Strawberry Recording Studios and the Development of Recording Studios in Britain c.1967-93

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A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities

2007

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the development of the British recording studio from the mid-1960s to the early-1990s. Although there are now a growing number of academic studies of popular music they have, so far, largely failed to study the evolving process by which artists were able to reproduce their music for mass distribution. Consequently, this dissertation investigates the image portrayed of the studio and its utilisation and representation by a combination of human, technological and locational factors.

The first part of the thesis constructs an overview of the recording studio industry, as based on contemporary trade journals, in order to produce a traditional historical narrative, so far absent from music's historiography, which provides the framework in which to place more detailed research. The prominence given by the industry to the 'progress of technology' is then compared to the public perception of the recording studio, as shown by the extent and content of its inclusion in the popular culture media of the period, both print and film based. How far the process of producing recorded music managed to permeate through the presentation of a music industry that was becoming increasingly reliant on the image and personality of the artists themselves is then analysed.

The second part of the thesis is based on Latour's concept of actor-networks and deconstructs the recording studio into three main components; technology, architecture and the human element within it. Using one particular studio (Strawberry Recording Studios in Stockport) as being representative of the increasing proportion of small independents in the industry, the further deconstruction of these three components into their constitutional networks, provides the key theme of the dissertation. Consequently, studio technology can be viewed not simply in terms of functional machinery in the studio setting (of Latourian 'black boxes') but more as a confusing and intrusive element that was developed, shaped and created by the requirements of those in the studio. And, whilst contemporary society has always elevated the status of the performer in the music industry, the human element in the studio can also be shown to comprise the industrial and social interaction between a wide range of support staff, whose roles and importance altered over time, and the artists themselves. Finally, studio buildings were not just backdrops to the work taking place in them but were seen to extend their boundaries and influence beyond their immediate location through their architecture, interior design and geography. In other words, the recording studio might be seen as the combination of a number of fluctuating networks rather than just as a passive element in the production of recorded music.

As a result of the content of the subject being studied, this thesis utilises a number of sources that, in Samuel's terminology, moves the study away from a 'fetishization' of the traditional historical archive towards those of 'unofficial learning'. Given the immediacy of the period being studied, the personal accounts of those involved in the studio, mainly through the use of oral history, form a major part of the research material.

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Whilst the British public has particularly had an interest in youth-centred popular music from the late 1950s onwards, the academic study of the topic has only developed in the last thirty or so years. Indeed, from the 1980s onwards, the subject of Media Studies experienced "massive and rapid growth in secondary, further and higher educational institutions",[1] with particular attention paid to youth and popular culture. Consequently, this has allowed the study of popular music to become a "flourishing academic industry"[2] and for the work of such bodies as the International Association for the Study of Popular Music[3] (founded in 1981) to move the topic away from the opinions of the hallway towards the "discourse of the classroom."[4]

Whilst the early initial academic interest in the 1970s produced mainly descriptive accounts of the rise of pop music in western society,[5] the later academic[6] works sought to place the phenomenon into a wider cultural[7] and sociological[8] framework and often concentrated more specifically on the various pop sub-groups, such as reggae[9] punk,[10] hip hop,[11] blues,[12] and Motown.[13] And yet the majority of these works concentrated mainly on the analysis of the finished musical product rather than attempting any study of the actual creation of it. Little emphasis was placed on investigating the process of transferring music to record, tape or disc, with only a few published works looking at the technical aspects of the process itself[14] or the wider recording industry.[15] Consequently, the importance of the recording studio in the pop

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[1] S. Thornham and T. O'Sullivan, "Chasing the Real: 'Employability' and the Media Studies Curriculum", *Media, Culture & Society*, 26:5 (2004), p.717.
[2] A. Blake, *The Land Without Music*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.9.
[3] www.iaspm.net
[4] S. Frith, *Performing Rites*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.12.
[5] C. Belz, *The Story of Rock*, (New York; Oxford University Press, 1969), N. Cohn, *Awopbopaloobopalopbamboom*, (London: Paladin, 1970), M. Wale, *Voxpop*: *Profiles of the Pop Process*, (London: Harrap, 1972).
[6] R. Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990).
[7] K. Negus, *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry*, (London: Arnold, 1992).
[8] S. Frith, *The Sociology of Rock*, (London: Constable, 1978).
[9] S. Davis, *Reggae Bloodlines: In Search of the Music and Culture of Jamaica*, (London: Doubleday, 1979).
[10] J. Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock*, (London, Faber + Faber, 1991).
[11] A. Ogg, *The Hip-Hop Years: A History of Rap*, (London: Channel 4 Books, 1999).
[12] J. Collis, *The Blues: Roots and Inspiration*, (London: Salamander, 1997).
[13] G. Fuller and L. Mack, *The Motown Story*, (London: Orbis, 1985).
[14] E. Daniels, *Magnetic Recording: The First 100 Years*, (New York: IEEE Press, 1999).
R. Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph*, (London: Cassell, 1977).
[15] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1998).

music process has been much understated and what little research there has been on this topic has, on the whole, been restricted to studying individual studios and their histories,[16] slanted towards the experiences of the personalities within them[17] or focussing primarily on the American experience.[18] As a result, there is little research on the British recording studios to build on and one of the initial aims of this study, therefore, is to raise the historical profile of the recording studio itself and to emphasize its importance in the creation of the finished musical product. This lack of an historical investigation into the modern British recording studio also requires that the first part of this study creates a historical narrative of the industry and analysis of the perception of the studio space that was being created in the minds of the British public.

Narrative

The construction of a backdrop to the recording studio industry requires a framework of key dates, people and events to be created, which can then place any further research into some sort of context. Such an approach is not unusual and, taking the historical study of just two British industries out of many as random examples, those researching the post-World War Two Lancashire cotton industry[19] are able to place their own work in relation to the key facts of the period as a result of the descriptive work of historians such as John Singleton[20] and, likewise, analysis of the British motorcar industry[21] can occur against the detailed background work of, amongst others, James Foreman-Peck, Sue Bowden and Alan McKinlay.[22] For many historians, more in-depth research can take place with the basic narrative already constructed and with the framework of notable events taken for granted. For example, Ackers and Payne's analysis of the post-war British coal industry takes the opportunity to delve beyond the established facts and to "displace the grand

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[16] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1985) is the best example.

[17] H. Massey, *Behind the Glass: Top Record Producers Tell How They Craft the Hits*, (San Francisco: Miller Freeman Books, 2000).

[18] D. Simons, *Studio Stories: How the Great New York Records Were Made*, (San Francisco, Backbeat Books, 2004).

[19] On example is M. Parsons and M. B. Rose, "The Neglected Legacy of Lancashire Cotton", *Enterprise and Society*, 6:4 (2005), pp.682-709.

[20] J. Singleton, *Lancashire on the Scrapheap: The Cotton Industry 1945-1970*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[21] For example, R. Koshar, "Cars and Nations: Anglo-German Perspectives on Automobility Between the World Wars", *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21:4-5 (2004), pp.121-44.

[22] J. Foreman-Peck, S. Bowden, A. McKinlay, *The British Motor Industry*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

narrative"[23] that was portrayed in the industry's own official history[24] published some years earlier. This is not meant to imply that producing a chronicle of dates, names and events is somehow less important in historical terms than more detailed analysis of specific factors or specialised areas. It is only through these initial efforts that further contextual research is possible. However, those researching uncharted territories run the risk of spending too much time producing this framework. In other words, there is the possibility that the historian's work can become bogged down in the creation of the historical narrative.

The very use of the term 'historical narrative' is a contentious one as it has created much friction between historians in recent years. For those such as Alun Munslow, the historian's role is to provide a "narrative substitution"[25] of the past for those in the present. In other words, the historian is using a limited number of historical sources to provide a glimpse of the past using a combination of personal judgement, selectivity and literary skill. However, leading on from this, historians have encountered and debated questions that have struck at the very heart of the subject. For instance, what is history - the 'facts' of the past as represented by the sources or the historian's narrative presentation of them? What is the historian's role - to simply structure and relate the 'facts' or to apply narrative techniques that produce a representation of the past? Is the historian who pays more attention than another to the language and structure of research producing a lesser history? On the one side, Arthur Marwick stated that "historians do not…'reconstruct' or even 'represent' the past. What historians do is produce *knowledge about* the past",[26] emphasising the need for research to be presented as clearly and unambiguously as possible, without the introduction of superfluous narrative dressing. Others though, such as Bruno Latour, have accepted that literary techniques can be used to play their part in the presentation of historical research. His own study of a failed Paris automated transport system[27] is a mixture of carefully researched source-based fact and fictional

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[23] P. Ackers and J. Payne, "Before the Storm: The Experience of Nationalization and the Prospects for Industrial Relations Partnership in the British Coal Industry 1947 – 1972 – Rethinking the Militant Narrative", *Social History*, 27:2 (2002), p.206.

[24] W. Ashworth, *The History of the British Coal Industry, Volume 5 1946 – 1982*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

[25] A. Munslow, "Where Does History Come From?", *History Today*, 52:3 (2002), p.20.

[26] A. Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.xiii.

[27] B. Latour, *Aramis: or the Love of Technology* (Translated by C. Porter), (London: Harvard University Press, 1996).

writing, employed by the author to create just the type of work of historical art that Marwick says should not exist.[28]

Of course, this does not mean that, once produced, any historical narrative remains unchallenged or set in stone. It is possible to provide a variety of narratives on just one topic, each from a different historical viewpoint. The historian is able to transfer his or her own ideology or specialisation onto the narrative process and, as a result, produce differing, maybe opposing, narratives. The specialist branches of history, such as economic history, business history, cultural history and the history of science and technology, all have their own particular narrative to relate. Changes in contemporary society can also provide the impetus for the creation of new narratives, as noted by the editors of *Past and Present* in their overview of the journal's first fifty years,[29] with the most obvious example of this in recent years being the introduction of 'gender' into the historical debate.[30] Also, further narratives can be created that provide an overview or summary of the research that has already taken place in a certain field. Such narratives can be useful for those outside of, or perhaps new to, the study of that particular topic.

As already noted, no historical narrative of the modern British recording studio industry has so far been constructed. Whilst some works on the music industry, and some looking at individual recording studios, have identified certain key factors, none of them have looked at the recording studio industry generally over the period in question. To construct a linear narrative framework, as well as pulling together those factors highlighted in other published research, it will be necessary to piece together the recording studio's development as seen through the industry's own trade journals during this period plus a number of secondary sources. Fortunately, a number of such journals (*Audio*, *Studio* and *Studio Sound* for example) cover the period and analysis of the major themes noted in these can provide the basis for the narrative that will form the framework for more detailed analysis of the recording studio itself. *Studio Sound*, published between 1961 and 2001, is particularly useful in that it covers the entire period of this study and was considered to be "the world's

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[28] "To call a work of history a work of art is to show a poor understanding of the nature of works of art." A. Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.195.

[29] "We publish much more cultural and gender history than we did, in particular", L. Roper and C. Wickham, "*Past and Present* After Fifty Years", *Past and Present*, 176 (2002), p.5.

[30] Just one example from many is R. Watts, "Gendering the Story: Change in the History of Education", *History of Education*, 34:3 (2005), pp.225-41.

leading professional recording journal",[31] a point emphasised by the number of technical articles cited or reproduced from the magazine on various commercial websites today.[32]

Perception

The concept of the studio as a place for the creation of a work of art is seen in many other artistic pursuits, representative of the different human senses, all of which provide interesting pointers for this study of sound recording studios. Painters, photographers or sculptors, for instance, were often isolated in small rooms that could offer "capacious breadth only to one mind and provide room for only one pair of hands"[33] whilst, conversely, the twentieth century film and television studios were giant, sprawling communities[34] that housed large numbers of people. Yet, key elements bound these different types of studios together; these were places, all of which maintained an air of mystery and an aura, where 'artists' with special skills created works of art that captured the public's imagination. The presence of science also added an extra layer of mystery as very few people understood the techniques associated with film or sound production and an example of this 'technophobia' is seen in the nineteenth century photographic studio where customers were initially concerned that the camera might rob them of their souls.[35] Such perceptions were often established and sustained as a result of the ignorance of the workings of studios by the public. Very few would ever visit the painter's, film company's or music studio and the 'visits' that were made were usually undertaken on their behalf by journalists or documentary filmmakers.

The historian, too, could often embellish and romanticise industry, thus creating another layer of perception. For example, when describing the nineteenth century Lancashire cotton industry, one historian said that "the story of a great industry is a romance, in which may be traced the hopes and fears, achievements and failures of successive generations. For History, even when clad in sober economic garb, is a

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[31] www.brideswell.com/richard.html

[32] For example www.ambisonic.net/ambimix.html, www.stereosociety.com/SurroundIntro.html, www.manleylabs.com/reviews/Studio_Sound_Voxbox_review.html

[33] C. Jones, *Machine in the Studio*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p.7.

[34] Ealing Film Studios in Britain, for example, was "set up on a four acre site in West London." (C. Slessor, "Set Dressing", *Architectural Review*, 211: April [2002], p.70).

[35] E. McCauley, *Industrial Madness*, (London: Yale University Press, 1994), p.17.

thing of flesh and blood."[36] This use of the word 'romance' in association with industry was very much a product of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when a number of books and articles appeared on the subject. Samuel Smiles, for instance, followed up his most famous work, *Self Help*,[37] with a number of biographies of famous industrial engineers, such as George Stephenson, James Nasmyth and Thomas Telford which were almost fiction-like and concentrated on the heroic deeds of individuals who had used toil, perseverance and effort to bring about industrial success. In addition to the books that offered fictional accounts of industrial life (for example, Trefor Thomas has identified a number of Lancashire cotton-mill novels),[38] these 'factual' accounts often matched them for language and narrative.

Perception of industries on a wider scale was influenced by many factors, both visual and verbal, and was open to revision as time progressed. A prime example of this is how the perception of the twentieth century industrial North changed from the nineteenth century representation in such novels as Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*,[39] which linked the lives of the factory workers with "graphic accounts of filth and waste",[40] to the more romantic twentieth century visual representations of factories and workers as shown in the paintings of L. S. Lowry and the fact that this 'Lowryscape' came to achieve "a central space in the national imaginary."[41] The importance of perception was also seen in the fact that some industries were extremely keen to control and manipulate the image that was being created of them. For instance, the British oil companies went to great lengths in the 1920s and 1930s to be seen as "protectors of the countryside"[42] rather than the cause of its destruction through the proliferation of advertising signs and untidy petrol stations. Through the increasing use of mobile hoardings and illuminated globes for petrol stations, the companies reacted to the growing criticism of their activities and attempted to change the perception held of them. For example, Shell enlisted the help of John

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[36] L. Wood and A. Wilmore, *Romance of the Cotton Industry in England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), p.*v*.
[37] S. Smiles, *Self Help: With Illustrations of Character and Conduct*, (London: John Murray, 1859).
[38] T. Thomas, "Lancashire and the Cotton Mill in Late Victorian Fiction", *Manchester Region History Review*, XIII (1999), pp. 44-51.
[39] E. Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[40] N. Freeland, "The Politics of Dirt in 'Mary Barton' and 'Ruth'", *Studies in English Literature*, 42:4 (2002), p.799.
[41] C. Waters, "Representations of Everyday Life: L. S. Lowry and the Landscape of Memory in Postwar Britain", *Representations*, 65: Winter (1999), p.122.
[42] R. Brown, "Cultivating a 'Green' Image: Oil Companies and Outdoor Publicity in Britain and Europe, 1920 – 1936", *Journal of European Economic History*, 22:2 (1993), p.349.

Betjeman in the early 1930s to help edit a series of *County Guides*, "not only to encourage drivers to use more petrol but also to associate his company with a caring attitude to the environment."[43] The same industry also began to realise that an association with technological advancement could improve the public's perception of them. For instance, British Petroleum (BP) introduced *BP Plus* petrol in 1931 with added tetra-ethyl and, as well as making "a virtue out of necessity, claiming that the plus was a little something the others hadn't got",[44] the company also increasingly emphasized the technical advantages of the fuel by noting its potential to combat 'knocking' and 'pinking' in engines. This reference to technical detail was not new and had been used, for example, in the nineteenth century when the cotton industry's machine manufacturers used technical drawings in certain advertisements and textbooks. Indeed, Louise Purbrick, studying these technical illustrations, has suggested that it is these drawings, rather than the machines themselves, that created the perception of automated efficiency.[45]

The music industry itself, although often linked with glamour and lavish lifestyles, was not necessarily seen as a 'romantic' industry but rather one that came to be regarded as "monopolistic, exploitative of artist and public alike, and devoted to the production of shallow commercial tat."[46] Interestingly, much of the perception of recording studios will have been shaped and formed as a result of the visual images created for public consumption through film, television, pop videos and photographs. The lack of recognition given by historians to such visual sources was emphasised by Raphael Samuel who said that "the pleasures of the gaze – scopophilia as it is disparagingly called – are different in kind from those of the written word but not necessarily less taxing on historical reflection and thought."[47] Samuel stressed that, with the application of the same critical investigation usually reserved for written sources, historians could utilise images as a primary source rather than just as illustrations to accompany and support the printed word and manuscript sources. In an era when the visual image was becoming more and more powerful, the importance of the photograph or film in promoting or reinforcing perception should

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[43] T. Mowl, *Stylistic Cold Wars: Betjeman Versus Pevsner*, (London: John Murray, 2000), p.55.
[44] R. Ferrier, "Petrol Advertising in the Twenties and Thirties: The Case of the British Petroleum Company", *Journal of Advertising History*, 9:1 (1986), p.42.
[45] L. Purbrick, "Ideologically Technical: Illustration, Automation and Spinning Cotton Around the Middle of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Design History*, 11:4 (1998), pp.275-93.
[46] A. Johns, "Pop Music Pirate Hunters", *Daedalus*, 131:2 (2002), p.67.
[47] R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1994), p.271.

not be overlooked and, as well as the more conventional written accounts, much of this chapter will be based on the visual representations of the recording studio as seen in the photographs and, particularly, the moving images presented in the pop films and videos released in the period under investigation.

Beyond the Narrative

Having constructed an industry-wide narrative and looked at how the recording studio was portrayed, the main body of this study will then investigate how further research can build on this in order to analyse in more detail how the recording studio itself developed over time. However, the historian's investigation of places of technology or science (such as the modern sound recording studio) is often perceived as being vulnerable, given society's tendency to separate and elevate scientific issues and, as one eminent biologist (Jonas Salk) wrote, "Scientists often have an aversion to what nonscientists say about science."[48] Salk's words were written as a preface to Bruno Latour's pioneering and controversial anthropological investigation in the mid-1970s of scientists in their laboratory, a study of how they worked and how scientific facts and discoveries were constructed. His work was an attempt to move away from seeing scientists as neutral fact finders who were simply plotting a "linear progress from error toward truth",[49] and to question how scientific facts became established and accepted. Latour then followed this up with further studies[50] that attempted to provide an understanding of 'science in action' and to suggest alternative ways of viewing scientific activity and technology. The key theme of his works was that science and technology do not evolve in isolation, that there is no "autonomy of technology",[51] but rather that they develop in a 'socio-technological' realm where networks of human and non-human elements (or 'actants' to use Latour's phrase) interact and struggle for control. Latour showed technology to be fluid, influenced by the conflict and resistance from the network of actors surrounding it, sometimes solidifying when those networks stabilise, and sometimes failing when they do not. This 'actor-network theory' (ANT) was summed-up in 1992 by Bijker and Law, who suggested that "technologies do not evolve under the

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[48] B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p.11.
[49] S. Brush, 'Should the History of Science be Rated X?', *Science*, 183:4130 (1974), p.1166.
[50] B. Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
B. Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1988).
B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996).
[51] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.292.

impetus of some necessary inner technological or scientific logic…If they evolve or change, it is because they have been pressed into that shape."[52] As well as Latour's various offerings, others produced works that applied the actor-network theory to a variety of subjects, such as medicine,[53] information technology,[54] transport systems,[55] engineering projects[56] and design engineering.[57] Whilst the theory's application was debated widely, it underwent a series of modifications[58] and Latour, himself, led the debate about its relevance.[59] He famously declared ANT to be dead in 1997[60] and then recently questioned whether his approach to the study of science had been mistaken when he found his own arguments were being used to question the existence of global warming.[61] Such admissions failed to disarm the critics of ANT who saw Latour's work as a challenge to the natural order of science, of how structured knowledge is obtained through scientific discoveries, and of the natural separation of human and non-human objects. ANT, it is argued, fails to allow for the sheer size and scale of the human factor compared to the other actors involved and produces two-dimensional representations that are "a long way from the three-dimensional world they seek to represent."[62] Such opposing views[63] ensured that debate about ANT was fierce and led to some bitter exchanges in what became known as the 'science wars'. Other theories, often based on a similar linkage of technology and society, were developed and ANT competed with, amongst others,

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[52] W. Bijker and J. Law, *Shaping Technology / Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnological Change*, (London: MIT Press, 1992), p.3.
[53] K. Garrety, 'Social Words, Actor-Networks and Controversy: The Case of Cholesterol, Dietary Fat and Heart Disease', *Social Studies of Science*, 27:5 (1997), pp.727-73.
[54] B. Bloomfield, 'The Role of Information Systems in the UK National Health Service', *Social Studies of Science*, 21:4 (1991), pp.701-34.
[55] M. Callon, 'The Sociology of an Actor-Network: The Case of the Electric Vehicle', in M. Callon, J. Law and A. Rip, *Mapping the Dynamics of Science and Technology: Sociology of Science in the Real World*, (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp.19-34.
[56] J. Law, 'The Olympus 320 Engine: A Case Study in Design, Development and Organisational Control', *Technology and Culture*, 33:3 (1992), pp.409-40.
[57] K. Henderson *On Line and On Paper: Visual Representations, Visual Culture, and Computer Graphics in Design Engineering*, (London: MIT Press, 1999).
[58] Latour suggested that 'research', rather than 'science', might lend itself more to ANT investigations as "science puts an end to the vagaries of human disputes: research fuels controversies by more controversies".
www.bruno-latour.fr/poparticles/poparticle/p074.html
[59] B. Latour, 'A Dialog on ANT', http://www.bruno-latour.fr/articles/article/090.html
[60] B. Latour, 'On Recalling ANT', www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/latour-recalling-ant.pdf
[61] "Was I wrong to participate in the invention of this field known as science studies? Is it enough to say that we did not really mean what we meant?" B. Latour, 'Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry*, 30:2 (2004), pp.225-48.
[62] M. Rix, 'Latour and Nuclear Strategy: The Big, the Bad and the Ugly', www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/research/STPPapers/Latour-MDR-1.html
[63] G. de Vries, 'Should we Send Collins and Latour to Dayton, Ohio?' (www.easst.net/review/dec1995/devries) provides a summary of the ANT debate.

Bijker's Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) theory[64] which links the different social and technological spheres and shows how individual technological items can be shaped, manipulated and used in differing ways by different social groups.

Latour's works provide useful pointers for this study and his and Woolgar's *Laboratory Life*[65] is particularly relevant in that the same elements of mystery that surround scientists at work can also be applied to musicians in the recording studio. The fact that sociologists could visit a world foreign to them to study its inhabitants provides a precedent for one without any knowledge of equalisers, Ampex and midi sequencers to enter the recording studio and investigate the surroundings. Their main findings could easily be applied to the recording studio as well as the scientific laboratory. For instance, they noted how even those scientists acclaimed as developing important theories relied heavily on the support of technicians, fellow researchers, published literature, the laboratory itself and all the equipment in it. Latour and Woolgar emphasised the importance of the 'microprocesses', the 'nitty gritty' work that contributes to the construction of scientific 'fact', and came to the conclusion that this all evaporates from the general consciousness once the finished product is in the public sphere. Likewise, in music, the finished product (the recording) is not just the work of the artist, but of a combination of studio environment, staff and equipment and yet this network of humans and technology ends up as a brief credit on the record sleeve. To the outside world, there is just a name which, occasionally, might register a brief moment of recognition but, usually, only ensures the anonymity of the studio and its practices. The recording studio itself becomes a Latourian 'black box', in which "things whose contents have become a matter of indifference"[66] are placed and largely ignored.

Another key point that Latour emphasises is the importance of circumstantial factors, many of which again become forgotten when history is recorded. In *Aramis*, Latour notes that exactly the same scientists and the same technology produced one successful transportation system (VAL in Lille) whilst simultaneously producing

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[64] W. Bijker, T. Hughes and T. Pinch, *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, (Cambridge, Mass; MIT Press, 1987).
[65] B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
[66] M. Callon and B. Latour, "Unscrewing the Big Leviathan" in K. Knorr-Cetina + A. Cicourel (Eds), *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro- and Macro-Sociologies*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p.285.

another, Aramis, that ultimately failed. Why, he asks, should this be or did Aramis actually succeed in that it produced "little reusable bits, in separate pieces"[67] that became part of the VAL system? Other historical accounts have often overlooked the local circumstances that affect decisions taken at particular moments in time, too. One of the advantages of the study of a recent historical period is that it will allow the key personnel to account for their decisions, to allow the circumstantial factors some relevance in this investigation. Indeed, Latour, particularly in his study of Aramis, stressed the importance of taking into account *all* the factors associated with the development, and ultimate decline, of this one piece of technology. He noted that there were a number of elements (actors), with fluctuating levels of importance, which fused together and competed in order to determine and shape the Aramis story. Likewise, the recording studio can be deconstructed to show a number of such 'actors', some human, others not, whose importance and interaction varied and fluctuated over time. Those factors common to the studio across the period are (a) the technology in the studio, (b) the human element (both the artists recording in the studio and those who work in them) and (c) the studio building itself (the location and design of the building). Analysis of these various competing factors, studying how their prominence ebbed and flowed, allows for an original approach to be taken towards the study of the recording studio industry, and one that will also add depth to the historical narrative already constructed.

Technology

In an industry based on the mechanical reproduction of sound, it is no surprise that technological change should feature strongly in any analysis of the recording studio. The growing influence of technology in the studio can be seen from the contrasting nature of three snapshots of studio life, two from the 1960s and one from the 1990s. Memories of the Beatles' first album, recorded in 1963 at London's Abbey Road studios on a twin-track mono recorder, are typically characterised more for the speed of output rather than for the technology used to produce the sound. Looking back at that period, Paul McCartney's observations of a single recording session for the first Beatles' album were reinforced by engineer Norman Smith[68] and echoed by other artists of the day, such as Roy Wood, whose main memory of recording at Abbey

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[67] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.264.
[68] B. Southall, *Abbey Road; The Story of the World's Most Famous Recording Studios*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.91.

Road in the 1960s was that "we were in and out in two hours."[69] As well as the emphasis on speed of recording, 1960s studios were often not as sophisticated as their contemporary technological image might suggest. In 1967, for example, Stockport's Inter-City studio was described as having "walls lined with egg boxes…and a make-shift sort of control desk tied together will sellotape and string."[70] Within ten years of this, however, the extent to which technology had overtaken the recording process, and was seen by some as a barrier preventing access to recording facilities, was evident in the rejection of technology by the punk movement which advocated a 'do it yourself' approach to both the production and distribution of recorded music and promoted an "access aesthetic"[71] in which technology should not be a barrier to those making music. The failure of punk to halt the spread of technology can be seen from the new language of recording, based on the technical revolutions which had taken place, that had developed by the 1990s, as shown in this one sentence from an article in *Studio Sound* in 1997; "Take the tracks off the Otari RADAR and put it through a little Mackie 8-bus, and screw a bit of EQ onto it and put in a couple of inserts, and it'll sound great."[72] In essence, the recording studio's function was no longer "to capture music as 'naturally' as possible, but to create new, artificial worlds of sound",[73] reinforcing the notion that "the history of innovations in modern popular music is largely a history of technological changes."[74]

Having accepted the growing influence of technology within the recording studio, the question that then arises is how best to study its history without becoming entangled in the evolution of studio items such as flangers, equalizers, doublers, phasers, compressors, noise gates and multi-tracking recorders. In their own attempt to provide an overview of the first one hundred years of magnetic recording, Daniel, Mee and Clark decided to approach the complex issue of the history of sound recording by summarising and explaining the "significant new products, or

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[69] B. Southall, *Abbey Road; The Story of the World's Most Famous Recording Studios*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.89.
[70] G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.58.
[71] P. Rosen, "It was Easy, it was Cheap, Go and Do It. Technology and Anarchy in the UK Music Industry", *SATSU Working Paper (University of York)*, 11 (1997).
[72] P. Ward, 'Performance and Production', *Studio Sound*, May (1997), p.76.
[73] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1999), p.153.
[74] J. Curtis, 'Toward a Sociotechnological Interpretation of Popular Music in the Electronic Age', *Technology and Culture*, 25:1 (1984), p.91.

technologies, in approximate chronological order."[75] Although the resulting work is not as inaccessible as it might have been, there is an impression given of technology developing in isolation, the suggestion that technological change somehow equates to progress and the inevitability of a "certain logic of technologization."[76] For historians, there is always the danger that technology and history can become entwined and confused and, as Rosalind Williams has noted, "instead of being a figure in the ground of history, technology has become the ground – not an element of historical change, but the thing itself. We have come to assume that where technology is going is where history is going, as if they are now one and the same."[77] It is therefore easy for the historian to get bogged down in description of technological detail and, likewise, to simply provide an inventory of technology's progression, such as the development from two to twenty-four track recorders or the emergence of digital recording.

Whilst much of Latour's earlier work had concentrated on the construction of scientific facts, of the dependence on literary texts to create and support scientific statements, and of the creation (or demolition) of networks that strengthen (or weaken) scientific truths, it was his work on Aramis that particularly moved the debate more fully onto technology itself and he declared "I have sought to offer humanists a detailed analysis of a technology sufficiently magnificent and spiritual to convince them that the machines by which they are surrounded are cultural objects worthy of their attention and respect."[78] His pioneering investigation, part-fact and part-fiction, permits the historian to widen the investigation and include non-human, as well as human, actors, although, for some, this perceived reduction in the role of the human element was a step too far; "We are happy to experiment with conceiving of nonhumans as possessing 'knowledge, rights, a vote and even refreshments', but in such an experiment we also do not want to drain humans of many qualities such as the capacity for emotion that empirically, if not necessarily, tend to co-exist with, and in, the distinctively different 'figure' that is the human."[79]

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[75] E. Daniel, C. Mee and M. Clark, *Magnetic Recording: The First 100 Years*, (New York: IEEE Press, 1999), p.2.

[76] Misa, in his review of Sara Danius' *The Senses of Modernism*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), questions her use of this phrase and her failure to show how technology was shaped by society (T. Misa, "A Gramophone In Every Grave, *History and Technology*, 21:3 [2005], p.328).

[77] R. Williams *Retooling: A Historian Confronts Technological Change*, (London: MIT Press, 2002), p.15.

[78] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.viii.

[79] E. Laurier and C. Philo, 'X-morphising: Review Essay of Bruno Latour's "Aramis"', *Environment and Planning A*, 31:6 (1999), p.1063.

What Latour does emphasise in the Aramis story is the importance of studying the networks that surround technology rather than just looking at the technology itself. The role played by politicians, financiers, institutions, other technologies and the scientists themselves in the birth, then death, of the Aramis system become as important to the story as the development of technical items such as the variable-reluctance motors, hyperfrequency links and catadiopters. The fragility of technology without these networks is emphasised in the conclusion to the book's fictional investigation when all those associated with the project gather to hear who was guilty of 'killing' Aramis:

> You had a hypersensitive project, and you treated it as if you could get it through under its own steam…And you left Aramis to cope under its own steam when it was actually weak and fragile. You believed in the autonomy of technology.[80]

In placing technology firmly within this wider setting, Latour's work provides an innovative approach for the non-scientist's study of science and technology, an approach that demands the investigation of these networks, of how technology was developed and diffused, of why and how it worked (or didn't) and of the function, support and location of the technology itself.

In contrast to the historical approach taken by Daniel, Mee and Clark, there appear to be two main areas that might be investigated to help navigate a path through the increasingly-complicated history of recording studio technology; firstly, analysis of the production of the technology, by interviewing those who were involved in its manufacture, will chart how different technologies could emerge, solidify, develop and change over time, not in isolation but through the impetus of a network of actors, much in the same way that Donald Norman's theory of technological life-cycles emphasised the conception, birth, death and shaping of technology ("technological products have a fascinating life cycle as they progress from birth through maturity. The same product that was attractive and desired in its youth can be irrelevant and ignored at maturity.")[81] Secondly, an investigation of the functionality of technology, once it was in place and established, will show how the diffusion[82] and aesthetics of the technology actually manifested itself in its work-centred setting (an approach

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[80] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.292.
[81] D. Norman, *The Invisible Computer*, (London: MIT Press, 1999), p.24.
[82] See E. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (4th Edition), (New York: Free Press, 1995) for a detailed analysis of the subject and its history.

advocated by historians such as Pickstone who said "I want to show how ways of knowing were linked with ways of *production* – to ways of *making* things.")[83] Both of these areas will concentrate mainly on the importance of the consequences of technology, emphasising the interaction of technological networks, rather than getting lost in the detail and specifics of the development of electronics, circuitry and digital theory of individual items of studio equipment. As Latour emphasised, it is these *networks,* rather than just the technology *per se*, that merit investigation. Whether they can be traced in the recording studio where, uniquely, science and art meet, where entertainment, rather than scientific fact, is the ultimate goal, will be interesting to determine.

People

Whilst the preceding chapter will look at how the studio technology changed and developed over time, the introduction of the human element into the investigation, looking at how people interacted with this technology and the space it was housed in, will be an important component of this study. The chapter will identify those located in this space and show that the importance of these different groups could fluctuate over time. It will analyse how the space meant different things to those using it (even at the same point in time), will show how time changed perceptions of this space and will also highlight how the different human actors interacted. The thoughts, words and actions of those in the studio will be studied and analysed closely, not only to infuse the human characteristics into the history of the recording studio, but also, to provide a template for comparisons with the human actors in other industries. Certain aspects of human activity have long fascinated the student of the past. From the traditional historical studies of class conflicts through to the more recent investigations of the lives of 'ordinary people', the 'human' element in history has proved to be an attractive one. The emergence of museums dedicated to "people's history"[84] and the growing numbers of those researching family history is testament to this. The human element in the recording studio can be split into two – those who owned, developed, worked in and helped run the studio, and the artists who used them for recording, for creating sound. This can produce two different perspectives of the same studio space, sometimes in harmony and sometimes conflicting, and consideration must be given to both in order to fully comprehend the human factor in

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[83] J. Pickstone, *Ways of Knowing*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.3.
[84] The People's History Museum (103 Princess Street, Manchester, www.nmlhweb.org) is perhaps the best regional example.

the recording studio. The main questions will be how these human roles developed and mutated and, also, how the interactions and relationships between the groups changed over time.

When C. P. Lee analysed the history of the Manchester music scene by interviewing a number of those artists directly involved, he argued that he was "reclaiming the people's voices"[85] in allowing such participants to have their say. Similarly, one of the Oral History Society's main aims is to "enable people who have been hidden from history to be heard."[86] In looking at the historical development of the recording studio, it will be argued that, although the artists concerned have often been asked about many things, very few have ever had to consider and discuss the time they have spent in the studio whilst the studio employees themselves have rarely been given the opportunity to advance their contribution at all. However, whilst Lee was "reclaiming" the artists' voice from a history that had neglected an important component, this study will rescue the studio itself from historical neglect and all the elements, inanimate and human, will be 'reclaimed'.

One of the major sources of this chapter will be the contribution of those people who were actively involved in the recording studio during the period in question. This therefore means that there will be much emphasis placed on the use of oral testimonies and also on the evaluation of the memories and thoughts of those concerned found in various printed sources. Although the first serious steps towards using oral history for research were taken in the 1940s, it was not until the 1960s that a number of events combined to increase its popularity amongst historians.[87] Whilst the use of oral history in research increased dramatically, there was still a stigma attached to it by some academic historians who implied that it could only ever be seen as a back-up to the more traditional text-based sources. The arguments against any reliance on oral history have been based on a number of issues.[88] Conversely, oral historians have argued that text-based sources are subject to the same problems

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[85] C. Lee, *Shake, Rattle and Rain: Popular Music Making in Manchester (1950-1995)*, (Ottery St. Mary: Hardinge Simpole, 2002), p.1.
[86] www.ohs.org.uk (What Is Oral History?).
[87] These included the launch of the Philips pocket cassette recorder in 1963 (E. Daniel, C Mee and M Clark, *Magnetic Recording: The First 100 Years*, [New York: IEEE Press, 1999], p.102) and the formation of the Oral History Society and the production of their *Oral History* journal from 1971 onwards.
[88] Including the failure to accurately recall events, the embellishment of accounts, the corruption of memory as a result of hindsight, the absence of sensitive material, the bias in the selection of interviewees, and the alteration of the spoken word when transcribing it.

but that society has simply favoured documentary evidence and that most historians have always believed in the superiority of "document-driven history, preferring sources, like wine, properly aged and stored."[89] One of the major advantages of oral evidence, it has been claimed, is that it allows insights into the thought processes and decision making that create the conventional documents being used by 'traditional' historians. A good example of this is Tyson's study of one branch of accounting history, the development of standard costing, which had conventionally been viewed using archival data. Tyson suggested that oral history could "personalize a superficially mundane procedure…and could reveal facets and considerations that occurred beneath purely theoretical discourse"[90] or, in other words, a human element could be introduced into the archive-heavy research.

In recent years, the debate over the use of oral history has developed to lead historians to discuss more complex, yet intriguing, historical relationships. Some have now become less concerned with 'remembering' *per se* (an important element of the oral history) than with the issue of memory itself. As a result, the question of how memories are formed, how they are kept alive and the way in which they are used, and narrated, by those studying them have now become key historiographical issues. Academics such as Patrick Hutton, Pierre Nora, Raphael Samuel and Simon Schama (and a journal, *History and Memory*, devoted to the subject) have contributed to a separation of 'history' and 'memory' and introduced a new depth to the subject. Some have questioned the validity of this approach and have wondered how useful the results might be ("So conceived, the history of memory is a vein that we shall be mining for a long time before we can ascertain the quality of its ore")[91] whilst for others the 'new' study of the past (now generally termed 'postmodern') has become "less interested in 'what actually happened' than in its perpetual reuse and misuse…a history that is interested in memory not as a remembrance but as the overall structure of the past within the present."[92] Whilst keeping out of the 'end of history' debate, the discussions concerning memory and its role within history have

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[89] J. Sherron de Hart, "Oral Sources and Contemporary History: Dispelling Old Assumptions", *Journal of American History*, 80: September (1993), p.582.

[90] T. Tyson, "Rendering the Unfamiliar Intelligible: Discovering the Human Side of Accounting's Past Through Oral History Interviews", *Accounting Historians Journal*, 23: December (1996), pp.87-109.

[91] P. Hutton, "Mnemonic Schemes in the New History of Memory", *History and Theory*, 36: October (1997), p.390.

[92] L. Kritzman, "Foreword" in P. Nora, *Realms of Memory*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.xxiv.

produced one point in particular that is pertinent to this study. Memories are, by their very nature, personal and unique. One person's memory can never be exactly the same as another's because they are shaped by different personalities and different experiences. Individual memories are molded by small, private communities, such as the family or workplace, often with little contact with the wider world. Philip Aries noted the importance of looking into the private world of families and their memories and traditions for a counter-balance to a world "shaped by invented traditions"[93] and emphasised the need to acknowledge the "reality of the living memory of the past."[94] Herbert Finberg, writing in the 1960s, also saw that the need for the historian to take the smaller communities into account, to use the microscope as well as the telescope.[95] The historian, in theory, becomes a 'collector of memories' and must be mindful of the variation that will exist when extrapolating theories and suggesting collective memories. In this study, the personal nature of memories will show that the same space at the same point in time could still produce a variety of representations for the different human elements in the recording studio.

Connected with these personal testimonies, and an important part of this chapter, will be the use of the growing number of music autobiographies from the 1980s onwards in order to widen the range of views relating to the recording studio. This rise in pop music nostalgia at the end of the 20th Century seemingly culminated in the opening of a museum dedicated to the subject (The National Centre for Popular Music in Sheffield) in March 1999 and an ever-increasing market for "recycled, re-invented and re-mixed"[96] music. The fact that Sheffield's 'pop museum' closed to the public within eighteen months of opening (attributed to, amongst other things, the fact that "the concept of a pop museum runs counter to the spirit of pop: it institutionalises pop music, which does not belong to museums"),[97] might suggest that the nostalgia boom was short-lived, that "because it was invented to break rules and tear down cultural barriers, rock never formulated a rigorous tradition of workmanship that

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[93] P. Hutton, "Recent Scholarship on Memory and History", *The History Teacher*, 33: August (2000), p.543.
[94] P. Hutton, "The Problem of Memory in the Historical Writings of Philip Aries", *History and Memory*, 4:1 (1992), p.115.
[95] H. Finberg and V. Skipp, *Local History: Objective and Pursuit*, (London: David and Charles, 1967), p.5.
[96] R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1996), p.89.
[97] J. Kam, 'Success in Failure: The National Centre for Popular Music", *Prometheus*, 22:2 (2004), p.176.

could be used to create time-resistant artefacts."[98] However, whilst the idea of tying pop music's history to the display of artefacts in the limiting and limited space of a museum proved a virtually impossible task, music itself had a "capacity (in contrast to a photograph) to generate an intensity in the unanticipated recollection"[99] and, from the proliferation of boxed set re-releases of music from the archives to the reformation of bands who had long-since split up, nostalgia "infected every branch of popular music."[100] It also became apparent that the appeal of the retrospective was being applied to the more recent musical periods and, within only a few years of its launch, the music video channel MTV had launched a 'greatest hits' programme that was "an intriguing, quasi-historical presentation that dished up a gumbo of past and present videos…a dose of history or nostalgia."[101]

Of course, the use of autobiography is said to present problems for the historian with its reliance on 'the personal', on memory infused with nostalgia, bias and selectivity. For instance, the value of renowned composer Michael Tippett's autobiography[102] was questioned because of his use of an interviewer to produce the final work ("By what process were decisions as to what to include and what to omit arrived at?")[103] and the similarity in parts to the text in Ian Kemp's biography[104] of the composer ("the near parallels in the sequence of narration and close resemblances of wording cannot be co-incidental.")[105] Likewise, the many autobiographical works of 20th Century theatre critic Walter Macqueen-Pope have "been dismissed on account of the occasional inaccuracies, opinionated diatribes, and seemingly irrelevant anecdotes that sometimes characterize his work."[106] And yet the value of the autobiography to historical work has grown in recent years and the development of the 'historian-autobiographer' who, in theory, have the training to allow them to place an account of their own lives into the context of a wider historical picture and enable them to "contest the literary theorists' bid to annex autobiography to the realm

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[98] S. Holden, 'Pop Nostalgia: A Counterrevolution', *The Atlantic*, 255: April (1985), p.121.

[99] L. Botstein, 'Memory and Nostalgia as Music-Historical Categories', *The Musical Quarterly*, 84:4 (2000), pp.534-5.

[100] R. Cook, 'Friends Reunited', *New Statesman*, May 19th 2003, p.42.

[101] G. Burns, "Popular Music, Television, and Generational Identity", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 30:3 (1996), p.136.

[102] M. Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues: An Autobiography*, (London: Hutchinson, 1991).

[103] D. Clarke, "Tippett In and Out of 'Those Twentieth Century Blues': The Context and Significance of an Autobiography", *Music and Letters*, 74:3 (1993), p.402.

[104] I. Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and His Music*, (London: Eulenberg Press, 1984).

[105] D. Clarke, "Tippett In and Out of 'Those Twentieth Century Blues': The Context and Significance of an Autobiography", *Music and Letters*, 74:3 (1993), p.402.

[106] J. Davis and V. Emeljanow, "'Wistful Remembrancer': The Historiographical Problem of Macqueen-Popery", *New Theatre Quarterly*, XVII:4 (2001), p.300.

of fiction"[107] was evidence of this. The status awarded to official documents, in contrast to that of the 'imperfect' memory, also came to be questioned as shown, for example, by the semi-autobiographical work of Carolyn Steedman who, on investigating her mother's life, came to realise that she was an illegitimate child in spite of what was recorded on her birth certificate ("my mother must have told a simple lie to the registrar, a discovery about the verisimilitude of documents that worries me a lot as a historian.")[108] The value of the autobiography to the historian, whatever its imperfections, are that they permit the reconstruction of a past "that must always be a melting pot of 'imperfect recognitions' and unattainable desires"[109] and allow the introduction of the personal element as a way of "deliberately avoiding traditional primary sources – and hence resisting their authority."[110] For Clarke, reviewing Michael Tippett's autobiography, it is the introduction of the human element to such accounts that make them so useful, and popular; "they excite the dialectical tension which inheres in the very difference between the lives of flesh-and-blood personalities and the symbolic phenomena in which they traffic."[111]

The Building

The importance of architecture, of the relationship between buildings and other actors, is something that has been reinforced by elements from different studies, across a number of academic disciplines. For example, anthropologist Dvora Yanow noted that built spaces could become both storyteller and an element of the story being told, much more than just passive backdrops to the tales unfolding in them and "both the medium and message"[112] of any academic investigation. Psychologist Glen Lym recognized that the same buildings, or space within buildings, could affect various people in different ways and that space could be neutral (where life and the physical environment are separate) or acute (where certain feelings allow that same place to take on a special personal quality for whatever reason.)[113] Raphael Samuel saw that there was a symbiosis between buildings and people and his essay on the

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[107] J. Popkin, "Historians on the Autobiographical Frontier", *American Historical Review*, 104:3 (1999), p.748.
[108] C. Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, (London: Virago Press, 1986), p.40.
[109] J. Davis and V. Emeljanow, "'Wistful Remembrancer': The Historiographical Problem of Macqueen-Popery", *New Theatre Quarterly*, XVII:4 (2001), p.309.
[110] J. Mitchell, "Popular Autobiography as Historiography: The Reality Effect of Frank McCourt's 'Angela's Ashes'", *Biography*, 26:4 (2003), p.611.
[111] D. Clarke, "Tippett In and Out of 'Those Twentieth Century Blues': The Context and Significance of an Autobiography", *Music and Letters*, 74:3 (1993), pp.410-1.
[112] D. Yanow, 'Space Stories: Studying museum buildings as organizational spaces', *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 7:3 (1998), p.215.
[113] G. Lym, *A Psychology of Building*, (London: Prentice Hall, 1980).

public's re-emerging love of brickwork in the latter half of the twentieth century emphasised that the brick itself had almost human qualities.[114] Indeed, this recognition of closer relationship between humans and buildings is important as it demands that any study of built spaces recognizes the existence of such an affiliation. The novelist Ayn Rand was one person who advocated this link and who, when writing in the 1940s about New York's skyline, said "I feel that if a war came to threaten this, I would like to throw myself into space, over the city, and protect these buildings with my body."[115] Buildings, rather than simply being inanimate objects, inspire people and have often been given human characteristics by those associated with them. Looking at the recording studio industry, for example, George Martin, when talking of the Abbey Road, addressed it as though it were a person ("Dear Abbey Road, you demanded, and took, a great deal; but you gave much more back")[116] and suggested that the building had absorbed and reflected the personalities and emotions of those who had used it. In short, buildings, even whole towns or cities, possess the ability to become more than just 'bricks and mortar' to people and are able to "seduce"[117] a response from the human actors.

In spite of Latour's attempts to play down his ANT theory in later years, his assertion of the importance of buildings as one of the actors in any study coincided with a growing awareness of the relevance of architecture and history across society. The increasing recognition, from the late 1960s onwards, of the need to conserve those buildings deemed to be part of the nation's heritage was crystallized when 1975 was declared to be European Architectural Heritage Year and, in the United Kingdom, such heritage projects were boosted by the creation of an Architectural Heritage Fund.[118] This growing realisation of the notion of architectural heritage and preservation continued into the 1980s and beyond and the National Heritage Act of 1983 set up the forerunner of today's English Heritage body, to advise government

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[114] "It is tactile, textured and grainy…individual and quirky…warm…breathes easily…grows old gracefully", R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, (London: Verso, 1994), p.120.
[115] A. Rand, *The Fountainhead*, (London: HarperCollins, 1994), p.433.
[116] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.5.
[117] "The ability to create an emotional bond with their audiences, almost a need for them…an important role in automobile design, architecture…"; J. Khaslavksy + N. Shedroff, "Understanding the Seductive Experience", *Communications of the ACM*, 42:5 (1999), p.45.
[118] "The most significant loan facility in the UK is via the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) which was set up in 1975 with a fund of £1 million to assist repair and rehabilitation projects.", R. Pickard and T. Pickerill, "Conservation Finance 1: Support for Historic Buildings", *Structural Survey*, 20:2 (2002), p.75.

on such matters and to guide those interested in preservation.[119] The notion of heritage in relation to architecture is one area that caught the public's imagination and, in recent years, the popularity of such television programmes as the B.B.C's *Restoration,*[120] which has allowed viewers to vote to save one building from a list of endangered structures, was allied with the increasing public membership of bodies such as the National Trust (one of the leading and widely recognised guardians of British heritage), which was well over three million in 2006.[121] This idea of heritage spread from simply being an architectural matter to encompass the desire to preserve a whole way of life and history, although the contribution to historical understanding of the proliferation of historic visitor attractions by the turn of the millennium, which one commentator ascribed to the British public's "national veneration for all things historical",[122] was seriously questioned.[123] However, architecture cannot be seen simply as a detached study of buildings in isolation because the aesthetics of such structures also inspires emotion. Whilst the study of building design can show how structures themselves were planned, built and developed (using terms such as Gothic, Bauhaus, Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, and Modernism) it is how the human element interacts with buildings which requires our attention. The historical study of buildings is much more than the analysis of individual structures. A building's appearance, its place in the community and functionality inspire feelings amongst those using it and even those who simply view it from a distance. Sometimes buildings produce little reaction from those around them whilst, at other times, they inspire admiration, devotion or provoke defensive reactions against perceived threats. One of the most famous reactions came in 1984 when Prince Charles used the quote "It's like a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend"[124] to attack the proposed plans for the National Gallery and appealed for more thought to be given to the effect of buildings on the environment and the community around them.[125] The campaigns of national bodies and local groups to save buildings

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[119] www.english-heritage.org.uk details the numerous publications available.
[120] www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/restoration/
[121] www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-trust/w-thecharity.htm
[122] T. Hunt, 'Monumental mistakes', *New Statesman*, December 2nd 2002, p.34.
[123] "Heritage began to have inherently conservative, narrow-minded connotations", Speech by Culture Minister, David Lammey, to the Royal Geographical Society on January 26th 2006,
http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Minister_Speeches/Ministers_Speech_Archive/David_L ammy/David_Lammy_Speech03.htm
[124] Speech by the Prince of Wales at the 150th Anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects Royal Gala Evening, May 30th 1984,
http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speechesandarticles/a_speech_by_hrh_the_prince_of_wales_at_the _150th_anniversary_1876801621.html
[125] *The Times*, June 1st 1984, p.3.

threatened with demolition or suffering from neglect is another sign of this. The emergence of new branches of architecture in recent years, such as building ecology[126] and architectural aesthetics,[127] suggests that awareness of the link between buildings and community, of how people interact with the structures around them, is growing.

In accepting that the technological aspects of the recording studio produced the fitting technological-related phrase 'laboratories of sound' with which to begin an investigation into the development of the studio (and a later chapter will analyse Cogan and Clark's suggestion that recording studios be seen as "temples of sound"),[128] it seems, in the architectural sense, that a different phrase may have to be found with reference to labour, craftsmanship and production. Architecturally, this will involve analysis of the structure of the studio building itself in order to investigate its affect on those working in it, those living in the vicinity and those who simply see it from the outside with little or no concept of what actually happens inside. All of these factors were certainly present in the great factories that sprang up during the industrial revolution and the link between factory and recording studio provides some interesting comparisons. Visually striking, factories also presented a façade that hid the activities that were taking place inside ("From behind the massive walls often no noise or light emerges. Often it is only the smoke from a chimney which signals a mill is at work except on winter evenings when the lights are visible.")[129] The multitudes of factories that sprang up in the industrial towns and cities, many with elaborate architectural features, presented an image that that could both repel and attract. The importance of visual appearance, which was often a major consideration for those who constructed the mills and factories of the industrial revolution,[130] diminished as more uniform, and less exciting, pre-fabricated buildings emerged from the 1950s onwards. Almost to compensate for this, some companies started to make up for such a lack of visual presence with more creative and eye-catching company signs on the outside of the buildings and the visual appeal came

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[126] A. Tetior, "Ecological Beauty of City and Love to City as Conditions of Its Sustainable Development", *Un-Habitat In Action*, 1: March (2002), p.1.

[127] R. Weber, *On the Aesthetics of Architecture*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995).

[128] J. Cogan and W Clark, *Temples of Sound: Inside the Great Recording Studios*, (London: Chronicle Books, 2003), p.11.

[129] SAVE Britain's Heritage, *Satanic Mills*, (London: SAVE, 1974), p.5.

[130] Pear Mill in Stockport, built in 1912, is one example as it was "distinguished by the pear shaped dome which tops the water tower.", R. Holden, "Pear Mill, 1907-1929: A Stockport Cotton Spinning Company", *Manchester Region History Review*, 1:2 (1987), p.24.

less from the architecture and more from the decoration of the exterior of the buildings. As well as the visual presence, the design and utility of buildings could also play a part in shaping those who used or visited them. The surrounding space, the building's neighbourhood, the amenities and facilities close by and the design features of the building could all play a part in setting an agenda. What might seem like minor details to outsiders could become a major part of the lives of those people occupying certain buildings. As well as the importance of the actual building layout, such matters as car parking, location of shops and pubs and the general 'feel' of the surrounding area could all contribute to the success or otherwise of a specific building. Indeed, in certain industries, factories were often deliberately sited to become a central part of the community in which they were placed.

Case Study

When Latour studied the activity of the Salk Institute for his *Laboratory Life* investigation, he acknowledged that concentrating on one particular laboratory as being representative of others might invite criticism if it was "not typical of the drama and conjectural daring prevalent in other areas of scientific work."[131] However, he anticipated such criticism by noting that one of the Salk Institute scientists had just been awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine and cited this as a good reason for choosing that particular place to analyse. Latour's resulting work then contributed towards a growing literature focussing on the work and output of scientific laboratories in general.[132] In the same way, this study of the 'laboratory of sound' will concentrate on Strawberry Recording Studios in Stockport as being representative of the technologically-developing recording studios in general of that era. Analysis of Strawberry's development offers a number of interesting perspectives from which to study the recording studio. Not only was it one of the first professional independent studios in the country (and a very successful one at that), but its location outside of London marked it as different from the majority of the other professional recording concerns at the time. Additionally, the locality of the Studio allows for easier access to the various strands of its archive (particularly the human element that has largely remained in the Stockport area) for someone local researching the history of the recording studio industry on a part-time basis.

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[131] B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p.31.
[132] R. Smith, 'Introduction', *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences*, 32:1 (2001), pp.3-9.

In the same way that a conventional historical narrative of the recording studio industry needs to be 'constructed' as a framework for further research, then a similar approach has to be adopted for the use of a specific studio as a case study. Interestingly, those historical accounts of other studios that already exist, many of them brief summaries on studio's web pages, often feature a number of common traits that might provide a template for Strawberry's own narrative. The most obvious of these, apart from the chronological order of the narratives, is the emphasis placed on the linking of the studios' success with those artists who recorded there over the years. Whilst Abbey Road's connection with the Beatles is the most obvious example of this,[133] the Studio's official history[134] is also full of references to (and pictures of) many other famous clients, particularly relating to the period from the 1960s onwards. Another London studio, The Town House, celebrated their 25th anniversary in 2004 by publishing a celebratory supplement in *Music Week* and noted that Elton John's tribute song to the late Princess Diana, *Candle in the Wind*[135] was recorded there and that "besides being Sir Elton's London studio of choice, Town House's Studios 1, 2 and 4…have played host to a who's who of the British music industry of the past two decades."[136] Olympic Studios' own narrative[137] is mainly a decade-by-decade list of those bands who have recorded there, London Recording Studios' web page notes that "many iconic and inspirational artists came through the doors",[138] whilst Trident's history particularly notes the role played by the Beatles, Queen and Elton John in that studio's development.[139] As well as numerous mentions for the artists, other individuals, who are often credited as being the driving forces behind the creation of the studios, are also given prominence. Whilst some of these individuals are household names (for instance, George Martin is not only featured heavily in the Abbey Road story but is also inexorably linked with the creation of AIR Studios too[140] whilst Richard Branson and Trevor Horn are credited with creating the Town House and Sarm studios respectively), others, such as Ray Kinsey at Livingston Studios[141] and Mark Reader at Tonewood Recording

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[133] The last album the band recorded together in 1969 was named after the Studio; The Beatles, *Abbey Road* (Apple: PCS7088, 1969).

[134] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1985).

[135] Rocket: PTCD1, 1997.

[136] J. Jones, "Town House Celebrates Silver Anniversary", *Music Week*, October 2nd 2004, Supplement, p.2.

[137] www.olympicstudios.co.uk/history/

[138] www.thelondonrecordingstudios.com/London-Recording-Studio-Home/Studio-History/index.html

[139] www.tridentsoundstudios.co.uk/history4.html

[140] www.airstudios.com/info/history.shtml

[141] www.livingstonstudios.co.uk/history.htm

Studios[142] for example, are less well-known. Another common feature is the notion of 'progression', whether in terms of technology (Eden, for example, began by building their own mixing desk before, eventually, installing a Solid State Logic console in 1980),[143] in the buildings housing the studios (AIR, for instance, relocated in 1991 into "the beautiful Lyndhurst Hall in London")[144] or in the structure of the business (the Town House, for example, underwent several changes of owners, from Branson to the Sanctuary Group via EMI, and a fluctuating number of studios).[145] One final feature of the traditional studio narrative is the predilection for the unusual or quirky in relation to specific moments in the studios' histories. Sometimes these relate to the history of the buildings themselves (Livingston, it is noted, was housed in a Victorian chapel),[146] whilst others refer to specific incidents, often dramatic and out-of-the-ordinary, which add colour to the descriptive accounts of the studios' development. These include the destruction of Air's Caribbean studio when Hurricane Hugo "devastated"[147] Montserrat, Tonewood's owner finding the locks being changed on his own studio,[148] arguments amongst the members of the pop group Queen[149] and the fact that Olympic could boast that it was the studio where "numerous episodes of the cult TV series Joe 90"[150] were recorded.

Using these various examples as templates, Strawberry's specific historical narrative begins in 1967 with Inter-City Studios located in a tiny twenty foot square studio above the Nield and Hardy record store in Stockport's town centre (see Figure 2). Having helped out there for a few months, local man Peter Tattersall (who had worked in the music business as a road manger with such groups as Billy J Kramer and the Dakotas) decided to buy the studio and its equipment, which consisted of two tape machines and a few microphones. He paid approximately five hundred pounds[151] and, for the next few months, worked from seven in the morning until two in the afternoon at a local bakery in order to raise money for the studio. In 1967, there were no other professional recording facilities outside of London and Inter-City

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[142] www.tonewood.co.uk/history.html
[143] Eden "became the first studio in the UK to offer Total Recall", www.edenstudios.com/history6.htm
[144] www.airstudios.com/info/history.shtml
[145] J. Jones, "Town House Celebrates Silver Anniversary", *Music Week*, October 2nd 2004, Supplement.
[146] www.livingstonstudios.co.uk/history.htm
[147] www.airstudios.com/info/history.shtml
[148] www.tonewood.co.uk/history.html
[149] "There's probably still some of our blood on the desk", J. Jones, "Town House Celebrates Silver Anniversary", *Music Week*, October 2nd 2004, Supplement, p.2.
[150] www.olympicstudios.co.uk/history/1960s.php
[151] Peter Tattersall, January 28th 2005.

settled for offering the studio for the recording of advertisements[152] and demonstration tapes for local artists such as The Mindbenders and Herman's Hermits. It was at this point that Eric Stewart, a member of the Mindbenders, became associated with the Studio, along with others such as Pauline Renshaw and Ray Teret. Having always wanted to become involved in that side of the business, Stewart accepted an offer from Tattersall to become a partner and, in spite of being told that it was a waste of time, money and effort,[153] Stewart invested eight hundred pounds[154] in Inter-City and set about improving the standard of the equipment.

For the record

MOST young girls in the pop world tend to be in front of the microphone but not Pauline Renshawe who is training to be a recording engineer at the studios of Inter-City Productions in Stockport.

She is taking lessons on how to work the control desk and how to balance up the sounds from each microphone from Peter Tattersall, resident recording engineer, who has put the sounds of the Hermits, Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas, Wayne Fontana, the Mind Benders and the Northern Dance Orchestra on tape in the studio.

Pauline is mastering the maze of dials, switches and meters and at the moment assists Peter when there is a large-scale recording to be taped. Later she will get the chance to go solo while Peter stands by in case she makes any mistakes.

Figure 1: An early mention for Strawberry Studio in 1967[155]

His arrival also later brought about a change of name for the studio; Stewart's favourite song at the time was The Beatles' *Strawberry Fields Forever* so he and Tattersall chose the name Strawberry Recording Studios, with the catchy advertising slogan 'Strawberry Studios Forever' in mind and Strawberry Recording Studios Limited (UK) Limited was incorporated on October 20th 1967.[156]

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[152] "When we first started Strawberry Studios, we got most of our work from a commercial company in the same building", D. Fricke, "Two Plus Four Equals 10cc", *Circus*, November 7th 1978, p.18.
[153] A point confirmed by Graham Gouldman, who said "all our friends said we must be mad to put our money into something like that", G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.78.
[154] G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.59.
[155] *Stockport Express*, November 23rd 1967.
[156] Companies House *WebCHeck* details
http://wck2.companieshouse.gov.uk/6f42288ccdaa0c6f8c011a7042eb2c13/compdetails

Figure 2: The Nield and Hardy music shop in the 1960s[157]

Within a few months, though, Strawberry's owners were told that they were considered to be a fire-risk to the historic building next door and were informed that they would have to vacate the premises. After much searching, they found a building in nearby Waterloo Road that offered a suitable shell for a recording studio and they set about constructing the studio space themselves (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Work begins at Waterloo Road (with Eric Stewart far right)[158]

With additional financial support from other backers (local songwriter Graham Gouldman invested £2,000[159] and the artist-management firm Kennedy Street Enterprises also became a partner and provided some much-needed respectability for the project),[160] Strawberry upgraded its equipment and began to offer recording

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[157] Stockport Heritage Library.

[158] Author's private collection.

[159] G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.62.

[160] "Whenever we went to finance houses or banks about borrowing money, although they sympathised they couldn't understand why we needed to spend so much money on things they thought of as tape recorders…We really did need someone who could talk their language", G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.59.

facilities for a wide variety of locally-based artists.[161]   By 1969, Gouldman was working in New York for the Kasenetz-Katz[162] 'bubblegum' music organization and he persuaded them to base their UK operations at Strawberry and to use Stewart and two other friends, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, as session musicians. The money from these sessions saw the trio producing records to be released under a variety of pseudonyms[163] and, although they felt there was little artistic merit in these tracks,[164] they allowed the studio to purchase of a four-track tape machine and, in 1970, for Stewart, Godley and Creme to record a single[165] together under the name Hotlegs which reached number 2 in the UK charts. Although a Hotlegs album[166] followed, the group (now joined back in Stockport by Graham Gouldman) settled for working in Strawberry as producers and, occasionally, backing musicians for a wide variety of other artists. These included songs by Manchester City,[167] Leeds United,[168] Everton[169] and Bury[170] football clubs and, most notably, fading American star Neil Sedaka, who made a comeback by recording two albums[171] at Strawberry, with Stewart, Gouldman, Godley and Creme as his backing musicians and co-producers. Having worked hard for others to be successful, the four musicians decided to record together for themselves and, with the backing of Jonathan King's UK Records, they released a single in 1972, *Donna*,[172] under the name of 10cc, which reached number two in the UK charts.

The period between 1972 and 1976 was one of great success for 10cc and one that, consequently, established Strawberry as a major recording studio. All four 10cc

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[161] Paul Young, *You Girl*, (Columbia: DB8188, 1967).

[162] www.bubblegum-music.com/kasenetz

[163] A collection of these recordings can be found on *Strawberry Bubblegum: A Collection of Pre-10cc Strawberry Studio Recordings 1969-1972*, (Castle: B00009PC0E, 2003).

[164] Kevin Godley declared "I'm still appalled. I should think the wax cringed when those records were pressed they were so bad", G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.97.

[165] *Neanderthal Man*, (Fontana: 6007 019, 1970).

[166] *Thinks School Stinks*, (Philips: 6308 047, 1971).

[167] *Boys In Blue / Funky City*, (RCA: RCA2200, 1972).

[168] *Leeds United / Leeds, Leeds, Leeds*, (Chapter One Records: ZXDR 51194 SCH168, 1972).

[169] *For Ever Ever-ton*, (Philips: 6006 253, 1972).

[170] The Bury Tones, *Up The Shakers*, (Loop Records: IC290, 1972).

[171] *Solitaire*, (RCA: SF8264, 1972) and *The Tra-La Days Are Over*, (MGM: 2315 248, 1973).

[172] *Donna / Hot Sun Rock*, (UK Records: UK6, 1972).

albums[173] (and eight top-ten singles,[174] including two number one records) were recorded in Stockport and, as the band invested their financial gains into Strawberry,[175] it allowed the studio to progress from four to twenty-four track and to bring in the internationally-renowned acoustic designers, Westlake Audio, to design and construct a new control room. As well as being home for 10cc, Strawberry was still available for outside bookings and the Studio was used by such artists as Paul McCartney (who recorded an album at Strawberry with his brother Mike McGear),[176] the Bay City Rollers,[177] Mandalaband[178] and Granada Television, who pre-recorded tracks for those artists appearing on their *Lift Off* music programme. Indeed, Strawberry became so successful that, by 1975, 10cc were having difficulty in booking time in their own studio and, by the time they had recorded their 1976 album *How Dare You* in Stockport, they had already taken the decision to build a second Strawberry Studios,[179] this time in Dorking, Surrey, to give themselves the time and space that had been available in the early days in Stockport. Unfortunately, by the time they began to record their first album at Strawberry South, 10cc had split in half, with Godley and Creme leaving the band to pursue a separate career.

In spite of 10cc's move to Strawberry South, the period from 1976 onwards was still one of success for Strawberry North and, by the end of the decade, they were able to open a second, smaller studio across the road (known as Strawberry 2) in an attempt to offer recording facilities (utilizing some of the Studio's older equipment) at a reduced rate. As well as the return of artists who had already used the Studio (such as Godley and Creme,[180] Barclay James Harvest,[181] the Syd Lawrence Orchestra[182] and,

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[173] *10cc*, (UK Records: UKAL1005, 1973), *Sheet Music*, (UK Records: UKAL1007, 1974), *The Original Soundtrack*, (Phonogram: 9102 500, 1975) and *How Dare You*, (Phonogram: 9102 501, 1976).
[174] *Donna*, (UK Records: UK6, 1972), *Rubber Bullets*, (UK Records: UK36, 1973), *The Dean and I*, (UK Records: UK48, 1973), *Wall Street Shuffle*, (UK Records: UK69, 1974), *Life Is A Minestrone*, (Phonogram: 6008 010, 1975), *I'm Not In Love*, (Phonogram: 6008 014, 1975), *Art For Art's Sake*, (Phonogram: 6008 017, 1975), *I'm Mandy Fly Me*, (Phonogram: 6008 019, 1976).
[175] "Every penny we made there went straight back into the studio to make it better. We weren't taking any money out of Strawberry…", G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.79.
[176] *McGear*, (Warner Brothers: K56051, 1974).
[177] *Once Upon A Star*, (Bell: 1C 064-96 506, 1975).
[178] *The Eye of Wendor*, (Chrysalis: CHR1181, 1978).
[179] Strawberry Studios South was used in 1976 and 1977 for 10cc's exclusive use and then opened for other artists in 1978. The Studio was then closed in 1984.
[180] *Consequences*, (Phonogram: CONS17, 1976).
[181] *XII*, (Polydor: POLD5006, 1978).
[182] *That Miller Magic*, (Beech Park: SR1183, 1983).

indeed, 10cc[183] for one last visit in 1982/83), a new generation of bands visited Stockport to record their work. By the late 1970s, producer Martin Hannett was beginning an association with Strawberry[184] that would last until his death in 1991, producing such bands as Joy Division,[185] Durutti Column,[186] Pauline Murray,[187] The Names,[188] Minny Pops,[189] Stockholm Monsters[190] and The Stone Roses,[191] and using the Studio facilities to mix songs by OMD,[192] A Certain Ratio[193] and the Happy Mondays.[194] Other notable names who recorded at Strawberry included The Buzzcocks,[195] New Order,[196] Crispy Ambulance,[197] Blitz,[198] The Wake,[199] James,[200] The Smiths,[201] Simply Red[202] and Saint Winifred's School Choir.[203]

By 1986, however, the recording studio industry was in a state of flux with the advent of digital recording and the growing number of 'do-it-yourself' computerized instruments such as the Synclavier and Fairlight. Strawberry, in spite of its reputation, was finding it difficult to keep up with these changes and in March 1986 it was announced in the local press that the Studio was being purchased by a rival concern, Yellow 2, (who had taken over the Strawberry 2 building only a couple of years previously), with the actual change of directors taking place on March 5th 1986.[204] Yellow 2's owner, Nick Turnbull, proudly declared at the time, "The Strawberry name is one of the best in the world. We believe the studio's reputation, coupled with the extraordinary growth of Yellow 2, will put our engineers and

[183] *Windows in the Jungle*, (Phonogram: MERL28, 1983).
[184] "This studio (Strawberry) I was very impressed with.", www.martinhannett.co.uk/interv.htm
[185] *Unknown Pleasures*, (Factory: FACT10, 1979).
[186] *Without Mercy*, (Factory: FACT84, 1984).
[187] *Pauline Murray and the Invisible Girls*, (Polydor: 2394277, 1980).
[188] *Swimming*, (Crepescule: TWI065, 1982).
[189] *Dolphin's Spurt / Goddess*, (Factory: FAC31, 1980).
[190] *Alma Mater*, (Factory: FACT80, 1984).
[191] Although recorded in 1985, this album of material was not released until 1996. *Garage Flower*, (Silvertone: GarageCD1, 1996).
[192] *Electricity / Almost*, (Factory: FAC6, 1979).
[193] *To Each…*, (Factory: FACT35, 1981).
[194] *Bummed*, (Factory: FACT220, 1988).
[195] *Everbody's Happy Nowadays / Why Can't I Touch It?*, (United Artists: UP36499, 1979).
[196] *Ceremony / In A Lonely Place*, (Factory: FAC33, 1981).
[197] *The Plateau Phase*, (Factory Benelux: FBN12, 1982).
[198] *Voice of a Generation*, (No Future Records: PUNK1, 1982).
[199] *Harmony*, (Factory: FACT60, 1982).
[200] *Jimone*, (Factory: FAC78, 1983).
[201] *Hand In Glove / Handsome Devil*, (Rough Trade: RT131, 1983).
[202] *Every Bit of Me* was included on *The Hit Red Hot EP*, (The Hit Magazine: HOT001, 1985).
[203] *There's No One Quite Like Grandma / Pinocchio*, (Music for Pleasure: FP900, 1980).
[204] *Strawberry Recording Studios (UK) Limited Accounts for the Year Ended December 31st 1986* (Manchester: Peat Marwick McLintock).

producers at the sharp end of the British recording scene."[205] Initially, this arrangement allowed Strawberry to comprise two studios, one fully digital and still known as Yellow 2, although this set-up was contracted to just the one studio at the original Waterloo Road site in 1988 as "spreading the talent of both producers and engineers between the two studios during the last two years has created the complicated problem for artists as to which studio to use."[206] The impetus created by the merger gave the Studio an initial spur and, in 1988, the *Sunday Express*, in its review of Northern recording studios, reported that "Strawberry Studios in Stockport have established an international reputation."[207] However, with technology moving on at a pace it became difficult for the smaller studios to keep up with those record-company owned studios which had the financial backing to upgrade their equipment where necessary and one employee at this time, John Pennington (who had started as YTS trainee at Strawberry in the mid-1980s), was well placed to observe the Studio's gradual decline:

> The industry kind of withdrew to London and Strawberry had a financial shortfall. It wasn't charging enough, despite the incredible stuff that was being produced there, and with seven employees it was starting to struggle…I think in a way it jut seemed to lose the lust for the cutting edge. Strawberry got left behind.[208]

It came as no surprise, therefore, when it was announced in the early 1990s that Strawberry's owners had decided to concentrate on video production rather than sound recording,[209] thus ending nearly a quarter of a century of such activity in Stockport. Indeed, by 1993, Strawberry had closed its doors altogether, ending its association with the town.

The start (1967) and end (1993) points in Strawberry's existence can be seen to coincide quite closely with certain key events that dramatically altered the use of recording studios generally and are, therefore, natural chronological boundaries for this study. Although popular music was flourishing in the 1950s and 1960s, it was the arrival of the Beatles in the mid-1960s which revolutionised the British pop music scene, both musically and from a recording point of view, and Strawberry's emergence in 1967 coincided with the release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club*

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[205] *Stockport Messenger*, March 28th 1986, p.25.
[206] *Stockport Messenger*, February 12th 1988, p.17.
[207] G. Bell, "Our Pop Scene's A Big Hit", *Sunday Express*, August 14th 1988, p.29.
[208] www.geetan.com/johnnyp.cfm
[209] *Manchester Metro News*, April 24th 1992, p.17.

Band,[210] declared by *Rolling Stone* in 2003 to be most important album of all time.[211] Likewise, a key event in the early 1990s was the emergence of the world-wide-web and the use of this medium for the distribution of music.[212] 1993, for instance, saw the development of the International Underground Music Archive (IUMA)[213] which offered free music over the internet and, in 1995, David Bowie became the first major artist to release a new record via the net.[214] As with the arrival of the Beatles, the 1993-94 period would seem to mark a major shift in the music industry's approach to the recording and distribution of music and, therefore, provides a natural break in this study of the recording industry that ties-in with Strawberry's demise.

By the end of 2007, a number of key people associated with development of Strawberry had been interviewed as part of this study, including Peter Tattersall, engineer Richard Scott, director Ric Dixon, employee Julie McLarnon and technician Tony Cockell, with comments and guidance provided throughout by Eric Stewart. What did become apparent from the interviews was a genuine interest in looking at time spent in the Studio and a willingness of those involved to talk about Strawberry, as summed up, for example, by ex-engineer John Pennington who responded to the Studio's appearance on the internet by noting "I have been waiting to find someone who cares about Strawberry's history."[215] Even allowing for the selective memory, exaggeration and differences in perception of many of those in the pop music industry, the proximity of the period in question has allowed for memories to be recalled whilst, at the same time, providing enough time to have elapsed in order to infuse an element of objectivity and reflection into the responses. In addition to these face-to-face interviews, some of those who had used Strawberry's facilities also responded via various internet-related means and, as a supplement to all these responses, material from the archives of the 1990s 10cc Fan Club, including both direct and radio interviews given by members of 10cc and others, was also utilized. As a result, the responses of 53 people were used for the study (with a selection of interview samples included on the appendix cd) and it is hoped that both the recorded

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[210] *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, (Parlophone: PCS 7027, 1967).
[211] www.rollingstone.com/news/story/6595610/1_sgt_peppers_lonely_hearts_club_band
[212] J. Alderman, *Sonic Boom: Napster, MP3 and the New Pioneers of Music*, (London: Fourth Estate, 2001).
[213] "The IUMA was a pioneer of on-line music…Artists could present their music over the internet in stream, download and internet radio format."
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Underground_Music_Archive.
[214] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1998), p.212.
[215] Message posted at http://www.myspace.com/strawberrystudiosnorth, 21st August 2007.

and printed responses, along with other material uncovered during the study, will be used to form the basis of a Strawberry Studios archive.

Finally, the study has also made use of a wide range of what might be considered to be unconventional[216] historical sources to supplement the oral interviews, from records, films, children's annuals, photographs to the numerous music magazine interviews and web pages that contain references to, and accounts of, life in the recording studios. Indeed, the use of the internet as a primary source of material has proved to be a key point of interest in this study, not just for the practical problems it has raised in connection with the archiving of a fluid medium, but also because it has been indicative of how quickly the historian has come to adopt the world wide web as an archive of primary material rather, than as two Australian academics suggested in 1996,[217] as simply being limited to either speeding up conventional searches, the digitization of existing resources, or the ability to communicate with other historians via email or electronic discussion groups. The use of the World Wide Web to place museum collections on the internet, rather than just having an online presence to promote them,[218] was one example of the evolving role of the web during the period of this study. Rather than simply being an information repository or a tool for communication and searching, the internet has opened up new avenues for the historian to investigate. For Organ and McGurk, writing in 1996, "surfing the internet is….fraught with trepidation and danger….One is liable to take a direction which is unforeseen and uncontrollable, until finally 'thrown upon the beach' at a desirable or satisfactory destination."[219] Within only a couple of years, however, the same surfing analogy was viewed somewhat differently, and more positively, by Featherstone who emphasised "the sense of riding and jumping from wave to wave, of the mobility to shift direction, perceptions and vistas."[220] Indeed, Featherstone compared the historian's journeys around the internet with the activities of the 19th

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[216] What Raphael Samuel referred to as "the work, in any given instance, of a thousand different hands" (R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, [London: Verso, 1994], p.8) which contributed to a form of history that goes beyond the academic journal, serious text book or thesis.

[217] M. Organ + C. McGurk, "Surfing the INTERNET and Academic Research: What Use for Historians?", (University of Wollongong, 1996, http://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers/26).

[218] W. Mitchell, "Moving the Museum onto the Internet: The Use of Virtual Environments in Education About Ancient Egypt" in J. Vince and R. Earnshaw (Eds), *Virtual Worlds on the Internet*, (California: IEEE Computer Society, 1999) is one example of this.

[219] M. Organ and C. McGurk, "Surfing the Internet: Electronic Library and Archival Resources for Historians", *Provenance*, 1:2, 1996, http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=asdpapers

[220] M. Featherstone, "The Flâneur, the City and Virtual Public Life", *Urban Studies*, 35:5-6, (1998), p.921.

Century 'flâneur', a key figure in Walter Benjamin's Parisian Arcades who "walks the streets of the modern city at a slow and leisurely pace, an observer and recorder of modernity." [221] Whilst the speed and boundaries were obviously different to the physical notion of strolling through a city, Featherstone made the point that the information available via a world-wide network of computers produces an "electronic *flânerie*"[222] in which the physical Parisian streets are replaced by the virtual landscape of the internet and which, in turn, affect the way in which academics might present their research:

> This entails learning to abandon the essay form and write in 'chunks', neatly constructed bite-sized pieces which are designed to stand alone. The key point about chunks is that we do not need to proceed through a series of chunks in a linear or sequential way, as is the case with an essay or conventional story. Instead we can make hypertext jumps across the material and lose forever the assumption that good writing has to be in the narrative form: with a beginning, middle and end – and necessarily in that order.[223]

As well as hosting information, the internet has also allowed the historian to set-up gateways as a means of reaching out to those who might help with any research. For example, the current study developed its own website[224] and adverts were placed on such sites as those belonging to the Manchester District Music Archive[225] and the Association of Professional Recording Services,[226] all of which prompted responses from a number of people who had been involved with Strawberry. Also, at the beginning of 2007, a Studio profile was created on the "most popular social network in the country",[227] MySpace.com,[228] with the potential of being seen by more than 10 million UK users and, more interestingly, of being directly linked to those musicians registered on MySpace who had used Strawberry at some point in the past.

Additionally, the World Wide Web has also changed the way in which historical objects and ephemera have been collected and purchased by historians, particularly

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[221] P. Buse, K. Hirschkop, S. McCracken, B. Taithe, *Benjamin's Arcades: An UnGuided Tour*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.4.
[222] M. Featherstone, "The Flâneur, the City and Virtual Public Life", *Urban Studies*, 35:5-6, (1998), p.921
[223] M. Featherstone, "The Flâneur, the City and Virtual Public Life", *Urban Studies*, 35:5-6, (1998), p.909.
[224] www.strawberrynorth.co.uk/strawberrystudios.htm
[225] www.mdmarchive.co.uk/archive/shownews.php?nid=2
[226] www.aprs.co.uk/forum/forums/thread-view.asp?tid=11&posts=1229&start=1
[227] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/6288120.stm
[228] http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=171063562

through internet sales sites such as eBay,[229] as noted by one observer in the late 1990s who said "whether we like it or not, eBay's made it easier than ever to consume history. It has opened up the market for historical objects large and small…."[230] In the same way that a collector of back-issues of *Time* magazine might locate gaps in his collection ("For me, as for millions of other seekers of the obscure, eBay changed everything. Suddenly I had a supply that seemed limitless"),[231] numerous items connected with Strawberry Recording Studios' history have also been offered for sale. For instance, as well as various records that had been recorded at the Studio, other items of ephemera were offered including magazines containing articles on Strawberry or even material that would have been regarded as superfluous at the time, such as a faxed Strawberry invoice (Figure 4) and acetate (Figure 5).
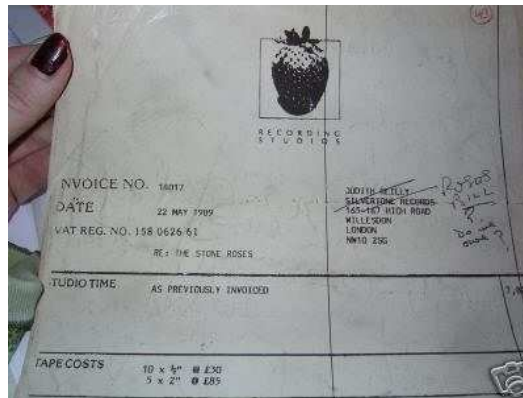
Figure 4: A faxed Strawberry invoice which was offered for sale on eBay[232]

Figure 5: A Strawberry acetate offered for sale on eBay[233]

[229] www.ebay.co.uk
[230] M. McCarthy, "Consuming History", *Common-Place*, 1:2 (2001), (www.historycooperative.org/journals/cp/vol-01/no-02/ebay/ebay-3.shtml)
[231] B. Barol, "In My Lifes", *American Journalism Review*, 24:10 (2002), p.19.
[232] www.ebay.co.uk
[233] www.ebay.co.uk

As well as this, however, there has also been a growing interest in the sale of instruments and equipment that would have been used in the Studio, with two specific examples, both offered for auction on eBay in 2006, being a Gretsch bass drum and a 1960s Vox AC4 amplifier. Whilst the functionality of the items was noted in the eBay descriptions, it was their histories that were mainly emphasised as key selling points: "She has performed in some of the top recording studios in the UK including Strawberry…." and "The condition is immaculate and this is mostly due to the fact that it spent its entire life in Strawberry studios in Manchester. A whole host of stars MUST have used this to record and when you hear it you will understand why!"

The way in which these items were promoted, and indeed the commercial interest in them, seemingly reinforces the notion that somehow such technology might absorb the location and history of its setting, such as when Rochdale's Suite 16 Studio was said to contain the "heart of Strawberry"[234] as a result of having much of its original equipment in there. The roles played by technology, geography and personnel, and their interaction, will be looked at in more detail in the following chapters.

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[234] www.webinfo.co.uk/crackedmachine/dumb.htm

Chapter 2: The History of the Recording Studio in Britain

The Historical Narrative

In creating an historical narrative of the recording studio industry, I intend to move away from talking of historical narratives generally (and the apprehension caused for those encountering the term) towards a narrower and more traditional understanding of the term. The dictionary definition of 'narrative' is "a written account of connected events in order of happening"[1] that includes all the relevant or essential facts. Such narratives, often the mainstay of textbooks and older research, are characterised by a number of key elements. As well as an emphasis on dates, statistics and outstanding personalities, the accounts are generally descriptive rather than analytical and are chronologically ordered. They are also presented in a detached way, without the personal involvement of the historian. Saul Friedländer, for example, whose own work on the Holocaust was described as having been "related carefully and dispassionately"[2] noted the need for the historian to find some middle ground between "the constructs of public-collective memory…at one pole and the 'dispassionate' historical inquiries at the opposite pole."[3]

Using this narrower definition of 'narrative', the story of the early British recording studio industry would start with the creation of the first basic studio in London's Cockburn Hotel in 1889,[4] would note the contributions of such people as Fred and William Gaisberg,[5] and would finish with the opening of the first custom-built recording studio at Abbey Road, London, on November 12th 1931.[6] By the early 1960s, a number of the developments that were to revolutionise the British recording studio in later years were becoming increasingly apparent. The most obvious change was the "dynamic acceleration"[7] of pop music in relation to classical music, and the rise of the 45rpm single record. Although classical record sales still increased year-on-year, the market was rapidly becoming dominated by pop and, consequently, the record company studios, more used to recording orchestras or big bands, had to adjust to cater for the arrival of individual artists or small groups of musicians. The

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[1] *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[2] S. Aschheim, "On Saul Friedländer", *History and Memory*, 9:1/2 (1997), pp.11-46.
[3] S. Friedlander, *Memory, History and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p.viii.
[4] P. Martland, *Since Records Began: EMI, The First 100 Years*, (London: Batsford, 1997), p.40.
[5] F. Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1948).
[6] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.17.
[7] R. Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph 1877 – 1977*, (London: Cassell, 1977), p.332.

larger recording areas were therefore no longer needed and studio space could be partitioned, temporarily or permanently, to reduce the wasted space. Additionally, the work of innovative British producer Joe Meek,[8] "who made an extraordinary instrumental hit called *Telstar* with the Tornadoes in 1962"[9] having built his own studio in a three-storey flat in London, signalled the emergence of the independent producer who would combine inspiration with technological innovation in the recording studio. For musician and academic Albin Zak, Meek was at the forefront of these changes and he noted of the producer:

> "In pursuit of sounds that he first imagined and then set about creating – even if doing so required that he build equipment from scratch or modify an existing piece – he used recording techniques that would have been forbidden in the studios of any of the major record labels. He is credited with some of the earliest radical sound treatments in rock, employing reverb, echo, compression, equalization, distortion, unusual microphone placement and tape-speed variation to create sound worlds – and hit records – unlike any of the time."[10]

The 1960s

The recording studio of the 1960s was characterised by a number of key elements. Firstly, they were run very much like normal businesses rather than as places of creativity, and the owner was more likely to be "a record company accountant or a business man"[11] than someone with a musical background. The most famous British studio, Abbey Road in London, was representative of the approach to recording in this period. Recording sessions had to be authorised through the use of official forms and the studio only operated from 10am to 10pm precisely ("the lights went off and that was it…you just packed everything away and left like everybody else")[12] whilst artists were paid in the same way as staff and received a weekly wage packet from EMI, the owner of the studio. As well as housing a staff canteen, the corporate feel of Abbey Road was further emphasised by the fact that even the toilet paper was embossed with the EMI logo and that the staff and artists alike were expected to dress appropriately, mainly in suits and ties.

A second key element was the recording process itself. Sessions were strictly limited time-wise and great emphasis was placed on recording as many as songs as possible

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[8] J. Repsch, *The Legendary Joe Meek: The Telstar Man*, (London: Cherry Red Books, 2000).
[9] T. Barrow and J. Newby, *Inside the Music Business*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p.5.
[10] A. Zak, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records*, (California: University of California Press, 2001), p.182.
[11] *Studio Sound*, April (1984), p.93.
[12] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.68.

in each session. The Beatles first album,[13] for example, released in 1963, was virtually recorded in a single session at Abbey Road.[14] The artist in the studio area was also very much separated from the actual recording process being carried out in the control room and, as one musician, Roy Wood, remembers, "those were the days when they didn't let you near the control room – you just had to wait for 'em to say yes or no through the loudspeakers at the end of the session."[15] The air of mystery surrounding the recording process was intensified by the role of the engineers (or technicians) who, in their white coats, created a clinical feel within the studios. Famous producer Mickie Most referred to Abbey Road as being "very hospitalised"[16], a view mirrored by one music journalist who saw studios as portraying "a clinical environment…like being in hospital"[17] whilst one of the artists who used Abbey Road further emphasised the point by noting that "the technicians came in like a load of doctors with white coats on."[18] In general, rather than places of artistic creativity, the early 1960s recording studio was "a place in which a technical operation was carried out"[19] and, although the stars of the blossoming popular music scene for the general public were the artists themselves, the power in the recording studio lay with the record companies. Through their producers and other staff, who tightly monitored both the material being produced and the way in which it was being recorded, the major companies of the period were very much in control of the whole recording process. Many would place an 'artists and repertoire' (A&R) man in the studio to monitor and advise the producer as to how to proceed with the recording and, inevitably, this often led to tensions and conflict.[20]

Of all the technical developments in the 1960s, that which affected the recording studio the most was the advent of multi-track tape recording facilities. Whilst two-track tape recording had been developed in the 1950s, it was the arrival of the four-track recorder that had the biggest impact in the studio. Now, instead of duplicating single live performances directly onto tape, the finished product became a mix of four separate layers, each recorded separately. If one of those layers proved not to be

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[13] *Please Please Me*, (Parlophone: PMC 1202, 1963).
[14] Paul McCartney noted "We did that first album in a day." (B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, [Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982], p.89.)
[15] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.89.
[16] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.105.
[17] L. Henshaw, "It's All A Question of Atmosphere", *Melody Maker*, January 16th 1971, p.23.
[18] *Up Town*, October 11th-25th 1987, p.19.
[19] *Studio Sound*, April (1984), p.87.
[20] H. Lawrence, "Who's In Charge?", *Audio*, December (1965), p.12.

up to scratch, it could be re-recorded or over-dubbed without the need for all the musicians to perform again. Recognising the commercial sense in the utilization of such technology, studios quickly adapted the multi-track recorders and Abbey Road installed a four-track tape machine in 1963, just in time for the Beatles to record their second album.[21]

The arrival of the four-track recorder had a profound affect on the British recording studio. Generally speaking, it marked a shift from attempting to capture the natural musical performance to an era of fragmented recordings, of the isolation of instruments and vocals, an era where "the recording process became more self-conscious and less spontaneous."[22] Rather than having to perform, artists now moved towards 'constructing' their music and, as a result, the length of time spent in the studio increased dramatically. At the forefront of this were the Beatles as their success allowed them to start dictating their own recording requirements. At Abbey Road, they not only did away with the strict three hour recording session, but they began to record at night and even started living and writing in the studio. Other artists, too, extended the recording process although few could match Brian Wilson as he constructed the Beach Boys album *Pet Sounds*.[23] The single *Good Vibrations*,[24] which lasted just over three minutes, took twenty recording sessions and ninety hours of tape to complete.[25] In general, multi-track recording altered the artists' approach to their music with the live performances attempting to recreate the music of the recording studio, rather than vice versa. For one performer, pianist Glenn Gould, "the goal of musical perfection was now attainable in the recording studio, where the musician could become 'creatively dishonest' and produce music that far exceeded his capabilities in the concert hall."[26] Indeed, the increasing gap between recorded music and live performance created tensions between performer and the public. As one industry magazine noted in 1971:

> It seems that the live audiences for music have come to expect (and even demand) more than the music can ever supply, in terms of a lasting and permanent 'impact'

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[21] *With the Beatles*, (Parlophone: PCS3045, 1963).
[22] C. Gillett, *The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll* (2nd Edition), (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996).
[23] Capitol: T-2458, 1966.
[24] Capitol: 5676, 1966.
[25] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1999), p.157.
[26] A. Millard, *America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.307.

that they feel they must experience. At the same time, some bands have tried to put more into the music they play than can be contained within the human limitations of composition and performance. The net result, at the end of a set, is usually disillusionment and frustration on both sides.[27]

With this ability to construct rather than perform songs, artists began to innovate and experiment in the studio, both testing the new multi-track technology and improvising with other studio equipment. Other technical innovations of the time, such as the noise reduction system invented by Raymond Dolby,[28] equalisers, compressors and limiters, improved the sound quality of the recordings. Additionally, the new electronic instruments, such as the Moog synthesiser[29] and Mellotron,[30] added to the sound-creation techniques of the recording studio. Studio staff and artists were keen to invent new devices that helped expand the technical possibilities. At Abbey Road, for example, staff were paid for any ideas that were tested and then accepted by the studio. As one engineer, Norman Smith, put it when contributing his thoughts to Abbey Road's official history, "people's dedication to developing the recording industry in this country was quite astounding."[31]

As well as changing the working pattern of the musician in the studio, the roles of producer and engineer, in the wake of Joe Meek in particular, also altered with the spread of multi-track technology. By the mid-1960s, the final mix of a record was in the hands of the producer and, as a result, his or her status increased in the recording process. George Martin, of course, is the prime example of this but other examples, such as Phil Spector in the United States, are very apparent. From simply being the means of allowing the transfer of a musical performance onto tape, "the studio had become a huge musical instrument at the producer's disposal."[32] The producer was no longer concerned with capturing natural music, but wanted to create "new worlds of sound."[33] Allied with this change in the producer's role, the recording engineers also saw a shift in their position as the technical complexities of the mixing desk increased. With producers taking the creative lead in the control room, engineers

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[27] *Beat Instrumental and International Recording Studio*, December (1971), p.3.
[28] E. Daniel, C. Mee and M. Clark (Eds), *Magnetic Recording: The First 100 Years*, (New York: IEEE Press, 1999), p.94.
[29] T. Pinch and F. Trocco, *Analog Days: The Invention and Impact of the Moog Synthesiser*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2002).
[30] www.mellotron.com/history.htm
[31] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.91.
[32] M. Chanan, *Repeated Takes: A Short History of Recording and its Effects on Music*, (London: Verso, 1995), p.144.
[33] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1999), p.152.

were needed to assist with the technical operations of the equipment and, as a result, "the engineer came out of the backroom and into the same room as the producer."[34] Eventually, the original role split into two separate jobs, the recording engineer helping the creative side and the maintenance engineer or technician fulfilling a more technical role. Indeed, the 1960s saw the development of a "collaborative regime"[35] between artists and technical staff in the studio that allowed those recording to fully exploit and interpret their musical compositions.

By the mid-1960s, as more companies became involved in the commercial production of the multi-track equipment (Ampex, Scully and 3M being three such examples), it was becoming much easier and more affordable for new recording studios to be developed and built by those independent of the major record companies. With the burgeoning number of pop groups and artists wanting to record, the demand for studio time was growing. Those studios owned by the major record companies often gave preferential treatment to artists on their own labels and there was still, despite the efforts of the Beatles, a reluctance to change the working practices of old, especially the rigid session times. This led to a growing number of independent studios appearing as many within the music industry recognised the potential for expansion in the field. George Martin, the backbone of EMI's success with the Beatles, even left the safety of Abbey Road with three other producers to form their own Associated Independent Recording (AIR) studios in central London. As Martin told the music press at the time, "we want to provide producers with every aid to production that we ourselves have longed to have available when working in other studios."[36] Even those studios only offering basic facilities could provide a service as many up and coming artists needed the opportunity to record demonstration tapes in the hope of being able to secure a recording contract. As with the music industry itself, the majority of recording studios were London-based and, some of the leading names in the business were Olympic, Trident, De Lane Lea, Decca, Morgan, Marquee and Decca. There were few, if any, professional studios outside of the Capital in spite of the fact that many successful artists were from such places as Manchester and Liverpool. Indeed, by the beginning of the 1970s, one U.S.

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[34] *Studio Sound*, April (1984), p.87.
[35] J. Toynbee, *Making Popular Music: Musicians, Creativity and Institutions*, (London: Arnold, 2000), p.90.
[36] *Melody Maker*, January 16th 1971, p.23.

magazine featured an article on the subject with the heading "London Studios As World Recording Centers."[37]

The technical development of the four-track tape recorder was only the start of a rapidly-developing multi-track technology era. When the Beatles recorded *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts' Club Band*[38] in 1967, they actually used two four-track machines in order to increase the range of sounds available to them. This was the signal that four tracks were no longer adequate and a meeting was called in Abbey Road to discuss the acquisition of an 8-track machine. One artist, Dave Gilmour of Pink Floyd, remembers advising the studio to switch directly to 16-track, as George Martin was doing at AIR, but the conservative element in charge of the studios thought the better of it and purchased the 8-track recorder.[39] Within a year, however, they had moved to 16-track recorders as the technical pace speeded up. By the end of the decade, professional recording studios were very different places than they had been ten years previously. Developing technology, allied with the general success of the music industry, meant that artists were now free to experiment with sound, to create rather than just perform, and the recording studio was now more akin to an artist's studio than just a laboratory of sound reproduction. For some observers, the late 1960s had become a much less stringent period when "groups could spend leisurely weeks of expensive studio time while they haphazardly experimented and doodled instrumentally towards an eventual LP's worth of material."[40]

The 1970s

The early 1970s saw the development of a number of features that characterised the British recording studio of the time. Whilst the concentration of studios (and the music industry generally) remained in London, there was a notable spread of professional studios into the rest of the British Isles. One measure of this is the first commercially-published listing of UK recording studios in the *Music Yearbook*,[41] first published in 1973, but with data from as early as 1971. The 1972-73 *Music Yearbook*[42] lists approximately eighty United Kingdom studios from outside the capital (although the accuracy of these might be questioned as Strawberry Studios

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[37] *Billboard*, November 13th 1971, pp.L4-L6.

[38] Parlophone: PCS7027, 1967.

[39] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.113.

[40] *The Music Yearbook*, 1972/73, (London: MacMillan, 1973), p.96.

[41] The National Music Council of Great Britain decided to publish a Directory containing as much information as possible for those involved in all aspects of British music.

[42] *The Music Yearbook 1972-3*, (London: MacMillan, 1973).

and Inter-City Studios are shown separately[43] even though they were one and the same) with just over ninety shown as being located in London. A number of the new studios being developed in this period were also being set-up and run by musicians themselves. These included Konk Studios (owned by The Kinks), Ramport (set up by The Who) and Threshold (developed by The Moody Blues).[44] There were a number of reasons for this; the need to experiment and utilise the facilities as fully as possible meant that artists needed as much time in the studio as possible. As the Beatles had discovered at Abbey Road, this had sometimes led to conflict with other users and the obvious solution was for such artists to build their own recording studios. Additionally, as the status of the pop star of the early 1970s increased, so did their financial ability to develop their own recording facilities. One of the key features of this new artist-owned studio was the relaxed atmosphere in which they were run. In contrast to the suit and tie, and strict session time approach of the studios in the 1960s, the 1970s recording studio saw a more liberal approach. The barriers that had kept the artist out of the studio's control room were being removed as the finished product was nearly as much about the final mixing and editing as it was the original performance in the recording area.

Generally, the pop music scene of the first part of the 1970s is now mainly associated with excess, glamour and over-indulgence. An increasing number of records were presented as 'concept albums' or 'rock operas' and "there was the irresistible feeling that rock had now established itself to such a degree that there were no further battles to be fought."[45] Many artists dressed flamboyantly, stage shows were lavish and theatrical whilst album packages, with gatefold sleeves and expensively-produced cover designs, were extravagant. At the same time, though, the technological development of recording studios showed no signs of slowing down either as the 1970s progressed with sixteen track soon progressing to twenty-four track. Other technical developments allowed new sounds to be created and, for example, Pink Floyd's 1973 album *Dark Side of the Moon*[46] "set a new precedent in sound recording techniques"[47] through the use of noise gates, tape loops and quadraphonic mixing that made them one of the first bands, according to engineer Alan Parsons, to

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[43] *The Music Yearbook 1972-3*, (London: MacMillan, 1973), p.560.
[44] *Melody Maker*, August 3rd 1974, pp.39-40.
[45] D. Hatch and S. Millward, *From Blues To Rock*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p.159.
[46] Pink Floyd, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, (Harvest: 11163, 1973).
[47] R. Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music*, (London: Routledge, 2001), p.54.

"stretch a studio to its limits."[48] Mike Oldfield, with the recording of *Tubular Bells*[49] in 1972, took overdubbing to new extremes when he recorded most of the instruments himself and layered them over each other to produce the finished sound. Another studio innovator was Brian Eno who made "innovative use of the technology of the day…and famously devised the Revox tape-delay process that was applied extensively by guitarist Robert Fripp."[50] Eno also became one of the pioneers in the growing use of synthesised music in the 1970s and the rise of such artists as Jean-Michel Jarre and Kraftwerk, "the prime 1970s progenitors of the artificial"[51] and one of the first bands to make use of the voice-distorting vocoder, is testimony to the growing influence of the analogue synthesiser in that decade, as seen in the development of such instruments as the Mellotron, the Moog and the Minimoog.

These technological developments were often reflected in the use of studios too. For instance, the technical requirements of the mixing desks increased, with many becoming computerised in order that all the dials and switches could be fully monitored. Linked to this, specialist companies began to appear dedicated to the recording studio market (Neve for example) and a number of these companies grew out of, and in tandem with, certain studios. For example, when London's Trident Studios (famous for The Beatles recording *Hey Jude*[52] there in 1968) wanted to upgrade their mixing desk in the early 1970s, they investigated what was on offer commercially and then decided to design and construct their own desk in order to maintain this control. Interestingly, though, the experience of building their own mixing desk led to those involved in the construction of it deciding to offer their services to other studios and they formed Trident Audio Developments.[53] This company, entirely devoted to the production of mixing consoles, based their approach on those key elements seen as important to the development of mixing desks, in other words "a good understanding of the operational and ergonomic aspects of recording consoles together with an ability to design equipment…that is very pleasing to the ear."[54] Another similar company was Helios Electronics, formed in 1969, which was developed by one man (Dick Swettenham) and his work for

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[48] B. Southall, *Abbey Road*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.144.
[49] Mike Odlfield, *Tubular Bells*, (Virgin: V2001, 1973).
[50] P. Tingen, "Brian Eno", *Sound on Sound*, 2005:October, www.soundonsound.com/sos/oct05/articles/brianeno.htm
[51] D. Buckley, "Book Review", *Popular Music*, 13:3 (1994), p.363.
[52] Apple: R5722, 1968.
[53] http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/TRIDENT/history.htm
[54] www.tryaudio.co.uk/old_trident_audio__background.htm

various studios. His approach was to custom design and manufacture the consoles for each individual customer, mindful of the fact that each client wanted something slightly different from the others. The individuality that was developing in the 1970s recording studio industry (as opposed to the corporate control of studios in the early 1960s and before) meant that commercially-produced equipment was often too standardised for many studios. Another growth area allied to recording studio development was that of studio design with companies such as Westlake and Eastlake offering the opportunity for the professional design of studios. Some designers, such as Tom Hidley of Westlake, were in constant demand by the top studios and the term 'acoustic designer' became more prominently used in this period.

The commercial mass production of recording studio equipment in the early 1970s also contributed towards what would eventually become a worrying trend for the professional studio. With companies such as Teac, Sony, Revox and Allen & Heath able to offer basic recording set-ups for less than a thousand pounds, and with much of the professional studios' 1960s equipment available second-hand, there was an increase in the number of home studios appearing. Even as early as 1972, *Melody Maker* was running articles with titles such as "A Studio in Your Front Room?",[55] although, in this instance, it was referring to the construction of professional studios in unusual settings, such as someone's home, rather than the true 'home studio' concept. Within a year, however, the same journal recognised the emergence of the more conventional 'home studio' when it observed "about half the garages and basements in England must be echoing to the siren song of rock music by now; everybody's building their own recording studios."[56] However, such studios were only intended to provide limited demo-tape facilities and were not considered to be a challenge to the standards of the larger professional establishments, which were "far too high for the home studio to approach."[57] Recording quality was equated to the cost and complexity of the equipment available and this was often emphasised to the record-buying public ("when you consider that a professional studio can cost hundreds of thousands of pounds….it is obvious that a front room made partially soundproof and equipped from the local hi-fi shop is not going to be able to compete

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[55] *Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1972, p.27.
[56] *Melody Maker*, January 20th 1973, p.34.
[57] *Melody Maker*, January 20th 1973, p.34.

on equal terms.")[58] As in the 1960s, though, this did allow a number of 'demo studios', to develop as up and coming bands would look for cheaper, locally-situated, recording facilities. Whilst such studios could not boast the space or technology of the majors, they were not as bad as their popular image ("they are dirty, uncomfortable, expensive, run by nasty little men who charge by the minute, and they turn out rotten sounds on rotten gear.")[59] A comparison of the hourly rates of one such demo studio, Gooseberry in London (£10.50 per hour for 8-track) with other professional studios (£31 per hour for 8-track at the Beatles' Apple Studios) shows the appeal of the more basic studios to those without the financial backing of established artists. Indeed, outside the capital this price could drop as low as £3.50 per hour for basic 8-track facilities.

Whilst UK record sales would increase year-on-year until 1977 (sales in the UK more than doubled from 98.9 million in 1968 to 198.4 million in 1974),[60] the economics of the music industry began to play an increasingly important role in the recording studio sector throughout this period. The majority of record companies were now transforming into major global corporate concerns and the big five that emerged in the 1970s (CBS, EMI, PolyGram, Warner and RCA) began to take a much more business-like approach to the acquisition and financing of artists. The idea of budgets, and sticking to them, became more prevalent and the company accountants began to exert more control than they had previously done. General economic crises were bound to affect such companies and their operations, as was seen by the 'vinyl crisis' of 1973. An oil embargo by members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) restricted the supply of oil and raised prices to levels previously thought impossible. One of the by-products, vinyl, also rose in price and it became too expensive to produce, delaying the release of albums and seriously affecting the proposed recording of others. In addition, power-cuts became common-place and those recording in studios were affected. Abbey Road, for example, invested in the purchase of a generator in an attempt to maintain the electrical supply. Generally speaking, record companies tightened their belts and reduced their budgets in an attempt to remain profitable and cost-consciousness became a watchword in the industry. As one contemporary review put it, "it seemed

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[58] *Melody Maker*, March 15th 1975, p.36.
[59] *Melody Maker*, January 20th 1973, p.32.
[60] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1999), p.137.

like Christmas all the year round in the recording industry. Unfortunately the recording boom came to an end."[61]

By the mid-1970s, the recording of music "had stagnated, centering around high technology facilities and superstar acts who spent several months in the studio per album."[62] One of the men responsible for advancing multi-track technology, Phil Spector, had already recognised the problem and started a 'Back to Mono' campaign that argued for a return to the basics of recording music. When up and coming acts, such as The Ramones, also began to rebel against the corporate controlled sterility of the music scene they struck a chord with a sizeable portion of the youth market. As a result, the new punk movement was born and was characterised by a raw, basic sound that no longer needed the sophisticated technology to produce multi-layered offerings. Now, the established studios and record companies were under attack from a generation of musicians who preferred the energetic, warts and all music that could be recorded in the growing number of basic studio facilities ("It was suddenly the fashion. Go to a cheap tatty studio to record your album.")[63] Even the appearance of the studio could provoke reaction and there was a conscious move away from the uniformity of the Tom Hidley/Westlake designs that were synonymous with the early 1970s. With less concern about how polished the final sound was, and with no need for the expert technical supervision of a complicated recording process, the established producers and engineers also found that their position was under attack. Many went into other areas (such as film or advertising) or even left the country altogether.

As well as being relatively brief, the impact of the punk movement was possibly exaggerated by the media's fascination with its excesses and it still had to share chart space with other musical trends, such as the disco boom of the late 1970s. Ironically, disco was the antithesis of the punk approach to the production of music in that it was artificial, mechanised and was "studio music created by record producers whose weapon of choice was the synthesiser".[64] Although it did not necessarily oust the public's liking of other types of pop music as far as record sales were concerned,

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[61] *Billboard*, October 28th 1972, p.L-6.
[62] *Studio Sound*, April (1984), p.93.
[63] *Studio Sound*, January (1982), p.63.
[64] A. Millard, *America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.308.

punk did challenge the musical "excesses"[65] of the 1970s musicians and, also, threw out many of the established techniques "which had been developed around precision, care and expertise"[66] in the recording studio. At the very least, punk was a shock to the system and its wider historical significance will be considered more fully in Chapter 6.

The 1980s

Whilst the 1970s had finished with a swipe at the technological trappings of the multi-track studio, the 1980s arrived with the advent of yet more new technology, that of digital sound. Until then, recording had relied on the conversion of sound waves into electrical impulses and then storing them on vinyl or tape in order to reverse the process and allow the listener to hear the music. In other words, they were both examples of analogue technology. One of the major drawbacks of analogue sound was the possibility of sound distortion and that the finished product could only sound as good as the equipment being used to store or listen to it allowed. Although companies could remove the tape hiss, for example, by using the Dbx[67] noise-reduction system, this meant that the public needed to buy specialist equipment in order to be able to benefit. As with the introduction of quadrophonic sound in the early 1970s, a good technical idea floundered on the lack of support from the record-buying public. Digital sound, the conversion of sound waves into binary digits, offered a number of advantages over analogue sound, the main one being the removal of all background noise and distortion and the lack of deterioration in sound quality however many times it was copied from the original. Whether digital sound would revolutionise the music industry was dependent on two main factors. Firstly, the question was whether recording studio equipment could be developed to take advantage of digital recording and, secondly, whether the public could be persuaded to move away from their vinyl and tape products in favour of a new medium and the equipment that would go with it.

The initial problem that faced recording studios was whether it was worth investing in digital given both the experimental nature of the equipment on offer and the fact that the public were still buying vinyl records or cassettes and could not therefore

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[65] D. Hatch and S. Millward, *From Blues To Rock*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p.171.
[66] *Studio Sound*, April (1984), p.95.
[67] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dbx_(noise_reduction)

really hear that much difference in the finished product. When Rod Stewart had been persuaded to record an album digitally in the United States in the early 1980s (when it was still experimental) and he heard the finished product on vinyl, he asked the studio owner "why in hell did I spend an extra $25,000.00 to get the same thing I would have got if I had done it analogue?"[68] Companies such as Sony, Solid State Logic and JVC began to produce digital machinery for the studio, in the shape of digital mastering machines, digital multi-track systems and digital console desks. Initially, such equipment was prohibitively expensive and many studios were forced to hire rather than purchase it. The main worry for studios was that there was no agreed digital standard in place and, mindful of the 'War of Speeds'[69] that had taken place in the 1940s, they were reluctant to totally commit to one system. Whilst digital stood waiting in the wings, analogue was still very much the norm in the studio and technical progression continued with the development of 48 track systems. The dilemma facing studios was summed up in 1984 by Ken Townsend, General Manager of the Abbey Road studio who declared the early 1980s to be

> …a technological mess – standardisation has evaporated. Analogue and digital side by side…mix to digital PCM1610, JVC or Sony F1. Mix to analogue ½" or ¼"…record straight to digital, 2 track, 24 or 32. No tapes are interchangeable between any systems. Edit via computer or just splice.[70]

Having to make "purchasing decisions on digital equipment with inadequate information"[71] and with "far too many unknowns that may have an effect",[72] it was no surprise that, even in 1986, those in the recording studio industry might approach the digital issue with trepidation and still find the trade press unsure of how to approach the question of digital technology and suggesting a novel solution; "Find a small stretch of deserted beach, dig a round hole about a foot across, kneel down and lower your head into the darkness."[73]

As the 1980s progressed, the debate over analogue versus digital was tipped in favour of digital by the public's acceptance of the compact disc (CD). This disc, on which the digitally stored music is read by a laser instead of a stylus, ensured that

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[68] *Studio Sound*, February (1984), p.52.
[69] CBS's introduction of 33 r.p.m. records was challenged by RCA's 45 r.p.m. discs (A. Bennett, B. Shank and J. Toynbee, *The Popular Music Studies Reader*, [London: Routledge, 2006], p.237).
[70] *Studio Sound*, April (1984), pp.86-7.
[71] *Studio Sound*, September (1984), p.5.
[72] *Studio Sound*, October (1985), p.5.
[73] *Studio Sound*, June (1986), p.5.

better sound quality could be delivered to the end user and also meant less wear to the disc itself because of the absence of direct contact with its surface. The first CD prototype was unveiled in 1979, was commercially introduced to Britain in 1983 and before the 1990s arrived was outselling the vinyl LP. As well as capturing the public's imagination (the CD was more convenient to play, individual tracks could be easily selected and they were perceived to be less prone to wear and tear than vinyl), record companies were able to charge much more for the CD in comparison with the LP. At the same time, there was also the potential to re-release older music on the new format which gave them a further boost. With UK record sales rising by 16.8% in the 1980s (and a further 34% between 1991 and 1995),[74] there was a marked upturn in the fortunes of the music industry in general.

In spite of these rising sales figures, the 1980s were also a time of upheaval for recording studios. By the mid 1980s, digital sound was becoming less of a novelty both in studios and with the record-buying public. In September 1984, *Studio Sound* decided to stop separating digital matters from other recording issues and to include it generally throughout the magazine, "rather than as a separate topic that has to be considered as somehow remote from the basic rules that govern recording in general."[75] The uncertainty in studios, though, still continued. Digital technology continued to advance and it was now possible for studios to convert from analogue totally. Allied with the growing popularity of the CD this added to digital technology's "omnipresence"[76] and to the pressure that many studio owners felt they were facing when having to decide between analogue and digital systems. Although analogue was not going to disappear overnight (the continued success of the cassette and such items as Sony's Walkman ensured this), the fear of being left behind, especially in such a technologically-driven industry, was very real.

One of the main pressures in this period was the economics of digital sound. Whilst hiring such systems was still an option, the more advanced equipment still meant greater overheads for the studios and the only way to recoup this would be to raise their costs. However, competition within the industry was such that rates were declining. This presented a dilemma to those running studios in that they needed to

[74] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry,* (London: Cassell, 1999), p.193.
[75] *Studio Sound*, September (1984), p.5.
[76] *Studio Sound*, October (1985), p.5.

have the latest equipment to attract people to their studio but, at the same time, they could not charge enough to cover the costs of re-equipping. By the mid 1980s, an average hourly rate for a well-equipped studio was approximately £70 (not even double the cost of the 1970s whereas, for example, consoles were costing six or seven times as much). Whilst renting the equipment was a short-term solution, the longer-term consequences of the arrival of digital were viewed very seriously indeed, on both sides of the Atlantic. One of *Studio Sound*'s editorials in 1984 urged studio owners "to charge realistic rates now. All of you. It's as simple as that."[77] The Chairman of the United States studio owners' organisation (Society of Professional Audio Recording Services) told his British counterparts at the end of 1983, "…the biggest problem is 'who pays?'…in the long run the independent recording studio as we know it will disappear…pretty soon it is going to get back, I think, to where we began – the record label recording studio where the artist does not have a choice of where he goes."[78] Some studios did start to move back towards such a system, although not quite in the way that record companies had run studios in the 1960s. CBS Studios in London obviously had a connection with its parent record company but, with regard to recording sessions, only one third of customers would necessarily be from the label. "CBS records is a customer like anybody else. We have to sell ourselves to CBS Records as if they were any third party customer."[79] Independent studios could also build a relationship with record companies and specific labels in order to guarantee certain levels of custom, such as Sarm's accommodation of Trevor Horn and his ZTT label. Paradoxically, professional studios found that, as technology began to settle, resisting the urge to compromise and cut recording rates, indeed even raising them, did not necessarily lead to the loss of customers. Lansdowne's owner, Adrian Kerridge, noted that maintaining the realistic level of rates raised the studio's professional image and status and filled the order books at the same time. Air's David Harries also remained philosophical about the wide variety of rates on offer across the United Kingdom, putting this down to the widely differing "facilities, locations, standard of equipment and the sort of service you get"[80] in these studios.

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[77] *Studio Sound*, February (1984), p.5.
[78] *Studio Sound*, February (1984), p.54.
[79] *Studio Sound*, January (1986), p.32.
[80] *Studio Sound*, January (1986), p.33.

Another feature of the 1980s was the number of recording studios which decided to diversify into new areas other than just straight sound recording. Much of this was based on the need to recoup the costs of new equipment at a time when competition could leave some with too much 'dead' time in their studios. One of the areas that recording studios moved into was that of the music video or general film work. The rise of the popular music video, allied with a general acceptance of the video recorder, had been swift and had resulted in the launch of MTV, a round the clock music television channel, in August 1981. Record companies were now paying as much attention to the visual presentation of songs as they were to the sound itself ("They don't want to pay any more for sound but they'll willingly spend thousands and thousands on a video")[81] and, today, some songs are better remembered for the accompanying video rather than for the music. Many recording studios saw this potential and began to offer post-production or sound-to-picture facilities. Lansdowne, for example, moved into, and indeed helped to develop technology for, music-to-picture facilities and, in 1986, declared it "the best move this company ever made."[82] Many studios began to offer the ability to lock multi-track machines with video recorders and some even built video production facilities. Other areas that studios could diversify into were advertising jingles, feature-film soundtracks, classical music or general voice-overs. Some of these, especially feature film and classical music work, required large studio space for orchestral work and were therefore limited to the larger studios (such as Abbey Road). As the 1980s progressed, however, and as the novelty of the music video began to wane, studios started to question the need to move away from straightforward music production. One thing that music video production had shown the music industry was that clients were willing to pay good rates for video facilities but were still reluctant to pay more for an excellently equipped recording studio. The realisation that realistic recording rates, obtained through "co-operation rather than competition",[83] were the way forward for recording studios began to grow. Possibly, it was now not a question of "'diversify *or* die' but of "diversify *and* die"?[84]

Whilst 1980s technology was changing the way in which music was being recorded and listened to, it was also developing in regard to the way musicians were

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[81] *Studio Sound*, May (1984), p.41.
[82] *Studio Sound*, January (1986), p.34.
[83] *Studio Sound*, May (1984), p.42.
[84] *Studio Sound*, May (1984), p.42.

performing in the studio. Whilst synthesised sounds had been important in the late 1960s and 1970s, the 1980s saw major progress in this field. Whilst polyphonic synthesisers began to appear at the end of the 1970s (such as the Yamaha CS-80), the Prophet 5 was the first instrument to store the digitised settings in its memory and bands such as Soft Cell and Bronski Beat utilised the synthetic sound for their own purposes and, at the same time, changed the way in which music was captured. Looking back at the early 1980s, one producer (Mike Thorne) remembers the difference that the emergence of processed sound made; "Enormous canned energy was available at the push of a button, and large dance productions took advantage of such electronic stamina…up to 22 continuous minutes of high-energy dance music."[85] And, yet, it wasn't just the way music was being produced that was changing, but the process of recording and saving the music too. Instead of recording onto magnetic tape, the synthetic sounds could be stored digitally, as noted by Thorne; "We were able to build big structures and eventually store them in a computer, but these recordings were just at the turning point when an entire arrangement might be stored this way."[86] As Thorne hints at, the musical instrument and the computer storage of its sound became increasingly linked and, as computer technology developed, the combined instrument/recorder, at a price that made it accessible to a large market, became a common feature of the music scene. When the manufacturers of these systems agreed a standard interface for the transfer of information between instruments and recorders in 1983 (the Musical Instrument Digital Interface or MIDI standard), the ability to produce and record good quality sound outside of the larger recording studio was enhanced. For instance, as noted in the early 1990s, "MIDI makes it possible to bring an entire recording studio into the living room for less than $2500 (£1,600)."[87] The introduction of computers into the system led to the creation of the Synclavier, the first 'workstation' synthesiser that was able to do many jobs, including scoring and sampling. The major player in the sampling market was the Fairlight, which had a light-pen to control the keyboard. By the mid 1980s, a number of companies were producing cheaper, more-accessible digital synthesisers. Yamaha's DX7 was perhaps the best known whilst Roland was responsible for a number of programmable instruments, including guitar synthesisers. In essence, this new generation of equipment was allowing performers to obtain

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[85] www.stereosociety.com/body_recordingstudio.html
[86] www.stereosociety.com/dancing.html
[87] L. Austin, *Rock Music, The Microchip, and the Collaborative Performer: Issues Concerning Musical Performance, Electronics and the Recording Studio*, (PhD. dissertation, New York University, 1993), p.89.

sounds that they could not achieve, either easily or cheaply, before. The earlier development of a standardised MIDI system meant that different machines could be connected together to help the musician. Taking the idea further, the MIDI also allowed machines to be connected to computers (as with the Fairlight and Synclavier) and, in the 1990s, to connect to a home computer to allow the general public the chance to indulge in music-production. The speed in which things changed can be seen from example of 1970s electronic pop kings, Kraftwerk. After recording in 1982 they took their masters to New York for mixing and found themselves out of step ("Suddenly all this digital equipment appeared. So we had to step back and think it all over…We got a little bit lost in the technology.")[88] The music of the 1980s was very much affected by these technical developments. Whereas many of the early pioneers of synthesised music (Vangelis, Mike Oldfield, Jean-Michel Jarre and Kraftwerk) were considered to be outside of pop's mainstream, the synth-pop bands arriving in the 1980s (Human League, Tubeway Army, OMD and Depeche Mode are just four examples) were very much at the forefront of the music scene. Such musicians could now introduce a wide array of sounds without the need to spend hours experimenting or to bring in other musicians. Sampling allowed a variety of instruments to apparently appear on records although they were all usually the products of the synthesiser. Indeed, this sampling went one stage further when artists began to sample not just instruments but whole sections of music, usually that of other artists. One record label, KLF, was set-up specifically to produce such records and, more often than not, they ended up in court as the artists whose works had been sampled claimed breach of copyright and pressed for royalties.

Obviously, such machines had an effect on recording studios. The linking of computers to the instruments meant that everything prior to the production of the final master tape could be done on the one machine (the Synclavier, for example, had a separate page for post-composition editing). In 1986, Sarm toyed with the idea of devoting one of their four studios to simply a Synclavier and a programmer for those wishing to use this instrument. There would be no need for a desk or any mixing facilities, the final product would transfer directly from the Synclavier onto a digital master tape. Recording studios realised that such systems were amalgamating several different studio processes into one machine. "In short, we have a new category of

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[88] *Mojo*, February (2002), p.73.

studio equipment – an addition to our cupboard of techniques."[89] Also, the relationship between musician, producer and engineer (computer programmer) was changing in the studio as the responsibility for the finished musical product shifted between the three. Whereas some musicians were in complete control of their own sound from start to finish, others needed help to guide them through the maze of technology that existed. Producers were now able to create their own sounds and often adapted artists to their work. The rise of people such as Martin Hannett, Trevor Horn and Stock, Aitken and Waterman are good examples of this and there was even one case of a 'band' (Milli Vanilli) having to hand back an award when it was discovered that they had not participated on the record in any way other than to appear on the accompanying video.[90] Finally, as synthesisers (and their associated products) became more widely available and prices dropped, musicians found that they could create a reasonable recording set-up at home. This seemed to affect the lower end of the recording studio market as people realised that they could now record demos and rough mixes of their work at home. Many established artists also created home studios for the same reason although they could also afford to actually produce a near-finished product in these home studios.

The 1990s

In spite of the seemingly inexorable move towards synthetic music being produced in smaller, often home-based, studios, the professional recording studio of the 1990s continued to survive although success was often limited to major studios. One reason for this was that whilst technology continued to influence many different styles of music (techno or house often relied on electronic drum machines for their beat and DJs would use the studio to produce a variety of mixes of individual tracks for the club scene), there was also a return to more traditional pop music. Guitar bands re-appeared and, as with the punk revolt against overblown studio techniques, there was a move away from the synthesiser sound which has resulted today in it being very much associated with the 1980s. Some studios began to differentiate themselves from their competitors by promoting the advantages of analogue technology over digital. Even when they launched their own digital recorders in the late 1970s, Sony's designers had faced opposition to the introduction of digital technology from certain people, for reasons such as those described in the official Sony company

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[89] *Studio Sound*, November (1986), p.5.
[90] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1999), p.203.

history; "Studio engineers were opposed to digital technology. They criticised it on the grounds that it was more expensive than analog (sic) technology and did not sound as soft or musical."[91] This perception of the analogue sound being 'warm', in contrast to the 'cold' and 'clinical' sound of digital, was one that persisted and was given technical credence as well; "The valve is an analogue device which means that its operating parameters tend to vary gradually. Valves used in audio related circuitry can only handle certain levels of current before their output becomes distorted – but this distortion is approached gradually, at levels which the ear interprets as warmth and richness added to the sound."[92] Record companies also began to look towards new talent after the initial boom of re-releasing older material on CDs had begun to wane.

One of the features of the early 1990s recording studio was the move away from the image of 'enthusiastic amateur' to that of serious business enterprise ("Big business has arrived and the common language now has less to do with music and more to do with 'numbers'.")[93] Whilst record companies had become corporate bodies in the 1980s and had sharpened up their business plans, it took the studios a little longer to catch up. However, as record companies began to exert greater control over the studios, their influence began to rub off. One of the big players in the music industry, The Virgin Group, started to spread their corporate influence within the studio industry by taking over a number of places, such as Townhouse and The Manor and other studios became subsidiaries of larger corporate players. Now, studios had to be more professional in their business approach to recording, as shown in particular by the introduction of a 'Money Matters' column in *Studio Sound* which looked at such matters as accounting, tax returns, pensions, VAT and PAYE. This was summed up in one such piece where the observation was made that "It is no longer chic to ignore costings and cashflow estimates…out goes the old laissez faire attitude of it's rock n' roll and we're not in it for the money and in comes tighter cash control and long-term financial planning".[94] Accountants and financial advisers were now becoming as important as the sound engineers to many studios in an era when governmental financial decisions (such as the introduction of uniform business rates) could dramatically increase the expenditure of many businesses. Another feature of this

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[91] www.sony.net/Fun/SH/1-21/h2.html
[92] M. Jenkins, 'Phonic Tube Processors', *Music Tech Magazine*, August (2004), p.97.
[93] *Studio*, November (1990), p.28.
[94] *Studio*, June (1990), p.10.

period was the growth of the European Community and Britain's role within it. Closer economic ties meant that Britain was now a more integral part of Europe than it had ever been and the recording studio industry was forced to monitor the European industry as well as that within the UK. One specific journal, *Pro Sound News Europe*, was established in order to do just this and its format was updated in 1990 to reflect the changes taking place in Europe. The magazine provided studios with news from across the continent thus increasing the notion of a single European market in the industry. Indeed, the rise of global corporate concerns in music, covering Europe, America and Asia, was ensuring that the UK recording studio was now part of an international industry rather than just a national one. Reinforcing this was the advances being made in telecommunications technology which, via ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) lines and Dolby fax, allowed engineers in one studio to record musicians in another, possibly on the other side of the world, in real time and with Dolby sound quality. Whereas the 1960s had seen the distance between London and Manchester as an obstacle to success in the recording studio industry, the 1990s saw the erosion of any such geographical barriers, even on an international scale.

Conclusion

From the composition of this historical narrative of the British recording studio from the 1960s to 1990s, it is clear that the emerging and constantly changing technology in the studio was a major factor according to the industry itself. The arrival of multi-tracking, noise reduction techniques, digital recording and those instruments producing synthesised sound were all emphasised in the contemporary literature and in those overviews that have followed. Additionally, it is clear that this technology affected the roles of those working within the studio, with the status and contributions of different personnel and artists developing and fluctuating as the available technology altered over time. However, the inclusion of this narrative, impersonal and fact-based, is mainly to provide a backdrop to the later chapters rather than being the primary *raison d'être* for the research and will be used to place the further research into some sort of context. Additionally, the construction of a narrative based on the industry's own perceptions does not necessarily create a fully-rounded view of the British recording studio as it does not provide any indication of how the studio itself was perceived by those outside of the industry, most notably those consumers of the finished musical product, the general public. In order to address this, the following chapter will examine those images that were being

presented to the public and analyse how the actual creative process in the recording studio was portrayed, as a means of comparing it with the industry's narrative already produced.

Chapter 3: Representations

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the perceptions, many of them visual, of the recording studio that were being created in the wider media of the music industry, not only as a means of building on the narrative already produced, but also partly as a response to Raphael Samuel's challenge to historians; "How often has the visual been the original prompt for an historical inquiry?"[1] The recording studio industry itself did not have any financial or commercial interest in influencing the public perception and its operations were largely confined within the music industry. Although the popular music industry was based on recorded sound, the mass media (both print and visual) was utilised as an effective means of promoting the finished product, developing what Walter Benjamin referred to (when looking at the film industry in the 1920s) as the "spell of the personality, the phony spell of a commodity."[2] This created a situation where the public demand for information about the musical stars became intense and, by the end of the 20th Century, Jason Toynbee, in his study of the role of creativity in music, was able to observe:

> Popular musicians are popular figures in the media. Specialist magazines carry lengthy interviews and features on them, newspapers have shorter ones, television programmes scrutinise the lives of artists and there is a sub-genre of the biographical feature film which deals with singers and musicians. Clearly, people want to know about music makers.[3]

Indeed, this increasing link between music and celebrity has been further reinforced since the 1960s by the growing realization among commercial companies that the endorsement of products by musical stars can reap huge rewards, from starring in or supplying the music for adverts[4] to the tour sponsorship packages[5] and notion of product placement in music videos.[6]

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[1] R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1994), p.29.

[2] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in H. Zohn, *Illuminations*, (London: Fontana, 1992), p.224.

[3] J. Toynbee, *Making Popular Music: Musicians, Creativity and Institutions*, (London: Arnold, 2000), p.ix.

[4] One of the earliest marriages of music and product was the use of The New Seekers' *I'd Like To Teach the World to Sing* as an advertisement for Coca Cola in 1971, whilst later exponents included Madonna, Michael Jackson and George Michael (S. Frith, A. Goodwin and L. Grossberg (Eds), *Sound & Vision: The Music Video Reader*, [London: Routledge, 1993], pp.87-8).

[5] C. Walsh, "Sponsorships Moving Beyond Signage", *Billboard*, December 4th 2004, p.14.

[6] S. Chang, "Product Placement Deals Thrive in Music Videos", *Billboard*, November 29th 2003, p.18.

For some of those who have studied the workings of the music industry the part played by the recording studio in the creation of music has often been ignored, as noted for example by sociologist Theodore Gracyk who said that "the images in which rock is packaged and promoted tend to deny the recording process."[7] Analysis of the popular print and visual resources available will allow some measure of whether this statement is valid and, if not, to see to what extent the existence of the recording studio was acknowledged or promoted by the music business. As with ever-changing styles of music from the 1960s to 1990s, the print and visual media available to the public also altered and evolved over time. For instance, the proliferation of pop music annuals in the 1960s and early 1970s gave way to a popular and strong music press during the 1970s. Visually, the popularity of the pop music feature film was undermined by the strengthening position of television from the 1970s onwards and, subsequently, by the rise of the pop video in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As a result, coverage in a number of these print and moving image media formats have been investigated in order to judge the extent of the recording studio's presence in the general consciousness of the British public.

The Printed Sources

The popularity of annual themed hardback books, which had appeared from the nineteenth century onwards ("*Child Companion Annual* [1824] must have been one of the earliest to include the word 'annual' in its title")[8] with such titles as *Boy's Own Paper* and *Chatterbox*, was cemented in the United Kingdom by the late 1930s with the publication of D. C. Thomson's *Dandy* and *Beano* Annuals and the growing number of titles in the late 1940s and 1950s appealing separately to young boys or girls.[9] It was not, however, until the 1960s that the link between such annuals, usually published around Christmas time, and the blossoming television and pop music interests of teenagers became most apparent. The evolution of content in the 1950s girls' annuals of "ballet, hockey, boarding schools, ponies and romance"[10] to the inclusion of photos and articles relating to pop stars in the 1960s was augmented by a number of publications that were totally devoted to pop music[11] and the arrival

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[7] T. Gracyk, *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), p.76.
[8] W. Lofts and D. Adley, "Popular Girls' and Boys' Annuals", *Book and Magazine Collector*, 19 (1985), p.18.
[9] For example, *The Triumph Book for Boys*, *Boy's Own Annual*, *Girl Annual* and *Girls' Crystal*.
[10] P. Green and L. Taylor (Eds), *Green's Guide to Collecting TV, Music and Comic Book Annuals*, (Great Yarmouth: GT Publications, 2000), p.9.
[11] For example, *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars*, *Pop Weekly Annual* and *Teenbeat Annual*.

in the 1970s of annuals tied-in with the popular televised music programmes of the day[12] or the actual pop stars themselves.[13] Although the inclusion of annuals as a primary source of historical study might seem unusual, other academic studies have made use of similar sources, including an investigation of how Australian life was portrayed[14] and a study of the changing image of singer Dusty Springfield.[15] In fact, historical analysis is now being extended to include other areas of what has, up until recently, been considered as juvenile literature, such as comic strips and comic books.[16] Indeed, the use of such material would have been welcomed by Raphael Samuel, who had championed the utilisation of various sources of 'unofficial knowledge' and had stressed the role children's literature might play when asking "Is not *Robinson Crusoe* as good a starting point as any for the study of English individualism, 'enterprise culture' or overseas colonization and settlement? And might not *Black Beauty* serve as a basic text for the study of gender and class in nineteenth-century England…?"[17] For this study, a cross-section of annuals and children's books (see the 'Annuals' section of the Bibliography for a complete list) will be analysed in order to gauge the portrayal of the recording studio.

Whilst the pop annuals targeted the younger end of the market and the more specialised magazines, such as *Beat Instrumental*, catered for the music professional, the middle-ground slowly began to be provided for by the growth of the weekly 'inkies'[18] from the 1950s onwards. Whilst *Melody Maker* had been in circulation since the 1920s,[19] the *New Musical Express* (*NME*) was launched in 1952, *Record Mirror* in 1953 and *Sounds* in 1970, and these papers became the staple diet of the more mature readers, often students, "who didn't want to know what a particular star

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[12] The *Top of the Pops Annual* was published from 1974 to 1983.

[13] Such as the *Abba Annual*, published between 1977 and 1983.

[14] C. Bradford, "(Re)Constructing Australian Childhood: The Pound Collection at the State Library of Victoria, Australia", *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 22:3 (1998), pp.327-37.

[15] A. Patrick, "Defiantly Dusty: A (Re)Figuring of 'Feminine Excess'", *Feminist Media Studies*, 1:3 (2001), pp.361-78.

[16] "More completely than illuminated texts or illustrated novels, Hogarthian picture sequences, or medieval and Renaissance icons, comic books and comic strips integrate words and pictures into a flexible, powerful literary form." J. Witek, *Comic Books as History*, (London: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), p.3.

[17] R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1994), pp.15-16.

[18] "The origin of the term 'inkies' lies in the print quality of the papers. Even today tell-tale deposits of pigment on shirt, hands and face mark out the readers of these organs.", J. Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia, Pinning up Grunge: The Music Press and Generic Change in British Pop and Rock', *Popular Music*, 12:3 (1993), p.300.

[19] N. Johnstone, *Melody Maker: History of 20th Century Popular Music*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1999).

had for breakfast or what his fave colours were."[20] The inkies were also supplemented, particularly in the 1960s, by American magazines (such as *Rolling Stone* and *Creem*) and also by the emergence of an 'underground' press in the UK, which produced such titles as *Zigzag*, *Cream* and *Oz*.

The 1960s and 1970s were characterised by a battle between the leading 'inkies' for supremacy in the weekly market. As musical styles developed and altered, the fortunes of the music papers, particularly the leading two (*Melody Maker* and *NME*), fluctuated and changed. For instance, in 1964 the *NME*'s circulation was 306,881 compared to *Melody Maker*'s 95,544[21] but, by the early 1970s, the situation had reversed and *Melody Maker* could claim to have more readers than its closest rival. These fluctuations seem to have been based on the different musical approaches of the papers, as noted by music analyst Charlie Gillett; he contrasts *Melody Maker*'s slant towards "individual live performance rather than the packaged pop format"[22] with the *NME*'s tendency to favour chart acts ("The people who were buying *NME* were buying records. They weren't going to gigs: they weren't themselves musicians.")[23] Interestingly, the arrival of punk in the mid-1970s appeared to catch both papers out when the main beneficiary seems to have been *Sounds*, with a content and approach that was much closer to the style and attitude that was being championed by a new breed of undergrounds publications, such as *Punk* and *Sniffin' Glue*.[24]

However, the biggest threat to the 'inkies' arrived in the late 1970s, not through punk's challenge to the establishment, but with the launch of the glossy, pop-based magazines such as *Smash Hits* and *The Face*.[25] These not only portrayed a wide range of musical tastes in a refreshing and colourful way, but also managed to reflect

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[20] P. Gorman, *In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press*, (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 2001), p.85.

[21] J. Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia, Pinning up Grunge: The Music Press and Generic Change in British Pop and Rock', *Popular Music*, 12:3 (1993), p.290.

[22] P. Gorman, *In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press*, (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 2001), p.87.

[23] P. Gorman, *In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press*, (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 2001), p.155.

[24] See M. Perry's, *Sniffin' Glue: The Essential Punk Accessory*, (London: Sanctuary, 2000) for a collection of all the issues of this celebrated fanzine.

[25] "According to Charles Shaar Murray (and he should know) the launch of Smash Hits and The Face did for the hegemony of the inkies", P. Gorman, *In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press*, (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 2001), p.14.

the approach of the teenage consumers of the period, as shown by this tribute paid by one ex-reader to *Smash Hits* when the magazine closed in 2006:

> At its best, British pop music has always been about irreverence and irony, individuality and wit…Smash Hits, with its impertinent tone and peculiar sense of humour (as one former writer pointed out, the magazine's standard line of questioning was never 'What's your favourite colour' but 'What colour is a Thursday?') seemed to understand that perfectly.[26]

Whilst the 'inkies' suffered at the hands of these 'glossies',[27] further competition arrived in the mid-1980s with the launch of *Q* magazine. Coinciding with the emergence of the compact disc and the subsequent re-release of increasing numbers of re-mastered 1960s and 1970s albums, those behind *Q* successfully identified the market being created by an ageing audience, who demanded both nostalgia and a more mature approach to music journalism than that being offered elsewhere. The co-founder, David Hepworth, noted at the time that "the proper publishing reason for *Q* [is that] there is an older demographic who are still interested in music, but they are not going to read inky weeklies any more"[28] whilst *Q*'s own website refers to the magazine as a "serious music publication",[29] reinforcing the notion that its main rivals are, and have been, somehow more frivolous and lightweight in content. The approach certainly worked, and it success could partly be measured in the number of similar magazines that appeared in subsequent years such as *Mojo*, *Uncut* and (for the film market) *Empire*.

One common feature of all the music magazines across this period, regardless of their target audience, was the autonomy they seemed to possess in their dealings with the music industry. Eamonn Forde, who researched the industry for a PhD thesis,[30] concluded that "the music press is not controlled by the music industry. It's got its own agenda…a lot of people presume that a label takes out an advert after they get copy approval. It doesn't work like that."[31] Such an approach also seems to have been evident in the 1970s and 1980s, as music journalist Charles Shaar Murray

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[26] A. Petridis, 'Down the Dumper', *The Guardian*, February 3rd 2006, http://arts.guardian.co.uk/critic/feature/0,,1701291,00.html
[27] *Sounds*, for example, ceased publication in 1991.
[28] P. Gorman, *In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press*, (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 2001), pp.317-8.
[29] www.q4music.com/nav?page=q4music.about.history
[30] E. Forde, *Music Journalists, Music Press Officers and the Consumer Music Press in the UK*, (PhD Dissertation, University of Westminster, 2001).
[31] www.ideasfactory.com/music_sound/features/mus_feature60.htm

confirmed when noting that "the music press pretty much had the scene to itself. As long as we kept selling papers, making money and not getting sued too often, the management more or less let us get on with it."[32] Indeed, this autonomy is somehow reinforced by an apparent shift towards closer links between the industry and music press in more recent years. Commenting on the demise of *Smash Hits* and the independent approach it displayed in its heyday, one music journalist commented that such an approach "would never happen now. Magazines are too fearful of losing record company advertising to pick on artists."[33]

The Moving Image Media

From the release of Al Jolson's *Jazz Singer* in 1927, popular music and cinematic films have always maintained a close relationship, even before the emergence of modern pop music in the late 1950s. The classic Hollywood musical,[34] dominant from the 1930s to 1950s (represented by such names as Busby Berkeley,[35] Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers),[36] were supplemented by a number of British film musicals, which made stars of those such as Gracie Fields and George Formby. This tradition, revised and updated for a younger audience, was continued in the 1950s and 1960s by the making of films starring singers such as (in the United States) Bill Haley, Elvis Presley and (in the UK) Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard, although some these films "kept rock at arm's length…muffling it with the wet blanket of show-business-as-usual."[37] After this more traditional interjection of musical numbers into a fictional plot (as typified by Cliff Richard's *Summer Holiday* and *Wonderful Life* films in which "the aesthetic is derived comprehensively from the Hollywood and the stage musical"),[38] a new revue type of film began to emerge in which pop artists would appear in performance mode as a peripheral to the storyline (for example, the 1966 film *To Sir, With Love* included scenes with Lulu and The Mindbenders performing at the school dance). A further development of cinema's link to pop music emerged with the success of such Beatles films *as A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *Help* (1965) and *Let It* Be (1970) which, influenced by the success of

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[32] P. Gorman, *In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press*, (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 2001), p.11.

[33] http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/culturevulture/archives/2006/02/02/byeeeeeeee.html

[34] J. Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, (2nd Edition), (London: Macmillan, 1993).

[35] A. Thomas, *The Busby Berkeley Book*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).

[36] A. Croce, *The Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers Book*, (New York: Outerbridge & Lazard, 1972)

[37] H. Hampton, 'Scorpio Descending: In Search of Rock Cinema', *Film Comment*, 33:2 (1997), p.37.

[38] K. Donnelly, 'The Perpetual Busman's Holiday: Sir Cliff Richard and British Pop Musicals', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 25:4 (1998), pp. 152-3.

the early 1960s British 'kitchen sink' films, "broke new ground in rejecting the conventional format of pop musicals which had grown since the 1950s"[39] and purported to present a more realistic portrayal of the musician's life in the pop music industry. Whilst this 'biopic' approach had been attempted in 1957 with the release of *The Tommy Steele Story*, it had presented pop merely as a stepping-stone to a more suitable show-business career and it took the Beatles' celluloid arrival to allow pop artists "to rid themselves of the long shadows of the Hollywood musical"[40] and to give pop music its own prominence and position within the wider film setting.

As well as the continuing presentation of fictional accounts of the music industry as seen in *That'll Be the* Day (1973), *Flame* (1974), and *Stardust* (1974), the 1970s and 1980s also saw a number of different film genres being used to accommodate pop's growing prominence. The most straightforward of these was the documentary-type filming of live concert performances (often labelled the "rock doc"),[41] as seen in the release of *Yessongs* (1973), *The Song Remains the Same* (1975) and *A Kiss Across the* Ocean (1984) or the development of the 'rock opera', represented by the releases of *Tommy* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (both 1975) and *Pink Floyd: The Wall* (1982). The fragmentation of the music industry towards the end of the 1970s was also reflected in film as seen, for example, in the representation of punk music (*Jubilee* and *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*), disco (*Saturday Night Fever* and *The Music Machine*) and the growing affection for nostalgia (*Quadrophenia* and *Absolute Beginners*), and even a return to the more traditional 1960s pop musical (*Give My Regards to Broad Street*).

However, the relative failure of pop films after the initial impact of The Beatles in the 1960s was due to the increasing influence of television, as noted by Andy Medhurst in his analysis of the British pop film; "…television always did pop better anyway. Pop tv had no need to try and shoe-horn the music into outdated formats, it had less rules to break and more freedom to move, it was quick, cheap and immediate, just like the music itself."[42] The success of television programmes such

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[39] J. Mundy, Popular Music on Screen: From the Hollywood Musical to Music Video, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.171.

[40] J. Romney and A. Wootton (Eds), *Celluloid Jukebox: Popular Music and the Movies Since the 50s*, (London: BFI Publishing, 1995), p.65.

[41] A. Wootton, 'Looking Back, Dropping Out, Making Sense: A history of the Rock Concert Movie', *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 55: December (1988), p.355.

[42] J. Romney and A. Wootton (Eds), *Celluloid Jukebox: Popular Music and the Movies Since the 50s*, (London: BFI Publishing, 1995), p.69.

as *Ready Steady Go*, *Top of the Pops* and *The Old Grey Whistle Test* was based on their ability to deliver what the young audience was demanding – the 'live' appearance of a range of contemporary artists, performing up-to-the-minute songs in a visually-exciting manner – something that the lengthy shooting schedule and expanded storyline of films often precluded. However, as the pop music market became increasingly global into the 1980s, even the staple pop television programmes were finding it more and more difficult to ensure that artists were free to appear in the studio to perform and, as a result, record companies increasingly turned to the production of short videos as a means of promoting singles on television when artists were otherwise engaged. Although many now accept that the video made to accompany Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* in 1975 was "the first conscious use of music video to promote a pop single",[43] it was the launch of Music Television (MTV) on August 1st 1981 that elevated the status of the pop video and led *Billboard* to declare that the 1980s had been "the video decade."[44] It became accepted that single releases would be backed-up by a video[45] and the video producers themselves became celebrities in much the same way as the status of the record producer had shifted in the 1970s. Indeed, the notion that the pop video was becoming an art form in itself gathered pace and a number of those directors making their name in the genre started to experiment with it. For example, two of the leading pop video directors of the 1980s, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, produced a piece of work (*Mondo Video*)[46] that saw the merging of sound and video into a new entity, called the videola.[47] On its release, they emphasised the experimental nature of the work and pointed to the progression they were making from the original music video concept when they said "It came from our desire to extend the boundaries of conventional music video within the context of a kind of mixed media…imagine a musical instrument that can play pictures as well as sounds."[48] However, although the Videolabel company produced a small number of other videolas, including one

[43] K. Negus, *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry*, (London: Edward Anrnold, 1992), p.93.

[44] J. McCullaugh, '1980-1990: The Video Decade", *Billboard*, January 6th 1990, p.V-6.

[45] The *Now That's What I Call Music!* series of compilation records, launched in 1983, also had accompanying video compilations from Volume 1 onwards.

[46] Godley + Creme, *Mondo Video*, 1989, The Videolabel (VVC 571).

[47] "What is a videola? It is a made for video piece of audio-visual entertainment. Music and vision are conceived and created simultaneously. Sight and sound integrate and reinforce each other to form a new and exciting popular medium." The Videolabel, Advertising release (1989). Author's Private Collection.

[48] Video sleeve notes, Godley + Creme, *Mondo Video*, 1989, The Videolabel (VVC 571).

that mixed music with skateboarding visuals,[49] the experiment did not prove to be particularly successful with the general public and there was a lingering perception that those producing the medium were taking the connection between music and video one step too far.

What the rise of the music video did do, though, was to accentuate the decline of the pop music film as young people's viewing habits began to alter:

> Just as pop tv made the old-model pop film redundant, so pop video has now redefined the way we think about pop and moving images. To readjust our soundbite ears and channel-surfing eyes to almost ninety unbroken minutes of pop imagery is difficult and perhaps unwelcome.[50]

Interestingly, the emergence of the video format did not seem to create the same excitement in its infancy as it did in later years, as shown by Simon Frith's assertion in his 1983 book that "most record companies agree that the most effective form of promotion is airplay…one spin on the radio is worth any number of full-page ads or good reviews."[51] This raises the possibility that the status of the pop video in the 1980s and 1990s has been exaggerated in recent years, a point made by Will Straw at the end of the 1980s; "Music video was one of a number of innovations producing major structural changes in the music-related industries during that period, but it is unlikely that it was the most important of these."[52] However, the success of the MTV channel cannot be questioned and its successful divergence into other areas of youth culture was noted by *Billboard* in 1993 when it declared that "it is clear that music television isn't just for music anymore."[53]

The Moving Image Sample

Whilst Aldgate and Richards noted the historical value in the study of the film media when they declared that "films provide images…constructed of selected elements and aspects of everyday life",[54] the question of whether the pop music industry

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[49] T. Simenson and S. Peralta, *Attack*, 1989, The Videolabel (VVC573).

[50] J. Romney and A. Wootton (Eds), *Celluloid Jukebox: Popular Music and the Movies Since the 50s*, (London: BFI Publishing, 1995), pp.69-70.

[51] S. Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock'n'Roll*, (London: Constable, 1983), p.117.

[52] W. Straw, 'Music Video in its Contexts: Popular Music and Post-Modernism in the 1980s', *Popular Music*, 7:3 (1988), p.248.

[53] D. Russell, 'MTV In 2nd Decade: A True Network", *Billboard*, June 26th 1993, p.1.

[54] A. Aldgate and J. Richards, *Best of British: Cinema and Society from 1930 to the Present*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), p.3.

portrayed in the cinema or on music video was based on reality is one that has been investigated by a number of people. For some, pop music in films worked better when it had an "atomised presence"[55] rather than the pop world itself being the primary focus of the story. And yet, for this study, it is those films and videos that purported to show representations of the music industry in some detail, in almost documentary mode, which needed to be examined to see whether, and how, the recording process itself was portrayed within this overall framework. Donnelly's study of pop in the British cinema,[56] a "reference guide to enthusiasts of British popular culture"[57] allows for the identification of a number of such films and, from its decade-by-decade list and plot descriptions of cinema releases, a number of films seem ideal for analysis.

Jean-Luc Godard's 1968 film *One Plus One*[58] (later renamed, much to the producer's disgust, *Sympathy for the Devil*) intersperses footage of the Rolling Stones recording in a London studio with short vignettes that embrace topics such as pornography, revolutionary politics and race. The Beatles' *Let it Be*,[59] released in 1970, was a straightforward documentary of the band rehearsing, recording and performing together in 1969 and was seen as an indication of how the group was disintegrating and moving their separate ways long before the official split was announced over one year and one album later. Shot in a Twickenham rehearsal studio and at the Apple Savile Row recording studio and rooftop, the original aim of the project was to show the Beatles "getting back to basics"[60] and recording an album of simpler material but the release of this record was delayed and, ironically given the original premise, it was then re-produced and re-worked by producer Phil Spector.[61] 1974's *Stardust*,[62] a sequel to the 1973 film *That'll Be the Day*, tells the story of Jim Maclaine and his band (The Straycats) as they find success in the pop world, only for the story to end in the drug-induced death of Maclaine as he is unable to deal with the loneliness and trappings of international stardom. As well as the casting of David Essex in the lead role, numerous other pop music personnel featured in the film (such as Keith Moon

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[55] M. Bracewell, "Tunes of Glory: The Best Music in Film", *Sight and Sound*, 14: September (2004), pp.28-9.
[56] K. Donnelly, *Pop Music in British Cinema: A Chronicle*, (London: BFI Publishing, 2001).
[57] B. Southard, "Book Reviews", *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, 33:3 (2005), p.173.
[58] *Sympathy for the Devil (One Plus One)*, 2006 Fremantle Home Entertainment, (FHED1937).
[59] *Let It Be*, 1981 20th Century Fox, (4508-20).
[60] www.thebeatles.com/hub/article.php?page=letItBe&menuItem=the%20films
[61] In 2003, the album was re-released as originally intended with the Spector production removed (*Let It Be...Naked,* Apple Records, 5957132).
[62] *Stardust / That'll Be the Day*, 2003 Warner Bros. Entertainment, (D038491).

and Dave Edmunds) and this, along with some obvious parallels between the fictional Straycats and real-life Beatles, ensured that the film was described as having "an acute ear and knowing eye for a variety of subcultural milieux of a kind one takes for granted in American pictures about poolroom hustlers, boxers and truckdrivers, but rarely finds in British pictures."[63] *Flame*,[64] released in the same year as *Stardust*, had many similarities in the storyline between the David Essex film and this vehicle for the 1970s pop group Slade and was based on the rise and fall of a fictional group called Flame, with the storyline centred on the "cynicism, callousness and general unscrupulousness of the pop music business."[65] The film charts the group's slide from the euphoria of success to its implosion under the pressures of fame, noting that they remain "blissfully unaware of all the backstage crime and viciousness"[66] going on around them.

Confessions of a Pop Performer[67] was based on the novel of cinema screenwriter Christopher Wood (writing under the pseudonym of Timothy Lea) and is one of four Confessions films that were released in the 1970s which were typical of the British sex comedy films of that era, with plenty of "creaky gags, overly familiar slapstick routines, sniggering innuendo, grimly leaden mugging and a nervously regular injection of titillating sequences on the lines of the average German sex comedy."[68] *Confessions of a Pop Performer*, released in 1975, was the second in the series of these films with the main character, Timmy Lea, swapping his window-cleaning job from the previous film (*Confessions of a Window Cleaner)* for that of drummer with an aspiring pop group called Kipper. The film follows the group through various mishaps and adventures as they progress from their first concert, through the recording of a single, to an appearance at a Royal Variety show, which ends in chaos and the departure of Lea from the band. *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*,[69] with its mixture of documentary footage and semi-fictional scripted and animation scenes, was director Julien Temple's portrait of the rise and fall of the Sex Pistols and has since been hailed as "the *Citizen Kane* of rock 'n' roll pictures."[70] Whilst following

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[63] P. French, "Go and catch a falling star", *The Times*, October 25th 1974, p.12.
[64] *Slade in Flame*, 2003 Union Square Music, (0000018USP).
[65] T. Rayns, "Flame", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 42: March (1975), p.54.
[66] T. Rayns, "Flame", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 42: March (1975), p.55.
[67] *Confession of a Pop Performer*, 2004 Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, (C822 8592).
[68] V. Glaessner, "Review of *Confessions of a Pop Performer*", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 42: September (1975), p.196.
[69] *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, Sony BMG, (2028859).
[70] "Review of *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*", *Sight and Sound*, 3: December (1993), p.61.

the band's progress through concerts, public appearances and other events, what the film actually highlights is Malcolm McLaren's role as "an expert media-manipulator earnestly striving for bad art at any price"[71] and his imposing role on the Sex Pistols' career. According to punk-commentator Jon Savage, the film also gave McLaren the opportunity to elevate and reinforce his own contribution to the band's story and produce his finest hour; "here he achieves what he always wanted: to be the Sex Pistols' front man."[72] *Give My Regards to Broad Street*[73] was Paul McCartney's return to the cinema screens over a decade after having performed with the Beatles in the fly-on-the-wall *Let It Be*. McCartney played himself in a fictional 'day-in-the-life' tale of the search for the stolen master tapes of his new album and, interspersed into this semi-documentary plot, the film includes lengthy dream or fantasy sequences which allow for the lavish presentations of McCartney (and Beatles) numbers but with "the look and feel of pop promotional videos."[74] The storyline follows McCartney through a 'typical' rock star day (rehearsing, recording, travelling) and his increasingly frantic attempts to save his business empire by recovering the lost album tapes. Those supporting McCartney in the storyline were real-life family and friends (Linda McCartney, Ringo Starr, and George Martin amongst others) which led to a number of critics declaring the film to be "at least to some extent, a home movie on an amazing scale."[75] For others, it was a self-indulgent exercise, a "curiously sclerotic rock movie, the product of a talent grown bloated and bland",[76] that was only partly redeemed by the soundtrack. Confirmation of this view came in 2000 when *The Guardian* declared the "little-seen film"[77] to be one of the five top vanity rock projects of all time.

The selection of pop videos to complement these feature films is somewhat more problematical. Given that there were over 1,200 videos made in the United States and Europe in 1983 alone[78] the total number available for study and analysis across the whole period becomes clear. As the popularity of music videos increased and

[71] C.Rose, "Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 47: July (1980), p.133.

[72] J. Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), p.499.

[73] *Give My Regards to Broad Street*, 20th Century Fox, (B0001FR552).

[74] C. Hutchinson, "Give My Regards to Broad Street", *Films and Filming*, 363 (1984), p.37.

[75] J. Maslin, "Film: Paul McCartney Stars in 'Broad Street'", *The New York Times*, October 26th 1984, p.C14.

[76] S. Johnston, "Give My Regards to Broad Street", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 51: December (1984), p.381.

[77] "The Top Five Vanity Rock Projects", *The Guardian*, April 21st 2000, p.3.

[78] J. Brown and K. Campbell, "Race and Gender in Music Videos: The Same Beat but a Different Drummer", *Journal of Communication*, 36:1 (1986), p.97.

their output became more prolific, a number of academics began to study and analyse the content of the films and, as a result, produced methodologies for selecting random samples of the medium. The favourite technique was to use selected periods of MTV output to compile a list of videos for analysis and, for instance, samples of sixty-two,[79] seventy-five[80] and 138[81] music videos were chosen in three of these types of study in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, whilst this allowed for a general overview of the subject matter in the videos, it did not necessarily help when specific topics were being investigated. One way round this was to include material known to the researcher and, for example, Kevin Brehony, when looking at representations of schooling in pop music (not necessarily just in videos), created an "opportunist sample drawn from my own extensive memories of pop songs."[82] For this study, analysis of Channel 4's "The 100 Greatest Pop Videos"[83] (broadcast on February 6th 2005)[84] allows for an exploration of the extent to which recording studios were included in the video medium, whilst this can be supplemented by a selection of videos known to include studio scenes as a means of further exploration of their portrayal. Included in this latter sample are Olivia Newton John's *Deeper Than The Night* (1979), The Police's *Every Little Thing She Does is Magic* (1981), Paul Young's *Wherever I Lay My Hat* (1983), Band Aid's *Do They Know It's Christmas* (1984), Paul McCartney's *Spies Like Us* (1985), Cliff Richard and the Young Ones' *Livin' Doll* (1986), Bon Jovi's *Born to be My Baby* (1988) and East 17's *Stay Another Day* (1994), providing a selection of films and videos that span a large proportion of the period under investigation.

The Occasional Glimpse of the Studio

One of the key conclusions that can be drawn from all the sources being analysed is that the recording process itself received comparatively little attention across the whole period, with only the occasional portrayal of life inside the recording studio. This is seen in the visual media where the limited number of scenes set in the studio comprises only a small proportion of the total running time of each film or video, the

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[79] R. Baxter et al, "A Content Analysis of Music Videos", *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 29:3 (1985), p.335.
[80] J. Brown and K. Campbell, "Race and Gender in Music Videos: The Same Beat but a Different Drummer", *Journal of Communication*, 36:1 (1986), p.98.
[81] J. Gow, "Music Video as Communication: Popular Formulas and Emerging Genres", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 26:2 (1992), p.48.
[82] K. Brehony, "'I Used to Get Mad at my School': Representations of Schooling in Rock and Pop Music", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 19:1 (1998), p.114.
[83] www.channel4.com/entertainment/tv/microsites/G/greatest/pop_videos/results.html
[84] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/4242371.stm

main exceptions being *One Plus One* and *Let It Be*. For example, the *Confessions* film has ninety seconds in the studio (out of the eighty-seven minutes total running-time) whilst *Flame*, which lasts a similar length of time, has three minutes in a studio setting, although a large amount of this includes a close-up of a conversation between the band's manager and his assistant in the studio control room, with the sound of the group's music being recorded in the background. *Stardust* has two separate studio scenes, comprising just less than eight minutes out of the 107 minutes in total. As well as the limited time showing life inside the actual studio, all of the films appear to indicate that the recording of a single is of secondary importance to the establishment of the bands concerned through other means. For instance, the group Kipper in the *Confessions* film are seen as live performers first and foremost whilst Flame do not enter the studio in their film until three quarters of the way though the story at a point where they have been fully established by their live and television performances.

The arrival of the pop video in the late 1970s did not necessarily provide any extra coverage for the recording studio either. Taking Channel 4's top 100 videos of all time as a random sample, only one video contains any direct reference to the recording process with the majority placing a performance of the track concerned in an unusual setting (Michael and Janet Jackson's *Scream* and Queen's *I Want To Break Free* are two good examples) or as the backing for a visually-stunning display of clever film effects (as seen in the use of animation in Peter Gabriel's *Sledgehammer* or Godley and Creme's morphing effect in *Cry*). Whilst it is possible that the public's preference for videos that offer something different (as seen in the placing of Michael Jackson's fourteen minute epic video for Thriller at number one in the top 100 videos) relegates the memory of the more 'mundane' topics when polls are taken, even the inclusion of those works known to include recording studio scenes does not necessarily enhance the studio's status significantly. Whilst a number of videos contain scenes set in the studio, they are often interspersed with either performances of the song (as in *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic* when The Police are shown on location in the Caribbean) or undertaking other activities (such as Olivia Newton John's fashion shoot in *Deeper Than The Night*). Only three of the selected videos (Band Aid, Bon Jovi and East 17) are totally set in the recording studio, although East 17 ended up filming an alternative version when *Stay Another Day* was re-released for the Christmas market and the Band Aid video also contains a number of scenes of some of the superstar cast arriving outside the studios

prior to the recording session. The fact that 1988's *Born to be My Baby* might be said to be the only music video to properly represent the recording process up until the mid 1990s (Joe Gow described it as "the most unique manifestation of the performance documentary formula")[85] is further proof of the visual media's relegation of the role played by the recording studio.

Interestingly, The Beatles' *Let It Be* appears to offer a contrast to this general lack of studio coverage with twenty-five minutes of documentary-style footage showing the Beatles working in the studio included in the film. On further analysis, however, it is unclear whether the Beatles are actually recording or simply rehearsing in the studio and a large proportion of the studio scenes involve the live performance of two songs. Interestingly, the critics of the time described the first part of the film (in the rehearsal and studio settings) as "rather tedious, unlikely to appeal to any but Beatleographers"[86] and this view seems to have been confirmed subsequently with the film best remembered for the live rooftop concert given by the band during the last section of the film rather than the rehearsal or recording of tracks. It therefore appears that *Let It Be* is something of an anomaly and is perhaps more indicative of the status of the Beatles in the pop music industry at that time rather than as a measure of the importance of the recording studio as portrayed by the visual media.

The printed media itself did not contribute much more than the occasional glance into the recording studio either. The process of recording was often reduced to one-line comments in the News sections of the music press, with mentions of artists being *in* the studio,[87] *beginning work* on a record[88] or undertaking recording *sessions*[89] in order to *prepare*[90] or *do*[91] an album. The prominent news stories in the music papers were usually connected with the release or promotion (usually by touring) of the finished product rather than the actual creation of it and, for example, two random editions of the *New Musical Express* from the mid-1970s show that the main

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[85] J. Gow, "Music Video as Communication: Popular Formulas and Emerging Genres", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 26:2 (1992), p.55.

[86] "Review of *Let It Be*", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 37: July (1970), p.151.

[87] "Joni Mitchell is in A+M's LA studios…" (*Sounds*, 28th June 1975, p.2) or "The duo are currently in the studio" (*Sounds*, March 6th 1976, p.4).

[88] "Lone Star…began work on their debut album" (*New Musical Express*, June 12th 1976, p.2).

[89] "Stevie Winwood has completed two sessions at the Chipping Norton studios for a solo album", (*Sounds*, November 20th 1976, p.4).

[90] "Early 1977 saw the band back in the recording studios preparing yet another album", (*Record Mirror*, 16th April 1977, p.16).

[91] "Yeah it was done at my basement studio", (*Record Mirror*, September 29th 1974, p.8).

newsworthy stories were those related to the promise of tour dates ("Average Whites – 12 Dates for May", "Groundhog Return; Tour in February", "Redding Band in British Tour" and "28 Gigs by 10cc")[92] or the release of new records, with the use of such phrases as "follow-up single" and "new single rushed out".[93] Indeed, this perception that touring and performing were somehow more important than recording was often suggested in comments that talked about bands taking a break from touring in order to go into the studio[94] or the contradictory comments about the relationship between use of the studio and performing live. Whilst the Beatles escaped criticism for their decision to stop touring in 1966 and concentrate solely on recording,[95] other bands were accused of over-reliance on the recording studio. The 1970s pop group 10cc, for instance, were initially praised for their innovation in, and successful utilization of, the studio, with their first album in 1973 labelled "a minor masterpiece of composition, performance and production"[96] and with favourable comparisons being drawn with other major artists by the time of their second album in 1974.[97] However, this admiration soon changed and the music press began to use 10cc's association with their own studio as a means of criticism, often contrasting the band with other performers. For instance, the December 13th 1975 issue of *Record Mirror* produced a two-page spread on the band, mentioning their Strawberry Studio a number of times and referring to the band's "crisply polished production"[98] of their records. On the following page, a feature on the British band Mud, noted the excellence of their live performances, noting that one gig in particular was "electric, exciting and full of the usual half-riot scenes."[99] Indeed, this contrast between studio and live performance provided the music press with further grounds for criticism of 10cc, with the band's live performances attacked for being inferior to the original recordings. One reviewer claimed:

> there's still too much of the clinical clamminess of the studio about 10cc's gigs; their live performances are not independent entities in themselves…some bands are

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[92] *New Musical Express*, December 6th 1975, pp.2+3.

[93] *New Musical Express*, June 12th 1976, p.2.

[94] "Stackridge have taken a two month break from touring to concentrate on writing and recording material for their next album", (*Melody Maker*, April 14th 1973, p.4).

[95] Reviews of their albums in this period included such descriptions as "creative" (*The Times*, May 29th 1967, p.9), "a brilliant feat of invention" (*The Times*, November 22nd 1968, p.9) and "remarkable and very exciting" (*The Times*, December 5th 1969, p.7).

[96] I. MacDonald, "10cc: A Triumph of Professionalism", *New Musical Express*, July 28th 1973, p.32.

[97] "They're the Beach boys of Good Vibrations, they're the Beatles of Penny Lane", "10cc's Music of Genius", *Melody Maker*, May 18th 1974, p.32.

[98] *Record Mirror & Disc*, December 13th 1975, p.7.

[99] *Record Mirror & Disc*, December 13th 1975, p.8.

fortunate enough to be able to cope equally well the differing demands of the stage and studio.[100]

The release of a 1977 live album allowed this criticism to be explored further, with the contrast between the studio and stage highlighted:

> 10cc releasing a live album? Whatever next? A year ago it would have been unthinkable to even suggest that 10cc who were then, let's face it, the da Vincis of the recording studio, be taped in such crude circumstances.[101]

Although this first line of the review suggested a revision of this theory was about to be delivered, it was not forthcoming and the reviewer re-emphasised it by declaring that "these live versions…couldn't lick the boots of the studio masterpieces. I can't ever imagine playing the live versions of any of the songs here…in preference to the tracks on previous studio albums".[102] The band's ironic, self-effacing rebuff to the critics ("Oh yes, we're cold and cynical aren't we lads")[103] simply echoed the words that were being used by the music press to describe the band's mastery of the recording studio and the publicity images they often used were of the group looking relaxed and at home in the studio (see Figure 6 included in the *Top of the Pops Annual 1978* and Figures 7 and 8 which were taken by the *Daily Express* in 1975 when they visited 10cc in Strawberry to interview them).
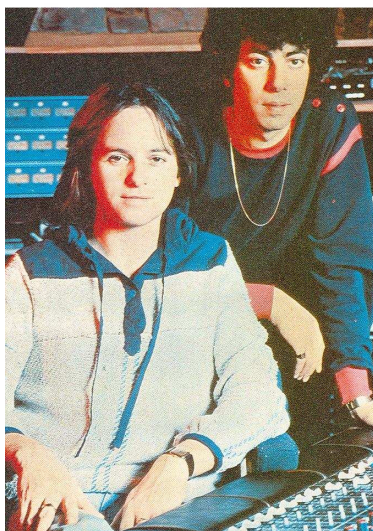
Figure 6: 10cc at Strawberry South in 1977, pictured at the mixing desk[104]

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[100] C. Shaar Murray, "The Punk and I or Two Jews Blues", *New Musical Express*, March 15th 1975, p.5.

[101] H. Doherty, "10cc: A Repeat Performance", *Melody Maker*, December 3rd 1977, p.27.

[102] H. Doherty, "10cc: A Repeat Performance", *Melody Maker*, December 3rd 1977, p.27.

[103] J. Etherington, "Knocking the Knockers", *Record Mirror and Disc*, February 28th 1976, p.16.

[104] K. Irwin (ed), *Top of the Pops Annual 1978*, (Manchester: World Distributors, 1977), p.6.

Figure 7: 10cc in the studio area at Strawberry North in 1975[105]

Figure 8: 10cc at the Strawberry North desk in 1975[106]

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[105] Copyright *Daily Express* 1975, supplied by Chris Gregory.
[106] Copyright *Daily Express* 1975, supplied by Chris Gregory.

As the period progressed, the importance and status of the recording studio appeared to be diminishing in relation to the printed media's fascination with the notion of personality and ability to perform. As the 1978 *Top of the Pops Annual* noted, "Everybody loves a star. Especially a gold-plated, diamond-studded superstar…(they) have that strange, elusive, inaccessible quality that is essential to the real superstar."[107] For bands such as 10cc, who had been described early on in their career as an "Imageless Image Band"[108] and who acknowledged their own lack of 'star appeal' ("We know we're just ordinary. When we appear on Top of the Pops we're in our jeans because that's us and what we wear all day long"),[109] the status attached to being professional exponents of the recording studio was now being tarnished, and the perception of the importance of the studio itself was being diminished.

In spite of this general attitude and approach towards the recording studio, the printed media did give readers a fleeting view of the recording process. Some of the 1960s annuals, in contrast to their content in later years, did focus a small number of articles on life in the studio and, for instance, the *Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars* featured well-illustrated articles on Helen Shapiro's work in Abbey Road studios in its 1962 edition[110] and on the radio station's own recording studio in the 1964 edition.[111] By the early 1970s, the music press had also begun to include analysis of the studio scene and *Melody Maker*, for example, had annual reviews of recording studios at the beginning of each year.[112] Interestingly, these overviews produced a number of points that recurred each year, particularly the relationship between studios and the stars who either owned or used them. Whilst the articles in the early 1970s, perhaps understandably, were still keen to relate to the influence of the Beatles,[113] later years would heavily feature other artists who owned studios[114] and the 1975 review produced a snapshot indicating which bands were recording in

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[107] B. Hart, "Frampton, Marley and Mercury: They're Magic", K. Irwin (ed.), *Top of the Pops Annual 1978*, (Manchester: World Distributors, 1977), p.29.

[108] *Record & Popswop Mirror*, September 28th 1974, p.12.

[109] R. Brinton, "Flying Bullets", *Disc*, June 9th 1973, p.11.

[110] J. Fishman (ed), *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1962), pp.16-19.

[111] J. Fishman (ed), *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1964), pp.112-18.

[112] For example, "Recording Studios: A Three-Page MM Special", *Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1972, pp.27-29, "Recording Studios: A Four-Page MM Report", *Melody Maker*, January 20th 1973, pp.32-35 and "Studios 6-Page Special", *Melody Maker*, March 27th 1976, pp34-39.

[113] George Martin's AIR Studio was featured in 1971 (*Melody Maker*, January 16th 1971, p.23) and Apple's Savile Row Studio in 1972 (*Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1972, p.29).

[114] L. Henshaw, "There's No Place Like Home", *Melody Maker*, August 3rd 1974, pp38-9.

which studios.[115] The success or otherwise of a studio was seemingly linked to the profile of those who were actually using them, indicating to the public that what was important was not so much the excellence of the studio itself but more the creative input of the artists and the strength of the final product. The creation of a relationship between studio excellence and artistic success, often reinforced by the mention of the cost of the construction of such studios[116] or the lavish setting in which they were located,[117] was further emphasised by the contrast drawn with the growing number of home studios (see the Narrative chapter) which, as well as exhorting amateur musicians to "do it yourself",[118] held out the promise of being able to progress such 'inferior' studios into fully-professional, money-making concerns,[119] as emphasised by the 1975 advert cartoon, shown in Figure 9. This advertisement, for a company that was offering home-recording equipment in a more professional setting, linked the two settings visually in a humorous way for the *Melody Maker* readers.

Figure 9: Advertisement for Lindair (London)[120]

Although references to the studios in the printed and film media are proportionately small, those that do exist allow a certain amount of analysis of the actual presence and workings of the recording studio that were being presented to the general public.

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[115] "Who's Where?", *Melody Maker*, March 15th 1975, p.36.

[116] "The cost to complete and equip it was enormous – around a quarter-of-a-million pounds", (*Melody Maker*, August 3rd 1974, p.38).

[117] "It lies in its own 100 acres of land, taking in woods, streams, trees, slow munching cows, various bird noises…", (*Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1972, p.27).

[118] *Melody Maker*, March 15th 1975, p.36.

[119] For example, "Decibel Studios: Originally established…as a four-track demo studio, Decibel became so popular that they went into partnership with the members of Xanadu to transform it into a fully-equipped 16-track studio", (*Melody Maker*, March 27th 1976, p.38).

[120] *Melody Maker*, January 4th 1975, p.5.

With very few members of the public ever allowed inside, the images presented in the media offered a rare glimpse of the interior of the recording studio and a number of factors, such as the physical appearance of the studio, the role played by technology in the process, and the human interaction within the studio space, offer the chance for further investigation.

The Studio Appearance

Whilst some artists would occasionally refer to the size of Abbey Road's Studio 1 after they had recorded there (Kate Bush noted "despite the enormous size of the studio I never felt scared or lonely when singing in there"),[121] the variety of studio sizes presented in the images from film and video might have been confusing for those with little knowledge of the subject. Whilst the real-life studio locations for the Rolling Stones (Olympic in London), the Beatles (Apple in Savile Row) and Band Aid (Sarm Studios in Notting Hill, London) and the fictional studio for Kipper and Jim Maclaine were all represented as large, cavernous areas (a pair of stepladders is seen behind a number of artists at various points of *Do They Know It's Christmas?* and Maclaine's studio can easily house a large after-session party in one scene), the other studios were seen as smaller and more compact with much less space for the artists and, for example, both Flame and The Stray Cats are seen performing in the studio in very close proximity to each other. The images of studio size were also affected by the lighting, with the larger studio areas much brighter (the *Confessions* studio is lit by large film-studio type lights for some reason and *One Plus One* reveals a bright, colourful studio area) and the smaller studios much gloomier with subdued lighting (very apparent in the *Livin' Doll* and Flame examples).

Other constants that are seen in the majority of the sample and across the period in question are the physical relationship between the studio area and the control room and the compartmentalisation of the studio space. In the majority of cases, the recording chamber is overlooked by the control room through a large window and, as early as the 1960s, people would "peer through the Control Room window",[122] with a popular image for the music video being one of the band seen recording from the control room side of the window (as shown, for example, in *Deeper Than The Night*

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[121] B. Southall, *Abbey Road: The Story of the World's Most Famous Recording Studios*, (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p.170.
[122] "G. Everrit, "208 – Session Time", *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars Number 3*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1964), p.117.

and *Stay Another Day* videos and in the advertising image used by Sony in Figure 10 which interestingly frames the musicians in the background, almost invisible, behind the prominent producer and studio technology).
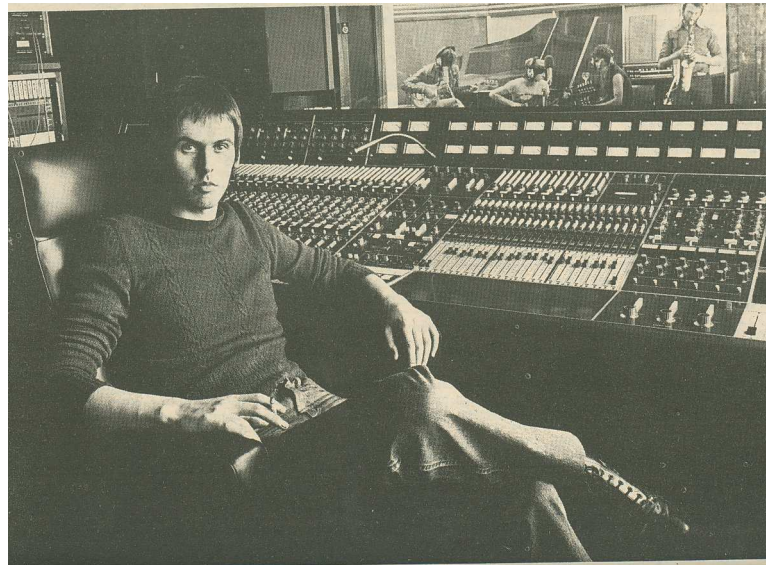

Figure 10: Sony advertisement from 1976[123]

In the films *One Plus One*, *Stardust* and *Flame*, the control room is positioned above the recording area, making it harder for the artists to see up and through the window and allocating an elevated status to the staff supervising the artists. Interestingly, the main omissions with regard to the visual connection between the control room and studio space are found in the Band Aid video (although a brief glimpse of the control room is shown without any reference to its location) and *Let It Be*. The separation of the studio space is also very apparent as the period progresses although the degree of separation increases as time moves on. Whilst there are only minimal attempts to separate The Rolling Stones, The Beatles or Kipper, for example, behind half-height wooden booths in the late 1960s and early 1970s films, the complete physical separation of vocalists and instrumentalists is much more apparent by the time of the videos for East 17 or Bon Jovi in the late 1980s and early 1990s, where members of each band are shown in separate booths. Another change that seems to be time-related is the disappearance of the clutter and smoky atmosphere, both in the studio and control room, with a stark contrast between the areas populated by the Rolling Stones, Beatles, Flame and the Stray Cats and the sparse, tidy spaces used by Paul Young and Olivia Newton John.

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[123] *Sounds*, November 20th 1976, p.38.

The Recording Process

As well as the layout of the studios, the moving images available also reflect the actual recording process and provide some insight into the social setting of the studio too. Firstly, it is interesting to note that most of the artists concerned appear to record their songs whilst performing together in the studio and without many obvious references to multi-tracking or recording individual parts separately. The ability of the Beatles and McCartney, for example, to run through a variety of songs in one take in *Let It Be* and *Broad Street* respectively, is reinforced by Flame being told by the producer that they should have got any mistakes or problems ironed out before entering the studio. The only references to repeated takes are in the *Confessions* film where Kipper's manager, at the end of the session, mutters "not bad, for the seventieth time",[124] and during the Bon Jovi video where "by slightly varying the volumes of different instruments as the song plays the videomakers suggest that different sessions may have been devoted to perfecting the sounds of the individual voices, guitars, drums and keyboards."[125] In contrast, the Rolling Stones are seen constructing their song through an extended period of jamming and the whole process is one of experimentation and creativity.

Secondly, the changing role and approach of the studio support staff is also highlighted. Helen Shapiro's account of her time in Abbey Road in the early 1960s concentrates more on these staff than the musicians and notes the importance of the balance, control and electrical engineers, the recording manager, the tape editor and the 'A-and-R man" (all pictured in Figure 11 behind Shapiro) to the success of the session.

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[124] *Confession of a Pop Performer*, 2004 Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, (C822 8592).
[125] J. Gow, "Music Video as Communication: Popular Formulas and Emerging Genres", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 26:2 (1992), p.56.

Figure 11: Helen Shapiro in the control room with her support team[126]

The first recording session from the moving image sample chronologically, the Stray Cats' visit to a 1960s studio in *Stardust*, sees the sound engineer portrayed as a middle-aged, pipe-smoking man who shows obvious contempt towards the performers by his abrupt manner and by referring to them as 'sonny' when speaking to them individually and who rebukes them by reminding them that 'studio time costs money'. However, by the time Maclaine revisits the studio as a solo performer in the following decade, the producer is shown as someone who empathises with the star and who encourages him to produce his best work. This latter approach is confirmed by the relationship in the studio shown between McCartney and producer George Martin in *Broad Street*, where detailed conversations about the recordings take place between performer and producer in the setting of the control room. However, the Police's *Every Little Thing* video hints at a change in the relationship between the performers and the backroom staff as the band are shown controlling the mixing desk alone and, indeed, showing a certain amount of irreverence by playing with the controls and even dancing on top of the desk. This suggestion that artists were coming to be more heavily involved in the production side of music in the studio as well as performing was further reinforced by the fact that members of East 17 were shown monitoring and adjusting the desk alone during part of their *Stay*

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[126] J. Fishman (ed), *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1962), p.17.

video, possibly as a means of dispelling the belief that the music of the growing number of 'boy bands' was manufactured and lacking in authenticity.[127]

Work Versus Social

Another area hinted at in the media is that of the inclusion of social activities within the recording studio. Of course, the general perception would have been that the studio was a workplace, and this was emphasised a number of times in the printed media by the use of the word 'work' ("it embraces also a great deal of tedious work",[128] "Whilst working as a back-up vocalist at Munich recording sessions",[129] "he swept studio floors for a living"[130] and "she went into recording session work")[131] and by the explicit contrast drawn between working life inside the studio and the relaxation outside it, as shown by 10cc when they declared "we're going on holiday for a while and then do some work in the new studios".[132] However, the social side of the recording studio was not ignored and Rick Wakeman, for example, is noted as having ensured that he got the name of the French studio he was using on a wine label by ordering more than 600 bottles for his recording session. As one of the studio owners noted, "we don't want to make it a music factory"[133] and it seems that others were also keen to include certain social elements into studio life. For instance, the Band Aid video contains shots of some of the artists' children joining their parents during the recording session which is reminiscent of the arrival of McCartney's daughter and her subsequent playing around the studio during one session in *Let It Be*. The Bon Jovi and East 17 videos also portray the lighter side of the recording studio with the relevant artists seemingly enjoying the energy of the work involved in the session and being shown laughing and joking with a number of people from outside of the bands. Finally, the studio could also play host to extravagant parties and, in *Stardust*, one such occasion sees empty bottles and packets of food strewn around the control room and Jim Maclaine and his manager indulging in sexual activities with a couple of prostitutes in the studio itself.

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[127] R. Peterson, "In Search of Authenticity", *Journal of Management Studies*, 42:5 (2005), p.1085 ("Many boy bands are created by professional managers").

[128] G. Martin, "From One End of the Scale to the Other", *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars Number 3*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1964), p.64.

[129] "Donna Summer", *Top Pop Scene*, (London: Purnell Books, 1978), p.14.

[130] *Record Mirror*, April 16th 1977, p.10.

[131] "Tina Charles", *Top of the Pops Annual1978*, (Manchester: World Distributors, 1978), p.4.

[132] *Record Mirror*, May 1st 1976, p.6.

[133] P. Sutcliffe, "Horrorville Heroes", *Sounds*, March 6th 1976, p.16.

Ironically, in *Confessions of a Pop Performer*, the recording studio scene is one of the few in the film that does not include any nudity or sexual activity.

The Lasting Image

In much the same way that the activity of film or radio broadcast studios was introduced visually with a picture of a lit 'on air' sign (as, indeed, the studio location in the *Confessions of a Pop Performer* film was introduced by the appearance of a large red neon 'recording' sign), it was the images of just a few, specific items, seemingly recurring frequently and consistently across the period under review, that came to represent the recording studio to the general public. In such a restricted setting, where John Lennon had to peer round the studio equipment to be able to speak to Paul McCartney in *Let It Be* or the lead character in the *Confessions* film actually became entangled in the wires as he attempted to leave his drum kit, it is no surprise that these recurring images of the sound recording studio were technology based. Simple items, such as the microphone and a pair of headphones, or the more complex technology of the studio mixing desk, were portrayed in numerous photographs, and in all but one of the film or video samples, to virtually become the iconic representation of recording studios themselves, whatever the point in history being studied.

Of all the technological items in the studio, the microphone and headphones were those most closely linked with the artist. In contrast to the microphones often portrayed in performance images, which were often less obtrusive and able to be hand-held, the studio microphones were larger, more imposing items that were much more visually striking (as shown in Figure 12).

Figure 12: Paul Anka in the 1960s[134]

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[134] *Boyfriend Book 1966*, (Manchester: World Distributors, 1965), p.114.

As well as individual microphones, another common image is that of bands standing around a single microphone (sometimes one that hangs down from the ceiling, as in seen in Figure 13 and the *Deeper Than The Night* video) to record group vocals and this image is taken to the extreme with the large group of artists who recorded the Band Aid single.

Figure 13: Studio hanging microphone for Johnny Mathis in the 1960s[135]
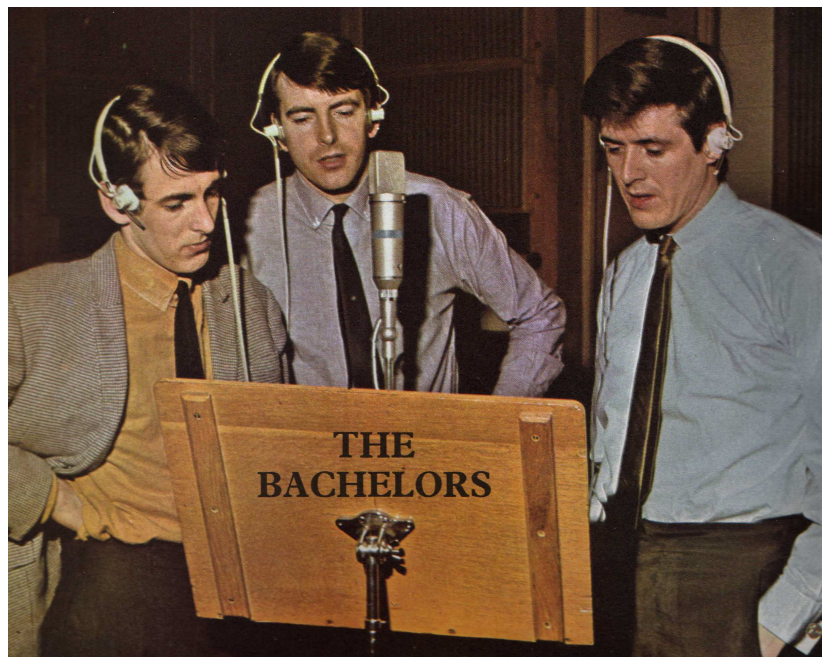
Figure 14: The Bachelors in the recording studio[136]

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[135] J. Fishman (Ed), *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1964), p.59.
[136] *Boyfriend Book 1966*, (Manchester: World Distributors, 1965), p.141.

Interestingly, the recording studio shots from the 1960s (Figure 14 shows an image of The Bachelors looking ill at ease around a microphone) often contrast completely with images of 'live' performances by bands from the same era when, on a number of occasions, artists were shown performing without the need for microphones at all (Figure 15 shows the Rolling Stones looking more relaxed in a performance setting which also contrasts with the microphone-laden studio the Stones used in *One Plus One*).

Figure 15: The Rolling Stones minus any microphones[137]

Likewise, the image of artists wearing headphones in the studio seems to be almost obligatory and one constant image in all the visual representations of the recording studio is of the artists placing their hand or hands to the headphones whilst singing their vocal contributions (see Figure 16 for a picture of Paul McCartney striking such a pose).

Figure 16: The cover for Paul McCartney's 1993 single, "Pretty Little Head"[138]

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[137] A. Hand (Ed), *Pop Weekly Annual 1968* (Manchester: World Distributors, 1967), p.20.
[138] Paul McCartney, *Pretty Little Head / Write Away*, (Parlophone, 1986, R6145).

Indeed, the signal that Bon Jovi's time in the studio is complete is a close-up shot of the symbolic dropping of a set of such headphones to the floor.

The video that best shows the link between studio and microphone/headphones is that for Paul Young's 1983 single *Wherever I Lay My Hat*. The first part of this video shows Young (miming the lyrics) washing, dressing and leaving a woman, asleep on a bed, and then going to a phone box to call another woman, the implication being that he has a number of women waiting for him in different locations. Then he is seen entering a building and a gloomy, sparsely-furnished room in which there only appears to be a mixing desk (with producer) and a single microphone. Young takes off his jacket, undoes his top button, places a pair of headphones on and then begins singing the song with much feeling and whilst clutching his headphones. After fifty seconds of this, Young takes off the headphones, wipes his brow and then leaves the studio. The video then ends with one of the two women seen earlier in the video shooting Young as he leaves the studio building down a set of steps. What is interesting is that the studio in the video appears to be housed in what looks like a hotel room, with the only confirmation of its purpose coming from the brief glimpse of the desk and the single microphone in the room and Young's wearing of headphones. Also, in spite of the short space of time spent recording, Young is obviously keen to show the hard work and effort put into the session with shots of him mopping his brow just before he leaves the studio.

As well as the headphones and microphones, the other iconic visual symbol of the recording studio was the mixing desk. With only *One Plus One* and *Let It Be* not showing it (ironically, given the Beatles championing of the studio), the image of the studio desk was forever being emphasised visually. There were two aspects that were often highlighted; firstly, the desk always appears as a working instrument and one that appears to need the constant tending and supervision of one, two or a number of people to ensure the sound is being recorded successfully. As with the touching of headphones, a familiar image is that of the producer and/or engineer sat at the desk, adjusting a slider or tweaking a knob, whilst looking towards the studio area where the artists are recording. The second aspect often highlighted is the prominence given to shots of the visually-impressive array of switches, dials and coloured lights housed on the desk itself. Paul McCartney's *Broad Street* offers the best example of this as the camera pans along the mixing desk for a few seconds to emphasise the number of switches and dials that were housed on the desk, and also shows a number of clips,

intermittently amongst the shots of the artists recording, of flashing lights and flickering needles on level gauges.[139] The complexity of this desk technology, with the implication that only professional staff should be using it is shown in a number of the images, as with Figure 17, where the artists stand behind those operating the desk, seemingly looking on in admiration at the serious work taking place in front of them.

No time for clowning now—Freddie and the Dreamers lend a serious ear to their playbacks.

Figure 17: Freddie and the Dreamers in the studio control room[140]

This is further emphasised by one moment of humour in the *Livin' Doll* video. The Young Ones (a group of students from the BBC comedy series) are momentarily shown in the control room sat at the mixing desk, and one of them asks 'What does this button do?' before pressing it and seeing the whole desk explode. The humour of this is more than likely based on the public's fear of being placed in a similar position and the recognition of a general level of technophobia that seems to afflict many people.[141]

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[139] Interestingly, *Give My Regards to Broad Street* is the only film or video that explicitly shows the actual recording tape being used, although this was possibly done to reinforce the importance of the missing master tapes that was central to the film's storyline.
[140] J. Fishman (Ed), *The Official Radio Luxembourg Book of Record Stars*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1964), p.117.
[141] R. Filipczak, "Technoliteracy, Technophobia and Programming Your VCR", *Training*, 31:1 (1994), pp.48-52.

Figure 18: Microphones and headphones in the 1970s[142]

This assumption that the images being presented in the media came to represent the recording studio itself echo the thoughts of Roland Barthes who, in the 1950s, wrote a number of journalistic pieces for *Les Lettres Nouvelles* which looked at various aspects of contemporary French life[143] and their hidden meanings. For instance wrestling is not a sport but more of a public spectacle that portrays a "form of justice which is at last intelligible",[144] cars are "the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals",[145] and Mars is not some mysterious galactic world but simply a "petit-bourgeois Earth…cultivated (or expressed) by the popular illustrated press."[146] One of the more pertinent studies to this investigation is Barthes' look at the portrayal of Romans in the 1953 film *Julius Caesar*, which starred Marlon Brando and James Mason. Barthes asks what allowed the American actors to signify Roman-ness in 1950s Hollywood and came to the conclusion that it was the image portrayed via the actors' hairstyles, particularly their fringes;

> "The frontal lock overwhelms one with evidence, no one can doubt that he is in Ancient Rome. And this certainly is permanent: the actors speak, act, torment

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[142] *New Musical Express*, January 10th 1976, p.23.

[143] A number of these were collected together, translated into English and published as books called *Mythologies* and *The Eiffel Tower*.

[144] R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, (Translated by A. Lavers), (London: Vintage, 1993), p.25.

[145] R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, (Translated by A. Lavers), (London: Vintage, 1993), p.88.

[146] R. Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*, (Translated by R. Howard), (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), p.29.

themselves, debate 'questions of universal import', without losing, thanks to this little flag displayed on their foreheads, any of their historical plausibility."[147]

Likewise, everyone in the film apart from Caesar appears to be shown sweating, a sign, according to Barthes, of thought, planning and emotion with Caesar's lack of sweat signifying his lone role as unknowing victim in the film. In the same way that Barthes saw that the image of the Eiffel Tower became the "universal symbol"[148] for the city of Paris, others linked image and objects too. For instance, Hadlaw invoked Barthes' approach when noting that Harry Beck's famous London Underground map had moved on from being a simple map to becoming the visual representation of the system as a whole, an "ideal image of modern time and space: orderly, lucid, regular, efficient and entirely functional".[149] In the same way, the images of the microphone and headphones, have come to signify the actual studio itself and to locate the viewer in the studio space, or, via the image of the mixing desk, into a world of technological complexity in which the status and profession of those operating the desk is elevated beyond that of the artists and public alike.

Conclusion

In the same way that cinema audiences over the years have suspended their knowledge of the artificial construction of films in order to enjoy the film-going experience, the record-buying public, judging by the images presented in the popular printed and moving image media from the 1960s to 1990s, rarely seem to have shown much interest in the process by which music has been produced in the recording studio. What appears to have been of more importance is the personality of the artists themselves and their promotion and performance of the recorded sound, rather than any detailed knowledge of the construction of the finished product. Society itself seems to have confirmed this preference for the cult of the personality, especially when measured in terms of the British honours system awards made to those within the pop industry. Whilst the Beatles led the way with their M.B.E. awards in 1965, George Martin, representing the studio profession, had to wait until 1988 for the award of a C.B.E. for his services to music[150] and until 1996 to become

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[147] R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, (Translated by A. Lavers), (London: Vintage, 1993), p.26.
[148] R. Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*, (Translated by R. Howard), (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), p.3.
[149] J. Hadlaw, "The London Underground Map: Imagining Modern Time and Space", *Design Issues*, 19:1 (2003), p.35.
[150] www.airstudios.com/info/george.shtml

"the first of his profession"[151] to receive a knighthood (Bob Geldof and Cliff Richard, for example, received theirs in 1986 and 1995 respectively).

Whilst the specific work of the recording studio was largely ignored in the media, what did filter through to the general public were specific images of the recording studio that, by their repetition, actually came to be representative of the studio space itself. It appears that Walter Benjamin's assertion in his unfinished *Arcades Project* that "history decays into images, not into stories"[152] can definitely be applied to the historical view of the British recording studio and is an assertion that has been applied to other industries too. Andrew Blaikie, for example, has shown how the visual representation of the British seaside has changed over the years, from the Victorian photographs of old fisherman who were "icons of intergenerational harmony"[153] to the saucy postcards and holidaymaker images that represented the very British notion of the holiday business. What is interesting about the recording studio images, however, is that they did not really change at all and remained constant from the 1960s right through to the 1990s; whilst the clothes, hairstyles and equipment details might have changed, the actual composition of the images remained static and their significance and meaning remained unaltered across the period.

The first two chapters of this study have provided a history of the British recording studio based on the published media sources from both the studio and music industries themselves. However, given that the historical narrative was, as with most such histories, general and impersonal, and given that the public's perception of the studio has been shown to be based on a lack of clear information and on a few key images, further investigation is needed in order to provide a more in-depth investigation of the British recording studio. What of the studios themselves, their location and architecture, and the technology and humans in them? All these elements and their interaction, missing from the investigations so far, need to be studied and analysed.

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[151] www.answers.com/topic/george-martin

[152] W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, (Translated by H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin), (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p.476, (N11, 4).

[153] A. Blaikie, "Beside the Sea: Visual Imagery, Ageing and Heritage", *Ageing and Society*, 17:6 (1997), p.629.

Chapter 4: Technology

Having noted its prominence in the narrative constructed from the self-perception of the industry, and in the image presented to the general public, it is logical to begin a more in-depth investigation of the British recording studio by looking at the technology that was present in the studio. As well as providing an excellent general case-study, there are a number of additional reasons why Strawberry Recording Studios is a good setting for any such analysis of technology; Firstly, the Studio's development and constant use by 10cc ensured that the band were totally committed to enhancing the quality of the Strawberry's equipment and were also innovators when it came to the creation of sound through technology. As well as being recognised as a group at the forefront of quality British pop music (for example, one critic said they "grip the heart of rock 'n' roll like nothing I've heard before…sheer brilliance"),[1] they were also known as technological innovators in the recording studio. This is emphasised by, amongst other things, their use of Strawberry's recording technology to obtain the (then) unique sound on their 1975 number one hit *I'm Not In Love*,[2] described as "a good song given a touch of genius in the studio",[3] and, also, the actual invention and development of a piece of technology called the Gizmo by two members of the band, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme. The Gizmo was a small box which clamped onto the bridge of the guitar and which mechanically bowed and vibrated the instrument's strings thus allowing a whole new range of sounds to be created (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: The Gizmo[4]

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[1] *Melody Maker*, May 18th 1974, p.32.
[2] Phonogram: 6008 014, 1975.
[3] *Melody Maker*, October 20th 1979, p.27.
[4] Booklet accompanying *Consequences*, CONS017 (Mercury Records), p.16.

The device, developed by Godley and Creme in conjunction with the Physics Department at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), and intended for mass production by an American firm, Musitronics,[5] was born out of a fusion of Godley and Creme's inventive personalities and the inordinate amount of time they spent in Strawberry perfecting their records. Such dedication to their art and science attracted much attention and even merited a mention in George Martin's autobiography when he noted:

> The consequence of all this is that many groups spend an enormous amount of time in the studio just playing around, 'doing their thing'. Two people from the group Deep Purple (sic), for example, invented an instrument called the Gizmo. Closeted with this new toy, they spent no less than eighteen months in the studio making one record.[6]

The device was used on a number of 10cc songs and the focus on its development, in particular the recording of an album to showcase the device, led to Godley and Creme's decision to leave 10cc in 1976. Unfortunately, certain technical problems could not be overcome (see later in this Chapter for details) and the arrival of more advanced synthesisers and samplers meant that no more than a few hundred or so Gizmos were produced and it spectacularly failed to live up to the pre-production boast that it would "open wide the musical horizons of guitarists and bands all over the world."[7]

Secondly, Strawberry shared its Waterloo Road, Stockport building with a company, Formula Sound,[8] which began life in the early 1970s when musician and engineer, Tony Cockell, found himself helping Strawberry to fine-tune, maintain and develop their equipment, both in the studio and on the road with 10cc. Realising the potential of supplying studios with custom-built technology and using some money earned from helping to fit out Granada Television's sound studio, Cockell and a number of the Strawberry partners developed Formula Sound (getting the name from a Formula One racing magazine) and incorporated the company in 1973. Having designed and built many systems, including Strawberry's third mixing desk in the late-1970s, Formula Sound recognised a number of common requirements in their customers' demands and therefore began to concentrate on off-the-shelf products, starting with

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[5] www.musitronics.net
[6] G. Martin, *All You Need Is Ears*, (London: MacMillan, 1979), p.254.
[7] Press Release – The Gizmo (1976) (Author's Private Collection).
[8] www.formula-sound.com

their PM-80 modular mixer in 1980, whilst their one-off custom design work diminished. Formula Sound, led by Tony Cockell, is still operating in 2007 and, as well as producing technology for the entertainment industry, has now diversified into the noise-control market. This combination of Formula Sound and Strawberry, both housed in the same building, allowed for an analysis of technology from both the production and application angles, from the viewpoint of the supplier and customer. In other words, Strawberry not only offers the chance to study the mixture of creativity and technology that generally made recording studios unique environments, but also the successful combination of art and industry that allows this particular studio a special place in recording studio history.

In such a technologically complicated setting as the recording studio, the question of *where* to direct this research can also be complemented by also asking *which* technology might be investigated for the study. Whilst much of Strawberry's technical capability was based on the developing products of numerous commercial sound-equipment suppliers (such as Studer[9] tape machines, Dolby[10] noise reducers, Neumann[11] and Sennheiser[12] microphones and Westlake[13] monitors), their main technological focus was placed firmly on the Studio's control room and, in particular, on the mixing desk. In the control room environment, where the appearance and functionality of technology was determined by the manufacturers of such equipment, the Studio's desk, where the recorded sound was channelled and mixed from recording area to tape, was the centre piece of the display. In the Studio's own promotional brochures, pictures of the mixing desk were the most prominent and details of it were placed at the top of list of technical equipment. It seems that in the same way that the image of the mixing desk had come to represent recording studios to the general public, so the studios themselves were using the technical and visual imagery of the desk to attract potential customers. Analysis, therefore, of this major piece of technology, and the process by which it emerged and evolved, has been an important part of this study of studio technology. Figures 20 to 24 show how Strawberry's desk changed between the late 1960s and late 1970s, with the most notable feature being the increasing size and complexity of the desk, a development that occurred over a period of less than ten years.

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[9] www.studer.ch
[10] www.dolby.com
[11] www.neumann.com
[12] www.sennheiser.com
[13] www.westlakeaudio.com

The Changing Face of Strawberry's Mixing Desks

Figure 20: Peter Tattersall at the Strawberry Desk c.1970[14]

Figure 21: The Strawberry Desk c.1970[15]

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[14] Author's Private Collection.
[15] Author's Private Collection.

Figure 22: The Helios Desk[16]

Figure 23: The Evolving Helios desk[17]
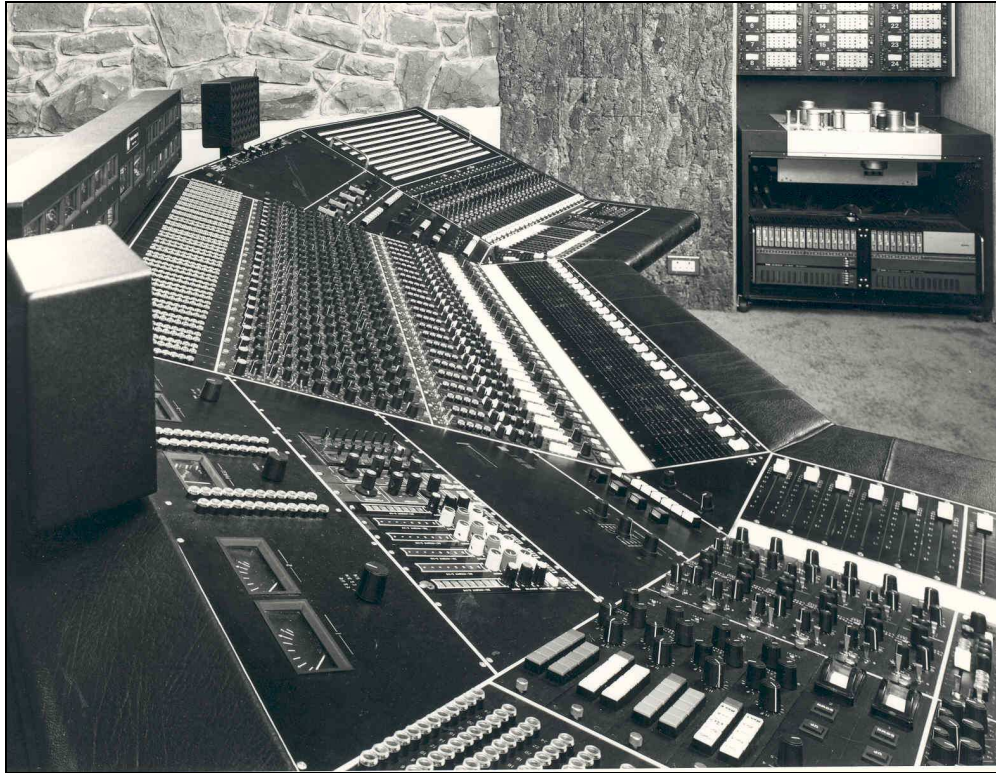
Figure 24: The Formula Sound Desk[18]

Creating Technology

Whilst Latour's search for the source of technology's creation often proved to be frustrating ("most of the time the origins are too obscure"),[19] his exhortation to "stick to the actors"[20] is useful advice, especially in such a confused and complicated setting as Strawberry Recording Studios. In essence, the task of defining these actors seems reasonably straightforward; the Studio's technology did not just develop in isolation but was the result of a combination of demand from customers, supply by studio technology firms, general economics and developing technical expertise, with the interaction between these factors shifting and altering over time to produce a variety of networks. It should be noted, however, that much of Strawberry's successful evolution was based on a system that often blurred the distinction between supplier and customer; For example, one of Strawberry's co-owners (Eric Stewart), for instance, not only performed on 10cc's records but also engineered and produced them as well, and was therefore uniquely placed to influence both the artistic and technological aspects of their music and, consequently, the Studio too. Additionally, as will be seen later in the chapter, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme could be both producer and consumer of their Gizmo device and therefore follow in the footsteps of

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[18] Courtesy of Tony Cockell, Formula Sound Ltd.
[19] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.50.
[20] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.94

not just artists who had shown engineering skills (such as Leonardo da Vinci),[21] but also inventors who had excelled artistically (such as Samuel Morse who, as well developing the Morse code, had paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy).[22] In analysing the networks of technology's development in the Strawberry setting, such complications need to be borne in mind. In spite of this, however, such an approach has provided a contrast to the more conventional study of studio technology's 'progression', as seen, for example, in Richard Swettenham's 1982 article on the development of the mixing console,[23] which seems to imply that technology has been driven mainly by technical change and advancement. Looking at the development of Strawberry's desk technology, there seem to be two distinct phases between the late 1960s and mid 1990s that merit investigation, with a change occurring in the early-to-mid 1980s. At first glance, the split between the two periods would seem to coincide solely with the arrival of digital technology, but closer inspection suggests that other issues might also have affected this change of direction.

Prior to Strawberry's arrival in the late 1960s, mixing desk technology had been mainly the preserve of the record-company owned recording studios and their workshops. The whole process, from the design to the production of desks, was controlled in-house, and only Marconi in the United Kingdom offered any kind of standardised desk for sale and this was mainly aimed at the growing number of radio stations in the country. It was into this setting that the increasing number of independent recording studios entered in the late 1960s and which, faced with the choice of constructing their own desk or attempting to buy a second-hand model, began to create a demand for mixing desk technology that had been largely absent up until that point. Whilst Strawberry's initial solution was to cobble together their own desk (leading to the "sellotape and string"[24] desk mentioned earlier), their preferred option was to commission the creation of a new desk, custom-built to their own specification and, during their first decade of business, they commissioned three such desks to be built. There were a number of reasons why the Studio preferred this option to that of searching for a standard off-the-shelf product or purchasing a second-hand model from one of the established studios. Firstly, in the same way that their location, décor and general approach to the recording process could mark

[21] B. Hall, "Leonard da Vinci: Engineer and Architect", *Technology and Culture*, 29:3 (1988), p.606.
[22] M. Davidson, 'What Samuel Wrought', *American Heritage*, 12:3 (1961), pp.106-11.
[23] R. Swettenham, "Evolution of the Mixing Console", *Studio Sound*, 24:11 (1982), pp42-6.
[24] G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.58.

Strawberry out as being different to their London rivals, as highlighted in a later Chapter, the degree of individuality given to them by a custom-built desk added visually to the Studio's appeal. Strawberry's owner, Peter Tattersall, notes, "We wanted people to walk into the Strawberry control room and think, 'Wow, look at that!', so that they would want to come back again and again"[25] and the comment from one customer, that their main memory of Strawberry was the "Star Trek desk"[26] is proof of the success of this. Secondly, whilst the appearance and design of the mixing desk was important to the Studio, the quality of sound that could be produced through it was a vital feature for those using it for recording. Studio co-owner, and 10cc member, Eric Stewart was particularly keen to maintain the sound quality of 10cc's records, and emphasised the sonic value of the technology when he remembered that "the lovely smooth fuzz guitar sound I developed on the early 10cc tracks was the result of D/I'ing (direct injection) of the guitar through our control desk at Strawberry."[27] He also lamented the loss of particular sounds when equipment was changed:

> When I ordered the new wraparound desk, Dick Swettenham said 'I've improved the mic amps, Eric, I think you'll be pleased with them'. Well, I plugged my guitar in, pulled down the fader, wound up the line amp, and the thing sounded so brittle. We'd sold the original black desk to someone local and I desperately tried to get at least one or two of the mic line modules back but the bastards wouldn't sell them to me.[28]

Thirdly, as well as ensuring that the equipment looked technologically advanced and sounded good, practical concerns also played a part in the demands of those purchasing the studio desks. For instance, Stewart, who spent much of his time engineering records on Strawberry's desk as well as performing in the studio, wanted a design that permitted him to maintain control over an increasing number of dials and switches and that allowed for a certain level of comfort as well. The end result was the creation of Strawberry's wrap-around desks, where the sides of the desk were angled in to allow the person in control to reach and monitor the impressive number of knobs and displays and this became a typical design of the period. Figure 25, for instance (from Swettenham's analysis of mixing desk evolution), shows how the original console (a) could be expanded without making it too cumbersome,

[25] Peter Tattersall, July 14th 2001.
[26] Joe Glasman, email, 1.7.04
[27] www.ericstewart.uk.com/questions11.htm
[28] R. Buskin, "Classic Tracks: 10cc I'm Not In Love", *Sound on Sound*, June (2005), www.soundonsound.com/sos/jun05/articles/classictracks.htm

allowing greater control for the person at the desk. This also generated additional space (as shown by the shaded areas in b and c) which permitted the introduction of a number of extra modules that might otherwise have been omitted if the original design was utilised.
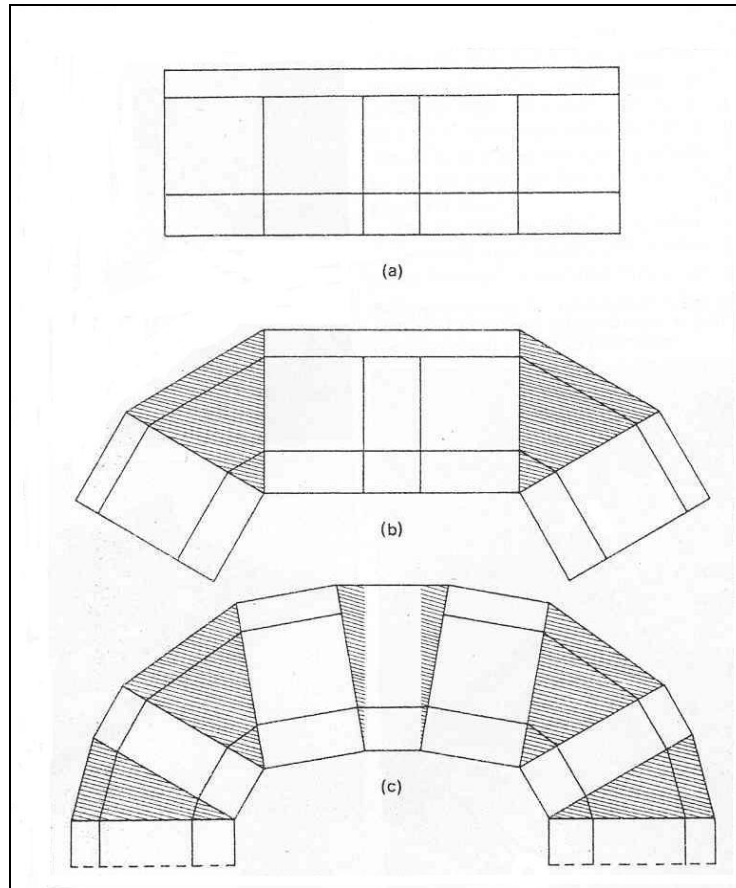
Figure 25: Evolution of the Desk Layout[29]

The image of the producer behind such a wrap-around desk as Strawberry's was a memorable one, as Tony Wilson notes when recalling producer Martin Hannett in the Studio:

> Martin sits at the center of his world. The chair at the centre of the great Strawberry studio mixing desk. Thirty six tracks, the dog's bollocks. If there is a power chair in life it is the producer's seat when art is happening behind the thick glass screen.[30]

As well as the actual design of the desk's shape, Strawberry also saw some more unusual requests for the desk layout itself, as Stewart himself remembers; "In the 70s in the studio I was smoking up to 60 cigarettes a day and even had a cigarette lighter

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[29] R. Swettenham, "Evolution of the Mixing Console", *Studio Sound*, 24:11 (1982), p.46.
[30] A. Wilson, *24 Hour Party People: What the Sleeve Notes Never Tell You*, (London: Channel 4 Books, 2002), p.69.

and ashtray built into the control desk!!"[31] The third generation Strawberry desk was also constructed with a number of extra features built-in including, as Tony Cockell recalls, "a row of push buttons selecting who the talk back was assigned to and the last button on this row was labelled 'Tea'! This talked to the kitchen to order a brew!!"[32] Interestingly, it seems that some desks are remembered now more for such quirky, practical details rather than, necessarily, their sonic or technological qualities. This is also shown by Keith Richards' memories of the Olympic Studio's which, because the manufacturers had been involved in war-time weapons production, had "a red button called 'Missiles Fire' on the mixing board".[33]
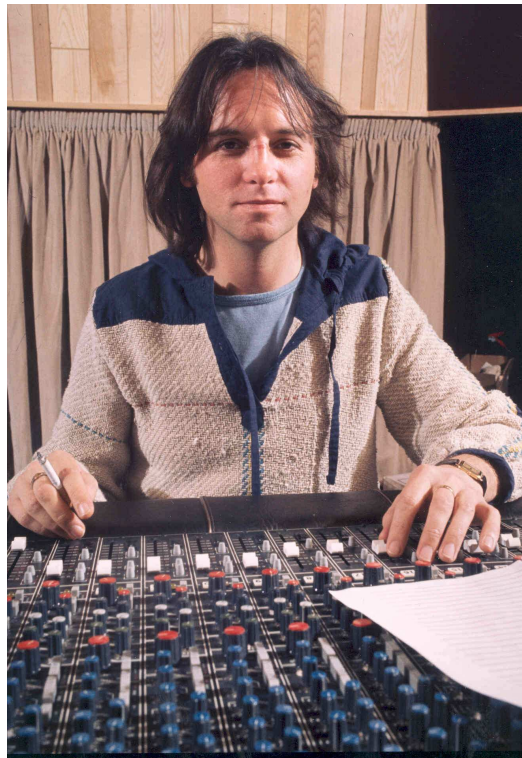
Figure 26: Eric Stewart, cigarette in hand, at the Strawberry South Mixing Desk[34]

With this increasing demand for a new generation of mixing desks, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the emergence of a new breed of desk designers and manufacturers who identified the need for a different approach to the development and supply of studio technology. This was based primarily on a better understanding of the recording industry (mainly through having worked in recording studios themselves) and on recognising the needs of the customers, who wanted quality

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[31] www.ericstewart.uk.com/questions1.htm
[32] Tony Cockell, May 1st 2005.
[33] D. Loewmstein and P. Dodd, *According to the Rolling Stones*, (London: Phoenix, 2004), p.61.
[34] Author's Private Collection.

items built to exacting specifications. Initially, for some studios, the desire to maintain complete control over the recording process meant that there was still some reluctance to delegate the responsibility to external manufacturers. Strawberry's own experience of upgrading their various desks in the 1970s reflects how manufacturers were changing their approach to studio technology at this time. After Peter Tattersall and Eric Stewart had put together the Studio's original console, they turned to these new suppliers in the shape of Helios Electronics (led by Dick Swettenham) in the early 1970s and Formula Sound (Tony Cockell) in the mid 1970s. Both Swettenham and Cockell had begun their own working lives in the recording studio and, as a result, had gained considerable knowledge of what studio staff expected from their technology. Indeed, it was this ability to be able to understand and empathise with their clients that drove companies like Helios and Formula. When Olympic Studios in London relocated in the late 1960s, Swettenham worked closely with Olympic's chief engineer, Keith Grant, "and it is here that many of the basic ideas that characterised Swettenham's later console designs were formed – a fusion of his technical ability, and skill in realising the operational ideas of Grant, his staff and producers passing through the studios."[35] Strawberry's first custom-built desk was the result of Swettenham working with Eric Stewart and, as Swettenham himself noted, "the Helios approach was custom building in every detail plus face-to-face consultation with clients who had a clear picture of what they really wanted."[36] Swettenham would visit studios with a blank piece of paper, rather than a catalogue, and would sketch ideas as the studio owners spoke to him about their requirements. Figures 27 and 28 show how Swettenham could alternate between concentrating simply on the ergonomics and appearance of the desk (Figure 27 or highlighting the specific technical aspects in more detail (as shown in Figure 28.

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[35] http://prostudio.com/studiosound/june00/swettenham.html
[36] www.digitalprosound.com/Htm/Articles/June/Current.htm
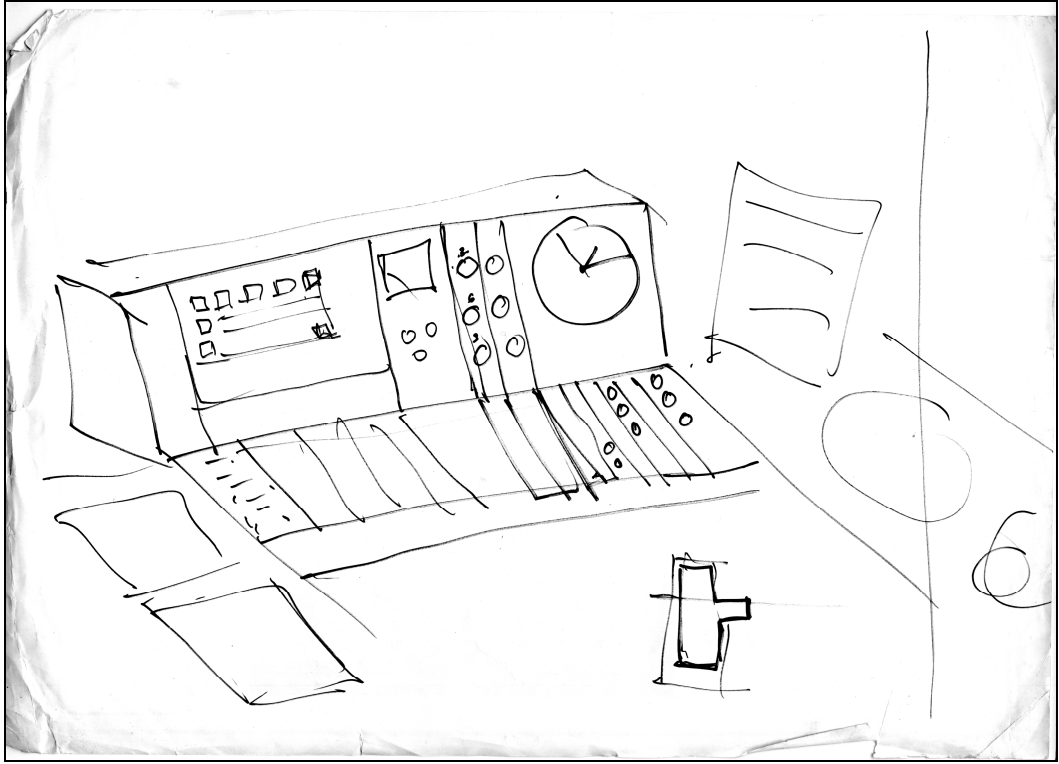
Figure 27: An original Dick Swettenham sketch[37]
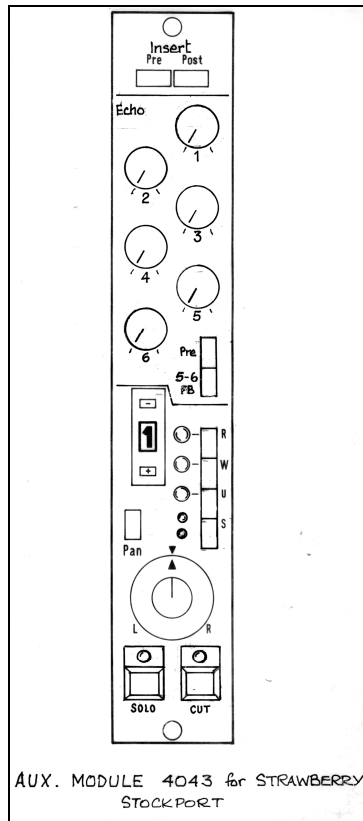
Figure 28: A more detailed Swettenham drawing for a Strawberry desk module[38]

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[37] Courtesy of Helios Electronics.
[38] Courtesy of Helios Electronics.

There were times when the manufacturers might question the rationale of some requests, but the desire to meet the customers' needs overcame any reservations. Dick Swettenham, for example, thought it possible that some desk features were more of a psychological boost for those owning the desk rather than for their practical contribution to its function; "One suspects that the banks of lighted buttons which appeared at the 8-track stage were partially introduced as a client-impressing feature and then became so entrenched that with 24 and more tracks their presence, however space consuming, had become traditional rather than totally rational."[39] For Cockell, too, such interaction with the customer, and ensuring their satisfaction with all aspects of the desk, was of extreme importance and his unofficial motto was "what the customer wants, he gets!"[40] One of the by-products of this custom-build approach was that the detailed discussions before manufacture ensured that very few of the proposed desks failed to reach production once the initial thoughts had been outlined; "I can't remember any dis-satisfaction with the final product as we had spent so much time beforehand making sure it would be as the customer wanted."[41] One major consequence of this approach, particularly for the historian, is that many of these original one-off desks no longer exist and the very nature of their construction means that the only record of their existence today is through the memories of those who used them or photographic/visual evidence. Tony Cockell, for instance, ensured that he photographed each of his desks after they were completed as his only record of the work he had done (see Figure 40). He then used these to show other prospective clients or relied on the word of mouth recommendations from satisfied customers to promote his company.

With the demand from customers for specific technology and a number of small, bespoke companies willing to supply such items, the further factors that helped shape the studio technology of the 1970s were the economics of recording studios, the social climate of the pop music world and the general state of technology in this period. Generally speaking, the pop music world of the late 1960s and early 1970s is generally perceived by the public to be a period of extravagance and indulgence. This was the era of transatlantic super-groups who could spend months in the recording studio, producing excessively multi-tracked records, before launching worldwide tours to support the disc's sales. The artists' appearance was often

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[39] R. Swettenham, "Evolution of the Mixing Console", *Studio Sound*, 24:11 (1982), pp.45-6.
[40] Tony Cockell, August 23rd 2005.
[41] Tony Cockell, May 1st 2005.

glamorous (for example David Bowie or Marc Bolan) and the performers were generally held in awe by the record-buying public. Financially, the recording studios of the early-to-mid 1970s were in a similarly healthy state, helped by the phenomenal record sales of the time. Added to this, whilst the established studios had the backing of their record company owners, many of the independent studios springing up were owned or supported by successful musicians who had the financial ability to purchase whatever equipment they thought necessary to maintain their status. In Strawberry's case, 10cc were committed to ensuring the quality of the Studio and this meant that, for instance, they considered the £70,000[42] cost of the Formula Sound desk as a solid investment rather than a drain on the Studio's resources. At around the same time as this, George Martin was spending $210,000 (£109,200)[43] on the console for his Montserrat-based AIR Studios in comparison to the $35,000 (£14,350)[44] that AIR London's original desk cost in the early 1970s and, interestingly, Martin qualified the advantages of the custom-built desk by emphasising the costs involved; "Even though it is hand-made, and designed to our own specifications, that is still a lot of money!"[45]

The final factor that affected the mixing desk in this period was the state of technological development in general. Whilst the perception of advancing technology in the recording studio in the 1970s is a strong one (as seen in Chapters 1 and 2), the actual process of recording sound was virtually unchanged, as noted by Gronow and Saunio in their overview of the recording industry; "the quality had improved, but the basic principle of mechanical recording was the same."[46] The technology, whether reproducing onto disc or tape, was analogous and the main technical advances were in the field of improving sound quality (such as Dolby's noise reduction system) or in the complexity of capturing the growing number of tracks being fed into the final mix. Whilst the onset of multi-tracking obviously affected those building the mixing desks, as they ensured that the various inputs could be monitored, adjusted and then transferred onto the final master tape, the more profound effects of this technology were seen in the final musical output and in the role of the mixing engineer and recording studio itself, as noted by one observer

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[42] Using the GDP Deflator comparison method, this would have been equivalent to just over £386,000 in 2004 (http://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/).
[43] Based on the 1978 exchange rate of $1 = £0.52 (www.measuringworth.com).
[44] Based on the 1971 exchange rate of $1 = £0.41 (www.measuringworth.com).
[45] G. Martin, *All You Need Is Ears*, (London: MacMillan, 1979), p.268.
[46] P. Gronow and I. Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, (London: Cassell, 1999), p.187.

in the early 1990s; "the studio became more of a place where electronically mediated performances were created rather than simply 'documented'."[47] As will be seen in later chapters, these developments allowed the recording studio to almost become an extra 'instrument' in the creation of music and shifted the balance of power in the studio towards those in charge of the final mix. However, this change in the studio hierarchy meant little to the desk manufacturers. As Tony Cockell notes, the principles of desk construction remained fairly constant throughout their early years in business; "The analogue technology was stable and it was more a case of presenting it to the customer as they wanted to see it. Whilst the desks got bigger and maybe more complicated, the theory behind them was the same."[48] There were, of course, limits (both space and technical) to how far these complications could stretch, although as Dick Swettenham notes, the limits were often tested as far as possible; "The process of 'everything possible in every channel' continued until a typical 1977 piece of sales literature proclaimed with pride '14 EQ and filter controls per channel' – which for 56 inputs is 784 controls to be set manually!"[49] When controlling such a desk became too onerous, the designers went one stage further and introduced automated systems that memorised the movement of the faders and then reproduced this movement when requested, something that definitely impressed those who owned and used such consoles, even experienced producers like George Martin who noted that "it was rather like seeing the invisible man in the studio."[50]

As the 1970s progressed, however, the approach to recording studio technology, from both the view of customers and suppliers, began to change. Symptomatic of this change was that the two major suppliers of Strawberry's desks, Helios and Formula, altered their direction and moved away from the custom-building of consoles into other areas of sound technology. Whilst Tony Cockell saw Formula move into the production of equalisers and mixing system modules for clubs and discos,[51] Dick Swettenham actually closed Helios Electronics in 1979 to concentrate solely on his recording studio design consultancy business, something he had run in parallel with his desk construction concern in the preceding few years. Looking back, both

[47] L. Austin, *Rock Music, The Microchip, and the Collaborative Performer: Issues Concerning Musical Performance, Electronics and the Recording Studio*, (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1993), p.62.
[48] Tony Cockell, May 1st 2005.
[49] R. Swettenham, "Evolution of the Mixing Console", *Studio Sound*, 24:11 (1982), p.44.
[50] G. Martin, *All You Need Is Ears*, (London: MacMillan, 1979), p.272.
[51] E. Brunert, "Sounding Off From Stockport", *Stockport Advertiser*, February 26th (1981), p.13 notes that "there will be in production soon a compact modular mixing system…".

suppliers offered the same reason for their move away from the console construction market, particularly highlighting the growing number of standardised desks being produced and a move towards a situation where the appearance of the desk became more important to the customers than the quality of sound being produced. For Cockell, recording studios were now less adventurous and less likely to want to put any work into planning the buying of a desk as they "just wanted to pick a nice-looking one from a catalogue."[52] Swettenham's favourite phrase to describe the basis of these purchasing decisions was that studios were now more interested in 'knobs per dollar', implying that they were more concerned with ensuring the desk included as many switches, dials and knobs as possible for visual impression rather than being concerned with the sound quality being created by the console. Others, too, noted the difference between Swettenham's own desks and those of the newer manufacturers when they said "studios bought Neve, musicians buy Helios",[53] indicating a growing divide between the aspirations of the studio owners and the artists. In the market, companies like Neve and Solid State Logic recognising that profits would come from the mass production rather than the custom-building of desks, began to actively promote their standard consoles to those studios which were seeking to purchase a mixing console rather than influence the design of specially-built item. For example, Eden Studios (London) decided to revamp their studios in 1980 and took the decision to replace their original purpose-built desk with a standard Solid State Logic model, noting the importance of ensuring the right choice of desk when they remembered "it was almost as agonising as finding new premises…we had to think of the impact it would have on our clients, many of whom loved the old desk and didn't want to change."[54]

So what reasons can be given for this shift in the production of studio technology towards the end of the 1970s? The most obvious and conventional explanation is that, simply, the technology itself developed. By the end of the 1980s, digital recording techniques had replaced analogue and, consequently, a new generation of technology had been developed in the studio to allow for this evolution and the arrival of the compact disc system. It would seem to make sense, therefore, that recording studios 'progressed' and replaced their equipment in line with these changes. Indeed, by 1986, the Yellow 2 Studio (Strawberry's eventual partner) was

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[52] Tony Cockell, May 1st 2005.
[53] http://prostudio.com/studiosound/june00/swettenham.html
[54] P. Lewis, "Eden: The Birth of a Studio", *Studio Sound*, 25:9 (1983), p.58.

reporting in the industry press that they were preparing to become the "UK's first residential fully-digital studio",[55] a feat they seemed to have nearly achieved by 1987.[56] And yet this simple explanation of evolving technology masks the actual process, often painful, of the reality of change and obscures many of the factors that were actually involved in the process. Analysis of the trade press from the late 1970s onwards shows how the move towards digital sound was a period of confusion and worry for those in an industry that had seen other technological revolutions, such as quadraphonic sound in the 1970s, emerge and then falter. Firstly, digital arrived in the studio in a piecemeal fashion and the actual console was one of the last pieces in the digital jigsaw. This meant that studios were faced with the problem of mixing analogue and digital equipment and the industry's trade press noted that "we can confidently expect analogue consoles to remain in production for several years yet",[57] although they also showed their concern about the uncertainty of the future; "don't ask me how long 'several' is!"[58] As well as the question of compatibility between the different technologies, the issue of standardisation amongst those companies developing digital systems also caused headaches for the recording studio industry. Speaking in 1983, the chairman of the United States recording studios owners association (SPARS) noted the lack of agreement between three of the leading digital companies in imposing a digital standard, and at a time when the VHS/Betamax battle in the video recorder market was still fresh in people's memories:

> I was talking to 3M about the possibility (since we are finally starting to, apparently, get a standard with the announcement of Sony DASH) of going along with DASH at some future date…The answer I got, at a very high level, was 'I hope not'. So that means 3M will have a 'standard', other than DASH. Hopefully they will join Mitsubishi (who also plan not to go along with DASH) so that we can at least have some kind of 'alternative standardisation.'[59]

Whilst technology changed, but over a period of time and with resulting confusion and concern, other factors also moulded and shaped the demand for technical development in recording studios. As the 1970s had progressed, with multi-tracking prevalent and supergroups spending months perfecting their music to the smallest

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[55] *Studio Sound*, 28:6 (1986), p.28.
[56] "Yellow Two have announced the purchase of a Mitsubishi X850 multitrack, an X80 and a Sony F1 mixdown. These, combined with their V series Neve console, makes them the first fully-digital studio in the North of England", *Studio Sound*, 29:8 (1987), p.14.
[57] R. Elen, "Moving Towards Digital", *Studio Sound*, 25:8 (1983), p.3.
[58] R. Elen, "Moving Towards Digital", *Studio Sound*, 25:8 (1983), p.3.
[59] C. Stone, "The Digital Business", *Studio Sound*, 26:2 (1984), p.52.

detail, it had seemed that the recording process was destined to become more and more complicated. However, the arrival of punk music in 1976 meant that the precise, technologically-driven and slow recording process (Godley and Creme, for example, were often recording only one minute of their finished product per day when making their 1976 album, *Consequences*)[60] was challenged by a new generation of musicians who wanted to capture the raw energy of one-off performances rather than constructing songs layer by layer. For these artists, the less technology there was in the recording studio the better as there was the impression given that many of the established artists might be relying too much on the technological rather than their musical ability. This was actually acknowledged a few years later by Godley and Creme themselves when they noted "We were spoilt working in what Strawberry had become…You know there are certain pieces of equipment there that you can plug in to get certain sounds and I think that limits your ingenuity."[61]

Whilst punk might have been a relatively short-lived phenomenon, the next major phase in the music industry had a greater effect on the recording studio. The emergence of synthesised sound, allied with the computerised equipment on which to play and record it, not only influenced the musical landscape of the 1980s but also allowed the machinery needed for recording tracks, both in terms of size and amount, to shrink, thus making it more accessible to a wider range of professional and amateur musicians. It was the mass production and distribution of the digital synthesiser in the 1980s, though, that revolutionised music-making. For Mike Thorne, the emergence of the digital era marked "the final erosion of the traditional recording studio"[62] in that advancing instrument and personal computer technology was increasingly allowing music to be created and captured in smaller environments, such as the home. One of the major knock-on effects of this competition was that these studios now felt under greater pressure to keep up with the latest technical advances to give the impression of being at the forefront of technology. Whilst technology was allowing the recording of music to move away from the traditional recording studio, the studios themselves were focussing on their own technically-advanced equipment to sell themselves as superior to these new competitors, a point emphasised by one studio owner who noted "I hope everybody will recognise that

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[60] Booklet accompanying *Consequences*, CONS017 (Mercury Records), p.14.
[61] R. Denyer, "Godley and Creme", *Sound International*, October (1978), p.6.
[62] www.stereosociety.com/body_recordingstudio.html

you can only get consistently good results from producers and artists in a studio with the best and most professional acoustics and equipment. Otherwise you are taking a chance."[63] This perception of technology was becoming as important to the success of studios as the actual pieces of equipment themselves. For Strawberry owner Peter Tattersall it was essential that the studio was seen to be updating equipment regularly just for the impression of staying ahead of the competition ("we sometimes changed equipment just so we could say we were improving it")[64] and 10cc themselves often took the opportunity when touring to keep abreast of technical developments around the world; "At present, the Japanese music scene has little to offer its counterparts from the West other than rich pickings and innovative equipment – 10cc are speculating about introducing to Strawberry Studios a machine they saw at an audio fair in Tokyo."[65] Indeed, the emergence of Japanese companies into the music market, reflected in their growing influence in other areas of western industry (such as motor car manufacturing for example),[66] was an important feature of this period[67] and was an achievement described as "literally magnificent, beyond the pale of the West."[68] One of the leading players in the market, Sony, was a major innovator in the markets of both music producers and consumers. The success of Sony's Walkman, introduced in the late 1970s[69] was followed by the company's move into digital technology and Sony launched their initial foray into the market with the first digital processor for the studio (the PCM-1600) in 1978.

The difference between digital and analogue sound has allowed some of those desk suppliers who had given up at the end of the 1970s to return to the market and produce newer versions of their original works, encouraged by the demand for traditional desk production values and sounds from a new generation of musicians and studio owners. As Crispin Horsfield, Dick Swettenham's partner in Helios, noted in 2005, "I don't think that the custom approach is necessarily redundant even now",[70] emphasizing a possible return to the values of desk production that he and Dick Swettenham had been so successful at in the 1970s. This general growth of

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[63] P. Lewis, "Eden: The Birth of a Studio", *Studio Sound*, 25:9 (1983), p.58.
[64] Peter Tattersall, July 14th 2001.
[65] *Melody Maker*, October 29th 1977, p.27.
[66] M. Cusumano, *The Japanese Automobile Industry: Technology and Management at Nissan and Toyota*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies Harvard University, 1989).
[67] For a general discussion about the reasons for Japan's rise, see K. Koizumi, 'In Search of Wakon', *Technology and Culture*, 43:1 (2002), pp.29-49
[68] I. Inkster and F. Satofuka, *Culture and Technology in Modern Japan*, (London: Tauris, 2000), p.1.
[69] http://www.sony.net/Fun/SH/1-18/h4.html
[70] Crispin Horsfield, email, 19th August 2005.

nostalgia in modern society was noted by historian Raphael Samuel, who applied the term 'retrochic' to it and who noted that "the most remarkable example of this instant historicization is in the world of rock and pop, where the hunger for new sounds is only matched by the constancy with which older ones are recycled, re-invented and re-mixed."[71] The growing demand for analogue sound from the 1990s onwards and a reversal of the trend that had seen the vinyl record all but disappear in the face of competition from the compact disc and downloads[72] seems to be grounded in this nostalgia boom as shown by the demands of musicians[73] and the space devoted in the trade press offering advice on such issues.[74]

Using Technology

Whilst accepting the importance of technological development in the recording studio, of technology evolving not in isolation but through the interaction of many factors, it is also essential that any historical study investigates the practicalities of technology's placement, of its ergonomics and interaction with the human element in the studio. As technology does not progress in isolation, nor does it function in a vacuum. Technology's impact on those in the studio can be a study as much of its failings as well as of its successful progress (and, sometimes, the same piece of equipment can produce a study of both!) For instance, whilst producer Martin Hannett became attached to the design and layout of the Strawberry mixing desk, others found it less welcoming or helpful. Howard Devoto (of the pop group The Buzzcocks), for example, remembered working at Strawberry with Hannett as producer and highlighted the lack of space at the mixing desk when there were more than two people who wanted to have some control over the finished product:

> I remember the mixing desk being hexagonal or octagonal, with a wedge cut into it which had just enough space for two people; him (Hannett) and the engineer. So they had all the fades and all the twiddle knobs and y'know. Anybody else, it was like really difficult to get at it…it didn't work at Strawberry. We couldn't get there, we couldn't modify... I mean, I couldn't get at it to modify the levels, so it ended up being a little unsatisfactory to me.[75]

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[71] R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1994), p.89.
[72] Vinyl single sales April – June 2005 rose by 87.3% compared to the same period in 2004: (www.bpi.co.uk/index.asp?Page=news/stats/news_content_file_938.shtml).
[73] "I also want a very analogue sound…I would really like a genuine vintage synth to get a 'real' analogue sound", *Sound on Sound*, May (2005), www.soundonsound.com/sos/may05/articles/qa0505_1.htm
[74] *Sound on Sound*, February (2005) www.soundonsound.com/sos/feb05/articles/soundingoff.htm
[75] http://shotbybothsides.com/ig_20000423n.htm

For those recording in Strawberry, in particular those outside of the control room, studio technology was usually represented by individual pieces of equipment in the recording area and this, more often than not, included the microphone. Indeed, the importance of the studio microphones changed greatly over the period to a point where many of the synthetic sounds of the 1980s were fed directly into the sound mixer, thus negating the need for any microphone equipment at all. The importance of microphone placement with regard to the finished sound can be gauged from the way in which Eric Stewart described (in almost technical terms) the setting up of the microphones just for the drums during early 10cc sessions in Strawberry:

> We were very much into close-miking and very, very tight close drum sounds…Kevin Godley's oyster-shell Ludwig kit was miked with Neumann U87s overhead, a D12 in the bass drum, a Shure SM57 under the snare, a Neumann KM84 on the hi-hat also picking up some brightness off the snare to complement the thud of the 57, and all five tom-toms very closely miked...it sounded like everything was right next to you. There was no room around it. You were almost inside the kit itself.[76]

This arrangement of so many microphones around the individual drums (indeed, the fact that so many microphones were required in the first place), and the attention to detail with regard to the precision of placement, shows how important the technological equipment could be in the studio setting (see Figure 29).

Figure 29: Microphone arrangements in the early 1970s Strawberry[77]

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[76] R. Buskin, "Classic Tracks: 10cc I'm Not In Love", *Sound on Sound*, June (2005), www.soundonsound.com/sos/jun05/articles/classictracks.htm
[77] Author's Private Collection.

Whilst the recording area itself could be filled with speakers, microphones and bits of musical equipment, one of the more interesting features of recording technology, more so in the early days of the 1960s and 1970s, was that the space could also be filled with the equipment's intrusive wires and cables. Prior to the arrival of the cable management systems that became prevalent in the 1990s, the floor of the studio area could be cluttered and untidy, as the technology left its mark (see Figures 30 + 31). Peter Tattersall remembers that "care was often needed walking around the studio in the early days as there were a fair few wires to avoid tripping over."[78]

Figure 30: Wires and cables in Strawberry's recording area in the early 1970s[79]

Figure 31: Paul McCartney and Eric Stewart surrounded by wires and cables[80]

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[78] Peter Tattersall, July 14th 2001.
[79] Author's Private Collection.
[80] "Eric Stewart: from the Mindbenders to McCartney", *Club Sandwich*, 36 (1985), p.4.

As well as technology passively imposing its presence in the studio, it could also actively interplay with the human element as well. This happened especially in the 1970s when the production of tapes involved a lot more physical work than today's digital editing allows, as Lol Creme remembers when using Strawberry in 1976:

> In those days, the simple act of editing was a major thing. I remember laying out the tape on the floor, chopping it up with a razor blade and sticking it back together in any order we felt like. Play it back, see what you've got, develop it from there. Now it's three clicks on the mouse. But the painstaking bit was fun.[81]

But perhaps the greatest interaction between the human and technological elements in Strawberry's history came in 1975 when 10cc recorded their most famous song, *I'm Not In Love*.[82] Unsure of how to record the track, the band decided in the end to use vocals for the backing to the track instead of musical instruments, and ended up using the multi-track machine to record 48 vocals per note on the chromatic scale. The ingenious part of the process was to construct continuous tape loops of each of these notes so that they could be fed through the desk and bounced back to a new recorder and thus be used as backing vocals for the track. In 2005, Eric Stewart was asked to recall the process and noted that it involved a large amount of physical manipulation of tapes in the control room as well as musical prowess:

> I rigged up a rotary capstan on a mic stand, and tape loop had to be quite long because the splice edit point on the loop would go through the heads and there'd be a little blip each time it did. So, I had to make the loop as long as I could for it to take a long, long time to get around to the splice again. We're talking about a loop of 12 feet in length going around the tape heads, around the tape machine capstans, coming out away from the Studer stereo recorder to a little capstan on a mic stand that had to be dead in line vertically with the heads of the Studer. It was like one of those continuous belts that you see in old factories, running loads of machines, and we had to keep it rigid by putting some blocks on the mic stand legs to keep it dead, dead steady…Then all four of us manned the control desk, and each of us had three or four faders to work with. We moved the faders up and down and changed the chords of the 13 chromatic scale notes as the chords of the song changed…We knew we had something very, very special, very different.[83]

The whole bizarre process of recording these backing vocals took three weeks to complete but the effort was worth it as the song reached Number One in the UK charts and, as noted by the band's official biography in 2000, "continues to ride high in the all-time popularity polls, recently earning the group a citation from the

[81] www.othermachines.org/blint/lol.shtml
[82] Phonogram: 6008 014, 1975.
[83] R. Buskin, "Classic Tracks: 10cc I'm Not In Love", *Sound on Sound*, June (2005), www.soundonsound.com/sos/jun05/articles/classictracks.htm

American radio industry in recognition of three million airplays."[84] This interaction between the recording technology and musicians in the studio seems to have gradually disappeared as the 1980s arrived, in that newer technology allowed the same sort of sounds to be created via the instruments rather than through innovative use of recording equipment. In the mid-1980s, only ten years after 10cc had spent weeks creating *I'm Not In* Love, Lol Creme noticed the change that had taken place; "The technology is making people approach sound differently. They can take other people's noises and regurgitate them through the computer so you'd never know where they were from, and they're forming new music."[85] The arrival of the Fairlight, Synclavier, Ensoniq Mirage and other samplers, completely altered the process of music production from the 1980s onwards and changed the way in which the human element physically related to the technology.

The Gizmo

Figure 32: The Musitronics Gizmotron[86]

And yet, recording studios were not just sound laboratories, where an evolving technology, constantly being shaped by many factors, enabled the creation, capture and distribution of music to the consumers. Technology was not just something that was created outside of the studios to aid the recording process, for these very studios could also be the places where technology itself was born, nurtured and developed. In some cases, such as Les Paul's development of the multitrack tape recorder, the technology was successful and played a major part in the progression of popular music. In other cases, the technology failed and was destined to become just a footnote in music's history. Whilst many of the success stories have been studied, the failures have often been noted but never analysed too deeply. However, much can be learnt from investigating that technology which did not emerge and sustain itself

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[84] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World; The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press), 2000, p.xi.
[85] *Melody Maker*, April 27th 1985, p.35.
[86] www.beitec.com/stomp.htm

successfully, as shown by Latour's study of Aramis. In the same way, an analysis of Godley and Creme's Gizmo, a device born out of the work being done in Strawberry Studios in the 1970s, has, in spite of its failure, contributed greatly to this study of technology in the recording studio.

Recording studios, perhaps more so than anywhere else, were places where artistic talent and innovation met to create works of art. Whilst many of these works have been as a result of the innovations in the technical fields, from multi-tracking, through synthesisers, to sampling machines, there was a period in the 1960s and 1970s when such innovation came more through experimentation in the studio rather than through the availability of technology. It was in this period that 10cc, as owners of Strawberry Studios, had the luxury of time and space in which to take such experimentation as far as they could. The band members would often find themselves searching for alternative sounds instead of using conventional instruments. It was in this atmosphere during 10cc's early years that Godley and Creme decided to attempt to recreate the string sound of an orchestra, but by using an electric guitar instead of the more conventional Mellotron synthesiser. The apparent motivation behind this attempt was economic according to the record company, who declared that "unable to afford an orchestra for early 10cc albums, Creme and Godley conceived a guitar able to play violin sounds."[87] For the artists themselves, though, the Gizmo's development was more as a result of the attitude that was prevalent during 10cc's time in Strawberry, when they said "Because we had always worked on our own up in Strawberry…no one had ever told us what we *couldn't* do."[88] The actual experimentation process involved strapping a guitar to the studio wall and, as Godley remembers, "I got an electric drill and stuck an eraser on the drill bit and held it up to the guitar. We got this horrible noise but it gave us the idea that eventually became the Gizmo."[89] The idea that Godley and Creme were forming was for a device that would permanently bow individual guitar strings, through a series of powered small wheels, leaving the guitarist's hands free to play the instrument whilst the device sustained the notes. They managed to construct a working prototype themselves and actually used the device sparingly on their *Sheet Music*[90] album during 1973, with

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[87] Booklet accompanying *Consequences*, CONS017 (Mercury Records), p.16.
[88] G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura, 1976), p.114.
[89] R. Clay, "Godley and Creme's Gizmo", *Device: The Newsletter for the Electronic Guitarist/Musician*, 1:2 (1979), p.12.
[90] *Sheet Music* (UK Records, 1974, UKAL1007).

the b-side to the *Wall Street Shuffle*[91] single from that LP being a showcase for the invention, titled *Gizmo My Way*.

Whilst Godley and Creme had managed to construct a partially-working model of the Gizmo, they realised that, as with many inventions, they needed the authority that came with expert advice, legitimate recognition of their idea and a plan to commercially distribute a production model of their new device. In an attempt to move on from their prototype, the pair approached the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) Industrial Liaison Bureau (the first set up in the UK[92] in an attempt to link the academic world with both industry and with those needing technical help) and were put in touch with John McConnell and Martin Jones from the Applied Physics Unit (see Figure 33) which had been created to "assist small local firms who do not have their own research personnel but who could benefit from time to time by making use of assistance from the UMIST Physics Department."[93]

Figure 33: (l-r) McConnell, Jones, Creme + Godley at UMIST[94]

Interestingly, such a liaison between industry and academia is one of the areas highlighted by Pickstone in his analysis of how science and technology have evolved

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[91] *Wall Street Shuffle / Gizmo My Way* (UK Records, 1974, UK69).
[92] www.hero.ac.uk/uk/universities___colleges/north_west/umist.cfm
[93] UMIST Applied Physics Unit Promotional Leaflet, Courtesy of Dr Martin Jones.
[94] Courtesy of Dr Martin Jones.

in the UK; "we gain more by recognising the dense interweavings of universities and industry, and of science and technology, than we do by trying to separate them."[95] For Martin Jones, the ability to work with industry was one of UMIST's key missions and he noted in 2007 that such interaction kept their teaching "grounded in commercial reality and also encouraged business enthusiasm to finance some of the more heavyweight research."[96] On a personal level, as well as being paid £135 out of the total £561.50 charged by UMIST (see appendices 7, 8 and 9), Jones' involvement with the Gizmo (and visits to Strawberry) stimulated his interest in that particular field. In 1976 he left academia having successfully applied for the position of Technical Director at Rupert Neve Limited, where he worked on audio technology for the next ten years. For Godley and Creme, the link with UMIST allowed them to supplement their ideas with engineering knowledge ("they had all this mechanical equipment there, and they gave us information on how to approach things…such as the use of lathes and the like")[97] and thus produce a more robust prototype model. At the same time, legitimacy for the project came with a British patent application in April 1973 (application number 19760/73) and the subsequent granting of the patent (number 1 426 203) in 1976 (see Figure 34), with the American patent (3,882,754) granted one year earlier in 1975. For the Gizmo's inventors, the involvement of academics and the approval signified by the issue of patents added weight to the project that they felt may have been missing because of their non-science background; "We weren't into mechanical things at all, we were writers up until then."[98]

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[95] J. Pickstone, *Ways of Knowing*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.163.
[96] Martin Jones, email, October 31st 2007.
[97] R. Clay, "Gizmo", *Device: The Newsletter for the Electronic Guitarist/Musician*, 1:2 (1979), p.13.
[98] R. Clay, "Gizmo", *Device: The Newsletter for the Electronic Guitarist/Musician*, 1:2 (1979), p.12.
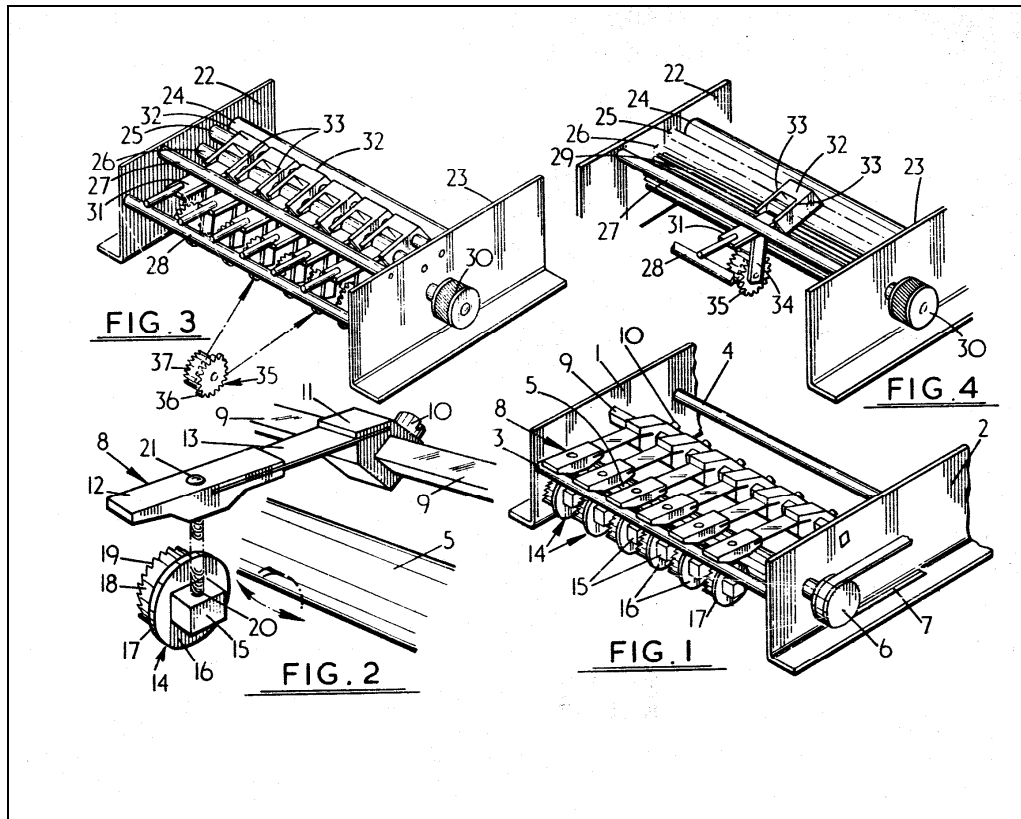
Figure 34: The Drawings from the UK Patent for the Gizmo[99]

By 1976, Godley and Creme were devoting more and more time to their new invention, having used it on 10cc albums and live on stage, and decided to record a proper three-minute demonstration track to highlight the potential of the Gizmo. McConnell and Jones had produced a more stable prototype that the duo took into Strawberry to use and, with the other members of 10cc waiting at Strawberry Studios South for them to return to the band, they produced the track. The final piece in the Gizmo jigsaw had already been laid when Godley and Creme had visited America with 10cc earlier in the year and had agreed a deal with the Musitronics firm to produce the Gizmo once it was ready (although, it was to be marketed as the 'Gizmotron'). With the idea firmed up and a producer ready, the pair of musicians decided that the potential of the Gizmo was too great to limit to a short record and they shocked the music world by taking the decision to leave 10cc and concentrate on recording an entire album of Gizmo material instead (see Figure 35).

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[99] UK Patent, 1,426, 203, (1976).

Figure 35: Godley and Creme's decision to leave 10cc hits the music press[100]

Using Strawberry in Stockport at night time (to allow for paying customers during the day) they began the mammoth and time-consuming process of producing what was to become a triple-album (with a Peter Cook drama thrown in for good measure) about the forces of nature fighting back against the human race. The actual recording of *Consequences* at Strawberry showed not only the range of sounds that the Gizmo could achieve, but also how the human interaction with other technology could produce innovative and exciting art. For example, in contrast to the more passive microphone arrangements seen in the Studio in earlier years, Godley and Creme fitted Sennheiser microphones to a dummy's head and placed it under a board of wood at the bottom of Strawberry's cellar steps. Godley then shovelled sand from above to recreate the sound of a burial (see Figure 36).

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[100] *Rock Star*, December 27th 1976, p.1.

Figure 36: Recording the 'Burial' at Strawberry[101]

The same microphone head was also placed on a pole and carried through the streets of Stockport to produce an authentic recording of street sounds. A dripping tap was bits of plasticine being dropped into a bucket of water whilst the sound of a tidal wave was hundreds of buckets of water being thrown at Strawberry's walls. To get an unusual fire sound, Godley and Creme used a piece of equipment called a Kepex (a 'sound gate' on the desk which could be programmed to only allow certain sounds through to be recorded). The duo recorded the sound of polystyrene being burst and popped along with the Gizmo music and then ensured that the Kepex only allowed the music to be recorded when it picked up the sounds of the polystyrene, thus producing a prickly, fire-related, noise. Getting the Gizmo to sound like a saxophone saw the pair playing Gizmo notes through a speaker and, from there, down a rubber hose which was covered at one end by a piece of perforated cigarette paper. The pressure of the sound going through the paper made the rasping noise reminiscent of a saxophone. Indeed, many ideas were tried in the Studio and then discarded but the effort that Godley and Creme put into recording the album showed their commitment

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[101] Booklet accompanying *Consequences*, CONS017 (Mercury Records), p.17.

to developing sound through the innovative use of technology. As Creme noted after recording had finished, "There is a story behind every single note on that album."[102]

And yet, in spite of the technical achievement of *Consequences* and the potential of the Gizmo, both the album and the device itself failed to take hold. The failure of *Consequences* is not hard to explain, as it was released exactly at the same time as the punk explosion was challenging the pompous, overblown excesses of the previous generation's music and a triple concept album (with an estimated budget of £500,000),[103] including both music and dialogue, selling at the comparatively high price of twelve pounds, was a prime target for derision. As Godley noted years later:

> It was instantly invalidated. We'd lost touch. We'd believed in our own myth, not that there was one for anyone but ourselves. We'd submerged ourselves in the womb of the studio, at vast expense, to come out with some amazing pieces of art and we lost the plot. We'd been overtaken by events. Looking back, there were some interesting things on that album, but not six sides worth! Not enough to warrant the amount of effort and expense that went into it.[104]

Interestingly, Godley's reference to the duo submerging themselves in the recording studio suggests a perceived physical separation of time in the studio from other aspects of everyday life, with hints of the physical discomfort and danger associated with being submerged under water. The reference to the 'womb of the studio' (a metaphor that Godley used on more than one occasion),[105] as well as reinforcing the notion of being cocooned from the outside world, also produces connotations of the creation and birth of some new entity, in this instance, presumably, the *Consequences* album. The failure of the Gizmo itself, though, after the time, energy and money that Godley and Creme had put into the project, was a bitter blow. On the face of it, its success seemed assured as other artists, such as Paul McCartney (see Figure 37), Phil Manzanera (Roxy Music), Jimmy Page, Todd Rundgren and Justin Hayward (Moody Blues), began to use the device on their own records.

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[102] *Melody Maker*, September 24th 1977, p.45.
[103] *Variety*, October 19th 1977, p.217.
[104] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press), 2000, p.191.
[105] "We were in this womb-like situation", *Uncut*, March 1988, (www.othermachines.org/blint/kev.shtml)
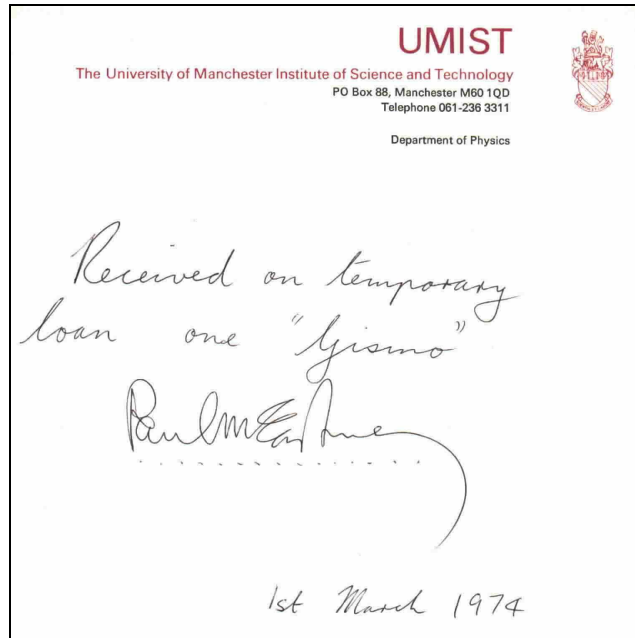
Figure 37: McCartney's receipt for the loan of a Gizmo[106]

Indeed, Musitronics were so sure of the Gizmo's future success, that they sold their company to devote all their time to its production under the new name of Gizmo Inc. However, transferring an idea, or even a prototype, into a fully-working, commercially-available technological model proved to be the downfall of the Gizmo, as Mike Beigel and Aaron Newman, the founders of Musitronics have since noted:

> It was too difficult to make a good Gizmotron…you could make one if you diddled with it long enough, but you couldn't make them in production. It had these teeth that plucked the strings, but that created problems with subharmonics. The thing had a pitch of its own. We'd build them and ship them, then decide there was a problem, recall them and ship them again. We had tons of orders. If the product would have really worked, we could have made a fortune.[107]

At the same time, alternative technologies were encroaching on the Gizmo's potential market and, one of these, the EBow[108] began to thrive, magnifying the problems and failure of the Gizmo. The EBow, initially developed in the late 1960s and commercially produced in the mid-1970s, differed from the Gizmo in that the device was hand-held in place of the pick and used an energy field to vibrate the strings rather than having them mechanically bowed as in the Gizmo's case (see Figure 38).

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[106] Courtesy Dr Martin Jones.

[107] C. Gill, "The Stomping Ground: Musitronics, Mu-tron and the Gizmotron", *Vintage Guitar Magazine*, 12:11 (1997), p.123.

[108] www.ebow.com/ebow/brochure.htm

Figure 38: The EBow in operation[109]

The EBow seemed to possess a number of advantages over the Gizmo; Firstly, it was portable whereas the Gizmo had to be physically mounted onto the guitar, meaning that it took some time to install and, once complete, the instrument could not be used for any other purpose. Secondly, the EBow did not have to rely on the mechanical bowing of the guitar strings and did not, therefore, encounter the problems of breaking strings and worn wheels that the Gizmo ran into. Finally, whereas the EBow was powered by battery, the Gizmo needed an external power source and this meant that the player was tied to the location of a power socket and had to have a trailing power cable along with the other guitar leads. However, the final straw for the Gizmo technology was nothing to do with the application of the technology itself but came about when Newman suffered a massive heart attack in February 1980 and, with one of the main driving forces sidelined and further technical problems being discovered ("We discovered that if we made them during the winter, they wouldn't work properly in hot weather…it was the characteristics of the plastics, and none of us were plastics engineers"),[110] Gizmo Inc. was closed down with only a couple of

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[109] www.amptone.com/heetsoundplusebow.htm
[110] www.beitec.com/stomp.htm

hundred of the devices ever actually produced. The Gizmo, an idea born out of Godley and Creme's innovative minds and stubborn do-it-yourself attitude, was finally killed by external factors, some of them technical and others not, over which they had little or no control.

In contrast to Aramis's long and stuttering journey, Godley and Creme's simple idea of a machine that could permanently bow the guitar string in order to create new sounds moved relatively smoothly from the drawing board, through prototype, to full (albeit small-scale and limited) production. And yet, history has labelled the Gizmo a technological failure, overtaken by more robust competitors, superceded by superior digital technology and promoted on a triple album that, by 10cc's previous standards, was a failure, "spending one week at No.52 before dropping like a stone",[111] and uniting the critics in their disapproval; "Simply put, *Consequences* is a disaster: its humor is labored, its musical content is dull and the mind-numbing length of the album prove that neither Godley nor Creme knew when to quit."[112] And yet, for Latour, technology's success was not necessarily based on its continuing existence or commercial viability but in the hope that any technological failure might eventually produce a positive outcome; "It would be good for educating the public, for getting people to understand, getting them to love technologies…"[113] For Godley and Creme, the process of turning their idea into a working reality was a journey that, in spite of the problems along the way, was an experience that they both enjoyed. For each inventor, the success of the Gizmo was grounded in the actual process of developing and using the device. In Kevin Godley's case, it was the physical process of experimentation that he now remembers and emphasises; "It was a very physical process but it was great fun. We were constantly pushing the process, pushing ourselves and the equipment further than it was designed to go."[114] This was true for Lol Creme too and he echoed Latour's thoughts when declaring the whole process to be an enjoyable education; "I loved doing it so much and I learned so much, got so much out of it…to me it's the doing of something that's the vibe, it's not necessarily the result."[115]

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[111] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press), 2000, p.190.
[112] www.livedaily.com/artists/discography/album/R%20%20%2039062.html
[113] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.298.
[114] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press), 2000, p.86.
[115] *Uncut*, March 1988 (www.othermachines.org/blint/lol.shtml).

Conclusion

> The technical development of Strawberry Studios North has been equally impressive. From the early 4 track days of Hotlegs' hit Neanderthal Man it has progressed through its present day 24 track Westlake/Eastlake-designed facility.[116]

As well as the public perception of the importance of technology in the recording studio, the above quote, taken from Strawberry's own promotional brochure, emphasises the status that studios themselves attached to technological development when promoting their services to the outside world. Whilst few observers could fail to be impressed by this application of technology in the recording studio, the development of Strawberry Studios shows that, for the historian, the evolution of equipment is just one factor amongst many that has contributed towards the changes in the technology housed in the Studio. Whilst evolving technology might have allowed Strawberry's equipment to mutate and change over the years, it was also a combination of other factors, such as the requirements of the owners, the demands of the Studio's customers and the prevailing trends and economics of the music industry generally, that influenced and shaped the Studio's technical capability. Consequently, human qualities, such as attitude, expectation, understanding, extravagance, caution, excitement and endeavour become just as important to technology's story as the capture of soundwaves, the development of capacitors or busses and the understanding of digital pulses. Additionally, technology's interaction with its environment, its placement and the extent to which it affected others using that same space, were also key factors in the changing perception of technology over time. The development of the Gizmo in Strawberry has also shown how recording studios, as well as simply housing equipment, might become technological incubators too, places where technological notions could be born and develop from simple idea and then either be discarded or become physical reality.

This study of Strawberry has also shown how the historical investigation of technology, often thought of as a detailed analysis of science and scientific theory, can often result in a more conventional search for the traces of technology. For example, Strawberry's mixing desks, advanced and state-of-the-art at the time, have now been mainly broken up and either dispersed geographically or destroyed. Some equipment has ended up locally ("a lot of local studios have been getting rid of their

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[116] Strawberry Recording Studios North Publicity Brochure, 1983 (Author's Private Collection).

old analogue equipment and they [Suite 16 Studios, Rochdale] have been buying it up so you've got virtually the heart of Strawberry in here as well")[117] whilst other components have turned up further afield, (Figure 39 shows two modules from Strawberry's red Helios desk that were purchased in 2002 in the United States).

Figure 39: Helios EQ/mic preamp modules[118]

Indeed, the development of the Audities Foundation[119] in Canada, a collection of over 150 pieces of outdated electronic musical equipment (including recording technology) which have been restored and housed in a working studio, shows how this process of technological dispersal might be reversed. The original hope of the Collections' founder, David Kean, was that "the artifacts could play a vital role in the artistic and instrument-making communities in years to come"[120] and the Foundation's current mission statement is "the preservation of electronic musical instruments and associated documentation for use in museums, recording studios, modern instrument research and new music/dance/film works."[121] Interestingly, in 2006, Kean managed to acquire Strawberry's original early 1970s Helios desk and, with advice from Eric Stewart, set about restoring it.

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[117] www.webinfo.co.uk/crackedmachine/dumb.htm
[118] Russ Elevado, email, August 6th 2002.
[119] www.audities.org/audities/index.html
[120] N. Strauss, "The Pop Life: An Archive of Oddities", *The New York Times*, October 1st 1998, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9800E6D71638F932A35753C1A96E958260
[121] www.audities.org/audities/index.html

But where the technology itself has disappeared for good, the historian can now only find its traces in memories, or in the more traditional paper-based archives such as drawings or photographs.[122] For example, Figure 40 shows the photograph taken by Formula Sound of the console they built for Strawberry Recording Studios South in 1976, a desk that no longer physically exists, but still remains as a result of the recollections of those who used it or because of this photographic evidence.

Figure 40: Strawberry Studios South Desk[123]

And, finally, Latour has shown that the historical analysis of Strawberry Recording Studios should not rest solely with the analysis of studio technology. His emphasis on the inclusion of all the actors involved in studying the history of technology should also apply more generally to the Studio's development over the years. Human actors (the people working and recording in the studio) and inanimate objects (the building, its location and design) need to be investigated as well so that their interaction with each other, and with the technology, can also be studied.

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[122] For an analysis of the role played by photographs in the historian's work, see R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1994), Part V – Old Photographs.
[123] Courtesy of Tony Cockell, Formula Sound Ltd.

Chapter 5: The Human Element

> Most sociologists have overlooked the mass-culture industries as work settings; they have preferred to focus on the media content rather than on its employees, or on the art of popular entertainment rather than on the artists, performers and technicians who shape it.[1]

Having shown the importance of technology, the introduction of the "soft…adventures of poor humans"[2] into this investigation permits a contrast to the "hard and cold"[3] elements that many other studies of technology have preferred to focus on. Whilst Latour exhorted humanists to recognise the machines around them as "cultural objects worthy of their attention and respect",[4] he also addressed the need for those who study science to recognise the importance of taking into account "the mass of human beings with all their passions and politics and pitiful calculations."[5] However, infusing the human factor into this study does not just simply mean providing a list of those artists who recorded in particular studios (as favoured in many conventional narratives) but must also relate the actual day-to-day experiences of the artists and those others who worked in the studios too, such as the producers, engineers and other personnel.

The importance of the human element in the study of industry, noted by psychologist Benjamin Schneider when he said that "organizations are the people in them…the people make the place,"[6] has been further reinforced by a broad spectrum of those across the wider music industry, whether talking about studios themselves or referring to other parts of the sector. For instance, studio equipment designer Rupert Neve was quoted as saying "a business is never better than its people"[7] whilst musician Gary Barlow recently noted that he was keen to change record labels after many years as none of the people from the original company were left ("It's the people you deal with that make a label what it is.")[8] In the recording studio environment, the importance of the personnel was emphasised by a wide range of professionals, from members of established bands like the Rolling Stones ("in theory,

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[1] R. Faulkner, *Hollywood Studio Musicians: Their Work and Careers in the Recording Industry*, (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1971), pp.3-4.

[2] B. Latour, "Acceptance", *Science, Technology &Human Values*, 18:3 (1993), p.387.

[3] B. Latour, "Acceptance", *Science, Technology &Human Values*, 18:3 (1993), p.387.

[4] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.viii.

[5] B. Latour, *Aramis or The Love of Technology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.viii.

[6] B. Schneider, "The People Make the Place", *Personnel Psychology*, 40:3 (1987), p.450.

[7] R. Elen, "Thanks for 25 Years", *Studio Sound*, April (1984), p.97.

[8] G. Barlow (with R. Havers), *My Take*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p.260.

you can make a record anywhere as long as you've got the right guy to do it with…")[9] to respected producer George Martin:

> It's people that make it work, not technology. If you get the right people, you'll be OK. You can have the best gear in the world, but unless you've got a really good person dealing with it - and dealing with the client, of course - it doesn't mean a thing.[10]

This approach was confirmed by others as well; in the early 1990s, one commentator offering advice on how studios might be successful noted that "expertise, rather than equipment is what the modern commercial studio must sell in order to survive."**[11]** Those connected with Strawberry, too, emphasized the importance of people within the studio setting; when Eric Stewart worked with Abba's Agnetha in the mid-1980s (at a European studio) he made particular reference to the ambience produced by "everybody who works here, not just in the control room; the people in the office, the girls at the front desk. It's just a very good and happy team"[12] whilst Peter Tattersall, when looking back in the late 1990s at the Stockport studio's successful era, declared "Strawberry wasn't a building, it was the people and the talent inside it."[13]

In 2003, Cogan and Clark, in their study of the great American recording studios, were happy to call such places "temples of sound",[14] with inferences of reverence, worship, inspiration and a reinforcement of the magical[15] aura that, still today, surrounds the activities of those within the recording studio. However, although one might expect the studio staff to talk of their labour and the artists to emphasise the more creative nature of the studio, this chapter will highlight alternative narratives that instead link the artists with the effort and graft utilized in the construction of their music and the studio staff with a seemingly passive acceptance of the work involved. Such a linkage between art and industry is not just restricted to the production of music, though, and has also been seen in other creative areas. For example, the Baltic Arts Centre, which opened in 2002 in Gateshead (in a disused

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[9] D. Loewenstein & P. Dodd, *According to the Rolling Stones*, (London: Phoenix, 2004), p.184.
[10] www.recordproduction.com/sir_george_martin.htm
[11] A. di Perna, "Confab Explores Ways to Rise Above Slump", *Billboard*, February 22nd 1992, p.61.
[12] http://abbamikory.blogs.com/abbamikory/2005/10/agnetha_in_the_.html
[13] *Headline Hustler*, 7 (1997), p.16.
[14] J. Cogan and W Clark, *Temples of Sound: Inside the Great Recording Studios*, (London: Chronicle Books, 2003), p.11.
[15] P. Clarke, "'A Magic Science': Rock Music as a Recording Art", *Popular Music*, 3 (1983), pp.195-213.

flour mill),[16] was, according to its Director, the creation of an "art factory"[17] where "studios as well as exhibition spaces"[18] were created in order to ensure that the audience might recognise the importance of "making art"[19] as opposed to 'creating' it. However, in contrast to the painter or sculptor who usually preferred the solitude and isolation offered by his or her studio for creative inspiration, this study will show recording studios to be more akin to the film or television studios, where the artists combined and interacted with a support workforce in order to create the finished product. Whereas such recognition of the work of the studio staff may not always have reached the same levels of appreciation that was awarded to the artists themselves, some in the industry have specifically acknowledged their support; In 1984, Doug Hopkins of Advision Studio said "I have always maintained that the people who work in the studio – the staff – are actually more important than the clients"[20] and, today, attempts are being made in other historical studies to recognise these contributions and to archive the recollections of the support staff who worked in recording studios.[21]

Traditionally, the historical studies of British industrial life have tended to concentrate on the more precise division of the human element into such collective headings as 'employers' or 'employees' and the conflict between them. Studies of the Twentieth Century British motor car industry, for instance, often analyse the failures of 'management' to challenge the productivity of the 'workers' and the power of the 'unions' but rarely venture down to the shop-floor level for the opinions and thoughts of the workers themselves.[22] Another example, and one that is closer to the subject matter of this study, is Porter's study of the Elstree film studios between 1945 and 1961[23] which concentrates on matters in the boardroom rather than on events at studio floor level. Often in these cases, it is only strikes or disputes that allow the feelings and thoughts of the workforce to surface and such instances do not

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[16] *The Independent*, July 11th 2002, p.5.
[17] A. Wulf, "Man About the Art House", *Architects' Journal*, 216:5 (1-8 August 2002), p.17.
[18] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2123179.stm
[19] A. Wulf, "Man About the Art House", *Architects' Journal*, 216:5 (1-8 August 2002), p.17.
[20] T. Leigh-Smith, "The View From the Top", *Studio Sound*, May (1984), pp.44-5.
[21] "Kicking off EMI's new Oral History Project by focussing on 75 years of Abbey Road staff, EMI's Heritage Archivist is looking for ex-EMI employees to interview", *APRS Bulletin*, Autumn (2006), p.1.
[22] For example, T. Donnelly and D. Thoms, "Trade Unions, Management and the Search for Production in the Coventry Motor Car Industry, 1939-75", *Business History*, 31:2 (1989), pp.98-113, encapsulates the general arguments.
[23] V. Porter, "All Change at Elstree: Warner Bros., ABPC and British Film Policy, 1945-1961", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 21: March (2001), pp.5-35.

necessarily represent the typical experiences of those working in the factories. This, as Hedges and Beynon have pointed out in their photographic study of British factory life in the late 1970s, leads to a situation where the public know little about life in the factories, "of the jobs that women and men do while they work there, the conditions and stresses they endure…the ambiguity and ambivalence they feel towards the work they perform."[24] The recording studio, however, will be shown to have boundaries that are much more blurred and fluid than the traditional British industries, with more emphasis on teamwork and the role of 'artist' and 'worker' overlapping on a number of occasions.

Placing emphasis on the industry of the recording studio, and, in particular, the more in-depth analysis of the day-to-day activities of those located within the workplace, ties the study in to a number of other historical investigations. John Bodnar, for instance, interviewed a number of the key proponents in the American Studebaker Corporation automobile plant and then constructed an analysis of the worker-management situation in the factory (as well as suggesting a number of conclusions about the pros and cons of relying on personal memories.)[25] Additionally, the work of Huw Beynon, from the late 1960s onwards, took such analysis further and emphasised the importance of placing the workers' labour factors into the context of their lives as a whole by studying the "individual's total experience."[26] In order to achieve this, Beynon entered the workplace in order to interact and immerse himself in the workers' world, to gauge their reactions, hopes and fears, and to highlight the "fluency of people's lives."[27] The main factors that he noted as being of interest included worker expectations, friendships, supervision, grievances, management, relationship with technology and overall job satisfaction. In his study of the Ford factory at Halewood, Beynon came to the conclusion that the workers were not as interested in the class struggle that took disputes out of the factory gates than in the daily experiences and the day-to-day struggles they faced in order to ensure a certain quality of life for them and their families. As one worker told Beynon, "I just can't afford to think about things like that. If we thought about that we'd go crazy."[28] This

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[24] N. Hedges and H. Beynon, *Born To Work: Images of Factory Life*, (London: Pluto Press, 1982), p.8.
[25] J. Bodnar, "Power and Memory in Oral History: Workers and Managers at Studebaker", *Journal of American History*, 75: March (1989), pp.1201-1221.
[26] H. Beynon and R. Blackburn, *Perceptions of Work: Variations Within a Factory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.4.
[27] H. Beynon, *Working for Ford*, (London: EP Publishing, 1978), p.14.
[28] H. Beynon, *Working for Ford*, (London: EP Publishing, 1978), p.319.

approach, emphasising the human experience in the recording studio, echoes the rise of *Alltagsgeschichte* (or the history of everyday life) that evolved in West Germany in the 1970s in which stress was placed on the "historical analysis…of those who have remained largely anonymous in history – the 'nameless' multitudes in their workaday trials and tribulations."[29] However, whilst care has been taken to ensure that the concentration on what might be termed 'minutiae' during the current research has not ignored "the wider context in which the described events and experiences were taking place",[30] it has allowed for the human characteristics to be emphasized and mapped onto the human presence in the recording studio.

However, the emphasis of 'industry' over 'creativity' in this study (with a concentration on workplace relationships, developing roles, day-to-day activities and the mapping of human characteristics onto the studio experience) should not be seen as a denial of the importance of the artists or of their art. More often than not, the production of music has relied on the skill and creativity of those performing or producing it and the recording studio has been an integral part of this creative process. What is clear though is that the intensity, insularity and yet also exhilarating nature of the recording studio, possibly unique in the world of artistic creation, could have a profound affect all those working in it. One artist, Sting, referred to the studio as a "bohemian jumble"[31] whilst another, Midge Ure (of Ultravox), remembers that the decision to seclude themselves in a German studio for three months to write and record an album had a profound affect on their music; "We ended up with a good but incredibly dark album…Not surprising really. Imagine the state of our heads, having lived for three months in the German countryside."[32]

The Industrious Human

By the time it was fully established in the mid 1970s, Strawberry Recording Studios had already forged a strong connection with the 'industry' of music production and this would be further reinforced by the close relationship the Studio had with Factory Records in the 1980s (and which will be investigated in the next chapter). Strawberry's earliest development, in the late 1960s, was based on the almost

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[29] A. Lutdke, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Way of Life*, (Translated by W. Templer), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.4.
[30] O. Bartov, "Time Present and Time Past: The Historikerstreit and German Reunification", *New German Critique*, 55: Winter (1992), p.185.
[31] Sting, *Broken Music: A Memoir*, (London: Pocket Books, 2004), p.293.
[32] M. Ure, *If I Was…*, (London: Virgin Books, 2004), p.115.

production-line techniques of the founders' work with Kasenetz-Katz (see page 35) in which Graham Gouldman would sit in an office in New York writing songs from 9am to 5pm and the resident musicians in Strawberry would then "churn out…like a machine"[33] numerous records which were ultimately released under a variety of pseudonyms. Indeed, when these house-musicians became 10cc in the early 1970s there will still those who accused the band of producing records that were "jigsawed together with the emotionless precision of a Ford Motors' construction line"[34] and Gouldman himself, looking back in 2007, described the process as "almost like an American corporate thing: What did *you* do for 10cc today? Every day you must do something."[35] This emphasis of 'industry' over 'creativity' in the recording studio can also be seen in the recollections of a number of other artists and staff from across the period being studied and has produced two opposing narratives based on the notion of work in the studio.

Speed

The first of these narratives relates to the speed and intensity of work, particularly from the point of view of the artist. In the 1960s, for instance, the musicians' work had to be completed as quickly as possible with the minimum of fuss and, as a result, recording sessions were often tense affairs. From the producers' point of view, pressure was placed by the record companies to record the songs in as short a space of time as possible, as seen in this comment from Peter Sullivan who was responsible for producing Tom Jones in the 1960s; "We'd work from two to six in the afternoon and seven to ten in the evening, with thirty minutes overtime. If I started running over, I'd get hit up by the label."[36] In turn, this pressure transmitted itself to the artists and, as Eric Stewart noted when looking back at his Mindbenders days, this meant that there was little room for anything other than straightforward run-throughs of their material; "The Mindbenders usually had 2 days to record their albums in the London studios but the songs were all well rehearsed and we didn't experiment much in the studios then so it was possible to do it in 2 days."[37] Sessions were strictly timed and the studios closed late in the evenings (much as offices and other places of work would do) and late night recording was rare. Artists were, in effect, simply

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[33] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.41.

[34] "Stunning 10cc – Daredevils of Rock", *Melody Maker*, January 10th 1976, p.23.

[35] P. du Noyer, "Life Is A Minestrone", *The Word*, 49: March (2007), p.69.

[36] R. Eggar, *Tom Jones: The Biography*, (London: Headline, 2000), p.99.

[37] www.ericstewart.uk.com/questions1.htm

recreating their performances directly onto record and the art was contained in this rather than in any creative use of the technology to manipulate or alter the sounds.

Interestingly, the same work-ethic surfaced again in the late 1970s when a new younger breed of artist arrived on the scene who felt that the studio practices that had developed had been stifling creativity and impeding spontaneity. For sociologist Simon Frith, this emerging punk movement was mainly based on the conflict between "the 'raw' (lyrics constructed around simple syllables, a three-chord lack of technique, a 'primitive' beat, spontaneous performance) versus the 'cooked' (rock poetry, virtuosity, technical complexity, big studio production)"[38] and specifically the artists' desire to return to the immediate capture of raw sound that had been evident in the 1960s. They thought that the construction of songs and layering of music was the opposite of how music should be and, as a result, they altered their approach to studio work. One such punk band, Peter and the Test Tube Babies, have vivid memories of the recording process for their 1985 album *The Loud Blaring Punk Rock LP*[39] and, as well as the references to drink and drugs, particularly emphasise the speed with which not just the music was recorded but with which the whole process was completed:

> We started rehearsing at ten in the morning and by four in the afternoon we'd bashed out 18 songs, we then had a few hours break in the pub. At about 6PM we moved all the gear up the corridor from the rehearsal studios to the recording studio and from 6PM till Midnight we recorded the whole album! During this time a hell of a lot of speed and booze was consumed as you can imagine! Trapper had flu or something and left around 9PM so Del played bass on a lot of songs, Walnut also done some guitaring and the backing vocals were done by Ogs, Del, myself, Walnut and a friend of ours Guy. After a bit of a break, Me, Del and the engineer started mixing the album at about 2AM. We finished about 6AM and that was it, a whole 18 track album written, rehearsed, recorded and mixed in less than 24 hours. [40]

Extending Time

The arrival of the multitracking technology in the late 1960s and early 1970s onwards, though, changed the way in which the functional aspect of the work was perceived by those in the studio and this has produced a second narrative of studio work that is the opposite of the first. Many musicians of this era now began to talk about using the extra tracks available to them to add layers of sound with individual

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[38] S. Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll*, (London: Constable, 1987), pp.158-9.
[39] Hairy Pie Records HP1, 1985.
[40] www.testtubebabies.co.uk/discography/discography05.htm

instruments recorded separately and then fused together in the final mixing stage. Midge Ure's analysis of the work in the studio with his producer in the 1980s, for example, provides an interesting contrast to the approach taken by Peter and the Test Tube Babies shown above. For Ure, the whole process was much more complex and elaborate with songs now being constructed rather than performed; "It was really interesting to see how Phil worked, using double and triple-tracking, doing vocals in higher octaves to fill out the sound. In reality the song was like making aural wallpaper."[41] This change in how music was recorded meant that artists were now looking for a more flexible time framework so that they might feel less inhibited during the recording process. Keith Richards, of the Rolling Stones, favoured the more relaxed approach of the increasing number of independent studios for just this reason as his main memory of the record company studios was of "guys in brown coats walking around with stopwatches."[42] Gradually, the time limits on sessions that had been prevalent in the 1960s were being eroded and night-time recording became more commonplace. Artists could now expand their music and spend more time filling gaps with extra instruments and vocals and, as a result, the finished product that had taken hours or, at most, a couple of days to record previously, was now extending to weeks and months. This length of time being spent in the studio almost became a matter of pride and became associated with the artists' search for musical perfection. The Beatles had been one of the first bands to signify this change in approach and they went from recording their first album in a single day to spending four months making *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*[43] in 1967.[44] 10cc, when recording their fourth album, *How Dare You*[45] in Strawberry took 10 weeks to finish ("a lot longer than most of the band's contemporaries")[46] whilst "a Californian group called Love once had to record a song over 60 times because the drummer was unable to keep pace with the frantic rhythm of the number for its full two and a half minutes."[47]

This move away from time-restricted sessions towards more relaxed recording hours was particularly evident in the independent studio sector as seen in the approach

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[41] M. Ure, *If I Was…*, (London: Virgin Books, 2004), p.32.

[42] D. Loewenstein & P. Dodd, *According to the Rolling Stones*, (London: Phoenix, 2004), p.69.

[43] The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, 1967 Parlophone (PMC7027).

[44] P. Martland, *Since Records Began: EMI, The First 100 Years*, (London: Batsford, 1997), p.321.

[45] 10cc, *How Dare You*, 1976 Phonogram (9102 501).

[46] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.135.

[47] M. Cable, *The Pop Industry Inside Out*, (London: W H Allen + Co., 1977), p.76.

taken by Strawberry. As Eric Stewart noted in 1974, one of the fundamental criteria behind the Studio was to contrast the approach he had encountered in the 1960s London studios and to emphasise the importance of there being "no bad atmosphere, no clocks and no clock watchers"[48], a point he reinforced in the late 1980s when he noted "there wasn't a clock in Strawberry studios: things like that we laid down at the start."[49] This intentional omission of a small item such as a clock provided a contrast between Strawberry and other similar concerns. For instance, the famous American Motown studio had more in common with America's manufacturing sector ("We punched a clock, literally punched a clock, nine o'clock in the morning. Berry Gordy had worked at Ford, so he ran Motown like a factory"),[50] Strawberry's approach was certainly noticed by others and commented on in the music press, as seen from this quote in a 1973 article on 10cc:

> When they built the Strawberry Studio in Manchester, they left out one item which every other such establishment would consider essential: a clock. Life's like that outside London. In a metropolitan studio, clock-watching is the major pastime. If you're booked in at Strawberry and you want to go over the time you've booked, no-one complains.[51]

This relaxation of time-control allowed the artists more time to explore their creative potential and, as a result, the memories of their time in the studio appear to be much more positive. 10cc's Eric Stewart, selecting the band's musical milestones in 1995, remembers the recording of 1974's *Sheet Music*[52] album as a particularly fond time and this contrasts with the negative images he portrayed of the 1960s studio sessions:

> We had our own studio which was booked out 24 hours a day – we were using 12 hours and Paul McCartney was using the other 12 hour, so he'd go in through the night and we'd come in in the morning….we were just borrowing each other's gear and playing each other what we'd just done in the studio. They'd say 'Come and listen to what we did last night', we'd say 'Oh, that's not bad but listen to this!'[53]

One of the interesting by-products of this extension of studios' operating hours was the emergence of the late-night session when, generally, none of the major artists wanted to work in the studio. The term 'dead time' or 'down time', in other words when there was no one else using the studio, provided the opportunity for a number

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[48] Eric Stewart, BBC Transcription Disc, 1974.
[49] T. Hicks, "Mindbending Eric Stewart", *Guitarist*, February 1989, p.44.
[50] J. Smith, *Off The Record: An Oral History of Popular Music*, (London: Pan Books, 1989), p.169.
[51] R. Williams, "C.C. Riders", *Melody Maker*, April 14th 1973, p.34.
[52] UK Records, 1974, UKAL1007.
[53] S. Molineaux, "Ten Out Of Ten", *Keyboard Review*, June (1995), p.40.

of up and coming artists to record songs, either cheaply or, in some cases, at no cost at all. A number of examples of this were seen at Strawberry; Chief engineer David Rohl, for example, orchestrated his Mandalaband project in the mid-1970s and "recorded the album at Strawberry in periods of downtime (usually late at night)"[54] over a period of two years. In later years, producer Martin Hannett managed to arrange special rates for bands to use the studio in off-peak hours, as seen in his work with the Stone Roses in 1985 when the band "were getting studio time on the drip…Hannett having plenty of down-time from his never-ending sessions in the studio."[55] The Charlatans' debut single, *Indian Rope*[56] primarily owed its existence to a combination of the practice slot given to trainee-engineer Julie McLarnon[57] and the "graveyard slot...between midnight on Sunday and 8am on Monday morning"[58] offered to the band by Strawberry's engineer Chris Nagle. This extension of hours also affected the staff too and the studio was now developing into a dual world where some of the staff would work what might be termed 'normal' daytime hours whilst others might start in the afternoons and work through the night or even remain at the studio for twenty-four hours. Engineer Richard Scott, for example, developed his role so that he primarily worked on the Studio's television and advertising jobs during the day[59] whilst Julie McLarnon remembers that the sessions for the BBC started at 9 o'clock precisely and would always be over by lunchtime.[60] These time-controlled sessions though contrasted with what Richard Scott referred to as the "indeterminate"[61] ones in which the finish time might depend on an artists' whim. U2's Bono, for example, admitted this in his autobiography when he noted, "There's a phrase after midnight that puts the fear of God into producers and engineers. It's when he says 'I have a little idea I'd like to try' [laughs] because that might mean that they're up through six A.M."[62]

Support Staff

Interestingly, this reference to the possibility of extended working hours for the support staff, allied with the poor working conditions within a recording studio,

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[54] www.dprp.net/reviews/200414.html
[55] R. Robb, *The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of British Pop*, (London; Ebury Press, 1997), p.67.
[56] Dead Dead Good / Beggars Banquet, 1990, GOOD ONE.
[57] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[58] D. Wills and T. Sheehan, *The Charlatans; The Authorised Biography*, (London: Virgin Books, 1999), p.28.
[59] Richard Scott, January 9th 2007.
[60] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[61] Richard Scott, January 9th 2007.
[62] M. Assayas, *Bono on Bono*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), p.159.

might suggest the potential for unrest or dissatisfaction amongst the workers but there appears to be very little evidence of this at Strawberry. The recollections of Julie McLarnon, who started at the Studio in the late 1980s on a student placement from the Sound Technology course at Salford College of Technology and stayed at Strawberry for just under two years, show why this might be. To begin with, McLarnon confirms that those aiming for a career in recording studios did so with the knowledge that the hours would be long and the pay low:[63] "There were no prizes for going home at 5 o'clock. You knew you weren't going to be kept if you had that attitude…it wasn't unusual that the pay was bad."[64]

And yet, in spite of this, the evidence shows that those wanting to work in a recording studio ignored the seemingly exploitative nature of such employment conditions and, as McLarnon notes, there was still huge competition to land a job or placement at Strawberry: "a work placement at Strawberry was a prize catch for anyone on that course…if you were looking for a studio, Strawberry would be the first place you would run with your CV."[65]

Indeed, McLarnon, after volunteering to work at the Studio over the summer, left the college course part-way through in order to remain working at Strawberry full-time. Others who followed the same training path include Tony Spath and Richard Scott who both started off at the Stockport studio in 1975 and 1976 respectively when they did their one-year industrial placements as part of the University of Surrey's Tonmeister[66] Music and Sound Recording degree course. Spath eventually went on to manage Strawberry Studios South whilst Scott, having found a niche at the Studio with his technical knowledge, stayed at Strawberry North for nearly eighteen years. For Scott, the year's placement involved being:

> the general dogsbody, spending far too long for not much money….working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, helping on sessions and making cups of tea and going getting the sandwiches and things. The highlight of my first day was going with Pete to the cash-and-carry and buying thirty loo rolls[67]

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[63] McLarnon estimates that she was earning £60 per week when she left in 1990 (Email, November 28th 2001).
[64] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[65] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[66] http://tonmeister.org.uk/
[67] Richard Scott, January 9th 2007.

This idea of serving an apprenticeship, of working one's way up from the bottom, has been a constant theme in the testimony of those using studios and reinforces the link between studio life and the wider industrial scene. A number of engineers, and indeed top producers, started their careers by volunteering to help out in whatever capacity they could, following "…the time-honoured traditional progression from tea boy to assistant recording engineer to fully fledged engineer."[68] In the early 1970s, George Martin advised potential engineers that ""the best training is where…you would pick up a basic knowledge of the equipment you would be using in the studio, enabling you to operate and maintain it. You should then get into a recording studio by taking any job offered, however menial at the start."[69]

In the 1980s, though, things began to change after one of the industry's leading magazines scathingly noted that "the British recording industry is resistant to trained entrants and training at a time when this might be exactly what the industry needs."[70] These words of warning appear to have been heeded and a number of training courses specifically aimed at those wanting to have a job in the recording studio began to emerge, backed by the industry. Colleges now offered courses for the budding producer or engineer as the notion of 'working' in the studio transformed into one of having a 'profession' in the industry. Things were not necessarily perfect though and, in 1990, John Hudson (the owner of Mayfair Studios) suggested that the training on offer needed to prepare students more fully for the realities of studio life and he urged colleges to "talk to a few experienced engineers and studio owners"[71] before setting up any such courses.

As well as gaining entry to studios via college placements, a number of other people also offered to do voluntary work in recording studios in order to gain a foothold in the industry. At Strawberry South in Dorking, one such person who undertook work-experience, this time in the 1980s, was John Calvert who went on to become a Managing Director of a music production company. His memories of this short time at Strawberry include "making tea, sarnies and dismantling microphones from their

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[68] R. Denyer, "Producer Series – Mike Hedges", *Studio Sound*, December (1983), p.34.
[69] C. Hayes, "So You Want to be an Engineer?", *Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1972, p.28.
[70] "Editorial", *Studio Sound*, June (1983), p.3.
[71] "Comment", *Studio*, November (1990), p.28.

stands. I also helped Steve calibrate the Studer tape machines. To be honest, I had no idea what I was doing, so I probably screwed things up loads!"[72]

What these experiences do show is that those people employed in the recording studio did not just tolerate the kind of working conditions that others might fight against but actually competed against each other in order to accept them. One of the main reasons for this appears to be that many saw the recording studio as a gateway to success and glamour and, in spite of the initial onerous work, saw it as the place to unlock any creative ambitions, as noted by McLarnon (who herself went on to become a recording artist under the name of Bridget Storm):[73] "The whole building was kind of alive with stuff happening and it was the place to be…You'd be mad to (go elsewhere) really as you were doing hit records at Strawberry which is what you want to do."[74]

Such a brush with fame might even apply to the studio administration staff too as shown by two stories relating to Strawberry's secretaries; in 1970, as Eric Stewart remembers, they were faced with the dilemma when wanting to release *Neanderthal Man* as a single:

> We had no name for the group of course but we had a secretary at the studio called Kathy Gillbourne, who had very, very nice legs and she used to wear these incredible hot pants. Green leather hot pants. So we called the group Hotlegs![75]

In 1975, the secretary's involvement in the recording process went one stage further when the band were constructing *I'm Not In Love* and needed someone to speak a few words in the middle part of the song:

> Just at that point the door to the control room opened and our secretary Kathy [Redfern] looked in and whispered 'Eric, sorry to bother you. There's a telephone call for you.' Lol jumped up and said 'That's the voice, her voice is perfect.' We got Kathy in the studio just to whisper those words and there it was, slotted in just before the guitar solo….she didn't want to go in the studio, we had to drag her in….and there it is, on the record….and she got a gold record for it too.[76]

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[72] John Calvert (email), 30th August 2003.
[73] www.analoguecat.com/index.php?page=artists&artistID=7
[74] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[75] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.44.
[76] R. Buskin, "Classic Tracks: I'm Not In Love", *Sound on Sound*, 2005: June, www.soundonsound.com/sos/jun05/articles/classictracks.htm

Another area that separates the recording studio worker from others is the fact that the boundaries between the artists and staff were often blurred, as particularly seen in Strawberry's example, and therefore could affect the approach to the work being undertaken. As well as having a financial stake in the business and helping to build and run the Studio, Strawberry's original owners were also either artists (as in the case of Eric Stewart, Graham Gouldman, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme) or worked as the Studio's engineers for other bands (as in the case of Peter Tattersall and Stewart). Other staff, too, took on wider responsibilities and, for example, Richard Scott went from being trainee-engineer to becoming a director of the business within the space of seven years. In studios generally, artists were also beginning to assume more control over the production side of their work and Edward Kealy, in his late 1970s overview of studio staff, noted the emergence of a new "hybrid type of studio collaborator – an artist-mixer."[77] This was reflected, for example, by the movement of both Stewart and Gouldman away from concentrating on their work with 10cc to the production of other artists in the Strawberry setting.[78]

One final area of note in the link between the recording studio and industrial life is the representation of women[79] amongst the staff. On the whole, it would appear that Sara Cohen's statement about the wider music industry, that "there tends to be a general assumption that rock music is male culture comprising male activities and styles (whilst) women tend to be associated with a marginal, decorative or less creative role"[80] would also apply to the studio industry too. The November 1990 issue of *Studio* magazine carried a four-page feature on women in recording studios[81] and declared the industry to be "the last bastion of male chauvinism…(with) the odds certainly stacked against women succeeding in or being accepted to high positions."[82] Using Strawberry to investigate this theory, one of the earliest pieces of press coverage from 1967 (Figure 1 on page 33) might seem to indicate that the Studio was set to be different in that it was actively promoting women as recording

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[77] E. Kealy, "From Craft to Art: The Case of Sound Mixers and Popular Music", *Sociology of Work and Occupations*, 6: February (1979), p.20.
[78] Eric Stewart produced Sad Café's *Facades* album (RCA PL 25249) in 1979 whilst Graham Gouldman produced the Raomones' *Pleasant* Dreams album (Sire srk 3571) in 1981.
[79] G. Gaar, *She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll*, (New York: Seal Press, 2002) provides a good overview of women's participation in the pop industry.
[80] S. Cohen, "Men Making a Scene: Rock Music and the Production of Gender" in S. Whiteley (Ed), *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.17.
[81] C. Moss, "All Men Are Equal – But What About the Women?", *Studio*, November (1990), pp.10-13.
[82] C. Moss, "All Men Are Equal – But What About the Women?", *Studio*, November (1990), p.10.

engineers. Closer analysis of the text, however, shows a more condescending tone and the suggestion that the female trainee would still need the support and helping hand of her male supervisor. In the following years, Strawberry followed the norm in that the main female presence in the Studio was through the roles of secretary or receptionist and it wasn't until the 1980s that people such as Caroline Elleray took on more senior administrative roles or Julie McLarnon began work as an engineer. Interestingly, many of the quotes in the *Studio* article, where suggestions such as "a woman has to be 10 times better than a man",[83] "don't have relationships with the band"[84] and "you really can't afford to make a mistake"[85] were echoed by McLarnon as she looked back at her role in the 'macho' Strawberry world:

> You must never be a floozy, you must never sleep with a client, you must just be an absolute ice queen…you have to be bloody good at your job and you have to be the last out – first in and last out. You have to give them no room to complain. [86]

Indeed, McLarnon's desire to prove herself meant that she waited until she was over the age of thirty before having children as she knew that it would have proved a barrier to her career progression; "It would have been the finish of me if I'd taken maternity leave any earlier."[87]

Human Characteristics in the Studio

Having shown recording studios to be as much about industry as art, where a combination of workers both laboured and created the musical product, the evidence of those in the industry has also emphasised that they were places where human beings (both artists and staff) socialised, interacted and portrayed a number of other Beynon-highlighted human characteristics such as boredom, recreation and humour. In short, recording studios, much as other workplaces, were communities in their own right with all the facets associated with human involvement. At Strawberry, this was recognised in the 1980s when support staff were specifically employed to chat with the clients, make tea, play pool and generally "make the clients feel at ease."[88] These everyday human attributes affected the artists and workers in the studio and played a major part in their perception of their working environment.

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[83] C. Moss, "All Men Are Equal – But What About the Women?", *Studio*, November (1990), p.10.
[84] C. Moss, "All Men Are Equal – But What About the Women?", *Studio*, November (1990), p.10.
[85] C. Moss, "All Men Are Equal – But What About the Women?", *Studio*, November (1990), p.12.
[86] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[87] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[88] Julie McLarnon, email, 28th November 2001.

Initiative and Innovation

In an environment filled with the technology capable of producing a variety of sounds, it is interesting to note that the finished musical product could often rely on the practical innovation of the human element in the recording studio rather than necessarily the technical wizardry that was available. For instance, in the early days of Strawberry, Peter Tattersall particularly remembers the Syd Lawrence Orchestra coming to the Studio and the need for some quick-thinking and initiative when faced by the large numbers in the band:

> I wasn't used to so many musicians! I sat them down and then spent ages moving the microphones in and out to try and get the entire band on the final mix. Funnily enough, the record we produced then started a revival in the big-band sound so I must have done something right![89]

Ten years afterwards and the technologically sophisticated recording sessions for Godley and Creme's *Consequences* (see previous Chapter) were also punctuated with more practical episodes (such as the shaking of piles of magazines in order to simulate the sound of flocks of birds, as shown in Figure 41) and Tattersall's main memory of that album being recorded at Strawberry was one particular evening when the only technology used was a portable tape recorder and the recording itself actually took place outside of the Studio:

> The thing that sticks out in my mind on Consequences is all the firework sequences. We went out and got all these display fireworks from Liverpool, loaded them into the boot of the car….no instructions really on how to set them off. We recorded it on November 4th at a local park and it was dark by 8 o'clock….we dropped down onto the football pitches and set off the first thing which was a maroon buried in the ground. We didn't know what it would do….there was a big flash in the ground and a spurt of fire going up and we thought 'is that all it does' and suddenly it exploded in the air with the biggest bang I've ever heard. We dived back in the cars and lights were coming in houses and dogs barking….it was quite an hilarious hour or so setting them off and we were trying to record them with all hell let loose.[90]

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[89] Peter Tattersall, March 20th 1984.
[90] Peter Tattersall, June 26th 1984.

Figure 41: Godley + Creme use their initiative to achieve the sound of a flock of birds[91]

Boredom and Recreation

For a seemingly exciting environment, bathed in glamour, the notion of boredom is not one that is necessarily associated by the public with the recording studio. Boredom often presents itself either through the lack of activity or the repetitive nature of certain tasks, something that was not readily apparent in the 1960s recording sessions when studio equipment was more geared to the immediate capture of a performance rather than the construction of songs. However, within this process artists were often asked to repeat the same songs over and over again so that mistakes could be rectified and the best performance picked for public release.[92] This notion of repetition also survived the transition to the era of multitracking and many artists complained about the monotonous nature of the work, as seen in Gary Barlow's memories of one Take That session; "It ended up a bloody marathon – nine hours in all – with take after take…"[93]

The development of multitracking, though, led to the possibility of a different type of boredom, one borne out of the lack of things to do. Artists no longer produced performances for capture on tape but recorded individual parts of the whole so that they could be pieced together in the final mixing. As the number of tracks available

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[91] Booklet accompanying *Consequences* (CONS 017), p.16.
[92] The Beatles, *Anthology 1 CD*, 1995, (Apple 724383444526) for example contains a number of different takes of the same tracks, with, for instance, takes 1, 2 4 and 5 of *Eight Days A Week*.
[93] G. Barlow (with R. Havers), *My Take*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p.127.

grew, so the complexity of the recording increased and more and more vocal and instrumental parts were added to the final product. What this meant for the artist in the studio, particularly when in a band or group, was a certain amount of time spent waiting for others to perform their contributions. For instance, one music journalist tells of an incident when he visited U2 in Air Studios (London):

> The mood was very tense….A couple of days before an array of about forty of the best classical musicians in Britain had to be dismissed from the recording. Why? Well, said Bono, it was a typical U2 situation: 'The orchestra looked bored. The band could feel it: they were bored too. Conclusion: finish the songs before you bring a fucking orchestra in to play them.' He added that Chris Thomas had concluded the day by saying that it had been the worst in his whole career….[94]

Another artist, Boy George, also noted the strain of being in the studio and offered a potential antidote to the problem when he said "I hated the studio straight away; everything took too long. I went shopping when I got bored."[95]

Having already noted an enthusiasm for their chosen occupation, boredom rarely seems to have been a problem for those working with the artists. At times, though, engineers did occasionally express dissatisfaction with some of the tasks they were given. One commentator offering advice to novice musicians in the 1970s, noting the repetitive nature of the continual listening to a song, asked the artists to "spare a thought for the engineer who may have to listen to it dozens of times over during the course of recording, playback and mixdown – he may not even like it the first time."[96]

In an effort to minimise boredom levels, various attempts were made by studios to introduce recreational activities for artists and (if needed) staff. This echoed those efforts made by, for example, managers at some UK automobile factories in the 1950s and 1960s when they began to realise that worker boredom, caused by increasing automation, was reducing productivity.[97] The introduction of recreational items such as televisions, video recorders, dartboards, pinball machines and pool tables in the 1970s, superceded by computer and electronic games in the 1980s and

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[94] M. Assayas, *Bono on Bono*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), p.143.
[95] S. Bright, *Take It Like A Man: The Autobiography of Boy George*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1995), p.171.
[96] D. Blake, "Getting the Best Cuts", *Melody Maker*, August 3rd 1974, p.39.
[97] P. Thompson, "Playing at Being Skilled Men: Factory Culture and Pride in Work Skills Among Coventry Car Workers", *Social History*, 13:1 (1988), pp.45-69.

1990s, were seemingly welcomed by those in the studios, although they did not necessarily hold interest for too long (Figure 42 shows how Strawberry promoted one aspect of leisure in their advertising brochure);
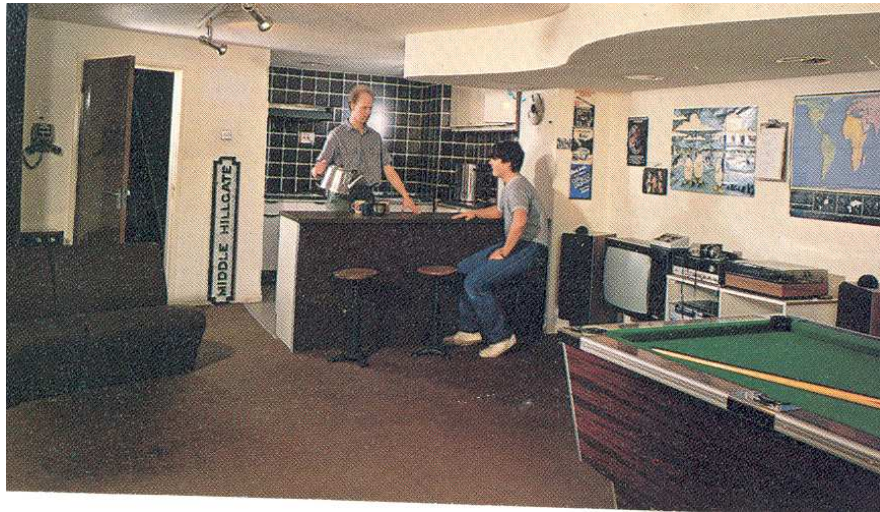
Figure 42: Promotional shot of 1970s leisure facilities at Strawberry Studios[98]

The use of Strawberry's pool table, and the ability of artists to be creative with their recreational moments in the recording studio, was highlighted by a visit to the Studio of the winner of a contest to meet Barclay James Harvest in Strawberry in 1978:

> Woolly and I played a game of "pooker", which is a cross between pool and snooker that the band have invented. Not being used to this game, and also out of practice, Woolly beat me three games to nil. Tracey was talking to Jill about the club at this time. It seemed to be time for a general break, as Les and Mel came downstairs to play backgammon at l0p a shot, and Dave challenged Woolly to a game of 'pooker'.[99]

Indeed, many artists actually recall studios by the type of recreational equipment that was supplied and might often judge a studio's suitability by such equipment, as seen by Eden Studios' desire to promote their own such facilities in an article on the studio; "The lounge area which has been doubled in size this year contains television and video (120 cassettes), and a video games machine."[100]

A more common way of relieving boredom in the studio, especially for the artists, was through the use of recreational drugs, including tobacco and alcohol. Some of

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[98] Strawberry Recording Studios Promotional Brochure (Author's Private Collection)
[99] *Friends of Barclay James Harvest Newsletter*, 6: July (1978), http://www.bjharvest.co.uk/fobjh-6.htm
[100] P. Lewis, "Eden:The Birth of a Studio", *Studio Sound*, September (1983), p.54.

the more sophisticated or residential studios would have a working bar as part of the complex and others were, more often than not, situated close to a pub. Strawberry was one such studio, with the Waterloo public house situated just across the road from the studio (see Figure 43) providing a second home for many of Strawberry's visitors, as noted by one journalist in 1975 ("The meeting was adjourned to a fine hostelry offering a choice of Robinson's most excellent ales.")[101] Indeed, some bands used the pub as a place to rehearse in prior to using the Studio[102] or to relax by drinking "copious amounts of ale…with the genial landlord at the helm giving us a good laugh."[103] Interestingly, Strawberry Studios South (in Dorking) was also close to a pub "called the Cricketers Arms, where the landlord would regale us with stories of visits by the infamous Oliver Reed challenging the inmates to drunken arm wrestling."[104]

Figure 43: The Waterloo Pub as seen from the step outside Strawberry[105]

Tobacco was, not unexpectedly, widely used in the studio and this led to Eric Stewart's desire for an in-built ashtray in Strawberry's purpose-built mixing desk

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[101] F. Ogden, "Strawberry", *Studio Sound*, May (1975), p.46.
[102] Giles Bodoano (of the Stockport band The Outriders), email, 21st December 2003.
[103] D. Irving, email, 19th May 2005.
[104] D. Irving, email, 27th May 2005.
[105] Author's Private Collection.

(see page 109). Even in the 1990s, recording studios were seen as "the last bastions of unrestricted smoking at work"[106] and, as a result, the health of those in the studios could be adversely affected, as seen in the following quote from Led Zeppelin's manager, Richard Cole; "His face seemed drawn. The circles under his eyes were getting darker. He started smoking more cigarettes than usual."[107]

The association of drugs with popular music was commonplace throughout the period of this investigation[108] and often featured widely in the lyrics of songs.[109] The availability of drugs for those in the studio was no secret and artists and staff would often have local suppliers visit studios in order to supply their needs. The use of drugs not only relieved boredom, but some were thought to help the artists' creative process too and even the official investigations into the substances confirmed such theories; "Supposedly cannabis enables one to perform more creatively. It is likely that it enhances the emotional aspects of the creative process."[110] Although pop and drugs have been inexorably linked for many years, recording studios do not seem to have attracted the same attention from the authorities as other pop venues have done. Clubs, for example, have received many visits over the years from the police searching for drugs. Manchester's Twisted Wheel nightclub, for example, was on the receiving end of undercover drug operations in the 1960s by "police cadets wearing what they perceived as hip clothes complete of course with a note pad to make observations."[111] More famously, the police were the prime movers behind the closure of the Hacienda club in 1991 because of the violence associated with the "blatant drug taking."[112]

Interestingly, Strawberry's early years provide a complete contrast with those in the 1980s and early 1990s when the drug association with music became much more apparent and open. The arrival of the 'Madchester' era and subsequent "moral

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[106] C. Baker, "All You Need Is Love…", *Studio*, November (1990), p.16.
[107] R. Cole (with R. Trubo), *Stairway to Heaven: Led Zeppelin Uncensored*, (London: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p.92.
[108] S. Napier-Bell, *Black Vinyl, White Powder: The Real Story of the British Music Industry*, (London: Ebury Press, 2001).
[109] One recent study has analysed 784 songs since the 1960s that explicity mention illegal substances (*The Guardian*, October 28th 2003, p.16.)
[110] G. Chopra, *Marijuana and Adverse Psychotic Reactions*, (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 1971), http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/bulletin/bulletin_1971-01-01_3_page003.html.
[111] K. Rylatt and P. Scott, *CENtral 1179: The Story of Manchester's Twisted Wheel Club*, (Manchester: Bee Cool Publishing, 2001), p.99.
[112] *New Musical Express*, February 9th 1991, p.4.

panic"[113] that ensued in relation to the ecstasy-fuelled acid house movement was typified by the following quote from the Happy Monday's Shaun Ryder; "It's brilliant the way all those musical barriers have been kicked in. I reckon it's down to the drugs, E particularly."[114] Indeed, this contrast is quite nicely highlighted by the different approach to the memories of drugs within Strawberry taken by two representatives of the different eras. When asked in 1996 whether there was any drug-taking by 10cc in the Studio in the early 1970s, Tattersall hesitantly responded:

> Yeah….well….Yes! Just for….not constantly…not constantly smoking in the Studio 'cos they knew it could affect you. I think I was just for relaxation afterwards but they never really….not whilst they were working. They weren't really into drugs…they might have the occasional joint just for relaxation but that would be it.[115]

Kevin Godley, speaking in the same year, adds to this coy approach on the issue of drugs when noting that the *Consequences* recording sessions often got out of hand "for whatever chemical reasons."[116] The use of drugs during this period is confirmed by Eric Stewart who felt able to speak more openly on the subject at the end of 1990s, in particular about the almost comic incident when Neil Sedaka was in Strawberry with them:

> I was mixing the album and while I was at the mixing desk, Kevin, Lol and Graham were passing around one of these massive spliffs that Kevin used to roll. We used to call them the 'Benson and Hedges Mindfuckers' because they were so big and strong. They passed the spliff to Neil, and at that point the door to the control room in the studio opened and in walked a policeman. Neil freaked! We all just thought we were going to get busted but the policeman just said, 'Do you know that the front door of the Studio is open?' So I got up and accompanied the policeman off the premises, thanked him for his trouble, and walked back into the control room. I look at Neil and he was white![117]

John Pennington's memories of the same Studio space in the 1990s reveal a more matter-of-fact and open approach to the issue of the availability of harder drugs:

> The Happy Mondays were the first street level band I worked with and they brought the culture of drugs and music into the studio….I remember once Bez and Shaun turned up completely off their tits on acid. They spent half the nights staring up at

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[113] A. Hill, "Acid House and Thatcherism: Noise, the Mob and the English Countryside", *British Journal of Sociology*, 53:1 (2002), p.89.
[114] T. Sheehan, "Thieves (and so do the Police) Like Us", *New Musical Express*, September 16th 1989, p.48.
[115] Peter Tattersall, September 23rd 1996.
[116] Kevin Godley (Interviewed by Phil Loftus), November 22nd 1996.
[117] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.98.

> the lights in the studio because they thought the lights were staring at them. We had to turn them off and work in the dark….And there was one time when nothing happened in the session until Martin's dealer turned up. Then, when he got his stash, a pile of coke like the top of Kilimanjaro, he sat in the vocal booth with a 2 inch tape slicing block for a couple of days.[118]

This frank approach was reinforced by other artists of the era, including Andy Couzens of the Stone Roses who said of his time in Strawberry, "One night I had a speedball. I was really fucked up. The whole session was like spending six weeks on another planet…"[119] In fact, the prevalence of drug taking during recording sessions also affected the staff too and engineer Julie McLarnon remembers both the smell associated with the marijuana and the number of sessions interrupted by the inability of the artists to continue with their work.[120]

Humour

Whilst artificial stimulants could help life in the recording studio, a more natural approach used by some was to utilise humour as a means of passing time and relieving tensions. Whilst psychologists have long been interested in humour in society, academics have only recently extended such studies to look at it in the workplace. They have concluded that humour "can reveal as much or perhaps more about the organization, its management, its culture and its conflicts than answers to carefully administered surveys. If anything…people can express deeper feelings and views."[121] Whilst some businesses historically frowned upon humour amongst employees, the intense, artificial atmosphere of the recording studio seems to have tolerated a certain number of jokes and pranks as an escape valve for letting off steam and for constructing and sustaining relationships as a means of obtaining "workplace harmony."[122] As one producer noted of his clients, "They'll tip beer over you, tie you up with recording tape and drive a tractor at you, but after all that you'll get a lot of work done."[123]

Much of the humour seen in the recording studio seems to have been performed by staff on their colleagues, or by artists amongst themselves, rather than between the separate groupings. This would suggest that the jokes that were played were reliant

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[118] www.geetan.com/johnnyp.cfm
[119] R. Robb, *The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of British Pop*, (London; Ebury Press, 1997), p.68.
[120] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[121] D. Collinson, "Managing Humour", *Journal of Management Studies*, 39: May (2002), pp.269-88.
[122] J. Holmes and M.Marra, "Having a Laugh at Work: How Humour Contributes to Workplace Culture", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34:12 (2002), p.1687.
[123] C. Welch, "My Top Ten – Robin Lumley", *Melody Maker*, March 19th 1977, p.47.

on a certain amount of familiarity between the perpetrator and recipient. Some pranks could be very sophisticated and required elaborate planning. Two members of 10cc played numerous jokes on the studio owner, Peter Tattersall. On one occasion, they carefully placed a protective cover over the studio's pool table and proceeded to cover it with junk to give the impression that it had been trashed. They only revealed the truth after Tattersall had rung the band's manager to complain of the group's behaviour. The pair were so proud of their efforts that they photographed their handiwork (see Figure 44).

Figure 44: Kevin Godley and Lol Creme with their 'doctored' pool table in 1975[124]

On other occasions, they would use their artistic and technical skills to alter pieces of studio equipment to give them human appearances or would even construct theatrical props in order to change the appearance of the actual studio interior itself (see Figures 45 and 46).

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[124] Author's Private Collection.
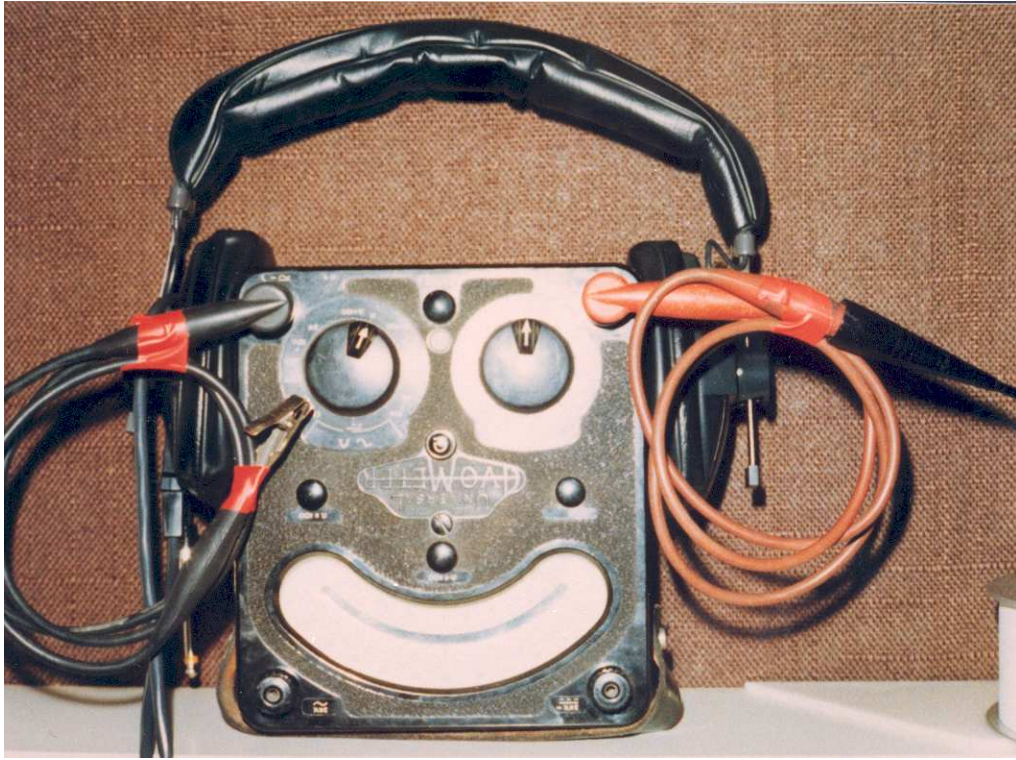
Figure 45: Artistic work in the recording studio, 1975[125]

Figure 46: Further artistic work by Godley and Creme[126]

Revealingly, Kevin Godley (when looking back some twenty years later at his time in Strawberry as part of 10cc) emphasised the humour rather than the music and he described one such practical joke that 10cc played on Peter Tattersall as "one of my

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[125] Author's Private Collection.
[126] Author's Private Collection.

favourite moments of the whole band experience. It's when we had the most fun together."[127] The joke involved wiring two of the mixing desk speakers so that 10cc, who hid themselves in Strawberry's cellar whilst another band were using the Studio, could both hear what was happening in the control room and also feed back sounds into it from their hiding place too.[128] To begin with, they would simply play incorrect notes on a guitar every so often so that Tattersall, who was engineering the session, would think that the band in the studio had made a mistake during their performance. After doing this for a while, and causing more and more confusion between the musicians and the engineer, 10cc then began to add strange vocal noises into the control room and the prank was only discovered when those in there began to dismantle the speakers to investigate what was going on after the mixing desk began to speak to them. Indeed, although the butt of the joke on this occasion, Tattersall himself is keen to talk about the incident and says of it; "it was brilliant…I was completely wound up. A wreck I was at the end of that."[129] Even in 2007, Godley (when being asked about the recording of *Consequences*) stressed the humour involved rather than the hard work:

> I remember Strawberry North's studio manager was due to show a big prospective client around so we turned a very impressively 'teched' out control room into a very convincing bricked up bombsite with props and stage scenery etc. Knowing our reputation and ushering Mr Super Client into the room ahead of him with a proud flourish, was a mistake that will haunt him forever...[130]

Status

The changing status of the producer to a position on a par with, or even excelling that, of the artists themselves is an interesting development in the recording studio. In the 1960s and early 1970s, producer Mickie Most's role was equated by artist Peter Noone (of Herman and the Hermits) to that of a film director when he said "He made me believe in what I was doing and he helped me to imagine that every situation I was singing about was real."[131] Although Jonathan King declared in 1974, "What goes down on tape is what the producer wants to express (which) makes him an artist in his own right"[132] and Mike Batt noted of the 1970s that "producing was more of

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[127] Kevin Godley (Interviewed by Phil Loftus), November 22nd 1996.
[128] This is described in some detail in L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), pp.110-111.
[129] Peter Tattersall, September 23rd 1996.
[130] www.proggnosis.com/interview.asp?theInterview=23
[131] *The Independent*, June 2nd 2003, p.14.
[132] M. Cable, *The Pop Industry Inside* Out, (London: W H Allen + Co., 1977), p.85.

an art then",[133] it was specifically in the 1980s that the producer's status became much more elevated. People such as Martin Hannett, Trevor Horn, Hugh Padgham and Stock Aitken and Waterman became celebrities in their own right and their production techniques on the records could be discerned beyond that of the artists' music. Trevor Horn[134] was one such producer and his work has been described as being "at the cutting edge of inventing a whole new way of making modern records, involving the use of the studio as a musical instrument"[135] with the musicians becoming almost superfluous in the recording process. A good example of this is seen from Horn's success with Frankie Goes To Hollywood's *Relax*, the final mix of which came after he "decided to send the Frankies back to Liverpool and record the song alone."[136] At Strawberry, producer Martin Hannett was described as both "inspirational"[137] and "idiosyncratic"[138] whilst journalist John Robb commented that "sometimes in the studio he would be inspired and brilliant and sometimes he would fall asleep, stoned, under the desk, leaving engineer Chris Nagle to mop up and do the work."[139]

Other staff, too, saw a change in their status. The engineer, for example, began to acquire a status not far removed from that of the producer. One such engineer, winning an award for his work, was described as someone who "danced with his fingers [on the recording console]"[140] and the move into the control room allowed the engineer to become a more fully integrated member of the studio team with the perception of distance and aloofness starting to disappear. The appearance and perception of the engineer also altered as the role in the studio changed. The white-coated technician now disappeared and they came to be seen more as a technical 'enthusiast' rather than scientist, as well as becoming permanent fixtures around the studio. This is shown, in particular, by Tony Cockell's growing involvement in the work at Strawberry after initially starting as a supplier of their technical equipment (see page 101). The arrival of digital sound in the 1980s further altered the role of

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[133] M. Cable, *The Pop Industry Inside* Out, (London: W H Allen + Co., 1977), p.81.

[134] See T. Warner, *Pop Music – Technology and Creativity: Trevor Horn and the Digital Revolution*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003).

[135] P. Morley, *Trevor Horn: A Biography*, (www.soundslogic.com/fisonic/_legacy/tchpmbio.html, 1997)

[136] www.trevor-horn.de/

[137] www.ltmpub.freeserve.co.uk/namesbio.html

[138] www.ltmpub.freeserve.co.uk/namesbio.html

[139] J. Robb, *The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of British Pop*, (London: Ebury Press, 1997), p.57.

[140] G. Koch, "Roy Haylee, Enginner of the Year", *Recording Engineer/Producer*, 2: April (1971) , p.11, quoted in E. Kealy, "From Craft to Art: The Case of Sound Mixers and Popular Music", *Sociology of Work and Occupations*, 6: February (1979), p.21.

engineer as much of the equipment became computerised and, in an extended essay looking at the changing roles of record producers and engineers, Sarata Persson has noted with interest the responses that have talked of roles disappearing, changing and emerging as a result of the blossoming technology.[141]

Human Interaction

One of the key features of the human factor in recording studios was the interaction between the different groupings, the relationships that were formed and the sense of community that was created. In the small, pressurised, close-knit studio world, it was hardly suprising that tensions might exist, as shown by one member of the 1960s pop band The Hollies who said "I just hate those guys, fussing and fiddling with knobs."[142] This separation of artists and staff in the 1960s is further emphasised by two quotes; Musician Jack Bruce, looking back the early 1960s days of the rock band Cream, said:

> …the important people were behind the glass panel in the control room. They'd say 'do it again' and when it was finished you might be allowed to listen to the playback if you were lucky. You couldn't say 'Oh no, that's wrong'. Can we do it again?' So the workings of a studio were a huge mystery[143]

Whilst the spur for Eric Stewart to become involved in Strawberry Studios had also been the lure of the mysterious control room:

> During the early to mid 60s, the studio was where the musicians were and the control room was always hallowed ground. You were never allowed in there. 'No, no, no, boys. We'll let you come in and hear the mix when it's finished.' I'd go in and thrill to the sound.[144]

Negus, who has written on conflict within the music industry, notes that engineers in the 1960s and early 1970s were often dismissively referred to as "knob twiddlers"[145] by some artists, who also lamented the lack of support from the producer in charge of the recording session. Conversely, other artists might resent what was seen as interference from producers in recording sessions (as seen by producer Bob Mersey's

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[141] S. Persson, *Technology, Society, Industry and Music*, Lulea University of Technology, 2006. http://epubl.ltu.se/1402-1773/2006/139/LTU-CUPP-06139-SE.pdf
[142] *Melody Maker*, May 27th 1972, p.41.
[143] C. Welch, *Cream: The Legendary Sixties Supergroup*, (London: Balafon Books, 2000), p.86.
[144] R. Buskin, "Classic Tracks: I'm Not In Love", *Sound on Sound*, 2005: June, www.soundonsound.com/sos/jun05/articles/classictracks.htm
[145] K. Negus, *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry,* (London: Arnold, 1992), p.85.

approach when he noted "You've got to yell at them and hit them over the head before you get what you want")[146] and Gary Barlow, for example, notes one particular recording session where the producer had demanded a flawless vocal performance in the first take and had induced a real feeling of fear; "Bloody hell, I was scared shitless as I went into the vocal booth."[147]

Additionally, the reputation of those recording in the studio could affect both the engineering staff and the other musicians, as seen in two examples at Strawberry Studios. Speaking seventeen years after the event, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme's outstanding memories of Neil Sedaka's early-1970s sessions in the Studio were connected with the American singer's imposing perfection whilst he worked and the strain that it put on the embryonic 10cc, who were backing Sedaka:

> Every time he did his vocals he always did them right. He was an absolute bastard was Neil Sedaka…never made a mistake. We did all the mistakes…all the retakes were because we fluffed things.[148]

One of Peter Tattersall's memories of Paul McCartney's visits to Strawberry in 1974 relate to an incident in the control room after the ex-Beatle had been laying down some bass guitar on tape when one of the engineers suddenly realised that he had taped over McCartney's session. Tattersall tells of how he had to inform McCartney of the mistake and how the engineer, although remaining in his job, was so shaken by McCartney's reputation that he "never made that mistake ever again."[149]

Artists, especially those in groups, were certainly prone to differences within the studio and recording sessions could be interrupted, or even abandoned, during such disputes, as seen by Boy George's admission concerning his time in the studio in the 1980s; "I was very tetchy in the studio, I couldn't take criticism: 'What do you mean I'm flat?' I would make everyone leave the studio – sometimes even the engineer."[150]

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[146] H. Lawrence, "Who's In Charge?", *Audio*, December (1965), p.12.
[147] G. Barlow (With R. Havers), *My Take*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p.101.
[148] Roger Scott Interviews Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, Metro + Tees Radio, January 5th 1989.
[149] Peter Tattersall, January 28th 2005.
[150] S. Bright, *Take It Like A Man: The Autobiography of Boy George*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1995), p.199.

In Strawberry, 10cc decided from their early days to set aside time and space for a forum where grievances might be aired and discussed amongst the band. These 'truth sessions' as they came to be known, were described by Creme at the time:

> If we're on the road or in the studio and there's something bugging one of us, or someone says 'I want to leave the group' which is something that someone says at one time or another in every group I've ever come across, then someone else will say 'It's Truth Session time' and we drop everything, sit down and sort it out.[151]

Eric Stewart, when looking back in 2005 at the recording of *I'm Not In Love* noted how the frank interaction between the four members of 10cc in the studio contributed to the band's early success:

> We were always very blunt with each other….we recorded everything we came up with but we were very brutal at the end of it saying things like 'Is this working?' or 'Do we like this?'….Well, we recorded 'I'm Not In Love' as a bossa nova and Godley and Creme didn't really like it! Kevin was especially blunt. He said 'It's crap!' and I said 'Oh right, OK, have you got anything constructive to add to that? Can you suggest anything?' He said 'No. it's not working man. It's just crap, right? Chuck it!'[152]

This acceptance of criticism, though, began to wane over time as the aspirations and interests of the band members began to alter. When 10cc initially assembled at Strawberry in 1976 to record a Stewart/Gouldman composition, *People In Love*, Godley and Creme's focus was already beginning to shift towards promotion of their Gizmo and, as a result, their attitude was less flexible, as Kevin Godley remembers when speaking in 1996; "We'd all sit round a piano and whoever wrote a particular song would demonstrate it to the other two and as the first bars of it came out the heart began to sink…and I thought this is just a piece of bland pop nonsense."[153]

In contrast to the way in which *I'm Not In Love* was recorded, with all four members combining as a unit to create a single track, *People In Love* saw how far the group were now operating as separate entities, as seen in this quote from Eric Stewart:

> There were four versions of that song, each of us going in the studio and recording the song the way we thought it should be. We were each given four tracks to

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[151] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.77.

[152] R. Buskin, "Classic Tracks: I'm Not In Love", *Sound on Sound*, 2005: June, www.soundonsound.com/sos/jun05/articles/classictracks.htm

[153] Kevin Godley (Interviewed by Phil Loftus), November 22nd 1996.

complete and then we put them all together as well. It could have been one of those things that turned out brilliantly, but it didn't. It sounded horrendous.[154]

Interestingly, one way that artists would often artificially attempt to counter any negative vibes in the recording studio was to attempt to create positive social interaction during recording by admitting friends, acquaintances, colleagues and various other 'hangers on' into the studio. The Beatles were one of the first bands to fill the studio with an entourage but they were certainly not the only ones to attempt to do so over the years. For example, a photographic record of one of the few visits that Kevin Godley and Lol Creme made to Strawberry South before leaving 10cc shows Lol Creme's young son, Lalo, with him in the control room (see Figure 47) whilst Julie McLarnon recalls that occasionally microphones were specially placed to pick up the noises made by staff's children in other parts of the building and then the sounds monitored by those at the mixing desk.[155]

Figure 47: Lol Creme and son at Strawberry Studios South in 1976[156]

Conclusion

In contrast to those artists, such as sculptors and painters, whose work has had more of a direct relationship between raw materials and the finished piece of art, the efforts of those in the recording studio have often been as much about industry as about art

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[154] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.160.
[155] Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007.
[156] Author's Private Collection

and would appear to have become increasingly fragmented over time. This definition of the studio space as a functional workspace, where industry rather than creativity is important, suggests that a more fitting historical definition for recording studios might be 'factories of sound', with reference to the craft, labour and perspiration of those working in them. One example of this approach came when Lulu recorded with Take That in 1993 and she amazed the group with her approach to the session. Gary Barlow's memories of her are connected more with her professionalism and work-ethic than her actual performance; "Despite having already done an hour's warm-up before she got there, she then went into another room at the studio and did thirty minutes more."[157] The adoption of this 'factory' definition helps to demystify the studios to some extent and provides another context in which to study them, as well as giving more prominence to the contributions of the entire 'workforce' rather than just the artists themselves. This approach was emphasised by Charlie Watts, of the Rolling Stones, who, when looking back at his time in one particular studio, was keen to promote the role of the engineers and noted how the control room "was their domain, their home, they worked there all the time."[158] For Watts, this was seemingly an admission that artists such as him were somehow intruding into a workspace that was owned by those who were employed in the studios. It also highlights the unusual nature of the sound recording studio, of a place where industry merged with art in order to create the finished product.

And yet, importantly, the recording studio was also home to a human element that interacted and displayed characteristics that are often absent from accounts of the technologically-developing studio. As Graham Gouldman noted in 2007, his main recollection of 10cc's early days are more to do with the camaraderie and human interaction rather than the technology or other aspects of studio life:

> "We were basically the house band at Strawberry Studios and started off playing sessions for other people, doing backing vocals, co-writing, in fact doing anything and everything. We wanted to work with our mates in the studio."[159]

The experience of the support staff, too, echo these thoughts and Julie McLarnon's over-riding memories of Strawberry are of the relationships she built up with the

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[157] G. Barlow (With R. Havers), *My Take*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p.126.
[158] D. Loewenstein and P. Dodd, *According to the Rolling Stones*, (London: Phoenix, 2004), p.72.
[159] www.getreadytorock.com/rock_stars/graham_gouldman.htm

staff rather than the music they recorded and she suggests that it was the breaking up of this team for economic reasons that was the beginning of the end for the Studio:

> It's the people that run a studio that make it successful, that's where Strawberry got it right in the early days and where it went wrong in the '90s. Nick (Turnbull) brought in an accountant who spent money revamping the reception and recreation area but sacked the couple of staff whose job it was to make the clients feel at ease. He saw them as an unnecessary expense. When they went the atmosphere went.[160]

This was also reinforced more generally by producer George Martin who noted a contrast between those artists who were becoming increasingly reliant on interacting with technology and those he saw working together in the studio:

> But, in the main, people do like working with other people. If you work in a studio with a good engineer and a good producer - and with good musicians playing together rather than layering a cake all the time - something happens between those people. There's a kind of 'frisson' of creativity that's sparks off between one and another, and the production gets better as a result. It's the way I've always worked.[161]

And it is the introduction of these human characteristics, of changing relationships, humour, leisure and boredom, which might permit a comparison with the historical studies undertaken of other industrial sectors, however seemingly disparate or unconnected with the recording studio. Latour pioneered this approach when he placed himself in a laboratory setting and observed that much of the work taking place there was seemingly less obviously concerned with 'science' than with the more mundane universal activities of reading, writing and the holding of numerous "conversations, discussions and arguments."[162] And whilst the application of human elements and characteristics might be thought of as simply adding anecdotal flavour to the otherwise dry, historical accounts on offer, it also allows the contemporary audience, who recognise and empathise with these characteristics, to engage and identify with the study. Also, as Gossman noted when looking at Corbin's anecdotal tales of bell-ringing,[163] studies with an emphasis on the human involvement and

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[160] Julie McLarnon, email, 28th November 2001.
[161] www.recordproduction.com/sir_george_martin.htm
[162] B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p.16.
[163] A. Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th Century French Countryside*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

experiences "offer us privileged access to a world we have lost"[164] and, at the same time, "help the historian to understand the atmosphere and milieu of the times."[165]

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[164] L. Gossman, "Anecdote and History", *History and Theory*, 42: May (2003), p.166.
[165] J. Dougherty, "From Anecdote to Analysis: Oral Interviews and New Scholarship in Educational History", *Journal of American History*, 86:2 (1999), p.712.

Chapter 6: Locating the Studio

> Historians are supposed to reach the past always through texts, occasionally through images….But one of my best-loved teachers…had always insisted on directly experiencing 'a sense of place', of using 'the archive of the feet'.[1]

Having viewed the technology and human element in the recording studio, the final chapter will look at the actual studio building itself, remembering that Latour's Actor Network Theory emphasised "the interaction of heterogeneous elements as these are shaped and assimilated into networks."[2] In other words, whilst the architecture of a building might seemingly just refer to its design and structure, it should also include the other network strands that comprise it, such as its geographical location, interior design and changing function too. Lloyd Jenkins, in his study of one specific Parisian building,[3] noted that built structures should not just be seen as "static, closed and materially constant"[4] but rather as "permeable and part of a potentially unstable and changing web that acts through relationships at a distance."[5] Applying this to the current study, recording studios should not just be seen as isolated buildings, whose only importance was their appearance and internal functions, but also as fluid entities that could interact with their surroundings (locally, nationally and internationally), on those humans within the buildings and also upon their own historical legacies.

The Architecture of the Studio

Situated within the town centre area, bordering St Mary's Parish Church and the Market Place, the Waterloo Road area of Stockport (see Figure 48 for a basic map taken from a Strawberry Studios brochure) was, prior to the arrival of industry in the town, a place of leisure for the residents as they used the dam created in the Tin Brook for boating or ice-skating.[6]

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[1] S. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, (London: Fontana, 1995), p.24.
[2] J. Law, "Technology and heterogeneous engineering: The case of Portuguese expansion" in W. Bijker et al (Eds), *The Social Construction o Ttechnological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, (London: MIT Press, 1987), p.113.
[3] L. Jenkins, "11, Rue du Conservatoire and the Permeability of Buildings", *Space and Culture*, 5:3 (2002), pp.222-36.
[4] L. Jenkins, "11, Rue du Conservatoire and the Permeability of Buildings", *Space and Culture*, 5:3 (2002), p.226.
[5] L. Jenkins, "11, Rue du Conservatoire and the Permeability of Buildings", *Space and Culture*, 5:3 (2002), p.232.
[6] Stockport Education Authority, *History Trail Number 10 – Waterloo Road*, 1993.

Figure 48: Strawberry's location[7]

From each end, Waterloo Road dips down into the Hopes Carr valley (the source of the Tin Brook which had provided the water power for a number of the town's original silk and cotton factories) and, from the mid 19th century onwards, the area became predominantly industrial, dominated by the large Christy's hat factory and also home to a number of other factories and warehouses. Figure 49 shows the view from one end of Waterloo Road in the 1950s, whilst Figure 50 shows a contemporary view (photographed in 2006) taken from the dip in the centre of Waterloo Road which highlights the industrial nature of the area.

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[7] Strawberry Recording Studios North Brochure, c.1983 (Author's Private Collection).

Figure 49 – Looking down Waterloo Road in the 1950s[8]

Figure 50 – Hopes Carr's industrial landscape[9]

At the top of the town-centre end of the road were two large buildings, brick built and split into smaller properties to accommodate, by the start of the twentieth century, a mixture of industrial and commercial premises. Number 3 Waterloo Road, began its life as a warehouse (as indicated by the remains of a former hoist on the

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[8] Stockport Heritage Library.

[9] Courtesy of Andy Barson (www.andybarson.co.uk/Images/SK62.jpg)

right hand side of the building) and, given the proximity to the cotton mills of the town, it is likely that the building would have been used to store raw materials or finished goods. A study of local directories shows the changing ownership of the building, from being home to the French polishers, William Symes, in 1902[10] to that of Thomas Webb, brass nameplate maker and motor engineer, in 1910.[11] Various other uses were made of the building, from munitions factory to television shop before, in 1967, Eric Stewart and Peter Tattersall purchased the building, attracted by the large room on the ground floor that they envisaged using as the recording area.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the environs of Strawberry might be thought to exude an air of the ordinary and less-than-glamorous. Flanked by a number of commercial buildings and surrounded by factories, a garage, public houses and the town's police station, the area that Strawberry was located in was not only yards away from the birthplace of Stockport's industrial community but also the scene of the June 1967 air crash that killed 72 people.[12] The industrial nature of the immediate surroundings gave the area a subdued feel and this was, perhaps, exacerbated in the early days of the Studio by the close proximity of the fatal air crash. It is interesting to note the repetition of certain phrases that people used to describe the Studio's surroundings when visiting Strawberry; DJ and music journalist, Paul Gambaccini, who went to the studio on several occasions in the 1970s described it as a "run-down factory in a dark and gloomy back street"[13] whilst a visiting London journalist noted that "at first glance the street seems pretty inhospitable."[14] The building itself, brick-built with a large number of windows, blended in to the surrounding structures and was described as possessing "the façade of an ordinary building"[15] that allowed the studio to all but disappear visually. When it was remarked on at all, as for example by journalist Dave McCullough, who visited the Studio in 1979 to speak to Joy Division, it was described as having a "dirty and ramshackle outside."[16]

As well as affecting its appearance, the location and surroundings of a studio could also influence the agenda when it came to interaction with the local community. The

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[10] *The Stockport Directory*, (Stockport: New Cheshire County News Co. Ltd., 1902), p.211.
[11] *The Stockport and Hazel Grove Directory*, (Stockport: New Cheshire County News Co. Ltd., 1910), p.162
[12] S. Morrin, *The Day the Sky Fell Down: The Story of the Stockport Air Disaster*, (Stockport: S. Morrin, 1998).
[13] Paul Gambaccini, 27th November 2003.
[14] "Studio Spotlight – Strawberry Recording Studios", *Beat Instrumental*, December (1971), p.47.
[15] *Stockport Express Advertiser*, 26th May 1983, p.31.
[16] D. McCullough, "Truth, Justics and the Mancunian Way", *Sounds*, August 11th 1979.

proximity of a pub to a recording studio ensured that regulars could mix with artists and staff alike when they relaxed after sessions (see Page 156) and, in many respects, this demystified the aura that often surrounded the artists. Additionally, the community of a studio could also include those who simply passed by the building. Unlike those studios that were isolated from the local populace, many were situated in the middle of communities and, as a result, became part and parcel of local life. For example, those using Strawberry would often make use of the local Chinese takeaway, as noted on more than one occasion ("Everybody was hungry, so we decided to pop into the Chinese Take-Away round the corner."[17] and "Returning once more to the control room, pungent oriental spices greeted the nostrils. The 10cc men had shown up for work laden with takeaway Chinese nosh")[18] or the local sandwich shop ("All the small companies round that area used the same sandwich shop for lunch. In the queue one day was none other than Terry Hall taking a break from recording.)[19] This proximity to food was often seen in the success or otherwise of other studios, with the Rolling Stones' showing a preference for central Paris studios because of their proximity to the "great restaurants"[20] there. Although the ease of parking was one of the attractions of Strawberry's location ("There is the waste ground nearby and a garage forecourt they could use at night"),[21] the Studio did not have a very large car park next to the building and many artists parked their expensive cars in full view of the local youths. Strawberry owner, Peter Tattersall, remembers with some amazement that Paul McCartney's sports car remained untouched during his spell at the studio in the early 1970s whereas other vehicles were regularly vandalised.[22] Another Stockport studio, Revolution, also encountered the same problems, as noted by one visitor in the 1980s; "Revolution is on the outskirts of Stockport, next to a bus stop where lots of milling schoolkids wait for transport home and idly scrape sharp and blunt instruments down the side of parked cars."[23] As well as such encounters, the two worlds of studio and public could also collide via the simple and anonymous pieces of street furniture that surrounded the buildings. On one occasion in 1973, for instance, Paul McCartney left Strawberry where he was recording with his brother Mike and, sitting on the studio steps with

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[17] *Friends of Barclay James Harvest Newsletter*, 6: July, 1978, http://www.bjharvest.co.uk/fobjh-6.htm
[18] F. Ogden, "Strawberry", *Studio Sound*, May (1975), p.46.
[19] Ashley Haynes, email, 6.5.04
[20] D. Loewenstein and P. Dodd, *According to the Rolling Stones*, (London: Phoenix, 2004), p.188.
[21] J. Dwyer, "Around the Studios: Strawberry, Manchester", *Studio Sound*, July (1974), p.71.
[22] Peter Tattersall, March 24th 1984.
[23] K. Black, "Sad Café: Made in Manchester", *Melody Maker,* 31st December 1978, p.31.

guitar in hand, serenaded a couple stood at the bus stop outside the Studio (see Figure 52).[24]

The most obvious way that studio buildings could interact with the local community was visually. Some locals would "hang around the front of the building on whimsical rumours of this or that artist was recording there, maybe in the hope of seeing someone famous."[25] For many, however, the only contact with a studio was with the façade of the building and, like the local mills of a previous era, little was known of what went on inside. From very early on, Strawberry's owners were intent on connecting the building on Waterloo Road with the studio and they utilised a 'shop sign' approach to state the building's purpose and, as Figure 51 shows, the contrasting colours of the brickwork made the building stand out from those around it.

Figure 51: The front of Strawberry in the early 1970s[26]

The early 'SRS' sign was replaced in the mid 1970s by the logo that became synonymous with the studios and, also, by the painting the large front door on the studio building bright red and by painting a large number '3' on this door, as shown in Figures 52 and 53.

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[24] Peter Tattersall, March 24th 1984.
[25] M. Fairfield, email, 5th September 2004.
[26] Stockport Heritage Library.

Figure 52: Strawberry's façade in the early 1980s[27]

Figure 53: The Strawberry exterior in the 1980s, particularly showing the steep slope[28]

Stockport's Yellow 2 studio (which eventually took over Strawberry in 1986) went one step further and painted a large yellow '2' onto the white building. Interestingly, Strawberry Studios South (which opened in 1976) only had a small poster-size sign on the side of the building to reflect the studio's existence, as seen in Figure 54.

[27] Author's private collection.
[28] Stockport Heritage Library.

Figure 54: The small Strawberry sign on the side of Strawberry Studios South[29]

The Interior Space – Aesthetics and Function

When Bruno Latour entered the world of the scientific laboratory, one of the key features that struck him as a non-scientist was the design and layout of the interior space, particularly the split between the 'office' and 'bench' areas.[30] It is worth noting that in the recording studio sector the one common factor that links all studios is the requirement for acoustic space and it is the relationship between this recording area and the other parts of the building that distinguish the recording studio from most other industries. The acoustic space in question did not necessarily need to be artificially manufactured and could be found in a variety of urban and rural buildings, whether industrial, commercial, artistic or residential. Analysis shows the multitude of buildings that were being used to house recording studios, from those set up in the inter and post war years, to the more modern concerns of the 1980s and 1990s. Converted residential buildings,[31] churches,[32] cinemas,[33] mills,[34] boats,[35]

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[29] Dorking Museum.

[30] "The special relation between office space and bench space is sufficient to distinguish the laboratory from other productive units", B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p.47.

[31] "The obvious choice was his six-bedroomed semi-detached house at Putney", *Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1972, p.26.

[32] "Manchester-based Stephenson Architecture have come top of the pops by gaining planning permission to convert a Central Manchester church hall into a recording studio for pop impresario Pete Waterman", *Building Design*, August 24th 1990, (http://global.factiva.com).

[33] Strawberry Studios South was built in Dorking's old cinema.

[34] "There are actually two ways to get to Tony Cox's Sawmill Studio in Cornwall..a 200 year old mill that gives the studio its name", *Melody Maker*, March 19th 1977, p.49.

[35] "The Astoria is a house boat turned recording studio", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astoria_(recording_studio)

farms,[36] country houses,[37] not forgetting the trucks that housed the mobile studios[38] – all have been converted into recording studios. Indeed, this conversion of old buildings, many in the late 1960s and early 1970s, seemed to pre-empt the URBED-led movement of recycling old buildings for industrial use.

In recent years, social scientists have expanded their analysis of architecture from simply looking at the buildings themselves to investigating the aesthetics of the space around and within objects. For example, Sigfried Giedion wrote *Space, Time and Architecture* in 1940 and introduced Einstein's concepts of time and space into the historical study of architecture.[39] More recently, Anthony Vidler has introduced the notion of 'spatial warping', where space can be seen either as a projection of the neuroses and phobias of the subject or an entirely new phenomenon where media such as film, photography or art are used to create 'new spaces'.[40] On a more practical level, the notion of interior design for both home and the workplace has moved on from the simple choice of decoration, flooring or furniture to a more complicated process of ergonomics, functional analysis and knowledge-based design. Whilst home-makers may now concern themselves with ensuring that the 'feng shui' of the house is in balance in order to create "a harmonious, happy and prosperous living environment",[41] those in charge of workspaces now need to link their interior design with productivity and corporate efficiency. Led by the Americans, a number of bodies have been set up to investigate the notion of corporate interior design and have come to the conclusion that "companies obtain far-reaching benefits by eliminating obstacles to productivity and providing employees with functional, healthy and attractive surroundings."[42] This includes looking at such issues as accessibility, lighting, air quality, noise, furniture, carpeting and the approach of management to office design. Whilst some of the terminology may seem extreme, the connection between a building's interior and those who work in it is one that

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[36] "They (Rockfield Studios) have 16-track in the barn and 24-track in the cow shed", *Melody Maker*, March 19th 1977, p.47.

[37] "Set back off the road…The Manor is possibly the ultimate in congenial atmospheres. In fact it's amazing. To all intents and purposes it is a manor, old English and proud of it It lies in its own 100 acres of land…", *Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1972, p.27.

[38] *Studio Sound*, 24:8 (1982), p.26.

[39] A. Molella, "Science Moderne: Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* and *Mechanization Takes Command*", *Technology and Culture*, 43:2 (2002), pp.374-89.

[40] Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, (London: MIT Press, 2000).

[41] S. Shurety, *Feng Shui for Your Home*, (London: Rider, 1997)

[42] American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), *Productive Solutions: The Impact of Interior Design on the Bottom Line*, (New York: ASID, 1997), p.4.

certainly merits investigation. Just as with a building's location and exterior, the interior space could both be used as, and set, the agenda for those using the building. Whilst the inside of recording studios are often assumed by the public to be the same wherever they are housed (i.e. recording chamber and control room), in reality they are often very different. The recording and surrounding space can often reflect the personalities of those running them and can influence those using that space, as emphasised by Keith Negus who noted in his review of the music industry that "the interior of a studio can influence the atmosphere at a recording session and have subtle but profound effects on the music produced."[43]
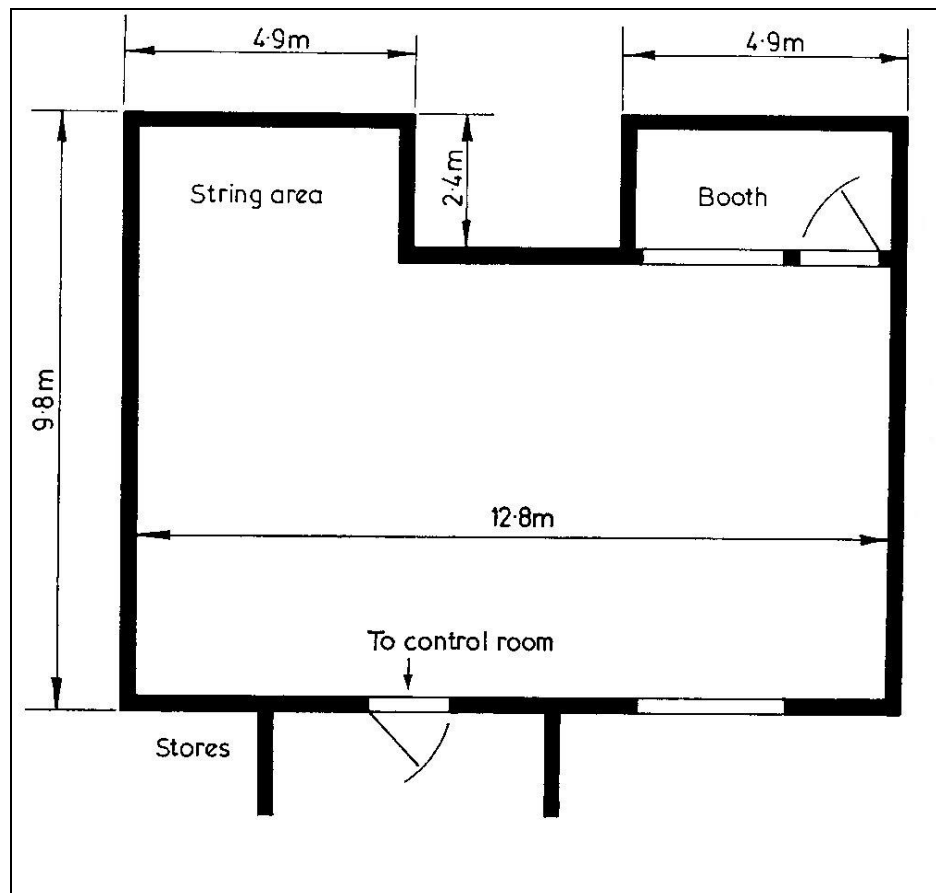
Figure 55: Layout of Strawberry's studio area in 1974[44]

[43] K. Negus, *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry*, (London: Arnold, 1992).
[44] J. Dwyer, "Around the Studios: Strawberry, Manchester", *Studio Sound*, July 1974, p.68.
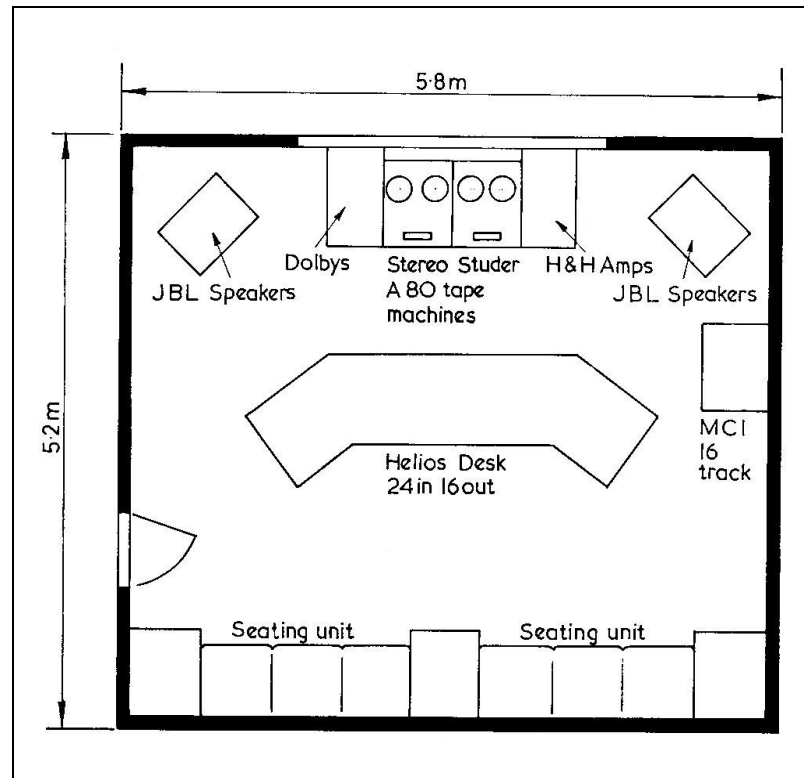
Figure 56: Layout of Strawberry's control room area in 1974[45]

Space

One of the most notable by-products of the emerging multitrack system of recording in the 1970s was that individual musicians began to be separated in the studio in order to record their own particular parts of the music or, as Alan Williams noted, they "recorded in severe isolation."[46] The working layout of the studio altered and changed the way in which the artists interacted with the space and with each other, as noted by one musician looking back at the development of the recording studio; "We should have seen the sign. Someone should have noticed sooner that open recorded air was missing."[47] The space that had often been large and spacious to accommodate groups of musicians performing together was split into units with screens, false walls and individual chambers erected to ensure that individuals could be recorded separately. This change was emphasised by those bands that refused to conform to this notion of separation, as seen by the approach of the Rolling Stones; "The sound on *Jumpin' Jack Flash* is very close together, because we do sit close to each other in the studio, much to most engineers' amazement nowadays."[48]

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[45] J. Dwyer, "Around the Studios: Strawberry, Manchester", *Studio Sound*, July 1974, p.70.

[46] A. Williams, "'Been Drowning Me Out': Sonic Aesthetics, Neo-New Traditionalists, and the Performance of Process", *Echo* 4:2 (2002), www.humnet.ucla.edu/echo/volume4-issue2/folk/williams.html

[47] www.stereosociety.com/recordingstudio.html

[48] D. Loewenstein and P. Dodd, *According to the Rolling Stones*, (London: Phoenix, 2004), p.110.

Another prominent feature of this era appears to have been the growing ownership of the studio space by those artists creating the music. It seems that this gave more freedom from external pressures and permitted experimentation on a scale unseen before. Tony Banks (of Genesis), for example, commented on the benefits of being able to spend time in their own recording studio when he said "As soon as we came up with an idea that was good, we could put it straight down on tape…We've often found in the past that when you take two or three months to write before recording, you get some incredibly strong moments during the writing but which you can't recreate in the studio"[49]

Eric Stewart related 10cc's ownership and use of Strawberry Studios to simple childhood pleasures by saying "we were children in our own toy shop."[50] Interestingly, this analogy of childhood was also used by Stewart's partner, Graham Gouldman, in 2006 when he looked back at the role the Studio played in 10cc's development:

> And because we had our own studio we would record when no one else was using it. Because of that it was done in a very casual way. We weren't thinking about deadlines, we weren't thinking about budgets, it was our own playground.[51]

The development of synthetic sounds and the emergence of digital recording from the 1980s onwards also challenged the more traditional approach to recording studio activity and changed the perception of the studio space of those in it. The versatility, and range, of sounds produced by the synthesiser meant that many artists relied entirely on these machines for their music. Some of the more sophisticated instruments had the capability of storing and mixing sounds together and this meant that part of the process that had been undertaken in the recording studio could now be achieved wherever the instruments were housed. Artists now had more choice in where they recorded and the environment in which they worked was noticeably different from that of others. The rise in personal computers and programs designed for music composition, for example, enabled a growing number of people to own the capability for music production, often in their own homes. The studio space, once it became digital, could be easily accommodated in a small room in a house, as

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[49] D. Fowler and B. Dray, *Genesis: A Biography*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1992), p.187.
[50] L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.326.
[51] http://playlouder.com/feature/+dr-rock-vs-10cc/

American musician Andrew Gold noted in 2003 when looking back at the rise of the home studio in the 1980s; "music was now as mobile as my pc – I preferred working at home to being tied to the studio."[52] The most notable feature that was to strike visitors to the studio in its early days was the contrast between the interior and the outside of the building, as one journalist noted in 1976 at the start of his report on a visit to the Studio; "In a less than salubrious part of Stockport…the austere surroundings belie the comparative internal splendour of Strawberry."[53] Having described the building's exterior as being 'run down', 'dark' and 'gloomy', many of those entering inside Strawberry commented on the "inside furnitured with low-key sophistication."[54] Paul Gambaccini, for instance, compared walking inside the building to "entering Dr Who's tardis. It seemed so much bigger inside, it looked so much more modern, light and another world."[55] Another visitor, who had used the words 'grimy' and 'old iron' to describe the outside of 3 Waterloo Road, contrasted it to the inside by saying there was, "a spaceship like atmosphere inside – plastic, leather, shiny steel, bright red, black, silver and white",[56] whilst a local journalist made the same 'science fiction' connection when noting that the control room was "dominated by a massive mixing console which looks as though it could hurtle you into space."[57]

The lighting within the Strawberry studio area was also adjustable to meet the differing needs of the Studio's clients. Eric Stewart noted in 1971 that "Some heavy musicians prefer playing into semi-darkness…[but] orchestras prefer to play with the lights burning brightly."[58] But the main aim of those establishing Strawberry was not just to present a modern image (which would have been the preconceived notion of a recording studio at that time anyway), or to simply contrast the tiled walls and floor image of the established studios, but to let their décor, down to the smallest detail, reflect their attitude and approach to the recording business. This even extended as far as ensuring that the small kitchen was equipped properly, as one visitor noticed when visiting Strawberry in 1981; "Even the crockery is covered in strawberries!"[59]

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[52] Andrew Gold, email, 25th February 2003.
[53] "Strawberry Studios", *International Musician and Recording World*, January 1976, p.53.
[54] D. McCullough, "Truth, Justics and the Mancunian Way", *Sounds*, August 11th 1979.
[55] Paul Gambaccini, 27th November 2003.
[56] G. Herman, "10cc and Strawberry Studios Forever", (Reproduced in *The 10cc Scrapbook Volume 3*, The 10cc Fan Club, 1996).
[57] *Stockport Messenger*, February 6th 1981, p.9.
[58] "Studio Spotlight – Strawberry Recording Studios", *Beat Instrumental*, December 1971, p.50.
[59] *Stockport Messenger*, February 6th 1981, p.9.

This point was not lost on one musician in the 1980s who was impressed with the cutting-edge technology contained in the Studio's kitchen area:

> My memory of working in Strawberry Studios was going 'They've got a microwave. I've never seen one.' (laughs) You could make incredible toasted cheese – but a professional musician discovering a microwave is pathetic really.[60]

One of the major decisions with regard to the interior space that Strawberry's owners took in the 1970s was to employ a specific studio design firm to re-fit Strawberry's control room. This room was the nerve-centre of the studio, housing the mixing desk, and it was where the producers and engineers would sit to hear and mix what was being played in the recording studio. They chose Tom Hidley (who had set up Westlake/Eastlake Audio), who later on would become known as "the king"[61] of studio designers and who would design and build Strawberry Studios South and the Strawberry Mastering room in London. The design of the Stockport control room was impressive ("The décor was pretty good as it was but it doesn't compare to the finished results now")[62] and Peter Tattersall emphasised the importance of this in the 1980s when he noted "It's a very clever acoustic design and that matters a great deal in the control room."[63] The material used for the walls was stone and cork and thick, plush carpet was used on the floors, contrasting with the early days of the studios when the egg boxes were stuck to the walls to improve the sound insulation. The same material was used in Strawberry South too as shown by this description of that studio when it was under construction; "…with walls of glass, varnished wood and cork looking like wood bark. The floor is covered by a thick, tufty brown carpet…"[64] The impression that this studio and Stockport's control room managed to convey through their design and construction was one of professionalism and opulence and the studios' clients were certainly impressed, as shown by this memory of one visitor to Strawberry North in the 1970s:

> I was more suitably impressed with the walls…these were layered in a mixture of Californian pine and a particular kind of stone that had been quarried off a cliff face in Colorado. Apparently only this stone would absorb the sound in the specific way that the audio engineers deemed acoustically correct.[65]

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[60] http://shotbybothsides.com/ig_1299.htm
[61] www.artisansoundrecorders.com/bio.html
[62] "Strawberry Studios", *International Musician and Recording World*, January 1976, p.53.
[63] *Stockport Express Advertiser*, 26th May 1983, p.31
[64] G. Brown, "Two's company, four's a crowd", *Melody Maker*, January 22nd 1977, p.31
[65] C. P. Lee, *Shake, Rattle and Rain: Popular Music Making in Manchester, 1950-1995*, (Devon: Hardinge Simpole, 2002), p.163.

As time progressed, however, certain aspects of this space ceased to function in the same way as the attitudes and outlook of those using it altered. The Strawberry room and studio, and others like them (Hidley and Westlake/Eastlake were designing all across the world, including, for example, the control room at Mountain Studios in Switzerland[66] and Paradise Studios in Australia)[67] began to lose their appeal and the space that had overawed so many began to inspire different feelings. The punk movement, already noted as being connected with raw excitement, spontaneity and an attack on anything considered to be 'the establishment' began to influence musicians' approach to the recording environment. The Westlake/Eastlake studio designs had become so widespread that the word "homogeneous" began to be applied to them[68] and the uniform nature of studios was beginning to irritate some musicians. Indeed, it was not just the younger artists who began to associate such studios with another generation, but even musicians like Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, who had left 10cc in 1976 to pursue their own musical careers as a duo, were beginning to voice their own concerns; "Everyone uses the Eastlake studio system now. It's characterless."[69] The aesthetics of the space were shifting and altering, maybe 'warping' in the Vidler sense, as those using it projected their own negative feelings and thoughts onto it. However, such feelings did not prevail over the practical concerns of musical ability and the desire for raw, unadulterated 'pure' music was soon diluted by the musical progression of these artists and the arrival of new types of music (electronic and new romantic). The Strawberry space, which had been in danger of becoming too luxurious and standardised for the young musical upstarts, was still very much in demand from producers, record companies and artists alike, as the Studio progressed into the 1980s.

As well as interacting with those recording at the studio and the wider community, studios in general also provided a place of work for many and would have been seen in a different light from those without the day-to-day connection with the buildings. To many associated with recording studios, the working environment generally in the studio was not considered to be the best and did not necessarily alter much over the years, as seen from this summary posted by one producer in the 1990s:

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[66] www.mountainstudios.com/index2.html
[67] www.mikeruddbillputt.com/home/Music_Downloads/Music_downloads_feedback.htm
[68] www.stereosociety.com/body_recordingstudio.html
[69] H. Doherty, "How to get to be rich and famous, Kev?", *Melody Maker*, September 23rd 1978, p.25.

> The recording studio might be one of the least pleasant of all human environments. A typical contemporary studio has no windows. The control room pretends to be air-conditioned, kept cool if only for the comfort of the equipment in it, and if it really works the powerful fans always seem to blow freezing cold air down the back of your neck…Surely this cannot be anyone's idea of a comfortable and productive work environment? How did this torture chamber evolve?[70]

However, those working in these conditions often became oblivious to the hardship they were facing daily. The longevity of service and a close involvement in the setting up and development of a building could invoke close ties with, and loyalty to, it and it is no surprise in Strawberry's case that there was a bond between those who worked in the studio and the building itself. Many of the original owners were personally involved in the work on the building and fine-tuned it over the first eight years of its existence. Therefore, rather than simply just being a place of work, the studio building came to represent something else. Whilst to many, Strawberry might have seemed to be represented by "a backstreet…and a grimy street scene of old iron and red brickwork",[71] to others, it was also "home, in which case you feel a little differently."[72] The small number of staff at Strawberry and their close association with the building engendered a different attitude towards it and the surrounding area. As Peter Tattersall put it, "You see things differently when you've been there so long. Parts of the building became invisible after a while and it was only when bands pointed things out that they suddenly reappeared, as if by magic."[73]

Strawberry also stood out from many other studios through the amount of time and money that those running it put back into the business. Success can be measured in a number of ways, but the accolades from outside observers and full booking diaries show how well the studio did over many years. Another measure of success, and one interior design feature that most studios like to use still, are the seemingly-obligatory gold, silver or platinum discs for that get presented for certain levels of sales, often featured on some prominent wall. Strawberry displayed many of theirs in the building and allowed themselves the luxury of at least one design feature that, to some extent, bragged about their successes (see Figures 57 and 58).

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[70] www.stereosociety.com/body_recordingstudio.html
[71] G. Herman, '10cc and Strawberry Studios Forever', (Reproduced in *The 10cc Scrapbook Volume 3*, The 10cc Fan Club, 1996).
[72] R. Williams, 'C.C. Riders', *Melody Maker*, April 14th 1973, p.39.
[73] Interview with Peter Tattersall, July 14th 2001.

Figure 57: Richard Scott, plus award discs, at Strawberry[74]

Figure 58: A visual representation of Strawberry's success[75]

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[74] *Stockport Messenger*, January 18th 1985, p.15.
[75] Strawberry Recording Studios North Brochure, c.1983 (Author's Private Collection).

The presence of the gold discs in the Studio also allowed for humorous moments, as seen from this recollection by Tony Wilson of Martin Hannett working in Strawberry:

> Martin is sitting at the mixing desk, starting straight ahead. Pupils ultimately contracted. What drugs? Lotsa drugs. The mix ends. Martin, startled, jumps from the producer's chair. 'What's that? What's that gold shiny thing? It's not a halo, is it? I'm not dead. Am I dead?' 'No, Martin,' says Ian. 'It's a gold disc. 10CC, 'I'm Not In Love'.[76]

The Geography of the Studio

In many historical accounts, geography is used mainly to describe and explain the specific factors that have led to the development of certain industries in particular locations.[77] Traditionally, location of the older industries has been determined by the proximity to raw materials and labour so that, taking Strawberry's home town of Stockport as an example, it was the water of the Rivers Goyt and Tame (which merge in the town to form the River Mersey), allied with the damp climate, which were the major factors in the development of the town's silk, cotton, hatting and engineering industries. However, the emergence of small, high technology and service industries have since allowed for greater industrial mobility where geographical location can be influenced by less rigid factors such as market availability, state policy, regional incentive schemes and other random variables.[78] In Stockport, this saw a move away from the traditional heavy industries towards a more geographically-dispersed service sector, often located in specially-constructed business parks, which employed 75% of the town's workforce in 2006.[79]

In the music industry, however, location is a much more complex issue, as seen by the emerging regional challenge to the London-centred industry and, in recent years, the globalization of the pop music market. Whilst it has become generally accepted that a large part of the success of the British music industry since the 1960s has been based on region-specific music, such as the Beatles-led Merseybeat era of the 1960s and the 'Madchester' era of the 1980s, it is only in recent years that those studying

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[76] A. Wilson, *24 Hour Party People: What the Sleeve Notes Never Tell You*, (London: Channel 4 Books, 2002), p.74.

[77] A. Hoare, *The Location of Industry in Britain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) provides an overview.

[78] I. Begg, 'High Technology Location and the Urban Areas of Great Britain', *Urban Studies*, 28:6 (1991), pp.961-81.

[79] 'Stockport Economic Overview', www.stockport.gov.uk/content/business/economicdevelopment/sectorinformation?a=5441

the influence of music have concentrated on the local, as opposed to national or international, role of music production. Studies of specific localities and their music, such as Cohen's look at Liverpool[80] or Finnegan's investigation of Milton Keynes[81] have been augmented by an increasing number of researchers seeking to analyse the significance of *locality* in music generally. Tony Mitchell, for example, uses the term *local* to apply to national scenes in an increasingly global market[82] whilst Bennett argues that *local* should be recognised as a more fluid space in which competing and changing notions of localism are housed.[83] Such moves also tie in with the recent turn away from the 'Grand Narratives' of British history towards a recognition that the processes of change and devolution across Europe have affected the way in which History has evolved and become more regionalised.[84]

London

> Its head is too large, out of proportion to the other members; its face and hands have also grown monstrous, irregular and 'out of all shape'…London is so large and so wild that it contains no less than everything...bow down before the immensity.[85]

The declaration on the April 1966 cover of *Time* magazine that London was now "The Swinging City"[86] is evidence of the unique position that the Capital city held as the 'swinging sixties' progressed. The empowerment of the young through an improved economic situation, the abolition of National Service and greater personal freedom with regard to the sex and drug scenes, allowed the two main youth cultures, music and fashion, to blossom in the Capital. Carnaby Street and the King's Road were the sites of numerous boutiques, whilst the London art schools were the breeding grounds for numerous musicians. London had reinvented itself (or, as Rycroft suggests, had undergone a "re-capitalisation"[87] process) since the 1951 Festival of Britain had fused together the Capital and notions of 'Modernity' in many people's minds. In music, too, London was the place to be. From the setting up of the

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[80] S. Cohen, *Rock Culture in Liverpool: Popular Music in the Making* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[81] R. Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[82] T. Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop and Rap in Europe and Oceania* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996).

[83] A. Bennett, *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music Identity and Place* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000).

[84] One example of this has been the development of the Institute of Cornish Studies at the University of Exeter (www.institutes.ex.ac.uk/ics/).

[85] P. Ackroyd, *London: A Biography*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 2000), p.1-2.

[86] *Time*, April 15th 1966, cover.

[87] S. Rycroft, "The Geographies of Swinging London", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 28:4 (2002), p566.

first gramophone factories and recording rooms, through the emergence of the industry's publishing houses on Denmark Street's 'Tin Pan Alley', to the establishment of major record company headquarters across the city, London has always dominated, and been the centre of, the British music industry. Allied with the London dominance of the printed and visual media and the entertainment industry in general, the Capital's hold over the music industry intensified from the 1960s onwards and still remains today (the City's inward investment agency recently declared that ninety percent of the industry's activity is centred on London.)[88]

Whilst music obviously developed and flourished across Britain's towns and cities from the late 1950s onwards, as seen in the rise in coffee bars, discotheques and clubs in most of them, London came to be accepted as the natural nucleus of the industry with only the occasional challenge to the control that was so prevalent from the Capital. Some have suggested that such dominance was achieved through underhand means and Bill Harry, an authority on The Beatles who was personally involved in the industry at the time of the Merseybeat explosion, suggests that, "there may well have been an understanding between London A&R men and the capital's media to undermine the impact of Mersey groups in favour of returning London to the forefront of the music business."[89] Even during the Madchester era of the late 1980s, the London-based music press and other media were very much at the centre of reporting on, and promoting, the music. Although the artists themselves were keen to promote their Manchester roots, much of the power and decision-making remained in the Capital.

Recording studios, too, had very much been London-based up until the late 1960s. The major record-company studios were all in the Capital and the first independents were located there too from the late 1960s onwards. When the music press began to report on recording studio activity in the early 1970s, many of the articles focused on these studios and gave the impression that the recording studio world was entirely based in the Capital. Headlines emphasizing the importance of London studios[90] were reinforced by accounts of artist-owned studios that often ignored the provincial concerns. For example, in 1975, *Melody Maker*'s review of British studios declared

[88] London First Centre, *Media in London*, (London: LFC, 1997).
[89] B. Harry, "Did London Sabotage The Mersey Sound?",
www.triumphpc.com/mersey-beat/a-z/london-sabotage.shtml
[90] "London Studios As World Recording Centers", *Billboard*, November 13th 1971, p.L-4.

that "probably the three foremost artist-owned studios in England are The Who's Ramport in Sahf (sic) London, The Kink's Konk in North London and The Moodies' Threshold Studios in West Hampstead"[91] and ignored many of the studios, such as Stockport's Strawberry Studios, that were very much in the public eye at the time. Indeed, this seeming London-bias appeared to ignore many of the advantages that were available in not being situated in London. For Strawberry, these were best summed up by the artist/owners, 10cc, in 1973, when they said "We don't have to arrive at a session having driven through traffic jams for two hours, all nerve-wracked. Our running costs are lower too because we're not in the middle of Oxford Street."[92]

In spite of the success of The Beatles and other regional musicians in the mid to late 1960s, London had reclaimed the role of central hub of the music industry at the end of the 1960s, certainly up to the late-1970s. As one writer noted of the early 1970s artists, "…most of the hit-makers you can name from other British locations have usually come to the nation's capital city and made their recording. There, they have been observed and duly reported on by musical writers."[93] And yet, the geographical location of bands, including where they recorded their music, could allow them to make specific statements about themselves and their approaches to the music industry. In Strawberry's case, the way this message changed and altered over the years provides an interesting reflection on how location could become a major factor in the narrative associated with certain bands and types of music.

Being Stockport

In the mid 1970s, the national music scene was changing. The arrival of punk, and its affect on the country, was startling, with the Sex Pistol's performances at the Manchester's Lesser Free Trade Hall in 1976 cited as the catalyst for the rise in the City's musical status. One of the key elements of this rise in punk, as Haslam noted, was that it gave cities such as Manchester and Liverpool an independence and credibility that had been overshadowed by London in previous years. Such cities, Haslam said "developed fierce local identities…and a new perception that moving to London and going with a major was selling out"[94] and a new wave of Manchester

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[91] D. Blake, "Go It Alone Superstars", *Melody Maker*, March 15th 1975, p.36.
[92] R. Williams, "C.C. Riders", *Melody Maker*, April 14th 1973, p.34.
[93] T. Jasper, "Love on the agenda", *Manchester Evening News*, June 9th 1977, p.11.
[94] D. Haslam, *Manchester, England*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), p.115.

bands, such as The Buzzcocks, gave the city a new status in the national music scene. This is emphasised by Leyshon, Matless and Revill who point out that punk "involved the reassertion of placed identities"[95] and moved pop music back from the 'mid-Atlantic' to regional bases, particularly Manchester. This change was reflected by the music press of the time who began to investigate and report on the blossoming Manchester scene. Stockport writer, Paul Morley, began to champion Manchester as he started writing in the *New Musical Express* and, after a while, other music papers began to follow suit. *Melody Maker*, on June 3rd 1978, noted that the original Manchester punk bands were now giving way to "a whole number of bands who can justly claim to make up Manchester's second wave"[96] in the shape of such groups as Durutti Column, The Fall and Joy Division. This momentum continued and more and more bands, such as The Smiths and New Order, came to keep Manchester at the forefront of the national music scene. Even as the punk and post-punk embers began to die down in the late 1980s, Manchester experienced a third wave as the drug-fuelled rave 'Madchester' era was heralded by bands such as 808 State, The Stone Roses, Happy Mondays and James. Once again, the whole nation became entranced by the City's central role in the music world and the national music press produced endless articles on the phenomenon. No longer did Manchester bands have to openly declare their Northern origins to the world as by now "the city had become synonymous not only with successful pop groups but questioning, original groups, groups fronted by larger than life characters playing cutting edge music…the city was energised; of its own accord, uncontrolled."[97] The Buzzcock's guitarist, Steve Diggle, noted the importance of not being in the Capital and spoke of the importance of his Manchester roots when he declared "Manchester didn't have as many distractions as London, and that moulded a lot of characters. You had to do it on your own in a way, and it generated this energy that took off in 1976."[98]

In the punk and new wave eras, the titles or lyrics of a number of songs would reference parts of the City, as seen, for example, in The Fall's *Cheetham Hill* and *City Hogoblins* ("It's a large black slug in Piccadilly, Manchester") or The Smith's *Rusholme Ruffians*, *Headmaster Ritual* ("Belligerent ghouls run Manchester schools"), *Vicar in a Tutu* ("I was minding my business, lifting some lead off the

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[95] A. Leyshon, D. Matless, G. Revill, *The Place of Music* (London: Guilford Press, 1998), p.20.
[96] A. Harries, "Manchester: riding the second wave", *Melody Maker*, June 3rd 1978, p.38.
[97] D. Haslam, *Manchester, England*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), pp.128-9.
[98] www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/02/16/1045330464794.html?oneclick=true

roof of the Holy Name Church"), *Suffer Little Children* ("Oh Manchester, so much to answer for") and *Miserable Lie* ("Just rented a room in Whalley Range"). Indeed, The Smiths' songs were noted as "creating images that are as iconic of Manchester as the paintings of L S Lowry"[99] or of deploying "the imagery of provincial northern life…as a weapon against the cheap hedonism of an Americanised southern England."[100]Also, the songs would reflect issues that were working class and down-to-earth and this became particularly accepted as a Mancunian trait.[101] In other words, the music and Manchester itself combined to become intertwined. As one observer put it, "Manchester is a dark, cramped and chilly city. It's no surprise then, that so much of the music that comes from Britain's second largest city has the same damp, claustrophobic sound."[102]

And yet, whilst the new generations of Manchester bands came to represent the City, many of them still owed their development to one institution that had been created and nurtured in a previous era. Although, as Dave Haslam has pointed out, such bands were responsible for their own success to a large degree, ("There was nowhere to play, so you booked your own venues. There were no labels, so you started your own")[103] they still needed a place to record and Strawberry Studios, with its Stockport location, provided the perfect opportunity for Manchester bands to use and to retain their City status. The list of bands who used Strawberry North is impressive. The Buzzcocks, Joy Division, The Smiths, James and The Stone Roses amongst others all came to Stockport to lay down some tracks. Yet, with their Manchester connections already established on a global scale, there was no need for such bands to openly declare their whereabouts when recording, as perhaps their Manchester pride might suggest they should. The typical Manchester understatement was proof enough of a band's locational identity and further explanation of where the music was being produced seems not to have been needed. The location of Strawberry, however, with its link to industrial Manchester, was an important factor in later years when many of the famous Factory Records acts used Strawberry as well as other local studios. Factory's ethos ("with the industrial revolution as its model, Factory played upon Manchester's traditions, invoking at once the images of the industrial

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[99] "Manchester" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester

[100] S. Reynolds, *Blissed Out: The Raptures of Rock*, (London: Serpent's Tail, 1990), p.24.

[101] Sara Cohen, writing about Liverpool music, notes that the bands there were producing melodic pop rather than "music of a harsher, angrier style" (Cohen, 1991, p15.)

[102] R. Byrne, 'Deathly Chill', www.alexandria-press.com/novi_broj/joy_division.htm

[103] D. Haslam, *Manchester, England*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), p.113.

North")[104] was well-served by the use of Strawberry. A good example is found in the use of the Studio's surroundings as the backdrop for Joy Division's publicity shots in July 1979. Whether accidental or not, the industrial landscape behind the band members in Figure 59 or the ugly street scene in Figure 60 were certainly symbolic of the group, record label and recording studio.

Figure 59: Joy Division at the back of Strawberry Studios, Stockport[105]

Figure 60: Joy Division at the top of Waterloo Road[106]

This relationship between the record label and studio was reflected in the original script for the film *24 Hour Party People,* which was based on Tony Wilson and

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[104] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester, 'Popular Music'
[105] www.enkiri.com/joy/pics/jd_stockport79_street6.html
[106] www.enkiri.com/joy/pics/jd_stockport79_street4.html

Factory Records, and included certain scenes set in Strawberry. Unfortunately, with the studio long gone, the script was revised and the scenes re-set in Rochdale's Cargo Studios instead.[107]

A comparison with other British studios, their buildings and locations, shows how different they could be to Strawberry's industrial setting and how their environment could come to represent contrasting approaches to recording. Rockfield Studios, in Wales, is an example of a studio in a rural setting and one of the earliest descriptions of it in the 1973 music press painted a vivid picture of the surroundings; "It's rural, very rural, at Rockfield. Straw's trodden into the studio and the mixing room looks like a 21st Century milking room. In fact there's a rumour that sessions have been brought to a halt at milking time."[108] Simple Minds' visit to Rockfield in the early 1980s shows the studio's environment still intrigued the music journalists and the picture painted of it also provides a contrast with the more claustrophobic setting of Strawberry in Waterloo Road; "A beautiful, balmy summer's day earlier this year at Rockfield Studios, a converted farmhouse tucked away in the lovely, lush green countryside near Monmouth in Wales."[109] The description of Richard Branson's Manor Studios in Kidlington, near Oxford, by pop group Helix (who visited in the mid 1980s) also shows how studios could be found in a more opulent and luxurious setting: "As you entered the grounds from the main highway, there was a small lake which was illuminated at night by coloured flood lights. The Manor had its own go-cart track, an outdoor heated swimming pool covered by an enormous bubble, (so you could use it in the winter)."[110]

A New Narrative?

The recent historical analysis of punk's emergence in the mid 1970s has had to tread a careful path between attributing sociological explanations to the wider punk movement (or giving it "academic authority")[111] and a recognition that, for many, punk was simply the "time-tried rejection of existing rules and the rowdy voice of change [and that] trying to read any more into punk is as pointless and as futile as

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[107] www.partypeoplemovie.com/film_sub.php?section=1&subsection=2&article_id=35
[108] M. Plummer, "Rockfield – a breath of country air", *Melody Maker*, January 20th 1973, p.35.
[109] I. Cranna, "Sons and Fascination", *Smash Hits*, 1981, 17th/30th September, p.31
[110] www.planethelix.com/History/h1987.htm
[111] J. Davies, "The Future of "No Future": Punk rock and Postmodern Theory", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 29:4 (1996), p.3.

making sense of adolescence."[112] Whilst some academics want to place punk in a wider narrative (Simonelli, for instance, saw the movement as "the most outspoken effort to restore working-class values in British rock and roll"[113] whilst others have emphasised the influence of Situationist anti-consumerism writers like Guy Debord),[114] others, such as Redhead, have framed it purely within a musical narrative.[115] However, one of the key features of the punk movement was the iconoclasm that saw the total rejection of the music that had gone before. Such attitudes became woven into the musical narratives of 1970s music and, looking at Manchester specifically, became accepted as the definitive statement concerning the lack of an early 1970s Mancunian scene. Contemporary advocates of the punk movement were scathing of Manchester music in the early 1970s and Andrew Harries described the city as a "musical desert"[116] whilst DJ/historian, Dave Haslam, declared:

> What was beginning to grow in those post-punk days was a strong attitude of staying real, doings things in an uncompromised Mancunian way…This is in stark contrast to the earlier parts of the 1970s, when much locally made rock music, pre-punk, was rootless, bland, performed in a gutless style…These groups were so over-stylised, so frilly, so blow-dried, it seems like rock music had merely become a branch of bad hairdressing.[117]

Other writers, in general overviews of Manchester music, have also come to accept and repeat this narrative associated with the early 1970s:

> In the latter half of the sixties and the early seventies music seemed to sink into a slumber across Greater Manchester. There were bands that made an impact but unlike in the first half of the sixties and then from 1976 there wasn't much of a local music scene. Those groups that made it during this period did it on their own not as part of a Manchester phenomena.[118]

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[112] B. Chamberlain, "The Quintessential Punk", (Kingston, Canada: Department of Film and Media, Queen's University, 1995), http://raymediaweb.freeservers.com/History%20of%20Punk%20essay.html

[113] D. Simonelli, "Anarchy, Pop and Violence: Punk rock Subculture and the Rhetoric of Class, 1976-78", *Contemporary British History*, 16:2 (2002), p.121

[114] G. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle and Other Films*, (London: Rebel Press, 1992); T. McDonough, *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*, (London: MIT Press, 2002).

[115] S. Redhead, *The End-of-the-Century Party: Youth and Pop Towards 2000*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990)

[116] A. Harries, "Manchester: riding the second wave", *Melody Maker*, June 3rd 1978, p.38.

[117] D. Haslam, *Manchester England: The Story of the Pop Cult City*, (London: Fourth Estate,1999), p.143.

[118] J. Schofield, "Musical Capital: The History of Manchester Pop in Four Chapters", www.manchester.com/music/features/music3.php, Chapter 2 The Punkless Seventies.

And yet, the study of Strawberry's early years, prior to the punk explosion of 1976, shows how the accepted narrative of the lack of a Manchester scene might be considered to be misleading. The attitude of those who had set up Strawberry Studios, and even those who chose to use it, displayed many of the stubborn, gutsy and confrontational characteristics that were supposed to be missing during this period of a supposed lack of Mancunian pride, and the people running and recording in Strawberry were very vocal in their feelings about the studio. One of the earliest spurs for those setting up Strawberry was the opportunity to counter the perceptions of the London-based music fraternity. In 1973, one music paper reported that "Time was when their friends laughed at the idea of a group from Stockport 'making it'. They laughed all the more when 10cc said they were going to start a local studio that would be as good as any in the world."[119] This was reinforced one year later when one of the recording studio trade journals noted that "Pete Tattersall says people thought he was mad when he said he was going to open a studio north of Wormwood Scrubs. Quite a way North, actually – Stockport. 'Who's going to record there?' they asked him. 'We will' he said."[120]

As early as 1970, when the embryonic 10cc were known as Hotlegs and were riding high on the back of their one hit (*Neanderthal Man*), they made a real effort to promote the Northern origins of the record. They emphasised to *Melody Maker* their desire to challenge the Capital when they said:

> London has been the centre for God knows how long. Nobody has been able to record elsewhere if they wanted success. But now we are producing a hit sound from up here, which just shows that it can be done[121]

a point picked up by other music papers too: "Hotlegs are very enthusiastic about the Strawberry set up and they hope it can be the start of a breakaway from London as the one recording centre in Britain. Lol interjected 'Our foremost reason for making the record was to try and establish the Studios in Stockport, Manchester.'"[122]

And they also ensured that the studio's home town (albeit Manchester, rather than Stockport) was credited on the record label (see Figure 61)

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[119] R.B., "You've Heard the Rumours About 10cc", *Beat Instrumental*, September 1973, p.20.
[120] J. Dwyer, "Around the Studios: Strawberry, Manchester", *Studio Sound*, July 1974, p.68.
[121] A Means, "Hotlegs – hotfoot to the top", *Melody Maker*, July 25th 1970, p.16.
[122] R. Carr, "Hotlegs' hit more atmosphere than song says Lol Creme", *New Musical Express*, August 22nd 1970, p.14.

Figure 61: 1970 record label crediting Strawberry Studios[123]

Other artists, too, were happy to use the Studio and declare their appreciation of Strawberry's location. Barclay James Harvest noted in 1972 that, *"Most of the time we're happier away from London. I think it is relevant to say we don't have to come to London to be a success."*[124] By 1973, once 10cc had been created and were starting to hit the charts, they continued to champion the studio and its location:

> Being in the North helps us to think more clearly. In London we'd probably have all the wrong influences. We'd get seduced by ideas that wouldn't be good for us. Here, we know what's right for us.[125]

Others also noticed the band's stance of putting distance between themselves and the Capital, saying they were *"anything but slaves to the trends and stultifying hipness which afflict the London music business."*[126]

When they looked back at that period later on in the 1970s, 10cc were still adamant that the geographical location of Strawberry had helped them make a definite

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[123] Author's Private Collection.
[124] "Barclay James: So who needs London?", *Melody Maker*, May 27th 1972, p.41.
[125] R. Williams, "C.C. Riders", *Melody Maker*, April 14th 1973, p.39.
[126] R. Williams, "Rubber Bulletin", *Melody Maker*, June 23rd 1973, p.8.

statement about their intentions; "The studio in Stockport, as well as helping us, was to help other musicians who, like us, were getting fed up with having to go down to London and having to pay London prices for studio time."[127] Strawberry's owners had a vision that would extend the influence of both the studio and the town itself when declaring, "Staffmen at Motown had a good run. Now it's Stockport with the will to stretch the pop song."[128]

Although the final choice of Waterloo Road was, to some extent, accidental, the character of the building and surrounding area provided the studio owners with an interesting selling point. 10cc's desire to promote their roots and attitude was reinforced by the Northern industrial spirit evoked by Strawberry. This point was emphasised by 10cc's Graham Gouldman, looking back in 2006, when he suggested that the band's whole ethos, from writing to recording, had "something to do with coming from the north of England and a working-class upbringing."[129] This ethos was also apparent when 10cc were considering expanding the Studio in the mid-1970s, as noted by one journalist who spoke to Tattersall in 1975:

> Strawberry people don't like to rush into things, they won't let themselves be tied down by merchant bank cash. Hence, they earn money before they spend it. This philosophy built the studio from a mono tape recorder and it's still good when expanding from 16 to 24 track.[130]

And it was not just the major artists who were able to make use of Strawberry's facilities but also local musicians who would not normally get the chance to record in such professional surroundings. Major names such as 10cc, The Mindbenders, Paul McCartney, Neil Sedaka and the Bay City Rollers would be sharing the studio with a number of South Manchester artists like Impact,[131] St Winifred's School Choir,[132] Bryan and Michael and Porch Party. Strawberry in Stockport could equally be home to the international superstar and the local amateur band.

Ironically, Strawberry's continuing role in the Manchester music scene came about as the Studio's co-owners and key protagonists, 10cc, found themselves having to

[127] C. Irwin, "Splash down for 10cc", *Melody Maker*, August 26th 1978, p.9.
[128] G. Brown, "Strawberry Patch", *Melody Maker*, February 16th 1974, p.19.
[129] G. Reid, "From the Backroom to a Perfect 10", *The New Zealand Herald*, June 15th 2006, www.nzherald.co.nz/section/6/story.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=10386728
[130] F. Ogden, "Strawberry", *Studio Sound*, May 1975, p.46.
[131] B. Lomas, *When Stockport Rocked* (Stockport: Neil Richardson, 2001), p.14.
[132] *Stockport Express*, 31st December 1980, p.31.

create a new studio because they could no longer find any time to record in Stockport. Although they did not go as far as siting their new studio in London, the fact that it was in Dorking (Surrey) was a blow to all those who had always seen the band as being irreversibly linked with Strawberry North (as it now became known).[133] The fact that the band were quoted as saying "the centre of the music business in England is in London and we've got to keep in touch with what's going on…It would be very easy to get isolated and we don't want that",[134] was seen by some as a rejection of their traditional Northern roots.

In essence, whilst the post-punk artists and producers used lyrics and personalities to focus the media on their roots, bands such as 10cc did the opposite and attempted to play down their own image and personality and push Strawberry with an effacing Northern attitude through the many Strawberry-centred quotes that they made in the early 1970s. Whilst their pop-oriented music might have been the antithesis to that of a number of artists from 1976 onwards, the punk narrative that states that bands like 10cc are representative of an era where there was no regional pride or collective Northern spirit is way off the mark. In an era of mid-Atlantic music and glam-rock extravagances, the ordinariness of 10cc, as shown by their lyrics and appearance, marked out their Northern origins. In the same way that later bands such as New Order were credited with being "willing to put their hard-earned back into their home city",[135] 10cc's contribution to Strawberry ("there are few other bands who have ploughed back so much of their income into equipping their own studios on the scale that 10cc have done"[136]) cannot be underestimated. Whilst some have suggested that Manchester was a musical desert in the early 1970s, with little or no regional pride, Gary Herman, writing in 1973, offers a different perspective:

> Once upon a time, Manchester was best known to the pop/rock world as a big town about 30 miles east of Liverpool…The story of 10cc and Strawberry Studios is really the story of pop in Manchester from the early sixties until today. Starting tomorrow, it may be another story altogether – Lol Creme, Kevin Godley, Graham Gouldman

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[133] Indeed, looking back in 2006, one commentator described 10cc as having been "hermetically sealed" in Strawberry between 1972 and 1976 (P. Lester, "Clever Clogs are Cool At Last", *Daily Telegraph*, November 2nd 2006, p.35)

[134] H. Doherty, "10cc: We're the missionaries", *Melody Maker*, September 20th 1975, p.9.

[135] www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/entertainment/music/rock_and_pop/s/79/79430_new_order_biography.html

[136] G. Tremlett, *The 10cc Story*, (London: Futura Publications, 1976), p.116.

and Eric Stewart, who are 10cc and Strawberry Studios, all insist that what they are doing now is the most personally significant thing they have ever done.[137]

This suggests that the surviving punk narrative of Manchester's musical desert is too narrow and that Will Straw's less rigid definition of a music scene ("a space in which a range of musical practices co-exist")[138] would allow for the period of the early 1970s, and specifically the activity centred on Strawberry, to claim some part of the Manchester music scene in much the same way that the Hacienda nightclub is often credited as being an integral part of the 'Madchester' scene[139] in the late 1980s. When the contribution of Strawberry to a number of generations of musicians is taken into account, then the early 1970s was of great significance to the Manchester music scene, as was Manchester's 'satellite' town – Stockport.[140]

Conclusion

Rather than simply being a shell that remained inactive and passive for twenty-five years, the brick building at 3 Waterloo Road, and the space inside it, was an important element in Strawberry's story, a network of geography, architecture and design. The décor, layout and location were all able to contribute to the statement being made by the building and this statement was one that could subtly change over time. For instance, looking at 10cc's use of the Studio between 1970 and 1976, the same building could be 'home' to them at one point in time but then change within a few years to become a "garret",[141] with the connotations of separation, of being under siege or of being stifled.[142] Additionally, the very same space that could come to represent one particular era and style could also then accommodate those who openly opposed and derided that representation. Whilst the views of many of the post-1976 Manchester musicians mirrored those of The Fall's Mark Smith ("Manchester bands were like The Hollies, Freddie & The Dreamers, 10cc, The Buzzcocks – it's all the same fucking vein. All nice clean-cut lads singing about

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[137] G. Herman, "10cc and Strawberry Studios Forever", (Reproduced in *The 10cc Scrapbook Volume 3*, The 10cc Fan Club, 1996).

[138] W. Straw, "Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music", *Cultural Studies*, 5:3 (1991), p.373.

[139] Martyn Walsh, bass player of the Inspiral Carpets, declared that "what encapsulates the Madchester era was the Hacienda, 1987-88 before anything really came overground" (www.drownedinsound.com/articles/6117.html)

[140] History repeated itself in 2004 when Badly Drawn Boy, after recording in Los Angeles, wanted to "come home" (*The Independent Magazine*, June 12th 2004, p.18) and chose to record at the Moolah Rouge Studios in Stockport.

[141] C. Irwin, "Splash down for 10cc", *Melody Maker*, August 26th 1978, p.31.

[142] "I'd begun to find Manchester a bit stifling' said Stewart." L. Newton, *The Worst Band in the World: The Definitive Biography of 10cc*, (London: Minerva Press, 2000), p.123.

love. We deliberately went out of our way to avoid that"),[143] they would still make use of, and benefit from, what was, in effect, the physical embodiment of 10cc's commercial success – Strawberry Studios. This was recognised in *City Life* (a Manchester publication) which noted in 1991 "It has stood the test of time to become more than just a studio space. Instead it exists as an inspiration for both new bands and new industries."[144]

The location of the building was also a major factor, not just in its successful development, but also in its contribution to the way in which the Studio has been remembered since its closure in the early 1990s. Whilst the building's visually-mundane industrial Northern placement both set the tone of the Studio's approach and provided an interesting contrast to the perceived glamour of those artists using the building and the advanced technology inside, it also allowed Strawberry to play its part in the much wider battle between provincial music and the 'Londoncentric' music industry. Its setting also affected the way in which the Studio interacted with, and was remembered by, its local community. For many who passed the immediate vicinity of Strawberry's exterior, items as mundane as the street furniture outside the Studio could come to represent Strawberry almost as much as the building itself. In much the same way that the zebra crossing on Abbey Road has almost become *the* visual representation of that studio,[145] people's memories of Strawberry are now often related to simple items and things, such as standing at the bus stop outside the building, sitting on the steps of the Studio, the peeling red paintwork of the door or, for those who recorded there, the cork tiling on the control room walls. How the town of Stockport itself has commemorated this memory of Strawberry will be explored further in the final Chapter.

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[143] www.prideofmanchester.com/music/Fall.htm
[144] *City Life*, October 23rd 1991, p.17.
[145] Abbey Road's online shop sells zebra crossing t-shirts and caps and has a webcam pointed at the crossing as well (www.abbeyroad.co.uk).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

What began with the simple aim of raising the historical profile of the British recording studio, by producing a conventional historical narrative of the industry's development from the 1960s to 1990s, soon progressed to allow for an analysis of the industry's self-perception and a study of those media images being presented to the public. Leading on from this, mindful of the work of those such as Bruno Latour who have studied science and technology from an outsider's perspective, using Strawberry Recording Studios as an example, the recording studio was then deconstructed into its three main components (technology, architecture and the human element) in order to study each of the network strands individually.

Given the fact that the technical capability of sound reproduction was discovered as late as the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that the recording studio industry should be so closely linked with technological advancement. The advent of multi-tracking and digital sound are just two examples out of many which have shown how technology could be the driver of change in the recording studio from the 1960s onwards. Not only did the studio space itself alter, through partitioning and separation, but the actual recording operation evolved too as recording sessions lengthened and fragmented and the recording studio itself became an extra instrument in the process of music creation. For those outside the industry, the studio technology seemed exciting and complicated and this study has shown how the studios came to be visually represented by either technically impressive items such as the mixing desk or by simple, timeless pieces such as the microphone and headphones. What has also been shown is the fact that the introduction of technology could, in reality, be cautious and chaotic, as seen with the hesitant and confusing advent of digital recording. Also, technology could be as much driven as driver, particularly by those developing or utilising it, as in the example of the birth of Godley and Creme's gizmo or the preference of punk musicians for basic, rather than advanced, technology. In essence, this study of a recording studio is not so much an investigation of technological developments but rather of technology's interaction with the other networks surrounding it, of studying technology in its setting.

Indeed, one of the prominent conclusions to be drawn from this study is that it was the industrial, social and creative aspects of the human element combining with the

surroundings and technology of the studio space which created the unique nature of the sound recording studio. This is best summed up by two quotes from different phases of Strawberry's history: Firstly, when Godley and Creme recorded their *Consequences* album there in 1976 they emphasised the importance of both the technology and human interaction and endeavor when they stated immediately after finishing the album that "To us, doing Consequences was like a laboratory of music, a scientific experiment but instead of being built on fact, it was built on emotion."[1] Secondly, producer Martin Hannett seemingly had the ability to bring together the artist, the technology and the studio itself, as noted by engineer John Pennington, who had worked with Hannett at Strawberry in the 1980s: "He was an audio alchemist and could create depth within a recording that captured the surroundings of the performer, not just the performance."[2] Equally important was the Studio's geographical location, particularly in an industry that was, like the music industry generally, concentrated mainly in London. Strawberry's legacy is that it challenges the conventional understanding of Manchester as a "musical desert"[3] prior the arrival of punk. The Studio's presence, imbued with many of the attitudes and ethics that were accepted as key features of the prominent Manchester music scenes of the 1970s and 1980s, might be said to extend the beginnings of the City's pop musical narrative back as far as 1967, rather, than as Tony Wilson suggested, 1977.[4]

However, whilst the application of Latour's Actor Network Theory to the recording studio, and subsequent examination of the various networks that comprised it, were key elements of this investigation (and could, in theory, provide a framework for research into other industries), the actual process of studying Strawberry Recording Studios and the evolving historical landscape around it have been equally as interesting. For instance, the research took place in a period of increasing historicization of popular music, characterised by the 1990s releases of the Beatles' *Anthology* series of television programmes, book and albums which provided the public with a glimpse of the progressive musical journey undertaken by that iconic group. As far as the actual music was concerned, the *Anthology* releases presented a number of the Beatles' tracks in various stages of construction and also those 'human' moments when mistakes occurred or the recording was interrupted for some

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[1] H. Doherty, "The Things We Do For Art", *Melody Maker*, September 24th 1977, p.45.

[2] www.mymanchester.org/manchester/fe-music_interview-john-pennington.htm

[3] A. Harries, "Manchester: riding the second wave", *Melody Maker*, June 3rd 1978, p.38.

[4] "The scene lasted for 20 years, from 1977 to Oasis", D. Haslam, "Northern Soul: Manchester", *New Statesman*, June 21st 1977, www.newstatesman.com/200706250031

reason, such as "laughter during a chorus or Paul shouting that he couldn't play without his plectrum on *One After* 909."[5] With the first *Anthology* CD[6] deemed to be of "historical significance"[7] and the book[8] described as "Biblical"[9], the *Anthology* series saw record companies begin a "headlong rush to the archives, in a bid to exploit unreleased and often incomplete material"[10] of other artists. Examples of this were bands (Genesis' *Archive 1967 – 1975* box set[11] and Gary Numan's *Archive*),[12] specific record labels (Island Records[13] or Vertigo[14] for instance) or individual producers (such as Martin Hannett[15] and George Martin).[16] Additionally, the archivization of music, possibly dented by the failure of Sheffield's National Centre for Popular Music at the end of the 1990s, was boosted in 2004 by the creation of the Manchester District Music Archive (MDMA),[17] one of whose stated aims at the time it was launched was to promote all aspects of Manchester music:

> Imagine a place where you can find and listen to every piece of music ever made in Greater Manchester. Imagine an interactive journey through time where posters, fanzines and films jostle for your attention. We want to shine a torch into long-forgotten corners of our history. We want to shout about the jazz boom of the '50s and the beat clubs of the '60s. We want to recreate the petulance of punk and the high of the Hacienda in a cutting-edge museum for residents and visitors alike.[18]

Although the MDMA's long-term plan is still to find a physical space in which to exhibit Manchester's musical artefacts, they have so far limited themselves to an online archive of photographs, videos and stories, many of which have been uploaded to the site by those who have visited it.[19]

What has been of most interest throughout this period of research, though, has been, the journey that Strawberry Studios itself has taken from what historian Pierre Nora called *milieux de mémoire* ('real environments of memory') to *lieux de mémoire* or

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[5] *The Guardian*, November 24th 1995, www.guardian.co.uk/thebeatles/story/0,,606550,00.html
[6] Parlophone, 1995, CDPCSP727.
[7] *The Guardian*, November 24th 1995, www.guardian.co.uk/thebeatles/story/0,,606550,00.html
[8] The Beatles, *Anthology*, (London: Weidenfeld Nicolson, 2000).
[9] *The Sunday Times*, November 26th 2000, p.50.
[10] *The Sunday Times*, November 9th 1997, p.18.
[11] Virgin, 1998, CDBOX6.
[12] Rialto, 1997, RMCD205.
[13] *Strangely Strange but Oddly Normal: An Island Anthology 1967-1972*, (Island, 2005, 9822950).
[14] *Time Machine: A Vertigo Retrospective*, (Vertigo, 2005, 9827982).
[15] *Zero: A Martin Hannett Story 1979 – 1991*, (Big Beat, 2006, CDWIKD270).
[16] *Produced by George Martin: 50 Years in Recording*, (Parlophone, 2001, 3754862).
[17] www.mdmarchive.co.uk
[18] www.redcafe.net/showthread.php?t=55949
[19] By July 2007, over 2,600 artefacts had been uploaded to the site.

the symbolic 'sites of memory' which eventually become the focus for those in the present day. For Nora, history and memory were entirely different:

> Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.[20]

As far as Strawberry was concerned, whilst the business was an ongoing concern (or in the years immediately following its closure), the community (such as those who worked or recorded there) ensured that the Studio's living memory was maintained and perpetuated, as shown, for example, by Morrissey (The Smiths) who, when asked, remembered Strawberry with the simple line "…one day in Stockport to enliven history."[21] Interestingly, many of the quotes used by those in Strawberry during its early days invoked memories of the previous industrial uses of the Waterloo Road building, as though attempting to provide the fledgling business with some kind of permanence of status through its varied past. Likewise, the success of many recording studios in general was (and actually still is) often based on artists wanting to use the very places where previous records have been made. Charlie Watts of The Rolling Stones, for instance, noted that the highlight of his visit to Alabama's Music Shoal Studio was not so much the drum kit unusually placed on a riser but more because of "all the guys who had worked in the same studio. I just placed my drums in the place where Roger Hawkins used to have his kit."[22]

Back at Strawberry, Neil Sedaka asked to use the studio in 1973 after hearing the sound quality of Hotleg's 1970 hit single and The Carpenters specifically requested a visit to see where 10cc's *I'm Not In Love* had been produced. Likewise, Julian Shore, of the pop group Grind, noted how they were "far more amazed to be in the same place that had recorded 10cc, Sedaka's Back, etc."[23] The fact that, in 2004, composer Joe Glasman could remember two things of his visit to Strawberry twenty years earlier, namely the sound desk and "the sense of history"[24] he felt when using the Studio, is proof of the developing status developed by Strawberry's personnel.

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[20] P. Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations*, 26: Spring (1989), p.8.
[21] R. Boon, "Morrissey – The Catalogue", http://foreverill.com/interviews/post87/catalog.htm
[22] D. Loewenstein and P. Dodd, *According to the Rolling Stones*, (London: Phoenix, 2004), p.135.
[23] Julian Jay Shore, email, 2nd June 2005.
[24] Joe Glasman, email, 1st July 2004.

Indeed, the wider musical community honoured the Studio's status when Harp included Strawberry in its *Rock Gazeteer*[25] and then awarded it a 'Harp Beat' plaque[26] to place outside on the Studio wall. Interestingly, Strawberry's memory could also be used by others in order to deliberately fabricate or validate other histories. For instance, in the early days of pop group Take That their manager, Nigel Martin-Smith, circulated the story that Mark Owen and Gary Barlow had originally met at Strawberry, where Owen had worked as tea-boy. In his 2006 autobiography, Gary Barlow noted that whilst Owen had worked at Strawberry, he had not initially met him there at all and suggested that Martin-Smith was "just reinventing our history to make us sound more interesting"[27] and using the Studio's status to authenticate the tale.

However, as Nora pointed out, these 'environments of memory', created, perpetuated and shaped by the communities involved, are liable to disappear over time. He argued that "the less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs."[28] When Strawberry Studios closed down in the mid 1990s, 3 Waterloo Road remained and was divided up internally to form new office space. However, the appearance of the building from the outside only changed slightly[29] and the visual reminder of the Studio's existence remained, a memorial to those who had used or even just walked past it, or in other words it became more of a *lieux de mémoire*. This retention of such a visual reminder is one aspect that undoubtedly spurs many conservationists on when they attempt to save buildings, or at least save the facades of structures. The work of a myriad of Building Preservation Trust bodies[30] across the United Kingdom is testimony to the desire to preserve architectural heritage wherever possible. And when demolition of buildings does occur, although memories are still prompted by photographs, memorabilia, video footage and other reminders, the physical presence and impact of buildings on their surroundings is removed and lost.

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[25] P. Frame, *Harp Beat Rock Gazeteer of Great Britain*, (London: Banyan Books, 1989).

[26] "There were 22 in total, usually given to very famous names in rock, to commemorate a moment in rock history." http://www.lespayne.com/about_les_content.htm

[27] "Nigel claimed that we had met at Strawberry Studios, where Mark had worked as a tea boy…I suppose it was just reinventing our history to make us sound more interesting." G. Barlow (With R. Havers), *My Take*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p.74.

[28] P. Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations*, 26: Spring (1989), p.13.

[29] Musician Andy Couzens (of The Stone Roses and The High) noted, "The building is still there. Externally it doesn't look any different, but inside it's offices.", www.kolumn.co.uk/thehigh/biography.htm

[30] www.ahfund.org.uk/advice_bpt.html

For Nora, one of the prerequisites for *milieux de mémoire* to become *lieux de mémoire* is that "there must be a will to remember"[31] in order to replace a community's memories with "the rhetoric of commemoration."[32] In Strawberry's case, such a will to remember has become increasingly apparent over the last few years, as typified by this study and the work of various other people. For one Martin Hannett fan, an internet discussion of that producer's work in Strawberry provoked this response:

> I wonder what's standing there now in England, if it still exists as a studio. I'd love to stand in that studio even for 5 seconds. I don't care if it's turned into some cheesy restaurant now or something. I'd love to be within that space. I don't care if it's just a bunch of rubble of broken walls and ceilings and rocks. I'd love to stand in that space.[33]

For one local musician, James Kirby,[34] the twenty-first anniversary in 2001 of the recording of Joy Division's *Love Will Tear Us Apart*[35] at Strawberry demanded that he produce his own commemoration of that song by recording a new version on the actual steps outside the Studio building.[36] And, in 2002, the building's owner, Julien Bromley (who had taken over managing the property from his father), noticed that many people in the town still referred to the building as Strawberry Studios even though the business had ceased trading nearly ten years previously. He thought it would be both a nice tribute to the building's history and a lure for potential clients if he marketed the property (see Figure 63) using the Strawberry name and, in 2003, this was placed on the outside of the building (see Figure 62).

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[31] P. Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations*, 26: Spring (1989), p.19.

[32] S. Legg, "Contesting and Surviving Memory: Space, Nation and Nostalgia in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Environment and Planning D*, 23:4 (2005), p.493.

[33] www.paxacidus.com/bb/viewtopic.php?p=21301&sid=0ee3a5099ce0501809c53331920c3629

[34] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V/Vm

[35] Joy Division, *Love Will Tear Us Apart / These Days* (Factory Records, FAC23, 1980).

[36] *Sick Love Will Tear Us Apart / Love Has Torn Me Apart* (V/VM Test Records, VVMT21, 2001).

Figure 62: The exterior of 3 Waterloo Road in 2003[37]

Figure 63: 3 Waterloo Road 'To Let' advertisement[38]

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[37] Author's Private Collection.
[38] Author's Private Collection.

And, finally, Stockport itself also began a process of commemorating Strawberry's presence in the town. When it had been an ongoing concern, although there was a certain amount of pride in the town's association with the Studio (10cc, for instance, were referred to as "the sons of Stockport AD 1972")[39] references to Strawberry were either limited to adverts placed in the town's official Handbook or to the occasional article in one of the local newspapers. By the time the Studio was closing in the early 1990s, it was included in a series of *History Trail* worksheets being produced by the Council's Education Division[40] and, by the end of that decade, the introduction of Stockport Council's internet history trail,[41] and the inclusion of Strawberry[42] in it (albeit with a number of factual errors), further promoted the link between town and Studio. When planning began for the town's new museum in 2004, a conscious effort was made to look for collections beyond Stockport's more traditional industrial heritage, such as cotton and hatting, and to "talk about modern Stockport in a fresher way, maybe attract new audiences by selecting different kinds of objects and perhaps having forms of interpretation that are less traditional."[43] One area that the Museum's archivists were keen to include was Strawberry Recording Studios ("although extremely important in its own right I feel that it will have huge appeal for our visitors")[44] and, having come across the website for this research on the Studio, approached the author for advice on what might be included. By the time the 'Stockport Story[45] museum was fully open in February 2007, one case in the contemporary collection area was dedicated to the Studio's history and contained a variety of items associated with Strawberry.

The final, and most symbolic, act that marked Strawberry's conversion to *lieux de mémoire* came in 2006 when the Stockport Heritage Trust was awarded a Lottery-funded 'Awards For All' grant of £9,146 in order to "install ten new blue plaques within the town"[46] (plus an accompanying information guide) to complement the fifteen plaques already in existence in Stockport. The Trust, aided by Stockport Council and the *Stockport Express*, gave the town's residents the chance to vote on a

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[39] *Stockport Express*, April 10th 1975, p.13.
[40] Stockport Education Authority, *History Trail Number 10 – Waterloo Road*, 1993.
[41] www.stockportmbc.gov.uk/trail/Map.htm
[42] www.stockportmbc.gov.uk/trail/strawb.htm
[43] Joanne Brown (Collections Access Officer, Stockport Heritage Services), email 11.2.2005.
[44] Joanne Brown (Collections Access Officer, Stockport Heritage Services), email 5.1.2004.
[45] www.stockportstory.org.uk/
[46] www.awardsforall.org.uk/england/northwest/grant_summaries_oct_nw.xls

list of twenty-one potential recipients[47] of a blue plaque, with one Councillor commenting "These blue plaques are a celebration of our history and heritage. It is only right that the people who live and work in Stockport have a role to play in remembering what makes Stockport so unique."[48]

When the results were announced in February 2007, eleven sites were chosen to receive a plaque (there was a tie for tenth place), including Strawberry Recording Studios, with Kevin Dranfield of Stockport Heritage Trust declaring "The plaques chosen by the public show a varied, exciting selection of sites across the Borough which obviously have deep meaning to the people of Stockport. From historic Lancashire Bridge to Strawberry Studio, they span 600 years of our history…."[49]

Indeed, the variety of sites chosen by the people of Stockport reinforces Nora's assertion that it is possible for *lieux de mémoire* to become part of a wider network and to show "the existence of an invisible thread linking apparently unconnected objects"[50] with, in this case, civic pride being the common denominator underpinning the various chosen recipients.

The official award of Strawberry's blue plaque was marked by a ceremony on May 2nd 2007 (see Figures 64-67) which, as well as receiving plenty of media attention,[51] highlighted the importance of the human factor in the Studio's history. Firstly, the building's current owner, Julien Morley, was keen that Eric Stewart and Peter Tattersall should perform the actual unveiling of the plaque given the role they had played in the Studio's development. Secondly, at the ceremony itself, Tattersall insisted "it was the amazing people who came through our doors that made it special"[52] whilst Stewart, although unable to attend the actual unveiling, asked that the following message, which concentrated more on Strawberry's location and human element than the technology, be read out:

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[47] http://interactive.stockport.gov.uk/blueplaque/blueplaquechoices.aspx

[48] *Stockport Express*, November 29th 2006, www.stockportexpress.co.uk/news/s/220/220504_blue_plaques_will_be_history_in_the_making.html

[49] *Stockport Express*, February 7th 2007, p.11.

[50] P. Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations*, 26: Spring (1989), p.23.

[51] *Granada Reports* and *Channel M* both carried the event on their evening news bulletins that day.

[52] www.stockportexpress.co.uk/news/s/527/527568_blue_plaque_honour_for_music_landmark.html

I am truly sorry that I can't be with you in person for the unveiling of this plaque, a very gracious honour. Stockport has a huge place in my memories and the history of English music wouldn't have been the same if 10cc hadn't created their many hits at Strawberry Studios Stockport. Peter Tattersall and I had some hairy moments asking the local banks to finance us in what was a very precarious age for lending money on an unknown business proposition! Thank God they did, and we got Strawberry up and running at Number 3 Waterloo Road.

We had some very weird companies in the building along the ride through the 1970's, the strangest being Kesman fashions on the 2nd Floor......they specialised in some very questionable underwear; I remember some of the ladies (!) who popped their heads around our door asking where the Undies Department was!!!!! Say no more!!! Thank you so much for remembering us and Strawberry Studios in this wonderful way, and my best regards to all who passed through our doors.[53]

From being on the periphery of history, commemorated only in a brief note on a record sleeve and largely ignored by the public, the memory of Strawberry Recording Studios has been revived in recent years in a number of ways or, as Nora termed it, there has been an historical "reawakening"[54] for the Studio. And rather than just being an isolated investigation into recording studio history, this academic study of Strawberry might be thought of as being part of the much wider process which has been undertaken by the "thousand different"[55] people that Samuel identified as being involved in historical research, motivated by what Nora saw as "an impalpable, barely expressible, self-imposed bond….[and by] what remains of our ineradicable, carnal attachment to these faded symbols."[56]

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[53] Eric Stewart, email, 27.2.2007.
[54] P. Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations*, 26: Spring (1989), p.24.
[55] R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (London: Verso, 1994), p.8.
[56] P. Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations*, 26: Spring (1989), p.24.

Figure 64: Peter Tattersall and Julien Bromley perform the plaque unveiling[57]

Figure 65: Peter Tattersall interviewed by Channel M at the unveiling[58]

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[57] Author's Private Collection.
[58] Author's Private Collection.

Figure 66: The Strawberry Studios blue plaque[59]

Figure 67: Peter Tattersall's speech at the plaque unveiling[60]

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[59] Author's Private Collection.
[60] Author's Private Collection.

Chronology of Strawberry Recording Studios

1967
Inter-City Studio, Stockport, taken over by Peter Tattersall
Eric Stewart (The Mindbenders) became partner in Inter-City
Name of Studio changed to Strawberry Recording Studios

1968
Studio relocated to Waterloo Road, Stockport
Local songwriter Graham Gouldman became partner in Studio

1969
American 'bubble-gum pop' company Kasenetz-Katz based UK operations at
Strawberry, using Stewart, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme as musicians

1970
Hotlegs (Stewart, Godley and Creme) reached Number 2 in the UK Charts with
Strawberry-recorded *Neanderthal Man*

1972
Strawberry co-owners (Stewart, Godley, Gouldman and Creme) formed 10cc

1973
10cc reached Number 1 with Rubber Bullets

1974
Paul McCartney recorded at Strawberry with his brother Mike McGear

1976
10cc left Stockport to record at the recently-opened Strawberry South (Dorking)

1979
Joy Division recorded at Strawberry

1980
Strawberry opened second studio (Strawberry 2) across from Waterloo Road

1983
The Smiths recorded at Strawberry

1984
Strawberry 2 sold to Yellow 2 Studio

1986
Yellow 2 took Strawberry over but retains Strawberry name

1988
Strawberry business consolidated into one site (Waterloo Road)

1992
Announced in local press that Strawberry now only being used for video production

1993
Strawberry closed down

Glossary of Names

Tony Cockell
Strawberry's technical adviser and co-founder of Formula Sound, the company who designed and built Strawberry's fourth mixing-desk in the mid-1970s

Lol Creme
Resident Strawberry musician/partner 1968 – 72 and member of 10cc 1972 - 76

Ric Dixon
Early Strawberry partner and 10cc manager

Kathy Gilbourne
Strawberry secretary in late 1960s and early 1970s

Kevin Godley
Resident Strawberry musician/partner 1968 – 72 and member of 10cc 1972 - 76

Graham Gouldman
Partner and resident Strawberry musician 1968 – 72 and member of 10cc 1972 - 96

Martin Hannett
Record producer and Factory Records co-founder

Tom Hidley
Westlake studio designer who designed Strawberry's control room in the mid 1970s

Jonathan King
Owner of the band's first record label (UK Records) and the person credited with naming the band 10cc

Julie McLarnon
Strawberry engineer in the late 1980s and early 1990s

Julien Morley
Current owner of Strawberry's Waterloo Road building

Chris Nagle
Strawberry engineer/producer late 1970s to early 1990s

Jon Pennington
Strawberry engineer/producer from the mid 1980s to early 1990s

Kathy Redfern
Strawberry secretary in mid 1970s

Pauline Renshaw
One of the original partners in Inter City Studios

David Rohl
Strawberry engineer/producer in the mid 1970s

Richard Scott
Strawberry engineer/producer 1976 - 1992

Eric Stewart
Strawberry co-founder, resident musician/engineer/producer and member of 10cc 1972 – 1996.

Richard Swettenham
Co-founder of Helios Electronics and designer of early Strawberry mixing desks

Peter Tattersall
Strawberry co-founder, resident engineer/producer and managing director until 1986

Nick Turnbull
Strawberry owner and managing director 1986 - 93

Zeb White
10cc road manager

Tony Wilson
Factory Records co-founder

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Appendices

Appendix 1: *Stockport Express*, April 11th 2007, p.36.

Heritage landmark's famous music history

by Victoria Morley

AN archive picture of the legendary Strawberry Studios

THE news that Stockport's legendary Strawberry Studios will be honoured with a blue plaque next month has been well received by one of the recording studios biggest champions.

Peter Wadsworth, 43, of Great Moor, was absolutely thrilled when he discovered that Strawberry's role in the history of Stockport would be commemorated with a heritage plaque, and now wants to bring together those people who helped to make the studio such a success at the grand unveiling on May 2.

Peter's enthusiasm for the famous landmark and his interest in the wide variety of popstars who recorded there from the 1960s to 1990s inspired him to further his research in the form of a part-time PhD at the University of Manchester on Strawberry's development.

"It's a phenomenal place and a very important part of Stockport's recent history. I was delighted people in Stockport recognised this too by voting for it to be in the top ten of the blue plaque campaign," Peter said.

Peter explained that Strawberry actually began life in the 1960s as Inter-City Studios which was above the old Nield and Hardy music store in the town centre.

After being taken over by Peter Tattersall, a road manager to local groups, Inter-City was developed further when local musician, Eric Stewart, of the Mindbenders, became a partner.

Moving to Waterloo Road in Stockport, the studio also got a change of name after Eric's love of the Beatles' Strawberry Fields Forever single and some more backing in the shape of songwriter Graham Gouldman and Ric Dixon of the Manchester-based Kennedy Street management company.

Break

"Strawberry got its big break in 1970 when an experiment on the Studio's new mixing desk, produced by Stewart and friends Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, created an unlikely hit record called Neanderthal Man - the band called themselves Hotlegs after Strawberry's secretary!"

"And together, these three, with the addition of Graham Gouldman, then formed 10cc and used Strawberry as their base for four hit albums and numerous singles between 1972 and 1976, including the classic I'm Not in Love in 1975," he said.

The Studio also welcomed a number of famous artists, such as Neil Sedaka, who produced two albums at Strawberry, Paul McCartney, who recorded there with his brother Mike McGear, Barclay James Harvest and St Winifred's School Choir.

By the mid 1970s 10cc found themselves in the unusual situation of not being able to find any studio time for themselves because of Strawberry's success. Their solution was to build a new Strawberry but this time down South in Dorking, Surrey.

Stars

Stockport's Strawberry still continued from strength to strength, playing host to a new generation of stars, from producer Martin Hannett to Joy Division, The Buzzcocks, The Smiths and Simply Red.

"Eventually, Strawberry was taken over by the neighbouring Yellow 2 recording studio but keeping the Strawberry name. However, by the mid-1990s the unpredictable nature of the music industry led to the Studio closing down for good. This was a real shame for the famous studios and also for Stockport itself."

"Although it's been more than a decade since the studio's packed away its equipment, I would love to hear from past artists or from those who have worked at Strawberry to talk about their experiences. So please get in touch," he added.

Peter can be contacted by email at peter.wadsworth@manchester.ac.uk

■ victoria.morley@gmwn.co.uk

Appendix 2: *Stockport Express*, April 25th 2007, p.34.

Plaque unveiling will mark studio's place in history

by Victoria Morley

NUMBER 3, Waterloo Road, will be adorned with its very own blue plaque next week – to mark the influential role the property played in launching the musical careers of some of the countries finest artists.

Strawberry Recording Studios was founded in the late 1960s at the Waterloo Road site. And 12 years after its closure, Stockport's legendary music studio will finally receive the recognition it deserves.

Strawberry historian Peter Wadsworth, who has taken a diploma in the studio's development, will be joining the family of the original owners, studio founder Peter Tattersal and some of the artists who recorded there at a grand unveiling ceremony on Wednesday, May 2.

Peter, from Great Moor, has been inspired by the studio since he was a child. It was synonymous with Manchester band 10cc, Neil Sedaka, Paul McCartney, The Smiths and Joy Division to name but a few. And he welcomes recent interest in its history.

He said: "I was always intrigued by the fact that the records I was buying as a child in the early-to-mid 1970s had 'Recorded at Strawberry Studios, Stockport' printed on the sleeves and labels. I often wondered what it was that brought such famous artists to the town to record their music?

"The history teachers at Stockport School had given me an early understanding and appreciation of local history. And when I got the chance to do a part-time, modern British history PhD at Manchester University in 2001, there was only one topic I really wanted to do – the development of Strawberry."

However, instead of doing a conventional history course on the studio, Peter wanted to study the actual building itself, as well as its architecture and geography. "Right throughout its history, bands used Strawberry both because of its relaxed approach to recording, as there

THE founder of Strawberry Studiod, Peter Tattersall, left, with historian Peter Wadsworth (sxn16116807)

was no clock in the studio during the early years, and also as a way of making a statement about themselves and their music.

"10cc used it to challenge what they saw as the London-dominance of the music industry, whilst later use by a number of Factory Records acts reinforced the record label's Manchester roots.

"As the studio's co-founder and 10cc member Eric Stewart noted: 'Stockport has a huge place in my memories and the history of English music wouldn't have been the same if 10cc hadn't created their many hits at Strawberry'," he said.

The blue plaque award is particularly important for Peter, as it shows a recognition of the contribution the studio made to Stockport's development – and highlights the town's history outside of the hatting and cotton industries.

"Events that took place in the last third of the 20th century are now being seen as history. And this award, as well as the development of a contemporary history display at the newly-opened Stockport Story, is proof of this in the Stockport setting.

"It is also a recognition of the work, effort and time that many people put in to make Strawberry a success. Whilst the music of bands such as 10cc has, quite

rightly, taken the limelight, the efforts of people like Peter Tattersall and Eric Stewart, and local companies such as Formula Sound, who constructed the sound desks, also need to be highlighted and appreciated," Peter added.

Although he might have said it tongue-in-cheek, Morrissey's assessment of the importance of Strawberry, when he described The Smiths' use of the studio in 1983 as 'one day in Stockport to enliven history', seems to be an appropriate phrase when studying the Strawberry story.

● Anyone with memories or pictures of Strawberry can email them to Peter at peter.wadsworth@manchester.ac.uk.

Appendix 3: *Stockport Express*, May 9th 2007, p.5.

Blue Plaque honour for music landmark

by Victoria Morley

PRIDE: Julien Bromley, Peter Wadsworth and Peter Tattersal, front.
sxn181331a07

STRAWBERRY Studios really will be remembered forever after it became the first of a new phase of Stockport landmarks to be honoured with a Heritage Trust Blue Plaque.

Thanks to our readers who voted the studios, named after the Beatles immortal song, Strawberry Fields Forever, as one of the most important buildings in Stockport, representatives from Stockport Council, the Heritage Trust and the family of the original owners came together in the sparkling sunshine to watch the grand unveiling.

Peter Tattersal, who founded the studio with former 10cc member Eric Stewart back in 1968, was there to unveil the blue plaque and raise a toast to the internationally-acclaimed studio and the likes of Paul McCartney, Sid Lawrence Orchestra and the Stone Roses, who recorded there.

Peter said: "I have a lot of happy memories of this place. Eric Stewart and I had some great times and we broke the mould in the north west with what we were doing.

"It was the amazing people who came through our doors though that made it special.

"The most fantastic thing about this plaque is it's being presented by the people of Stockport and it's a great honour."

After the unveiling, the crowd headed indoors to the very room in which some of the greatest British pop songs were ever recorded, to soak up the atmosphere and enjoy a glass of bubbly.

Julien Bromley, who now owns the building which has been in his family since the 1960s, said: "This has been the most amazing day.

"I would like to thank Peter Wadsworth, for his remarkable mind of information; Kevin Dranfield of the Heritage Trust, for all his support; and the *Stockport Express* and readers, for making sure this precious building and all its memories will be remembered forever.

"We are the first of eleven places to be given a plaque and that makes it even more special."

The next Blue Plaque to be unveiled is at Stockport Armoury on Saturday, May 12, culminating with the launch of the Blue Plaque Trail Guide on June 6 at Stockport Plaza.

Appendix 4: Stockport Council's Blue Plaque Trail Guide

STOCKPORT BLUE PLAQUE TRAIL

THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOCKPORT

A ~2½ mile stroll around Stockport town centre

Also featuring the locations of other blue plaques in the Borough of Stockport

The information on this leaflet can also be made available in Braille, large print, or audio tape
Please call 0161 474 4480 for details

STOCKPORT HERITAGE TRUST

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STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Blue Plaque project concept by Kevin Dranfield
Leaflet design, trail, and photography by Phil Rowbotham
Published June 2007 ©

4 Strawberry Recording Studios
3 Waterloo Road

Named after the Beatles' song, *Strawberry Fields Forever*, the Studios grew from humble beginnings in 1968 to become internationally recognised recording studios, one of the few based outside London.

The early association and ongoing connection with Manchester band 10cc increased its importance in the music world. It played host to a wide variety of world famous artists before closing in the early 1990s.
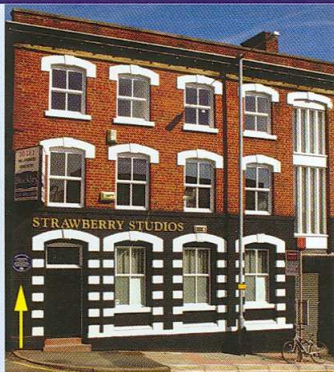
STRAWBERRY RECORDING STUDIOS
1968 to 1993
Associated with the band 10cc resulted in some of the most memorable music being produced at these Studios.
Paul McCartney, Neil Sedaka, Stone Roses, Syd Lawrence Orchestra and many others recorded here.

Right at the traffic lights into Hillgate, then turn left into John Street, past the Police Stn.

Appendix 5 – Strawberry Blue Plaque Unveiling Invitation

You are cordially invited to celebrate the unveiling of
Strawberry Studios' Heritage Trust Plaque, followed by drinks.

On 2nd May 2007 at 2pm.

At Strawberry Studios, 3 Waterloo Road, Stockport SK1 3BD.

RSVP by 25th April to Michelle Bromley, BPM, 13 St John's Road, Knutsford WA16 0DL
email: info@stockportoffices.com
Tel. 01565 641523
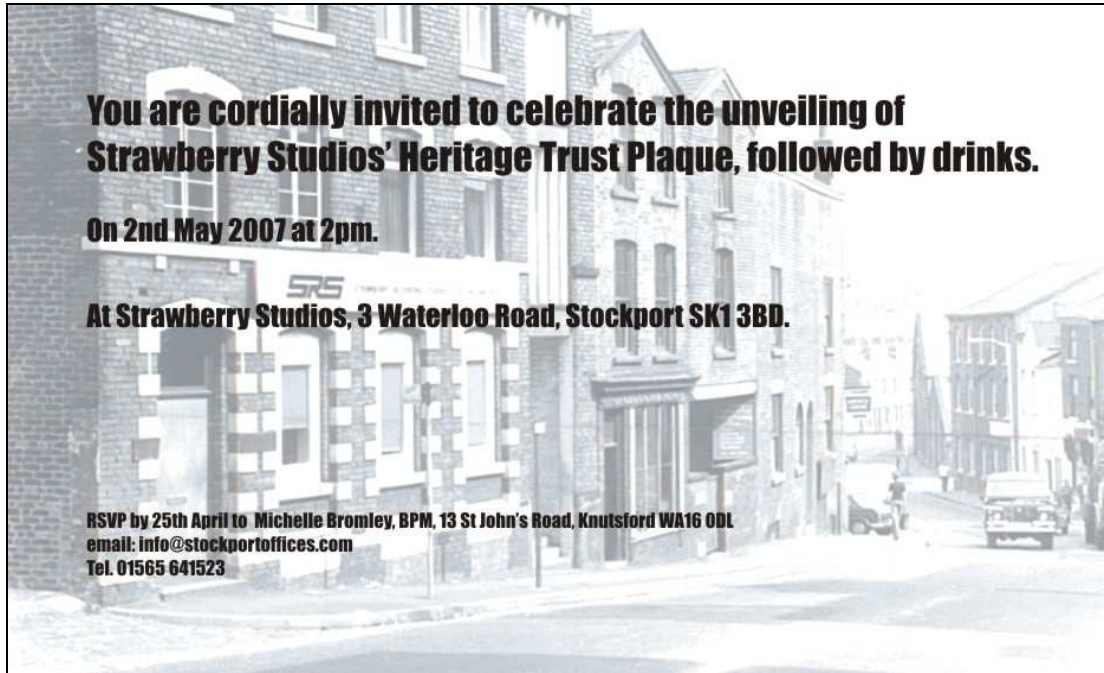
Appendix 6 – Various Photographs of the Blue Plaque Unveiling

Julien Bromley and Peter Tattersall

Gilly Hewer (Eric Stewart's Personal Assistant)

Strawberry Employees Zeb White (left) and Richard Scott (right)

Appendix 7 – UMIST Applied Physics Unit Enquiry Outcome Form

UMIST: Applied Physics Unit – enquiry no. *15* – outcome & estimate

Topic _____ ~~Such~~ *Gizmo* _____

Name of firm ___ *Kennedy St Artists* _____ Firm no. __*13*__

Address ___ *2 Swinbourne Grove, Withington* ___ Phone no. *061-434 3461*
_____ *Manchester* _____

Associate ☐ date joined __/__/__ A (50+) ☐ B (<50) ☑ Distance from UMIST ____ miles

Consultants ___ *M H Jones* + *J McConnell* _____

Initial discussion: with ___ *K. Godley.* _____

at UMIST ☑ at firm ☐ on phone ☐ Date __/__/__

Outcome: can't help ☐; comments below –

assistance completed during initial discussion ☐; summary below –

agreed to carry out work as follows:

Agreed to make prototype ~~Gizmo~~ Gizmo

Estimate of charges

Estimated amount of consultants' time required: ___ days at £___/day = *545.00*

Estimated total charge for technicians' time . . . . . : *nil*

Major special equipment required: _____

estimated number of days = ___ at £___/day = *nil*

Travelling expenses for initial discussion
– if at firm, and more than 10 miles from UMIST: ____ miles at 7.5p/mile = *nil*

Estimate: *545.00* *

Charges in addition to estimate – to be assessed on completion

Travelling expenses incurred during rest of job:

_____ total: _____

Materials and components:

initial rough estimate of cost, for guidance only: £_____

charged on completion at actual cost, which was . . : *16.50*

Final total: *561.50*

If Associate: previous total this year £_____ ∴total this year, to date = _____

Total paid so far this year, including £___ subscription as Associate = _____

∴ balance due = *561.50*

* Estimate agreed by consultant: _____ date __/__/__ | Received by Bursar

by firm: _____ date __/__/__ | £ *561.50* *18/6/75*

Please sign & return one copy, with any relevent reference no. or purchase order,
to: Dr J.E.Geake, Physics Dept., UMIST, Manchester M60 1QD.

Appendix 8 – UMIST Pay Slip for Dr Jones' Work on the Gizmo

To: Dr. M.H. Jones

From: The Bursar.

Date: 31st July, 1975

Payment of Fees

Your salary payment for this month
includes the following gross amount
of fees:-   £   p
Payment of Fees
Applied Physics Unit –
Enquiry No. 15   135   00

Appendix 9 – UMIST Payment of Fees Form for Dr Jones' Work on the Gizmo

Applied Physics Unit – payment of fees

To: Martin Jones

The Bursar has today been authorised to pay to you fees totalling £ 135

for your work in connection with enquiry no. 15 ; you should receive this amount

(less tax) in your pay-cheque for this/next month. Please let me know when you do

receive it – or if you do not get it in one of your next two pay-cheques.

J.E.Geake

18/6/75

R/APU/3/75

Appendix 10 – Manchester District Music Archive Web Page Appeal

Strawberry Recordings Studios PhD Request

Who would have thought that an old warehouse in Stockport's backstreets might become temporary home to a diverse range of musicians (Hotlegs, Syd Lawrence, 10cc, Barclay James Harvest, Neil Sedaka, Buzzcocks, Joy Division, New Order, The Smiths, Simply Red, The Charlatans, Martin Hannett and many, many others) whilst they recorded hit after hit there from the late 1960s to the1990s? Peter Wadsworth of Manchester University is writing a PhD on Stockport's legendary Strawberry Recording Studios. He's looking for people who had a connection to the studio (however tenuous!) to get in touch for a chat. Peter can be contacted at peter.wadsworth@manchester.ac.uk with further details at www.strawberrynorth.co.uk/strawberrystudios.htm

Appendix 11 – Strawberry North Promotional Brochure

STRAWBERRY RECORDING STUDIOS
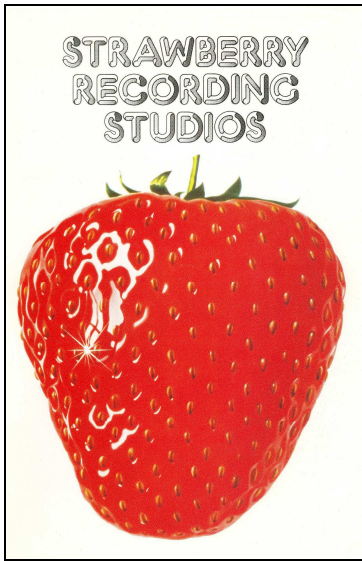
A fruitful experience!

The history of Strawberry in Stockport, where it all began 10 years ago, started with a decision by Eric Stewart and Peter Tattersall to open a professional recording studio, the first outside London at the time. Eric and Peter were subsequently joined by Graham Gouldman and the Kennedy Street Group of Companies and the close association which 10CC has had with the studio was an important factor in establishing its reputation.

The first four albums by 10CC were recorded there and the list of artistes, from all sides of the industry, who have recorded at Strawberry North is impressive. It includes Paul McCartney, Barclay James Harvest, Neil Sedaka, Sad Café, Buzzcocks and John Cooper Clark to name but a very few.

The technical development of Strawberry Studios North has been equally impressive. From the early 4 track days of the Hotlegs' hit Neanderthal Man it has progressed through its present day 24 track Westlake/Eastlake-designed facility.

Strawberry

The fruits of success
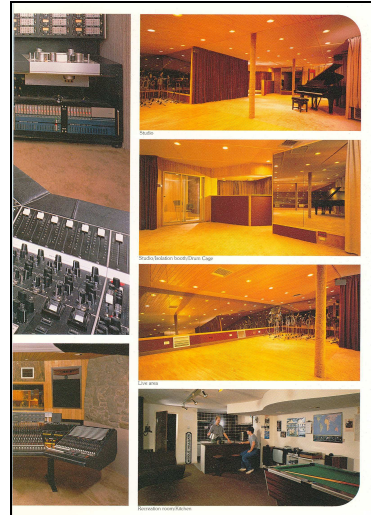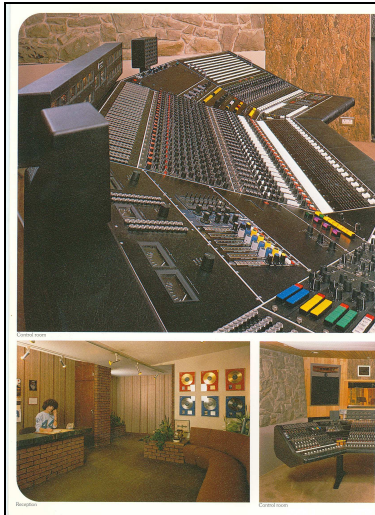
Strawberry Studios North Equipment and Facilities

Desk
Custom designed and built by ourselves and Formula Sound Ltd. 32 into 24 with Helios input modules incorporating high and low-pass filters and 4 band parametric equalization on each channel. 4 foldback outputs, 6 stereo echo channels, 8 VCA subgroups.

Tape Machines
Studer A80/VU 24 track with autolocate and remote mode selection.
Studer A80R stereo machines.
Studer A62 twin track machine.
All machines have vari-speed and full remote control facilities.
Dolby A noise reduction is also provided for all machines.

Monitoring
Westlake/JBL, bi-amped by Amcron DC300A, with White equalisers and JBL crossovers.
Alternative Auratone speakers are built into the desk.

Microphones
AKG, Beyer, Calrec, Neumann, Schoeps, Sennheiser.

Ancillary Equipment
Audio & Design Vocal Stressers and Express Limiter, dbx Compressor/Limiters, Kepex noise gates, Klark Teknik 11 and 27 way graphics, Formula Sound 19 way graphic, AMS digital delay and harmonizer, MXR digital delay, Flanger/Doubler and Auto Phasers, Bel Flanger, Ortofon Regulated Filter (as de-esser), EMT Echo Plates, AKG BX20, Natural Echo Chamber.

Studio
112 sq. metres including live area, isolation booth, drum cage, piano bay.
7' 6" Steinway 'C' Grand Piano.
Sennheiser stereo infra-red foldback system.

The studio has a large recreation area with pool table, hi-fi, colour TV, video etc., plus kitchen facilities.

Strawberry Recording Studios
3 Waterloo Road
Stockport, Cheshire SK1 3BD.
Telephone: 061-480 9711/2

Appendix 12 – Various Paper Archive Items

Eric Mixing 8 track Strawberry North 1970.

Courtesy of www.ericstewart.uk.com

SRS

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TEL: 061·480·9711

1971 Advert (*Beat Instrumental*, December 1971)

1972 Advert (Stockport Council Handbook)

1976 Advert (*International Musician*, January 1976)

Strawberry Two Brochure

1980s Strawberry Letterhead Notepaper

1980s Strawberry Booking Form

Eric Stewart and Peter Tattersall at the Strawberry Desk (c.1970)

Appendix 13 – The Strawberry Display at 'The Stockport Story'

Appendix 14 – Strawberry Interview/Music Sample CD

Interviews

1. Eric Stewart on his initial reasons for becoming involved in creating a recording studio in Stockport ("The 10cc Story", BBC Radio 2, July 24th 1999).

2. Peter Tattersall on the start of Inter-City Studios and then Strawberry (Peter Tattersall, March 20th 1984).

3. Peter Tattersall on the move to Waterloo Road (Peter Tattersall, March 20th 1984).

4. Graham Gouldman on his initial involvement with Strawberry ("City to City – Manchester [Graham Gouldman]", Radio 1, Date Unknown).

5. Peter Tattersall on the early financing of Strawberry (Peter Tattersall, September 23rd 1996).

6. Eric Stewart on Strawberry's earliest hit record ("Well Above Average: The Continuing Story of 10cc", BBC Radio 2, February 2nd 1995).

7. Jonathan King on his initial involvement with 10cc ("The 10cc Story", BBC Radio 2, July 24th 1999).

8. Graham Gouldman on early 10cc and McCartney's visit to Strawberry ("Well Above Average: The Continuing Story of 10cc", BBC Radio 2, February 2nd 1995).

9. Peter Tattersall on the development of Strawberry's control room (Peter Tattersall, September 23rd 1996).

10. Peter Tattersall on Strawberry's sound desks (Peter Tattersall, September 23rd 1996).

11. Tony Cockell on Formula Sound's Strawberry desk (Tony Cockell, May 1st 2005).

12. Eric Stewart on 10cc and Strawberry in the mid-1970s (Eric Stewart, BBC Transcription Disc Recording, 1974).

13. Kathy Redfern on her involvement with the recording of *I'm Not In Love* ("The 10cc Story", BBC Radio 2, July 24th 1999).

14. Graham Gouldman on the earliest signs of tension amongst 10cc at Strawberry ("The 10cc Story", BBC Radio 2, July 24th 1999).

15. Kevin Godley looking back at the 10cc split (Kevin Godley, Interviewed by Phil Loftus, November 22nd 1996).

16. Kevin Godley on the development of Strawberry South (Kevin Godley, Interviewed by Phil Loftus, November 22nd 1996).

17. Peter Tattersall on Martin Hannett (Peter Tattersall, September 23rd 1996).

18. Julie McLarnon on working with Martin Hannett (Julie McLarnon, November 19th 2007).

19. Richard Scott on the creation of Strawberry 2, the sale of Strawberry to Nick Turnbull and the end of the Studio (Richard Scott, January 9th 2007).

20. Graham Gouldman on Strawberry / Manchester ("City to City – Manchester [Graham Gouldman]", Radio 1, Date Unknown).

21. Graham Gouldman on the importance of Strawberry to the region's role in the music industry (Graham Gouldman, Piccadilly Radio, March 3rd 1990).

22. Peter Tattersall on Strawberry's international reputation (Peter Tattersall, September 23rd 1996).

Music

23. Ohio Express, *Sausalito* (1969).

24. Manchester City F.C., *Boys in Blue* (1972).

25. Grumble, *Da Doo Ron Ron* (1973).

26. Sourmash, *Autumn Country* (1971).

27. 10cc, *Gizmo My Way* (1974).

28. Neil Sedaka, *Solitaire* (1972).
29. Barclay James Harvest, *Suicide* (1976).
30. Godley and Creme, *Fireworks* (from *Consequences*) (1976).
31. Godley and Crème, *Burial Scene* (from *Consequences*) (1976).
32. Buzzcocks, *Everybody's Happy Nowadays* (1979).
33. U2, *11 O'Clock Tick Tock* (1980).
34. Pauline Murray and the Invisible Girls, *Dream Sequence 1* (1980).
35. The Names, *Night Shift* (1981).
36. James, *Folklore* (1984).
37. New Order, *Ceremony* (1980).
38. Strawberry Sound Effects for the Intro to *One Night in Paris* (courtesy of Eric Stewart), (1975).
39. Strawberry out-take of *People In Love* (courtesy of Eric Stewart), (c.1976).
40. Fade Out of Last Track (*Taxi Taxi*) on the Final Album 10cc Recorded at Strawberry North (*Windows in the Jungle*), (1983).