted – the telephone, most important not only for business convenience but also clients' use<sup>xxx</sup>. Few people in Britain had domestic telephones in the 1930s and so they were still considered a novelty. The telephone in a public space such as a hair salon would have been the pinnacle of luxury and modernity. This was part of a wider revision of female consumer retail spaces during the Twenties and Thirties with particular reference to Art Deco and Americanisation, principally found in hotels, cocktail bars and restaurants.

In line with a more scientific rationale, the saloons and cubicles where hairdressing took place were functional and more sparingly furnished but often with an integrated colour scheme (1931:646). As a hairdresser, Foan clearly recognised the importance of a coherent, design aesthetic that created a harmonised transition from waiting to work area, through subtle differentiation. His discussion of successful salon design employs the terminology and knowledge of interior design: for example, he discusses spatiality and illusion through the use of line, form, colour and pattern to maximise large or small spaces. Furthermore, the subliminal message is that a salon should be inviting and welcoming. Foan also notes the inclusion of children's saloons, which were just beginning to appear in Britain in 1931, although still lagging behind their American and European counterparts (1931:653).

The interwar years were a period when consumption was steered through the use of explicitly modern visual languages in designed goods, images or services. In particular, Sparke has noted the pivotal role played by a number of designed public environments in the formation of modernity and its consumption (2004:30). Tag Gronberg (1998) and Fiona Leslie (2000) have identified interwar city shops as pioneering markers of modern consumerism, both in their interior and exterior design

as well as through irresistible shop-fronts and window displays (see Fig.1.10). Leslie and Sparke have both reached the conclusion that these shops mediated modernity in a reciprocal fashion between the producers and consumers; each being reliant upon the other to stimulate new ideas. When Foan prescribes the decoration of the hairdressing salon reception, he is marketing modernity and demonstrating that reciprocity: the cosy creature comforts of the domestic interior and the modernity of new technologies such as the telephone.

While Sparke specifies shops as being amongst the first to be influenced by the latest styles of interior and exterior design, other retail spaces such as cinemas, cocktail bars, hotels and restaurants were plugging into fashionable consumerism by updating their interiors in the knowledge that modern young women would be attracted to them. In London many of these stylish social spaces became concentrated in the area of the West End which, already associated with leisure and women's pursuits could be seen to be contrasted with the City which was business oriented and a largely masculine domain. The design of these West End retail spaces therefore was mainly directed at female consumers who were more likely to perform such leisure activities as shopping, having their hair styled, dining in restaurants, drinking cocktails and cinema-going.

Already by the 1920s, the visual cues of Art Deco had begun to shape the appearance of the fashionable West End in the exterior and interior decoration of shops, hotels, restaurants and bars. Until the 1930s this was resolutely Parisian oriented; the Strand Palace Hotel restaurant had commissioned and used Lalique glass panels while Selfridges lift doors were designed by Edgar Brandt. The London *couture* houses continued to exude Paris fashion in both their clothes collections and the interiors in which they were shown to the clients, underpinning the continued

dominance of the French capital ((Massey 2000:52). In the Thirties the American influence would become more prominent through the use of design streamlining, affecting the outer and inner aesthetic appearance of fashionable city rendezvous. This was undoubtedly induced in the main by the huge popularity of modern Hollywood cinema from which new and exciting dress and interior fashions were mimicked. West End hairdressers, whose clientele would have actively used all of these other spaces, would have decorated their salons similarly, providing yet another link in the chain of fashionable modernity.

### **Science and Technology**

Throughout the twentieth century technical and scientific advances as well as design innovation, were integral to the expansion and development of the ladies' hair salon. As early as 1902, *The Queen* magazine was stressing hairdressing as a 'science' rather than a craft (Corson 1965:604) and hairdressers began to assume a scientific rationality. Penny Sparke (1995) theorises that turn of the century modernity was shaped by traditionally masculine domains, including and dominated by science, technology and rationality. Modernity, in its embrace of these notions drew on 'the rule of a masculine cultural paradigm' while 'taste' became marginalised and aligned with domesticity and femininity (Sparke, 1995: 74). The application of science with its connotation of being a serious 'masculine' discipline was probably seen by many male hairdressers as a way of countering the 'feminine' aspects of hairdressing.

It also repositioned the hairdresser as a professional<sup>xxxii</sup> who was the central conduit for the dissemination of scientific knowledge. No longer simply enough to be a dresser of hair, he had to be versed in all branches of the profession, competent in the operation and understanding of newer, complex technologies as well as fundamental

knowledge of skin and hair diseases. Apart from this knowledge, the new hairdressers were expected to be able to diagnose, prescribe and dispense chemical lotions and pomades for curative treatments of the hair and scalp, which they were required to mix themselves (Foan 1931:5).

This scientific approach probably exerted greater control over the integration of women into the profession. Science and technology were considered ‘boys’ subjects at schools; while girls were taught what was known variously as housecraft, domestic arts, domestic economy and domestic science even though these incorporated many aspects of basic physics and chemistry (House, 1953). In an article by Professor G. and Marelene Rayner-Canham (2011), the authors state that at the turn of the twentieth century the notion of the ‘new scientific age’ encouraged the focus of chemistry to be at the core of domestic science teaching. However, there had been fierce debates amongst first-generation women chemists as to the distinction between ‘real’ chemistry and ‘domestic’ chemistry. The former it was argued, would provide the same professional career opportunities as to those of men while the latter, as a component of domestic science, was simply another way of preparing girls for their future maternal and domestic roles under the guise of science. The Rayner-Canhams’ discussion on this subject, evaluated that ‘having fought so hard for getting girls an academic education equal to that of boys, many women scientists saw domestic science as a reversal of those gains, limiting girls’ aspirations and opportunities to that of domesticity’ (2011:35). The authors state that domestic science never achieved the status of a scientific discipline (2011:40) but continued to be taught exclusively to girls until changes in the national school curriculum in the late twentieth century redressed this. Domestic science was no doubt firmly entrenched in the minds of many men and some women as being a trivial woman’s

subject which had little foundation in 'real' more masculine-oriented sciences. It evidently appeared to have further precluded women from the scientific production of hairdressing, which with its new status looked to demand a more sophisticated scientific background and understanding.

By 1930s hair salons and other commercial enterprises actively embraced new scientific theories and technological innovations (Foan 1931:5; Cox 1999:60; Bowlby 2000:143-6). Stevenson has observed that 'the exclusive use of the new technology ... led to a radical transformation ... in terms of their décor and the services they offered' (2001:143). The scarcity of clean hot water supplies had made washing and shampooing hair virtually an unknown practise for women before the late nineteenth century (Zdatny 1999:19). In addition, gentlemen's barbers' clients had been worryingly made aware of breathing in germs that emanated from the pipes of forward washbasins, particularly and surprisingly in the London West End salons as a result of the poor state of the city's Victorian drains (*HWJ* 1882:11:431). The solution came in the Twenties with the invention of the backwash basin (Cox 1999), which not only counteracted clients' fears but through necessity, was one of a number of modernising elements in salon evolution. The installation of modern appliances and hot and cold running water evidenced a more technologically progressive approach to hairdressing, although some early apparatus or products were either dangerous or expensive resulting in a haphazard use (Cox 1999). As a result of serious investigation into hair health, the establishment of trichology together with the invention of new products and the technology with which to apply them, salon interiors were re-designed to accommodate better facilities and to provide more hygienic surroundings.

This rationalisation had also been influenced by the new Continental art and design groups who since before the First World War had been debating the notion of an international design vocabulary, which was progressively articulated through modern materials and objects as well as increasingly geared to industrial mass-production. Modernism's mantle enveloped the De Stijl Group in Holland, the Constructivists in Russia and the Bauhaus in Germany who had individually contributed to a working definition of Modernist ethos in their willingness to embrace new materials, experimentation with and production of appliances and a complete break with traditional aesthetics (Woodham, 1997:35-41; O'Neill, 1990:89-90, 101). However, while there were some staunch supporters of Modernism in Britain there was a general socio-political resistance to its standardisation and clinical appearance. The British preference in this style would be for the softer Scandinavian Modern which espoused the tenets of the stark machine aesthetic and uncluttered spaces but softened it with more humanising elements as in the use of natural, blond bent-wood furniture. This softer Modernism became increasingly familiar to a wider international audience and was probably more acceptable to British taste for which industrial modernism with its scientific appeal was less palatable (Woodham, 1997:59). However, Modernists displayed a keen interest in technology and engineering and these became fundamental notions that underpinned the value of the machine aesthetic.

Rationalisation in design generally, extended to the intense promotion of clean symmetrical designs with light and airy spaces using electricity as the bright, clean, healthy fuel of the future (Forty 1986:190-2) despite it being prohibitively expensive. In the first years of the twentieth century, *The London Magazine*, an illustrated monthly women's paper, extolled the virtues of this new technology in the domestic

sphere, particularly with regard to electrical appliance innovations. In an article titled 'My Electric Home' the author, while focussing on the labour saving qualities of these devices, also evaluated the safety and cleanliness, noting that '...gradually the notion of heating and cooling without coal, gas, or oil, smoke, flame, or soot, appealed to me more and more' (Fitz-Gerald, 1908:218). She reiterates the cleanliness aspect further in the article by reflecting that, '... the purgatory of smoky chimneys and the handling of fuel and ashes now belonged to a past that seemed a generation ago, a whole age of worry and turmoil' (1908:223). Fitz-Gerald equated electricity with being modern and 'up-to-date', as well as enabling her to maintain not just a clean and hygienic home but also personal appearance and a fashionable one. Having bought an electric curling-iron, she acquired what she described as 'an outfit' for drying her hair after a shampoo. Her assessment was positively glowing:

I really think the little blast of hot air that answered a turn of the switch did more to "convert" me than even Fred's never-ceasing eloquence. The terrors of a home shampoo were over, and a little quiet luxury now took their place. (Fitz-Gerald, 1908:218)

Articles such as this one would have disseminated ideas and information on a number of levels, each clearly indicating modernity to a feminine audience who might consider themselves as 'New Women consumers' either in the domestic or public sphere. Despite various campaigns to ensure its installation during the 'Homes fit for Heroes' house-building drive in the early 1920s, most houses were still fitted with gas only, as electricity was largely an unknown quantity and to some, a frankly terrifying force (Forty, 1986). Electricity was also considerably more expensive to run and as might be expected there was great inequality in its domestic consumption nationwide.

In the prosperous South East of England in the Thirties it was more than double that of the poorer North East. The only household consumer goods which were used in equal measure were the radio, the vacuum cleaner and the iron (Buckley, 2007:90) – the last two functional objects being aides to cleanliness. Most of the advertising of electrically powered domestic goods would have been aimed at the middle-classes who were learning to cope without domestic help. One can only surmise that Northern women, who could not afford the luxury of running domestic hairdryers or curling tongs, indulged themselves with a hairdressing appointment.

Hair salons were undoubtedly in the vanguard of modern electrical appliance usage but only grander salons would have installed the latest electro-therapeutic treatments, unquestionably the province of the fashionably rich (Foan 1931:470-3). This new approach was part of a greater national interest in science which as Adrian Forty (1986:159) points out, began in earnest from the 1890s, when the new germ theories were embraced as a method of eliminating disease. Hygiene extended into many areas of ordinary everyday life (Nava 2000; Ryan 2000; Winship 2000) and this translated into lighter, uncluttered interiors, plainer, fitted furniture and easily cleanable, loose rugs or linoleum floors. The hygiene imperative is reiterated in Foan's text, where he advocates the omission of skirting boards 'obviate[ing] the collection of dust, hair and fluff' (1931:648). As hairdressing establishments began to acquire the air of clinical laboratories their increasingly rationalised interiors were testament to the successful war waged on dirt and disease in the first half of the twentieth century. Foan maintained that many shops up and down the country were 'as clean and sterile as a hospital' (1931:6). As part of this image, the new hairdressers were expected to have an updated knowledge of hygiene, science and medicine. It was recommended they wear a white salon coat<sup>xxxiii</sup> while maintaining

cleanliness and neatness in their ordinary attire (Cox, 1999:75-8) and, as Foan's encyclopaedic manual emphasises, in a class style and professional manner that correlated with the doctor, surgeon and dentist (1931:6).

Even into the 1950s the importance of science and technology to hairdressing is consistently underlined and according to one article in the *Hairdressers Journal*, assumes a greater priority than a more traditional concept of craft (*HJ* 1954:1:18-19). Describing the modern interior of the Plymouth salon of one Mr Howe as scientifically and technologically efficient, the article cites the installation of loudspeakers 'enabling [Mr Howe] to talk to and be answered by any member of the staff *while working*' (*HJ* 1954:1:18). In the interview, Mr Howe reaffirms that "Hairdressing today is more and more a scientific and chemical business". He also stresses how greater privacy in the design of the men's hairdressing section through the incorporation of semi-private cubicles had enabled the less confident male client to become "...more and more interested in treatments he would not dream of accepting in an open salon" (*HJ* 1954:1:19). Rationalism and functionalism informed fundamental salon design practise and 'the application and manipulation of new materials signified a concern to represent the modernity of the salon' synthetically corresponding with the emergence of the 'new' modern woman in the production of fashion (Gieben-Gamal 1999:13-17). Nonetheless, such innovations clearly sanctioned men's increasing interest in hair fashion and it held radical implications for future innovations in salon design.

### **Aristocrats and Arbiters of Taste**

Although science, design and technology improved the exterior, interior and services provided in smart salons, what was also highly important was the more intangible

concept of kudos. While the previous sections have dealt with the solid and physical innovations in hair salons that affected their appearance and function, this section will attempt to identify the enigmatic qualities that distinguished a superior salon from an ordinary hairdressing shop. It will also demonstrate how 'luxury' was negotiated as a conceptual commodity as well as through actual space. While consumers would recognise the signs that made those distinctions, the attainment of such status had no precise formula, being a mixture of cultural capital, reputation, expertise and a certain amount of celebrity. To determine how particular hairdressers and their establishments achieved and disseminated those signs means investigating the historical, social and cultural subtleties that combine to create this enviable position.

The concept of kudos had rarely if ever been accomplished by the ordinary hairdresser or through the occupations of barber or wigmaker who were considered to be technicians, well-versed in their craft but without the artistic vision of a stylist whose inspired creativity went beyond the practical methods of producing a hairstyle. The early French *artiste-coiffeurs* of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Royal French Court had demonstrated that through their imaginative ideas and flamboyant personalities they could take relative control over hairstyles away from their powerful clients. By association, they also developed a privileged social position and earned an elite reputation, hence creating an aura of mystical desirability that equated with the idea of kudos. The main signification of kudos when applied to a hair salon, would be through notions of exclusivity understood in terms of geographic location, sophisticated décor, image and above all, the prestige of being the top stylist and his or her hierarchical positioning in the hairdressing world (Stevenson 2001:147).

Up to the mid-twentieth century, the dominance of Parisian hair styling together with Parisian high culture and avant-garde fashion was such that Paris' styles

were slavishly followed in Britain and America. This authority was reinforced by the formation of *Le Syndicat de la Haute Coiffure* in April 1945 (Haute Coiffure Française, 2009). The *Syndicat* had been created by a group of hairdressers<sup>xxxiv</sup> working in Paris' Golden Triangle to defend the interests of *haute coiffure*, not dissimilar to the steps taken previously by its *haute couture* sister organisation<sup>xxxv</sup>. One of its aims outlined in the first general meeting was the promotion and exporting of French hairdressing abroad (indubitably part of the re-emergence plans of the French fashion industry after the hiatus of World War II). Its objective was to signal to the rest of the world, the continued pre-eminence of Parisian hairdressing through this elitist association of high class stylists. What it also promoted was that Paris *haute couture* fashion was a complete 'look' brought about by *couturiers* and *coiffeurs*. This ascendancy was a much debated issue in the British trade press and can be evidenced in numerous articles from the 1950s in the *Hairdressers' Journal* which eagerly reported on Paris fashion and highlighted the complementary styles created by these hairstylists for each new season (*HJ* 1954:2:12-13: Wilson; *HJ* 1954:2:26-27).

The kudos of Parisian hairdressing was such that women who visited the French capital felt they must experience it, if only ever once (Kahn 1954). Its reputation was further enhanced by the continued patronage of foreign royalty, European and Hollywood actresses and film stars. Antoine famously became the Duchess of Windsor's hairdresser (Cox 1999) as did later his protégé Alexandre who dressed as many royal heads as those of Hollywood (Lichfield 2008). In her autobiography *Miller's High Life* Ann Miller, the American tap-dancing film star, describes a visit to Alexandre's salon while on honeymoon in Europe as a 'special treat', evidently in awe of his prestige as hairdresser to the Duchess and Elizabeth

Taylor amongst others. Miller's own fame drew a gathering of onlookers and a photographer but in her account this is a minor detail; in weighing up the greater celebrity status, she defers to Alexandre. Her account of the hairstyle he specially created, his mannerisms and eccentricity, was emblematic of the perceived image that a great French *artiste-coiffeur* conjured up and the cachet of visiting his salon added to her own status (Miller 1972: 185-187).

This curiously contradictory, even illogical form of status has been commented upon by Grant McCracken (1995) as a dichotomy between status and power of both client and hairdresser. McCracken observes that '...status remained a vexing issue ... by the middle of the twentieth century "birth" aristocrats had come to depend enormously on "taste" aristocrats ... all of this gave rise to a world in which hairdressers had precious little status but a surprising amount of power' (1995: 41-42). The client's status was invariably higher as hairdressing was regarded as a lowly occupation, not fitting for a 'real' male. The over-obsequiousness of certain sections of the trade noted in the nineteenth-century (*HWJ* 1882:9:345) which had been blamed for the public's contemptuous attitude toward it was added to by the myth that all hairdressers (as opposed to barbers) were 'gay' or 'effeminate', a fiction which persisted well into the mid-twentieth century (McCracken 1995) and to a certain extent still does. Occupations which did not demonstrate masculine prowess such as physical strength or intellectual capability and those which kept a male in close proximity to women, for example male ballet dancers, flower-arrangers, domestic interior designers as well as ladies' hairdressers, were seen as particularly effeminising and the butt of sexualised humour as well as general disdain. However, McCracken argues that no matter how high the client's station, it was the hairdresser's aesthetic transformational powers, quintessential to the client's fashionable

appearance which would override the latter's lower status. McCracken contends that while they may not have been aristocrats by birth they became the aristocrats of taste. Moreover, as Cooper (1971) recognises, since no fashionable woman ever had 'natural' hair, these master hairdressers were crucial to the *haute couturiers* upon whom their clients depended for their fashionable ensembles.

Just as British and American dress designers took their lead from the Parisian couturiers, correspondingly hairdressers drew from the initiatives of *maitre-coiffeurs*. From the general reportage of the *Hairdressers' Journal* it is possible to identify an unwritten but acknowledged hierarchy of hairdressing standards approached in relation to nationality. British hairdressers certainly looked down upon the quality of hairdressing coming from the United States and saw it as being very backward in its creative ideas until the early 1960s. However the British position was not particularly clear since its hairdressers probably considered themselves pretenders to the French *coiffure* Crown while realising that they had fierce rivalry from Austria and Germany, particularly in competition work. The only other nation that appeared to merit any consideration was Japan although reference to Japanese hair-work was infrequent. Nevertheless it is worth remembering that in the post-1945 decades, much of Eastern Europe was behind the Iron Curtain and therefore access to and by these countries was extremely limited. Consequently the dominance and the supremacy of Parisian *haute couture* and *coiffure* industries and their licensing arrangements remained effectively unchallenged until the 1960s.

Equally the aura which surrounded Parisian style, as well as the overall evocation of Paris as the centre of *haute couture* and *coiffure* was difficult for foreign companies to compete with. Despite London having its own smaller but no less impressive indigenous fashion industry which had become firmly established after the

First World War, it did not quite have the charisma of Paris. In the words of Alison Settle, the fashion journalist, London fashion in the late Forties had ‘social confidence ... but lack[ed] superb drama’ (Wilcox, 2007:16). The romanticism of Paris continued to captivate; whether it was a dress, a hat, perfume or hairstyle, whatever emanated from the French capital had a magical allure. Even the growing might and confidence of the United States could not entice American women away from Paris fashion. America’s fashion businesses were reluctant to sell American fashions, for fear of alienating the Parisian salons and forfeiting their rights to buy and sell Parisian models. As one retail trade paper in 1913 had pointed out, ‘the United States did not have the requisite infrastructure or resources to overturn the Paris fashion industry’ (Schweitzer, 2008:147-8) but it was consumer reluctance that proved the biggest impediment (Rantisi, 2006:115).

It wasn’t until New York had established itself as a cultural centre in the performing arts, cinema, theatre, popular music and a nascent art community, that this state of affairs altered. Only then could it begin to challenge the hegemony of Paris with an alternative cultural scene (Rantisi, 2006:116). By the start of World War II when the United States was in prime position to take the lead however, American Vogue still agonized over what America would do without Paris fashion (Wilcox, 2007:32). Its clothing industry, centred in New York’s Garment District and built on the premise of function and practicality, had always drawn its fashionable style and design from French *couture*. London, being primarily and more directly pre-occupied with the hostilities and restricted as it was by wartime rationing, was in no position to take control. Notwithstanding New York’s propitious development of its fashion industry during the course of the conflict, once Paris was liberated, all eyes immediately re-focussed on the French capital. The War had judiciously enabled

New York to gain a foothold and a rising fashion reputation, earning increasing press coverage. What had altered however was the balance of media coverage which now no longer concentrated solely on Paris (Rantisi, 2006:115-118).

It is clear that consumers and businesses alike were still held in the thrall of Paris. The key was that Parisian designers were creative artistically – they could not compete with American large-scale production and nor did they want to but they had what the rest of the fashion world wanted: originality and inventiveness combined with an indefinably intoxicating allure. Paris was synonymous with exclusive fashion, particularly female. In the abstract, this exclusivity has been referred to as ‘the Paris idea’ (Schweitzer, 2008:131); Agnès Rocamora (2006) has argued that this exclusivity, bound up with the myth or *esprit* of Paris, is due to the gradual anthropomorphization of the French Capital through its depiction as the overall author of fashion. Rocamora suggests its power is such that it saturates the creativity of designers to the point where they become ‘mere translators of Parisian chic’ (2006:44). Little wonder then that couturiers, when faced with the photographic techniques of foreign fashion journalism, were unimpressed and slightly resentful that their creations were diminished by the capital’s backdrop locations<sup>xxxvi</sup> (Breward, 2007:182).

The new style of post-war fashion journalism which mainly emanated from the United States was altering the way magazines approached the dissemination of fashion, particularly the look of the magazines through avant-garde techniques of fashion photography. Perhaps as a result of World War II which had had a sobering effect on the photography of fashion, images now assumed a more mature air and often had a documentary, photo-journalistic quality to them, typically in the work of photographers such as Irving Penn or Richard Avedon (Craik, 1993). Breward

believes that the American magazines were ‘responsible for redefining fashion photography in the period’ (2007:185) with American *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* drawing on the New York art and music scene for inspiration (2003:123). Dior, whose *couture* house was probably the most amenable of all Parisian salons to the visual publication of his collections, recognised that contrary to French fear of the Press, the USA treated it ‘as an accomplice in the world of fashion ... [and that] the picture of a dress in a magazine can inspire a woman to buy it’ (Breward, 2007:182). Dior was in the minority in this opinion as most French *couturiers* regarded this form of exposure as open to indiscretion and devaluation of the garments.

The aura of Parisian élan was such that in the fashionable imagination it extended its mantle over the whole of the country, obliterating the anomalies of class and rurality. Thereby France, by proxy, was also conferred with a fashionable glow. In fact, not only is the idea of Paris synonymous with the elite spaces of fashion, but that Paris itself is the mark of ‘French-ness’ is a commonly held view.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Therefore, the aura bestowed by Paris might also be considered more generally as a form of ‘French-ness’ and this in turn can be understood as a marketable commodity aesthetic that any fashion-conscious European and North American woman would have readily recognised as imparting a sense of *chic* upon its wearer.

The dilemma for central London hairdressers was how to marshal this symbolic capital and market themselves as part of this positively valued ‘French chic’. Even though they were not French by birth, many not only adopted a Gallicised persona but also imbued their salons with the tang of Paris. In this way they could add to their standing by adopting some of the attributes which signalled the desirability of fashionable Paris. Raymond, who opened his first salon in Mayfair in 1935, undoubtedly modelled himself on the great Antoine of Paris, affecting a camp,

eccentric bohemianism manifested in his outward dress and mannerisms, replete with assumed French accent. This strategy of performance was seemingly authenticated by his partnership in a Parisian salon (Cox 1999). Like Antoine, Raymond painted his fingernails, dressed like a dandy and was a notorious self-promoter. Raymond's awareness of a more restrained English sensibility may have curbed his enthusiasm for some of the more eccentric idiosyncrasies of the French hairdressers (such as Alexandre's extraordinary pirouetting, leaping, balletic salon entrance to complete Ann Miller's hair confection<sup>xxxviii</sup>). However he adroitly cultivated some of his own and these became his signature: the outrageous publicity stunts; his theme song (*I Dream of Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair*) (Cox 1999) and the curious catchphrase when demonstrating the cutting of a style that earned him the nickname 'Mr Teasy-Weasy' (Hairdressing Icons, 2012). He carefully recreated the sumptuousness of Antoine's Paris salon incorporating elaborate crystal chandeliers, de-luxe French Empire chairs, plush carpets and a theatrical champagne fountain for rinsing clients' hair (Cox 1999). This Francophile façade extended to the naming and mannerisms of his staff:

Women at that time thought that the only good hairdressing could come from French hairdressers. So I taught stylists to use French expressions such as "Bonjour, madame," "comment allez-vous, madame?" and all that nonsense. I also renamed them. If their name was Joe, I called them Louis or Monsieur Emile. They were all given a new name, French sounding. (Akhtar & Humphries 2001:34)

This stereotype of theatrical hairdressing showmanship approached as Francophile or more generally Latinate was mercilessly lampooned in films and press,

most notably by Norman Wisdom in the 1962 film, *On the Beat*, in which Wisdom's character Pitkin, is used as a double due to his extraordinary likeness to an Italian crime boss/hairdresser, Giulio Napolitani. Napolitani's character (albeit Italian) exhibits all the characteristics of the elite French stylists as well as an uncanny resemblance to Raymond who shared the same paternal lineage. His female clients, as one might expect, appear to include titled ladies who watch admiringly as he dances over to and around them, whipping up hair creations with a flick of his comb and flirting with them in an exaggerated Italian accent. His behaviour marks a clear distinction between his own role and position and that of his workforce. Under his direction his staff attend to the mundanities of hairdressing; as Napolitani disparagingly remarks to a client about one of his employees, "Oberon<sup>xxxix</sup> prepare, Giulio, he create" (*On the Beat*, 1962). The artistic significance of his status, as a creative stylist upon which the operational hairdressing business hinges, in reality could be considered as the heartbeat of any successful salon. There is an extraordinary moment in the film when due to Napolitani's enforced absence the whole conceptual structure of the working practise falls to pieces in a scene of near hysteria involving both clients and employees. Order is only restored when Pitkin, posing as Napolitani, appears in the salon. The fact that he is completely incompetent is ignored by all and sundry; the salon only functions when Napolitani's presence (or a substitute) is visible.

Within such popular culture, location also played a key signifier. Located vaguely in the West End, the salon's stage set replicates those found in Mayfair with French Rococo furniture, crystal chandeliers as well as light fittings and tall windows festooned with luxurious drapes (see Fig.1.11). The style of interior reflects a consumption sensibility similarly found at this level of fashion in other comparable

establishments. The *couture* industry of Mayfair in this period has been described as having an ‘opulence [which] almost rivalled that of Paris’ (Beward, 2004:139). Fashion journalist Francis Marshall’s description of upper-end fashion salon interiors as being ‘elaborately decorated ... with the most modern decor of mirrors, glistening chandeliers, stuffed satin upholstery and baroque ornaments’ (Beward, 2004:139) parallels Napolitani’s hair salon. The central feature of his interior, however, is a regal throne on a dais approached by a wide and imposing carpet. The throne, a highly decorative gilt affair topped by a monogrammed coronet, is symbolic of Napolitani’s status as a king amongst hairdressers. The tonsorial aspect of the film created enough interest for the *Hairdressers’ Journal* to include a pictorial mention of it. While the allusion to Raymond was probably not lost on the copywriter, the *Journal* appeared to be more interested in the authenticity of interior design reproduction, noting that items and furnishings included were those brands commonly used in existing West End salons. It also commented that the erection of the set cost £13,000 – an extravagant sum at that time (*HJ* 1962:9:6). While Napolitani’s salon is fictitious, it proves Stevenson’s criteria for kudos through its positioning in Mayfair, its palatial interior decorated with exquisite furnishings and its status as a high-class establishment. Despite being an exaggerated parody, much of its portrayal would have resonated uncomfortably with the Mayfair hairdressing fraternity.

If Raymond’s obligatory ‘faux French’ style was regarded by his peer group as histrionic, then at the very least, a good standard of diction was required in all West End hair salons. Common local accents such as Cockney were viewed askance and staff would be expected to eradicate them in favour of Received Pronunciation, usually known as Queen’s English. In post-World War II Britain, opportunities to advance in life increased dramatically for many ordinary people but with them came

the pressures to conform by adopting the accent of the Establishment (British Library, no date). Even as a young East End boy, Vidal Sassoon recognised that this modulation in his pronunciation would improve his career opportunities and he spent his spare time going to watch West End actors in order to learn how to emulate their clear diction (Sassoon, 2010). Nevertheless his first foray into West End hairdressing (circa 1945) seeking work at Raymond's salon was unsuccessful, despite his endeavours to moderate his Cockney accent. The receptionist's condescension was palpable, he recalled, and he was told to come back when he had studied the English language to an acceptable level. By the mid-Seventies Sassoon had cultivated what has been described as 'a mid-Atlantic accent' (Reed 2012:36), which effectively neutralised his East London brogue into a softer, indefinable modulation. Similarly, hairdressers Leslie Russell and Keith Wainwright, who opened the Smile salon in the late Sixties, had both been encouraged to lose their coarse London accents early on in their careers in order to work in the West End. Wainwright's accent was deemed so bad, that he was not even allowed to speak while attending to the salon's upper class clients (Wainwright 2005: MD010).

The adoption of *Frenchness* was filtered through the Capital's salons and imitated by many hairdressers around the country to a greater or lesser degree to lend an air of successful sophistication to their business and their activities. Many simply gave their shops French sounding names (Cox 1999) or less convincingly employed a form of 'franglais' to create a continental flavour through the combination of English and French words in the shop signage. More ambitious examples adopted interiors that exuded an unmistakable atmosphere of Parisian chic: for example, Langley's of Swansea's renovation had a newly created 'Louis lounge' with a fleur-de-lis motif wallpaper, *genuine* French furniture and 'Sèvres china busts of period hair styles [to]

add to the Gallic atmosphere' (*HJ* 1954:4:23-25). Other salons contented themselves with reproduction Louis XVI furniture and French styled salon overalls (*HJ* 1954:7:24-25). By emulating the French stylists in these ways, it is clear that central London hairdressers such as Raymond became conspicuous and recognisable arbiters of taste, disseminating *haute-coiffure* chic nationwide. However, as can be seen from the discussion in this chapter, there were many varied fashions of salon decoration, not simply 'French'. The eclectic mix of Rococo and other styles was seen as a modern take on interior decoration and in certain cases (such as Bloomsbury in the 1920s) to be a distinctively English modernism. Even though this form of modernism later became a more simplified Bauhaus style, all white minimalist interiors that repudiated historical eclecticism came to be seen retrospectively as 'modernist'. Sparke underpins this notion when clarifying that the 'idea of modernity refers to a particular historical moment and set of experiences' while 'modernism represented a high cultural response to those experiences, but the two naturally fed off each other' (1995:76).

The emergence and consolidation of the ladies' hair salon, had taken less than a century to complete. It is no co-incidence that its advent was simultaneous with many middle-class women's pursuit of public freedom, particularly but not exclusively through emancipation, which had consequences not only for women, but also for the industries associated with fashion. Two aspects – the 'new' modern woman and the self-conscious modernity of salon design – crystallised in the 1920s when fashion, design, science and hygiene converged in a mutual consensus of public, rather than private, preparation and display. While science and technology may have made the final modifications in salon design, socio-cultural issues were to influence

further important developments in the nature of hairdressing and its relative aesthetic in salon interiors.

This chapter has not only demonstrated the complex causes that contributed to the establishment of the twentieth century salon but it has also looked at related circumstances and events surrounding women which extended into the areas of education, emancipation, employment, design, the media and entertainment. Over a period of approximately half a century the combination of these circumstances and events facilitated the increased accessibility of women into the public sphere, encouraging the creation and development of ladies' salons. In so doing, the chapter has also provided a framework against which to consider the different direction that salons of the Sixties were to take. Understanding the historical situation of British hairdressing prior to the period under investigation in this study is crucial to grasping the reasons why West End hairdressers of the mid-1960s would perform a *volte face* in hairdressing practise and by extension, salon design. Without the preceding developments, their actions would not have been deemed to have such a revolutionary impact, or to be understood as such.

The establishment of hairdressers in London's West End and the understanding that the most exclusive hairdressing was situated in Mayfair is one which I want to investigate in the next chapter. The notion that considerable importance is placed on a geographic location as being the centre point for a retail culture is a fundamental aspect of retail geography and one which concerns the production and consumption of hairdressing. The chapter will also look at how this perception of Mayfair as the pinnacle of hairdressing in Britain was received by provincial businesses and how, like the idea of 'Frenchness', Mayfair was also adopted as connoting sophistication. The Mayfair effect can also be considered in

light of the expansion of Mayfair businesses in both the geographical and imaginative senses. To that end I will discuss 'Mayfair style' with regard to the type of hairdressing conducted there and the interior styling of the salons.

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<sup>xviii</sup> Parts of this chapter have already been published in Biddle-Perry, G and Cheang, S (eds) (2008) *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion* Oxford/New York: Berg pp.55-65

<sup>xix</sup> Cheryl Buckley and Hilary Fawcett have considered the opening of hairdressing salons as one of 'the techniques and devices which went into 'constructing' the ideal consumer of fashion' during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and that they contributed to a fashionable feminine ideal which pre-empted modernity. In the wider context of fashion and as a significant part of it, hairstyling and the spaces within which it was performed was one way 'in which women could attempt to mark out their personal sense of modernity, one which was as much to do with the private body as with the public world' noting also that it contributed to the notion that gender identity was not fixed, something which became increasingly highlighted in fashionable dress over the course of the twentieth century (2002: 9-11). Steven Zdatny has tied hairdressing in with the increasing consumer culture of modernity and that the 'coiffure ... is anchored in the structures and mentalities that define a society'. He has identified that at key moments of modernity, hairstyles have played an important part for women, such as the Bob-cut of the 1920s signalling a youthification of consumption and 'hairwaving' in the late nineteenth century as being the very foundation of modern hairdressing itself. The whole of his introduction discusses the impact of hairdressing within the context of modernity from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century (1999: 1-35)

<sup>xx</sup> According to Mary Trasko, in 1605 the Catholic Church decreed that any woman allowing a man to set her hair would be excommunicated (1994:43). This may have been more rigorously adhered to in Catholic countries such as France and to a certain extent by those still secretly practising Catholicism in England, but Trasko states that when the clergy interfered in fashion, their rulings were not necessarily enforceable. In France, however, the Church and State were almost indivisible in their interests and this may have given these rulings extra powers.

<sup>xxi</sup> Small independently run shops invariably had a back-room (as opposed to the stock room), generally used for preparation of goods sold in the shop. However, if the type of merchandise sold needed no preparation, the back room could be used for other purposes which did not need to be on display such as the practical service of another type of business. Back rooms, being generally workrooms would have been ideal for services such as hairdressing as they were not on public view.

<sup>xxii</sup> The Hairdressers' Guild founded in 1882 which included wigmakers, perfumers and other associated trades, was set up 'to improve the social position of the trade' and to raise standards. They did this by holding evening classes in hairdressing and creating new hair fashions, although in this they were over one hundred years behind the French. The first master was H.P. Truefitt, head of the oldest established hairdressing firm, Truefitt and Hill (Durbin 1984: 28)

<sup>xxiii</sup> These are just some of a range of texts which have comprehensively covered the women's magazine's publication and consumption. Dancyger, Irene (1978) *A World of Women: An Illustrated History of Women's Magazines* Dublin: Gill & MacMillan; Beetham, Margaret (1996) *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine 1800-1914* London: Routledge; Ferguson, M (1983) *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity* London: Heinemann; Winship, J. (1987) *Inside Women's Magazines* London: Pandora Press

<sup>xxiv</sup> New Journalism, a term coined by Matthew Arnold in 1887, changed the form of writing from long descriptive detailed passages and reports of serious matters to a much lighter, conversational tone and fragmented paragraphs which contained gossip, opinion and a focus on personality with human interest (Beegan, 2008: 4)

<sup>xxv</sup> It can be pinpointed to this date through the appearance of two articles in the *North American Review* (Ledger and Luckhurst, 2000).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Buckley and Fawcett (2002) cite Lily Langtry as being the archetypal model of this new womanhood which stood apart from feminist political ideology.

<sup>xxvii</sup> This is a concept which the literary historian, Alison Light has defined as a bridge between the past and present, seeing it as 'a deferral on modernity ... [but demanding] a different sort of conservatism from that which had gone before' (Sparke, 1995: 141).

<sup>xxviii</sup> In 2011 Austin Reed moved from these premises having occupied them for approximately a century. The building now belongs to Superdry and the Art Deco Basement Barbers has been taken

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over and sympathetically updated by Tommy Gun, men's hairdressers. They have retained many of the period features including the ceiling light.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Massey explains that the launch of panchromatic film in the late Twenties which created a much sharper image through the use of red filters than that of its predecessor orthochromatic film stock, required much stronger lighting because the positioning of new, sensitive microphones picked up the sputtering noise of the arc lights. However, the stronger lighting not only picked up every detail, it also highlighted every flaw and this meant Factor had to create new film make-up to overcome the problem (Massey, 2000:65, 78)

<sup>xxx</sup> Foan refers to the work area as 'saloon' throughout his text, regardless of whether it was for male, female or children's hairdressing. However, with greater differentiation between men's and women's hairdressing, women's establishments gradually became known as salons (connotative of French sophistication) while the men's remained saloons, suggestive of bar rooms. Women's salons were also differentiated by cubicles for privacy while children's were not and also remained known as saloons.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Remarkably, this notional picture of domesticity was not confined to hairdressing salons. Rachel Bowlby has found a parallel in a series of books written by Carl Dipman in the 1930s with regard to the design of early supermarkets. His suggestions for a 'women's rest corner' are almost identical to those of Foan's hairdressing reception area and the cosy, homely aesthetic combined with scientific rationalism (which is discussed later in Bowlby's chapter) maps on to the model of the 1930s hair salon (Bowlby 2000: 143-149)

<sup>xxxii</sup> Trasko says that it was with Champagne, working between 1630 and the 1650s that marked the beginning of the professionalization of hairdressing and the male *artiste-coiffeurs*' dominance within it. She states that most women working in hair establishments in the late nineteenth century had menial occupations such as cashiers and assistants rather than hairstylists (1994:43, 155). Cox similarly acknowledges the beginning of professionalization but adds further that because of their artistry, the *coiffeurs* became differentiated from barbers and wigmakers who were regarded merely as technicians. She says that female hairdressers did exist but were less publicly recognized and that by the mid-nineteenth century attitudes towards working women were negative on the whole (1999:9, 68, 71). This is confirmed in an article in the *Hairdressers' Weekly Journal* celebrating The Silver Jubilee of King George V and how hairdressing had fared during the King's twenty-five year reign. The article speaks of how WWI had robbed the Trade of foreign men (and in glowing praise) who had contributed so much to the overall ethos of British hairdressing. The shortage of male hairdressers meant that there were difficulties 'in the endeavour to meet the demand for capable workers, and in the result the long despised **Female Labour was Enlisted**' (*HWJ* 1935 May 25:2482). This quite clearly demonstrates that there was strong male opposition to female hairdressers before that point and would certainly have meant they were not seen as professionals.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Leslie Russell, partner hairdresser in Smile salon, says that hairdressers were still wearing salon coats when he was first employed in the late 1950s, but when he started work in the West End he was told to wear a suit and tie. No doubt the coat gave them the appearance of common workers and not smart enough for the upmarket salons (Russell, 2004:85)

<sup>xxxiv</sup> The steering committee was headed by Fernand Aubry and its original members were Rene Rambaud, Albert Pourrière, Marc Ruyer, Louis Gervais, Antoine and Guillaume, who were well-known in English hairdressing circles. Like the *Syndicat de la Haute Couture Parisienne* some eighty years earlier, they created regulations which stated that in order to become a member, the professionally qualified hair stylist needed to own a recognized quality salon (presumably within the Golden Triangle which was bounded by the Champs Élysée, Avenue George V and the Rue Montaigne) and be completely committed to his craft.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Véronique Pouillard states that the haute couture industry was formally recognised in 1868 in the creation of the *Chambre Syndicale de la Couture et de la Confection pour Dames et Fillettes* which monitored dressmaking, tailoring and confection but by 1911 it had changed its name (Pouillard, 2008: 65) to the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture Parisienne*, which governed its members' commercial and legal interests. To become a member, designers had to fulfil specific criteria and the Syndicale would then offer its members amongst other things protection against design plagiarism and uphold France's – and especially Paris' – pre-eminent position as leader of world fashion. In 1945, the *Chambre Syndicale* was forced to rethink the way haute couture was conducted and had to revise its regulations to accommodate the new post-war economy and changing clientele. Effectively, it had realised that it had to properly address the financial side of producing garments in order that French haute couture maintained its commercial viability as well as securing its continued prestige (Palmer, 2007:64-66)

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> There is a fashion photograph of Lisa Fonssagrives modelling a garment for a magazine shoot in Paris perilously swinging on the Eiffel Tower (she was fond of doing her own reckless stunts!). In this picture the reader would retrospectively be unable to remember the outfit or designer – only the awe-inspiring backdrop. The image is in the book she put together of modelling photos of herself. It was actually taken by Erwin Blumenfeld in 1939, the dress was by Lucien Lelong and appeared in the May edition of *Vogue*.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Valerie Steele (1998) has critiqued this ubiquitous myth. She says that this idea that the Parisian woman constitutes every Frenchwoman is countermanded with an oppositional idea that there is ‘Paris’ and ‘the rest of France’, which can be seen as the former being the view from outside France and the latter from within. When living in Provence in 1980, I was given the general impression by the local people, that Parisians saw themselves as being far above everybody else in France, who they regarded as peasants. Steele saliently makes this division as ‘Parisians’ and ‘barbarians and provincials’ (Rocamora, 2006: 49). Of course, this may simply be the general view of the inhabitants of any capital city by their countrymen – similar views have been expressed about Londoners – but there is a difference in that foreigners do not have a mythical view of all British people as Londoners, as is clearly the case with the French and Parisians.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Miller reported: ‘When [my hair] was dry- and this took forever – the great Alexandre pirouetted out from somewhere, went into some Pavlovian leaps, turns and ballet sprints, with comb and brush in his hands. I think the great Alexandre really missed his calling. He puts on quite a show.’ (1972:186)

<sup>xxxix</sup> The hairstylist has obviously been renamed in the film, just as Raymond would have done with his own employees. The fact that he has been called Oberon, who was ‘king of the fairies’ in Medieval and Renaissance literature and therefore a coded pun, is yet another sign that society considered hairdressers to be gay regardless of the truth. As McCracken stated, society took every opportunity and great pleasure in bringing this up, precisely because of its comedic value.

## **Advance to Mayfair! The Mecca of Hairdressing**

### **Westward Ho!**

The previous chapter established that British hairdressing, as with couture, followed the lead of fashionable Paris in the first half of the twentieth century. The kudos of those London hairdressers centred in and around Mayfair was built upon their ability to emulate the *mâitre-coiffeurs* of Paris. Not only did this include following the new fashionable hair-lines which were produced by the Paris *Syndicale* but also the ‘Frenchification’ of the London hairdressers and their staff, as well as the interior decor of the salons. The example of Raymond, already discussed, is the paradigm in this respect. Raymond had taken this emulation commercially one step further by securing an actual partnership in the Parisian salon *Desca* in order that he could authentically describe his business as being truly ‘of London and Paris’ (Cox, 1999:95). If Raymond saw Paris as the model to which to aspire, provincial hairdressers focussed on London, its West End and more specifically Mayfair. This situation presupposes a notional hierarchy in hairdressing which is clearly evidenced in the pages of the *Hairdressers’ Journal*. Its editorials mainly addressed the ‘ordinary’ hairdresser dealing largely with their concerns, such as good business practise or improvements in salon design. However, the *Journal* also reported on news and events that came out of Mayfair and (to a lesser extent) about Parisian hairdressing; the effects of which would have some bearing on provincial hair practice. While Paris might not have a direct impact on local hairdressers in the UK, Mayfair almost certainly did. Mayfair was the Mecca of high class fashion, for consumers and producers alike. To own a successful business in this small quarter of London was to have ‘arrived’; indeed the stamp of quality was to be able to put the words ‘of Mayfair’ behind one’s business name. However, this begs the question: what was so special about Mayfair?

In this chapter I will attempt to investigate the origins of Mayfair's identification with exclusivity and how its unique image was inextricably linked to its geographical boundaries. The history and geography of Mayfair is relatively important to hairdressing's development as I will demonstrate. These factors have significant social implications with regard to eminence within the hairdressing community and the type of clientele a Mayfair address would attract. I will also consider the general high regard with which Mayfair hairdressing was held by the wider hairdressing community, despite evidence that opinions were divided on its authority. Although Mayfair hairdressing was widely celebrated as avant-garde, it was not always held up as the pinnacle of *coiffure* as might be generally assumed. In fact evidence suggests that in areas around the country, there was active resistance to its being demonstrated as the benchmark of hairdressing, particularly by those established hairdressers who had no intention of ever setting up businesses there. However, the lure of the Capital was overpowering to young people who wanted to make their own mark in the world of hairdressing. For them, London was the theatre and Mayfair the stage upon which they could present themselves to the world. In an era when Britain's fortunes were changing, this was the perfect time to do so. The chapter will therefore also look at the effect of post-war affluence upon Mayfair hairdressing. Opportunities to expand began to present themselves and Mayfair hairdressers took advantage of the new growth in prosperity. In the mid-fifties, Mayfair hairdressing basked in its own glory but by the early 1960s, events beyond the control of those stylists were to create setbacks which had consequences for the hair salons there.

For many young hairdressers, starting out in their career meant being apprenticed in the suburbs and provinces before they could even consider applying to one of the great hairdressing salons in London's West End. For some would-be 'Raymond's' who were about to leave school and become part of the workforce, the reality was sobering and probably

disappointing. To be a Mayfair hairdresser and enjoy the prestige and trappings of that success was the ultimate ambition of most aspiring hairdressers. For the great majority, this would simply remain a pipe-dream and they would have to cultivate their success elsewhere but for some, nothing and nowhere else would do. There was an inexplicable magic about the name 'Mayfair' which excited all those who understood it as representative of luxury, exclusivity and untold wealth. While the bulk of its weekly news dealt with national hairdressing, the *Hairdressers' Journal* venerated those who conducted their business in this part of London and the wider vicinity of the West End. *Journal* reporters rarely, if ever, ventured into the City of London to report on hairdressing; the impression gained is that they considered the City and its businesses conventional and dull<sup>xl</sup> (*HJ* 1935:3:1470, Maxim). This feeling would have extended to City hair-work, of which the major part would have been barbering male office workers and businessmen. Unlike the West End, whose clientele were largely fashionable women who expected a certain standard and type of 'statement' hairdressing, the City barbers had other priorities. In 1959 the Holborn branch of the National Hairdressing Federation<sup>xli</sup> reported on the 'shocking' standard of work and low prices of haircutting in the City of London. This was undoubtedly due to the speed with which the haircuts were executed for the lunchtime trade; the Branch Secretary was most disgusted with the assistants' gleeful boasts of the number of cuts they could handle in an hour which clearly contributed to poor quality (*HJ* 1959:2:49).

While the female workforce was on the increase, women's hairdressers in the City were still relatively thin on the ground at the dawn of the Sixties. Female workers in all likelihood had their hair done locally or took a trip to the West End. In 1956 *The Journal* was still of the opinion that City attitudes were staid when it announced that a West End hairdresser had caused great consternation by taking over an old established barber's in Bishopsgate and converting it to a men's and women's salon, 'bringing West End styling to

the City business girl... better informed City opinion is that the new trend must be accepted as a sign of the times' (*HJ* 1956:7:26). Yet as the oldest part of the metropolis, it had long been the hub of British luxury commerce which, until the late seventeenth century, had included fashionable shopping streets (Rappaport, 2000:8). After this time, the City of London could not hope to compete with the West End's glittering creative industries and the consumption of its fashionable commodities; the aura of the West End alone overshadowed the rest of the Capital in these respects. However, unlike the City, the birth of the West End was relatively recent and the illustrious Mayfair grew from much more diverse if not dubious origins.

## **Mapping the Territory**

There has been a general assumption that successive attacks of the Plague and the Great Fire of London in 1666 were the prevalent causes of migration out of the City and the ensuing property development of the West End<sup>xlii</sup>. This is not strictly true (Styles & Snodin, 2001:5)<sup>xliii</sup>. While deaths exceeded births during the Tudor and Stuart reigns the population continued to grow through an estimated annual immigration of 10,000 people (Whitfield, 2006:13). Peter Whitfield has argued that since time immemorial, London had always been a magnet through its greater opportunities to improve one's livelihood, despite the risks entailed through overcrowded and insanitary conditions. Whitfield has also revealed that it was the problem of the swelling population both inside and outside the walled city that eventually saw the relaxation and abandonment of royal and municipal decrees which forbade unlicensed building within a three-mile perimeter of the City walls (2006:14; Styles & Snodin, 2001:3). The expansion of London towards the west had its roots in the establishment of a royal palace at Westminster by Edward the Confessor, close to the Abbey of St. Peter. However it was the freeing up of religious landownership through the

Reformation to secular landlords in the 1530s and the Restoration of the monarchy in the 1660s that saw unprecedented growth in housing (Whitfield, 2006:11, 14, 56). With the return of the aristocracy to the reinstated Royal Court, new developments of elegant housing were executed during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Earl of St. Albans had written in 1663 that ‘the beauty of this great town and the convenience of the Court, are defective in point of houses fit for the dwellings of noblemen and other persons of quality’ (Whitfield, 2006:56) underlining the fact that in the production of this new housing, the new West End created social differentiation (Whitfield, 2006) by putting distance between the wealthy and aristocratic and the rest of London’s lowlier population. Whitfield also explains that other, more commonly understood geographical reasons shaped the development of the West End; its position upstream meant that waste and sewage was taken away downstream as well as it being upwind of the noxious odours emanating from the industrial East End. It was also in close proximity to Temple Bar on the western boundary of the city and, the lawyers who plied their trade there in the Inns of Court were in demand by the gentry who were beginning to see the business potential of smart London residences for rent. As John Styles observes, the British nobility were clearly disposed towards certain types of commercial ventures (2001:6) and these circumstances provided them with a chance to turn disused land into handsome profits.

The districts in the West End are still recognisable by the names of their aristocratic landowner developers such as Grosvenor, Berkeley and Fitzroy (Whitfield, 2006; Rappaport, 2000). The majority of them were built during the long eighteenth century; the houses distinguished by their Palladian and Regency façades standing in elegant Georgian squares, often included an imposing mansion built for the landowning aristocrats themselves. Grosvenor’s surveyor, Thomas Barlow, had designed an ambitious square, its grandeur eclipsing anything of significance that had gone before. Grosvenor Square became a magnet

for the aristocracy, understood in the eighteenth century as London's 'innermost social sanctuary' from which radiated a grid of elegant straight, wide streets (Wetherell, 2014:83). Wealth was evident not only in the architecture but also in the width of the roads which were intended for the use of carriages, as opposed to the sedan chairs used in the old City's narrow streets (Whitfield, 2006). Designed to attract fashionably wealthy tenants the exclusivity and superiority of these houses and squares, as Whitfield states, endowed the new residents with a 'sense that to live there flattered people's image of themselves' and in so doing fostered the notion of the West End as 'a centre of social display' (2006:57,79). In order to keep up the appearances of these well-to-do householders, a network of luxury trades began to establish itself to service their needs. High class jewellers, tailors, furnishers, wine-merchants, boot-makers and physicians lived and worked discreetly in between the grand houses to provide a steady stream of provisions to their doorsteps (Whitfield, 2006:75, 79). Richard Grosvenor in designing for the needs of his wealthy tenants had planned and executed small backstreets to the north of Grosvenor Square to accommodate tradespeople and their businesses (Wetherell, 2014:87-94). Regent Street was purpose built as a long, sweeping, shopping avenue, originally with colonnades over the pavements as protection against the elements, something quite new to London. John Nash, the architect, saw this as a space for the idle rich where they could shop without being affronted by the lower classes. He stated quite emphatically that Regent Street,

would provide a boundary and complete separation between the streets and squares occupied by the nobility and gentry, and the narrow streets and meaner houses occupied by mechanics and the trading part of the community (Whitfield, 2006:115).

Nash's perception of a clear demographic partition, through the literal manifestation of a fashionably rich shopping street, further cemented the notion that the West End was symbolic of wealth, power and luxury.

The West End, unlike the traditional centrally administered seats of the City and Westminster, was an imaginary landscape whose margins oscillated between fantasy and reality and whose geographical peripheries were subject to the whims and vagaries of fashionable taste. What remained a constant was the synonymy of exclusive luxury and as Erika Rappaport states, the West End, through its link with aristocracy, was a metaphor for high society, ‘for those elite classes who lived, socialised and shopped in this area of London’ (2000:9). By association, the reputation of the trades which flourished here and served their wealthy clientele was magnified to the same degree. The further and deeper one delved into the environs of the West End, the more exclusive it became and businesses such as the hatter, Lock’s of St. James’ or the nineteenth-century barbers, Truefitt and Hill with their unassuming shop-fronts, were redolent of a type of sophistication that only their clientele would bring with them.

Bond Street had long been known as a male bastion of consumption and the patronage of important figures like Lord Byron and Admiral Lord Nelson brought distinction to its hatters, tailors, and hairdressers (Rappaport, 2000:10). They were also much-admired for the exquisiteness of their workmanship to the point where their products were their signature. Christopher Breward, in his study of dandyism noted how the power-base had gradually changed and it was these named professionals who dictated stylishness (2004b:40). Breward quotes the Marquis de Vermont<sup>xliv</sup> who on arriving in London wrote that he felt obliged to put himself into ‘the hands of the most celebrated professors. My hair has been cut by Blake ... Lock is my hatter and Hoby my shoemaker ...’ (2004b:28, 2004c:17) in order that he was not shunned by London’s *bonton* for his ignorance in observing the niceties of fashion. Breward also observes that in order to achieve the ‘‘correct’ London style’, the Marquis visited tradesmen within the confines of an area bounded by Oxford Street, Regent Street, Park Lane and Piccadilly (2004b:29). This area maps out the precise geography of Mayfair which later

came to be known as the Mayfair Square Mile probably in reference to its City counterpart as a powerful and wealthy financial district (*HJ* 1964:11:15).

During the nineteenth century, Mayfair's aristocratic tenants were joined by members of the *nouveau-riche* and increasing numbers of self-made millionaires who unlike the former aristocrats of inherited wealth, were determined to show off the fortunes that they had accrued often in commerce and manufacture by building what became known as 'plutocrat palaces' (Wetherell, 2014:130). The gradual decline of resident aristocrats in Mayfair offered new opportunities for this rising class, many of whom were British, imperial subjects, Americans and Jewish entrepreneurs who made much of their money from imperial trade and business rather than landowning, to move in. Park Lane in particular became famous for its concentration of 'new money' residents, such as Barney Barnato who had made his millions in South African gold and diamonds (Weightman & Humphries, 1984). In the two decades before WW1, there were approximately two dozen mining magnates in Mayfair and Belgravia (Kennedy, 1986). The manifestation of new wealth in Mayfair alongside the areas of Belgravia and Kensington, was evidenced in the opulent styles of their residential buildings, and only served to increase Mayfair's reputation as a fashionable neighbourhood and destination. This new wealthy class would have eagerly followed the social forms of entertaining and etiquette with which their neighbouring aristocrats were accustomed, gaining greater entry into the prestigious London Season that required their presence at elegant court rituals and at elaborate and luxurious social events.

For most of the nineteenth century then, it can be assumed that any public forms of commercial hairdressing executed in Mayfair would have been for men as upper and middle-class ladies' hairdressing was largely performed at home. Any women's hairdressing establishments would have sent their hairdressers *out* to women's homes upon request and by appointment and their shop premises, while conducting the business of hairdressing

arrangements and its elite account transactions, would have been used for the sale of hairdressing accessories and more probably the maintenance of postiches. While the wider West End area can be seen as largely the domain of female consumption, particularly in the last half of the nineteenth century (Rappaport, 2000), Mayfair appears to have clung in specific streets more stubbornly to a masculine oriented, elite service trade, a reputation which specific streets still retained into the following century. Rappaport's evidence that Pall Mall and Piccadilly were inextricably associated with gentlemen's clubs created through the conversion of private residential mansions (2000:86-7) and catering to the expanding number of metropolitan millionaires is further supported by the general acknowledgement of Bond Street and Savile Row as streets geared to fashionable male consumption, notably menswear tailoring. Even up to the mid-twentieth century, Jermyn Street was considered as one of the most significant West End streets that catered for men (*HJ* 1960:12:10) with its array of men's fashion shops, tailors, and jewellers, sporting goods, wine cellars and perfumers.

Consequently, the arrival of an increasing number of 'women' in the public spaces of nineteenth-century Mayfair could have been seen as an invasion of a quintessentially masculine territory, and conceivably greeted with male agitation and anxiety (Rappaport, 2000:100). However, it is clear as Christopher Breward has argued that 'the range of outlets for constructing a male sartorial image was much wider' than many commentators on West End consumption have acknowledged, thereby mitigating against this forceful reaction (Breward, 1999:100). Nevertheless, the gradual and greater acceptance of women's hairdressing in the public sphere with the advent of the department store from 1850s would no doubt have sanctioned the conversion of those extant discrete small enterprises into more visibly commercial, although still elite, ladies' public hairdressing salons. Those operations situated in Mayfair at this time may very well have been the original premises of the next century's prestigious Mayfair establishments.

For example, Swan and Edgar appears to have been the first department store in Mayfair, boasting a prime position on the corner of Piccadilly and Regent Street facing Piccadilly Circus (See Fig.2.1). It began as a haberdashery in 1812, but it is described as having developed and expanded into what we now understand as a classic London department store, comprising nine properties by the 1850s (McConnell, 2005). Its position at the south east corner of Mayfair meant that it was located very close to Grafton and Albemarle Streets. Significantly, Whiteley's department store was the first store to introduce a ladies' hairdressing salon in 1876 and Swan and Edgar may have followed its lead, encouraging smaller outlets to trade in the immediate vicinity as upper and middle class females became more accustomed to newer and more modern forms of conspicuous consumption. This trend expanding in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, when combined with the parallel socio-political issue of greater female emancipation in daily life, meant that upper and middle class women were becoming more publicly visible within urban society, thereby seeing themselves for the first time as attaining and enjoying a greater sense of economic independence and participating in expanded pleasurable consumption, even if this was relatively restricted and reduced by today's standards.

The impact of the Great War upon Mayfair was restricted to the effect that the introduction of conscription on all single men aged between 19-30 years old from February 1916 had upon the availability of trained male hairdressers and assistants, and the growing sense that the wealthy should not conspicuously flaunt their wealth at a time of national crisis since such opulent displays were popularly interpreted as inappropriate and anti-patriotic. Another more localised trend was the transformation of imposing Mayfair houses into privately funded, charitable hospitals for the large numbers of wounded casualties coming from the Western front (White, 2014:140). Indeed, Mayfair became the centre of a number of such hospitals for wounded officers opened in private houses at their owners' expense such as

Mrs Freddie Guest's mansion, the Marquess of Londonderry's house on Park Lane and Lady Evelyn Mason's Officer Hospital, in her home at 16 Bruton Street, Mayfair (Kennedy, 1986:179; White, 2014: 141).

With women's greater involvement in the war effort and their attainment of many roles previously the preserve of male workers, the 1914-18 war broadly expanded the pre-war tendency towards more economic independence for many women and these changing circumstances facilitated a greater participation in the urban sphere, thereby increasing activity in terms of retail consumption, and particularly in the West End businesses of fashionable consumption. This development had a demonstrably visible effect on Mayfair especially after the post-World War One era. Andrew Stephenson's examination of the artist Edward Burra argues that the changes in 'commercial, moral and sexual codes of urban society ... [were] the result of greater sexual equality' and that these trends were a 'natural continuation of pre-war transformations' (Stephenson, 2013). The area within and around Mayfair became a fashionable centre of modern bars, nightclubs and other high society haunts in which the modern young woman was as conspicuous as her male peers (see Fig.2.2). Burra's sketches of modern life in the late 1920s reveal his interest in contemporary fashion, illustrating that visual appearance equated with racy-ness; new fashions in clothing, cosmetics and hairstyles coupled with a modern risqué attitude were clinched by being seen in the right setting. Mayfair, as with many other parts of the country, may have been party to major societal changes but in itself, it epitomised Stephenson's analysis of the overlapping of traditional and newer ways of life; despite its traditional image of upper class sensibility and decorum, it was perfectly able to accommodate these neoteric fashionable notions which were at home in an area steeped in notions of luxury. In fact, Stephenson cites *The Illustrated London News* as pointing out that London's modern nightlife was not only a development of the new century but also noted that 'the social tone is much higher and the

setting more sumptuous and magnificent' (Stephenson, 2013) indicating that twentieth century 'modernity' was located in the more sophisticated, well-heeled areas of London.

By the late 1920s with the onset of the Depression (1929-32), it appears that Mayfair's luxury market orientation largely protected it from the extremes of the economic downturn. However, one of the noticeable features of the interwar period in this area were changes to the commercial type of building being constructed and the area's quite rapid transformation of residential home into commercial properties. Continuing a trend that had started at the end of the nineteenth century, many of the aristocrats whose wealth had derived largely from agricultural estates found that with the slump in agricultural and land prices that their fortunes were dwindling. Coupled with rising taxes and death duties, such increased debts forced them to abandon the large single occupancy grand houses often selling their contents and art collections to settle debts. Equally, many aristocrats who had invested substantially overseas affected by the economic instabilities of the Boer wars, the Great War and the Slump, lost considerable amounts of money and were forced to sell property, land and private art collections to pay off debts (Weightman & Humphries, 1984).

In the 1920s, many of these aristocratic Mayfair houses falling into disarray were demolished and they made way for new retail or commercial outlets and for new luxury hotels such as the Dorchester which was built and opened on the site of the former Dorchester House by Sir Malcolm McAlpine in 1931 (Kennedy, 1986:198). McAlpine regretted having to demolish the mansion but he observed that 'even for such a mansion such as Dorchester House, no useful purpose could be found' (Wetherell, 2014:166) due to the changes in living conditions in this period. The modern forms of residential properties were luxury flats and apartments which, although they had started to become fashionable at the end of the nineteenth century in the form of mansion blocks, were much better designed with the latest mod-cons and required considerably less staff to maintain. These flats, smaller in size and

with electricity and modern appliances, were frequently constructed above shop premises and they proved to be very lucrative for developers (Weightman & Humphries, 1984). Very often, the surviving mansions were also transformed into office space to accommodate the rise in demand from commercial companies for space in the fashionable West End. Wetherell noted that whole streets ‘such as Grafton Street, with its large redundant houses, were turned over to the commercial sector from the 1920s onwards’ (2014:155). No doubt the commercially-savvy Raymond, who opened his first salon in Grafton Street in the mid-Thirties, recognised that this was the right time to take advantage of the large empty mansions as well as to exploit a lucrative and high-class trade of often single women, fashionable West End flat owners.

The other noticeable change was the ‘Americanisation’ of the West End which reached its climax during the period between the wars and that also had an effect on the changing architectural styles as well as social mix. Increasingly prevalent in London social circles from 1890s, rich Americans, especially young women, were eager to participate in London’s rich social and cultural scene, often keen to marry into aristocratic British society. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 had not stopped very wealthy Americans from coming to London nor had it had the detrimental effects that this economic downturn had had on the Parisian *couture* houses, which suffered as a result until the middle of the decade (Wilson & Taylor, 1989). Park Lane with its new hotels and flats continued to attract American investment and purchasers and many British commentators complained that it now began to resemble Fifth Avenue in New York rather than the British capital (Weightman & Humphries, 1984). They also brought with them entertainments and less formal customs which appealed to the younger set and these included the cocktail bar, the dance-band, jazz music and a predilection for iced-water and Art Deco apartments with the latest fittings, home technology and conveniences. Lady Bonham Carter spoke for many of the younger set

when she declared that they were a breath of fresh air in what was becoming a rather stale London Season (Weightman & Humphries, 1984). The denizens of Park Lane whether aristocrats or American visitors therefore would have been an attractive and lucrative market for Freddie French whose first Mayfair salon was opened in the mid-Thirties in nearby Curzon Place and who, no doubt, did very well by attracting such well-heeled and fashionable customers to his hairdressing business there.

The onset of the Second World War (1939-45) with aerial bombing and the extensive destruction of the Blitz in Autumn 1940 disrupted commercial operations in the West End and it dramatically altered the geography of Mayfair and the complexion of its architecture and commercial retailing accommodation. Equally the introduction of conscription on men aged up to forty-seven years old in May 1940 and the government closure of many entertainment venues in the first months of the war from September 1939 had an impact upon the West End entertainment and fashion industries. Carol Kennedy stated that even though Ernest Bevin had called up employees of those luxury shops and trades in Mayfair, 'hairdressers were exempt for morale-boosting reasons' (1986:244). Even though London benefitted from an influx of on-leave service personnel and many foreigner servicemen, notably the arrival of American G.I.s from 1942, and whilst many entertainment venues re-opened later in the war, the conscription of retail personnel, compulsory rationing with shortages of specialist treatments and increasing police surveillance restricted commercial operations as did the impact of blackouts and the resultant damage of bombings.

### **Mayfair Setting, Style and Service**

Hairdressing in this part of London in the mid-twentieth century, continued to maintain and develop its former established reputation and while it had been subject to gradual changes with regard to its population, its wealthy socio-economic demographic and grandiose

property prices had not, thus continuing to underpin the high status of the luxury trades that existed within it. Mayfair, unlike the more nebulous West End, is a precisely fixed location situated within the square boundary of four major streets (the Mayfair Square Mile), nestling in the heart of modern London (see Fig.2.3). Its name originated from the disreputable May Fair which was held there annually in the very South West corner of the district, on what is now Shepherd Market (Marshall, 2013). The site of the former ancient Manor of Ebury, it was owned principally by Sir Richard Grosvenor and its singular aristocratic property development together with new building regulations<sup>xlv</sup> meant that for the large part it had a uniformity of style, very much in the fashionable Italianate model, which set it apart from the disorderly growth and variety of design in the City. This unity of stylish design meant that it exuded an immediately visible grandness which, aside from St. James', established it as the premier address in London, attracting wealthy and noble residents. However, the focal point of the original May Fair, Shepherd Market in the South West corner of Mayfair, retained a more down-at-heel, old-fashioned character, well into the 1950s. This contrasted dramatically with the transformation that had overwhelmed the rest of Mayfair, whose opulent modernity was mythologized in the creation of the board-game *Monopoly* in 1935; Mayfair was the last property on the board and the most expensive. Over time (and particularly during the interwar period of the twentieth century), the area became less residential and the grand houses were used for offices and embassies. Some of the streets and Georgian houses were demolished to make way for purpose-built office blocks (Whitfield, 2006: 170). Whitfield also noted the encroachment of a more blatant form of commercialism in the shape of retail and leisure industries which helped to change the character of the West End; not only of those from which exclusivity and wealth exuded, but also enabling, with the advent of the underground network, a more democratic consumption of these industries (2006:171).

The prestige attached to a Mayfair business address was enhanced by another factor: the distinctive telephone number. Prior to All Figure Numbers (AFN)<sup>xlvi</sup>, telephone numbers were preceded by the name of their local telephone exchange<sup>xlvii</sup>. In this way clients could easily determine which businesses were situated within the Mayfair exchange boundary; an instantly recognisable way of distinguishing the more exclusive Mayfair trade from the rest.<sup>xlviii</sup> The Mayfair Exchange was the third such to be opened by the Post Office in 1902, after 'Central' and 'City', to serve the wider West End (Freshwater, 2010; BT Mobile Website, no date). The Mayfair Square Mile, a largely residential area at that time, was undoubtedly not chosen because of its commercial value, but because its residents were wealthy enough to own this fashionable new technology. It seems fitting then that Debenham's department store situated just north of Oxford Street, should be the first telephone exchange subscriber in this area and having procured the prestigious number Mayfair 1 (Glinert, 2007), was able to communicate with its wealthy customers who took up this new luxury technology. Having a business with a Mayfair telephone number therefore became a sign of elitism and not only was it evidence of a luxury location but it instantaneously elevated those businesses in the public imagination through its superior socio-cultural connotations. When the old Mayfair exchange could no longer cope with the number of subscribers, the area east of Regent Street became REGent exchange with the new STD code of 734, further perpetuating the line drawn between the prestige of Mayfair and the rest of the West End. Therefore, the choice of business location within the Mayfair boundary became strategic in order to obtain the now all important telephone number.<sup>xlix</sup> By the early twentieth century the name of Mayfair, despite its more dubious origins<sup>1</sup> and in the face of the general development of the West End, was still synonymous with high class luxury. Notwithstanding its capitulation to commercialisation, Mayfair continued to embody

associations of excellence and superior craftsmanship. The businesses that had served to cater to the aristocratic houses not only maintained their trade but their exalted positions.

When looking at the map (see Fig.2.3), most of the important traditional hairdressers in the period 1955-1975 had their salons situated within Mayfair's designated boundaries (the Mayfair Square Mile) but it is evident that new hairdressers continued to move in right up to the end of the period too. It is also clear that even within Mayfair, there was a geographic hairdressing hierarchy, centred firmly on the south-eastern corner streets of Grafton Street, Albemarle Street, Bond Street, Dover Street, Hay Hill, Berkeley Street and Berkeley Square. In the early part of the period this was the most desirable part of Mayfair for hairdressing and where a small exclusive group of the top hairdressers at this time had their salons. Laurence Berg of André Bernard told *The Journal*:

“If you want a diamond you go to Hatton Garden; if you want good hairdressing you come to Mayfair. In fact, the Grafton Street area is to hairdressing as Harley Street is to medicine. There is magic in the name of Mayfair and we have to work to keep that magic in being” (*HJ* 1959:8:26).

This was an important consideration, for not all Mayfair addresses proved successful for the businesses that rented them. Their position within Mayfair was a decisive factor as to whether they flourished or failed and for unsuspecting newcomers, duped by the seeming advantages of Mayfair, unwisely chosen premises could force financial disaster. One such example was that of a hairdresser, who having leased his first West End shop in Brown's Arcade in Mayfair which few people knew existed, was forced to appeal against the newly imposed huge increase in rateable value because he could not attract sufficient trade. Even the Westminster valuation officer opposing the appeal agreed that it was not situated advantageously (*HJ* 1956:10:21). Conversely, those who could not secure premises within the Mayfair boundary traded on tenuous links in order to justify their prestige and prices. In

1956, the Edmund Barrie salon opened in Old Quebec Street, just outside the northern perimeter of Mayfair on the very western tip at Marble Arch. The owner, clearly irked by this geographical marginalisation, insisted that as his staffs were Mayfair trained, they would give Mayfair service and charge Mayfair prices (*HJ* 1956:12:21).

Freddie French, whose original salon was in Curzon Place on the very western edge of Mayfair near Park Lane, took the opportunity to move to Cork Street and make it his headquarters in 1959. Curzon Place is so small that it is not visible on the London street maps, positioned as it is between Stanhope Gate and Curzon Street. Situated at the opposite end of Mayfair to his competitors, French was further disadvantaged by the visual isolation of this address, so it is understandable that he would have set his sights firmly on a business premises in the Grafton Street area. Despite being the other side of Bond Street, Cork Street<sup>li</sup> which since 1925 had fast become renowned for its growing number of tasteful art galleries (Brown, 2012), not only suited his predilection for artistic dabbling but was probably as close as he could get to having premises in this quarter(*HJ* 1959:12:17). Likewise, Vidal Sassoon's first salon at 108 New Bond Street was only just inside the northern boundary of Mayfair, below Oxford Street. Mary Quant describes coming across his salon for the first time, as 'dashing past the wrong end of Bond Street one day,' (2012:167). The cognoscenti were well aware of even the finest nuances in location and fashionability. Sassoon too was undoubtedly conscious that while his salon gave him the all-important Mayfair address and telephone number, this was not the most exclusive location. A few years later when he had established himself as a rising star in the hairdressing community, Sassoon opened a new salon at 171 Bond Street, which was closer to Grafton Street and the hub of *haute-coiffure*. Sassoon trumpeted his arrival with a grand opening party which included live jazz music (Marwick, 1998:79) and guests mingled in a salon interior designed by the celebrated David Hicks.

Space would have been at a premium in just these few streets, with the probability of suitable shop premises becoming available to let being infrequent. If hairdressers were fortunate enough to secure commercial rental premises in the Grafton Street area, they would stay there. Number 18 Grafton Street was Raymond's first salon and his business headquarters for twenty-eight years (*HJ* 1964b:7:7); similarly André Bernard, Raymond's next door neighbour, had been there for sixteen years, both salons being forced out by redevelopment and the shops demolished in 1964. André Bernard, no doubt saddened by the enforced move (albeit to Bond Street) named their main salon in the new suite 'The Grafton Room' (*HJ* 1964:10:18) such was its magnitude.

Harold Leighton was a contemporary of Vidal Sassoon, and worked with him at various salons in the West End and on the fringes of Mayfair before Sassoon opened his own salon. Leighton followed Sassoon to Dumas' on Albemarle Street. Sassoon started there in 1951 (Voguepedia, no date) and this was a significant move as Dumas' clientele were wealthy business and fashion people who expected to receive a certain standard of hairdressing and treatment, which Leighton describes as 'the Mayfair style'; a practise that Leighton had to 're-learn' from scratch as it was the only way to 'get into a posh, smart salon like Dumas' (Burns, 2008).

The Mayfair Style was based on the knowledge of a portfolio of specific cuts and *plis*. A *pli* was the hairdressing term for a 'set' which, after the hair had been shampooed and cut, was put on to curlers of specific sizes in different positions and directions according to the desired outcome and usually heat dried under a hood dryer. When the hair was dry and curlers removed, it could then be styled to suit each individual client. The master-hairdressers' art came into play with the invention of new styles and in determining whether hair was to be longer or shorter, fuller on top, brushed off or forward on to the face, with or without fringes, partings, etc. In much the same way that the *haute couturier* would create

new fashionable seasonal collections, the Mayfair stylists would create new or avant-garde 'lines'. These lines, once introduced, would be varied slightly or adapted to suit different facial shapes and profiles.

Mayfair Style also focussed on dressing the hair but in a way that involved very elaborate and sophisticated creations using a variety of adornments. These could be a mixture of hair pieces or hair ornaments<sup>lii</sup> and other accessories ranging from artificial decorations designed by the hairdresser, natural objects such as seashells and petrified butterflies<sup>liii</sup>, to the client's own jewellery. Master hairdressers would demonstrate their artistic skill and expertise in the aesthetic arrangement of these decorations. The degree to which it was adorned largely depended on the formality or extravagance of the occasion. Quintessentially, 'Mayfair' dressing was one of freedom and movement, rather than contrived waves and curls<sup>liv</sup>. The Mayfair Masters obviously saw themselves as having faculties beyond simply being able to cut hair and they were unafraid of demonstrating their inspirational techniques before the camera. In this way, they were able to promote and advertise themselves to a much wider audience who, having watched them at work, would be drawn to their salons<sup>lv</sup>. Also they could demand high prices reflecting their skill and expertise.

Joshua Galvin (who later worked for Sassoon) described this period in Mayfair hairdressing history as 'the Golden Days' and he remembered that the clientele visited the salons in chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce cars (Galvin, 2005 MD:3-6.48). Leighton also describes this as being a period for 'big clientele and big profits for salons' (Burns, 2008) as the styles they created meant continuous visits to the hairdresser. Standing appointments as they were known, kept the appointment books filled for months in advance and the form and style of hairdressing meant that clients would normally come in at least once a week either

for cutting or washing and setting. Comb-outs were a form of 'restyling' which might also need to be done to refresh the hairdo between standing appointments.

Nonetheless, this arrangement was not enough to keep clients loyal to one salon as hairdressers also had to offer a 'Mayfair' service. Part of this was what sort of amenities could be provided to the clients over those offered by the hairdressers' competitors. Typically, most Mayfair salons had phone booths, but many had plug-in telephones so that clients could make and receive calls while having their hair dressed. They also ran their own laundries and had sterilised brushes and combs for each client. Light refreshments were always provided, but many offered a la carte restaurant service too. Moreover it was common practise to 'send out' for food if clients desired to eat something which the salon was unable to provide. Vidal Sassoon, well known for his healthy eating regimes, provided such delicious salads that a regular client on the pretext of having her hair done, admitted that she had come in simply to have one for lunch (1961:3:23, Figg).

Those with greater entrepreneurial skills pinpointed more specific needs. French's salon in the Mayfair hotel offered breakfast under the dryer to those residents with early morning business appointments and a stenographer was on hand to deal with client correspondence (*HJ* 1959:1:25). Quirkiness aside, Mayfair service was about being able to offer luxury facilities in elegant surroundings to wealthy customers used to high levels of personalised service and sophisticated client demands. Perhaps the most potent example of Mayfair entrepreneurialism was the total beauty service offered by Raphael and Leonard when they opened their salon premises in Upper Grosvenor Street circa late 1963<sup>lvi</sup>. Here the client could indulge in a sauna, facial, massage and depilatory treatments, followed by haircut and colour (Daniel Galvin worked for them at this stage<sup>lvii</sup>) and on the ground floor there was a boutique selling a range of clothing, shoes, jewellery and other accessories. Raphael and Leonard had realised from their experience of working in other salons that it would be

difficult to compete with established hairdressers on the basis of hairdressing alone. By providing a range of beauty services under one roof they had found a unique method of not only attracting but keeping their clientele (*HJ* 1964:4:33-39).

Apart from their reputations as hairdressers to high class, wealthy customers, these hairdressers recognised that their salon interiors must reflect a high level of aesthetic elegance to which they believed their clients were accustomed. The *Hairdressers' Journal* stated quite categorically, in an article on the new Maurice and John French salon that it was '... an unspoken tradition that if you open a salon in Mayfair it must be opulent and artistically decorated' (*HJ* 1965:4:28). I have already alluded to the sumptuous interior of Guilio Napolitani's salon reproduced in the film *On the Beat*, faithfully mimicking those found in Mayfair. This emphasises it was taken for granted that all traditional Mayfair salon interiors displayed a sophisticated level of luxury in their furnishings even if they did not all follow the same style. The most commonly recurring theme was the use of the Regency or Louis Seize style which usually included striped wallpaper or silk panels; velvet or satin curtains and drapery; period furniture upholstered in sympathetic materials; stuccoed walls; and invariably a large chandelier<sup>lviii</sup>(see Fig.2.4). Constituting an elegant, classical Mayfair drawing room style, these interiors were still being recreated well into the end of this period of study. Marking the opening of the new André Bernard salon in Mount Street in 1971, the proposed interior (see Fig.2.5) was described as having 'velvet upholstered seats ... standard lamps, wall lights and oil paintings, helping to provide an intimate, welcoming atmosphere.' Emphatically, all signs of commercial enterprise were kept out of view. As Edward Morris told the *Hairdressers' Journal*, the women who came to this salon had been educated to expect nothing less than the highest of standards in their hairdressing and surroundings (*HJ* 1971:9:20-22). As these salons were chiefly housed in the grand Palladian mansions of the eighteenth century and the clientele often consisted of titled women, this environment might

be imagined as a familiar interior and styling for many of them with which they were attuned and would feel comfortable.

While this aesthetic was faithfully reproduced well into the 1960s, more fashionable ideas started to pervade salon design, such as that for ‘Orientalism’ which was already underway by the late Fifties. The decoration gave the appearance of a spare minimalist Oriental style which would have been fashionable in the High Modernist period, but one subtly indicating luxury on a grand scale through the use of expensive woods and silks imported, if possible, directly from the Far East. The article on Maurice and John French’s salon (*HJ* 1965:4:28-29) includes several images of the interior (see Fig.2.6), its design having a distinctly Japanese minimalism feel to it. This spare decoration is offset by the vastness of its scale. Japanese silk lined the walls topped by polished green Japanese oak panels that contrasted against plain white walls edged with ebony. In addition willow green carpeting complemented the green, blue and gold tapestry upholstery in the reception. Not only was all the material imported from Japan, but John French flew to Tokyo to choose the silks and tapestry himself. The theme was carried through to pink silk kimonos for the clients and a range of Japanese wave setting lotions; snacks comprised China tea and Japanese Mikadoya<sup>lix</sup> (*HJ* 1965:4:28-29).

Similarly, Sassoon’s first Mayfair salon opted for contemporary Fifties styling which better accommodated the small space it occupied rather than using grandiose Regency trappings (Fig.2.7). As soon as Sassoon had managed to turn a little profit, he redecorated the salon incorporating striking modern furniture and covering the walls with original Lucienne Day wallpaper (*HJ* 1955:4:41). As with other Mayfair salons, no matter whether it was Regency, Contemporary or Japanese styling, everything had to be *authentic*. If clients were paying for the experience of Mayfair hairdressing, inexpensive or tasteless reproductions were out of the question.

## **The Magnetism of Mayfair**

Why Mayfair was seen as the Mecca of hairdressing for stylists and clients has been partially answered already by this chapter in considering its historic background. The desire of many hairdressers, particularly those who were young and just starting out, to work there and perhaps eventually own businesses in the area was very strong, as was the issue of why clients were so drawn and came from far and wide to have their hair styled in Mayfair and the West End. This might be explained to a certain extent by a national survey conducted to determine the preferences of the British people. It appears that the consumption of hairdressing nation-wide was generally a patchy practise during the period under investigation. In his book *British Tastes* (1968), the culmination of a ten-year survey, the author D. Elliston Allen notes regional discrepancies in the British Isles on a wide range of subjects, including hairdressing and its consumption. Elliston Allen neither clarifies why his survey does not give equal weight to the material gathered and analysed, nor does he explain why hairdressing receives comparatively little attention. Nonetheless, as a socio-anthropologist, his intentions were to counter the ever-growing notion that mass-consumerism created a homogeneous pall and his study clearly does that. His argument of justifiable regional differentiation is reasoned on historical continuity; that communities were slow to change, despite the efforts of mass-marketing. Elliston Allen observed that the Welsh, Scots and Tyne-siders spent little time on hairdressing. This did not mean that disinterest in hair was concentrated at the peripheries of the British Isles; on the contrary the West Country was populated by a large number of retirees, who spent a disproportionately large amount of their income on 'morale-boosting' visits to the hairdressers, equivalent to expenditure in the affluent South East. Elliston Allen comments that in the North, Yorkshire and Lancashire women also visited hairdressers more frequently than British women generally but he completely ignores the hairdressing habits of the Midlands. London,

naturally, spent more on hairdressing because the greater concentration of white-collar office work demanded higher standards in appearance and as he remarks, salons were within easy reach of women office workers, facilitating lunchtime appointments. Undoubtedly the close proximity of West End salons would have tempted many central London workers to pay for a celebrity salon cut, singling them out as fashionable individuals. The greater concentration of better quality hair salons in the Capital meant that many regional consumers and hairdressers were drawn to it and that Mayfair with its concentration of hairdressing excellence would have been the ultimate magnetic force.

This notion of ‘magnetic force’ can be more strongly underpinned through Central Place Theory (CPT). CPT was devised by Walter Christaller in 1933 to explain why and how urban sites are geographically situated using a theoretical model (Argawal, 2002). CPT also engaged with aspects of urban geography such as transportation and marketing strategies to determine the distances between settlements and how far people would be willing to travel to obtain goods. Christaller identified that retail products were geographically located according to their usage and price and was formulated on a hierarchical structure; ‘low-order’ goods which were common items such as food, would be positioned more nearly and have short travelling distances while ‘high-order’ goods that were either speciality forms or consumed less frequently, would likely be much further away in a conurbation and require more travelling to obtain them. Mayfair, which even compared to the rest of London has the highest order of goods, is undeniably a Central Place and in relation to hairdressing offered consummate services not generally obtainable elsewhere. While CPT has been contested as too rigid and simplistic in its assumptions, it has been argued that its neo-classical approach continues to subliminally underpin the new retail geographic approaches (Clarke, 1996) which have broadened the scope to consumption. In addition therefore, it might be useful to consider a geographical consumption model which is premised on three key terms: *sites*,

*chains and spaces and places* (Wrigley & Lowe, 1996) to further determine the draw of Mayfair. Mayfair, while it was also an imaginative construct, was evidently a fixed geographical site; no amount of imagination could supplant the real thing but the fantasy and the reality often worked symbiotically to create the desire to visit. Therefore the chains are not simply ‘the relationship between different areas of production and consumption’ as defined by Jackson and Thrift (Wrigley & Lowe 1996:17) but are networks of communication between manufacturing suppliers and hairdressers which fed into creating Mayfair magic, a little of which was then taken away by the clients, hairdressers and media to be consumed at a distance. The Mayfair salons – designed spaces that become places in which all manner of fantasy is played out – had individual identities carved out by their hairdressing owners/stylists. Each of the salons and their celebrity master hairdressers were atmospherically different to one another and this would determine the needs, tastes and type of client visiting them.

It is little wonder then that, for many young people who dreamed of being hairdressers, all roads led to Mayfair. The opportunities to become an apprentice in the West End were very slim; most young school leavers would have been apprenticed in the suburbs or provinces and once their early training was completed<sup>lx</sup>, might then look for an opening in a West End salon. In response to the question of whether apprenticeship should be pursued in the West End or suburbs, the *Hairdressers’ Journal* suggested that ‘Mayfair [would] surely look carefully into the character and personality of the apprentice [and that] the demands may well be more exacting’ (*HJ* 1955:8:36) implying that the applicant must be of a very high calibre to be accepted. However, it did go on to say that Mayfair experience might be secured post-apprenticeship, suggesting that providing the training was good, a suburban apprenticeship did not preclude a career in Mayfair. When Leslie Russell began hairdressing, he started his apprenticeship with Leslie Green in the Croydon suburb of London but he knew

that if he wanted to pursue a more creative career in hairdressing he would have to find work in the West End. Like many other young hopefuls, Russell would go to Mayfair salons on his weekly afternoon off to enquire if they needed anybody and an interview usually meant having to demonstrate a haircut (Russell, 2003/4:1, 75). His determination eventually paid off and he got a job at Raphael & Leonard's in 1964 where he met Keith Wainwright. Wainwright became his partner when they finally opened their own salon *Smile* in 1969 (2003/4:91, 117). Leonard Lewis, on the other hand, went straight to Mayfair. His background as a barrow-boy meant he knew absolutely nothing about the world of hairdressing; oddly it was his family connections with the criminal underworld that introduced him to the *Hairdressers' Journal* where he answered advertisements for apprenticeships. An embarrassing and unsuccessful first attempt at French of London did not deter him; his next interview with Rose Evansky was successful and he spent the next three years apprenticed to the salon (Lewis, 2000:29-31).

There were full-time college courses in hairdressing for those who were able to take up places. The Barrett Street Technical College<sup>lxi</sup> taught hairdressing and other trades for industries that required skilled crafts labour. As the former Trade School, Barrett Street was renowned as a first class institution for training students as needlewomen for couture houses and stylists for the upmarket West End hair salons. Almost all of their students gained employment in prestigious houses and salons upon completion of a two year course (Tancell, 2002). Others chose another route via college courses that ran evening classes. The Dempsey Technical College in the East End ran three-year courses to learn the hairdressing trade, for young teenagers already at work. It boasted that a good number of its students obtained work in Mayfair as first year operatives. This appeared to be the dream and determination of its students who saw Mayfair as the singular career trajectory (*HJ* 1955:6:22).

Nor was it unsurprising that although the core Mayfair clients were London-based, upper and middle-class women, there were those who travelled great lengths to have their hair done in these top class establishments, drawn by the mythical aura of its name. For them, the chance to visit London and boast a trip to a Mayfair hairdresser held untold advantages in terms of status particularly for county women. This was another reason that apprenticeships were scarce: there was no margin for error as Mayfair demanded a certain standard of proficiency (*HJ* 1957:12:28). Furthermore, even if a hairdressing assistant was highly skilled, any lack in the basic skills of service such as excellent manners and efficiency as well as perfect treatment of their clients, would have deemed them unsuitable employees of a Mayfair salon. Other conditions such as presence, voice, deportment and tact (*HJ* 1955:7:43); tirelessness and an ‘above-average’ personality (*HJ* 1958:12:46) were vital attributes for a position in Mayfair. What the *Hairdressers’ Journal* failed to put its finger on when providing a definition was that its top hairstylists needed to have the creativity and daring of avant-garde artists, to separate them from hairdressers of excellence in the rest of the country who could match them in all other skills. Not only that, London continued to be pre-eminent as leader of fashionable taste and no matter how good the hairdressing in other parts of the country, it was the location that was also key to its allure.

This presents a conundrum as the geographical view of Mayfair supports the idea of a solid setting, while the metaphorical notion of Mayfair transcends the physical, to become a construct of the imagination which could be mapped onto other locales. The evidence for this could be found in the idea that other cities could have their own ‘Mayfair’, so called, because it exemplified the highest standards of hairdressing. Manchester was one such that combined an elevated level of hairdressing with exclusivity, catering to the ‘cream of North-West society’ fixed in the fashionable location of King Street which had earned a reputation for being ‘rich in talent’ (*HJ* 1959:9:29)<sup>lxii</sup>. In smaller towns that did not have fashionable

shopping streets, the simple way to increase prestige was to add ‘of Mayfair’ to the shop name and signage (*HJ* 1973:7:14). Justifiably, this meant that the hairstylist must have had a background in Mayfair hairdressing but this was frequently tenuous, if not a complete fabrication. More vaguely, the appendix need only be the broader ‘of London’ to complete the mystique, but it was often disappointingly obvious that many hairdressers were trying to realise a fleeting and remote link to the Capital, without the competencies described. Nonetheless, this practise simply served to illustrate the high esteem with which London or Mayfair was held by both hairdressers and clients. The magnetism of the name Mayfair was so strong that to the untrained or uninitiated, its sphere of influence extended beyond its geographical boundaries into the wider West End. The Mayfair enigma was thrown into the spotlight by a letter to the *Hairdressers’ Journal* in 1957 which focussed the *Journal’s* response more sharply as to what ‘Mayfair’ truly meant. The analysis was interesting for *Referee*, having agreed with many of the letter’s observations, then proceeded to delineate the difference between what was denoted and connoted by the term Mayfair. The summary response was that ‘Mayfair’ generally speaking meant just a handful of top-class hairdressers ‘not necessarily ... every hairdresser within a mile or so of Piccadilly Circus’ (*HJ* 1957:12:28).

### **The Perception of Mayfair**

The picture painted of Mayfair hairdressing so far is one that conjures up a rarefied air of excellence and elegance, beyond the scope of most ordinary hairdressers. The average hairdresser could only imagine what it might be like to work there, or to be revered as a master of the craft. While young hairdressers pondered over Mayfair’s attraction, clients seemed to be less puzzled. In 1973 the *Hairdressers’ Journal* did a feature article on the clientele of Alan Spiers, whose Berkeley Square salon had been open for twenty-two years.

It interviewed Spiers and several of his clients, asking why they came to Mayfair. The social backgrounds of these clients were clearly very varied as some came from the suburbs and provinces, some lived in the surrounding districts and some worked nearby in shops and offices; interestingly the article mentions that nearly all of the display staff of Swan and Edgar's were having their hair styled at the salon. A good proportion of clients agreed that prices were expensive but not unreasonable and felt it was worth it for the attention and styling that they received. One Essex housewife stated that she came to Mayfair to get a good cut and that the cost was balanced by the satisfaction value; she was unable to get that kind of service in her own town. Spiers said that many out-of-town clients stayed in hotels to get 'super' hairdressing service as well as better and more exciting artists to do their hair in luxury surroundings (*HJ* 1973:7:14).

However, despite the positive testimonials of its clients, the aura of importance with which Mayfair surrounded itself created heated debates in the rest of the hairdressing community either by questioning its self-justification, or by arguing that those in the rest of the country were just as good, if not better, than some of the West End craftsmen. As a result, there was a mixed response to Mayfair's unchallenged position as the pinnacle of British hairdressing. Opinions were divided: there were those who saw it as the benchmark and drew inspiration from it while cynics dismissed it and the business conducted there as being unimportant in terms of their own work and environment. As a hairdresser in a small, remote Durham mining town, Mr Gladstone felt that the womenfolk of Ferryhill deserved a taste of big city glitz and sophistication. Gladstone would visit the Mayfair salon of José Pou biennially and bring back the latest styles, techniques and methods, enabling these women to enjoy a few hours of glamorous, fashionable West End hairdressing (*HJ* 1955:12:28). On the other hand, when it was suggested that a well-known West End stylist should demonstrate new styles to the Manchester branch of the Hairdressers' Guild, it was greeted with the angry

response “‘We don’t want foreigners from the South to come here and teach us our job’” (*HJ* 1955:5:25).

Resentment was heightened when provincial hairdressing was dismissed in the national media or through publications. A discussion on the radio programme *Woman’s Hour* in 1956 apparently merely questioning whether the standard of provincial hairdressing was as high as it ought to be, was seen as inferring that the BBC thought not (*HJ* 1956:11:17) but this was nothing compared to a newspaper article which appeared a few months later, archly accusing provincial hairdressers of being twenty years behind Mayfair. The retaliation ranged from defensive to disparaging, saying that London only led on one thing and that was price: the hairstyling in the North was often the equal of the Capital but at a fraction of the cost (*HJ* 1957:1:15). The following year, Susan Chitty’s *The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Good Taste* (1958) had Edinburgh hairstylists outraged. The criticisms levelled at provincial hairdressers in the book were that they were unable to cut modern styles and had standards of taste lower than that of the average woman. If the book sought to demonstrate the superiority of London hairdressing, its method of doing so through denigration simply alienated those hairdressers outside of it (*HJ* 1958:7:23). While none of these comments had been made by Mayfair stylists, such public displays of snobbery incensed the general opinion of Mayfair from without and might have proved very damaging.

The *Hairdressers’ Journal* had to tread a very fine line when dealing with such issues and in attempting to provide some form of balanced appeasement, took a critical but diplomatic stance. Whether it was through editorial or answering letters and queries, it saw its role as arbitrator between the great mass of provincial hairdressers and the West End. In almost every article which involved differences between both sides, the *Journal* would take a placatory tone, diffusing any potential upset through reasonable debate. When ‘Mayfair’ was accused of being rude to a visiting provincial hairdresser, the *Journal* responded with tact,

turning an inflammatory situation into an even-handed explanation – converting Mayfair rudeness into justifiably exacting professionalism, without undermining the skill and expertise of the provincial stylist (*HJ* 1955:7:43). Unquestionably the notion of ‘Mayfair’ had become embedded in the psyche of British society and ‘exercise[d] a strong fascination’ which the *Journal* was not sure that it should, as ‘not every West End salon [was] in the top flight’ (*HJ* 1958:12:46). The *Journal* advocated that Mayfair salons required a very special type of character who was ‘above-average’ but that the West End was ‘a limited sphere’ and ‘a very small part of the Trade’. Besides, while it reflected that Mayfair was a focal attraction, it also pointed out that, ‘Most of the truly great West End salons are busily going where the steady money is: to the Provinces, the great cities, the top-flight hotels, the famous holiday resorts’ (*HJ* 1958:12:46). Mayfair was in the grip of expansion.

## **Mayfair Expansion**

By the early 1960s the inaccessibility of Mayfair was becoming problematic owing to recently imposed parking restrictions, principally due to the introduction of parking meters; 647 of them had been unveiled throughout Mayfair one morning in July 1958 (Moran, 2010). Gone were the days when county women driving into London or chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce’s waiting for their upper class owners, could park without limit. Clients’ unwillingness therefore to drive into London or to pay the increased public transport fares, meant there were fears that the area, as far as hairdressing services were concerned, was in decline. Additionally, increased rates (*HJ* 1956:10:21) and rising rents (*HJ* 1960:5:58) were forcing even the cream of Mayfair artistes to consider moving out. Some Mayfair stylists saw this as a worrying development and chose to safeguard their businesses through expansion (*HJ* 1961a:7:26; *HJ* 1962:9:13). The causes for and feasibility of expansion were clearly outlined in a three page article on the Mayfair salon, André Bernard. André Mizelas

and Bernard Greenford had opened their first salon together in Grafton Street in 1948 (*HJ* 1966:8:21). During the following decade, the nation saw a hairdressing boom, verified by two Censuses of Distribution. The first census in 1950 established the economic status of hairdressing while the second in 1957 allowed for comparative analysis, confirming a healthy increase. There had been a twenty-one percent rise in staff (approximately 18,000 personnel) generating an output of £24,000,000. Fears that a mushrooming of new businesses through unrestricted entry into the Trade proved baseless as there had only been 13,000 salon openings, equating to a manageable four percent growth in actual shops. What this amounted to was a greater volume of existing individual business (*HJ* 1959:9:27) and in particular, Mayfair had grasped the opportunity to court the provincial market, based on its tradition of supremacy and exclusivity. André Bernard's small Grafton Street salon was not only filled to capacity, it was apparent that nearly half of the clients came from the provinces, necessitating long journeys. One of the major factors in drawing clients into Mayfair had been what the *Journal* described as a 'minor revolution in the provinces' due to 'the effects of television and the fashion magazines' further enabling the spread of premier London styling concerns (*HJ* 1966:8:21-23). It was these provincial clients, whose constant clamouring for Mayfair to come to their towns, influenced André Bernard to expand in this way.

Keith Wainwright whose salon *Smile* is still maintained as a single unit, noted the problems associated with increasing profits. He stated at best it was possible for one stylist to dress no more than twenty heads in a day; unless the price of haircuts was escalated it was impossible to boost profits without considering other strategies (Wainwright, 2005 MD 029-031). This denotes that at the point of origin (simply hairdressing) it was not possible to increase what Ducatel and Blomley (1990) call 'retail capital' and would involve 'further accumulation strategies [which] have included both an extension of operations into new spatial arenas and diversification into the retail of relatively underdeveloped product fields'

(1990:211). Although the authors were writing in the 1990s at the start of the new retail geography, some forty years earlier both of these strategies of retail geography were becoming possible avenues of expansion, particularly the former which solved the needs of both hairdressers and clients. These were opportunities which had been constrained during the immediate post war period due to the economic privations faced by the country but growing prosperity in Britain was mirrored in the hairdressing trade. There was a clear sense of the new affluence which began to manifest itself in spending as future investment (*HJ* 1955:6:19). The rebuilding and regeneration of areas damaged and destroyed by bombing provided openings not only for town planners simply to modernise old towns and cities<sup>lxiii</sup>. The booming population meant that the New Towns, conceived to rehouse the displaced and the 'London overspill' (*HJ* 1974:5:15) would create unrivalled opportunity for any business willing to set up trade, whether old or new. Both of these choices had clear advantages for established Mayfair salons providing they had verified whether or not there was a demand for their type of work. André Bernard used market research where necessary to assess the potential of an area before setting up business (*HJ* 1966:8:21).

In the older established urban areas, the problem faced was whether Mayfair 'invaders' or local resistance would have an adverse impact. This was a question asked by the *Journal* in 1955 during the second wave of what was akin to a 'hairdressing gold rush' by Mayfair salons<sup>lxiv</sup>. By this time, André Bernard had just opened its first provincial salon in Norwich<sup>lxv</sup> and it was clear from this article that its arrival had improved at least one local hairdressing business; the *Journal*, playing devil's advocate queried whether this was the general experience or would other local hairdressers accuse Mayfair of loss of business and/or poaching staff and clients (*HJ* 1955:7:20). In Birmingham, hairdressers braced themselves for 'the big invasion' by two top Mayfair stylists, Raymond and Steiner, who were opening within months of each other in 1955. The local stylists, confident in their skills

set, felt they had nothing to fear from either; the only problem facing Steiner and Raymond was whether their famous names were enough to lure the Birmingham women away from their current stylists. Local businesses were assured that Steiner already had a Midlands clientele of eight hundred strong who visited his Mayfair salon but the general assumption was that after the initial flurry of new clients, few would be prepared to pay the higher charges for haircuts on a regular basis (*HJ* 1955:3:19). If this was the case, what would be the point of trying to compete with local salons? The answer lay in another article on Steiner that revealed many women were dissatisfied with the unimaginative service received in parts of the Midlands and clearly welcomed the arrival of Mayfair entrepreneurs. One woman from rural Warwickshire who described herself as having a “thin, misleadingly intellectual face” referred to her hairstyles as being “frizzed and permed like a sulky horse on May Day” or “set in whorls and ridges like a party blancmange” (*HJ* 1955:7:34). When Steiner’s salon was described in a different article (*HJ* 1955:6:31) it was clear that he intended to replicate the Mayfair experience in total, from innovative and creative hairstyling by the London-trained stylists to the interior decoration reproduction of his London salon, stamping the glamour of ‘Mayfair’ style firmly onto the provinces.

Other Mayfair stylists saw that provincial expansion was not simply lucrative but that there were vast areas of the country that just did not have satisfactory hairdressing amenities. For example, the town of Norwich which had rapidly increased its suburban housing in the post-war regeneration found that it did not have enough skilled hairstylists to cope with escalating demand. While the women there were fairly conservative in style they still required a good standard of hairdressing. It was noted that the entry of Mayfair branches such as André Bernard, did much to boost public hair consciousness as well as raise standards generally, despite taking “the cream of county clients” (*HJ* 1959:10:5). Six years later, André Bernard’s Norwich branch doubled the floor space of its salon, in order to

accommodate new business. The success of André Bernard in Norfolk led to a further salon in the neighbouring county of Suffolk. In 1959 a new branch was opened in Ipswich and trade was so brisk that two years later, extensions to the premises were anticipated (*HJ* 1961:6:3).

André Bernard expanded to Ipswich, but the old market town's crowded centre and lack of suitable accommodation was a major stumbling block to further expansion by other Mayfair names (*HJ* 1959:10:12). However, this was a problem to which far-sighted Mayfair invaders found a solution: they began to collaborate with local department stores and use the existing space within to create their new salon branches. In fact, many of the department stores' old hairdressing salons had been considered the 'Cinderella' department but it seemed that there was a reassessment of hairdressing as part of a store's services, along with fashion and cosmetics. The dissemination of Mayfair styling through the media, which had led to greater hair consciousness and the wider success of hairdressing, encouraged stores to install new salons. The difference was that not only were the stores 'less inclined to organize and operate the hairdressing departments themselves,' they were 'arranging for their hairdressing to be under the direction of leading names of the Craft' (*HJ* 1960:2:20). This had obvious benefits for apart from not having to worry about premises, much of the cost of refurbishment would be borne by the store and the inclusion of a Mayfair salon would generate increased revenue throughout the rest of the shop. The *Journal* commented on this oversight in Ipswich which obviously had several such stores. Raymond had started the fashion for Mayfair salons in stores in Wales (*HJ* 1958:3:33), an idea which the Richard Henry chain emulated in Samuel Hall's of Cardiff. Situated on the fashion floor, it linked with other beauty departments and progressed naturally from the fashion accessories area (*HJ* 1958:3:40).

Of course the problem which the *Journal* foresaw in 1955 was not merely the inevitable battle between London and the provinces but more acutely the battle between the

‘Mayfair Aces’ who were vying and jostling for prime provincial cities and towns. These urban areas often set in large tracts of rural land had limitations in the number of Mayfair individuals that could profitably succeed there (*HJ* 1955:7:20). Mayfair salons started turning their attention to the suburbs of London which were fast becoming populated with middle-class couples, wishing to escape the inner city areas. As transport links improved, so many of these young people migrated out of the Metropolis to live in more countrified surroundings (Humphries & Taylor, 1986:98). Stylists who had been employees of prestigious Mayfair salons but could ill-afford to open shops there, also saw the advantages of opening in the suburbs: Harold Leighton moved into London’s ‘dormitory district’ at Harrow, with his erstwhile Dumas colleague, Gerard Saper (*HJ* 1955:7:9-10)<sup>lxvi</sup>. Here they felt that competition at close quarters would not have a detrimental effect on their profits but this was also called into question when areas became overly saturated in a short space of time. One hairdresser observed that in an effort to seize custom, West End hairdressers were using tactics of undercutting that were reminiscent of the trade pre-war and admonished the Mayfair invaders for ‘the indiscriminate and simultaneous opening of new large salons’ (*HJ* 1959:2:65).

Mayfair’s incursion into the suburbs whipped local hairdressing into such shape that the gap between the West End and suburban Craft had narrowed with breath taking rapidity. Standards of suburban hair-work had improved to the point that many women chose not to travel into central London, avoiding traffic problems and travel costs. While Mayfair had been looking the other way, its prestige was being undermined by Kensington and Knightsbridge, two West End boroughs that were gaining in hairdressing stature. By 1962, the *Journal* gloomily predicted that Mayfair was in decline (*HJ* 1962:9:13). Indeed there were signs that a few Mayfair artistes were deserting the Square Mile altogether, finding cheaper rents and better parking just beyond its perimeters (*HJ* 1964b:7:7). While these

causes might be blamed for loss of earnings, the *Journal* suggested that some West End salons had been hoisted on their own petards: their complacent attitude to their exalted positions and refusal to move with the times, changing clientele and fashions, were the probable causes of their downturn (*HJ* 1964a:7:7). Nonetheless the exodus from Mayfair did not last long; while one or two top hairdressers moved out forever (Raymond being one), by the summer of 1964 Mayfair was ‘staging a comeback as the country’s hair fashion centre’ (*HJ* 1964a:7:7). Stylists formerly in Mayfair were returning and some, like André Bernard were re-establishing themselves after being forced out of their old premises through redevelopment. Confident in its provincial expansion, André Bernard took a risk by creating a much bigger salon in Old Bond Street; two years later in 1966, business there had increased by eighty percent and the company was going public (*HJ* 1966:8:23). The revival of Mayfair continued in another surprising way. In a complete reversal, openings created in Mayfair by departures saw fresh business coming in from the provinces and suburbs. Two Manchester-based salons (*HJ* 1973:9:6) and Bruno and Guy who had a well-established business in the south London suburbs, moved into Mayfair in the early Seventies (*HJ* 1974:3:22). In 1975 South Molton Street (just a mere two hundred yards long) had six thriving salons trading there - at least two having opened that year alone. Added to this, the street had just become a pedestrian precinct and salon owners found that there was more passing trade, actually increasing business in some cases. The street’s close proximity to Bond Street Station and frequent bus services on Oxford Street meant that driving and parking was not really a consideration as had been the case with the introduction of meters in 1958 (*HJ* 1975:10:12). Mayfair expansion had come full circle.

In summary, the ethos of Mayfair hairdressing was a combination of factors with the sum of the parts being greater than the whole. Firstly its location in the centre of London was enhanced by its historical foundations and, its long associations with the aristocracy which

was manifested through the elegant Georgian buildings arranged in squares and streets bearing their names. Secondly, the hairdressers' themselves understood the sensibilities and the protocols surrounding the high class trade and produced styles which were artistic and sophisticated, developing a repertoire that would cover every occasion from daily wear to the most glamorous balls and ceremonies. Thirdly, as with *haute-couture*, they provided personalised attention to each of their customers, creating styles that would suit the facial contours and the societal needs of every individual. Fourthly, their salons were designed to exude a quality of luxury enjoyed by the upper strata of society and to that end hairdressers and their backers were prepared to pay huge sums to achieve it by buying only the very best materials to convey an atmosphere of elegance. Fifthly, the service that clients received was superior and efficient; all needs were catered for from the moment of entry to the salon until the client left. It was also instilled into staff that what was required was a high level of courtesy, civility and deference, which was fundamental to the smooth running and reputation of the business. More than anything else, it was a sophisticated and alluring mixture of traditional, original and modern references. Success relied quite naturally upon the skill, dexterity and creativity of these Master hairdressers. However, when combined with the luxuriousness and elitism of the location and clientele, this emphasised the differences between attending a Mayfair establishment and going to any other hairdressers in the rest of the West End.

Very few young stylists therefore made it into Mayfair, being an exclusive, small part of the Trade. Perhaps the desire to work for a Mayfair salon was solved by Mayfair stylists expanding to the suburbs and provinces where young people could work in local Mayfair branches with the added incentive and bonus of spending sometime training in Mayfair itself. André Bernard advertising the opening of their new salons in Bradford and Winchester specified that 'All applicants must be willing to spend a minimum period in our Mayfair

establishment until they have acquired the standard of artistry desired ...' (*HJ* 1960:5:78). The emphasis on achieving a standard and type of service recognisable as 'Mayfair' forced the *Hairdressers' Journal* on a number of occasions to attempt a definition of the enigma. In trying to weigh up the difference between Mayfair and the rest of the country, it hypothesized that Mayfair service entailed not only a punctilious attitude toward clients but that the salon and staff had identifiable character. One article reflected that, 'a Mayfair business is not entirely a hairdressing concern: there must be personality. That only comes by culture of some sort: it may be merely professional charm, or it may run deeper' (*HJ* 1955:7:43). It clearly pinpoints that the nature of Mayfair had indefinable qualities which may or may not be recognisable but were instantly understood. This *je ne sais quoi* was further tempered by artisanal elitism afforded to a small number of stylists.

In conclusion to this chapter, therefore, I felt I should discuss the work of two of Mayfair's most important early doyens, Raymond and Freddie French. My reasons for doing so are because it was their distinct skills and techniques which identify the elusiveness of Mayfair and made the greatest impact on the foremost celebrity hairdresser of the next generation: Vidal Sassoon. Raymond is acknowledged as being the first hairdresser to really publicise West End hairdressing and his particular skill was in cutting, recognised without exception by his peers. Prominent at the start of this period of study, his stupendous showmanship and his ability to manipulate the media, kept him continuously in the public eye, until Sassoon's notoriety eclipsed him. Likewise, Freddie French was another pivotal character in the shaping of young Sassoon. He was a contemporary of Raymond but his forte was in avant-garde styling, the other element in the formation of Sassoon's distinctive methods. It was his forward thinking which really impressed Sassoon and his outright uncompromising approach; French was a maverick Mayfair hairdresser but at the same time

defended and tirelessly promoted London hairdressing. Both of these hairdressers had a profound effect on Sassoon which would later be demonstrated through his own techniques.

### **Raymond: Mr Razzamatazz!**

The name of Raymond is legendary in hairdressing circles.<sup>lxvii</sup> His importance to Mayfair hairdressing was of an indescribable magnitude; he all but put modern Mayfair hairdressing on the map. Raymond realised the rising power of the media and the potential to broadcast his name; he also realised that to stand out from his contemporaries he would have to cultivate an individual personality that would capture the attention of the media and public alike. Some of his eccentricities have already been briefly outlined in the previous chapter but it would be impossible not to mention others, as they formed part of the complex layers of the Raymond persona. Raymond created a ‘character’ tailored to suit his needs, such as an actor might for a stage performance, but for Raymond this was a reality. All aspects of his character had been carefully crafted, whether they were mannerisms, outward appearance or publicity stunts. Raymond, a shrewd opportunist, knew how to use the ‘props’ at his disposal. His biggest prop was himself; debonair with dashing good looks, his mixed Franco-Italian parentage provided a seductive charisma, making him almost irresistible to women. He may have affected a Continental camp aura but his physical stature, enhanced by professional wrestling in his youth, belied any suggestion of homosexuality. In fact, the combination of physique, character and appearance produced an air of authority that according to Sassoon (2010), compared with Beau Brummell. Sassoon described his appearance in elegant, bespoke suits replete with pocket handkerchief, pencil-thin moustache and cigarette as exceptionally *soigné* (Fig.2.8). The perfect gentleman, he would not lower himself to sniping about his competitors’ limitations, maintaining that it was more valuable to demonstrate how much better were the results of his own work (*HJ* 1965:1:4). In contrast to

his contemporary, Freddie French, he was the archetypal ‘old school’ Mayfair stylist, following the Gallic mode. He cast himself in the same mould as the Parisian *Maître Coiffures* and emulated their effete eccentricities. His rationale for this was that women would dismiss a hairdresser’s ability if he was neither ‘queer’ nor French (Cox, 1999). To this end he successfully cultivated ‘Raymond’ as a person and a business, employing the same tactics within his salons. Beneath this glittering façade, however, was a calculating business mind that enabled him to amass a vast fortune through his various ventures either in hairdressing or horse-racing.

This formed the basis of his self-promotion in the numerous publicity stunts staged over his career, each one more extravagant than the last, which were carefully recorded by the British Press. His relationship with the Press was a double-edged sword; both propelling him into the limelight while at the same time mocking his antics. The media had initially been enraptured, for in the immediate post-war era Raymond brought some much needed glamour into the lives of women bogged down by austerity and rationing. Even if it was impossible to afford a visit to his salon, in the early 1950s women could watch Mr ‘Teasie Weasie’s’ captivating styles through film newsreels or on his weekly BBC television show (*Bouffants, Beehives and Bobs*, 2013), surrounded by all the razzamatazz of show business.

Although televisions were increasingly found in homes over the period, after WWII when services resumed, programming was restricted in two ways. The first was that there was a paucity of news bulletins and political programmes due to the BBC’s self-imposed ‘fourteen day rule’ which forbade any broadcasting of Parliamentary issues for a fortnight after having been debated in the House. Secondly, the BBC’s own reluctance to provide cutting edge or hard journalistic programming limited the amount of programmes on offer and the poor visual quality of early television screens meant that television was shut down for long periods throughout the day time and generally finished at 10.30pm at night (Kynaston,

2007). The BBC's output therefore, was largely made up of light, inoffensive entertainment or educational items and Raymond's hairdressing would have suited this agenda perfectly. As there would have been nothing else on offer until the arrival of commercial television in 1955, viewers would have had no choice but to watch the BBC.

That is not to say that women were force fed a diet of frivolous entertainment because they clearly enjoyed watching Raymond at work whether at live shows or through film. Television, however, brought him into their homes thereby allowing them to consume Mayfair hairdressing vicariously; it demonstrated its enormous ability to disseminate celebrity, thus reinforcing Mayfair's reputation. Sassoon's own mother would watch Raymond's hairdressing programme without fail every Friday night and if Vidal and his friends were there, force them to watch too (Sassoon, 2010). It was as if going to his salon would be similar to being invited to a high society party, all champagne and bubbles. Raymond 'sold' hairdressing to women through the concept of absolute luxury. However by the mid-fifties, the Trade press seemed less impressed with his egotistical publicity stunts which were becoming more ridiculous and an undertone of tired sarcasm crept into their articles. When accused of 'showmanship' he angrily denounced it as nonsense, pronouncing that on the contrary his work was artistic; his television presence was not simply to massage his ego but that it was 'good for all hairdressers and [was] making women hair-conscious' (*HJ* 1956:8:14-15)

The latter had obviously had some effect. In the Midlands, two newspapers ran competitions to encourage women to take a greater interest in their hair. Raymond immediately offered to provide the prizes of personal hair and beauty treatment (*HJ* 1955:10:33). However, altruism was not in Raymond's vocabulary: there was an ulterior motive to this magnanimity. Like many of his Mayfair contemporaries, he expanded his business countrywide; by 1965 he had a chain of twenty-three salons in virtually every corner

of the British Isles (*HJ* 1965:12:10). There had clearly been some resistance to Mayfair expansion but Raymond knew how to smooth the way; getting the local media and prospective women clients onside with cleverly planned promotional tactics. Whether it was prizes, or a personal appearance throwing his customary blue carnations from a basket to the adoring crowds, he used his charming celebrity to soften up any opposition. Later, in 1962 he had another brilliant expansion plan which was to invite hairdressers around the country to join an affiliates' scheme with certain trade-offs: they were able to take advantage of his fame and services while he was able to expand the client base. Moreover, the salons would be contractually obliged to buy Raymond products which he had been developing during the previous year (*HJ* 1962:6:10). In 1961 he'd opened what he claimed to be the first salon supplies supermarket showroom in Europe in the premises of his former Albemarle Street salon, with plans to open similar shops in provincial centres (*HJ* 1961:11:7-8). He traded on his 'Teasie-Weasie' nickname by adapting it to his hair embellishments such as small hairpieces which he called 'teasettes' and a matching range of non-slip buckles for hair and shoes called 'Headsies' and 'Toesies' (*HJ* 1960:3:20). He also foresaw the growth of hair colouring and had tie-ins with big brand colour companies such as Clairol, who launched three new Raymond colours aptly named Champagne Sherbet, Champagne Parfait and Champagne Toast (*HJ* 1962:6:10).

None of this would have been possible without his innate talent for and methods of cutting hair. Raymond's technique was completely different to his peers, using only scissors when his contemporaries favoured a combination of razor, scissors and thinning shears. Sassoon recalled that during his employ he watched Raymond very closely while cutting clients' hair because his technique was difficult to learn, requiring 'agile wrists and a great feeling for hair' (2010:1174-78). The difficulty, complexity and technicality of his methods resulted in what was generally acknowledged as Raymond's speciality: first-class cutting.

Copying of his cuts was understandably problematic to even the most skilled stylists and he recognised this when remarking on a new line, that it would “test the back-kitchen hairdresser. You cannot cut this with a knife and fork” (*HJ* 1960:2:24). His cutting, while understood as perfect, on the other hand rendered his lines completely inflexible<sup>lxviii</sup> (*Bouffants, Beehives and Bobs*, 2013) offering no possible variation in styling. While he was guarded about his techniques, he emphasised the importance of cutting as paramount to good hairstyling and hairdressers’ continued livelihood (*HJ* 1960:12:13).

If his showmanship had not endeared him to the Craft, he redressed this by a demonstration for the professionals in 1961. Despite being unable to completely divest himself of the legendary Raymond attention-grabbing devices much beloved by his TV audiences, the show was applauded as being ‘uncluttered with gimmicks’ nor ‘wreathed in a permanent mist of lacquer and glitter dust’ (*HJ* 1961:12:7-8), proving his not inconsiderable skills were still intact. By this time however, his star was waning; his styles were seen as sophisticated but not avant-garde (*HJ* 1960:3:20) and with the later success of Sassoon’s Five-Point Cut, his work began to follow rather than lead (*HJ* 1965:10:10). Nevertheless, after a naval-contemplating trip to the Atlas Mountains in 1964<sup>lxix</sup>, Raymond proved that he was still capable of innovation and regeneration in the face of growing competition from the new stylists. Forced to close the original Grafton Street salon after twenty-eight years, he made his headquarters in Knightsbridge just a few doors away from his new Miss Raymond salon which was aimed at young clients and managed by his teenage daughter Cherry. He sagely recognised that however good a hairdresser he was, the young would not be drawn to the same things as their parents’ generation (*HJ* 1964:11:15) and in business terms this diversification was just as much a method of expansion as it was insurance for the continued success of his salons. Raymond saw the tide turning and swam with it and this foresight, coupled with the elements of self-publicity and cutting, was perhaps ultimately the secret of

his success and were the indubitable dynamics which Sassoon drew upon when building his own career. Perhaps this was nowhere better evidenced than in 1974 when Sassoon, in a rare hairstyling demonstration show (contrived to promote his newly launched Yardley shampoo, conditioner and spray range), paid tribute to Raymond sitting in the audience as “the man who taught Britain how to cut” (*HJ* 1974:4:3).

### **Freddie French: Square Peg in a Round Hole?**

It is a step too far to say that Raymond’s nemesis was Freddie French. However, while French was a contemporary of Raymond, having also opened his first salon in the mid-1930s, his attitude to hairdressing could not have been more different to that of Raymond, or to the majority of his Mayfair contemporaries. By the 1950s French’s name was one amongst a select few (Cox 1999:93) who started to develop a British style of hairdressing which looked to counter Parisian ideas and domination. Cox (1999) says that French was an innovator which is certainly true, but I disagree with her assertion that he was more serious-minded than Raymond. Raymond took his hairdressing just as seriously but his eccentricities and showmanship overshadowed his ability and intentions, to such an extent that these are the things for which he is best remembered. French on the other hand was prepared to face ridicule (rather than being seen as ridiculous) when championing new innovations, and he was ready to put himself on the line in his own defence and to defend British hairdressing. Sassoon, who saw French as his greatest influence in brushing and styling, sadly reflected that his avant-garde ideas were often regarded with hilarity because they were too far ahead of the times (1968:69). From early on in his career French was indeed a revolutionary in the hairdressing world, rebelling against outmoded and constraining ideas. The *Hairdressers’ Journal* kept a keen eye on his activities and was peppered with articles about him. Its ‘Letters Pages’ were also full with letters from French himself. However, as Cox (2008)

stated, the careers of many of the great hairdressers remain largely clouded in mystery even within the hairdressing industry. Like so many of these hairdressers lauded at the time by contemporaries and society alike French has drifted into obscurity, along with his achievements.

Little is known of French's origins and background, there being scant information on him. French was allegedly born in 1910 in very humble circumstances and apparently could neither read nor write (Mackinder, 2014) although judging by his correspondence to *The Hairdressers' Journal*, he had perfected the ability to communicate very effectively later in life. Another source has it that in his youth, French worked in hairdressing for a shilling a week as a 'lather-boy' until 1924 when he opened a barbershop in the East End (Leighton, 2012) though this would have made him fourteen years old at the time. Whatever the truth is, French had become a fully-fledged ladies' hairdresser by 1934<sup>lxx</sup> and by 1938 he was already demonstrating his avant-garde artistic ability with a revolutionary hair line called 'Design Disordered', which broke with the conventional styling of the day. With this innovation, according to his son, French was the first hairdresser to create a style that matched the movement of clothes (Heitzmann, 2011). His interest in art extended to experiment, no doubt influenced by and/or paralleling contemporary art practices such as Abstract Expressionism,<sup>lxxi</sup> particularly the action paintings of Jackson Pollock. This desire to be different is perhaps one of the key factors in French claiming to be a truly 'artistic' hairdresser; one which set French apart from even his Mayfair contemporaries. Sassoon reflected that 'If you're not misunderstood, you're not doing your job ... you're not being creative ... so being misunderstood is part of being intuitively forward thinking' (Mackinder, 2012). This indeed applied to French, who did not set out so much to deliberately 'shock' the hairdressing community and the public but in pursuing his maverick artistic creativity,

certainly did so. Consequently French became a radical *tour-de-force* in Mayfair for his fluid technique at a time when hair was mainly rigid and static in style.

Grant McCracken has posited, using the beehives, bouffants and short-back-and-sides, that the 1950s was the tail-end of the 'Old World of Hair' when hairstyles for both men and women were 'anti-transformational' and 'spoke of highly conventionalized, unchanging selves'(1995:31) as his examples. Perhaps these styles constituted a form of gendered control over women. However, I would conjecture that these controlled hairstyles were evidence of a return to the safety of the peacetime establishment after the uncertainty and dangers of World War II. These neatly composed styles, held fast by hairnets or (ironically) the arguably volatile and dangerous properties of hairspray symbolically manifest signs of order, routine and security. McCracken demonstrates using Ruth Murrin's 1956 *Good Housekeeping* article entitled 'Spray to Make Your Hair Behave', the benefits of hairspray to keep hair controlled, illustrating these points by two contrasting images (Fig.2.9). The second, which is unruly and windswept is decried in the article as being the very opposite in appearance to the desired effect of the first (1995: 31-2).

One year later in *The Hairdressers' Journal*, French created a new style called the 'It Girl' which is described as a *coiffure* but looks even more windswept than the image in the Murrin article (Fig.2.9). This cut was quite typical of French who had been creating these signature 'wild' styles since before World War II and demonstrates saliently how his work openly contested the status quo. French explained in the editorial that he realised this was something entirely new and that it might take some time for stylists to get used to. No wonder: this style was seen as 'messy' compared to the starchy styles of the times! The cut, which had been created for *Vogue* and the *Sunday Express*, reportedly caused a huge but very positive stir after publication. Unusually, not only did fashion models warm to it but British women did too with permanent wave appointments increasing (*HJ* 1957:6:17).

Unsurprisingly French's 1958 Atomic Bang was used as an extreme example of Mayfair styling by the *Hairdressers' Journal* to demonstrate to the ordinary hairdresser that 'Mayfair' was a directive of future fashion (see Fig.2.10). The editorial made it clear that Freddie French was way ahead of his time when it stated 'such styles are not universally commercial. And, of course, the clients of most salons would not wear them ... yet' (*HJ* 1958:1:15).

French's pursuit of more fluid movement in hair was engineered through his brushing out techniques which had always been at odds with standard practise. From the very beginning, he had refused to install Marcel or tong waving points preferring the more casual and natural style effected by hand setting (Cox, 1999). If this was not appreciated by all in McCracken's 'old world of hair', it was by the next generation of hairdressers and clients. The mood was already changing by the new decade and French suddenly found his much maligned methods being appreciated by younger clients. Those who had never been styled before by a Mayfair sophisticate, were put at ease with the naturalness of French's styling and the simple dressing out achieved by just a few flicks of the brush and comb (*HJ* 1962:7:41). French's philosophy, as related to *The Hairdressers' Journal* was that 'a good hairstyle should bring out the client's personality, and the hair should always look clean healthy and shining, and not have the tortured lacquered look that comes from many salons' (*HJ* 1962:9:61). It is clear from these words alone that Sassoon learned much of his own philosophy from French. Sassoon (2010) stated that in the early days of his career, he used to visit the academies in the West End where hairdressers would demonstrate various techniques and this was where he first saw French, who taught there occasionally. French was very generous in sharing his approach and in passing on his methods which were spectacularly different to anybody else's. Sassoon saw him as a visionary and was struck by French's methods of styling as being quite individual. French apparently used no other implement than a hairbrush and after emerging from the dryer, each head was simply brushed into a

shape. This may not sound extraordinary now, but it clearly was then. Consequently French's name became synonymous with this singular technique of brushing out.

Exploiting his reputation, in 1955 French marketed a new product line of brushes, on which he had been collaborating with Jack Dean, the founder of the Denman Company who produced distinctive brushes. Dean, who was a chemist and had worked for Du Pont during World War II, had revolutionised brush design when he introduced nylon from America. He drew on the expertise of French to design this new brush, using ball-ended nylon pins instead of the customary boar's bristle (The History of a Hairdressing Icon, no date; Champaneri, 2013:93). This was not only more hygienic, but the brush was better suited to blow-drying and brushing out the new silky, swinging styles (Russell, 2004:189). French's branded Denman brushes were marketed as being identical to those used in his salon and they were pictured in attractive cylindrical boxes, embossed with his logo and topped by a rather elegant tassel (see Fig.2.11). The brush handles were also stamped with the recognisable logo and company name, French of London (*HJ* 1955:11:51). In 1961 French also opened a depot in Leeds run jointly with two other companies from which he marketed all his haircare products including a large section devoted to a wide range of hairdressing equipment. This too was distinguished by his unique logo and colour scheme (see Fig.2.11) (*HJ* 1961b:7:26).

Being one of the first to start his own hair products company, it is interesting to note French's awareness of the importance of branding. This strategy not only included his distinctive and stylised logo but it employed the colours he chose for his salon décor. Unswervingly, the triumvirate of black, white and red was used for all his salons and they became his instantly recognisable colour signature which the *Journal* commented on with regularity, conspicuous by its absence in their observations on other West End hairdressers (*HJ* 1959:12:17; *HJ* 1965:2:11). The Cork Street salon, which was faithfully reproduced as a set in the film *The Pumpkin Eater* (Fig.2.12), is only visible in black and white. However, its

appearance albeit briefly, does give an indication of the style of décor, which reflects the Orientalism trend. One of French's staff appears in the film carrying a tea-tray, the logo clearly emblazoned on her uniform (*The Pumpkin Eater*, 1964). Fortunately British Pathé News, whose later short films were in colour, filmed French in his salon a few times. The logo not only appears on the female staff uniforms (Fig.2.12) but also on the clients' gowns, highlighted in a bright pillar box red (Fig.2.13). The bucket chairs and salon accessories were also red; the walls white and black lattice-work screens à la Japonais greeted the client outside, while the shop front was topped with a red awning (Fig.2.13). British Pathé's 1958 film *Modern Hair Ornamentation*, and the later 1962 *Hair Sculpture*, reinforce the idea that these colours, style and logo were his recognisable brand features.

Unlike his counterpart Raymond, whose signature motifs were largely self-referential and extravagant, it is evident French knew that branding would have a more assonant, aesthetic impact and could be effectively employed as his company grew. French of London salons started to appear all over the country; first in London radiating from Mayfair as shops; then as salons in hotels or department stores such as Gamages and Bourne & Hollingsworth. They spread further afield to Manchester, the Midlands and Jersey amongst other venues. This form of expansion was similar to many other Mayfair hairdressers at this time. However, French went a step further and also put his salons in cruise ships. According to Leighton (2012), this was a unique placement for a Mayfair stylist during this period. The *Hairdressers' Journal* even saw fit to announce the opening of two French of London salons on the *RMS Transvaal Castle's* maiden voyage (*HJ* 1961:11:19). Keith Wainwright was employed by French to work on board the *Edinburgh Castle* as unusually for a hairdresser at that time, he was competent in both men and women's cutting. Between sailings, Wainwright worked in French's Bourne & Hollingsworth salon, perfecting his barbering techniques (Wainwright, 2005:MD036-042). French left a legacy of approximately twenty

seven salons - a thriving empire - but none outside the British Isles. His fierce allegiance to British hairdressing and establishing London as a leader was off-set by his feelings about foreign competition, particularly Paris.

French's voice had assumed such authority by the summer of 1956 that he was one of only three hairdressers to be invited to join the exclusive Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers as an Associate Member.<sup>lxxii</sup> The new venture had been set up to provide closer collaboration between the hair and fashion industries as well as aimed at broadening the appeal of the London fashion shows, aid exports and, as the Society President Lady Pamela Berry stated at the welcome party, "[be] an even stronger basis for the further promotion of British fashion – with London at its centre" (*HJ* 1956:7:19). Having been given this honour, French must have felt it a matter of civic duty to develop an Anglo-centric promotion of the hairdressers' craft.

French often felt embittered that the hairdressing avant-garde in London were largely snubbed by the fashionable press, in favour of the unremitting press adulation of his French, Italian and American competitors. French was not slow to demonstrate his irritation when his innovations were overlooked and attributed to foreigners, which they often were. Furious letters were published at regular intervals in the *Hairdressers' Journal*, demanding to know why London was considered the 'Cinderella' of fashionable hair and denouncing the free publicity accorded to Rome, Paris and New York by the British press. The correspondence also contested the proposal that English hairdressers were incapable of inventing new hairstyles and merely 'interpreted' those that came from abroad (*HJ* 1955:1:37).<sup>lxxiii</sup> In a TV programme called *Straight from Paris*, French's sarcasm was barely concealed when asked if British hairstyles were influenced by Paris (*HJ* 1956:9:15). He was particularly scathing about the Parisian *coiffeurs* and their assumption that they were better at it than anyone else. Moreover, French was aghast that many of his own largely discredited hairstyles had been

seemingly plagiarised by the Parisians and Americans, and ruefully reminded the *Journal* of this fact (*HJ* 1962:2:48<sup>lxxiv</sup>). To be fair, French did not lay the blame entirely at their doors. Nevertheless he felt that some of the British organisations entrusted to develop new hair lines had not demonstrated sufficient levels of creativity, nor understanding or knowledge of fashion. This failure undoubtedly would have affected foreign perception (*HJ* 1962:9:61). Herein lay the key to French's anger. He felt that sticking to the tried and trusted had nothing to do with being fashionable. Instead, French felt very strongly that the production of British styles should always be new and exciting so as to make every woman want to change her hairstyle regularly. Little did he know that this was exactly what was about to happen in the shape of Vidal Sassoon's modern cuts.

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<sup>xl</sup> Maxim's article states 'Here is this bright little shop-front to relieve the eye of the tired City man, and to entice within the spruce City girl. And therein lies the secret. It's these business girls that are preventing the City of London from going all dull and uninteresting. They are entirely responsible for these gay little breaks in the sombre architecture of the City streets' (Maxim, 1935:1470). The incidences of ladies' hairdressers in the City of London were quite rare as the City was a male dominated bastion of financial businesses. However, while women were by no means in powerful occupations at this time, Maxim's article shows that the opening of a ladies' hairdresser in the heart of this area indicated a growing legion of female office workers who had appearances to be kept up and were likely to be young and single with money to spend.

<sup>xli</sup> This will be referred to in its abbreviated form NHF from this point on.

<sup>xlii</sup> Christopher Breward cites the plagues and Fire of London as an early reason for the migration of the upper classes to the area west of the City (2004b: 29). Ed Glinert's text also implies that the West End was 'birthed' as a consequence of the same (2007: 220-24).

<sup>xliii</sup> London had started to expand dramatically from the 16C and by 1714 had overtaken Paris as the largest city in Western Europe. Styles says that despite the Great Fire of London in 1666 which ravaged huge tracts of land, it only accounted for 'some of the new building that changed the face of London in the half-century after 1660. The distinctive new residential squares extolled by Defoe [ just after Queen Anne's death] – Panton Square, Soho Square, St. James's Square, Red Lion Square, Leicester Square, Bloomsbury Square – were developed principally in the West End of the metropolis, which the Fire never reached.' (2001:5)

<sup>xliv</sup> Breward says that this name is a pseudonym (along with that of Sir Charles Darnley) for two authors 'representing the views of the quintessential French aristocratic and the English gentleman abroad' (2004c:17).

<sup>xlv</sup> In this case, as a direct result of the Fire of London, building regulations had been put in place that decreed the building of no more timbered houses as had been the case in Medieval London. Instead, the London Building Act of 1667 stated categorically that all houses were to be built in brick or stone and roads should be wide enough to act as a firebreak. This first Act was extended from the City of London to Westminster in 1707 and 1709 and then in 1774 a new Act encompassed the whole built up area (Manco, 2009)

<sup>xlvi</sup> All Figure Numbers were introduced in London and some other areas in 1966. This became essential with the development of Direct International Dialling when the mixed letter and number combination proved inadequate to the needs of expanding service. (<http://www.britishtelephones.com/histuk.htm>)

<sup>xlvii</sup> AFN incorporated the Subscriber Trunk Dialling code (STD) and the phone number. The STD was based on the fixed location of the telephone and was part of a local exchange, thus identifying the area of the number. The 26 letters of the alphabet were allocated to the numbers 2-9. Areas in London used the first three letters of their local exchange name such as MAYfair or REGent to translate into a dialling code (629; 734) for use by the operators to connect them as needed.

<sup>xlviii</sup> Advert with André Bernard's Mayfair telephone number for the Grafton Street salon is shown in this style: Tel: MAY 9366 (*HJ* 1960:5:78)

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xlix Even though by 1967 it was clear that most businesses were using AFN, some salons still used the old method to highlight status. In 1967 the new Joseph 33 salon in Chelsea advertised for staff using the prefix SLOANE 7664/0792 even though surrounding ads on the page used the new method. While the ‘fashionable’ district for hairdressing was no longer Mayfair the use of this old form signalled that the business was in one of the new fashionable areas. (*HJ* 1967:9:70)

<sup>i</sup> The origins of Mayfair as a dwelling area filled with lower and then upper class people and its degeneration by the annual ‘Mayfair’ is described in detail in Edward Walford’s chapter ‘Mayfair’, in *Old and New London: Volume 4* (1878). The annual May Fair had by 1721 become a public scandal and attempts were made to abolish it, due to its ‘nuisance’ to the gentry now having moved into the area. However, it seems that even the upper class inhabitants perpetuated this fashionable location’s notoriety as a scandalous area through its ability to perform ‘secret marriages’ within its environs until finally, urged on by its morally upstanding inhabitants, an Act was passed banning these clandestine matrimonial services in 1754.

<sup>ii</sup> Cork Street had a long and illustrious history as having been part of one of the earliest estates built in Mayfair. Queensberry House was first inhabited by the third Duke of Queensberry in the early 1720s. Records show that in 1850 the Queensberry estate which incorporated Cork Street had just over one quarter of all residents as private individuals and roughly the same proportion of doctors and dentists. About a fifth of the total estate population were tailors. Uxbridge House (originally Queensberry) which was the largest house in the Cork Street area was sold in 1855 after the death of the owner, the Marquess of Anglesey, in 1854. Sheppard notes that ‘at this time the West End pattern of private houses and retail shops was just beginning to be modified, with a few large private houses passing into the hands of the Government, insurance offices or banks. It was the Bank of England which now took Uxbridge House for conversion as its West End branch.’ The Bank remained there till 1930 when it was purchased freehold by the Royal Bank of Scotland and expanded upon by its further purchase of the adjacent property in 1933 (Sheppard, 1963).

<sup>iii</sup> This could be human or animal hair. In a Pathé clip from 1946 *Cows Tail Hair Raiser Aka Cow's Tail Hair*, hair from a buffalo tail is combed, washed and plaited into a hairpiece. A 35 year old Raymond is seen fixing it to the head of a model/client to create what looks like a basket top knot filled with hair curl roses (<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/cows-tail-hair-raiser-aka-cows-tail-hair-raiser/query/hairdressing>). Also the *Hairdressers’ Journal* has a picture of one of French’s creations with fresh flowers (*HJ* 1961 13 Apr:19) and another Journal article shows full page images of Evansky’s daisy ornamented hairstyle (*HJ* 1964 3 Jul: 2-3).

<sup>liii</sup> British Pathé News have some clips of a number of the Mayfair stylists demonstrating their aesthetic arts using these objects – René (Princess Margaret’s hairdresser) is filmed going off in search of shells and then making some extraordinary hairpieces with them in a piece called *Seaside Hairstyles* (1952). There is another rather gruesome clip of dead butterflies being used to decorate hair as well as spiders, beetles, etc., by Vasco of Dover Street, Mayfair in *Fashion Flash* (1950).

<sup>liv</sup> A really good description of all of these elements occurs in a short article on Vidal Sassoon, titled ‘V. Sassoon Chooses a Spanish Theme’ which reads:

‘Co-operation with Susan Small and other leading fashion houses gave added polish to the display of hairstyles given by 27-year-old Vidal Sassoon at the Dorchester Hotel. Models displayed dresses appropriate to their hairstyles and small head-dresses that ornamented without concealing the coiffures. The Torro Line, which formed the theme of the show, displayed a Spanish influence, with touches of Salvador Dali fantasy. Basic details were East-West partings, hair a little longer in the nape falling in chignon effects, front and side hair cut even shorter than of late, and forward flicks onto the face. Dressings were typically “Mayfair,” with freedom of movement rather than laboured waves and curls. Ceramic necklaces and ornaments featured with the dressings were by Lady Buller.’ (*HJ* 1955:10:29)

<sup>lv</sup> Pathé newsreels would have been seen at the cinema – it seems they had compilations of short films and these hairdressing pieces were part of that format. It is unlikely that their appearances in the *Hairdressers’ Journal* would have been seen by the public unless it was read in a salon waiting area but TV and other general magazines would have afforded the hairdressers publicity.

<sup>lvi</sup> 1963 is my guess because unfortunately there is no exact record of this salon’s opening. Lewis’s autobiography is virtually useless for dates because he almost never includes them. Lewis was an alcoholic and then later had a brain tumour so no doubt these facts have contributed to his memory loss. Oddly enough he is astonishingly good at other details. However, the *Hairdressers’ Journal* article written in 1964 says that Leonard and Raphael started their own business two years earlier (1962) and Lewis says they had a salon in Duke Street which became too small. They then started looking for and found the house in Grosvenor Street, which was incidentally the former home of Elsa Schiaparelli. My approximation is that this was opened around late 1963 or the beginning of 1964 (the *Journal* article is dated April 1964). Joshua Galvin says that Raphael and Leonard left Sassoon’s in the summer of 1961 and opened their Duke St salon circa October 1961 (Galvin, 2008 MD.004).

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<sup>lvii</sup> Daniel Galvin, whose father and grandfather were both barbers and whose brother Joshua was a hairdresser, wanted to specialise in hair colouring which, in the early days, was one of the lowliest forms in hair culture. It was largely employed to cover greying hair but Galvin revolutionised its use. In the very early 1960s Galvin started with Olofson's and then had two offers to work from both Sassoon and Leonard: he chose the latter with whom he stayed until 1977 when he opened his own salon (Finney, undated; *HJ* 1964:4:34; *HJ* 1966:4:10)

<sup>lviii</sup> Steiner's salon facing Grosvenor Square was typical in this regard. In two articles about his new premises in Birmingham which was to replicate his Mayfair salon, the descriptions state that his London interior was of Regency and Adam style; that he had an original Adam desk and the walls were decorated with Regency stripe and elaborate mouldings (*HJ* 1955:3:19 'Battle of Mayfair in Birmingham'; *HJ* 1955:6:31 'Steiner's New Birmingham Salon'). When Sassoon opened his salon at the Grosvenor House Hotel in 1963 a chandelier costing £450 had been made especially for the reception. The style of the Grosvenor demanded and could accommodate a much grander traditional style than that of his little salon in Bond Street (*HJ* 1963:12:8).

<sup>lix</sup> Mikadoya are explained as 'sweetmeats'.

<sup>lx</sup> At the start of this period of study under the Wages Order rates, the length of time spent as a hairdressing apprentice was limited to three years. This is also verified in the General and Legal Information chapter of *The Art and Craft of Hairdressing* (1968:503). Before this, it was at the discretion of the salon owner. If this meant a longer period of training, it was because the owner (usually the stylist) wanted to train the apprentice in all aspects of the Craft, so that he/she would be well versed in all of the requisite skills, not simply hairdressing. In the case of Steiner of Mayfair, these included postiche work; correct methods of shampooing; the study of trichology; marketing of salon products; as well as gradual training of cutting and styling by assisting experienced hairdressers and twice weekly 'school nights'. The time limit of three years meant that some of these skills had to be cut out and rather than the apprentice becoming a good 'all-rounder', he/she would be forced to specialise, a fact which Steiner himself deplored (*HJ* 1955:1:30).

<sup>lxi</sup> A very useful synopsis of the College's history can be found on the Aim25 collections website and the archive is held at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts.

<sup>lxii</sup> There is also another article dated 1<sup>st</sup> June, (*HJ* 1961:6:19) about the new hair salon in Lewis Dept. Store which claimed to be the largest and most luxurious in Europe. It followed the open-plan arrangement but had an element of privacy afforded by creating sections. Aside from its main salon it had a 'Mayfair Room', implying that the latter was more luxurious and exclusive than the rest of the salon. The salon invited Alma Cogan to officiate at its opening ceremony.

<sup>lxiii</sup> See Chapter 4 'Moving Out' in Humphries, Steve & Taylor, John (1986) *The Making of Modern London: 1945-1985*, for a more detailed study of the geographical and demographical transformation of the suburbs and provinces as a result of post-war initiatives.

<sup>lxiv</sup> There are countless articles in *The Hairdressers' Journal* about Mayfair expansion into the provinces during the period under study. However, it is notable that by around 1961/2 the rate slowed down to a mere trickle, indicating that the initial rush had subsided.

<sup>lxv</sup> By 1966 André Bernard had eleven salons. Having closed Grafton and Dover Street salons, they amalgamated them into one larger salon in Old Bond Street. The others were in Norwich, Liverpool, Bristol, Southport, Ipswich, Chester, Sheffield, Wigan, Doncaster and Winchester (*HJ* 1966:8:21).

<sup>lxvi</sup> Harold Leighton is at this time known as Harold Lipski – the assumption is he changed his name by deed poll later on. Gerard Saper, his business partner is deduced as also having changed his name to Gerard London (*HJ* 1964a:7:7)

<sup>lxvii</sup> To make any attempt to write a biographical piece here on Raymond would be futile as his life and career have been well documented. His escapades were recorded in newspapers and numerous British Pathé Newsreels as well as having his own BBC television programme in the 1950s. There are an increasing number of film clips and textual information on him which can now be viewed on the internet. He has been mentioned in a number of broader historical texts (not always with great accuracy as is the case with Ed Glinert's (2007) erroneous discussion of him as Paul Raymond) and apart from a basic but informative sketch (see Cox, 1999), in true Raymond style, he had previously written his own life story in 1976. However, there are a few things to note which I have discovered about him as some elements of these facts were mentioned in some of the *Hairdressers' Journal* articles, rousing my curiosity. The first was that he was divorced from his first wife in 1962 after a lawsuit citing Rosalie Ashley, the presenter/actress as 'the other woman' in which Ashley successfully cleared her name. However, she obviously had been guilty as they eventually married in 1965. Two rather sad things to note; the first was that at the end of the Sixties he battled with cancer and had extensive operations on his mouth and throat along with other forms of treatment to clear it. The post-operative pictures of him in the *Hairdressers' Journal* show him as just a shadow of his former self but he managed to survive until 1992 aged eighty. The second was that his middle daughter Amber who in 1979 was just twenty-seven and pregnant was killed with her husband and two children in a horrific crash on the M4 motorway. By a strange

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twist of fate, it was discovered that the male passenger killed in the other car turned out to be Brian Field, one of the key organisers of the Great Train Robbery who had assumed a completely new identity.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Rose Cannan, (formerly Evansky) who together with her husband Albert ran their Mayfair salon Evansky between 1939 and 1967, stated on the programme *Bouffants, Beehives and Bobs* “I always knew that when someone **did** go to [Raymond] it was a cut so perfect and in such a way cut that you couldn’t actually, you couldn’t do anything else with it. That was it” (BBC4, 2013).

<sup>lxix</sup> A nearly full page article appeared in *The Hairdressers’ Journal* on his proposed trip. The Press were called to his Belgravia flat in Eaton Place to be told the startling news that he was to ‘find himself’ through the guidance of a wise man, somewhere in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa. To say this was a ‘tongue-in-cheek’ report is something of an understatement; the *Journal* reporter who had been stationed there during WWII could hardly contain his mirth when Raymond stated, “‘I suppose the Atlas Mountains will be cold at night, so I will have a loin cloth, a few rough shirts and possibly a pair of short trousers. Of course, I will not have evening dress ...’” (*HJ* 1964:5:12)

<sup>lxx</sup> The *Hairdressers’ Journal* had marked the occasion of French’s opening of the new Cork Street salon and twenty-five years in the business in an article of 1959 (*HJ* 1959:10:32)

<sup>lxxi</sup> British Pathé News produced a short film called *Hair Sculpture* (1962) which looked at French at work. In the initial scenes he is experimenting with a dummy head and hairstyle, which he has created from moulded paper, by painting it with dripping wax in a variety of colours. The narrator says that it is not as easy as it looks! <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/hair-sculpture/query/French>. It is redolent of the methods used by Jackson Pollock in action painting.

<sup>lxxii</sup> Only fifteen approved associates were elected in total and their job was to provide fashion accessories such as hats, hairstyles, sweaters and stockings at the London couture shows. While hairdressers had been doing this for several years, there had been no formal recognition of their contributions. The associates were expected to contribute towards the cost of the bi-annual couture shows, but would have special shows at the July couture collections, have privileged access to Societal help and be given the opportunity to show their work annually at a Society reception. The other two Mayfair stylists to become members at the same time as French were Steiner and Martin Douglas (*HJ* 1956:7:17).

<sup>lxxiii</sup> (*HJ* 1955:1:37) ‘London Fashions Can Lead’. The *Hairdressers’ Journal* devoted a whole page to this letter. Although it is making several serious points, it is hilariously funny in that French is so incensed. He releases a volley at the French nation, saying his name has obviously confused French people (that’s why he added ‘of London’) and they visit the salon speaking to him in French because they can’t believe that anyone who has built up a reputation such as his could be anything else! He then says that thankfully he can’t speak a word of THAT language so they are in no doubt. He went on to say that the only thing the French give us credit for is Winston Churchill – and his mother was an American! There are a lot of other points in this letter which made it quite plain that he was angered by the contemptuousness of London hairdressing with which he was met.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> ‘Where London Stays Ahead’ Letter by French showing a sketch of a recent hairdo at a 1962 Dior Show and a photo of an identical style which he had done four months previously in November 1961 called *Whisper* which demonstrates this argument (*HJ* 1962:2:48).

## THE QUIET REVOLUTION

### Introduction: Old to New

It was a quiet revolution, the snip of scissors as nearly soundless as the clicking of Madame Defarge's knitting needles ... It was a revolution so fundamental that we cannot see our world today without perceiving Sassoon's effectiveness: his designs have shaped the late twentieth century. (Koda & Harrison, 1993:7)

'The Quiet Revolution' is a phrase synonymous with hairdressing. Amidst the clamour of Sixties' cultural insurrections and the resounding impact that social and sexual changes would have in all parts of society, the revolution in hairdressing, by comparison, was positively restrained. While other rebellions took the spotlight, hairdressing was imperceptibly causing a stir behind the scenes. No protest marches, drugs or sex scandals defined this revolution for posterity; within the hairdressing community there was an undercurrent of impending but positive change. In this respect it paralleled the mood of British society in the 1950s, which had, in part, been catalysed by the rebuilding and regeneration plans for the economy after World War Two. In 1942, Ashley Havinden an eminent British designer had prophesied that the post-war period would be one of 'tremendous creative reconstruction in which the talents of all designers will be taxed to the utmost. Those with clear heads and constructive ideas to offer will revolutionise the appearance of everyday life ...' (Darling, no date). At this moment Havinden had no idea what the final outcome of the war would be or that the post war years would be in the protracted grip of austerity. As Dominic Sandbrook (2005) surmised, at the start of the Fifties nobody

could have envisioned the phenomenon of Sixties Britain. Reiterating Hardy Amies' reflections on the *1951 Festival of Britain*, that nothing in the Festival had signalled the onslaught of the Swinging Sixties (Banham & Hillier, 1976), indeed the prelude to the Sixties was a gradual piece-meal affair with affluence gently nibbling away at the measures of austerity. By the time rationing was over in 1954, the British public was being groomed by Government organisations to become consumers (Sparke, 2004), aided by incomes which had almost doubled (Humphries & Taylor, 1986; Sandbrook, 2005). Perhaps the biggest factor of all was the increase in the population, frequently referred to as the 'bulge'<sup>lxxv</sup>, the result of high post-war year-on-year birth rates and commonly referred to as the 'baby boom'. 1962, the year when the boom peaked, saw almost a million teenagers reaching school-leaving age which was a fifty per-cent increase on 1956 (*HJ* 1962:2:19).

The revolution in hairdressing culture and its commercial practices was not immune to the sweeping changes that were making an impact on British society. The West End as a place noted for its concentration of leisure, pleasure and entertainment industries and its cosmopolitan atmosphere (Nava, 2007; Mort, 2010; Walkowitz, 2012) was, as to be expected, keenly affected by these changes. Moreover, it was also highly responsive to shifts in legislation that followed on from these wider debates (Weeks, 1989; Cook, 2007). The alteration in the status of women and their growing economic importance achieved as a result of women's rights together with race relation legislation and the legalisation of homosexuality, all contributed to a greater sense of improving civil liberties and equality that would alter British society and employment opportunities inexorably over the course of the late 1950s and 1960s (Weeks, 1989). Such trends were even more conspicuous and prominent in large

multi-racial conurbations such as London, where class and gender shifts were more marked and keenly discussed nationally (Hornsey, 2010).

More generally, the permissive moment had allowed for a greater openness and liberalism in attitudes towards social groups which had been previously marginalised in society and the legislative protection that resulted, permitted greater openness and flexibility in the performance of modern racial, sexual and gender identities. Women, who had already established themselves as the prime consumer group in the growing affluence of mid-fifties' consumerism, began to turn their attention to fashion and their own fashionable appearance as well as domestic consumables. For the West End hair salons, these broader changes meant that salons responded positively to the commercial opportunities that such an interest in fashionability powered, especially when occurring within a cosmopolitan 'permissive moment' where new, more permissive role models and lifestyle choices were emerging (Weeks, 1989).

As discussed in the previous chapter, West End hairdressers together with their more extensive exposure in the media, had encouraged women to cultivate a greater sense of 'hair-consciousness' as part of an expanding consumerism, particularly by exploiting the desire of women in the provinces or regions to gain access to Mayfair styles. Increased training opportunities as well as greater media exposure allowed provincial hairdressers to study and copy metropolitan styles more readily and then to use their skills to develop localised markets outside of London or the major cities. In spite of the growth in the number of regional or local hair salons, the appeal of Mayfair still remained as many women who could afford to, came to the West End as part of a more expensive, exclusive beauty regime; one that was made more appealing when it could be experienced within the more luxurious and

sophisticated surroundings and entertainment scenes of the metropolis (Walkowitz, 2012).

One consequence of these changes was that the professional and social interactions between the sexes within salons altered. As the client base widened in social terms away from its earlier reliance upon wealthy, upper and middle-class women and as the fight for equality in the workplace generated greater opportunities for working women generally - as well as hairdressers and salon managers, these changes meant that many more young, single and working-class women were able to afford fashionable dress and accessories than before. Youth culture spawned growing and fashionable markets for female consumption and widened the range of fashionable role-models, particularly prominent in the arts, entertainment and media industries; thus fashionably styled hair as a conspicuous feature of a modern, independent, young, up-to-the-minute lifestyle was essential. Women had also been able to take advantage of the broader spectrum of work available to them in these newly fashionable occupations so their appearance, as with the young men who worked in them too, had to be constructed around a more youthful rather than traditionally gendered identity (Luckett, 2000; Mort, 1996). In London and many other urban centres, greater social mobility facilitated women's ability to pursue independent careers (rather than jobs) outside of marriage and within areas previously denied them (Perkin, 2002; Aitken 2013). These trends also widened the social and racial demographic of clients entering the salons who wanted hairstyles to complement their fashionable wardrobes, identity politics and to fit their more liberated lifestyles.

Another consequence of these changes was that social interactions between the sexes within the salons were revised as young women took a more active part in

hairdressing culture, to become stylists (rather than simply receptionists) or aspiring to management roles. As a result, the hair salon's ambience changed to be more modern in design and reflective of young women's tastes. One feature was that the older stereotype of the effeminate, possibly homosexual male hairdresser (Weeks, 1985; Segal, 1990) was made redundant as male hairdressers' sexual preferences were no longer seen as tied to their involvement with feminine beauty or to outmoded Francophile cultural associations; indeed in American films such as *Shampoo* (1975), the fashionable young male hairdresser's access to young women encouraged an openly promiscuous mythology (*HJ* 1975:4:14). Not only were hairdressers themselves coming from a wider social background, but there was a substantial change in gendered attitudes towards pronounced fashionability and to the wearing of longer or more elaborately coiffured hair (Davis, 1992). Unisex salons, discussed in the next chapter, added to this sense of increasingly gender neutral environment where new sexual dynamics, design taste and commercial practices were developing.

The sense that hairdressing during and after the 1960s now reflected a more democratic and broader social and racial mix was especially marked in the younger and more fashionable salons such as Sassoon's. The cosmopolitanism that had long existed in pockets of the West End, but which had become more prominent as the Sixties progressed began not only to infiltrate the exclusivity of Mayfair hairdressing culture, thereby breaking down earlier and more entrenched social and class barriers, but also facilitated the relaxed informality and sense of sexual equality that was a hallmark of the newer salons catering to young women who were being given and confidently making choices about the way they styled their appearance, earned and spent their incomes and lived their lives. Annie Humphries who is discussed later in

the chapter and who worked for Sassoon was a typical example of this new kind of thinking.

As consumerism expanded and the relative wealth available for expenditure on lifestyle and fashion grew, hairdressers themselves found a new confidence in the way that they conducted their businesses in this period and the Craft consequently developed a growing enhanced sense of its own value and professionalism reflected in its press. By the mid-to-late 1960s, the shifts in attitudes towards sexual permissiveness also changed public perception of men's sexual identities and by 1967 the legislation which finally decriminalised homosexuality, acted to change sexual attitudes and broaden understandings of how male and female sexuality was understood and accounted for (Weeks, 1989; Segal, 1990; Cook, 2007; Mort, 2010;). One consequence of this was the way in which misconceptions about male sexuality, identity and fashionability were understood within the hairdressing industry. In the late 1960s and especially in the unisex salons of the 1970s, it did not seem to matter whether hairdressers were 'gay' or not, or whether men who worked in the fashionable and artistic industries were hetero-normative or not. As Sassoon said of the film *Shampoo* and its representative perception of the hairdresser's shifting sexuality, "It will do as much for hairdressing as *Blow-Up* did for photography ... nothing," (HJ 1975:4:14). Rather like many young women, a lot of young men had also become more fashionably aware and were themselves exposed, through the burgeoning mass media and film industries, to alternative patterns of male behaviour, manliness and to the more cosmopolitan features of masculinity. Young British men well understood the power that fashion, including hairdressing, held as a means of (self) styling their appearance and enhancing their sexual appeal. This permissive approach led to more ambivalent gender identities being seen, promoted and accepted

as part of modern British culture (Lomas, 2007). That male hairdressers no longer had to concern themselves over their assumed or perceived homo or heterosexual identity, or that this affected their professional standing was a milestone in their professionalisation and itself tied to the broader social and sexual changes that had taken place within the post-war decades, with the hair salon being a microcosmic, but nuanced, reflection of these shifts in many ways.

While all of these issues were to have a bearing on the hair industry and its development, the hair industry was about to have its own impact in a way that none could have envisaged. Koda and Harrison writing in the 1990s have specifically pointed to Vidal Sassoon as the architect of this hairdressing revolution (1993:7-21). Equally Grant McCracken infers that Sassoon initiated the ‘The New World of Hair’ (1995:45), a phrase identifying a stark division between Fifties and Sixties hairdressing. McCracken’s theories on the anti-transformational hairdos of the 1950s would certainly seem to correlate with the restrictive feminine fashions created by Dior. In contrast he defines 1960s hairstyling *through* Sassoon by quoting Quant’s soubriquet for him as ‘the Chanel of hair’ (1995:53), the analogy being one of liberation.

This generalised view of the Sixties as marking out a major schism between the old and new world is similarly repeated by many authors in broader histories of the period. Historical descriptions of Britain in the 1950s are invariably characterised as depressing and often termed as ‘grey’ (Booker, 1969; Humphries & Taylor, 1986; Tarrant, 1990; Akhtar & Humphries, 2001; Levy, (2002); Sandbrook, 2005; Marr, 2007; Kynaston 2008; White, 2008). This is then set in marked contrast to the upbeat dynamism of the Sixties<sup>lxxvi</sup>. Even Sassoon’s description of coming back to London from Israel in 1949 paints a similarly glum picture: ‘the city was fog-bound. It was

grey and sombre, and black soot seemed to discharge itself from every chimney' (Sassoon, 2010:1043). Humphries and Taylor (1986) commence their historical study of London with a chapter entitled 'Imperial Sunset' immediately followed by one called 'Style Capital' seeming to highlight a dramatic overnight transformation in which London eclipsed the rest of the country in a blaze of light. Brian Masters (1985) also alludes to the way in which the dismantling of Empire while being a humiliation to the older generation similarly cleared a new space for the younger generation's vision of regeneration.

However, Arthur Marwick articulates it rather differently. He sees it as an escalation of pre-existing events and describes it in oppositional terms as a shift 'from minor to major' and from the 'intangible to the real' (1998:7). Bernard Levin (1970) writing about the period equally saw it as the demarcation between the old static world of the Fifties and a new dynamic one of the Sixties. The theme of restlessness pervades Levin's first chapter which is itself titled 'The isle is full of noises', as if there was a general feeling of anticipation in the air. In a similar vein, Sassoon (Sassoon, 2011) described it as an unleashing of pent-up energy that had been festering as frustration with various imposed restrictions since the end of World War II. The transformations from death to birth; sunset to sunrise; minor to major are binary, but theatrical methods of envisioning the divide between the two periods, and testify to the difficulty in conveying adequately the sudden and astonishing changes that were to overtake the nation in the following decade.

Whilst there is broad agreement by many writers about the transformation, the point at which this change occurred varies, according to the history being written. It is located between 1954, the last year of rationing<sup>lxxvii</sup> (Sandbrook, 2005), and 1958-9, years that according to Marwick (1998) marked the unprecedented simultaneity of

innovative activities and ideas. In the world of hairdressing, this shift becomes even more inscrutable as hairdressers themselves felt that there was change underway. Leonard Lewis spoke of his desire to instigate changes in women's hair as the Fifties were drawing to an end and reflected that beneath the surface of dull post-war British life, an imminent explosion of talent and new ideas was simmering (2000:27, 37). For Sassoon, the Sixties began in 1957 at the point when Mary Quant first came to his salon, resulting in a partnership of ingenious conceptuality and dazzling actuality between fashion and hair. However, even as early as 1954 Sassoon had told his staff that they were not doing the 'old' hairdressing because he was unwilling to compromise his vision of cutting shapes (Sassoon, 2011).

One thing for certain though is that Sassoon was the catalyst of change. Contradictorily, while the hairdressing revolution is regarded as a quiet one and features no mention of other West End hairdressers, the name of Sassoon dominates. Subsequently it has reverberated continuously, within general cultural histories of the Sixties while hairdressing on the whole has been marginalised as unimportant. Nevertheless, in view of Havinden's 1942 prediction and Marwick's rationale that the cultural developments of the long 1960s would include entrepreneurialism and new modes of self-presentation (1998:16-20), there is arguable justification that West End hairdressing and hairdressers other than Sassoon, demand further attention than they have received.

In this chapter I will attempt to demonstrate the radical changes in West End hairdressing by considering the new entrepreneurs that emerged from the mid-Fifties onwards. I will demonstrate that the new hairdressing not only paralleled changing socio-cultural and socio-political attitudes of the Sixties but that it was intrinsically bound up with them. This effectively meant that the pronounced exclusivity of

Mayfair hairdressing was actually democratised in its production and consumption by a much more catholic body of hairdressers and consumers. As with fashion generally, hairdressing became a great leveller and this had as much to do with the protagonists, as with contingent societal factors. Sassoon had an exceptional gift for self-promotion and is distinguished as the pioneer of a new form of haircutting and styling. These issues will be used in this chapter as a platform to consider the effects, both positive and negative, on other West End, provincial and international hairdressers. The chapter effectively argues that the Quiet Revolution should be viewed as comprising a number of separate revolutions in hair culture rather than as a singular event tied to Sassoon's achievement. To that end, the chapter has been subdivided to try to provide a more balanced account of what happened in hairdressing during this period both in Britain and an evaluation of the response of the eyes of the world to such developments.

### **The White Hair Revolution**

Deep in the heart of the West End, in the exclusive salons of Mayfair, the master-hairdressers were about to be shaken to their very roots by one in their own midst. In 1963 the Kwan Bob caused such a sensation that hairdressing, as the old masters practised it, was never to be the same again. Vidal Sassoon, the creator of this phenomenon, had revolutionised the old world of hair but this shift was really the culmination of a much longer, multifaceted process. The white hair revolution was more complex than simply ditching old modes and introducing new methods of hairstyling to shake up the culture of women's hairdressing since there was a palpable change in men's hairdressing over the course of the period too<sup>lxxviii</sup>. Neither was it fundamentally about vacating Mayfair or contesting the increasingly stuffy older

traditions of Mayfair for other younger, more fashionable areas of the West End. Indeed two of its main protagonists, Sassoon and Leonard, never moved out and Mayfair remained the ultimate location for any hairdresser who wanted a prestige salon. Undoubtedly Mayfair experienced the culture of Swinging London as Sassoon and Leonard changed the image of the hairdresser irrevocably. Nonetheless, in the mid-Sixties when London had overtaken Paris as fashion capital, attitudes to Mayfair style changed. The new generation of hairdressers had moved to other newly fashionable West End areas such as Baker Street and Chelsea where the most radical and innovative hair and fashion was created. To these new entrepreneurs, the ethos of Mayfair was viewed as increasingly old-fashioned.

Until the mid-Sixties, there had been a gradual change in the attitude to British hairdressing and the perception of hairdressers themselves, seeking to break away from traditional Mayfair stereotypes, as well as crushing the myth that it would always take second-place to Paris. Koda and Harrison's quote aligning the soundlessness of the hairdressing revolution with that of Madame Defarge's knitting needles is an apt analogy in that it also simultaneously signifies the revolt against the French as dictators. French fashion was still in its 'Golden Age' in 1954 and leading hair and couture styles emanated from Paris. The previous chapter has revealed that Freddie French had campaigned tirelessly against Parisian domination in hair and it has demonstrated several times that he had pre-empted the French with many new hairstyles. However, the sycophantic attitude of the British Press, which continued to fawn over the Parisians and ignored the innovations of Mayfair stylists, did little to rectify this situation much to French's exasperation.

Yet, while French's accusations were probably true and to all intent the Parisians appeared indomitable, all was not well in the French hairdressing industry.

The French *haute-coiffeurs* and their organisations were in turmoil.<sup>lxxix</sup> Much bickering and jealous infighting was beginning to fragment their perceived unity and news of this was beginning to filter through to the British press. It was well-known that *Le Syndicat de la Haute Coiffure* was the official style controller in France and it was held in very high regard by the ordinary French hairdresser. As a strictly controlled professional organisation, its styles and forecasts were as vigorously guarded as that of its *Haute Couture* sister and *only* subscribers were entitled to see the latest style-plates and receive style information (*HJ* 1955:10:18). The *Syndicat* fiercely opposed competition from any individuals or organisations attempting to create styles, which it saw as its sole right. Tensions arose most acutely in 1955 when two organisations appeared to threaten its position, one of them headed by François Magnien, an old and militant adversary (1955:11:24:Kahn; 1955:12:20:Kahn). Through his magazine *La Tribune des Coiffeurs*, Magnien regularly attacked the *Syndicat*'s anti-commercial styles which he felt were impossibly artistic therefore leading the French hairdressing Craft to ruin (*HJ* 1954:7:15; *HJ* 1959:11:57). There had even been infighting between the *Syndicat*'s own members, resulting in further discord with endeavours to end this internal wrangling only effecting a fragile peace (1956:6:21; 1960:2:20: Kahn). Further outbursts continued all the way through the 1960s<sup>lxxx</sup>, with Magnien stating in 1964 that French hairdressing was in disarray and that it had no discernible directives and little effective policy (1964:5:17:Kahn). This situation was noted by the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1965 when it reported that the diversity of French lines and styles that season was causing considerable confusion as many top fashion *haute-coiffeurs* were now designing styles that ran counter to the *Syndicat*'s proposed curled styles (*HJ* 1965:10:9).

Paris, pre-occupied with its own internal squabbles, had little time to notice what was going on in London where Sassoon was already laying the groundwork for his assault on earlier styles. These innovations were seen to mirror the changing mood of creativity in literature, the arts, design and fashion. Even so, it is apparent that British hairdressing was already taking steps to orchestrate a coup. In the Spring of 1962, Freddie French finally received the support and acclaim he felt he had been denied previously, by creating a new London fashion line called 'The Victoriana'. The style had been conceived jointly by French and the British Section of the *Internationale des Coiffeurs de Dames*<sup>lxxxvi</sup>, who forecast that the new line would give British hairdressing its biggest boost in years. The *Hairdressers' Journal* congratulated its creators for their ingenuity, seeing it as an opportunity for British practitioners to overtake Paris in a leading hair fashion which was 'fashionable, beautiful, and practical' noting that 'this was more than [could] be said for some recent Parisian creations' (*HJ* 1962:5:13).

Later that year, the newly formed British Hair Fashion Co-ordinating Committee (BHFCC) was contemplating a style line for 1963 which would be fundamentally different to existing Continental trends. This rather radical decision had been debated at a heated meeting of the Hairdressers' Publicity Group which brought together representatives from all areas of the Trade. The manufacturing representative stubbornly opposed it, firmly convinced that 'A British style line would not succeed unless it was based on Continental hair fashion'. He also felt that manufacturers would not support it on the grounds that it would be difficult to sell (*HJ* 1962:11:8). Frank Di Biase, Chairman of the Fellowship of Hair Artists of Great Britain (FHA), countered this rejection by saying that not only was the BHFCC not interested in what the Continentals were doing, but that the British needed, "the best

brains available to produce a fashion line, which sells British hairdressing to British women, not French hairdressing to French women,””(HJ 1962:11:8). Nevertheless, the manufacturers were unconvinced of the economic viability of Britain ‘going it alone’ and they did not see that styles advertised in women’s magazines would be enough to save British hairdressing. Despite their best efforts to undermine the proposal, it is evident that Di Biase’s unflinching stance demonstrated that British hairdressers were confident that they could turn their own ideas into viable and profitable hair fashions without direct influence from Paris.

The following January in a style forecast article published in the *Journal*, Sassoon stressed the importance of developing original British styles. He made a pointed reference to the lines that were circulating from France through the magazine *Elle*, advocating instead that British hairdressers should not reproduce French models indiscriminately. He declared that while hairdressers in the UK “”should consider every line that comes from abroad ... in the final analysis we must create our own”” (HJ 1963:1:11). Sensing that the authority of Paris was weakening, the hairdressing community in Britain realised that this was the moment to act. However, it needed something spectacular to propel British style into the limelight. When Sassoon cut Mary Quant’s and her models’ hair into the new bob for a fashion show, it caused a ripple in the London fashion world but this was overshadowed by the response achieved and disseminated abroad when he cut Nancy Kwan’s Bob (see Fig.3.1). The images photographed by Terry Donovan were an international sensation (Levy, 2002:33). Kwan, who had shot to fame in the 1960 film *The World of Susie Wong*, was a Eurasian actress renowned for her long black hair (Levy, 2002:33; Cervantes, 2010). For the British comedy film *The Wild Affair* (1963) which hadn’t yet started

shooting she had the cut and pictures circulated in the fashion press almost immediately. This sensation turned Sassoon into an overnight celebrity.

Building on such interest, shortly after Nancy Kwan the French fashion designer Emmanuelle Khanh flew over to London to have the now famous bob which further increased Sassoon's celebrity status (see Fig.3.1) and it provided the much needed vehicle to turn the focus of the world's eyes towards London hairdressing. While Sassoon's style was unique and fundamentally different to the then prevailing styles of Mayfair, it did not take West End hairdressers long to realise that Sassoon had tuned into and exploited the notion of a closer relationship between hair and fashion as a result of his friendship with Mary Quant. It was a symbiotic interrelationship on which they would soon be able to capitalise.

Sassoon's emphasis on cutting rather than dressing and on synthesising hairstyles with fashion forced many established hairdressers to review their techniques and approaches. First, they realised that in recent years they had been putting all their emphasis into competition work which was the traditional way to demonstrate artistic talent and garner renown in hairdressing, thinking that this was the way to progress. Competition work which had been the British hairdressers' *forte* involved using all the established techniques of hairdressing that ran counter to Sassoon's new aesthetic. The FHA decided to put together a Work Study Group in 1964 to redirect their aims towards fashion, a direction which Sassoon had vociferously advocated for a number of years. Prospective members of the Group would be selected for their fashion ability rather than their competition records and would have a year to prove themselves as bona-fide fashion artists before being given full FHA membership. In a Fellowship Soiree that summer, FHA President, Silvio Camillo (who ironically had won every major international competition) invited top

London hairdressers including Sassoon, Rose Evansky, Edward Morris and Xavier Wenger to demonstrate their work alongside him with the accent positively on fashion styling. When interviewed, Sassoon said that simplicity was the key to good fashion and this stood out in the styles demonstrated that evening. *The Journal* summarised that the Fellowship soiree was the most fashion-conscious it had seen for many years (*HJ* 1964:6:9; *HJ* 1964:6:7).

Hairdressers also realised that precision cutting was vital as Sassoon's geometric styles would not hang properly without it. In some provincial hairdressers' training this was a deficiency; their inability to cut well, being hidden by back-combing and dressing. Likewise, Sassoon cuts were liable to expose hairdressers' knowledge or ignorance of bone structure and face shape and that was also a concern. In an effort to provide guidance, Alec Pountney a 'progressive' Berkshire hairdresser<sup>lxxxii</sup>, wrote a three-part feature on the importance of the total image and how hairdressers needed to be able to correct defects in balance through cutting. In the second article, Pountney made a detailed examination of the head and body outlining how they should be dealt with first as separate entities and then together to complete the overall picture. One issue was that as apprentices, hairdressers were taught that the ideal face shape was oval but Pountney extended this to consider the body-shape as well conceived as a series of 'ovoids'. His language defers to Sassoon's Modernist aesthetic for he makes reference to architecture and to mathematical shapes such as oblongs, ovals, triangles and diamonds supported by draughtsman-like diagrams. His discussion drew in fashion and it was augmented by an image of a black-and-white Modernist fashion outfit (see Fig.3.2) which categorically decreed that this style called for a completely different approach to hairstyling (1966:1:4-5: Pountney). Pountney was in essence marking Sassoon's

methods which had become well-known by this period with a seal of approval. *The Hairdressers' Journal* reprised Pountney's article a few months later but discussed the subject in economic terms. *The Journal* stated that the geometric cut had been popularised all over the world and being unable to cut it denied vast profits to hairdressers. It pointed out that it was not 'a trim' but cut properly, it took a great deal of time. The article then went on to reveal the techniques of geometric cutting in order that all British salons would be able to take financial advantage from such innovation (*HJ* 1966:4:23).

Meanwhile in Paris, Magnien's gloomy predictions were being fulfilled. When yet another disastrous line, 'Si Jolie' was released by the *Syndicat* in 1965, Magnien protested that if the *Syndicat* continued working in secrecy, he could not tell how long the rest of the French Craft could accept its creations and publicise them (*HJ* 1965:10:10). With no salient directive and discord amongst them, Parisian *haute-coiffeurs* were clearly in disarray and becoming influenced by London's fashion scene. In response Luc Traineau devised a hybrid style for 1965 which played with the fusion of curls and geometrics (Fig.3.3) while Desfossé's hairstyle (Fig.3.3) was accompanied by his affirmation that 'geometry was in the air.' Since geometric lines 'ovalised' the face, he acknowledged that the client would be able to arrange her hair quickly, thus always being perfectly coiffured, conforming to Sassoon's approach (*HJ* 1965:10:7). It had long been understood and articulated (*HJ* 1959:8:22) that French hairdressers spent more time dressing hair at the expense of cutting but here was evidence that outside influences were forcing change and by 1966, conversion was almost complete. *The Journal* reported that Sassoon had inspired the new authorised French line 'Chance' (see Fig.3.3) which had a smooth, asymmetrical shape. By 1968 West End hairdressing had overtaken Paris (*HJ* 1966:1:5; *HJ* 1968:2:13)

demonstrating that the West End was now seen as the fashionable avant-garde centre of hair culture. The change from individual to collective influence in the two years from 1966 highlighted that the perception by foreigners of London style had broadened, shifting the emphasis away from Sassoon into a wider corps of stylists, none slavishly following Sassoon's styles. Certainly influenced by his ideology, they nevertheless demonstrated that his belief in good cutting could be applied in a variety of diverse and exciting ways.

Britain's reputation abroad became firmly fixed by the Seventies and evidenced in three ways as three short articles in *The Hairdressers' Journal* testified. First, the fusion of hair and fashion, according to the French hairdressing paper *La Vie des Metiers*, had made London hair culture equal to that of French and Italian fashion. It was evident that British fashion did not try to emulate either of these two countries which as *La Coiffure de Paris* postulated, lacked 'commercial realism' in hair fashion. There was a marked contrast between the Continental hair fashions and the wearable, vibrant, London 'street styles' that were gradually spreading around the world (*HJ* 1972:7:3). Second, much of this new fashion leadership was about having confidence in hairdressing ability. This positive change had manifested itself not in hairdressing alone but it was noticeable in the way that salons stopped sheltering under the umbrella of Parisian names. No longer calling themselves 'Monsieur', 'Madame', 'Maison' or 'de Paris', British prestige and reputation legitimated the use of obviously British names (*HJ* 1973:7:3). Finally, this last trend was acknowledged in that the nation's new hairdressing was referred to as 'The English Cut'. It stressed that the secret of good hairdressing was good cutting and Sassoon and the new West End hairdressers who followed in his wake, had indeed established it as the distinct and unique British method (*HJ* 1973:8:3). Its export through the world's media brought

hairdressers from across the globe to London, to learn from the Masters and then took it back to their own countries and taught under that name.

### **Vidal Sassoon: the *Enfant Terrible* and the New Crimper Image**

By the time Saytes created this cartoon (see Fig.3.4) for the *Journal* in 1964, Sassoon was already well-established as the most exciting name to come out of Mayfair hairdressing for more than a decade. Not since Teasy-Weasy, had any British stylist been so publicly acclaimed. Compared to other Mayfair master-hairdressers he was relatively young and though in his thirties his boyish good looks belied his age. This, coupled with his vivacious attitude was perfectly in tune with the in-crowd of the High Sixties. Several years earlier, Leonard Lewis described his impression of Sassoon upon first meeting him:

Immaculately groomed and tanned, he looked more like a pop star than a hairdresser ... Vidal himself was one of the most glamorous figures in London at the time. Young, confident, handsome, fit and ambitious, part designer, part entrepreneur, part showman, he was preparing to take over the world, (Lewis, 2000:42).

Lewis, who was then still working at Evansky's salon in Mayfair noted the huge contrast in Sassoon's attitude which he said was very friendly 'with none of the old-fashioned snobbery associated with grand hair salons.' His total enthusiasm about hair and the fashion world was infectious (2000:41-42). Lewis wasn't the only one upon whom Sassoon made a deep impression in those early days. In 1958, a feature in the *Hairdressers' Journal* 'People' section had described him as a determinedly ambitious young man, equipped with boldness and dash, forecasting that the name of Vidal Sassoon 'might become bigger in the years to come' (*HJ* 1958:7:20).

Sassoon knew that to put himself into the spotlight, he needed to publicise himself at every opportunity, just like his old employer Raymond had done before him but on a far grander scale and more enduringly than his predecessor. At first Sassoon emulated Raymond's tactics with themed hairstyles and publicity 'stunts'. An opportunity arose to publicise himself at the premiere of the film, *I Am a Camera* in 1955 and Sassoon was asked to create some wild styles for six models which involved garnishing their hair with tripods, cameras, flashbulbs, negative film and photos. However, while the models' hairstyles were applauded as 'novel' they were overshadowed by the arrival of a film starlet and the pictures were not used. A little later on Sassoon decided to create a new Spanish themed hairstyle called the 'Toro' line which one daily newspaper, to Sassoon's great embarrassment, described as 'a lot of bull'" (*HJ* 1955:10:29; Sassoon, 1968:85; 2010:1372). It is unlikely that Sassoon had a public relations advisor at that time but this episode may have spurred him on to employ one in order to avoid making future errors, since Sassoon vowed never to try this approach to hair again.

In the previous section I mentioned that the Nancy Kwan cut had made Sassoon an 'overnight' celebrity. Of course, there is really no such thing; behind this usually lies years of hard work and Sassoon was no exception. In Shawn Levy's (2002) nonchalantly studied approach to *Swinging London*, he describes Sassoon as a 'chancer'. This study has a slightly flippant, derogatory air to it and does not do full justice to Sassoon's hard work ethic. The favoured maxim of his first employer, Adolph Cohen 'The only place 'success' ever comes before 'work' is in the dictionary' (Sassoon, 1968:9) was a motto that Sassoon came to live by. Even if 'chancer' is understood as one who takes risks, I would argue that Sassoon's choices were always calculated and everything he did was planned, researched and deliberate

in intent. As an example of this approach, Sassoon's intentions to propel himself into the limelight were patently clear in the previously mentioned *Journal* article which recognised that he had made 'the most spectacular bid for public attention that has ever been seen from a young hairdresser' (*HJ* 1958:7:20). Sassoon, who was by then thirty years old, had only been a master-hairdresser for three years. Whilst for most this achievement would have been accolade enough, he had no intentions of resting on his laurels. Behind his newly masterminded campaign, a team of professional public relations advisers had put together a complex timetable of events intended to give the impression Sassoon was a celebrity, even though he had yet to achieve this status. *The Journal* noted that a press-covered tour of European capitals with an elaborate schedule had been carefully handled with clear objectives towards a final goal (*HJ* 1958:7:20) making the trip a success; an itinerary that had already been given a dry-run by one of the team.

Sassoon continued to use public relations agents throughout his career. His autobiography mentions that up to 1964 his publicity was handled very ably by Pamela Buckland Beale until he met John Addey who Beale immediately recommended as her successor (1968:128-9). Addey, a former barrister turned witty and inventive publicist is generally acclaimed as the first financial PR adviser whose prestigious client list, included Charles Forte and Sir James Goldsmith (Blackhurst, 2000; Sassoon, 2010). In Addey, Sassoon found an agent who was astute, inspired, well-educated (he was a Harvard graduate) and on his own wavelength. Addey told Sassoon that if he handled him, he would become an international star. Addey was particularly useful in fostering Sassoon's entry into New York society, where hairdressers were still held in relatively poor esteem. Consequently the press there were dumbfounded that interviews with Sassoon had to be pre-arranged through a

publicist (Sassoon, 2010:2342-52) but this further elevated his credibility as a 'highflier'.

Sassoon had already made several other important decisions about how he was going to conduct the business of hairdressing by this time. As noted by Lewis, Sassoon disposed of the cathedral-like atmosphere and the subservient, obsequious attitude *de rigueur* in Mayfair salons, and replaced it with a modern vibrant mood with 'cool, cool jazz playing in the background'. He also refused to hire 'old-school' hairdressers or follow the old-fashioned methods of hairdressing (Sassoon, 1968:72; 2010:1217). To this end Sassoon employed very young staff and apprentices with their average age being just nineteen. While both he and some of his staff had been distinguished as Cup winners in competition work, Sassoon felt this was a pointless avenue to pursue and instead he put the expertise and talent of his staff into the creative training of new apprentices (*HJ* 1955:11:30). Lewis, a young teenager himself and about to join the salon, noted another change: that the stylists were all working-class like him with accents to match (Lewis, 2000:41). Obviously Sassoon had no problem with this class status preferring his staff to be polite rather than pretentious. Early in his career, the young Sassoon, like so many other hairdressers at that time, had been forced to modulate his 'Cockney' accent to be accepted into Mayfair salon culture.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> He had received elocution training with Iris Warren on stage at the Old Vic theatre; a skill in public speaking which would add to his personal and professional aura (*Imagine*, 2011).

Above all, Sassoon would not be dictated to by clients with regard to the styles they wanted as was customary in Mayfair but he would style it as he thought it suited them (Sassoon, 1968:72; Sassoon, 2010:1217). This created a stir amongst hairdressing clientele who wanted to know who this 'crazy hairdresser' was 'who

wouldn't backcomb, tease or lacquer hair.' Their initial curiosity brought them to him, where he would explain his approach that a hairstyle had to suit the client's overall silhouette. Some prospective clients could not grasp his philosophy of a 'total look', confusing this with arrogance and never returned. However, they were in the minority (Sassoon, 2010:1314). As a result Sassoon's acquired a reputation for not only being creative but attracting really interesting people through its doors (Lewis, 2000:41). As a result of Sassoon's vision, originality and freshness, he noticed that his clientele was increasingly younger, more fashionable and willing to risk change while the Establishment clientele stayed away (Sassoon 1968:84).

Sassoon also managed to overturn the commonly misguided belief that all hairdressers were homosexual. Apart from being handsome and often pursued by women himself, a number of his male staff were good-looking and sexy. This could create issues with female clients. After a meeting in which he tried to discipline his staff on dating married female clients, Raphael Santarossa responded that nobody cared as hairdressers were all believed to be homosexuals (Sassoon, 2010:1334). Incredibly, this was still the attitude outside the profession in the mid-Fifties, despite it being evidently untrue. However, this notion was about to change in the Swinging Sixties as certain jobs, particularly those media related occupations which cast their glow over the network of associated professions, became fashionable. Patrick Lichfield said that the opinion of fashion photographers prior to the 1960s had been that they were 'camp' and this was probably because, like hairdressers, they worked in a predominantly women's world. As fresh young photographers like David Bailey emerged, the 1960s introduced a different type of attitude. Lichfield said that Bailey and his contemporaries as 'strongly hetero East End kids', ushered in a new type of

youthful masculinity into the world of fashion photography, that encouraged the aristocratic fascination with the East End (Conekin, 2010:284).

Sassoon paralleled this new heterosexual image in his own field as an innovative young West End hairdresser, of East End origins, whose avant-garde fashionable ideas in hair brought him into contact with the Chelsea Set through Mary Quant and contacts who worked in the associated fashionable industries such as the media, television and the arts. The stronger these connections became, the further they took him away from the mythologised Mayfair hairdresser; the greater his celebrity the more the homosexual myth receded. Sassoon finally laid to rest the picture of the camp hairstylist and replaced it with a sense of the young, hardworking, fashionably connected, swinging stylist who was at the cutting edge of the fashionable social scene. Sassoon came to embody the notion of the ‘new crimper’. As evidence of this repositioning, the *Hairdressers’ Journal* in a report on his 1968 book launch party said that Sassoon had at long last given hairdressing an international masculine image. Citing an anecdote from *Sorry I Kept You Waiting, Madam* (1968), the article stated the only time Sassoon ever stood with his hand on his hip was to extricate himself from a female client’s advances and that because of the masculine image he portrayed, there was no fear of any hairdresser ‘being looked at sideways’ (*HJ* 1968:4:8). Within a few years in the 1975 film *Shampoo*, the very opposite was being postulated as hairdressers were portrayed as heterosexual predators and heavily criticised for giving the industry a lascivious image! (*HJ* 1975:4:14).

### **The Shape**

In his 1968 autobiography, Sassoon stated that the word ‘shape’ kept cropping up throughout his life (1968:202). If French and Raymond had taught him brushing out and cutting, it was Silvio Camillo who taught him to visualise shapes through the

mirror by looking at bone structure when creating balance and control. Sassoon extended this practise by getting clients to stand up in front of the mirror so that he could explain how the hair also needed to suit their body-shape (Sassoon, 2010:1086). Sassoon's techniques were guided by these three earlier stylists but he had to develop his own identifiable shape. The difficulty lay in breaking away from the traditional methods. Sassoon's disastrous attempts at themed work behind him and competition work banished from the salon curriculum, he concentrated his efforts on good haircutting, subtle colour and innovative shapes (Sassoon, 1968:85; 2010:1372).

Maurice Tidy, Sassoon's Artistic Director in 1956 said that the type of work that has since become the salon's trademark didn't exist at that time. Sassoon was still doing work that was typical of Mayfair while trying to make changes through experimentation (*Imagine*, 2011). Sassoon admitted that in the early days they were setting hair and using small rollers but like Freddie French, creating 'wild' styles. Nonetheless, they were gradually simplifying the way hair looked (Sassoon, 2010:1294). Undoubtedly like so many pioneers before him, Sassoon's frustration was borne out of elusiveness; he had the tools, the savoir-faire, but the inspiration evaded him. Many times Sassoon thought he had created something new only to find that it had been done before, or he would create a style which resembled Raymond or French's work (Sassoon, 1968:86). Sassoon could not turn to his Mayfair compatriots because nobody within the hairdressing avant-garde was attempting anything so radical. Keith Wainwright was less diplomatic than Sassoon in his opinion of 'the old-boy network' of Mayfair who he considered a self-congratulatory, financially preoccupied group, who were unwilling to share ideas. If this was the true culture of Mayfair and as Wainwright says they were monetarily motivated, they would have been unwilling to change an established and successful formula of hairdressing

(Wainwright, 2005 MD: 025-27). Sassoon subsequently affirmed in his autobiographical film that he often found himself alone in his endeavours to initiate change (*Imagine*, 2011).

Though he recognised that hair ‘dressing’ was a recognised art form in itself which could not be changed, Sassoon refused to surrender to the hairdressing norm as performed by Raymond, Guillaume and Alexandre. Sassoon believed he would have to change the methods that produced *hairdressing* in order to create an alternative form of hair art, just as architecture, design and fine art all changed intermittently (*Imagine*, 2011). To do this he began to look outside of hairdressing for inspiration.

One area of interest was the innovative shapes in Modernist architecture with their strict adherence to geometry and design. The new Quant fashions were also uncomplicated and their bold designs seemed most closely aligned to his desired simplification of line in hair. Although Sassoon is ambiguous about his relationship with Modernism<sup>lxxxiv</sup>, McCracken states that this was a parallel foisted upon him by journalists and academics<sup>lxxxv</sup>, which he was for some time content to allow (1995:56). In this respect McCracken’s proposal is correct as Sassoon’s principles were *based* on the clean shape and appearance of these buildings. However, rather than consciously taking Modernism as his precept it was the mathematical concept of geometry that underpinned Sassoon’s vision and instead of architecture, he famously stated that he ‘dreamt hair in geometry ... squares, triangles, oblongs and trapezoids’ (Levy, 2002:32). Although Sassoon saw his ideas as having a similarity with the prevailing fashion of Modernist shapes, like so many contemporary innovators in the arts, he was to a certain extent shaped by the Modernist ideals that surrounded him. No doubt Mary Quant must also have been similarly influenced. Quant discussed her clothes in the modern sense of sleek lines, stating in her autobiography that one of her

‘fashion hates ... was over-accessorization’ and she ‘decided that such [old-fashioned] rules were totally irrelevant to modern day living’ (1966:286). One could argue that both were rebelling against the status quo in their respective fields and this translated into a simplification of contour, that later became identified with the ‘London Look’.

With this in mind, it is interesting to look at some of the styles Sassoon created in the lead up to the Quant Bob which demonstrate the progression towards geometric cuts (see Fig.3.5). Shawn Levy states that ‘The Shape’ of 1960 came close (2002:32) but it still retained French’s influence. French’s ‘wild’ hairstyles had challenged the idea of neatness and as Cox says, Sassoon continued this approach (1999: 125-6). My view is this is not really the case as the geometric cuts were not about looking casual since they had very distinct, stark lines which even when the head was shaken, would reposition to a distinctive outline. The hair was smooth and glossy and all of this was achieved without setting, perming or lacquering. Whilst French sought a more informal look, Sassoon was ultimately aiming for angles. As the Shape is casual rather than geometric, it is a style that falls at the interstice of the old and the new.

In Mayfair at about the same time, there was a move towards reviving Interwar period hairstyles and this obviously had an influence on ‘The Vamp’ of 1961. In the image (Fig.3.5), Sassoon had dressed this for evening wear using a false piece but the *Hairdressers’ Journal* described it as having a deep fringe, short, straight bob at the back with the front and sides ‘left longer to achieve a *flat* effect’ (my italics *HJ* 1961:2:13). ‘The Guiche’ (Fig.3.5), another variation of this Spring Line, demonstrates further simplification, with a wider, sweeping flicked fringe and no kiss-curls. However, Sassoon’s ‘Vida’ cut (Fig.3.5), first shown in January 1963 is arguably on the verge of becoming geometric. Sassoon explained that the points of

interest were “the angles from centre of neck to ear and from ear to cheekbone – also the slanting parting using longer hair across the crown and developing into shorter sides’ (*HJ* 1963:1:11). Within a few months, the graduated shingle-type back would become one distinct line cut very high at the centre-back in his Quant Bob, whilst flowing at a smooth angle to meet the longer hair at the front. The ensuing famous cuts were feats of exquisite perfection; the V-shaped, the Asymmetric, the Five-Point and the Ungaro indelibly stamped his name on hair in perpetuity as ‘Sassoonery’. It is one thing to design geometric styles and shapes in solid materials such as textiles or brickwork but another thing entirely to achieve them in a volatile and unpredictable substance as hair.

When Sassoon cut hair he would make shapes of his own and his movements were like a theatrical performance; ‘dancing’ in his patent slippers as he moved round the client’s chair. Christopher Pluck, one of his Bond Street stylists, defined Sassoon as ‘art in motion’ (*Imagine*, 2011). Angela Taylor of *The New York Times* characterised this extraordinary behaviour in 1964 as ‘a strange, bent-knee dance that resembled a witch-doctor’s ritual, facial contortions and all’ (Voguepedia, no date). Even if he did not specifically expect his staff to copy his nimble leg-work and facial contortions while working, Sassoon obviously felt that this animated behaviour flowing through his fingers into the client’s hair in some way contributed to the achievement of the perfect cut as if his creativity should be visibly evident in his performance. One of his juniors, Tony Beckerman vividly remembered Sassoon’s instructions: “you’ve got to get it right. You’ve got to *pull* that hair; you’ve got to put *tension* on that hair. *Move your body*” (*Imagine*, 2011). Perhaps this is why Justin de Villeneuve unkindly nicknamed him ‘Victor Baboon’ (Lewis, 2000:38) and *Vogue* playfully dubbed him ‘the Demon Barber’ (Voguepedia, no date<sup>lxxxvi</sup>).

These movements and expressions were accompanied by the incredibly quick and deft snipping of his scissors; a technique, learned from Raymond, that took Sassoon a long time to perfect. Raymond purposefully cut hair in the secrecy of the salon cubicles and he would start at different parts of the head in order to confuse anyone watching (Simmons, 2004). Harold Leighton said that Sassoon took Raymond's technique of 'cutting sharp' and progressed it more acutely (*Imagine*, 2011). Getting closer to the head required smaller scissors than those generally used but Joshua Galvin managed to find some five-and-a-half-inch shears in Paris because Sassoon had 'wanted something tiny that would be like an extension of [his] hand' (Sassoon, 2010:1960). These scissors no doubt gave him greater control.

### **Splitting Hairs: Criticism and ...**

Sassoon's achievements have been invariably chronicled in glowing terms, evaluating his accomplishment as ground-breaking and innovative. At the same time, history does not in the main record the enormous controversy that his geometric cuts caused. The watchwords firmly associated with Sassoon are freedom and movement, linked to the release of hair from all sorts of constraints, whether it be setting and styling in rigid forms or being enslaved to hairdressing appointments. Within the broader context of society, his cuts are seen as being part of wider women's liberation, particularly in the fashion choices opening up to women in the Sixties. This was contested by the writers of a catalogue accompanying the exhibition *1966 And All That*, who argued that these new ideas while liberating women from the controlling fashions of previous generations, engendered other equally formidable constraints such as the adolescent body ideal that forced women to diet to achieve this look (Harris et al, 1986:120-30).

The question of Sassoon's complicity in this re-orientation might at first be dismissed but there is one very important factor which confirms the veracity of Harris, Hyde and Smith's argument. This was Sassoon's conviction that hair must be part of the total look and that prior to cutting he would assess the client's overall body-shape before deciding on a style. Now, this in itself is not prejudicial but his principles relating hair shapes to bone structure would have meant that anybody whose bone structure did not conform to his requirements or was hidden under a layer of fat would not have been considered for these styles. In Sassoon's autobiography, he recounts a story of a client who put on three stones in weight and her beautiful bone structure disappeared. He advised her to lose the weight (in three months!), telling her to 'forget about me cutting your hair until I can see that marvellous facial structure again' and he refused to until she had, thereupon rewarding her with an Asymmetric bob (2010:2215-31). The weight: bone structure ratio clearly did impose considerable restrictions to a fashion which saw itself as offering greater freedom of expression.

In the fashion industry for every positive, glowing editorial, image or geometric-friendly couturier there were magazine editors, photographers and designers who did not like these new styles. In particular, America had trailed far behind Paris and London in contemporary hairstyling, still immersed in what Sassoon called the 'old money' look of rigid conservatism (Sassoon, 2010:2478). In 1965 Sassoon's New York salon opened to huge publicity. However, Sassoon had turned down the *Glamour* magazine editor's offer of a feature because she wanted him to restyle the cuts believing that they were 'far too angular for America' (Sassoon, 2010: 2480). Sassoon's cuts fared little better having been featured in Ungaro's first Paris fashion show in 1965 (2010:2623). According to the French Press 'Sassoon' styling was unnatural since it destroyed women's 'femininity' and there was a widespread

belief that the French ‘would never wear architectural shapes’ although this comment had come from an elderly reporter (Sassoon, 2010: 2658). Nevertheless, even the futuristic designer André Courrèges was absolutely adamant that geometric cuts would suit nobody despite counter arguments that attempted to persuade him otherwise (Sassoon, 1968:146).

Similarly in Britain, Ernestine Carter, women’s editor of the *Sunday Times*, found it impossible to reconcile Sassoon’s shapes as forms that would beautify their wearers (Sassoon, 1968:125). Similarly, fashion photographer David Bailey and Sassoon disagreed vociferously over the validity of straight styles, which Bailey referred to as ‘bloody scars’ (Sassoon, 2010:2044). Other fashion photographers held comparable views. Norman Parkinson insisted on such elaborate embellishments that virtually obscured Sassoon’s neat swinging lines, thereby defeating Sassoon’s objective (Sassoon, 2010:2247). Despite Sassoon’s avid love of Modern architecture, some architects could not come to terms with his ideas either. While Marcel Breuer was in agreement with Sassoon and his ideas on the newness of form (Sassoon, 2010), Philip Johnson, designer of the Seagram Building who Sassoon revered, apparently did not like his shapes one iota (Sassoon, 1968).

However, the greatest antagonism came from within the hair industry itself. While Sassoon had argued that his haircutting had freed women from the tyranny of the weekly salon visit, some hairdressers complained about the regimentation and uniformity of his cutting style. As a young apprentice in a Croydon salon, Lesley Russell tried out the new geometric cuts on the Saturday trade which in his salon consisted mainly of young working girls. For young hairdressers, Sassoon was a revolutionary guru and Russell was invariably swept up in the new hairdressing fashion. Later, when working for Leonard, Russell was invited for an interview to

work at Sassoon's. Russell duly turned up on a staff training night, whereupon he observed that all the trainees were being taught the same Quant bob cut on models ranging from twenty to sixty years old. Russell realised that while he had great admiration for the technical precision of Sassoon styles, there would never be room for individual expression and variety, so he chose to stay at Leonards (Russell, 2003:81).

Leonard Lewis who had also worked for Sassoon likewise disagreed with the conformity of style imposed by Sassoon's cutting regime. However, Sassoon would not tolerate rebellion in the ranks to his methods. Consequently, Lewis observed that clients either knew which cut they wanted beforehand or had little choice in what could be offered to them. He likened it to 'forcing everyone to wear the same dress, even if it was by Chanel!' (2000:52). Sue Billam who became a client of Lewis's said that she had tried Sassoon's cut shortly after arriving in London, but she hated the hairstyle because it was too angular and straight. Her hair, being thick and curly, was entirely unsuited to geometric styling, thereby negating Sassoon's vision of freedom. Billam's description of the regimentation of Sassoon's haircuts led her to believe that Sassoon was simply 'processing people ... where they were all coming out cloned, and all the hairdressers were clones and I found that very intimidating for a start' (Billam, 2005: MD:014).

Linked to Billam's experience, there was open debate regarding Sassoon's scientifically rooted ideology. One hairdresser pointed out in the *Journal* that women were individuals and their hair and its quality, head-shape and age did not always fit neatly into the formulas prescribed by Sassoon (*HJ* 1965:4:12). Sassoon was also accused of virtually sabotaging the perm trade thereby depriving hairdressers of a large proportion of their regular income. As a result, Jack Garnel, a London

hairdresser, began to wage a one-man war on Sassoon initially by remonstrating against Parisian hairdressers for capitulating on the topic of Sassoon's geometric cuts, which he felt had already done much to damage the livelihood of ordinary British hairdressers. The 'damage' underlying Garnel's vituperative remarks was the idea of 'cutting first and perming second'. This opinion evidently put him in Saytes' 'waves-and-curls brigade'. In a further blistering attack on Sassoon launched at the annual conference of the Incorporated Guild of Hairdressers, Garnel moved a resolution for a campaign against the geometric cuts and what he saw as 'a threat to the Craft ... [of] unpractical ... anti-hairdressing' (*HJ* 1966:2:12; *HJ* 1966:5:11).

Whether he knew of Garnel's condemnation or not, less than a year later, Sassoon released the 'Greek Goddess' which was a permed geometric cut. This cut instantly re-established increased support from many of his dissenters and attracted acclaim from hairdressers around the world (*HJ* 1967:1:9). In this move, Sassoon had been able to bring back perming without compromising his own integrity.

Nevertheless he still could not shake off further criticism. Once again, Garnel unleashed yet another volley of criticism rounding on Sassoon's latest successful cut. Under the misapprehension that Sassoon had given up geometric cutting, Garnel demanded that 'hairdressers must end once and for all the cult of personality' judging that this worship of individual trend setters such as Sassoon was irrational. He openly reproached the *Daily Mirror* for its claims that Sassoon was the most-copied hairstylist and ridiculed Sassoon's new perming methods, ending with the riposte: 'must we now regard the art of running fingers through our clients' permed hair (as suggested by Vidal) an important skill in the art of hair-styling?' (*HJ* 1967:1:33). Garnel's lack of vision and his refusal to admit that British hairdressing had been unable to implement changes of its own accord blinded him to the fact that Sassoon

alone had instigated transformations which would go far beyond simply being copied even though copied he was.

### ... Copying: the sincerest form of Flattery?

For all the contemporary and retrospective critiques of Sassoon's ideology and practice, there is no doubt that Felicity Green of the *Daily Mirror* had simply stated the facts. Whether in Britain, Europe or America, 'Sassoonery' as it was fast becoming known was fashionable hairstyling and those hairdressers who stubbornly refused to entertain it were seen as 'squares', to use a Sixties idiom (Masters, 1985). For its part, the *Hairdressers' Journal* believed that all hairdressers, however grudgingly, should learn how to cut the new geometric styles, emphasising that while there was demand a salon should have at least one stylist who could perform them (*HJ* 1966:4:23). However, the *Journal* need not have worried since geometric cuts were pouring out of salons everywhere. In general, they fell into two camps. Either they were direct copies of Sassoon's cut or styles inspired by his geometric cutting. In all cases they nevertheless adhered either to the sharp angles and points or followed the neat, clean, swinging lines that Sassoon had pioneered.

Faced with such popularity, older established Mayfair stylists such as Raymond and Rose Evansky, alongside hairdressers from abroad brought out their own modified versions (see Fig.3.6). In Raymond's 'Three Points of Wisdom' his cutting skills come to the fore as he focussed on the precision of geometric points at the nape of the neck, but these features were hardly original (*HJ* 1965:10:10). Evansky's version was more creative in that she combined a shiny, swinging bob with a precision-cut heart-shaped fringe (1964:8:5:Figg). Evaluating her ability, Leonard Lewis saw Evansky as having no particular cutting technique, yet in common with many hairdressers she was a highly esteemed, talented hairdresser (2000:32,37). In

the same vein as Evansky, the Parisian Ehrlode Brothers (Fig.3.6) drew their inspiration from Sassoon's very short Asymmetric cut but created it with a squared-off fringe (*HJ* 1965:12:15). Another copied version, 'The Swing Heart' from America (Fig.3.6) demonstrated little originality in its almost blatant plagiarism of the original Quant bob suggesting that Americans still could not cope with Sassoon's extremely angular haircut (*HJ* 1965:2:7).

As Sassoon and his haircuts had become so famous both in Britain and abroad, they would become accepted by the general public as recognisable haircuts synonymous with his name. While Sassoon could not stop hairdressers from copying his cuts, there is an argument that those who had created similar styles like the American 'Swingheart', were marketing a Sassoon cut under a different name, thereby taking advantage of his success both artistically and financially. In this respect, Jonathon Sterling wrote an interesting article for the *Journal* in 1973 about the logistics of hairdressers bringing lawsuits against those who had plainly copied their ideas and indicated on what grounds these legal actions could be undertaken. He recounted a recent case between two furniture manufacturers in great detail, stating that it was a criminal offence to pass off someone else's goods and business, or improperly cash in on someone's goodwill, which he said 'may rest in the name of a business ... product, or in its "get up"'. Sterling argued that when the visual appearance of a product had become so indivisibly linked to an individual or company in the minds of the general public (not the Trade) it had some legal authority, and when 'copied' this could result in legal action. As to the issue of copyright itself, Sterling quoted Section 3 of the Copyright Act (1956), which restricted the 'reproduction of any material form of any artistic work'. This included the designation of 'works of artistic craftsmanship' such as hairstyling. In Sterling's

opinion this law would also apply to hairdressing ideas not copyrighted which had been put into some substantial form. At the top of his article Sterling featured two unmistakable styles by Sassoon as examples (see Fig.3.7) (*HJ* 1973:6:26). Whether Sassoon ever tried to enforce this right is not known. However, having started expanding his business internationally, Sassoon was well aware of the powerful use of his name to make and sell his hairstyles. When his Academy first opened in 1974 with advanced training courses for already experienced hairdressers, a clause in their contracts stated that students must never undertake to use his name in advertising, in any way, shape or form (*HJ* 1974:10:5). Perhaps Sassoon realised that his name was bigger and more valuable than the transitory, fashionable haircuts he had created. What can also be inferred by this action is that the celebrity image of Sassoon had already become greater than his salon's reputation, Mayfair, or even London itself. In that sense, we can see that Sassoon's Academy, in a thoroughly contemporary way, established how future hairdressers would, whilst trying to expand their commercial operations, also remain keenly alert to the 'copyright' value of their celebrity 'names'.

## **The Colour Revolution**

The ground which has been broken on hair colouring is part of an unobtrusive but widespread revolution which has been taking place in this country. Colour is now an important part of everyday life – not only in clothes, but in homes, offices and new public buildings (*HJ* 1967:3:52)

By 1967 when the article from which this quote derived was written, the condition of hair colouring had challenged many of the social taboos with which it had previously been associated. Before the Sixties, no 'respectable' middle or upper-class woman

would ever admit to dyeing her hair because of the associations it held for sexual and moral propriety, its identification with the lower classes and to a certain extent connotations of deception. As George Reeson noted, ‘Even the tinted false hair worn by the upper classes was gradually changed to grey as the wearer became older, by knotting white hair into the wigs’ (*HJ* 1960:5:19:Reeson). The deceptive use of hair-dye as an aide to lost youthfulness or to enable false advantages was traditionally condemned as a sin of misrepresentation (McCracken, 1995). The disparaging phrase ‘bottle-blonde’ was perhaps one of the worst insults that could be aimed at a respectable woman, because it symbolised a very visible, tawdry inauthenticity, promiscuity, commonness and a need to resort to (often cheap) chemicals to hide some guilty secret ((Cox, 1999:160; McCracken, 1995). Whatever the colour, before the mid-Fifties women who had their hair dyed referred to it through the ambiguous code-word ‘treatment’ (Cox, 1999; McCracken, 1995). As one beauty salon representative tellingly commented, “None of us old-timers in the field ever thought we’d hear hair colouring mentioned in polite society” (McCracken, 1995:112). Even in 1958 when modern hair colouring was so improved as to look natural and it was becoming more acceptable, the *Hairdressers’ Journal* mentioned it in guarded tones stating that only the hairdresser and client would know about it (*HJ* 1958:5:33: Waters). As might be expected then, ‘treatments’ were almost always performed in cubicles and frequently cloaked in secrecy (Cox 1999:166), further compounding this sense of some irrational shame.

This attitude is quite curious since hair-dyeing, albeit with natural products such as henna and other natural substances, has been practised since time immemorial (Lewis, 2000:79). However, when chemical dyes were first introduced,<sup>lxxxvii</sup> this broadened the range of dye colours. The introduction in February 1912 of the first

rapid oxidation hair-dye, commonly known as '*para*' dye,<sup>lxxxviii</sup> was the basis of all modern hair-dyes (Osborne, 1961:27). The colourless dye solution was kept separately and before use, would be mixed with a very specific amount of hydrogen peroxide solution, which oxygenated the dye in order to make it work (*HJ* 1958:31:Gugenheim). This method created aesthetic and toxic problems. Firstly, this old 'two-solution' hair-dyeing method which roughened the hair shafts to hold the dye meant light reflection was lost resulting in a 'solid paint-like colour' (*HJ* 1960:5:19:Reeson). Secondly, many of the early chemical *para* dyes were particularly toxic and their effects had ranged from severe allergic reactions to death, instigating the Pharmacy and Poison Act of 1933 (Cox, 1999:158; Trasko, 1994:97, 117). As well as toxicity, the primitive ingredients and undeveloped chemical research often problematized the application and appearance of these dyes. The trial facing chemists was to create a dye that would provide an even colouration on a material (hair) which was notoriously variable, even within one head (1960:5:19:Reeson). Despite these challenges, hair-dyeing continued surreptitiously and even Hollywood film stars, who brought platinum blonde to the masses such as Jean Harlow denied dyeing her hair, admitting only to adding a little blue to the water when she washed it (Cox, 1999:161).

The only area of hairdressing in which artificial colour was totally acceptable was in competition work, particularly evening and fantasy work, much of which would never be seen by the general public (Cox, 1999:100). The Mayfair hairdresser, Silvio Camillo, outlined the use of dye in fantasy work by way of having the main colour as the 'evening dressing'. This provided the basis upon which to work to create something spectacular and colourful but would also be able to be worn as a style and colour in its own right. All additional hairpieces were dyed beforehand to

blend in harmoniously with the final fantasy style (1962:4:23: Camillo). Oddly, there had been a trend amongst high society London women in the early Thirties to have their hair coloured in extraordinary shades to match or contrast with their fashionable evening wear (Trasko, 1994), acknowledged as deliberately artificial for artistic purposes. Neither of these discussed examples was intended as naturalistic. So the stigma associated with dyed hair, combined with its largely poor quality, prevented its uptake by the majority of women who only did so to cover up grey hair. Likewise, it seems from the sources that the language used was also to blame and in order to promote the acceptability of these products, the word 'dye' was replaced with a number of more elegant euphemisms. Consequently women would have their hair 'tinted' and 'lightened' rather than 'dyed' or 'bleached' (Cox, 1999:160; McCracken, 1994:114).

It is difficult to pinpoint any one thing or a precise moment when the attitude toward hair colouring altered to one of greater acceptability. In the hair dyeing industry chemical breakthroughs in the post-war period undoubtedly brought improvements to products such as the combined application of lightener and toner (the 'one-solution' method). Semi-permanent colour rinses were introduced and aimed at younger rather than older women, intended to 'brighten' mousy hair (*HJ* 1958:5:41). In the Fifties it was discovered that fur industry dyes were also suitable for human hair, thereby extensively widening the range of available shades (Cox, 1999:165). McCracken (1994) claims that greater exposure through women's and more importantly general interest magazines, was responsible for this gradual widespread acquiescence. However, it is John Waters' (*HJ* 1960:6:43) argument that teenagers after World War II were not only extremely interested in hair colouring but showed virtually none of the conservatism of the previous generations that was a

likely cause. The inference here affected changes in colour and in attitude. Since the hairdressing trade was continuously trying to find ways of enticing the younger generation through its salon doors, this was a significant opportunity to be exploited.

There appears to be an interconnection between the growing economy, the increasing population of young people, and the escalating uptake of hair colouring, encapsulated in the use of the word 'boom'. In 1957, Mr Routledge of the Victor of Mayfair chain was most emphatic about the future of hair colour and stated that it was a 'boom', becoming *the* thing. A rapidly increasing number of his clients were asking for professional hair colouring and by opting for temporary colours, they would be able to change their shade to suit the prevailing fashions (*HJ* 1957:12:20). The following year, Waters noted that the average national salon hair colouring turnover had increased from seven to fifty percent in under ten years and that 'according to a recent survey, nine women out of every 20 in this country now have hair colouring' (*HJ* 1958:33: Waters). By 1960 Waters, who worked for Rapidol Ltd<sup>lxxxix</sup>, told the London Guild of Hairdressers that Britain was experiencing the biggest colour boom in the world arguing more British women were colouring their hair than anywhere else. Waters also advocated the use of semi-permanent tints for teenagers for whom he considered them best suited (*HJ* 1960:6:43). Even though the use of home colour kits far outstripped numbers using professional salon colouring, nevertheless sales tripled in the period from 1959-1961. Consequently, according to an industry supplier, there was a shortage of expert trained and available colour operators to take advantage of the rapid increase in business demand (*HJ* 1962:4:28).

In 1961, Raymond too had noted that the use of hair colouring in salons was 'gathering momentum' and he predicted a time when the business volume of hair colouring would overtake that of perming (*HJ* 1961:5:5: Raymond). Raymond was

quite canny in this respect but he had not realised the portent of his words. Vidal Sassoon, with his new straight haircuts, drastically reduced the demand for the perm trade, further enforcing this change. A few years later, hairdresser Stanley Gold concluded that hair colouring had become the salvation of the Trade, welcoming it as a new form of revenue to replace the declining trade in perms due to these simpler styles (*HJ* 1963:9:35). Four years later this trend continued as permanent waving was suffering a serious crisis. By contrast the hair colouring trade had increased by one hundred percent. Reiterating Gold's view, another hairdresser recognised that 'coloured heads need regular attention at more frequent intervals than perming' and therefore he saw it as an excellent economic replacement (*HJ* 1967:1:17). As a result of these changes in taste and demand, hair colouring was now longer guiltily hiding in the cubicles of salons, but powering their financial success.

### **Annie Humphreys – The Unsung Queen of Colour**

When Vidal Sassoon bought the lease to his second salon at 171 New Bond Street from José Pou he was still relatively unknown, as were his radical plans for the future of hairdressing. José Pou was a noted Mayfair hairdresser who had decided to sell up and leave Britain; Sassoon found along with the lease he had also inherited Pou's staff and had a meeting with them outlining his new vision for the salon. He told them if they were prepared to learn the Sassoon methods and disciplines of hairstyling, then they were welcome to apply for a job. On the morning of the opening, only one member of Pou's old staff was waiting outside the salon – the seventeen-year old Annie Humphreys (Sassoon 2010). Humphreys had been impressed by Sassoon's vitality and his modern approach. She stated that 'When you're young, you're always trying to find something different and new. It sounded more exciting than what I was

doing and certainly more exciting than what everyone else was offering' (Gordon 2002:144).

One of the very few top-flight women in the hairdressing industry, Humphreys' achievements in her field are also in danger of being lost in the annals of time<sup>xc</sup>. Her public anonymity might have stemmed not simply from being a 'female' hairdresser, but from the fact that she worked as part of the Vidal Sassoon team. She and his other employees thought of themselves as a unit, rather than individuals, who collaborated on Sassoon's innovative ideas. Although she started as an apprentice hairdresser, like Daniel Galvin after her, she was more interested in being a hair-colourist having been fascinated with vivid colours since early childhood (Gordon, 2002). When Humphreys started in the colour section, there were no rules and guidelines to provide a strong foundation for learning as there would be later when the hair schools started. There were no 'systems'; it was mostly trial and error. In an effort to formulate some sort of method, she turned to art and in particular the texts written by Johannes Ittens (Gordon 2002). Sassoon's obvious passion for Modernist architecture directed Humphreys towards the Bauhaus where she discovered Ittens' work with colour. Ittens pioneered the documentation of colour and how it worked<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup>; in particular he created a colour wheel which extended the ideas of Adolf Hölzel<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup>, his former teacher. This has been used consistently ever since to organise colour, being incorporated into many systems such as present day computers. He based his ideas on a combination of science and the art techniques of the old masters (Froebel Web, 1998-2002). Humphreys was particularly interested in his theories on how chromatic and complementary colour affected the eye and one's mood; she had to think like a painter and translate artistic elements of shape, balance and colour into hairdressing skills (Gordon, 2002). Humphreys felt that this was an area in which she

could make her own artistic mark and it was clear that under Laurance Taylor's<sup>xciii</sup> guidance, she was extremely good at it (Sassoon, 2010).

While the rest of the staff were engrossed in precision cutting, Humphreys saw greater challenges and excitement in the 'more nebulous, unpredictable and very unstable' (Gordon 2002:145) world of dyeing, tinting and bleaching. In the late 1950s the stigma attached to colouring hair was still in evidence; most women had their hair coloured to look as natural as possible and usually to cover up grey. They didn't want to look different. To achieve a natural look was extremely difficult because colour's chemical composition and the techniques to apply it, as already discussed, were rudimentary. Humphreys described the rather barbaric practise of scrubbing the roots of the hair with a brush and boiling water; citric acid was then applied to provide a porous base. Speed was of the essence: if the colour was not applied swiftly, its progressive instability would alter the hue and could often turn almost black (Gordon, 2002:145). It demanded great skill, dexterity and complete concentration to achieve a good result.

Humphreys also believed that there was an element of scientific proficiency involved because as Sassoon said, this was the 'Dark Ages' before modern technology' when hairdressers were expected to concoct their own treatments and hair products (Sassoon, 2010). She remembered having to mix neat ammonia with soap flakes and peroxide – a highly dangerous and volatile mix for bleaching hair (Gordon, 2002). However, she believed that the narrow range of colours available forced her to be more creative. She not only mixed colours to achieve specific shades, she also mixed different companies' products together which was highly unorthodox (Gordon, 2002; Sassoon, 2010). Humphreys would have made her own colours but had neither the time, money nor the right chemical training to do so. Competition with the big

companies such as Wella or L'Oreal would also have required too much investment (Gordon, 145-147).

Humphreys believed that in order to be really good at anything, complete commitment was essential (Gordon, 2002). Sassoon said that she was 'as dedicated to pushing the boundaries of colour' as he was to cutting, developing new ways of highlighting and lowlighting hair that were avant-garde (Sassoon, 2010). Equally fascinatingly was her ability to fuse Sassoon's theories on face shape, hair structure and condition with her own ideas on hair colour. Mark Hayes, Sassoon's International Creative Director, believes that 'a haircut is not complete without ... some form of colour [as it] accentuates the shape of the cut' (*HJi*, 2010 youtube). This statement is directly attributable to Sassoon's collaborative approach to hairstyling in which Humphreys' creative colouring played a major role. In the era of Sassoon's geometric cuts, colour was vital to make the style a statement. In order to accentuate the angles and shape, Humphreys dyed the hair either jet black or white blonde, in a deliberately graphic fashion to make a strong visual shape. As the haircuts were not intended to look natural, the colour was licensed likewise. Just as Sassoon considered the shapes of Modernist architecture when constructing his haircuts, Humphreys reverted to Ittens' discussion of the use of 'cold-warm', 'light-dark' colour contrasts, to create balanced shape and dimensions through selectively flattening and enlivening the cut. Her previous cutting experience with Sassoon helped her to appreciate hair texture and shape which was critical in understanding where to place the right shades of colour. As she said, 'if you put them in the wrong place, you can ruin a perfectly beautiful haircut ... that's the difference: knowing not only how to do good colour but having the eye to make that haircut become almost three-dimensional' (Gordon 2002:150).

Humphreys is renowned for two other milestones. It was she who did the experimental perm for the Greek Goddess haircut spending the whole weekend working long into the night with Sassoon, Roger Thompson and Christopher Brooker, creating the new style (Sassoon 2010). Working for Sassoon allowed staff to explore and experiment in all areas of hairdressing and for Humphreys this meant making choices as a female: either to be 'one of the boys' or to give it up for a home-life in which she really wasn't interested. She decided to make a career of it when most young women were still opting to settle down and have families. For women at that time it was largely impossible to do both and so this was a big decision. In this respect, Humphreys can be seen to be in the vanguard of second-wave feminist thinking by putting her career first. By the early Seventies, she was in charge of all Europe and the only female on the art team (Gordon, 2002). Sassoon said that despite being petite, Humphreys had a very forceful personality and ran the colour department like a military operation; she eventually became the chief colourist for the Sassoon organisation and was later chosen to become a partner in the business after Sassoon had opted to relinquish control (Sassoon, 2010). She continues to inspire subsequent generations of female hair colourists who have followed her pursuit of artistic risk taking. As Humphreys herself concluded, 'If we all aimed for average, there wouldn't be a Vidal Sassoon' (Gordon, 2002:147).

### **Daniel Galvin – the King of Colour**

Whilst hair colouring may have unabashedly become more prevalent over the course of the Sixties, the techniques of colouring hair really had not altered significantly. Despite all the chemical improvements and the wider range of colours available, new and avant garde methods of using dyes failed to materialise on a scale to match.

Given its history, no hairdresser openly specialised in hair colouring. Consequently hair colouring was the ‘Cinderella’ department of hairdressing and those assistants who coloured clients’ hair were not considered as artistes but as technicians. The new hair colouring was poised, ready to advance but with no standard bearer to lead it into new territory. That is, not until Daniel Galvin appeared to revolutionise the techniques and lift hair colouring into more exalted spheres.

As previously mentioned, Galvin came from a hairdressing family. His grandfather had been a barber at Truefitt and Hill in Mayfair<sup>xciv</sup> while his own father, less illustriously, had a salon in Paddington where Galvin worked sweeping floors. His brother Joshua was also Vidal Sassoon’s top stylist and it was he who encouraged his younger brother to go into this branch of hairdressing (Finney, undated; Gordon, 2009; *HJ* 1966:4:10). It isn’t clear whether Daniel Galvin was aware of the status of colourists when he decided to make professional hair colouring his specialism. At age fifteen, Galvin was apprenticed in a salon off Baker Street and while there, decided that colouring was to be his focus. As Galvin stated in a recent interview, ‘from the very beginning I preferred colouring hair over cutting – I have to say I found cutting boring and felt that colouring was where the magic was’ (Galvin, 2013:10). His brother Joshua had recently returned from hairdressing in New York and his experiences there meant he could see the huge potential in this under-exploited area. Joshua suggested to his brother that he should be the first hairdresser to specialise solely in the art of hair colour and advised him to try to find work with one of the top ten hairdressers of the day (Galvin, 2013).

Galvin then joined Olofsons, a society hair salon in the Brompton Road, as a junior colourist where it became clear that few people wanted to enter that side of the profession. As a result, colourists were in short supply and ranked little better than

the cleaners (Finney, no date). Galvin's experience was largely that the staff were uncooperative and the only way to learn was through trial and error: 'In those days there wasn't any formal training. Whenever I asked the senior staff for guidance, their response was invariably: "If you don't know what to use, you shouldn't be working here!"' (Galvin, 2013:10). Quite probably this lack of help was a blessing in disguise because it forced him to experiment rather than being drilled in the traditional methods, particularly all-over block colouring. Galvin would pick the hair cuttings off the floor and take them home to try out different colour combinations. He was fascinated with the way different types of hair reacted to different colour mixtures and by now had become obsessed by colour, not simply as a means to cover grey hair, but as a demonstration that not just cutting and styling, but colour could alter a woman's looks (Gordon, 2009).

After eighteen months, Galvin's notoriety as a hair colourist had come to the attention of both Vidal Sassoon and Leonard, who telephoned him on the same day to offer work. Galvin's decision to take Leonard's offer was not purely monetary<sup>xcv</sup> (Galvin, 2013) but it was based on Leonard's approach of softer hairstyles rather than Sassoon's hard geometric cuts (Finney, no date). Together with the knowledge that as part of Leonard's total beauty house, colouring was to be integrally important enough to set up a floor in the salon devoted to it, Galvin accepted the offer (Galvin, 2013; Lewis, 2000:80). In fact, Leonard himself had said he wanted 'Upper Grosvenor Street to have the finest hair colouring department in Europe' (Lewis, 2000:79). Leonard's vision for hair was strikingly similar to Galvin's. He believed that good colouring was equally as important as good cutting and he had learned on the hairdressing grapevine, that Galvin was putting these ideas into practise. Galvin's highlighting techniques were so unusual for that time that Leonard defined them as

‘revolutionary’ (2000:79). In particular, Leonard was searching for a more natural look to a highlighted head, rather than the ‘skunk-like’ stripes which had been customary previously. These clearly artificial lights occurred because the colourist would position the lights in each layer directly over the top of the previous one. To counter this, Galvin had invented the ‘brickwork’ method which meant that his highlight layers would be fashioned in much the same way as a brick wall pattern would appear and that no one colour would sit directly level with that on the layer above or below. Accordingly, the more shades used, the softer and more indiscernible the highlighting. Consequently, no matter which way the hair fell, the lights would be evenly diffracted throughout the hair to give an overall shimmer and this was precisely the look that Leonard wanted (Lewis, 2000:80).

It wasn’t long before the *Hairdressers’ Journal* had noticed that Galvin was an exceptional member of staff at Raphael and Leonard’s salon. A short piece in 1965 appraised him almost as a curiosity - ‘a special tinter’ - but noted that despite being only twenty-one he had built up a sizeable clientele of over five hundred clients who included celebrities such as Cilla Black and Susan Maugham. His methods were also noted as unusual for it stated that ‘... [he] never uses one colour, but always prefers to mix his own shades. He usually administers colour in three stages; one for cover, one for colour, and one for depth,’ (*HJ* 1965:10:21-24). Six months later, Galvin explained to the *Journal* his new and revolutionary methods did not use bleach to lighten hair. Rather he would ‘*tint up*’. Without divulging too much, Galvin explained that his methods for highlighting hair would not generate ‘high-lighted lumps [but] produce a sheen which contains thousands of highlights’ (*HJ* 1966:4:10). Galvin’s approach to hair colouring confirmed Raymond’s earlier predictive article regarding the growth of colouring<sup>xcvi</sup> for although only ten percent of Leonard’s clients wanted colour when

he first joined, Galvin's aim was to expand this significantly and to have every client coloured (Lewis, 2000:80). How to attract women to accept colouring would necessitate greater publicity beyond being interviewed by the *Hairdressers' Journal* which was a trade paper. However, the potential to increase publicity came just a few weeks earlier when the unknown Twiggy came to Leonard's salon in January 1966 for a haircut which subsequently triggered her modelling career (see Fig.3.8) (Lewis, 2000:97-101). Galvin saw Twiggy's hair as an opportunity to promote his new colour technique. However, he could not have foreseen the scale of publicity Twiggy's future fame would bring. Finney puts it rather neatly: 'As Twiggy made her way across the world's magazine covers and newspapers, a treatment that had once been the preserve of greying old ladies suddenly went fashionably mainstream' (Finney, no date). Attracting young customers inspired by the lure of colouring as well as women who in the past had been wary of it made it much more in demand. Eventually, Galvin had built the business up to such an extent that twenty colourists were employed and Leonard could proceed with expansion plans.

The experimental brickwork technique had become an economic success and it became universally accepted as standard. With his technique established, the time was right for Galvin to investigate newer colours and with his name firmly established as the premier colourist of Mayfair, new innovations were initiated and accepted. Galvin and Leonard wanted to publicise the importance of colour itself in hair and rather like the former owner of Leonard's premises, Schiaparelli, they decided to produce a new range of colours which would attract attention using shock tactics. Initially, Galvin had begun by experimenting with nylon and poster dyes which when applied to hair were eye-catching but not striking. An opportunity arose to develop this further when Zandra Rhodes came to the salon to have her hair dyed green

(because Sassoon's wouldn't do it). Rhodes introduced Galvin to the dyes she used for her silk prints. The colours were not only unusual, but very vivid. Galvin then sought the expertise of Leonard's product chemist to turn these colours from textile dyes to hair colorants and to ensure they were not only easier to handle but safe to use. In 1967 Galvin and Leonard launched the 'Crazy Colours' range in British *Vogue* and the images were so breath-taking, they were included in *Vogue's* American and Italian editions. At the outset, neither Galvin nor Leonard dreamed that the ordinary public would wear these colours, because in a way similarly to *haute-couture*, outrageous fashion ideas would be worn by the elite and then much later, trickle down in a more muted, practical and acceptable form to a wider audience. To their surprise, an Italian company called Rembow approached them with a view to launch Crazy Colours in the retail market. In celebration *Vogue* did a special Guy Fawkes Night feature which using a photographic headshot included all the different colours, topped by a lit sparkler (see Fig.3.9) (Lewis, 2000: 113-116).

Galvin's next move was to start a new craze but this time for a very old product which had hardly been used since the turn of the twentieth century. Aside from Crazy Colours, Galvin's aim was to achieve a natural look even when using chemical dyes. Now he wanted to bring back henna which he did very successfully (Fig.3.9) generating more publicity by featuring Grace Coddington in American *Vogue*. The henna revival satisfied his interest in using herbal products, which both he and Leonard were keen to develop (*HJ* 1975:1:10). It seemed that Galvin was now in such a position of authority that he was able to dictate colour trends, with his innovations serving as inspiration (as can be seen in the images in Fig.3.10). However, feeling that he had reached the limit of his creativity at Upper Grosvenor Street, he left Leonard's in 1977 to set up Europe's first specialist colour salon in

George Street, where he remains to this day (*HJi*, 2012). Galvin's ambition had been to do for colouring what Sassoon had done with cutting and in this respect he achieved his desire, namely elevating the status of colourists to respected colour artistes and revolutionising hair colouring in the process (Galvin, 2013; *HJi*, 2009).

## **The Black Hair Revolution<sup>xvii</sup>**

The Black Hair Revolution started with a whisper so quiet that it was barely audible. Compared to the other issues involving black people and their civil rights which were to have a much noisier and resounding impact in the 1960s to 1970s, the revolution in hairdressing for black people was a relatively low key affair. Prior to 1954, it can be assumed most of the black population of Britain were not going to professional salons to have their hair done. As the black actress Isabelle Lucas testified, 'In those days there were no black salons for black women in this country. Black women styled their hair in their kitchens' (*Another Nickel in the Machine*, 2012). The black and Asian community in Britain was still relatively small, amounting to approximately 75,000 in the immediate post-war period (Sandbrook, 2005). Records show that there had always been foreigners in Britain including black people (Sandbrook, 2005) but 1948 marked the growing annual influx of people from British ex-colonies in the mid-twentieth century whose colours and cultures were markedly different (Humphries & Taylor, 1986).

It is, therefore, a generally mistaken assumption that black immigration started with the *SS Empire Windrush* and its arrival with a large group of West Indians in 1948. The uncharacteristic media publicity surrounding their arrival was probably responsible, brought on by the sheer numbers who arrived *en masse*, marking this

moment and ensuing arrivals out as different. The wave of immigrants, who landed on these shores in shiploads during the 1950s partly at the behest of the British Government, swelled the foreign population in cities like London and Birmingham where they had come to work usually filling the labour shortages which were mainly apparent in the lower grades of employment (Marwick 1998:230-1).

Arthur Marwick's comprehensive text, *The Sixties* (1998), discusses the post-war influx of new Commonwealth citizens to Britain which included amongst others Indians, Pakistanis and West Indians. West Indians were by far the largest group and by 1962 accounted for almost half of the non-white migrants. This had in part arisen from the virtual outlawing of West Indian immigration to the USA after 1952<sup>xcviii</sup> and consequently, Caribbean migrants switched their focus to Britain (Humphries & Taylor, 1986). The censuses show that from 1954 until 1961 the numbers arriving annually had grown year on year from 11,000 to 66,300 and that by 1958, London had absorbed 40,000 immigrants; Birmingham followed closely behind with 30,000 whereas Manchester in third place could only boast 4,000 (Marwick 1998:231). Between 1955 and 1960, the number of West Indians settling in London was averaging 20,000 per annum whereas previously in 1952 they numbered less than a thousand a year (Humphries & Taylor, 1986). Many parts of the United Kingdom had never encountered black people at all. Nevertheless, all of these people needed housing and access to other basic amenities, which were not always or readily available to them. Many, but not all of them had arrived here already relatively poor, and poverty levels were further exacerbated by menial jobs with low wages. As a result, professional hairdressing was viewed as a luxury, not a necessity, and so there was little demand.

The lack of professional black hairdressing meant that when it did happen, it made hairdressing news. As such, it can be seen as an important development in the history of the hair salon. With the burgeoning immigrant population, some black people who had been hairdressers before coming to Britain, saw opportunities to capitalise on the needs of their country-folk. Black hairdressing was an area of unexploited opportunity because it was a form of hair rarely tackled by white hairdressers who were unfamiliar with its texture. As a result, even those who did have the money to visit a professional hairdresser would have been hard-pressed to find anyone to do it, whether black or white. This was the situation that faced Winfred Atwell in the 1950s. Atwell, a West Indian chart-topping pianist, was a well-known, incredibly popular performer, who was constantly in the public eye and so her needs were accentuated<sup>xcix</sup>. Initially, Atwell had trained as a chemist in her youth but it was through her musical talent that she found fame and fortune and nowhere more so than in Britain. Undoubtedly, Atwell's sunny disposition and cheerful music was just the tonic that the nation needed. Norman Newell, the record producer and lyricist wrote, 'She had this unique way of making every note she played sound a happy note. She was always smiling and joking. When you were with her you felt you were at a party, and that was the reason for the success of her records' (Bourne, 2001:93) Atwell was not only the first black artist to sell a million records in Britain and the first to have a No.1 hit in 1954 (Bourne, 2001; Another Nickel in the Machine, 2012), but she was also the first female pianist to be awarded the highest grading for musicianship by the Royal Academy of Music where she had previously studied classical piano (Maconie, 2013). Not least amongst her British fans were the Queen<sup>c</sup> and Princess Margaret for whom she performed at private parties at the Palace (Bourne, 2001) as well as performing at three Royal Variety Performances (Maconie,

2013). With her television shows on both ATV (1956) and BBC (1957), her royal performances and her tours, Atwell realised that she required almost constant hairdressing. In the absence of Black hair salons, Atwell recognised that the only solution to keeping her hair immaculate was to open her own salon. In an interview with the *Hairdressers' Journal* Diarist, Atwell said that she had made the decision after a hair-do let her down just before a London performance. She wondered how many other black women had suffered this situation due to lack of good professional Black hairdressing (*HJ* 1960:1:14).

Given her concern, it is unlikely that Atwell knew about her fellow Trinidadian countrywoman, Carmen Maingot<sup>ci</sup>. Maingot had opened a hair-straightening salon in South Kensington earlier in 1955, which the *Hairdressers' Journal* described as 'possibly the first in Britain' (*HJ* 1955:5:16). In a British Pathé short film entitled *Hairdressing* (1948), Maingot is seen processing an African woman's hair at the British Colonies Club in London, using 'secret oils' and a hot-comb which was her preferred method of straightening.<sup>cii</sup> In the 1955 *Journal* article, Maingot stated quite clearly that she had no interest in employing the permanent wave method. Her reason for not using this technique may have been that it reduced the need for clients' visits and produced a loss of income. As the hot-comb method was impermanent, it required more frequent treatments and guaranteed that customers would return.

Atwell's hairdressing and beauty salon opened to much acclaim in Railton Road Brixton, South London just before Easter 1957 (as can be seen in Fig.3.11) (*HJ* 1957:4:21; *HJ* 1957:4:38). Although Atwell had opened her salon mainly for her own convenience, it is evident that the location of Brixton which she knew well, had a sizeable and steadily growing female West Indian population. It was the perfect

testing ground for hair and beauty services for black women. Apart from her musical career, Atwell owned and rented out several properties in the area and her astute entrepreneurialism, combined with her chemist background, resulted in the success of her £30,000 investment into a thriving business. It included the development of hair straightening products and cosmetics for darker skins which she called the *Opus* range (*HJ* 1957:4:38; *HJ* 1957:4:40). From bath essence to skin creams and perfume, the beauty range was given exotic names and her products were infused with Caribbean spices. A new hair straightener called ‘Stay-Straight’ was also used in the salon and additionally available as a home kit. Aware of the specific needs of black customers, Atwell also sold a range of stockings designed and dyed especially for her in darker shades entitled ‘Wild Bloom’ and ‘Winifred’ (*HJ* 1957:4:40). Unlike Maingot’s business, Atwell’s salon differentiated its practise by promoting permanent wave preparations rather than the hot-comb for straightening hair favoured by Maingot. Just as white women wanted the most modern and up-to-date products and methods for their hair, so Atwell cannily realised that black women wanted these too.

...the hot-combs to which coloured women had so long been martyrs were *out*. Winifred was after the pleasant, permanent way of straightening hair so that it could be styled, coloured, given modern fashion line, colour and movement (*HJ* 1960:1:14).

The modernity of Atwell’s salon interior was described in vivid detail by an article in the *Journal* but unfortunately without any images. Luckily surviving images sourced elsewhere demonstrate some of these descriptions graphically (see Fig.3.12). From this account it was open plan in the contemporary style with a six-seater island dressing out tables. Mirrors were separated by spotlight glass panels and there were white chairs; washbasins set in yellow and black mosaic and hood-dryers arranged in

a semi-circular drying alcove decorated with murals. In the waiting room there was a television, a coffee machine and an eight-foot tank of iridescent tropical fish. There was also a beauty room under construction (*HJ* 1957:4:38).

Whilst Atwell's Brixton salon appears to have been an unmitigated success, it was superseded by a more important milestone for Black hairdressing. In 1960 the *Hairdressers' Journal* in its 'People' section, reported again on Atwell's salon but this time it recorded a critical move into more luxurious surroundings. The *Journal* stated that Atwell had *relocated* her salon to central London although it did not say where (*HJ* 1960:1:14)<sup>ciii</sup>. Further research has revealed that the address was 39-41 New Bond Street (almost opposite Sassoon's second salon) making this, without doubt, the first Black hairdressing salon in Mayfair. The implications of a black woman establishing her salon in the heart of the testosterone driven environment of Mayfair at the end of the 1950s can only be wondered at as reactions, if any, so far have lain undiscovered. Nevertheless, the Winifred Atwell Salon survived until 1967 when records show that the business was wound up, no doubt coinciding with Atwell's loss of popularity in Britain and marked by her consequent move to Australia (BT31/41889/600962). What can be surmised is that Atwell's establishment in Mayfair paved the way for other Black hairdressers who had similar ambitions. Joshua Galvin said that the first Black hairdresser he recalled was Winston Isaacs who opened a salon on Maddox Street, Mayfair, called 'Splinters' in the early 1970s (Galvin, 2005 MD:007).<sup>civ</sup>

Atwell's fame and celebrity would have promoted her upmarket salon to black women nationwide, spurring ordinary women into establishing their own. In 1960 the *Hairdressers' Journal* ran an article on two Jamaican hairdressers, Mrs Henry and Mrs Lyons, who had set up businesses in Birmingham which may well have been the

first in that city. Mrs Lyons had been featured on a Midlands television programme, demonstrating that the rarity factor brought media attention. From the article's scant description their salons, albeit in a more modest fashion, followed Atwell's model. Mrs Henry's salon had only one basin and dryer, but the interior decoration was described as 'pretty pink-coloured'. Mrs Lyons salon also offered manicure and facial beauty treatments. Of note, the salon also sold special cosmetics such as darker powder and lipsticks, and a hair gloss which was imported from America (*HJ* 1960:9:31). By 1967 it was clear that the demand for Black hairdressing had grown in cities that had large immigrant populations such as London's but also Birmingham where there were at least ten salons that were run by and catered for immigrants (*HJ* 1967:5:5).

### **Training and Education**

While these Black hair salons followed the standard British interior design model, Black hairdressing involved very different processes, contributing to the growth of a new, different salon culture. The various distinctive procedures that were integral to Black hairdressing required different skills to that used in European hair, although many such as hot-comb straightening required no less skill than using chemicals to straighten black hair. Indeed, in the wrong hands both methods were lethal. Not unnaturally if they were to pay salon prices, black women wanted properly trained stylists. To rid themselves of the aura of amateurism, stylists had to have a formal education and training resulting in recognised certification. The first school for Black hairdressers started in 1958 was the Roy Lando School, based in North London. Lando, a Jamaican hairdresser, had trained in both America and London before setting up his own salon, training school and providing a range of cosmetics. Lando offered six-month long courses which culminated in a Diploma of Hairdressing. The first

eight students passed out in style, to a large audience of black people at a Graduation ceremony at Lambeth Town Hall (see Fig.3.13), having initially demonstrated their newly acquired skills in a competition (*HJ* 1958:11:39).

By the early 1960s, the number of Black hairdressing schools in London was growing and there were now calls to have official recognition by the British hairdressing authorities. Black hairdressers similarly hoped that eventually an association of Black hairdressers might be formed, possibly under the aegis of an existing Trade organisation (*HJ* 1962:11:10). In 1963 the *Journal* reported that a North London Black hairdressing school, Eve's Academy, had applied for membership of the Association of British Hairdressing Schools (see Fig.3.13), the first of its kind to do so (*HJ* 1963:3:10). Up to this point professional Black hairdressing and training appears to have been segregated from white because of its minority status, despite the fact that there had been interest in it from some white hairdressers almost from the start. When Lando's first graduates were competing in 1958, the judges included Alfred Morris of the Morris School & London Institute of Hairdressing which taught both black and white students (*HJ* 1958:11:39).

The Morris School was well-known to foreign students and it attracted a large number of West Africans to study both Black and Caucasian hairdressing as well as undertaking training in other aspects of beauty culture. Approximately one-fifth of the student intake was foreign, who after graduation would return to their countries and set up businesses. It has been conjectured by Doris Essah<sup>cv</sup> that the Ghanaian students preferred to attend schools that delivered on-site training rather than those that relied on salons to provide the facilities (Essah, 2008:138). This was probably due to the limited number of salons that would have been able to provide the resources needed.<sup>cvi</sup> By 1967, Morris had made the Mamore School of Hairdressing

an Associate of his School (*HJ* 1967:5:8) and three years later in 1970 the Mamore College claimed to be the largest school in Britain training Black hairdressers, mainly from West Africa and the Caribbean (*HJ* 1970:6:23). As a result of the phenomenal growth of the Afro-West Indian department of the Morris School, in 1975 Morris' son Sydney opened up a new African/West Indian Division, reflecting the continued interest in developing this form of professional hairdressing (*HJ* 1975:5:26). Students who attended were given complete training in the various skills needed at a Black hairdressing school and they also had the opportunity to learn European hair design if they wished.

### **Racism and beyond the Race Relations Act**

The Morris School was a shining example of the ability to integrate black and white hairdressing in Britain. However the adoption of Black hairdressing and inclusion of black clients by white hairdressers had not been as smooth and unproblematic as the Morris School story suggests. For black immigrant women, the desire to straighten their hair was to conform to Western ideals as a way to integrate into British society. Nonetheless, as one commentator maintained, it was comparable to losing a part of their cultural identity but, that was how many immigrants felt they had to present themselves in order to acculturate (*Bouffants, Beehives and Bobs*, 2013). This desire to adopt white styles was further complicated by black hair being seen as problematic by the white hairdressing community. Even the *Journal* took this for granted, noting that 'coloured women want their hair smoothed ... because they feel that their natural curl looks strange as they move among people with European hair' (*HJ* 1968:4:3). Yet the general desire to integrate socially was beleaguered by xenophobic prejudice and contempt, which as Sandbrook outlines had resulted in a discreet colour bar; discreet in the sense that 'most people ... were reluctant to admit they were

prejudiced' (2005:330). The colour bar, a contentious and thinly-veiled segregation mechanism, had operated in a variety of public spaces where owners felt that white consumers would not want to mix with black clients, derogatorily termed as 'coloureds'. Several instances had been reported in the *Hairdressers' Journal*,<sup>cvii</sup> which demonstrated that this attitude existed in hairdressing albeit those reported were in the provinces where racism may have been more intense. However, it is interesting to note that in the early part of the Sixties, the hairdressers involved were quite frank about their refusal to serve black immigrants. As the decade progressed, salon owners became more reluctant to be so candid on racial matters, either denying discrimination or justifying their actions by pleading a practical ignorance of dressing black hair, despite not all black hair being Negroid.

Views on this practise were split with as many public bodies and organisations denouncing it as there were others supporting it<sup>cviii</sup>. The NHF, who were involved in one particular high-profile case, said that while the Federation did not support racial prejudice, it rather ambiguously defended the right of its members to refuse to attend anyone regardless of their colour, if it were seen as detrimental to their business (*HJ* 1960:12:6). This situation was not helped by the general opinion that 'passive racism' was acceptable. Even the *Hairdressers' Journal* while reporting on these racial prejudice cases, had no qualms about including a cartoon illustration that was racially stereotypical (see Fig.3.14). With hindsight and the passage of time, it is easy to judge society from a 'presentist' point of view, to reveal the inadequacies and wrongdoings of earlier racial misconception<sup>cix</sup> yet, as has already been indicated, the attitudes towards migrants in all areas of society were simply not that clear cut. While 'Craft' leaders were united in their belief that salon colour bars should be outlawed, branches of the NHF met with silent resistance to the idea from their

members. Opinions were divided highlighting the short-sightedness of racial prejudice and the economic disadvantages of refusing business (*HJ* 1964:7:12). The pressure to change was beginning to accelerate by 1967, not least because there was concern that racial politics had overshadowed hairdressing for too long, causing separate schools and salons for black people to spring up. This prompted the *Journal* to question whether there was ‘a new Apartheid in the trade’ (*HJ* 1967:5:8). Perhaps in an effort to refocus attention away from the salon colour bar, *Journal* articles appeared which emphasised the economic returns of straightening hair using relaxants which it described as simply doing permanent waving in reverse. Rather than needing to learn the outmoded method of hair-pressing, this method required minimal retraining and it was open to all hairdressers (*HJ* 1967:10:10).

The arguments surrounding the salon colour bar were soon to be overtaken by wider political events as national legislation made the final decision. With the introduction of the Race Relations Act in 1968, discrimination became illegal. White hairdressing salons were consequently compelled to change their policies towards black clients and employees (*HJ* 1969:2:44: Sterling) and this effectively promoted greater integration in the working practises of hairdressing. Joshua Galvin confirmed that before he left Sassoon, white hairdressers in the West End and elsewhere did not cut or dress black hair, but after the Act came in, this gradually changed. Indeed Galvin had already cut black hair in 1957 while working for the Merchant Navy and when the Afro became fashionable, he extended his expertise in this area. Galvin pioneered a new technique using just scissors and an Afro comb to cut black hair into round Afros as well as adding varied colours, which other stylists were quick to take up (see Fig.3.15). Galvin’s work on black hair and his own fame was disseminated well beyond the West End through his experimentation on black models, since Galvin

was the first to have a photograph of a black model on the cover of the glossy magazine *Elle*, replete with spectacular hair and gold makeup. Galvin even had his own Black Hairdressing Academy, in conjunction with Westminster College at Battersea Bridge (Galvin, 2005 MD: 007).

The integration of Black hairdressers into the white hairdressing community was a slow process and relied on forward-thinking business people such as Joshua Galvin and Alfred Morris to encourage this assimilation. Keith Wainwright also asserted that Smile was advanced in employing Black hairdressers, particularly as few West Indian males would have entered a profession that they still saw as 'gay'. In his recollection, Wainwright observed that black male professionals still hardly existed in Seventies Britain (Wainwright, 2005 MD: 067-074). What can be deduced from Galvin's and Wainwright's testimonies is that white West End hairdressers were either learning or inventing techniques to dress black hair or they were employing Black hairdressers to work in mixed client salons. If this made the successful operation of Splinters in Mayfair easier, then the difficulties that must have faced Atwell's continued existence in Mayfair, is a sobering thought.

As the chapter has outlined, the period from the late 1950s through to the early 1970s saw tremendous changes in salon culture and hairdressing that mirrored the broader social and political shifts in British society. Not least the question of the professionalization of hairdressing, the proper skills and training needed to adequately respond to the greater sophistication of hairstyle design and colouring demanded by clients, and the increasing ethnic diversity of Britain's population impacted upon how hairdressers saw themselves and their professional image. It also directed changes in contemporary attitudes towards the culture of hair and contributed to greater press and

television attention to hair in an ever expanding international mass media culture emerging in the 1970s.

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<sup>lxxv</sup> ‘The bulge’ was a frequently used term to describe the very large number of teenagers in these years as compared to the previous decade and earlier. The Hairdressers’ Journal made many references to it in articles during this period, especially approaching 1962 when it talked of the bulge reaching its peak and the consequences this had in terms of hairdressing production or consumption. Marwick (2000) also referred to ‘the bulge’ in his discussion of the Sixties.

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Akhtar, M and Humphries, S (2001) *The Fifties and Sixties: A Lifestyle Revolution* London: Boxtree; Booker, Christopher (1969) *The Neophiliacs: A Study of the Revolution in English Life in the Fifties and Sixties*, London: Collins; Kynaston, David (2008) *Austerity Britain 1945-51* London: Bloomsbury; Levy, Shawn (2002) *Ready, Steady, Go! The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London*, New York: Doubleday; Marr, Andrew (2007) *A History of Modern Britain* London: MacMillan; Tarrant, Chris (1990) *Ready Steady Go! Growing Up in the Fifties and Sixties: from the Coronation to World Cup Willie* London: Pyramid; White, Jerry (2001/2008) *London in the Twentieth century: A City and Its People* London: Vintage (Amazon) [Kindle]

<sup>lxxvii</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1954 was when meat rationing finally ended and with it, all rationing.

<sup>lxxviii</sup> As stated in the introductory chapter, men’s hairdressing has not been written about due to the constraints of space and time. However, through my research on women’s hairdressing the change in men’s hairdressing from old to new styles and the spaces within which this was performed and by whom, changed dramatically. There were continuous arguments and debates about men’s styling throughout this period and it would make an interesting subject for study as it parallels much of what happened in women’s styling.

<sup>lxxix</sup> Stephen Zdatny’s (1997) journal article, ‘Collaboration or Resistance? French Hairdressers and Vichy’s Labor Charter’, sets out to a certain extent some of the French hairdressing organisations which were set up and existed during World War Two and their main protagonists. It discusses the bitter feuds between the various French hairdressing organisations and that of their leaders, in particular Marcel Bagnaud and Francois Magnien; the latter teamed up with Rene Rambaud to found the *Cercle des Arts et Techniques*.

<sup>lxxx</sup> There are other incidences – the Audace line (1961) and Si Jolie (1965) both introduced by the Syndicat were upbraided by Magnien as either being too short or too old-fashioned. He felt that the secrecy of the Syndicat was detrimental to the rest of the French Craft.

<sup>lxxxi</sup> This later came to be known by the shortened name of ‘Intercoiffure’.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> Pountney had already appeared in a 1962 British Pathé short film called *Space Age Hair Fashions*, a comical, tongue-in-cheek look at his futuristic designs. 1962 was the year that the first Telstar went into orbit, enabling the first live transatlantic television feed as well as phone calls and fax images (Gavaghan, 1998). It was part of the ongoing interest in space travel which had begun in the Fifties, particularly 1957 with the launch of Sputnik by the USSR. The period also saw the increasing developments in atomic research and micro-science. In the film, Pountney and his assistants are seen wearing Flash Gordon-esque costumes, using hair implements to which sparklers are attached, creating hairdos which had molecular structures attached to them, while all the time the narrator makes ‘space’ puns having said that ‘This isn’t London, with its wacky, daft ideas’! However, what it does demonstrate was that Pountney was unafraid to embrace novelty and forward thinking, serious and otherwise.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Sassoon and Keith Wainwright have already been cited in this regard in the first chapter of this thesis, but Leonard Lewis also had to take elocution lessons to smooth out the barrow-boy accent when he started working at Evansky’s in Mayfair (Lewis, 2000:33)

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Sassoon has at alternating periods agreed and disagreed with this theory which McCracken has identified. However, at no time does Sassoon say that he was not influenced by Modernism and, even in his last book and film, makes reference to it.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> McCracken cites Grace Coddington, editor of *Vogue*, Harold Koda and Martin Harrison and the contributors to a 1992 book *Vidal Sassoon und das Bauhaus*.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> This is found in the reference notes to the article on the website

[http://www.vogue.com/voguepedia/Vidal\\_Sassoon#cite\\_note-6](http://www.vogue.com/voguepedia/Vidal_Sassoon#cite_note-6)

and originally came from the article by Georgina Howell, ‘The Big Shear’ *Vogue* 1993 January #19930101/78.

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<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Cox (1999) and Trasko (1994) both mention that commercial hair dyes were first marketed in 1909 but this was probably in Paris, with Cox stating that it was L’Oreal invented by Eugene Schueller.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> The word ‘para’ is an abbreviation of two chemical compounds, para phenylene diamine (a derivative of aniline) and para toluylene (a derivative of phenazine) which in various combinations would create a range of colours from black to orange-red (Gugenheim, 1958:6:31).

<sup>lxxxix</sup> Rapidol Ltd., engaged in the manufacture, marketing and distribution of hair colour and haircare products to both retailers and wholesalers.

<sup>xc</sup> There is virtually next to no background information on Annie Humphreys. Apart from a few mentions in Sassoon’s book, the only other substantial piece of writing is an interview with Michael Gordon for his book *Hair Heroes* (2002). From this I have tried to analyse Humphreys’ philosophy on hair colouring.

<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup> His most famous text is *The Art of Colour*, originally published in 1961 under the title *Kunst der Farbe*. In this he explores theories of colour design, expression and impression; colour hues and contrasts; colour mixing and special effects; the physics of colour and colour agent and effect; composition, harmony and variations; the twelve hue colour circle and seven colour contrasts which are broken down into more detailed analyses.

<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup> ‘Adolf Hölzel was a native of Austria who lived and worked in Stuttgart from 1905 until his death in 1934. For the development of modern art in Germany, he was of a significance similar to the Blaue Reiter circle around the much younger Wassily Kandinsky in Munich. A gifted theoretician and teacher as well as an artist in his own right, within the context of his professorship at the Art Academy of Stuttgart Hölzel attracted a large circle of artists who would later become quite influential themselves, among them Max Ackermann, Willi Baumeister, Johannes Itten, Ida Kerkovius, Otto Meyer-Amden and Oskar Schlemmer. Through his pupils Itten and Schlemmer, both of whom were later appointed to the Weimar Bauhaus, Hölzel’s trailblazing doctrine on pictorial representation and his colour theory found their way into the Bauhaus curriculum’ (Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, [http://www.staatsgalerie.de/archive\\_e/hoelzel.php](http://www.staatsgalerie.de/archive_e/hoelzel.php), Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2015).

<sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup> Laurance Taylor was the only colourist working for Sassoon. As mentioned previously, colourists were held in poor regard by the rest of the hairdressing community so there would have been few following this section of hair culture.

<sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup> According to Galvin, his grandfather “was the top stylist at the top salon at the time, and that time was between 1890 and 1910,” ... “When he did the hair he had to wear a top hat, tails and white cotton gloves. The maharajas would pull up in their coach and horses.” In his father’s Paddington salon there was a Poodle parlour in the basement! (Gordon, 2009)

<sup>xc<sup>v</sup></sup> Galvin recalls Leonard was only offering £12 per week as opposed to Sassoon’s £14 (Galvin, 2013). However, Keith Wainwright has a very different opinion of Galvin’s motives and spoke quite disparagingly about him, saying that his **only** motivation **was** money (Wainwright, 2005 MD012-022)

<sup>xc<sup>vi</sup></sup> Raymond’s earlier article for *The Journal* (1961:5:5) had also identified that a good skilful hair colourist could correct deficiencies in a client’s beauty through the artistic use of colour by referring to the shape of the face rather than the age of the woman. He believed a clever use of colour, could produce the right amounts of shade, light and depth to achieve the desirable oval face-shape which would have women returning to the salon.

<sup>xc<sup>vii</sup></sup> Some parts of this section have already been published in Biddle-Perry, G and Cheang, S (eds) (2008) *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion* Oxford/New York: Berg pp.55-65

<sup>xc<sup>viii</sup></sup> Up till 1952, nine out of every ten West Indians immigrated to America and when this avenue was closed, there was a rapid increase in numbers coming to Britain (Humphries & Taylor, 1986:117).

<sup>xc<sup>ix</sup></sup> By 1952, Atwell was so renowned that her hands were insured at Lloyds of London for £40,000 with a clause stipulating that she should never wash the dishes (Maconie, 2013; Another Nickel in the Machine, 2012).

<sup>c</sup> After the first Royal Variety Performance, the Queen famously asked Winifred Atwell to play an encore of what must have been a personal favourite, ‘Roll Out the Barrel’! (Maconie, 2013)

<sup>ci</sup> Maingot and Atwell appeared to have curious parallels in their lives. Both were born within a few years of each other in an area of Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad. Both came to England to study music; Winifred Atwell studied classical piano at the Royal Academy of Music while Carmen Maingot became a licentiate of the Trinity College of Music. This no doubt explains why her salon also housed a grand piano, apparently for customer amusement (*HJ* 1955:5:16). It seems incredible that they would not have known about each other having opened up salons in London within two years of each other. Nevertheless, the *Hairdressers’ Journal* makes no reference to Maingot in the later articles on Atwell, which may have signified that either her establishment was defunct or that any element of rivalry was suppressed.

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<sup>cii</sup> Maingot called herself Carmen England in this earlier film but it is clear to see from the image in the *Hairdressers' Journal* that this is one and the same person.

<sup>ciii</sup> This is confirmed through the online article which states that 'By 1961 her hairdressing salon in Railton Road had been sold and the premises became A.C. Skinner and Co. Builders merchants' (Another Nickel in the Machine, 2012).

<sup>civ</sup> At the time of the interview, Splinters was still in operation but it had moved to Crawford Street W1. Splinters website verifies Galvin's information <http://www.do-it-4.me.uk/splinters/pages/experience.html>. Galvin also cited two further contemporary Black hairdressers in the West End as Errol Douglas whose salon is in Belgravia and Desmond Murray who has a shop on Drury Lane.

<sup>cv</sup> Doris Essah's (2008) PhD thesis *Fashioning the Nation: Hairdressing, Professionalism And The Performance of Gender in Ghana, 1900-2006* studies black hairdressing from the perspective of hairdressing in this African nation. She too has provided evidence of some of the Black hairdressing schools in London which I have mentioned in which Ghanaian students enrolled. The certification provided was evidence that they had been properly trained with the added bonus and prestige of being in London.

<sup>cvi</sup> The article on Eve's Academy verifies this as it wasn't able to accommodate all its graduate students. They intended to open a new salon and staff it with some of their graduates but they expected most students to go back to their home countries and practice hairdressing there.

<sup>cvi</sup> The following is a sample of the range of *Hairdressers' Journal* articles that dealt with discrimination of foreign people whether Asian, African, or other ex-colonials whose skin and hair were different to white people. *HJ* 1960 'Storm Over Colour Bar in Derby', 1<sup>st</sup> December, p.16; *HJ* 1960 'No Racial Prejudice' States Derby NHF', 8<sup>th</sup> December, p.15; *HJ* 1960 'Federation Answers Mayor on Colour Bar', 15<sup>th</sup> December, pp.5-6; *HJ* 1963 'Colour Bar Allegation', 16<sup>th</sup> August, p.7; *HJ* 1964 'Walsall Baffled by the Colour Bar Problem', 10<sup>th</sup> July, p.12; *HJ* 1967 'Race Prejudice Attack on Craft', 12<sup>th</sup> May, p.5; *HJ* 1967 'Is There a Salon Colour Bar?', 12<sup>th</sup> May, p.8.

<sup>cvi</sup> One outcome of the 1958 Notting Hill riots was the formation of the Institute for Race Relations which was intended to lead the fight against racism. At the same time, right-wing activism continued in the shape of organisations such as Sir Oswald Mosley's Union Movement and the incipient National Front (Sandbrook, 2005:336-340).

<sup>cix</sup> Lynn Hunt (2002) has stated that presentism encourages moral superiority in its worst efforts to demonstrate a politically correct perspective.

## Small But Perfectly Formed Salons

### Introduction

When Vidal Sassoon opened his first hairdressing shop in 1954 at 108 New Bond Street London, it was unlike any of the existing swish West End salons that had preceded it with their grand entrances and luxurious, temple-like interiors, designed to appeal to wealthy, middle and upper-class women. Advertised only by two show-cases in the ground floor window of the building, Sassoon's premises were on the third floor 'served by a matchbox of a lift that could hoist only a couple of people at a time' (Sassoon, 1968:71). Retaining this sense of intimate space, its interior was so small that no more than twenty clients could be dealt with simultaneously. Despite these shortcomings, the salon embodied the revolutionary, conceptual, hair-design ideas of its owner who, as already discussed in the previous chapter, changed hairstyling irrevocably by appealing to a much younger, fashionable clientele.

Contrary to the stylistic luxury and opulence usually a characteristic of Mayfair salon interiors, Sassoon's was starkly contemporary and modern. He chose not to follow the traditional decorative schemes, mainly because of his resolve to dissociate himself from old-fashioned hairdressing culture. It therefore followed that Sassoon's salon should replicate his ideas. This homologous approach was a manifestation of his philosophy, namely to eliminate the superfluous with clean simple lines (Sassoon, 2010). While Sassoon had set out to revolutionise hairdressing by focussing his attention on cutting, it was soon obvious that what he was doing was beyond that of reforming the basic technique. Sassoon regarded hairdressing as a matter of *design* (*HJ* 1967:4:17) which for him removed it from the realm of 'Craft' and elevated it to a new form of professional hair design. That Sassoon's salon should visually aestheticize and evidence this new professionalism reinforced his belief that the two

things were indivisible and that properly designed hairdressing demanded spaces to work in that were complementary. As Sassoon said when his first shop was being constructed, 'I wanted the salon to look like the hair that I envisaged ... clean simple lines with no frills' (Sassoon, 2010:1229).

Sassoon's philosophy, grounded as it was in the geometric and Modernist principles he espoused, was fit for purpose not just in terms of shop design but also it was economic in that at this moment he simply could not afford the cost of any grandiose Mayfair interior décor schemes even if he had wanted to. Despite this, Sassoon's salon like many of those that followed in his wake, appeared in the main to fall into the fashionable trend of being compact and bijou. Such styling was shared with three other types of establishment that were emerging as the fashionable and swinging places of the era: fashion boutiques, bistros and discotheques. These chic spaces were distinguished by two key features; compact spaces and youthful taste. Such innovations in turn, encouraged other concepts to be recognised as significant such as individuality and intimacy, and these features contrasted sharply with the impersonal monolithic Modernist architecture being erected at the time by government and local authorities. Barry Curtis (2004) has discussed the period's difficulty in negotiating the tensions that existed between innovation and tradition.<sup>cx</sup> However, such tensions were not always between youth and innovation on one side, and Establishment values and tradition on the other. In the post-war built environment the opposite could also be found and the youthful Sassoon interior with its Modernist decoration is further testament to the validity of Curtis' argument. Curtis argues that there were 'political discourses [which] linked affluence with individuality and new kinds of informality' and these were evidenced in both British political parties' agendas (2004:50) but particularly prevalent in the Labour

Government's focus on youth entrepreneurialism (Sandbrook, 2005:737-8).

Jonathon Aitken's contemporary 1967 text, *The Young Meteors* (2013) demonstrates just how much the concepts of affluence, individuality, informality and youth enterprise combined to create a dynamic, albeit short-lived, burst of creativity and economic success in the Capital city. Aitken's text also provides an insight into how these small, youthful enterprises coped with the drawbacks that were linked to compact size.

This chapter will consider how compact size became a distinctive feature of the youth culture at this time prevalent in their fashionable accoutrements and evidenced by the venues they patronised. It will examine the causes which I will argue precipitated this alignment between small size and youth and how the spaces offered an intimate and informal refuge which fitted with their perspective of the changes being wrought in the urban environment during this period. In particular it will focus on four spaces – fashionable salons, boutiques, bistros and discotheques that became directly linked together in London's West End through the active participation of 'Scenesters', forming a discreet network of metropolitan meeting places. In such venues, the casual interaction of aristocracy and celebrity clientele with those outside of their habitual class, often coming from the mass media and arts worlds, encouraged a wider more democratic social scene to develop and thrive. To this extent, it is apparent that whilst distinctions of class, gender and power relations remained, the more casual and less formal cultures that developed sanctioned but did not erase class divides or conformities.

It will also examine the changes to the interior design and decoration of the new Sixties salons that occurred as a direct result of fashion's emphasis on youth and the ways in which this contributed to a developing boutique aesthetic. As

fashionable hair design became not only synonymous with youthfulness and attracted younger clients, this trend also brought with it new styles of interior, in tune with youth culture and following the latest fashions. The national economic problems of the mid-Sixties engendered limitations which had repercussions that forced hairdressers to think more creatively about their business in order to survive by increasing their client base and incomes through social diversification.

### **Size Matters**

The traditional architectural and interior decor style of Mayfair salons, already described in Chapter Two, replicated elegant Georgian drawing rooms. Usually decorated in Regency, Louis Quinze or Seize styles, which were seen as the epitome of good taste (Massey, 1990), these interiors were largely situated in spacious Georgian town houses that had rooms with high ceilings and large windows. As an example, Leonard Lewis occupied just such a building when he moved into No.6 Upper Grosvenor Street date in 1963. Lewis's first salon in Duke Street had been a tiny one room affair which he and his partner Raphael<sup>exi</sup> were able to decorate in a weekend on a budget covered by a bank overdraft (2000:54; Russell, 2003/4:75). However, the scale and decor of the Grosvenor Street salon was quite a different matter (See Fig.4.1). The house had once belonged to the fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, and Lewis described it as being 'full of elegant, light rooms with big windows and eighteen-foot ceilings... [having] a distinctive circular window [which] looked out at the [American] embassy' (2000:60). Prior to the late 1960s the generous size and exclusive location of the salon mattered in that it could be interpreted by clients as a visual demonstration of the salon's status, desirability and prosperity. Reflecting this interest, *The Hairdressers' Journal* would often remark

on the square footage when reporting on new salons, with large floor space connoting a sense of aggrandisement. Lewis was extremely fortunate to have found such a building as they rarely came up for business letting and due to its spaciousness its size enabled him to do more than hairdressing. Under the same roof, Lewis was able to provide beauty and hair colour services, a suite of changing rooms and a boutique which sold exclusive clothes and accessories. Consequently Lewis's clients were able to find everything they needed without having to leave the building and he was able to give them a total beauty look in an absolutely luxurious environment (2000:78).

However, many hairdressers in Mayfair and in the wider West End, had to content themselves with much smaller sites and with fewer facilities, as Sassoon's example verifies. In the post war period, such disparity of proportions became exacerbated in a very different way due to the Government's rebuilding plans. From a panoptic view of British architecture in the 1960s the outstanding feature is the extreme differences in size between the existing traditional buildings, domestic or otherwise, and the scale of the new Modernist architecture, whose apotheosis were its monumental tower blocks that punctured the landscape and skyline. While these vast tower blocks seem now socially inhospitable as domestic architecture, as office blocks at the time they were seen as the developers' dream, requiring a proportionately small area of valuable land at ground level, while maximising the vertical space available above (White, 2001:1380). Examples such as Centrepoint and The Post Office Tower<sup>cxii</sup> in London demonstrate this adulation of extreme verticality underpinning Modernist concerns with lightness and airiness, made achievable by the new building technologies that allowed multi-story buildings to rise above the ground<sup>cxiii</sup> (Hadid, 2011; Sadler, 2004). In symbolic and spatial terms, it seems that the higher these

skyscrapers rose, the more diminutive became their relations to objects at ground level, thus executing in symbolic terms, a superiority through their imposing edifices. The Post Office Tower further strengthened its ‘coherent’ Modernist ideology by encouraging sightseers to visit its observation galleries, allowing them to view the incoherence of the cityscape below, aided by powerful binoculars (Goldie, 2011) that served to reinforce the huge discrepancies of scale. While earlier Modernist domestic architecture remained relatively low-level and frequently horizontal in the metropolis (Sadler, 2004), the new scaled perpendicular office blocks sprouting up all over central London in the 1960s assumed a new monumentality.

While some buildings such as the Post Office Tower achieved an enduring popularity from the outset, the intense negativity which greeted most post-war Modernist architecture, has been observed by Adrian Forty<sup>cxiv</sup> as ‘exceed[ing] normal standards of judgement’ (Goldie, 2011:207). Such protests about the unattractiveness of this type of building had already become media worthy very early on in their development. Ian Nairn’s article ‘Outrage’ published in the *Architectural Review* in 1955 had hypothesised that bad buildings were not simply disappointing but ‘unacceptably offensive’. After a lecture at the Royal College of Art on the subject, Nairn started the Anti-Ugly Action Society comprising a number of Royal College students, notably Pauline Boty. The online article about Boty and the Anti-Uglies protests, mentions several ‘eyesores’ in the Knightsbridge area which had been erected on bombsites, noting that within a few years these new large office buildings had altered the Knightsbridge topography appreciably (*Another Nickel in the Machine*, 2013). The group’s rancour was directed at the architecture’s unattractive, featureless impersonality, and at their monumentality which was reshaping the landscape. Their detractors concluded that such forms ‘ignored their surroundings

and crushed the spirit of the individual' (Sandbrook, 2006:588)<sup>cxv</sup>. Significantly many of these protests came from young people, who might have been the group expected to embrace these innovative symbols of an idealised utopia since two 1961 government reports predicted that baby-boomers would not share their parents' conservative tastes in homes and urban planning (Sadler, 2004).

As an inner city London location, Knightsbridge was characterised by Curtis' aforementioned tensions between tradition and innovation in its inhabitants' responses to the proposed modernisation schemes. Furthermore, as part of the expanding West End consumer culture, Knightsbridge and other neighbouring shopping areas were problematic in that complete rebuilding programmes were impossible. Bronwen Edwards (2006) writing about post-war Modernist West End redevelopment schemes demonstrates how planners and developers were forced to take into account the presence of fashionable consumer culture, presenting them with obstacles that building a New Town along Modernist lines eradicated.<sup>cxvi</sup> Edwards highlights how the masculine image of Modernist architecture with its functionalism and spatiality often contrasted with the 'feminine' notion of fashionable consumption and ran counter to the taste of retailers and consumers. In particular, it opposed retailers' need for a conspicuous street presence and façade 'as a spectacular means of marking out their business within the street' (Edwards, 2006:164-5). As a result, many of the Modernist schemes suggested for West End shopping areas were seen as problematic since they followed the 'pedestrian walkways in the sky' paradigm (Levin, 1959:11; White, 2001:1444). Such a model was inappropriate as it was geared towards civic planning or traffic solutions rather than to promote fashionable consumption (Edwards, 2006). While these schemes were to be integrated within pre-existing shopping areas and streets, I believe that they would have dislocated consumers from

their established shopping surroundings and in spatial terms would have loomed large and distant dominating the existing small shops on the ground.

However not all hairdressers were averse to this form of modernist environmental urban progress. One Mayfair men's hairdresser saw the salon in the office block becoming much more commonplace. Speaking to the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1965, Mr Morris Stanton predicted a future where, with the exception of tower blocks, salons would disappear from central London altogether, particularly since rents were rising and there was increasing traffic congestion. Stanton believed that office blocks could provide a range of services grouped together for the efficiency of the business community including hairdressing, a practise already conducted in America (*HJ* 1965:2:15). Three years earlier, The *Journal* had made similar observations in relation to declining Mayfair trade due to traffic problems. However, it had pointed out that there was a huge untapped customer base of young women working in the new office blocks to the east of Mayfair and south of the Thames which could be lucratively exploited. The text did not specifically state that salons should be opened within the blocks but it did say that these young workers would want a good hairdressing service in close proximity and that 'a sharp business eye could find many openings' (*HJ* 1962:9:13). Young female workers would have become familiar with such modernist working environments and would have felt comfortable with the design and scale of such interiors had they been incorporated within these buildings.

Contrasting with this Modernist vision with its magnitude in formal expression was a new and diametrically opposed concept of 'smallness' and compact scale in design. This alternative was distinctly conspicuous in 1959; a moment which Peter Dormer has highlighted as 'largely a year of compact and or miniaturised

design' (1993:205). This tendency towards miniaturisation can be recognised as emerging almost simultaneously in a number of related, if divergent fields and disciplines. Miniaturisation in the electronics industry had already been underway for some time, exemplified by the invention of the transistor in 1947. This innovation led to commercial industries designing increasingly portable rather than fixed objects such as the Sony 1955 transistor radio (Better Living through Chemistry, 2010) and the first transistorised television in 1959 (Dormer, 1993). In a similar way, Alec Issigonis' 1959 Morris Mini Minor car had originally been designed in response to the Suez Crisis and the resultant fuel rationing. However, it became the best-selling and most popular car in British history (Woodham, 1997; Marr, 2007; Wilkinson, 2013). Other culturally significant innovations that continue this sense of appreciation of miniaturisation include the appearance of the first Barbie doll at just eleven-and-a-half inches tall in 1959 and marketed as a teenage fashion model (Tosa, 1998). The Barbie doll heralded a revolution in doll design, inspiring the creation of Britain's equivalent, the Sindy Doll in 1963 (oodle46, 2010). It is also significant that when Mary Quant unveiled the iconic short and close fitting skirt (1964) she apparently named it the mini-skirt after the Mini, her favourite car (*50 Years of the Mini Skirt*, 2014).

Within the current literature, reasons why this miniaturisation process occurred over so many disparate fields and types of designed goods within such a short period of time are varied. Dormer's view is that the concept of liberation stood out particularly, and it was evidenced through: 'the miniaturisation of mechanisms – accompanied by a new lightness and refinement of the casings that house them' (1993:33). Dormer is not alone in his assumption that miniaturisation was connected to liberalisation in the market place and greater freedom in design choices and

lifestyle. In the programme 'Better Living Through Chemistry' (2010), the producers propose that the philosophy of liberation can be explained as being encapsulated in small objects which might be easily mass-produced, therefore heralding an innovative design revolution in small products. Other trends in the period confirm this argument. For example, the production of the appealing, pocket-sized Sony Transistor Radio TR 610 Model in 1958 coincided with the growing popularity of pop music aimed at teenagers. This allowed Radio Luxembourg and the later pirate radio stations to be listened to through an earpiece and on the move (Marr, 2007) or under the bedclothes at night (Sparke, 2004). Its link to fashion was evidenced through its availability in four contemporarily popular colours which according to Woodham, 'in its own time ... was as liberating a prospect as the [future] Sony Walkman' (1997:137). Stephen Bayley also subscribes to the argument that there is a toy-like magic to successful design arguing that Japanese designers developed a design language 'superbly able to articulate concepts of miniaturisation and preciousness' and that this was evidenced in their approach to aesthetics in constituent parts' detail and good quality graphics which 'excited cupidity in a way which other products didn't' (Better Living Through Chemistry, 2010). Aimed at the 'new' teenagers who were in a better financial position to consume the latest high tech goods and gadgets, small transistor radios in particular offered new freedoms away from their parents' home restrictions and available when on the move.

As Penny Sparke (2004) has argued, it is clear that the diminished size of designed objects marketed in relation to gender and youth identities was a key factor to be emphasised by designers and marketing men alike at this historical juncture. According to Sparke, the link began to shift from gender to youth in the 1960s and as 'smallness' in consumables had been previously targeted at women, this trend began

to map on to the increasingly dominant grouping of youth (2004:125). As I have already mentioned, the Barbie doll was introduced to Britain in 1961 (Tosa, 1998:35) presenting an idealised miniature of female adulthood whose wardrobe of clothes pointed to aspirational consumption of modern fashion and lifestyle. This feature stood in complete contrast to the typical ‘baby’ dolls favoured by earlier generations that were supposed to nurture maternal feelings in girls, thereby grooming them for responsible motherhood. Britain’s version, Sindy, undoubtedly captured the spirit of 60s fashion since she was the ‘ultimate liberated ‘dolly bird’ (Webb, 2009:15). Her clothes were designed by Foale and Tuffin (Webb, 2009), the newly graduated London fashion designer duo and her hair was cut into the fashionable Sassoon Bob. Revealingly, Sindy differed to Barbie in her bodily shape, being more realistically proportioned and having the figure of a young teenager. In Sindy, youth, fashion and smallness come together to epitomise the fundamental changes in real life, since her outfits were advertised as the ‘authentic miniature replicas of the latest adults’ clothes’ (Webb, 2009:15). Sindy created a desire in young girls, not just for the doll itself, but it provided a miniaturised glimpse at all that the status of teenager would offer in the future.

The connection between youth size and fashion can be mapped even further in the design drawings of Mary Quant (see Figure 4.2) which Sparke says gave grown women the appearance of ‘pre-pubescent girls’ (2004:127). Eliminating the curves of maturity Quant produced an elongated, doll-like appearance, which body type climaxed in the real life, doe-eyed, diminutive, skinny-shaped body image of Twiggy, the teenage model. As Jonathon Green asserts, the fashionable dolly bird, complete with mini-dress and round-toed shoes ‘reminiscent of Fifties’ schoolgirls’, was

Quant's unique creation and contained in the dolly's ambivalent image, was a sense of liberation that was overtly sexual (1998:76).

Likewise, the trendy, small and compact Mini car was the vehicle of choice for this new breed of fashionable young women as it was at this market that it had been specifically targeted (Akhtar & Humphries, 2001). The Mini offered them the voguish freedom of movement and liberation that mirrored Quant's mini-skirts, despite Issigonis' protest that it was not his job 'to design fashion accessories or status symbols' (Harris et al, 1986:152). The car quickly came to be viewed as one of the ultimate emblems of urban modernity, 'ideal ... for fast city living ... quick off the mark at traffic lights ... easy to park in small spaces and ... a deceptively large interior' (Harris et al, 1986:151). Confirming this cosmopolitan appeal to a younger generation of women consumers, in 1966, British Pathé News made a short newsreel filmed in Conduit Street, entitled *15 Girls In A Mini Car*, posing the question: 'How many mini-skirted maids can mix it in a Mini?'. The correspondence between size and the connections between 'small things' was not simply about objects in this design revolution but included the designed image of young people, mirrored in the social spaces they inhabited. Here the fashionable childlike image could be played out, cocooned in the cosy womb-like interiors. Within the small spaces of salons, bistros, boutiques and discotheques, young people could achieve the desired sense of intimacy and it is these social and spatial aspects that I want to examine next.

### **Boutiques, Bistros, Discotheques, Salons and 'Modern Youth'<sup>cxvii</sup>**

Within the changing circuits of the fashionable spaces of youth consumption that marked out the modern post-war British city, boutiques, bistros, discotheques and hair salons were inextricably linked to and seen as a sign of the emergent and vibrant

youth culture of the period. They were also historically configured spatially by an intimate scale, individuality and ‘smallness’ that stood in contrast to the large scale, anonymity and conformity of much modernist architecture and town planning. Although conspicuous in the architectural development and planning changes taking place in London’s West End, it was not a uniquely London phenomenon, but can also be seen as reflected in changes in demography, location and landscape occurring across many cities. Indeed, in Birmingham and in many Northern cities such as Leeds and Newcastle, the radical reconstruction of the inner city environment using Americanised arterial road and town planning layouts incorporating high rise flats and office blocks in modernist architectural styles was arguably more extensive than in London’s West End in this period.

For example, Guy Julier (2000) has examined the late twentieth century changes to the Leeds cityscape, and he has noted that by the 1990s, town planners were careful not to make the same previous planning mistakes by allowing International Style office blocks to dominate the skyline. One reason for this caution is the recognition that architectural exteriors alone do not create holistic identities for cities and their communities. Basically, the key was a much more integrated experience of ‘seating, signage sounds and smells’ which extended to more tangibly focussed examples of ‘eating, drinking, dancing and socializing [together with] the design hardware that surrounds and encourages these acts’. Consequently social locations such as bistros, bars and salons with their more ‘intimate, visceral experiences’ (2000:122) and often smaller scale spaces, play an important part in confirming the sociability of communities and in this case, highlighting the post-war visibility of youth culture in keeping the heart of the city intact.

Following on from these observations, Humphries and Taylor (1986) have argued that such sites also foster alternative social networks and youth sub-cultures, often with different attitudes and concerns. This sometimes dissident attitude stemmed in part from the dissatisfaction of these younger consumers with the controls over style and entertainment, which had previously been the preserve of the wealthy, that were now additionally exercised by their parents and by other post-war social controls. However, by the 1950s, it was clear that 'Bohemian sub-cultures, celebrating an unconventional kind of individualism, spontaneity and style, began to emerge in the capital' (Humphries & Taylor, 1986:30). Most conspicuously, Soho, the most important centre of artistic bohemia in London, was the hotbed for jazz nightclubs often located in small basement clubs, as well as the new coffee bars which habitually stayed open all night and were patronised by the youth who relished this unorthodox nocturnal metropolitan culture. By the mid-Fifties, Chelsea too was an enclave full of little businesses that were the 'prototype bistros, boutiques and night clubs' of the Swinging London era in the following decade (Humphries & Taylor, 1986:33). Its localised ambience encouraged convivial entertainment venues which thrived in the sort of small-scale commercial enterprises that became synonymous with the nascent 'Chelsea Set'. Whether in Chelsea or Soho, 'Young Bohemia', as it was dubbed by the press, was conspicuous by its members' distinctive clothing, tastes and sociability, and it is perhaps best exemplified in the emerging fashions of Quant and Alexander Plunket-Greene. This alternative subculture spread geographically up the King's Road in the mid-1950s and it was most conspicuously represented by Quant's boutique Bazaar, which opened there in 1955.

What can be deduced from this brief history is that the sites of 'alternative culture' were many and changing small-scale commercial enterprises exemplified by

bistros, coffee bars, boutiques and small night clubs. One shared feature, however, was that such social spaces, even though commercial, were often small, informal and intimate. The music and dress of the Young Bohemians specifically frequenting these spaces indicated new trends emerging and new patterns of consumption. A recognisable feature of sub-cultural groups is their preference for particular kinds of location. When Quant's style of clothing extended from appealing to Young Bohemians to the Mods (before the latter cult was exposed to the media), the preferred spaces extended from jazz clubs to the new discotheques where records were played as opposed to live music (Humphries & Taylor, 1986). The first of these, La Poubelle, opened in 1959 near Oxford Circus and it is where the term 'disc-jockey' was pioneered. It was a Soho basement dive which Ed Glinert described as being 'suffocatingly small, there were no windows, air-conditioning or fire exit' (2007: 5192). This type of discotheque became much more prolific in the early Sixties appealing to a wide range of pop aficionados (Sandbrook, 2006). As a result and attracting a shared clientele, when the boutiques that spread in the wake of Bazaar developed, pop music was played in a way to recreate the atmosphere of the discotheque. Similarly, the boutique interior replicated this ambience of excitement and informality, while the staff were in age and dress almost indistinguishable from their customers. One of the rare descriptions of Bazaar's interior came from jazz singer George Melly, who recalled that it was 'tiny ... small [and] disorganised' (Green, 1998:77-8). Quant herself remembered that it was so small she had to initiate a 'door' policy when the shop was busy, employing a strategy reminiscent of entry controls into exclusive discotheques (1966:952).

When Quant was recognised as being the most fashionable designer of the Mod look, her Sassoon geometric cut was also seen as complementing that style and it

quickly became popular with Mod girls (Humphries & Taylor, 1986). The fashionable Mod and pop sensibility of music and fashion, was soon broadened to incorporate hair salons and bistros and created the same mood of cosy informality with a frisson of excitement to that in the discotheques and clubs, particularly if celebrities were seen to patronise them. Sassoon's connection to Quant made him much sought after by fashionable shop and office girls wanting the new Mod look. However, it is evident that his clientele were socially diverse ranging from these lower-income workers, to well-known *Vogue* models and including the jet-set aristocracy. Since the salon at 108 New Bond Street was also very cramped, at busy periods clients had to sit on the stairs waiting for their appointments because there were no spare seats. As Sassoon mused, this situation 'made for a wonderful atmosphere' (2010:2199).

Bistros, like salons, would probably have afforded the most intimate spaces of all. Unlike the boutiques and discotheques, they played 'background' music, and were more conducive to conversation. The French bistro has been defined in the post-war era as a cross between a café, bar and pub and it provided 'a critical locus of community life' (Hamilton, 1997:135). Peter Hamilton has discussed its importance in humanist terms seeing its centrality as derived from its universality and accessibility drawing in everyone from the ordinary to the famous including intellectuals, artists and writers; activists and thinkers; friends and lovers. In Sixties London, the bistro maintained a similar function and attracted a mixed clientele, albeit a little more upmarket than the ordinary café. More pertinently Marie-France Boyer (1994) has observed that it provided a relief from less convivial spaces and that in the remote, vertical Modernist cityscape it provided a small, sociable, informal refuge that would draw people together.

This proposal has been considered from a sociological perspective by Ray Oldenburg who intimates, using the concept of a ‘third space’, that there are personal benefits attendant in such locations, usually ‘in short supply in industrialized, urbanized and bureaucratized societies’<sup>cxviii</sup> (1989:43-4). Oldenburg with other urban sociologists has identified the factors that make up the theoretical model of good municipal public space<sup>cxix</sup>. Amongst those factors, is that of ‘a human scale [that must be] preserved in the architecture’ but, he argues that this ‘doesn’t reveal the *dynamics* needed to produce an engaging informal public life.’ This he asserts is achieved through the balance of home (first place), work (second place) and play, this last concept in the public provision of a core setting which he has labelled ‘the third place’ – a place of rendezvous (1989:14-16). Third places are usually unassuming and exist on neutral ground distinguished in their patronage by a regular core clientele. Their primary function is to encourage relaxed communication in an atmosphere of fun. The commodity that they provide is almost secondary to the human interaction that the place encourages (Oldenburg, 1989).

Quant and Lewis’s accounts of their lifestyle and the locations in which it was played out underscore Oldenburg’s theory and supports Boyer’s observation that, during the mid-twentieth century, these places had become ‘shop-window[s] for a new art of living’ as their social values were added to by ‘cultural connotations’ (1994:28). Quant records that she and Plunket-Greene met their future business partner Archie McNair<sup>cxx</sup> at Finch’s bar – a place that attracted a wide variety of interesting people: ‘clever young architects, painters, musicians, sculptors, film directors and layabouts congregated there’ (1966:540). As an ex-solicitor, Quant thought McNair ‘oddly out of place,’ but recognised that his apparent love for Chelsea life and his business acumen gave him the ability to tap into lucrative, prospective

ideas and perceive the talent of the people who surrounded him. This outlook also provided the catalyst for the new culture of coffee bars, restaurants and even Bazaar. According to Quant, it was in McNair's photographic studio where he invited this socially broad circle of friends in for coffee and to chat 'that the whole Chelsea revolution was conceived' (1966:540).

While Leonard Lewis had an active social life and frequented a variety of haunts, he similarly described his favourite 60s West End bistro, San Lorenzo, as a place for conversation and sociability, not glamour. It was 'small ... not much more than a bar in a basement ... [with a] scruffy little garden out back' (2000:83). Lewis was a regular at the place for years (even having a favourite table) and he knew the proprietors and customers so well that he felt like part of a family. The time spent eating and socialising there was also useful for business and public relations since many of the customers were also regular clients at his salon. These overlapping social scenes meant that if Lewis was entertaining visiting celebrities he would take them there because of its familiarity and cordiality. Lewis also believed that the culture of restaurants and hairdressing salons was very similar in that both spaces were spectacular places in which to exchange gossip and trends, pulled together by the lure of the owner's personality (Lewis, 2000:84-86).

The importance of getting the right atmosphere and progressive décor increasingly came to play as significant a part as the named stylist or the celebrity clients in conferring fashionable status upon the salon. The *Hairdressers' Journal* commented that 'the most important aspect of salon service is good hairdressing, but a salon is essentially a haven of relaxation for the client' (*HJ* 1970:1:29). It also noted that the correct 'ambience' was a major consideration for clients since the closer they got to London, the more they would expect to pay for the right atmosphere (*HJ*

1974:9:18). In many respects, atmospherics within the context of the culture of the hair salon is akin to both Julier's and Oldenburg's theories, that design style is not merely visually consumed. Rather its consumption is a more complex but less tangible experience. Developing Julier's notion of the 'intimate visceral experience' and Oldenburg's third place as the salon as somewhere to relax, communicate and have fun regardless of the commodity being provided, Karen Stevenson has argued that it is the public culture of 'the hair salon ... [that provides] one context in which new relationships of self and group identity-construction are developed and practised' (2001:149). In this sense, we might understand the salon as having a performative function in which youth culture is enacted out and consumed.

The stylish youthful culture which linked these four spaces together began to have an effect on the way that young and trendsetting hair salons were described and appreciated, and it is surprising how often the place-names overlapped with one another. This sense was disseminated by specialist journals such as *Design* magazine, which identified Sassoon's early career as corresponding to 'boutique beginnings' (1973:14). A 1966 *Design* article revealed that Joseph Salon 33 in the Kings Road Chelsea was a refit of an old-fashioned salon, where the most noticeable modernisation feature was the striking shop-front (see Fig.4.3) that gave the hairdresser's 'a boutique-like quality' (1966:35). Moreover, *Design* likened these new salons' cosy, intimate atmosphere favourably to that achieved in the 'fashionably easy going Chelsea/Kensington bistro[s]'. Focussing on Crimpers in Baker Street, the article remarked that 'spaces between tables – as in many a bistro – is minimal' and noted that Crimpers' remodelled interior (see Fig.4.4) seemed to have created 'an informally matey relationship between the youngish male/female clientele and [the] even more youthful staff' (1972:71).

Not only were the descriptive distinctions intersecting, some salons were idiomatically designed, decorated and described as a reflection of these counterpart spaces. In an effort to attract a youthful readership *Honey*, the popular teenage magazine, launched its own small brand of ‘hair boutiques’ exclusively for its readers, having first successfully initiated this idea in one of Richard Henry’s London hair salons (*HJ* 1965:10:12). In 1966, a feature in the *Hairdressers’ Journal* investigated what it called a new type of establishment, the ‘discotheque salon’. ‘The Swinging Set’<sup>cxxi</sup> salon had violet fluorescent lights, orange and lemon luminous paintings with jukeboxes playing pop music, but still retained traditional dryer banks albeit positioned in a twilight discotheque setting. The young stylist dressed in mod gear said that it was aimed at the younger client who did not care for old-style sophistication (*HJ* 1966:6:15). This reasoning was repeated in yet another article on a subterranean salon housed in the ‘Midnight City’ complex in Birmingham which comprised a nightclub discotheque, Carnaby Street-style fashion boutique and a hairdresser. ‘The Cut-Away Set’ as it was called, was tiny and tucked away in the basement, having only two dressing out tables, one washbasin and hand-driers only. Its décor of black-painted brickwork with gold awning and uncarpeted wooden floors was identical to the rest of the club lending it a discotheque aura. The stylist said that its location and ambience especially suited teenagers who came there because they ‘detested the formal salon atmosphere’ (*HJ* 1966:10:8).

Though not a new idea, in order to maximise different functions and yet retain a sense of intimacy, the practice of linking small spaces together was undertaken. For example, Bazaar had a small restaurant in the basement called Alexander’s that belonged to Plunket-Greene where customers could combine the late opening hours of the boutique with dining on the premises (Quant, 1966:695-704).<sup>cxxii</sup> In another

example, Harold Leighton's wife, Maxine, opened a boutique above his hair salon in Hampstead in 1962 and this attracted the area's wealthy residents by selling Parisian ready-to-wear (Leighton, 2009). The Beatles, meanwhile, opened a very exclusive hair salon in the basement of their second fashion boutique, 'Apple Tailoring' (*HJ* 1968:6:45). Perhaps the most colourful boutique of all in the King's Road, Mr Freedom moved to larger premises in Kensington Church Street where it then instituted a basement bistro called Mr. Feed'em (Best, 1971). These examples demonstrate that this was only possible in larger premises. Tom Hustler, society photographer, opened up 'Fanny's Bistro' which was described as London's first 'bistroteque', a combination of dining and dancing in a single small space (Aitken, 1967:636). Owners of small premises might have to rent or buy adjacent properties, rather than converting basements or upper floors. One hairdresser who opened a boutique directly opposite his salon said that such commercial tie ups with the hair trade had increased custom as a result and clearly both outlets actively promoted one another (*HJ* 1972:12:21).

In his history of the development of London in the twentieth century, Jerry White confirms the significance of these trends by stating that 'Swinging London' was epitomised by 'its temples [which] were the boutique and the discotheque ... its emblems the miniskirt and the haircut' (2001:7789). However as these small spaces consolidated their connectedness to the concept of 'Swinging London' they lost their subcultural status and became enveloped in the mainstream notion of 'Youthquake'. Jonathon Green (1998) scathingly remarks on this revision that Modernist had become diluted to 'mod' which meant its status had changed to simply meaning modern. However, while Green lists what he describes as all Swinging London's 'appurtenances', it is these self-same four spaces that are grouped together as

significant: ‘chic new restaurants, smart boutiques, trendy nightclubs, and ‘fab crimpers’ like Vidal Sassoon’ (1998:74). That these phenomena were all understood as connected modern spaces and identified with fashionable youth is clearly significant, and reinforces my claims about their importance in this period. In the next section I will consider the interiors of the new salons in detail and examine how their designs were reflective of these equivalent spaces.

### **Stylish Places**

As I have argued West End salons did not undergo substantial radical architectural change but rather their visual appearances were subject to the latest developments in decorative design. With its new status of world fashion capital, London began to establish a youthful identity in the press and mass media and this image had a direct effect on the mind-set of neoteric, youth-oriented businesses. New young hairdressers accordingly turned their backs on traditional French hairdressing design and discarded what were seen as earlier and old-fashioned notions in cut, design and sophistication. In the West End, hairdressers adopted and projected a fresh cosmopolitan approach mirroring the boutiques and their counterparts, thereby cultivating an aura of *hip*, rather than chic, fashionability. This developing boutique style of commercial merchandising was understood by many younger Sixties consumers as a metaphor for cutting edge fashion. Harris et al (1986) have stated that it was a period when shops and shopping generally, like architecture, were becoming depersonalised and clothing manufacturers were failing to address the teenage market. Herein lay the success of boutiques; their entrepreneurial avant-gardism and their often unique, cutting-edge clothes appealed to the young as did their interiors which were just as fashionable. Ken and Kate Baynes writing for *Design* magazine in 1966 inferred that the boutique

approach pioneered at this time was ‘a desire to escape from the dreariness of predominantly drab and depressing surroundings into something that comes much nearer to the dream world promised by twentieth century technology’ (1966:22). They concluded that shopping should be not only an enjoyable experience, but one of entertainment and amusement and this pleasure should be reflected in the shop design and its surroundings.

The small size of these shops not only appealed to the young consumer, it also offered young, new architects and interior designers an innovative small-scale project to work on which would test their spatial and imaginative skills in an area that would quickly create a reputation for them. Mary Farrin’s boutique was a good example of the ingenuity of the designers to conceive a small space which addressed all the criteria of boutique aesthetics and culture in a spectacularly eye-catching way (see Fig.4.5). *Design* magazine’s feature ‘Room to Swing a Mini-Skirt’ (1969:66) already indicated that the 22ft x 11ft space was ‘absurdly small’ by any shop standards and the text underlines this even further with its use of similar adjectives. However, the editorial was just as interested in the designers Wilkinson, Calvert & Gough themselves, describing them as a group of student architects whose imaginative work on a boutique in Kensington High Street the previous year had aroused critical attention. *Design* congratulated them on having succeeded in maximising what it called ‘the cripplingly small space in which the designers were obliged to work’ (1969:66) and their use of simple geometric shapes throughout were considered a mastery of trompe l’oeuil. Notwithstanding, the quality of these simple shapes induced the sense of a children’s playroom in which to explore and have fun in combination with the real business of selling.

This sense of correlation between pleasurable consumption, shop design and merchandising layout was reiterated by Quant who felt that boutiques should not replicate the rarefied interiors of couture houses which she described as ‘grey striped wallpaper and chandeliers’ (Baynes and Baynes, 1966:22). In that case, nor should salons which, as I have already noted, traditionally corresponded to the sedate Mayfair hair salons whose interior style was often copied in varying degrees by hairdressers throughout the country in order to connote sophistication and refined taste. The subtle differences between Louis XV, XVI and Regency, were all subsumed under the general term ‘period style’, which the *Hairdressers’ Journal* stated had become, by this period of the early 1960s, understood by hairdressers and shopfitters alike as a kind of shorthand for ‘“Regency” styling with a ‘décor based on stripes’ (*HJ* 1960:10:3).

Another consequence of these developments was that the very term ‘salon’ was itself increasingly spurned by hairdressers, being seen as outmoded and old-fashioned by a youth audience. In the new language of Sixties youth, traditional Mayfair style and sophistication would have been viewed as old fashioned and, in the terminology of the day, ‘square’ (Masters 1985:17). Consequently, fashion designers realised that there was a direct correlation in these younger consumers’ eyes between the modernity and colourfulness of salon interiors and their consumption patterns (Baynes & Baynes, 1966). Young hairdressers wanting to distinguish themselves from the older, up-market salons acknowledged that by replicating boutique interior design and spatial styling, they would attract more fashion-conscious customers. By the mid-Sixties, such an explosion of boutiques and their myriad pop-fashion interior styles had been widely appreciated and it was categorised by Olive Sullivan in *Vogue* in the following adulatory terms:

There are the rave interiors with the British flag and pop all over. The camp interiors that are as good a joke as any, the starkers white cell that is always a certain winner (it must appeal to something basic), the art nouveau jobs that persist *ad nauseum*. And out of all of this is coming something very exciting and newly British (Fogg, 2003:81).

What demands further investigation is how this exciting, new British style came to be interpreted by hairdressers and how and in what way, were any of these variations to be found in hair salons?

When Sassoon and Quant set up shop within a year of each other between 1954 and 1955, the epitome of fashionable décor would have been Fifties 'Contemporary Style'. This style was derived largely from the 1951 Festival of Britain, composed of abstract shapes based loosely on scientific and biomorphic forms (Jackson, 1998; Massey, 2001). Whilst within London adoption of new patterns of interior styling was merely seen as progressive and experimental, this was not the case for provincial hairdressers who when contemplating updating their décor, felt that it was a risky business to adopt a very fashionable metropolitan style. In a *Hairdressers' Journal* article of 1955, the author was firmly convinced that after a few years of controversy, the 'Contemporary Style' would become an accepted style, due to better public education and increased recognition and that those commissioning new shop fronts could be confident of the longevity of this aesthetic (Murrills, 1955:32). In Fig.4.6 Sassoon selected the most modern, up-to-date materials and designs that 1954-5 'Contemporary style' had to offer represented by Lucienne Day wallpaper, Formica table top and bent-metal framed chairs on cherry-stick legs. Anne Massey (2001) acknowledges that the design qualities inherent in these mass-produced chairs made them very attractive to the fast-growing interior-design contract

trade. This popularity demonstrated a fashionable break from traditional Mayfair décor, and despite Sassoon's salon being situated there, it introduced a sense of contemporary flair. The shop's position on the third floor meant that Sassoon had no shop front to speak of unlike Quant whose shop window was a bigger feature than the interior itself<sup>cxixiii</sup>. This limitation in itself might have added an alternative quirky modernity to a rather staid reception, inviting the curiosity of passers-by who wanted something alternative and youthful, such as it had done for Quant (Quant, 2012).

A few years later Leonard Lewis, also located in Mayfair, was faced with a dichotomy when he took over No. 6 Upper Grosvenor Street. Coming from an impoverished background, the elegance of the Georgian façade and interior for Lewis represented the type of opulence that he saw as the pinnacle of a hairdressing establishment grand style. However, at the same time, such styling clashed with his desire to follow fashionable trends so he hired Tony Cloughley<sup>cxixiv</sup>, who Lewis unwittingly described as 'an interior decorator', to find a transformative solution (Lewis, 2000:60). In response Lewis and Cloughley chose to leave the building's period features intact, but since Lewis wanted a modern working interior which had to complement and enhance the building's glamour, the result was designed to blend in. The frontage, windows, halls and stairways together with ornate cornices, marble and wooden floors, were left untouched, but the design of the workspaces was carried out in an ultra-modern minimalist style (see Fig.4.1). Evidenced in the pedestal design chairs which emulated the fashionable Saarinen chairs of the mid-Fifties (Massey, 2001) and in the hairdryer hoods which swung down from an arm fixed on a joist above the dressing out stations, Lewis nevertheless, retained Modernist principles of cleanliness by having all the surfaces, carpets, curtains and walls in white together with large mirrors to reflect the light. Upon its completion Lewis said that 'after the

cramped clutter of my childhood, where the dominant colours were always brown, I wanted to bring as much light and air into my surroundings as possible' (2000:61).

Leslie Russell who worked for Leonard from 1964-1969, had an almost photographic memory of the Grosvenor Street salon recalling in great detail not only the layout but who worked there. The stylists' ranking was matched to the positions of the dressing out stations; Leonard and Raphael had those by the windows as they were the top stylists as well as being the owners (Russell, 2003/4:84-5, 91).

Contemporary clients recalled the stylishness of Leonard's interior clearly. Sue Billam, an art student at the Central School of Art and Design<sup>cxv</sup> remembered it as 'very discreet and very plush', and that it was entered on light grey carpeted stairs to the reception area on the first floor. Billam was enchanted by the beautiful Georgian doors and windows recalling that she 'could have sat there all day even if they had not cut [her] hair' (Billam, 2005 MD:014/54.50-55.30). For Billam, the architecture rather than the modern salon interior was the more interesting and it was this that left an imprint on her memory. Another client Jeanette Challenger's memory was less clear as she thought the salon was first 'diamond-shaped' and then 'threepenny-bit shaped'. However, what Challenger had remembered was a central seating area (which Leslie Russell also referred to in his account) within the salon space, which acted as a waiting area for clients (see Fig.4.7)<sup>cxvi</sup>. She also remembered other aspects of Leonard's interior such as the salon windows on one side and remembered that there were many different floors designating it as 'an old-type hairdressers' (Challenger, 2005 MD:003/10.00-13.03). Whilst Billam's and Challenger's memories are corroborated by the images in Fig.4.7 other client's such as John McLachlan, recalled that it was the ambience rather than the interior that attracted and that at the time it was *the* place to go (McLachlan, 2005 MD: 007/24.24-24.31).

By the late Fifties, the 'Contemporary Style' had become commonplace and clichéd, replaced by a minimalist aesthetic influenced to a certain extent by Japanese aesthetics.<sup>cxvii</sup> Sassoon's second salon, opened in 1959 reflected this change in taste (see Fig.4.5). Expanding trade had outgrown his first salon and this new salon was secured to accommodate its increase in clientele. As an associate member of the Incorporated Society of Fashion Designers, Sassoon was acquiring a reputation as an upcoming young star whose stance on fashion was firmly emphasised (*HJ* 1959:4:26). Sassoon had begun to mix with more influential and artistic people, when he met David Hicks. Hicks was one of the most fashionable interior designers of the period,<sup>cxviii</sup> contributing to the British cultural renaissance and, like Sassoon, was included in David Bailey's 1965 *Box of Pin-Ups*, as a young fashion-leader. His particular skills were in combining antiques with modern design, particularly geometric shapes and his use of striking colour contrasts (Massey, 2001). Hicks, who was more accustomed to designing furnishings and interiors of grand houses, was intrigued by the prospect of restructuring Sassoon's salon. In a design first, Hicks went against the conventional grain of light and feminine colour schemes and he created a dramatic 'all-black reception area with gold bars running down the windows' (Sassoon, 2010:1541). Joshua Galvin vividly remembered the distinctive black and gold reception and he recalled that the open-plan interior differed starkly to the more customary cubicle format (Galvin, 2005:MD003). The salon's décor was monochromatic, its interiors painted white throughout its four floors, while all the furnishings were black. The long narrow salon had an open staircase and balustrade leading up to a mezzanine drying area which was furnished with reclining couches (*HJ* 1959:4:26). Sassoon described it as 'minimalist' but noted that it created a great working atmosphere (2010:1541). Copied to an extent later by Leonard in his salon

interior, this aesthetic environment matched Sullivan's 'starkers white cell', in its loose conformity to Modernist principles which allowed hairdressers to work in clearly lit, clutter-free interiors.

However, as salon interior design and decoration sought to be seen as reflecting the latest trends and fashions of youth taste, so different styles emerged and were copied. Earlier, Sullivan had highlighted the significance of another boutique aesthetic, Art Nouveau style, which in 1966 she disparagingly concluded had already become commonplace in this type of shop but could also be found in hair salons (see Fig.4.8). Featuring Beardsley illustrations and florid black and white aesthetic design, it was a style which quickly became ubiquitous in all sorts of fashionable and commercial contexts. Containing largely monochromatic line drawings, the style's linearity would not have darkened or created too psychedelic an environment but would have openly demonstrated the hairdressers knowledge of recent fashionable taste. Given the desire to find new forms of fashionable interior motifs, it is not surprising that even the 'pop' aesthetic made its appearance, however in limited forms (Fig.4.8). While 'pop' was incorporated within the term 'rave', by contrast, 'rave' together with 'camp' styling seemed not to have pervaded hair salon interior design to any great degree. While smaller hairdressers recognised that the need to be fashionable was paramount to their success in the marketplace, remodelling was undertaken carefully. Reflecting this trend, Smile, whose 1969 relaxed, minimalist interior had once been the height of fashionable design, was remodelled in retro-1930s glamour style in 1972, exploiting the then fashionable interest in Biba's 'nostalgia' aesthetic (see Fig.4.9).

What such fashionable re-styling highlights is the crucial links between youth culture and hairdressing and it shows how eager salon owners and hairdressers were

to follow youth culture's tastes. A case in point is Sassoon's Bond Street salon. Its spectacular refit, praised as a masterpiece of design engineering in 1971, was probably generally understood as a fashionable gimmick but was apparently constructed to provide extra space in what appeared to be a small and awkward reception. It was replaced by 1973, much to the consternation of the Design and Industries Association Chairman, whose evaluation of the 'boutique' was that fitness for purpose had been overlooked in favour of popular aesthetics (see Fig.4.10). Its replacement was described as more conventional (*Design* 1973:67), effectively representing the maturation of Sassoon's business: 'Vidal Sassoon has risen far beyond its boutique beginnings and this may be the key to the change. Corporate image-wise, it just grew up' (*Design* 1973:15). What this comment underscores is that boutique style was linked to small-scale, popular, and changeable youth fashion, which needed constant and infinite novelty to survive. More conservative styling was reflective of Sassoon's established status. Heading a successful corporate, hairdressing empire, the choice of a classic salon design style meant no longer following fashionable trends. However this maturation came at a cost, signalling Sassoon's business dropping out of the youthful hairdressing avant-garde<sup>cxxix</sup>.

Given the high turnover of styles required to keep pace with the changing fashions of youth culture at this time, the boutique culture of the 1960s was fraught with problems which Marnie Fogg (2003) has adeptly evaluated in the conclusion of her book. The biggest challenge was economic viability, whether due to external economic forces, or issues specific to the shops' turnover themselves. In particular, Fogg cites the devaluation of Sterling in 1967 as marking a downturn in consumer spending and with further crises, internationally and at home impacting upon consumer confidence, the small entrepreneurial businesses which had prospered in the

Sixties, were now increasingly faced with financial insecurity and hardship. In part this situation reflected the changes in commercial stewardship that had marked out the Sixties in Britain. Many entrepreneurial fashion boutique owners had started these businesses with little knowledge of how to run them viably, and were inexperienced in many areas from producing accounts to tackling pilfering. In such shifting economic conditions owners or managers were also faced with the dilemma of whether to enlarge to attract a mass-market, taking on additional credit, or to stay small and selective and cut costs.

Jonathon Aitken (1967) drawing on his interviews with small-scale entrepreneurs may have ascertained the real reason why so few decided to enlarge their businesses. Firstly he reiterates Fogg's point that many small business owners, even those with high ambitions, had little knowledge of how to turn their small successes into big profits. Secondly he noted that 'Young London's' entrepreneurs had little or no ambition to expand their businesses into corporate companies. Aitken suggests that there were a variety of peripheral reasons, including treating their businesses as recreational, but these were as nothing compared to the punitive British taxation system. He quoted Mary Quant, at that point enjoying extraordinary success, who said the only reason for expansion was that she and her partners enjoyed the work; in commercial terms it would be better to call a halt because as she informed him: 'if we go on, we're not going to make any more money with taxes at 18/3d in the pound. It's very dispiriting' (Aitken, 1967:2383). Further, several shop owners admitted that small-scale businesses were more able to evade harsh taxes, sometimes to the tune of one hundred percent less than actual cash takings, with one bistro owner stating that he would have to run four legal restaurants to make as much money as he did by 'fiddling' on the one he was presently running. Comically, Aitken referred to

him as ‘one successful bistro owner’ (1967:2391). Undoubtedly, hairdressers faced the same taxation problems and this may have been the reason many kept their businesses small in the high Sixties.

At this very point in time when Britain appeared to be enjoying all the luxuries that a consumer culture could provide, the British economy was in serious trouble. The new Labour government was faced with an almost insoluble financial burden left to them by Conservative rule. Inflation, which had been a recurring but containable fiscal challenge from 1951, started to accelerate due to consumers’ insatiable appetite for foreign imports and the Tories unwillingness to deal with it. *Life* magazine had reported that in order to restore the balance of trade, the government had tried either to depress the economy which had cut business productivity or to accelerate it which only created rampant inflation (Welles, 1967). By the time Harold Wilson took over as Prime Minister in 1964, inflation was a problem which could not be ignored for very much longer and in an attempt to bring it down, Wilson eventually succumbed in 1967 to the embarrassment of devaluing Sterling in order to facilitate the export drive (Booker, 1969; Sandbrook, 2006; Marr, 2007). This of course meant that the general cost of living for ordinary British people would rise (Welles, 1967). Despite government attempts to bring it down, inflation accelerated sharply again between 1968-9 (Marr, 2007). This prolonged downturn which led to high borrowing rates and increased costs began to affect many areas but especially in the fields of entertainment and fashion which, in turn, would have a knock-on effect for hairdressing resulting in lowering consumer confidence.

Coupled with this, the unrestrained property boom in the decade from 1954 to 1964 was brought to a sudden halt when the government brought in legislation to curb excesses (White, 2001). The boom had started with the ending of wartime rationing

of building materials in 1954 (Chevin, 2012), followed by the relaxation of rent and building controls. The property boom had peaked in 1963 but with the death of two of its greatest British tycoons Walter Flack and Jack Cotton it was on a downward spiral (Booker, 1969). The boom had subsided by 1967 when London's domestic and business population was dropping and, with falling rental returns as Londoners moved out to the suburbs, the refurbishment of properties was not seen as economical. Sky-high land prices in Central London forced even big businesses to consider decentralising. The new suburban shopping centres in places like Croydon, Brent Cross and Wood Green, drew shoppers away from the West End as Jerry White remarks 'for all but the most discriminating, or wealthy of consumers' (2001:1594).

This would have placed a great strain on all but the wealthiest and exclusive of hairdressing concerns, forcing them to think more imaginatively about the use of space in their salons. At the beginning of 1970, the *Hairdressers' Journal* started one of its 'Salon Design' features with this opening paragraph:

The pattern of ladies' hairdressing is undergoing a transformation as great as the switch from cubicle to open plan. On one hand, client needs are changing. On the other, space must be used more economically. Rising rents, rates, maintenance expenses prove one thing: Those salons that can best weather difficult trading conditions are the ones that are organized so that every inch of space and every item of furniture pays its way (*HJ* 1970:1:25).

In 1971 the Journal issued an even sterner warning when it told hairdressers that 'with overheads soaring, salons must be business-minded or they will be forced to close' and listed a string of trade issues to which salon owners ought to attend (*HJ* 1971:1:13). In fact, after the crippling strikes of the next few years, it is hardly surprising that this was exactly what happened to two large and old-fashioned Mayfair

salons. The Phyllis Earle salon and the former Dorothy Gray<sup>xxxx</sup> salon which had been in business for fifty and thirty years respectively, blamed increasing costs and overheads and felt that the future of large uneconomical salons was limited (*HJ* 1975:11:7). The Seventies ushered in a new era of caution which the *Journal* quickly realised could only be overcome by an economy of space, drawing on all the ingenuity that hairdressers could muster.

There was also another problem which had faced the hairdressing fraternity and that was the dwindling number of apprentices coming into the profession. While it is easy to blame the catastrophic effects on employment by sustained industrial actions from the mid-Sixties onwards, it is more likely that there were too many temptingly well-paid office jobs available to young people in the Sixties. A survey conducted by the International Publishing Corporation's Young Magazines Group estimated that Britain's teenage dolly girls earned somewhere in the region of £595 million in 1968 and of the fifteen to nineteen-year-olds surveyed, twenty-percent could afford to go to the hairdressers once a month or more (*HJ* 1969:9:7). There was little desire for lengthy vocational training as a poorly paid apprentice, therefore, when office work offered instant 'wealth'. In another article from 1971, a nationwide survey revealed the raised school leaving age, from fifteen to sixteen, meant that 300,000 would-be school leavers were compelled to stay on for another year, exacerbating the problem of recruitment. Apart from that, it confirmed that the apprentice shortage was due to low wages and long traineeship. This it said put young people off, especially girls, who not unnaturally preferred to earn more money working in a factory which would gratify their consumption demands. Even in areas of high unemployment, there was little enthusiasm for hairdressing (*HJ* 1971:7:5). Despite this, the industrial struggles of 1970-74 which impacted on society as a whole

would certainly have reduced staffing levels in hairdressing, with very few inexperienced staff being employed, particularly school leavers. Hairdressers would have had to take all of these problems into account and the guiding rule, as the *Journal* reiterated, was efficiency; hairdressers could not afford the extravagances of the previous decade (*HJ* 1973:1:19).

### **Unisex: the Answer to Space Problems?**

One final aspect that directed changes to hair salon design and to hairdressing culture in this period that I have not so far discussed is the advent of unisex salons and it is with this trend that I wish to conclude this chapter. My analysis of small spaces culminated in a discussion that largely revolved around the reasons why the downturn in the British economy and other societal factors would have impacted on the size and development of ladies' hair salons. In keeping these salons small, hairdressers necessarily had to maximise the space available to profit from their businesses. One way of achieving this was in the organisation of their interiors and, as I have pointed out in Chapter One, open plan salons undeniably created more space.<sup>cxxxix</sup>

However, one of the big debates that continued to rage, since Gilbert Foan wrote *The Art and Craft of Hairdressing* in 1931, was whether salons should be cubicle or open plan. A typical article in the *Hairdressers' Journal* in 1964 considered the dilemma facing salon owners of losing old customers or gaining new ones by converting to the open arrangement to increase trade. It recorded the opinions of several hairdressers as to the disadvantages or benefits of both as well as some having opted to retain one or two cubicles within an open salon, but there were no clear-cut trends in relation to client age and appeared to be no straightforward solutions (*HJ* 1964:3:35). The pros and cons of either form were still being debated in

1969. Cubicles afforded privacy for clients but they took up a great deal of room and employees time due to individuated attention. This type of arrangement in the salon suited the older clients who preferred the discretion they offered. The open plan salon provided more working space but some clients objected to moving around the salon to perform the various stages of hairdressing (*HJ* 1969:1:21). In the open plan arrangement, stylists were able to attend to several clients at once, which was much more cost effective. Despite this dissent, over the course of the 1960s there was a general and gradual swing to open plan salons and by the late 1960s, open salons had virtually replaced the cubicle arrangement, which was seen as old-fashioned and inefficient, particularly at busy periods (Radford 1968:453-4). While cubicles still thrived in suburban and provincial salons particularly those that dealt with an older client-base, the open-plan proliferated in London and other large cities where floor space was at a premium (*HJ* 1970:1:25).

Apart from practical considerations, the privacy afforded by cubicles was not in keeping with the more informal contemporary atmosphere. The salon atmosphere over the period of study had been gradually moving away from the formality and sycophancy found in the top Mayfair salons which catered for the elite client, to a much more relaxed environment which had evolved due to a more democratic, young and fashionable customer base that neither wanted nor cared for deferential attitude and mature sophistication. Sassoon's pioneering employment of very young staff and his desire that they should have a relaxed but polite behaviour, was uncannily in step with the approaching sudden increase in the teenage population whose attitudes were in marked contrast to their parents and to the older generation. Sassoon's burgeoning celebrity status, youthful staff and his relaxed, easy going salon atmosphere encouraged a clientele mix of celebrities, aristocrats and ordinary female clients with

a youthful modern outlook, none of whom seemed in the slightest put out or intimidated by each other's company<sup>exxxii</sup>. Their male escorts would often wait at the salon while the appointments were completed demonstrating a further relaxation in gender hairdressing protocol. This model paved the way for subsequent West End salons whose open-plan style and mixture of clientele became even more laid-back as the Sixties progressed.

Sassoon was a ladies' only hairdresser, until 1968 when the gradual demand from the partners and husbands of his female clients persuaded him to open a separate men's salon in the basement of his Sloane Street salon. Sassoon described it as 'a women's hairdressing operation for men ... the two sides have got that close, now' (*HJ* 1968:7:37). His words were a portent of things to come since they indicated that men's hairdressing had undergone a parallel revolution which although having coursed along a separate stream, had reached a point of synchronicity that was beginning to converge with ladies' hairdressing. Other hairdressers, amongst them Leonard Lewis, had already started to accommodate this changing trend in the men's side. Lewis had converted one of the upper floors of his Upper Grosvenor Street House to a men's salon, which had a relaxed club atmosphere. Similarly to Sassoon, it had evolved out of accompanying males who, waiting to collect their wives or girlfriends, gradually became less self-conscious of being in a salon for women (Lewis, 2000:149). Lewis also employed Keith Wainwright to cut men's hair and he became friendly with Leslie Russell who worked in Leonard's women's salon, as Russell began sending his old male clients up to Wainwright for haircuts (Russell, 2003/4:139). Russell used to take some of his female clients upstairs to look at the new men's salon with its relaxed, club style interior and its design was greeted with

complaints by the women clients, as that was the layout they wanted too (Wainwright, 2005 MDP:051-066)

While Lewis claimed that the House of Leonard was officially the first 'unisex' hairdressers in London as a result of his inclusion of a men's salon (2000:149), I would argue that this was not the case. To be a unisex salon would have meant not only the incorporation of unisex hairstyling but also male and female clients would share the same space for hairdressing, which clearly Lewis did not do. A growing number of these combined salons were appearing during the mid-Sixties, many of them doing as Lewis did and introducing a separate men's section. The Samson and Delilah salon, which opened its doors to both men and women in Mayfair 1967, was featured in a British Pathé newsreel that year (*Ladies and Gents Hair Salon, 1967*) clearly demonstrating the separation of the sexes as the men's service was downstairs. It too had a club atmosphere as male clients were served alcoholic drinks and enjoyed luxury services such as hairdressing, wet-shaves, manicures and massage by young mini-skirted, dolly-bird stylists. Part of Samson and Delilah's interior can be seen in Fig.4.8, where one of the stylists in the salon 'uniform' of chain-belted micro-mini skirt and skimpy midriff top is attending to a male client.

The film's narrator infers that this was a beauty parlour originally for women but the shop-sign ambiguously says 'Samson & Delilah Exclusive Mens [sic] Hairdressing' (*Ladies and Gents Hair Salon, 1967*) which probably added to the confusion. Likewise some new men's hairdressers were erroneously labelled using the catch-all unisex term because the increasing convergence of men's and women's hairdressing began to blur the boundaries. Wendy Cooper described a typical new London salon Sweeny's as unisex, simply because it played loud pop music and had customers drawn from the fashion and pop scene such as Mick Jagger (1971:175).

Cooper was mistaken to dub it unisex because it only catered for men with the *Hairdressers' Journal* confirming it as being the most expensive men's hairdressing salon in Britain (*HJ* 1967:6:6).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Wainwright and Russell eventually left Leonard's to set up their own salon Smile, opposite the Scotch House, Knightsbridge in 1969. Because Wainwright and Russell could cut both men's and women's hair, they had decided to open up a unisex salon, that Wainwright asserts was the first of its kind (Wainwright, 2005 MDP:075-084). However, the *Hairdressers' Journal* had run a small article two years previously on Richard Conway's salon in Knightsbridge that it recorded was catering for both genders, with a photograph (see Fig.4.11) showing a young man and woman having their hair washed side-by-side (*HJ* 1967:1:8). Whether or not this was strictly a unisex salon is hard to tell, as the *Journal* did not discuss the style of hairdressing practiced. Although it remains a matter of conjecture that this was the first unisex salon, if so, I believe it would undoubtedly have garnered considerable newspaper and media attention. However, Russell's interview confirmed Wainwright's belief that Smile was the first one, through the newspaper publicity that it generated surrounding the salon at the time (Russell, 2003/4:117).

When planning their new salon, Russell and Wainwright had taken note of Leonard's female clients' demands for less formality. They realised from these comments that women were not embarrassed to sit beside men. However what they didn't want was to sit next to the male clients in hair-rollers as they felt that it demeaned their appearance. As a result, the interior of the Smile salon was designed to be more androgynous in its decoration. Informality, comfort and a complete absence of gender-differentiation were achieved by adopting an open plan interior and gender-neutral furnishing designs. Instead of the usual banks of hood-dryers which

had always been associated with women's hairdressing, their presence was minimised and they were discreetly situated away from view while blow-drying, which had long been the preserve of men's styling dominated, removing the notion of it being a feminised space. The interior decoration had simple white painted walls and the only adornment was a yin-yang symbol hanging opposite the washbasins, which carried with it a visual indication of the male/female connotation (see Fig.4.12).

The designer John Cairns, in discussion with Russell and Wainwright, had come up with an ingenious method of creating discrete 'areas' which could be dissembled and reassembled according to changes in requirement. There was a yellow painted, 'meccano-like' interior scaffolding, into which could be inserted separate panels or vertical blinds to screen off and create spaces at will (see Fig.4.13) with lighting perched atop the structure (Russell, 2003/4:116). In consultation with Russell and Wainwright, the designer had introduced large comfortable swing seats into the waiting area and in contrast to Leonard's, pop music played throughout the salon. Russell believed that when clients walked in, this music was 'a big part of the atmosphere ... it was probably too loud really. But it was sort of [ ] making a statement' (Russell, 2003/4:174). Moreover Russell declared that he and Wainwright wanted the place to be like a creative studio in which they could produce hairstyles as well as being imaginative with the spatial arrangement (Russell, 2003/4:175).

Symptomatic of wider cultural trends in fashion, science and political activism taking place at this historical moment, gender-differentiation in design was increasingly replaced by ultra-fashionable, youth-oriented interiors such as Russell and Wainwright's example. The open plan salon with its versatile possibilities was the perfect space in which to operate a unisex hairdressing business because it maximised both small spaces and increased the earning potential. From 1969

onwards there were an increasing number of references to unisex hairdressing and salons in the *Hairdressers' Journal* which saw it as hairdressing's future (*HJ* 1969:4:37). In November of that year, the *Journal* told its readers: 'If you think this Unisex thing is just a TV and newspaper colour supplement gimmick, think again' and it continued that with the breaking down of old barriers, conventional attitudes were changing (*HJ* 1969:11:2). While there were still those who stubbornly clung to these older attitudes, the opening of new unisex salons, including the first one in the City of London in 1972 (*HJ* 1972:4:10), continued all the way through this period with Marc Hilliard opening 'Shampoo', a unisex salon in the heart of Mayfair in 1975 (*HJ* 1975:11:4).

As can be seen, the unisex salon further altered the way that hairdressing and the salon space was produced and consumed. The *Hairdressers' Journal* was quick to point out changes in approach amongst younger consumers noting that modern young girls would not go to salons for 'overworked, high-piled candy-floss which needs hours to dry and dress out. *They* are the clients in a hurry today'. Similarly young men no longer went to barbers for a quick haircut in silence but chose salons 'where they're made to feel good [and] have their egos re-established.' They were also prepared to pay seven or eight times more than a barber would charge, for a longer but more fashionable haircut (*HJ* 1969:11:2). Above all, unisex salons epitomised the unconventional, advanced fashionable styling for which London's West End was famous. In response to a letter from a Plymouth hairdresser denigrating a unisex hairstyle as too 'feminine' and accusing the *Journal* of looking no further than the Capital for the pulse of 'real' hairdressing, Raymond of Mane Line countered that for 'original style design, [clients would] go to the West End, not the West Country, [where] salons ... will do what they require' (*HJ* 1970:10:37). The response signalled

that youth-oriented unisex salons with their hip young hairdressers were on the same wave-length as their customers by appealing to the youth market and providing exactly the right atmosphere and styling for the fashionable West End 1960s client.

Unisex salons were probably the last major change in salon design and hairstyling practice. What it transmits is that men's hairdressing in the Sixties was going through its own quiet but extremely interesting revolution, without which, unisex would not have become a possibility. Suffice to say that the cultural changes underway in British society in 1960s had affected every part of the hairdressing trade and such changes in both men's and women's hairdressing had eventually coalesced not only in the styling of hair, but in the fashionable shared style and design of salon spaces.

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<sup>cx</sup> Curtis refers to Anthony Sampson's surveys of British life during the Sixties (2004, fn23 p.146) which clearly addressed the conflicting attitudes of a nation in transition. The general and largely assumed view of the Sixties is the opposition of youth to the older generation and Establishment – modernity and innovation linked to the former and traditional values linked to the latter. However, Curtis argues that there was a great deal of ambivalence on both sides, and demonstrates that both the Conservatives and Labour Governments wanted to be seen to be modernising through their encouragement in enterprise by the younger generation, technology and invigorating the urban environment, whilst many of the young, particularly the middle classes and intellectuals, did not see the wholesale abandonment of tradition and adoption of a consumer culture philosophy as being the most beneficial or successful way forward. He cites the 'enthusiastic promotion of 'Tory Futurism'' and Labour's 'modernising rhetoric that the country was living in a jet age but being governed by an Edwardian establishment' but that there was a reluctance on the part of the English to forsake one for the other (2004:51). Curtis uses Pop culture as the example through which to understand this conflict from a youthful perspective.

<sup>cx<sup>i</sup></sup> Raphael Santarossa worked with Leonard at Vidal Sassoon's. At fourteen, he had run away from home in Italy to join the French Foreign Legion, went on to become a bullfighter having trained as a matador and then moved to London and a career in hairdressing. He spoke four languages and had a habit of swearing at the clients in Italian. He looked like Yves Montand and had a deserved reputation as a serial womaniser. Santarossa joined forces with Leonard in their first salon venture in Duke Street, Mayfair and then started the House of Leonard and Raphael at 6 Upper Grosvenor Street. However, while Leonard had been just as guilty as Raphael of seducing the clients at Sassoon's, Leonard would not tolerate it as owners of their own salon and after one particular incident, Raphael was forced to leave. He disappeared from the London hairdressing scene and then resurfaced some years later in Montreal, Canada. The Hairdressers' Journal reported on his new salon there in 1971 having described his varied CV since leaving Leonard probably circa 1964 (Lewis, 2000:43-55; *HJ* 1971:12:12-13)

<sup>cx<sup>ii</sup></sup> It was renamed several times afterwards to reflect the changing name of the company: the London Telecom Tower, the British Telecom Tower, the BT Tower and finally simply BT Tower.

<sup>cx<sup>iii</sup></sup> Sadler mentions the Park Hill Housing Scheme in Sheffield which encapsulated the Modernist vision of 'streets in the sky'. Buildings could be linked together by elevated communal walkways which were wide enough for milk floats to deliver the daily pint to the doors of residents. It was an architectural vision shared by many Modernists, not least the New Brutalist intellectual leaders, Peter and Alison Smithson (2004:122).

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<sup>cxiv</sup> Forty has implied that the ferocity of criticism has turned ‘ordinary historic failure’ into ‘a failure more complete and cataclysmic, a failure beyond redemption, a sort of architecture to which no one under any circumstances could ever contemplate turning back’ (Goldie, 2011:207). Writing this in 1995, he could not have foreseen that there were specific architectural spaces in which forms of Modernism would prove to be successful, such as the Jubilee Line Extension opened in 1999. As a result of the 1987 Kings Cross Fire, architects were charged with creating interiors that were made of low combustible and low toxic materials, as well as providing strong and durable interiors which were light and airy without being costly. This led to stations being built in concrete with civil works exposed and all surfaces at passenger level in stainless steel and reinforced glass (Euro Inox, 2002). This was Modernism and by proxy New Brutalism at their finest, fulfilling the Modernist ideology of form follows function and fitness for purpose.

<sup>cxv</sup> Dominic Sandbrook’s (2006) chapter ‘Streets in the Sky’ provides a lively bipartisan debate about the new architecture and its effects on cities and towns using a range of sources from politicians, developers, architects, writers, critics and the general public to provide the voices of both assent and dissent.

<sup>cxvi</sup> Edwards describes how there had been plans to redevelop Oxford Street during the interwar period but after WW2, there was a renewed sense of urgency as those buildings which had already become shabby and unfashionable were now interspersed with buildings patched up after bomb damage. The problems that the city planners encountered were that new Modernist shopping centres were designed for efficiency rather than pleasure and geared towards the housewife rather than the leisurely fashionable West End consumer. Another major issue was that the West End was not simply a series of shops in which to consume but there was a dense patchwork of small, interrelated industries such as milliners, dressmakers and tailors, producing such fashionable goods and in some cases, the upper floors of the larger shops were rented out to these small industries (2006: 164-166).

<sup>cxvii</sup> This was a phrase which became an in-joke between Quant and Plunket-Greene. Before Bazaar, both were notable for the outrageousness of their dress and people often laughingly commented, “God, this Modern Youth!” Quant says that when they met up, one or other would say, “Shall we be Modern Youth tonight?” and then think up some wild prank to play which marked them out as extraordinary (1966:496).

<sup>cxviii</sup> Oldenburg’s theory of the third place as a solution to societal estrangement is rooted in the social dislocation of late twentieth century America but it maps more or less exactly as a theoretical model on to the spaces of Sixties alternative culture.

<sup>cxix</sup> Sociologists agree that it is the way that the town or city’s interstitial spaces are populated which defines the notion of good town planning. The provision of space and place for everyone and a harmonious balance between various elements such as architecture, pedestrians and vehicles in terms of size and quantity is necessary to achieve equilibrium (Oldenburg, 1989:14).

<sup>cxx</sup> Archie McNair had a photography business in the King’s Road but previously he had been a solicitor. Quant admits that her first impressions were desultory; to a teenager such as herself, McNair was the epitome of everything she must have thought ‘square’. He wore suits, carried briefcase and a rolled up umbrella and still had the mannerisms that might be associated with lawyers (1966:543).

<sup>cxxi</sup> In the article, the owner says it makes no difference whether it is in Aberdeen or Mayfair - the Swinging Set (and by this he means young fashionable with-it people) were looking for an alternative which was distinct from other salons.

<sup>cxxii</sup> Quant’s working practise in the early days was such that new stocks of clothes did not usually arrive in the shop until 6pm. Regular customers became aware that this was the best time to come to view her latest designs. Alexander’s had acquired a reputation for really good food, which combined with the convenience of its location in the same building, made a perfect night out (Quant, 1966).

<sup>cxxiii</sup> Quant (1966) speaks extensively about Bazaar’s window dressing, but she does not talk about the King’s Road boutique interior although it might be supposed that with her love of jazz music and her ‘Modern Youth’ style, the interior design, as with Sassoon’s, would have been in the ‘Contemporary style’.

<sup>cxxiv</sup> Cloughley was a founder member of Garnett, Cloughley Blakemore, which was a company of architectural designers, noted for its adherence to Modernist ‘total design’ fused with a Pop Aesthetic. Their most famous interiors include the design of the revolving restaurant at the Post Office Tower and the Chelsea Drugstore which featured in the film *A Clockwork Orange* <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1518216/Patrick-Garnett.html>.

<sup>cxxv</sup> It is now known as Central St. Martins, University of the Arts London.

<sup>cxxvi</sup> Technically speaking, a threepenny bit coin had twelve sides and Leonards seating is octagonal, as can be seen in the image. However, as Challenger went only once as a teenager it is a testament to her

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memory that she was able to recollect the unusually-shaped feature at all. The seating area is mentioned in a feature article on the House of Leonard where it records that the main salon contained a circular seating area around a garlanded central column (*HJ* 1964:4:33-39). This feature had obviously altered by the time of Challenger's recollections to a more intimate regular octagon, the seats of which faced inwards rather than outwards as in the previous design.

<sup>cxxvii</sup> This aspect has already been discussed in the chapter Advance to Mayfair.

<sup>cxxviii</sup> The others were David Mlinaric and Max Clendinning. Mlinaric was hired by Rupert Lycett-Green to redecorate the premises that were to become 'Blades' to give it a 'forward-looking' attitude (Aitken, 1967:373).

<sup>cxxix</sup> Wainwright and Russell as well as McLachlan all make this comment that by about 1968 Sassoon was already being seen as a bit old-hat and there were new and more exciting hairdressers in the West End.

<sup>cxxx</sup> The Dorothy Gray salon had been taken over by The Innoxia Group in 1973 (*HJ* 1975:11:7).

<sup>cxxxi</sup> This is discussed under the sub-heading of 'Salon Design'.

<sup>cxxxii</sup> The only time that there was a disruption in this tranquil situation was when the Profumo Affair erupted. Both Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies were clients at Sassoon's and some of his other customers rebuked him for allowing them to enter the salon, even boycotting the salon in protest, when the girls continued to go there. Sassoon was reluctantly forced to offer Keeler and Rice-Davies private hairdressing as a solution (2010:2081-2092)

<sup>cxxxiii</sup> Situated in Beauchamp Place, Sweeney's was started by two ex-ladies' hairdressers from Smith and Hawes, Garry Craze and Anthony Tierney. They charged £2 10/- for an average haircut at a time when barbers' prices were just a few shillings.

## Conclusion

It is clear from my examination of the *Hairdressers' Journal* between 1954-75 that there were considerable and important changes in the status of hairdressing, the practices of haircutting and styling and in the socio-cultural significance that hairdressing had or was seen to represent in these decades. The impact of such changes to London's Mayfair hairdressers has been analysed in detail mainly because Mayfair was a wealthy area which had prided itself on being able to offer luxury hairdressing services to an elite client group and within local commercial spaces that provided them with familiar protocols based on earlier class relations and service expectations. Mayfair was regarded as the heart of high-class avant-garde hairstyling, but during the period of study events and circumstances in the wider society took hairdressing into a very different direction. At the start of my period, the British women who patronised the Mayfair hairdressing salons had a societal status and elite taste which was expressed through their fashionable Paris-informed style and appearance. Hairdressing, likewise, generally followed Parisian lines to complement the fashionable garments that British society women wore. In order to give a comparable service to Paris, many Mayfair hairdressers not only drew on Parisian fashions in hairdressing but extended this to their own demeanour and interaction. The salons also copied Paris's interior decoration styles and spatial arrangements. Right up to the 1960s therefore, Paris exerted a very strong pull over British fashion and along with it salon culture and hairstyling, thereby providing models and protocols which Mayfair hairdressers were expected to adopt and uphold.

For these reasons Mayfair's earlier position both in rank and geography that had given it a particular and elite aura and which drew both hairdressers and clients towards it from all parts of the country, was challenged when later in the 1960s

fashionable salons opened in the Kings Road, Knightsbridge and other parts of the West End to service younger, less aristocratic clients. Nevertheless, as the cases of Leonard and Vidal Sassoon have shown, Mayfair still retained its exclusivity and appeal in the face of such competition. In the post-war period of regeneration and initially at the request of clients who lived out-of-town, Mayfair hairdressing was very successful in an expansion programme which took this elite form to all four corners of the British Isles, despite some resistance from local hairdressers. The competition that Mayfair branch salons offered, actually raised the level of existing local hairdressers, while giving young local apprentices the chance to learn and work in top-class establishments. However, while many Mayfair hairdressers capitalised on these nationwide expansions, this did not mean Mayfair was immune to economic and commercial factors. When the property boom of the Fifties and Sixties began to encroach on Mayfair, two of the most important hairdresser establishments, Raymond and André Bernard were forced out; with Raymond who had been there the longest leaving Mayfair altogether for Knightsbridge.

Nevertheless, the much coveted Mayfair address and telephone number for salons demonstrated its continued importance as a sign of a successful hairdressing business virtually to the end of the period studied and at least up to the beginning of the 1970s. After a short period of decline during the mid-Sixties, new hairdressers moved in and some ex-Mayfair hairdressers returned to start business again in the Square Mile, demonstrating that the area still retained its magical allure. Mayfair hairdressers were also seen by other West End hairdressers (particularly those second generation hairstylists who appeared after Sassoon) as forming a 'magic and elite circle' with the media perpetuating and exaggerating the scale of difference between elite Mayfair and lowly suburban and provincial hairdressing. However by the end

of my period, it is evident that London hairdressers in general and Mayfair establishments in particular, had achieved an altered cultural relationship to Paris and to elite French fashion. The problems of infighting that had absorbed the Parisian stylists during the mid-Fifties allowed British hairdressing to come in by the backdoor and take the lead. There was a greater sense of co-operation and camaraderie between the Master hairdressers to create leading hair fashions and gain supremacy. From the 1960s, they were more independent and creative implementing hairstyles, cutting and colouring methods that corresponded to the greater youthful informality and popular cultural forms of fashionability that characterised 'swinging Sixties' London. As I have shown, two other emergent trends also impacted on West End and Mayfair hairdressing. The advent of Black hairstyling in the 1950s and its professionalization in the 1960s and the establishment of unisex salons in the late 1960s and 1970s, introduced new notions of race and gender into hairdressing practise, developing and updating salon culture and salon design in Britain.

While it is inevitable in any discussion of the history of British hairdressing across this period that Vidal Sassoon is presented as a significant figure, my research had endeavoured to locate his position within a broader cultural and socio-economic frame. Sassoon's status as a major innovator in styling and cutting, and his role as a celebrity hairdresser is unquestioned. His fame was perpetuated by media attention, through his friendships with key fashion designers and celebrities, and by the setting up of hairdressing schools and academies, thereby allowing hairdressing education to assume an importance that it had not done before. As a consequence the schools operating under the Sassoon name proliferated and were successful as a result leaving a substantial legacy for British hairdressing.

However, by looking at the work and ideas of two of his predecessors, Raymond and Freddie French, which would inform his own methods, it is clear that Sassoon was not an isolated genius even though his genius lay in skilfully blending and developing the talents and skills of Raymond and French to create something uniquely different. What he did do was to shift the impetus away from old methods of hairstyling by concentrating on perfection in precision cutting and brushing out techniques. He also eliminated the traditional focus on competition work which was the yardstick by which a Master hairdresser's competency was measured and redirected those skills through channelling his energies and that of his young staff into teaching in the salon. His love of Modernist architecture and his vibrant avant-garde attitude towards hair, not only created revolutionary geometric styles, but also inspired other hairdressers by his example. On reflection, I have to come to the conclusion that without Sassoon's involvement in hairdressing, London would not have assumed the status of Sixties fashion capital without him, and this would have greatly altered British hairdressing history and its claims for significance thereby producing very different histories and legacies.

Given my concern to consider British hairdressing developments in relation to a broader socio-cultural context, there is also no doubt that during the end of this period technological innovation and the mass media, especially the growth of the illustrated colour press, the expansion of radio and television coverage and the dynamics of popular youth culture played a key role in disseminating ideas about the vitality of British lifestyles and fashion, including hairdressing. The increased media coverage of 'fashionable' occupations which centred on the West End of London made an impact on the perceived professionalization of hairdressing and upon its perceived status as a newsworthy creative art involving celebrity hairdressers. With

the intense focus in the 1960s being on London's fashion and youth culture, the interest from television programme makers, film directors, advertisers, press and media throughout the 1960s was probably greater than at any time previously, making knowledge about the new London hairdressing salons far more effective and having greater resonance and influence.

As a consequence, hairdressers and writers on hairdressing began to take full advantage of these improved opportunities to advertise themselves in the press and mass media; not least as Sassoon's success shows. Guest journalists in the fashion press who were specialists in their own fields also exploited the expanding opportunities in the hairdressing field this provided. For example, Cynthia Figg who, as the Fashion Editor of *Woman* magazine, and who invariably attended the Paris fashion shows and covered fashion topics, also reported in the press on aspects related to hairdressing innovation in the top West End hair salons. Her articles appeared on a regular basis in the *Hairdressers' Journal*, amongst other outlets, bringing the news of the latest hair fashions and her interpretations of how to accessorise.

Finally, what my research has also underscored is that it is clear that as a commercial retail operation, the impact of broader economic factors upon the viability of hairdressing salons was significant. Rental costs, employee pay and advertising outlays were all contributory factors in the success, or not, of a West End hairdressing salon. Changes in architecture in the centre of British cities, not least in the West End, and the shifting interior decoration styles that salons needed to invest in to attract a fashionable clientele were also important. As I have shown, the advent of smaller salons carrying with them associations of youthfulness and intimacy linked to the spatial correlations of the bistro, boutique and discotheque were also valuable when attracting a younger age group. As the impact of the broader economic downturn of

the 1970s affected hairdressing, so greater competition meant an acute attention to interior decoration and design, gender protocols and as I have shown, more compact space use facilitating the efficient informality of the unisex salon. Overall, the changes that occurred in British hairdressing between 1954 and 1975 offer what I have termed another strand of historical knowledge, and one that is revealing both in its cultural complexities and its legacies.

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## Interviews

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Fig.1.1



The Crush was a room at the theatre where the audience waited for their cabs home – so called because at busy times that is what it became. Charles Dana Gibson's girls were youthful, seductive and demure (Senex Magister, no date).

Fig.1.2



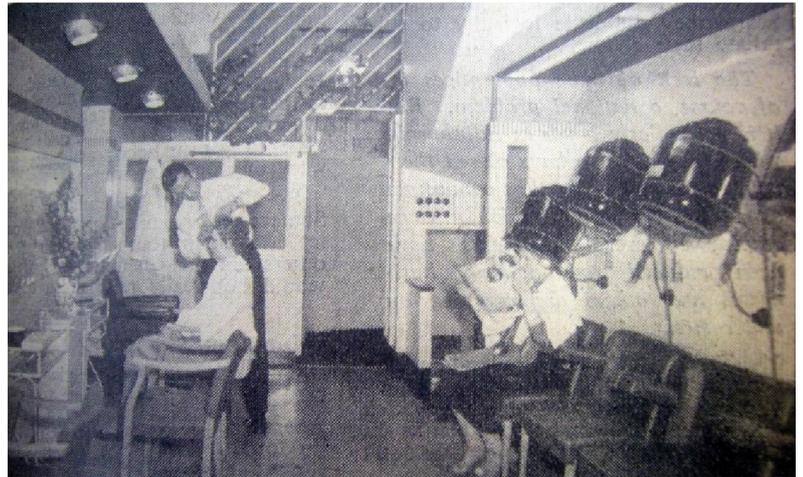
Jessie Bateman was a popular West End theatre actress of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century. She is depicted here 'at home' surrounded by objects that not only demonstrated her interests but also afforded the readers of illustrated magazines a glimpse into the interiors of these celebrity women. As part of an interview, it connected the reader visually with the subject. Reproduced courtesy of Don Gillan (Copyright), <http://www.stagebeauty.net/th-main.html>

Fig.1.3



Marcel Grateau (Ross, 2011). Marcel Grateau the creator of the 'Marcel Wave' technique, pictured here with tongs was arguably the first hairdresser to make going to public hairdressing salons a respectable practice.

Fig.1.4



**Above:** Raoul's before modernisation. Cubicles overpowered the narrow salon area while the reception looked cramped, dark and untidy.

**Below:** After conversion. The reception is light and airy while the curved desk creates a distinctive focal feature. The removal of the cubicles has created a spacious salon; flowers and climbing plants have 'feminised' the functional workspace (*HJ* 1954:11:30-31)

Fig.1.5



Miss Anne Morgan's Louis XVI Boudoir in de Wolfe (1913), *The House in Good Taste*.  
Right: Example of a late eighteenth century *Boudoir*, by Le Bouteux in Wharton & Codman (1898), *The Decoration of Houses*.

Fig.1.6



Fig.1.7



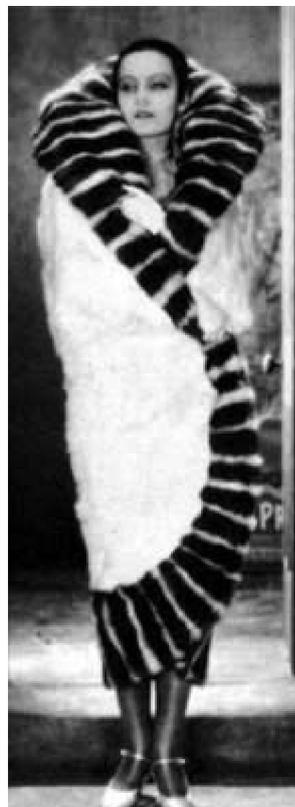
Edith Wharton's Parlour in the 'Old French Look', Ogden Codman Jr., c.1903. The Regency stripes and eighteenth century furniture were much favoured for Mayfair salons which in turn were copied by provincial salons who wished to appear more upmarket. (<http://image.slidesharecdn.com/hsiilecture6decoratorsolwbgreduced-140223213714-phpapp01/95/hs-ii-lecture-6-decorators-ol-wbg-reduced-6-638.jpg?cb=1393191500>)

Fig.1.8



Austin Reed's men's salon interior. Photographed in 1966, the salon still retained most of its original 1928 fabric and fittings of Vitrolite wall panelling, chrome fixtures and decoration, together with its original chairs. The main lighting with its extraordinary continuous snake-like formation, was a striking feature as was the unusual hygienic compressed-air tube system for getting rid of cut hair (HJ 1966:3:40)

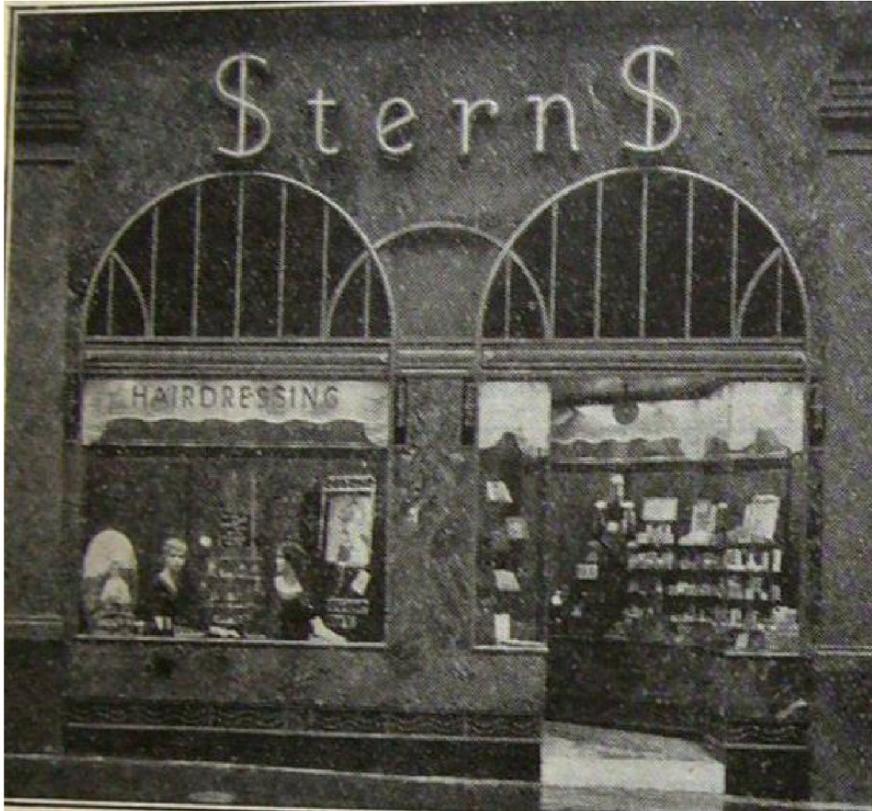
Fig.1.9



Greta Garbo in *The Torrent* (MGM, 1925).

146 film stills were made during the production by Bertram (Buddy) Longworth and Fred Morgan (*Garbo Forever*, no date). The dramatic imagery is largely due to the use of geometric shapes, particularly on Garbo's clothing which focussed increased attention upon her. Her incredibly short haircut is almost identical to the men's.

Fig.1.10



Left: 'A Gay City Shop Front' Messrs. Sterns of Queen Street, Cheapside 1935. Designed to 'entice within the spruce City girl' (1935:3:1470, Maxim) who Maxim suggested were responsible for these colourful little breaks in the dull City architecture, the front was an effective combination of modern materials, employing granite, green and black Issorie marble, bronze metalwork and box-metal lettering finished in red cellulose superimposed with red neon tubing with amber coloured bevelled glass windows. Right: The interior which used horizontal grain walnut veneer and birds-eye maple on all the interior walls. The salon follows the usual cubicle arrangement for the period and the geometric shapes used in the fixtures and fittings both inside and out are the most up-to-date 'Moderne' styling.

Fig.1.11



Still from the film *On The Beat* (1962), showing the interior of Giulio Napolitani's West End hair salon which was based very closely on the luxury interiors of traditional Mayfair high-class salons of the period.

Fig.2.1



Swan and Edgar's Department Store, circa 1929. Started as a haberdashery store by Swan in 1812, it became a partnership by 1820 shortly after which Swan died, but not before the owners had moved it to the prime location at Piccadilly Circus. It was described as possibly the single best location for passing trade in the world, as can be seen in the illustration. By the 1850s it had become a fashionable London department store having taken up the ground space of at least nine shops. At the very south-eastern corner of Mayfair's Square Mile, opposite Piccadilly Circus and sandwiched between Piccadilly and the long sweeping curve of Regent Street, the store survived until 1982 after numerous changes of ownership. During its heyday, it was patronised by the Royal Family and was a famous meeting place for Londoners (The Search for George Swan, no date).

Fig.2.2

## COCKTAILS AND DINNER AT THE EMBASSY CLUB

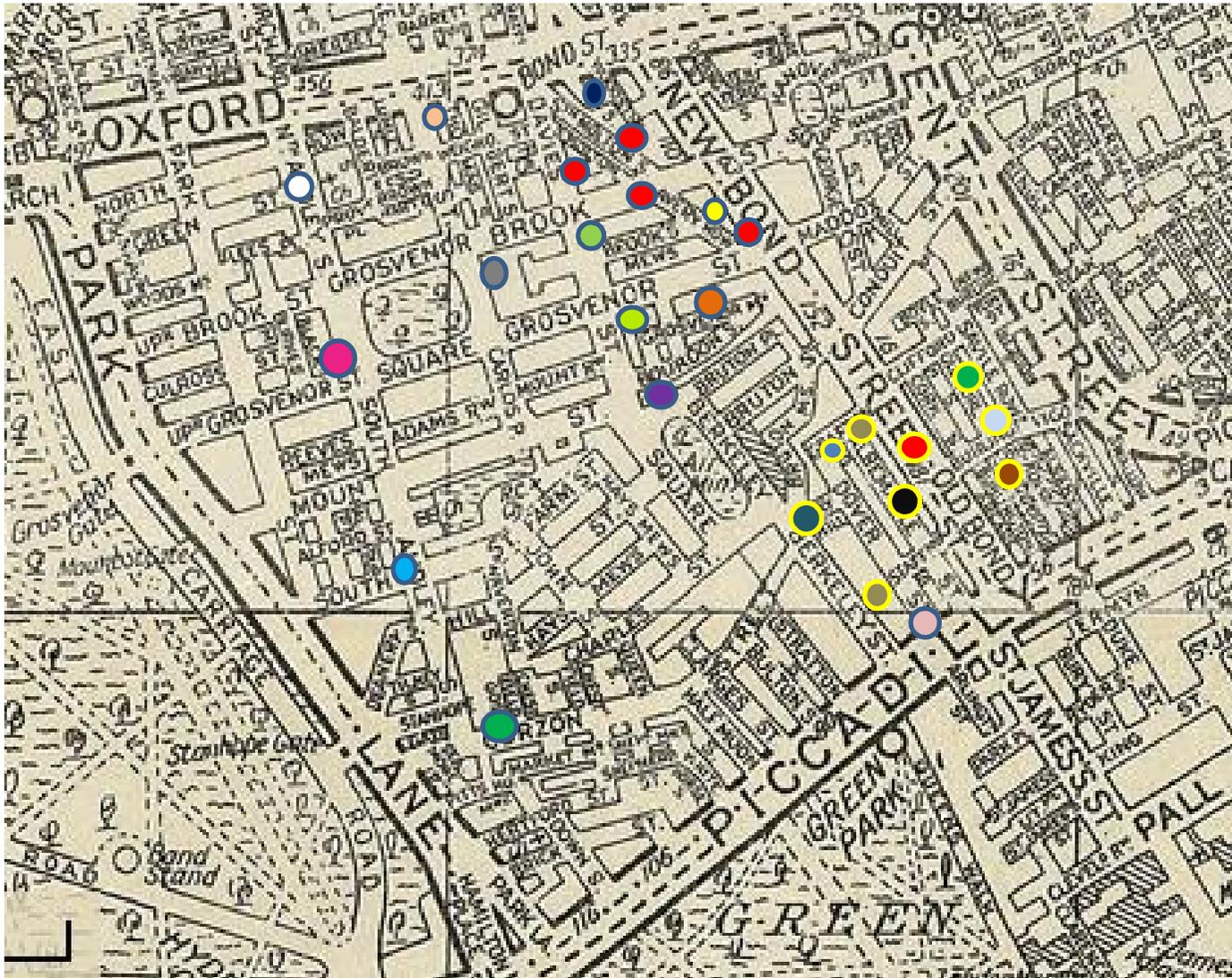


'She dines at the Embassy in a green frock of large mesh net and is seen drinking the cocktail which Theo has mixed her. Her dress is quite long but the underskirt short.

It was designed for her by Lady Cecil Douglas. Her jewels are from Cartier' (*Vogue*, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1929:5). The Americanisation of the West End included the newly fashionable form of socialising: the cocktail bar or party. The image of the young beautiful upper-class female, driving fast cars and partying at clubs like the Embassy, was London's answer to the Hollywood film stars who were now beginning to influence fashion. The popular newspapers treated these fashionables as celebrities.

Fig.2.3

KEY



- 18 Grafton Street *Raymond's* original salon opened 1936; closed by 4/8/1964. 20 Grafton Street *Andre Bernard* opened 1948; closed 1964.
- 18 Dover Street Andre Bernard also closed in 1964 for redevelopment.
- 16 Berkeley Street, *Andre Bernard* (Head Office)
- 23 Old Bond Street *Truefitt and Hill*, Barbers.
- 6 Cork Street *French of London* opened Oct/Dec 1959 and Curzon Place in 1934
- 16 Cork Street *Andre Paris*
- 108 New Bond Street *Vidal Sassoon*, opened 3/6 October 1954; 109 New Bond Street *Henry da Costa* opened May 1955
- 171 New Bond Street *Vidal Sassoon* (2<sup>nd</sup> salon) opened 1959 (previously owned by José Pou) South Molton Street *Vidal Sassoon: The Cutting Room* (4<sup>th</sup> salon – men's) Davies Street *Sassoon Academy* opened 1969
- Brook Street *Vidal Sassoon School* (inc. Men's Salon) (moved from Knightsbridge March 1972)
- 27 Berkeley Square 'The House' Alan Spiers opened c.1945-7
- *Riché of Hay Hill*, Berkeley Square (In existence at least from 1946)
- 38 Dover Street, *Antoine de Paris*
- Albemarle Street *Raymond* closed May 1960
- Albemarle Street *Dumas*
- Albemarle Street *Andreas* (came from provinces to Mayfair)
- 8 Avery Row *Marc Hilliard*: Shampoo (2<sup>nd</sup> Salon); *Marc Hilliard's* original salon at either 6 or 10 Avery Row
- South Molton Street *A Cut in Time* opened 1973
- Davies Street *Martin Douglas* Davies Street *Bruno & Guy* (opened 1973); ? Davies Street, *Toni & Guy* (opened 1973)
- House of *Leonard* opened 1963
- 62 Duke Street, Grosvenor Square *Robaire* (IE 1954); Duke Street, Grosvenor Sq, *Harvey & Rupert* (opened 1973)
- Grosvenor Square, *Mane Line*
- 73 Grosvenor Street, *Alexandre Francke* (opened 1956)
- Grosvenor Street, *Steiner* (opened in 1937)
- Evansky's, 17 North Audley Street
- Rene Moulard, 66-68 South. Audley Street (P.Margaret's hairdresser)

Fig.2.4

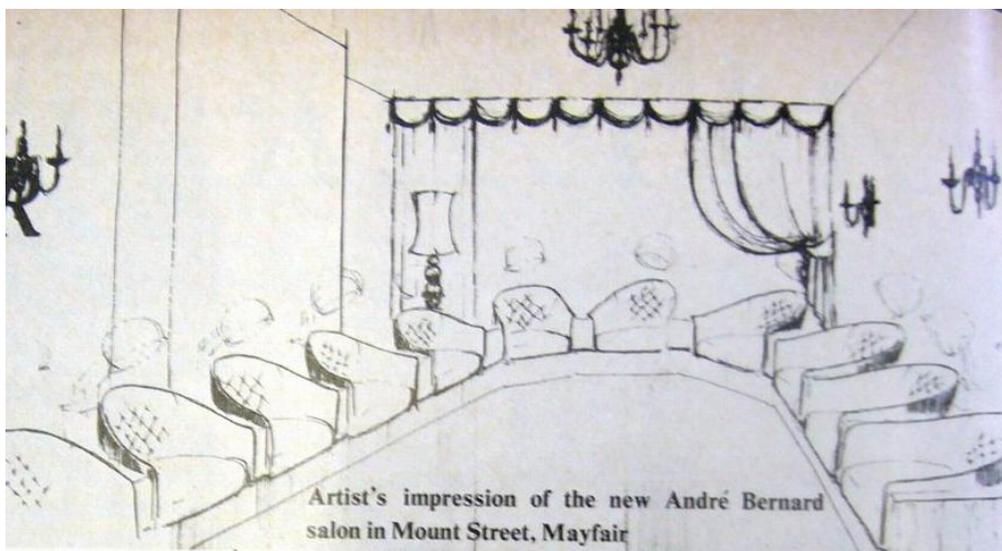
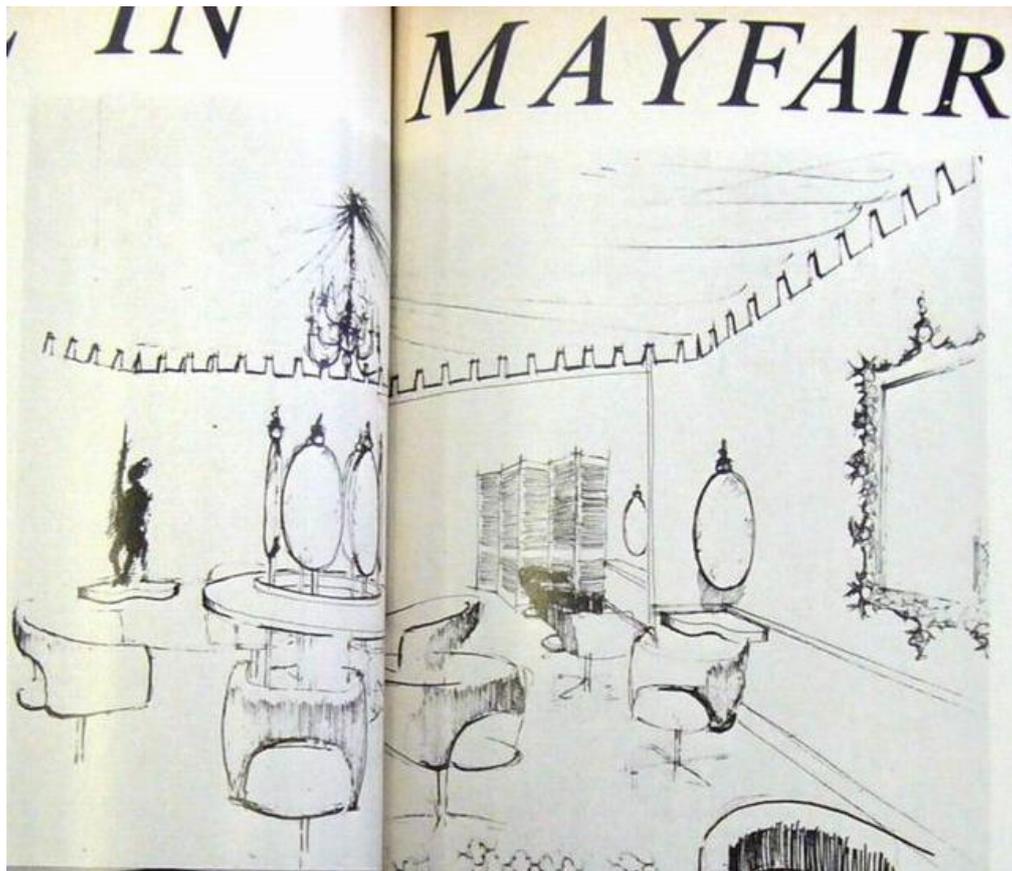


The reception area at Vidal Sassoon's Grosvenor House salon in 1963. While the furnishings look very modern, they are luxurious; the central padded seating area was made of soft leather. Above, the customary Mayfair chandelier, made to order at £450 (*HJ* 1963:12:8)



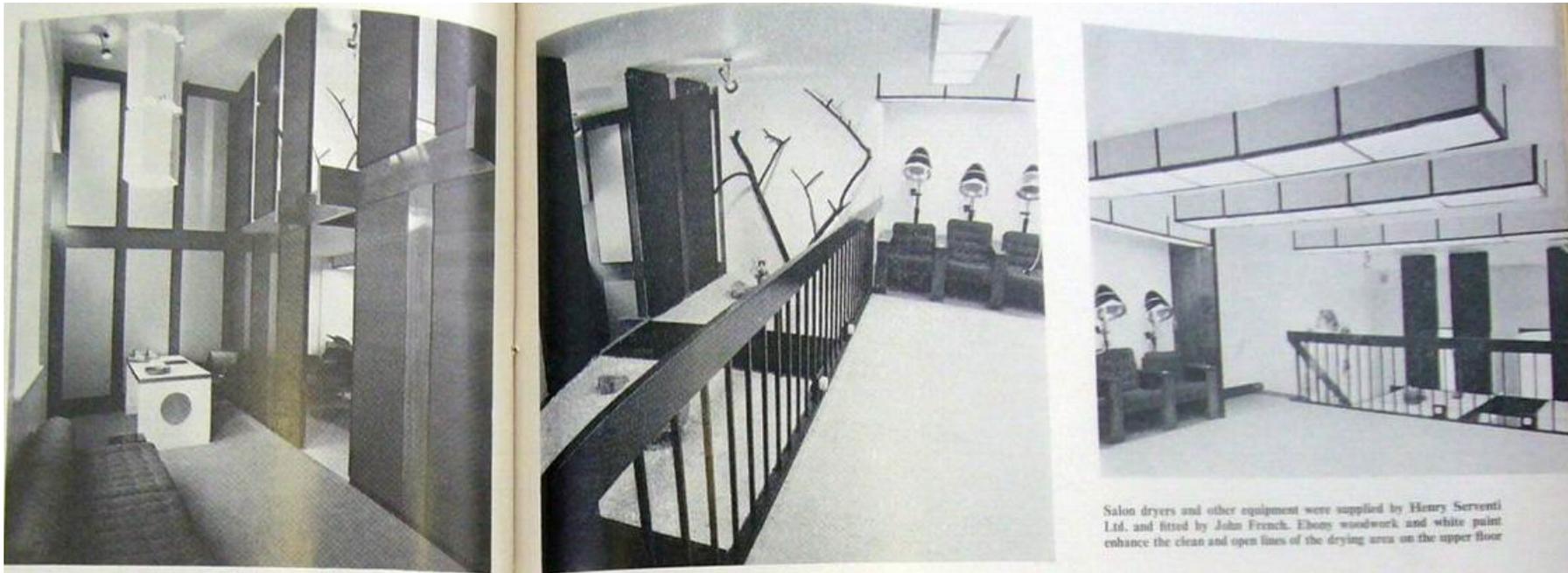
André Bernard's Mayfair (Old Bond Street) salon, 1966, demonstrating that even in the shampoo section chandeliers hang from the pleated folds of the ceiling (*HJ* 1966 8:21-25 'The Success Story of André Bernard')

Fig.2.5



These two sketches were for the new André Bernard salon in Mount Street, 1971, ('Elegance in Mayfair' *HJ* 1971:9:20-22). They demonstrate the Mayfair drawing room style, which was not dissimilar to the Regency and Louis Seize styles, so often used throughout the period of this study. The above is of the dressing out room and below is the drying room.

Fig.2.6



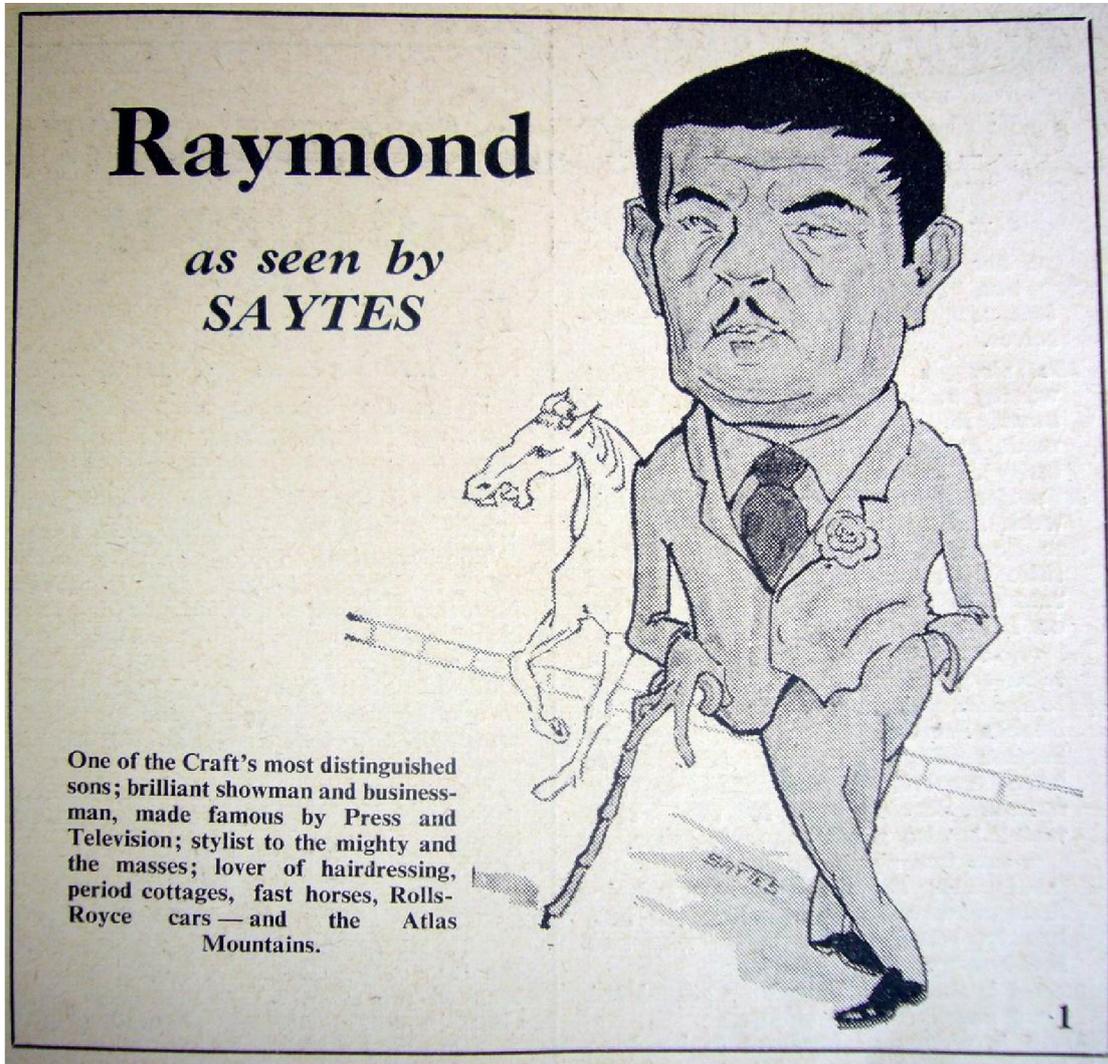
'Tapestry for upholstery and silk for wall panels in the reception area were imported from Japan to give authenticity to the Oriental décor of the Maurice and John French salon in Mayfair' ... 'Ebony woodwork and white paint enhance the clean and open lines of the drying area on the upper floor' ('Oriental Simplicity in Mayfair', *HJ* 1965:4:28-29).

Fig. 2.7



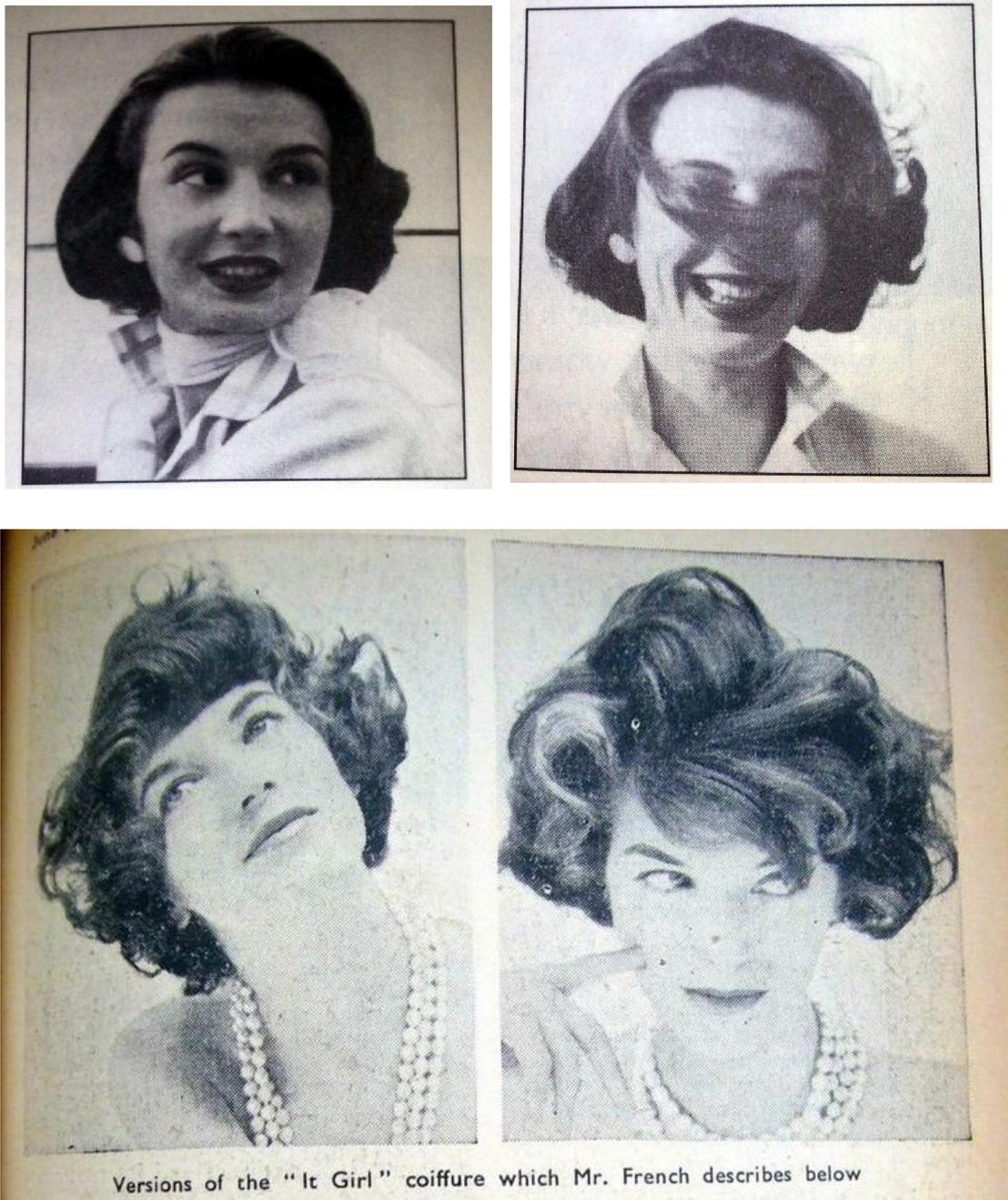
Vidal Sassoon's first salon at 108 Bond Street in the Contemporary Style, 1955. This was much better accommodated than typical Mayfair interiors as the salon was very small. However, Sassoon still decorated using designer furnishings for authenticity ('Bold Treatment for Mayfair' *HJ* 1955:4:41)

Fig. 2.8



Saytes has captured Raymond's attributes perfectly, offering an alternative 'perception' in this clever little caricature. Sadly, Saytes only did one other for the *Hairdressers' Journal* – that of Vidal Sassoon (*HJ* 1964:8:7).

Fig.2.9



**Above:** 'Spray to Make Your Hair Behave' *Good Housekeeping*, (1956). The neat smooth hairstyle of the left hand picture was the desired look of the 1950s, while the right demonstrates the unruly alternative (McCracken, 1995:31-2).  
**Below:** The 'It Girl' (*HJ* 1957:6:17). French had been designing wild styles since the late 1930s.

Fig.2.10



'Strong feelings are aroused in many hairdressers' hearts when they see pictures like this. "What sort of nonsense is Mayfair trying to sell us now?" they demand' (HJ 1958:1:15). The *Hairdressers' Journal* used French as the example of extreme Mayfair avant-gardism because his styles would provoke tremendous reaction in the provincial hairdressing community. In so doing, it confirmed Mayfair's position as creator of the most futuristic hairdressing, indicating that its clientele was so fashion-conscious as to condition the stylist's interpretations.

Fig.2.11



**Left:** French's newly designed Denman brushes with his distinctive logo. They retailed at 31/ 6d for the nylon brush and 50s. for the natural bristle (*HJ*, 1955:11:51). The new nylon brushes, according to Leslie Russell were perfect for brushing through the hair; the boars' bristle brushes were used for smoothing over the finished style (Russell, 2004:189). **Right:** 'The frontage and interior of the new depot ... features the familiar French of London colour scheme of black, red and white' (*HJ* 1961:7:26). The *Journal* made constant reference to French's distinctive logo and colour scheme in its articles.

Fig.2.12



**Above:** Still from the film *The Pumpkin Eater* (1964) which shows the distinctive French of London brand logo replicated on the work uniform of the salon assistant. In the background is the set of French's Cork Street salon, faithfully reproduced to ensure authenticity, which was extended to using some of his own salon staff (*HJ* 1963:11:15). **Below:** French's bright red logo emblazoned on his staff's uniform (*Modern Hair Ornamentation*, 1958)



Fig.2.13



**Above:** A still from the British Pathé newsreel *Hair Sculpture* (1962) showing Freddie French at work on one of his artistic creations. The client's protective gown replicates the staff uniforms in colour and use of logo, and the use of red black and white décor can be seen as colour branding. **Below:** The Oriental/Minimalism influence in design décor is evident in this still of the shop front, particularly in the use of black lattice screens. The colours, so often associated with Japan, blend perfectly with this fashionable style.



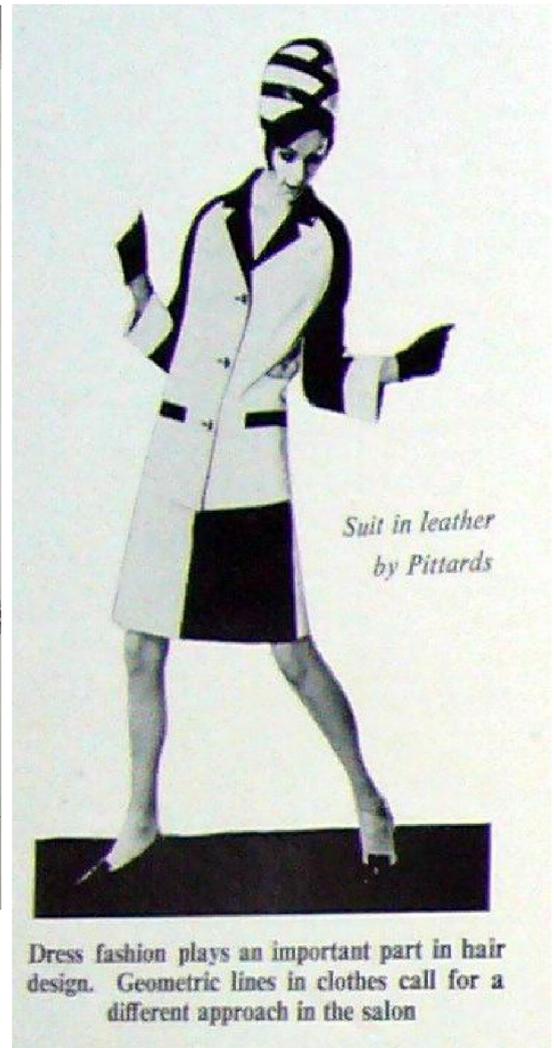
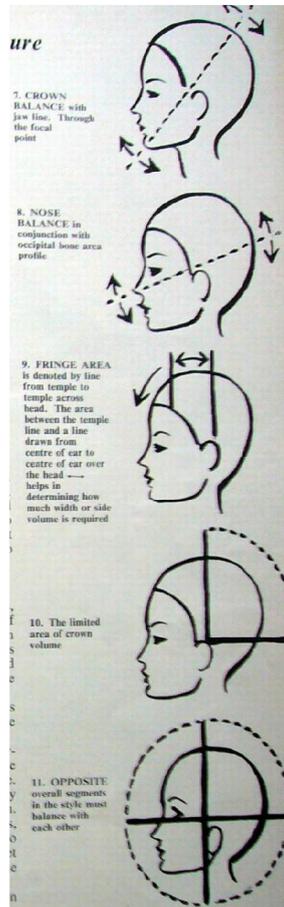
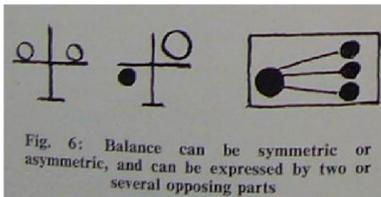
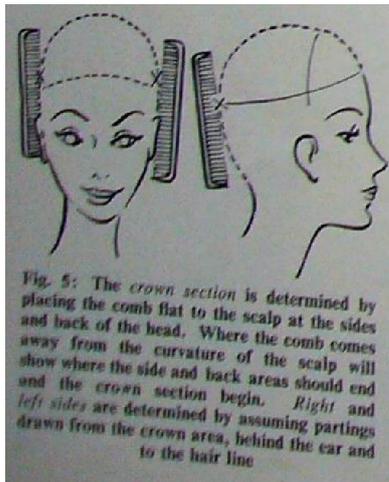
Fig.3.1



Left: These eight images show Nancy Kwan in the process of having her long black hair cut off in preparation for the shooting of the film *The Wild Affair* (1963). Even though Sassoon had cut the bob for Mary Quant just a short while before, it was Kwan who made it internationally famous and it soon became known as the Kwan Bob. Available at: <http://www.pinterest.com/pin/493003490429834280/> Accessed: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

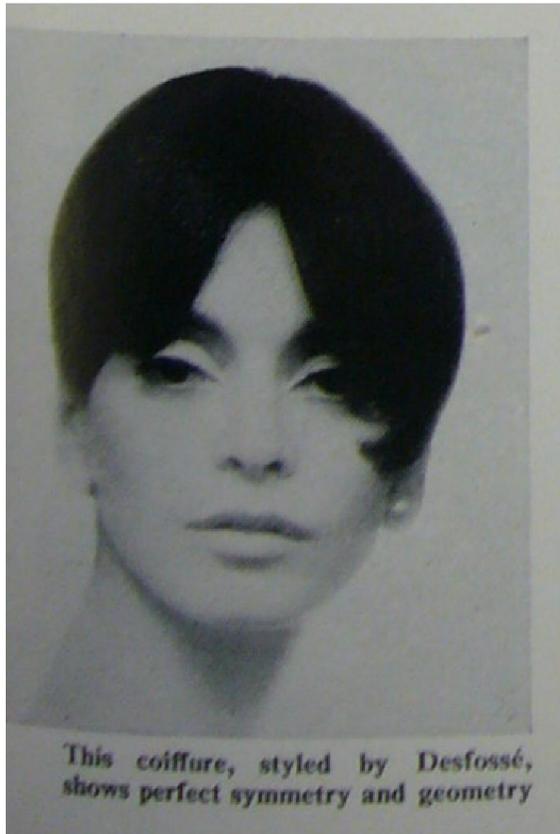
Right: Vidal Sassoon and French model-cum-fashion designer Emmanuelle Khanh. She had the cut shortly after Quant and Kwan – in its third incarnation, soon to be known as the Khanh Bob (<http://www.npr.org/2012/05/18/152822199/remembering-vidal-sassoon-an-iconic-hairdresser>)

Fig.3.2



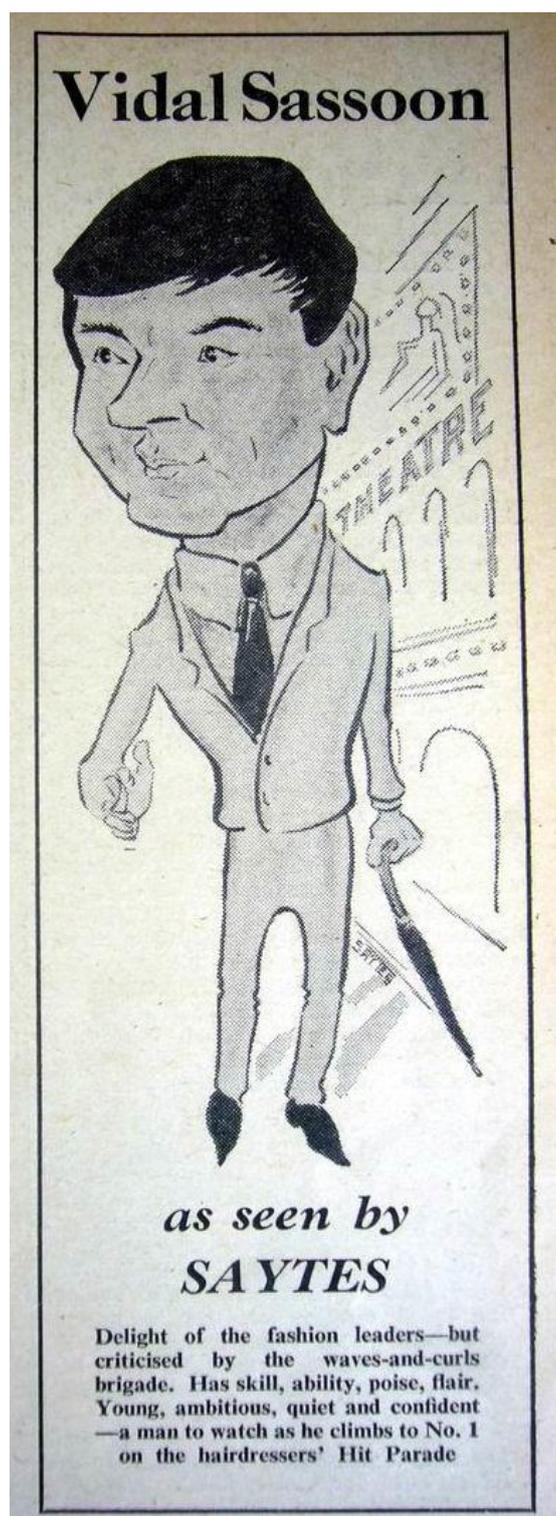
The consumption of hair and fashion came together unmistakably with the marriage of ideas between Quant and Sassoon. Here Alec Pountney demonstrates how this fusion became consumed by provincial salons when he took up the baton to encourage hairdressers outside of the West End to start adopting Sassoon's principles and techniques. Pountney's mathematical diagrams seemingly theorise the art of geometric cutting in their draughtsmanship (1966:1:4, Pountney). Cynthia Figg had also evaluated that the current fashions even for the more mature woman, had an economy of line that demanded sleeker hairdos (1966:3:20, Figg)

Fig.3.3



In 1965, Parisian *haute-coiffeurs* were beginning to adopt the geometric lines introduced by Vidal Sassoon in 1963. Desfossé (left) favoured the much sleeker lines; Luc Traineau's 'Triangle Line' (centre) still maintained movement and was a compromise between the smooth and curly look (*HJ* 1965:10:9). Right: 1966 finally saw the *Syndicat de la Haute Coiffure* catching up and acceding to the geometric look with 'Chance' which Cynthia Figg felt at last broke through the teenage barrier. This version 'Concorde' was asymmetric demanding skilful cutting, created by Henry Menut especially for *The Hairdressers' Journal* (1966:3:18, Figg).

Fig.3.4



Vidal Sassoon, cartoon by Saytes, (*HJ* 1964:8:9). Saytes captures the style of Sassoon in his Beatle boots and Dougie Hayward suit. In the caption he notes the controversy caused by Sassoon's straight geometric haircuts but records that among the fashionistas he is already a celebrity crimper.

Fig.3.5



Sassoon gets closer to his vision of the geometric bob. From top left clockwise: 1960 -The Shape Sassoon, 2010; 1961 -The Vamp (*HJ* 1961:2:13), 1961 - The Guiche (*HJ* 1961:3: 41), 1963 – The Vida (*HJ* 1963:1:11)

Fig.3.6



From left to right: Raymond 'Three Points of Wisdom', 1965 (Mayfair, London) (*HJ* 1965b:10:10); Rose Evansky, 1964 (Mayfair, London) (*HJ* 1964:8:5, Figg); Ehrlodes Brothers, 1965 (Paris) (*HJ* 1965:12:15); 'Swing Heart' Line, 1965 (USA) (*HJ* 1965:2:7). The *Hairdressers' Journal* described this silhouette as the 'tiny' or 'pin' head which would sit atop fashion like the dot on top of the letter 'i'.

Fig.3.7



'Unmistakeable Sassoon looks. Left his Geometric, right the Isadora. Would copyright laws protect these styles?' (1973:6:26, Sterling).

By the time Jonathon Sterling posed this question in 1973, the 'Five Point' (left) along with other signature Sassoon cuts were indelibly imprinted in the mind of the general public and evidence that in a few short years Sassoon had become a phenomenon which would simply not abate and continues to be so into the Twenty-first Century.

Fig.3.8



Twiggy 'the Face of '66', photographed by Barry Lategan (1966), hair cut by Leonard and colouring by Daniel Galvin. While hair model photographs were typically monochrome because most hairdressers felt that it accentuated the cut and shape, the coloured highlights are still clearly visible. Galvin said: 'I put highlights through her hair which took hours as I used the brickwork technique, which was new at the time. I wanted to push the boundaries whenever I could and get my name and colour as much publicity as possible. We had no idea how big this image would be.' (*Hji*, 2009)

Fig.3.9



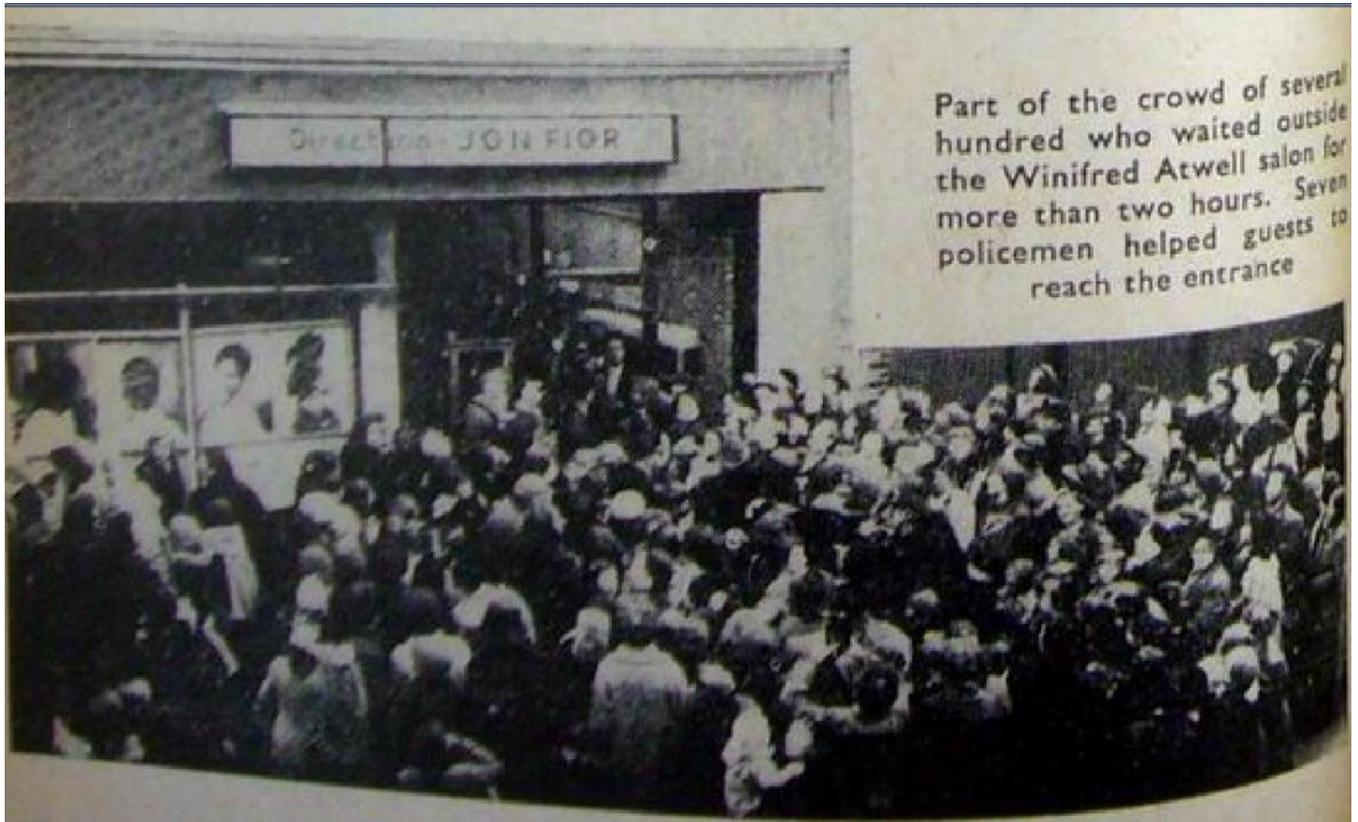
Daniel Galvin's hair colouring techniques completely transformed the view of tinted hair. Left: Creative Colour at Leonards, 1971. This image was produced for *Vogue* magazine to coincide with Guy Fawkes Night and to launch the new Crazy Colours into the retail market. Model Patricia Roberts and photographer Barry Lategan. Centre: Grace Coddington for US *Vogue*, 1972. Galvin wanted to revive the use of Henna and the dissemination of this image brought it back into fashion. Right: Crazy Colour, early 1970s. This image created huge interest in the artistic effects of colouring hair (*HJi*, October 2009)

Fig.3.10



'It all comes up colour in the new season's fashions ... Butterfly-bright colours ... reds, greens, yellows. Beautiful browns. Two-colour toning. Such colours are coming to *your* salon, said our Teach-In Trendsetters'. From left to right: hair colours by Stephen Way, Derek Roe, Mark Young, Keith Hall and Jason Brandler. These images from *The Hairdressers' Journal* 1973, demonstrate how far hair colouring had come at Daniel Galvin's instigation (HJ 1973:6:26-27).

Fig.3.11



Photographers captured the huge crowds waiting to see Winifred Atwell opening her new salon in April 1957 at Wise's Corner, Railton Road, Brixton, London SE24. According to *The Hairdressers' Journal*, they stood in the rain for more than two hours, chanting "We want Winnie!", stopping passing traffic and resisting police appeals to disperse (HJ 1957:4:38-39).

Fig.3.12



**Left:** The washbasins at Winifred Atwell's hairdressing salon in Brixton were surrounded by black and yellow mosaic tiles. **Centre:** A customer has her hair straightened out. **Right:** Atwell has her hair styled in her Contemporary decorated salon, 1957. All of these images of Atwell's salon are from <http://www.nickelinthemachine.com/2012/10/the-honky-tonk-woman-winifred-atwell-and-the-railton-road-in-brixton/>

Fig.3.13



**Left:** The first graduates of the Roy Lando Hairdressing School for black students, 1958. It was the first school of its kind in Britain (*HJ* 1958:11:39).  
**Right:** While Lando's was a dedicated school, others had to train their students in the salon. Eve's Academy of Hair and Beauty Culture opened in 1963 and was run on the salon premises. The salon and Academy had applied for membership of the Association of British Hairdressers, the first Black hairdressers to do so (*HJ* 1963:3:10).

Fig.3.14



This cartoon which appeared in *The Hairdressers' Journal* (*HJ* 1963:1:23) was typical of the wider society's 'passive racism' before the Race Relations Act came into force on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1968.

Fig.3.15



By 1973 Black hairdressing had come a long way. West End hairdressers were demonstrating that they were every bit as able to create innovative hair styles and colour with black hair. These colourful creations were the work of Harold Leighton for Harrods (*HJ* 1973:6:27)

Fig.4.1



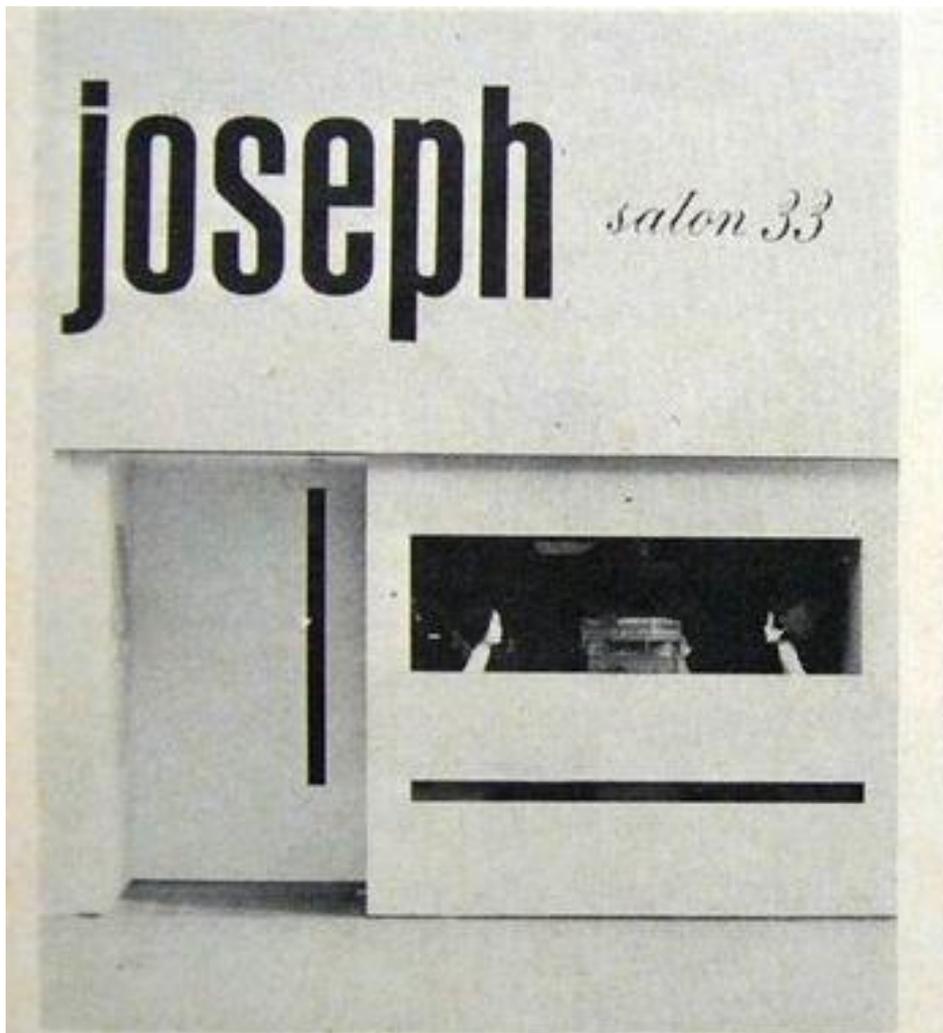
The Leonard House of Hair and Beauty. Leonard chose to locate himself in traditional Mayfair because as he said, 'there was nowhere else to be if you wanted to establish yourself as the best in the business ... I wanted a building that would make the clients feel as comfortable as when they were at home ... as luxurious and elegant as any five-star hotel' (Lewis, 2000:59). Lewis had moved into this building in the early Sixties before the new wave of hairdressers started setting up shop in the areas around Mayfair, such as Knightsbridge, Chelsea and Baker Street.

Fig.4.2



The short, slim-fitting designs of Mary Quant's clothes were drawn in a style that had a childlike quality about them, intended to make grown women feel like young girls. The very long legs accentuated the 'mini' silhouette of the outfits and the slightly pigeon-toed stance was redolent of childish poses. Long legs became symbolic of the new young fashionable woman (the 'Dolly') and were often strangely referred to through the aesthetic connotations of vegetables or flower stems such as asparagus or sunflower stalks (Sparke, 2004: 127; Harris et al, 1986:132).

Fig.4.3



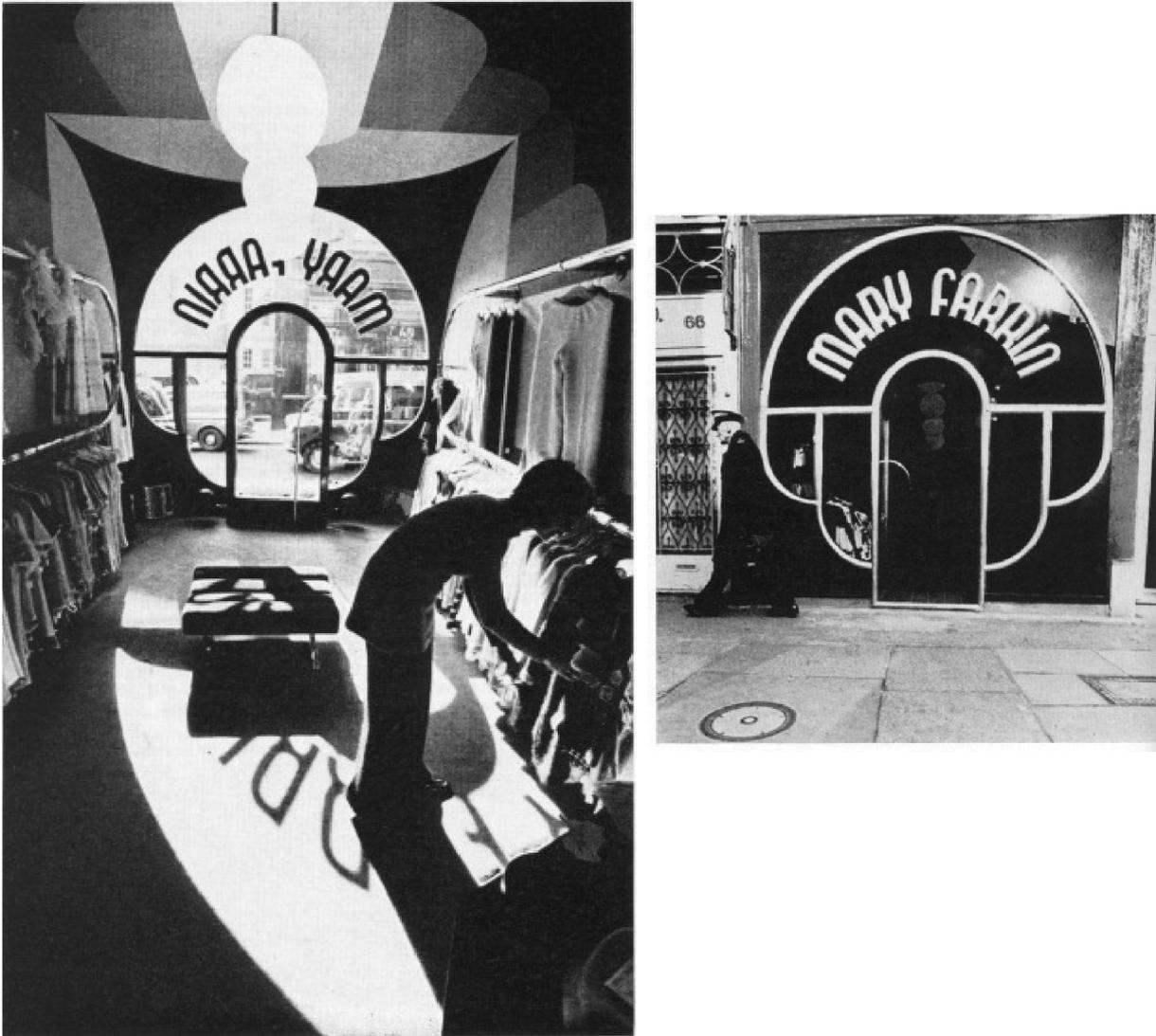
The Hairdressers' Journal captioned this as a 'Strikingly modern frontage, designed to attract the well-to-do, with-it Chelsea Set' (*HJ* 1966:6:9). Joseph Ettedgui (1936-2010), the owner of this new boutique salon was a shopkeeper from Casablanca who later went on to redefine fashion retailing in the 1980s and 90s. A little like Terence Conran's lifestyle store in the 1960s, Ettedgui pioneered the selling of furniture and ceramics alongside fashion garments. The Joseph store on the Brompton Road became a mecca for the newly rich and style-conscious (Reed, 2013:104)

Fig.4.4



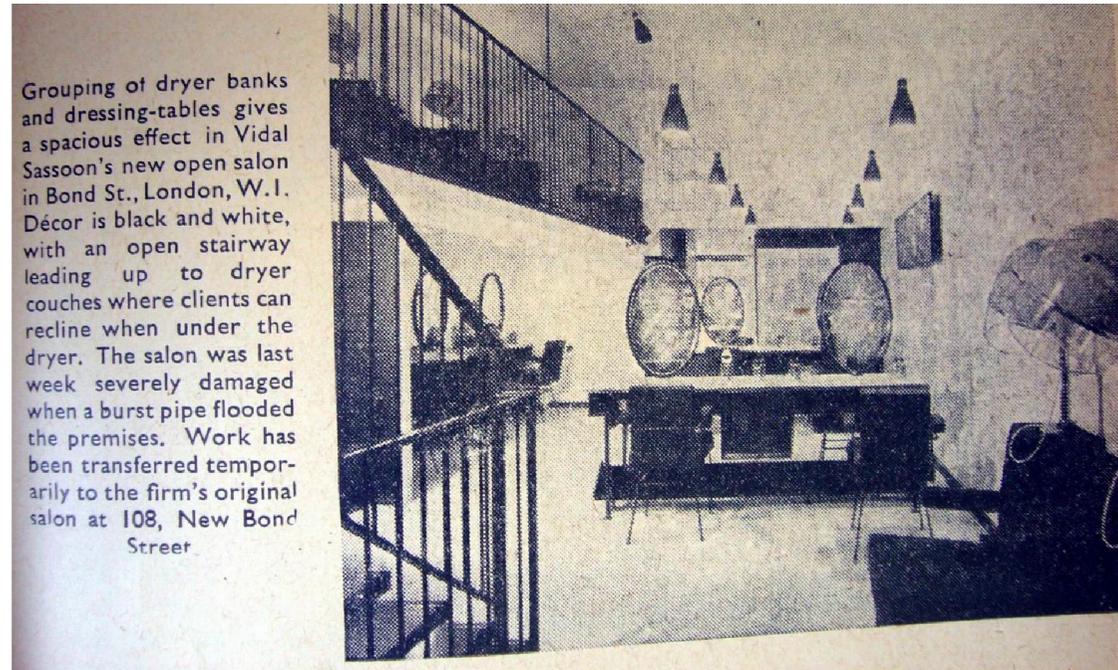
The interior of Crimpers in Baker Street. *Design* described it as having more in common with a bistro than a 'salon' interior because it exuded a much more informal youthful atmosphere. The Editorial said that for all the alleged glamour normally associated with hairdressing it was a slovenly business and it hoped that its small but minimalist design would encourage the stylists to clean up their act (1972:71).

Fig.4.5



Mary Farrin Boutique, South Molton Street, Mayfair, 1969. The young architectural student group Wilkinson, Calvert & Gough's clever use of geometry to maximise this very small space also gave it the atmosphere of an adventure playground for children thus encouraging consumption of its highly fashionable clothing by young adult consumers. *Design* magazine said that 'the tiny interior of the boutique [] shows ingenious spatial distortion caused by semi-circular wall painting' (1969:66)

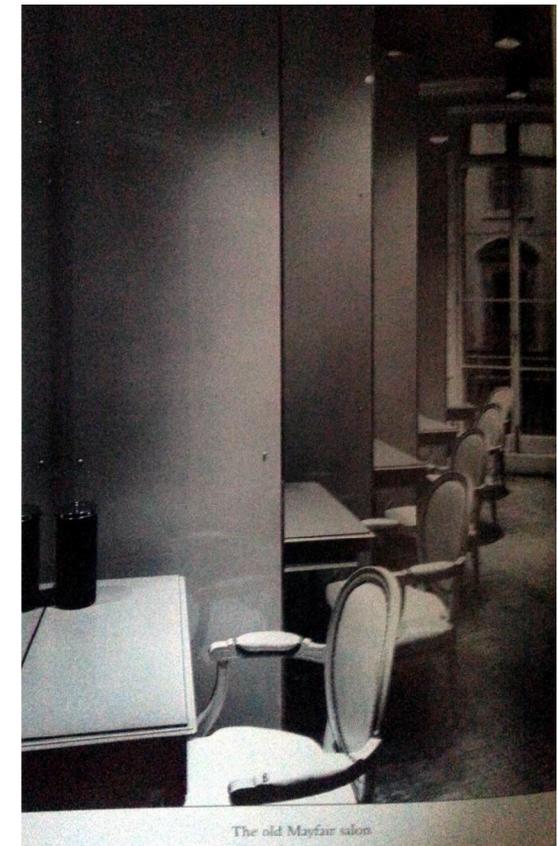
Fig.4.6



**Left:** 'Bold Treatment for Mayfair' - Sassoon's first salon interior at 108 New Bond Street, 1955, (*HJ* 1955 4:41). The décor conformed to the new Contemporary style which Lesley Jackson (1998) described as an active rejection of revivalism and a style that like Modernism, strove to break new ground but with a less clinical and more 'scientific' aesthetic. In the wider society it replaced interwar Modernism but in hairdressing interiors it replaced 'the old French Look' (Massey, 2001) of Regency wallpaper and chandeliers that was customary in Mayfair. However, within a few years, this new style was superseded by 'Sophisticated Contemporary' design, ushering in a 'controlled and understated' aesthetic (Jackson, 1998:17).

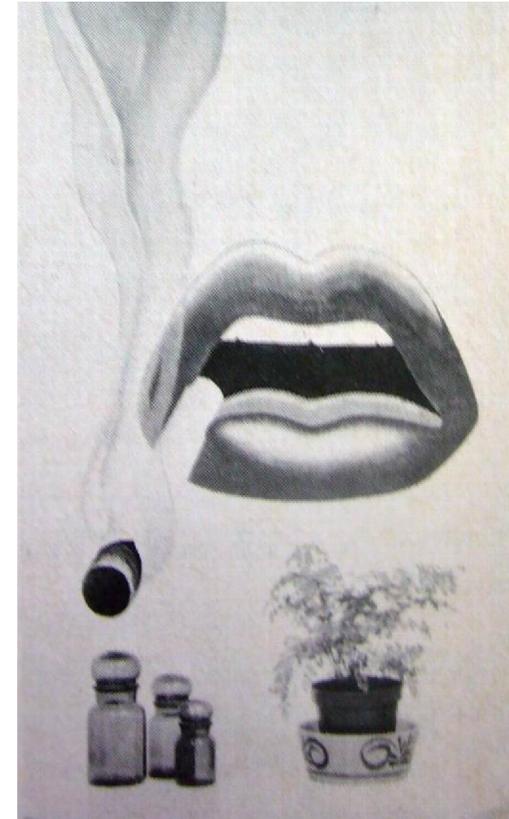
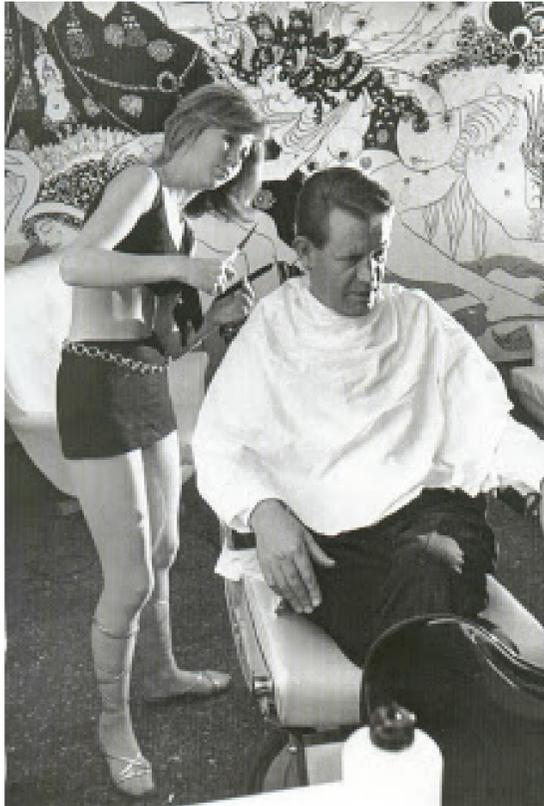
**Right:** 'Harmony of Line in London W.1' (*HJ* 1959:8:41) - 171 New Bond Street. The salon conforms to the new Sophisticated Contemporary style and appeared briefly in Polanski's 1965 film *Repulsion* as the workplace of Catherine Deneuve's character, Carole LeDoux (Sassoon, 2010).

Fig.4.7



**Left:** Leonard's Salon interior. *The Journal* noted that 5 tonnes of glass were used to revamp the main salon into a series of cantilevered mirrored and lacquer glass panels flanking plain Georgian floor-to-ceiling windows (*HJ* 1970:4:6). Jeanette Challenger's vivid memory of 'the threepenny-bit shape' appears to be a seating area in the centre of the more conventional shaped room. Both she and Sue Billam had clear memories of the tall Georgian windows visible in both images. **Right:** Dressing out stations on the windowless side (Lewis, 2000).

Fig.4.8



**Left:** A micro-skirted female stylist attends to a male client in Samson and Delilah's salon in Mayfair, photograph taken in 1968 (A Dandy in Aspic, 2013). Art Nouveau and the interest in Aubrey Beardsley had provoked his imagery to appear everywhere and was found in boutiques as well as fashion advertising. The mural behind the hairdresser is not identifiable as one of his drawings but is Beardsleyesque in style. **Centre:** *The Toilet of Salome*, Beardsley 1894. The *Hairdressers' Journal* acknowledged Beardsley's popularity and suggested that some reproduction images such as *The Toilet of Salome* either as a poster or card would be suitable for a salon because of the obvious content (HJ 1967:12:9). **Right:** Pop art murals were another way to brighten up and create a younger feel in a salon as this design demonstrated (HJ 1975:11:35)

Fig.4.9



**Above:** The 1969 Smile Reception: The minimalist interior was relieved by Swing Seats providing a novel and relaxing method of waiting for appointments.  
**Below:** Smile Reception 1972: Luxury replaces efficiency in the new look reception. The fashionable craze for Art Deco styling, instigated by the Biba aesthetic completely altered the salon's appearance. The swing seats have been replaced by a 1930s shell-back plush three-piece suite. Photographs by permission of Keith Wainwright.

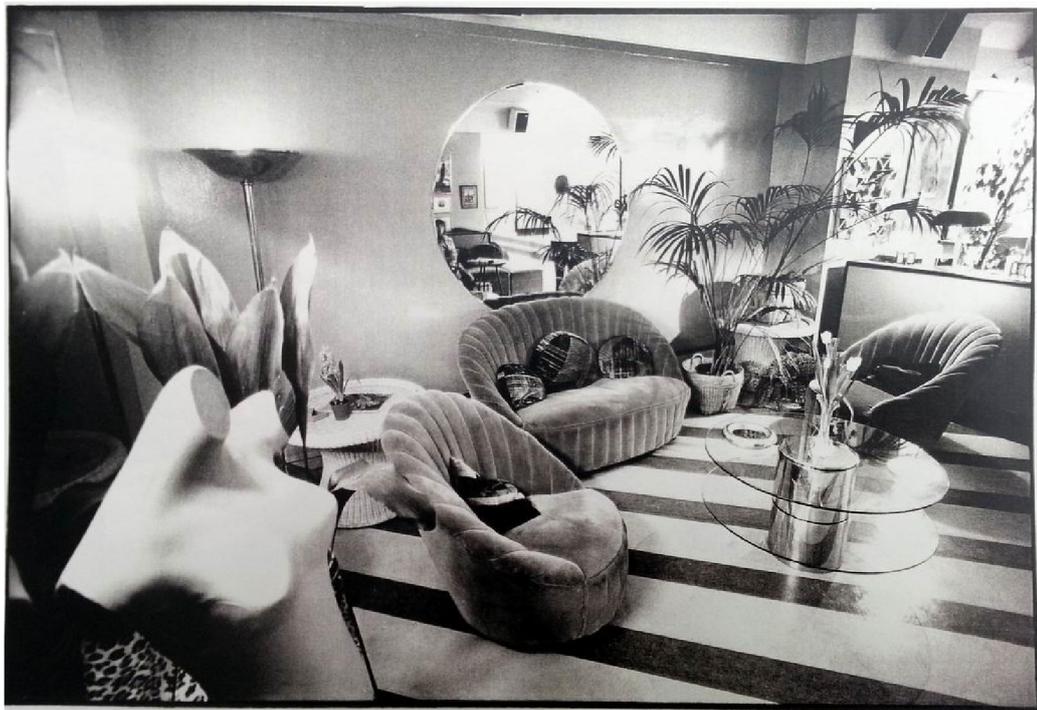


Fig.4.10



### Putting the boot into Old Bond Street



**Left:** Sassoon's 1971 dramatic restyle of 171 New Bond Street was designed by Billy McCarty out of 'grp' (glass reinforced plastic - or more commonly fibreglass). The reception interior was designed around the circular shop front window, creating a womb-like effect (*Design*, 1971:58). **Right:** '£8,000 worth of clever thinking, was apparently not clever enough' – McCarty's 'boot' was replaced by Gordon Bowyers bronze and filter glass frontage which began to be the hallmark of the Sassoon brand the world over (*Design*, 1973:14).

Fig.4.11



'The idea for a 'his and her' salon in Knightsbridge was conceived by Richard Conway, who also runs the famed Ginger Group of hairdressers. The girls were bringing boy-friends to wait while their hair was done – then boys started asking for styling, too. The whole thing is just a natural business development, and is proving very popular. Here a couple have backwash shampoos side by side' *Hairdressers' Journal* (HJ 1967:1:8)

Fig.4.12



Smile's washbasin area with its harmonious Yin-Yang image hung on the wall. The minimalist interior was completely white, including the Amtico floor. Vertical blinds hung from the yellow painted scaffold structure provided additional privacy if needed. Photograph by permission of Keith Wainwright.

Fig.4.13



The reception waiting area at Smile. The large swing seats provided a novel focal point and were suspended from the yellow painted 'meccano-like' scaffolding which could house large panel screens to create 'areas', or vertical blinds for privacy. A hood hairdryer is just visible, shielded by the reception panel. The lighting was also attached to the top of the scaffold structure. Russell said that the ornate dressing-out mirrors were introduced to provide relief from the prevalent minimalism which resembles the forthcoming high-tech interior style that would appear in the mid-Seventies. Photograph by permission of Keith Wainwright.