

The London Coffee Bar of the 1950s – teenage occupation of an amateur space?

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Abstract: London coffee bars of the 1950s quickly became recognized social spaces described in books, magazines and films of the period. This paper critiques the received view of a homogeneous, generic coffee bar 'type'. By contrast, this paper emphasizes coffee bars' heterogeneity both in terms of their design but more significantly in the range of their clientele and designers.

The somewhat negative attitude of the architectural establishment towards coffee bars and the degree to which their success was partly due to the disinclination of architects to work on them and their subsequent design by amateurs is discussed in detail. This paper demonstrates the extent to which interior design of the period was seen as of secondary importance to the serious business of the architectural façade of a building. This paper demonstrates that coffee bars were significantly more diverse than current writing allows and will argue that they were spaces occupied by different social and age groups in different ways at different times of the day and night as well as at different points during the 1950s.

Introduction

This paper looks in detail at the London coffee bars of the 1950s. Described variously as the 'coffee bar phenomenon'¹, the 'coffee bar craze'² and the 'espresso revolution'³, coffee bars quickly became recognized social spaces described in books, magazines and films of the period.⁴ This paper offers a view of the coffee bar as a cultural and social phenomenon, one that critiques the received view – created by the popular press during the period and in subsequent writing⁵ – of a homogeneous, generic coffee bar 'type' which can be easily characterized, their common features being the prevalence of a vaguely defined exoticism and their teenage customer base. By contrast, this paper emphasizes coffee bars' heterogeneity both in terms of their design but more significantly in the range of their clientele and designers.

The often negative attitude of the architectural establishment towards coffee bars and the degree to which their success was partly due to the disinclination of architects to work on them and their subsequent design by amateurs will be discussed in detail. This paper will also demonstrate the extent to which interior design of the period was seen as of secondary importance to the serious business of the architectural façade of a building. A particular focus of the paper will be the changing use of the coffee bars during the day from a lunchtime place to eat for shoppers and businessmen to an evening haunt for younger people. The change in use of the coffee bars during the 1950s will also be demonstrated in their gradual occupation over the decade by an ever younger, teenage audience indulging their new found status as active 'consumers'.

The first coffee bars

In the summer of 1952 a small coffee bar opened in Frith Street, Soho. The 'Moka Bar' was owned by Pino Riservato, an Italian dental technician who owned the British concession for the newly designed Gaggia espresso machine.⁶ The Moka Bar was designed by the architect Geoffrey Crockett and was meant to demonstrate to prospective buyers of the Gaggia machine what it could do in a catering setting. The Moka was an immediate success which

quickly led to other bars opening in central London and by 1960 it was estimated that there were 'over 500 in the Greater London area alone'.⁷

The London coffee bars of the 1950s no longer exist. Not one of the bars defined as such in the context of this paper is still operating. Coffee bars were not designed to last for more than a few years. Their design themes were of the moment and were often changed and refined until the inevitable day when the bar became a restaurant or made way for a more profitable retail venture or redevelopment of the site. What has been left is a sense within the public consciousness of a coffee bar 'type' - a place of bright colours, fantastic design schemes and a young clientele - described by Jonathan Woodham as the 'hallmark of the decade'.⁸ What has been lost with their disappearance is a sense of their enormous diversity - catering for a wide range of customers and tastes.

The majority of coffee bars were independent, (rather than part of a chain of premises) and they not only looked different from one another but their owners actively sought to make them look different so that their bar would be remembered from the multitude of others that were beginning to appear. A 1955 article in *Architecture and Building* written by Paul Reilly underlines the importance of the independence of the bars,

...as yet independently owned, each with its own reputation to make. There is thus none of the uniformity associated with a chain of milk bars or tea shops; that may come...but until that happens variety will remain a healthy feature of these gay little centres that have done so much to enliven the West End of London.⁹

The independent coffee bars were distinguished by their welcoming of the youth as well as the older customer. They served 'proper' coffee and good food; they didn't hurry the customers to leave and they stayed open late and at weekends. Writing about the 'Boom in Coffee Bars', Edward Bramah provides an explanation for their success:

They were excellent meeting places for young people. Office girls could chat happily with an escort; women shoppers and tourists found them handy and comfortable as resting places; business men could get a quick meal and they had no 'class' image...They were gay and offered continental or English food and a non-alcoholic drink, which many people preferred. Indeed, the coffee bars were badly needed.¹⁰

Whilst the cost of the espresso machine was often considerable (the overwhelming majority of bars had a Gaggia espresso machine, which cost between £150 and £400), the fact that coffee bars did not need a liquor licence and could therefore stay open late meant that with the provision of simple food the coffee bars could turn a profit relatively quickly.

Amateurism & Coffee Bars

In an article about coffee bars for the September 1955 edition of *Architectural Review*, the architect Stephen Gardiner highlighted bars designed by professionals and amateurs. He concluded that the bars designed by architects were generally rather uninspiring whereas some of the most interesting were designed by amateurs:

...it shouldn't be assumed that I mean that the modern architect or interior designer is incapable of designing a good coffee bar: what I do mean is that he does not always understand the problem, and what he has designed - simple, plain, functional - fails because it is essentially humourless: El Cubano [fig.1], on the other hand, does understand what is wanted and while it may be in some eyes vulgar, flashy and a

fake, it does still succeed.¹¹

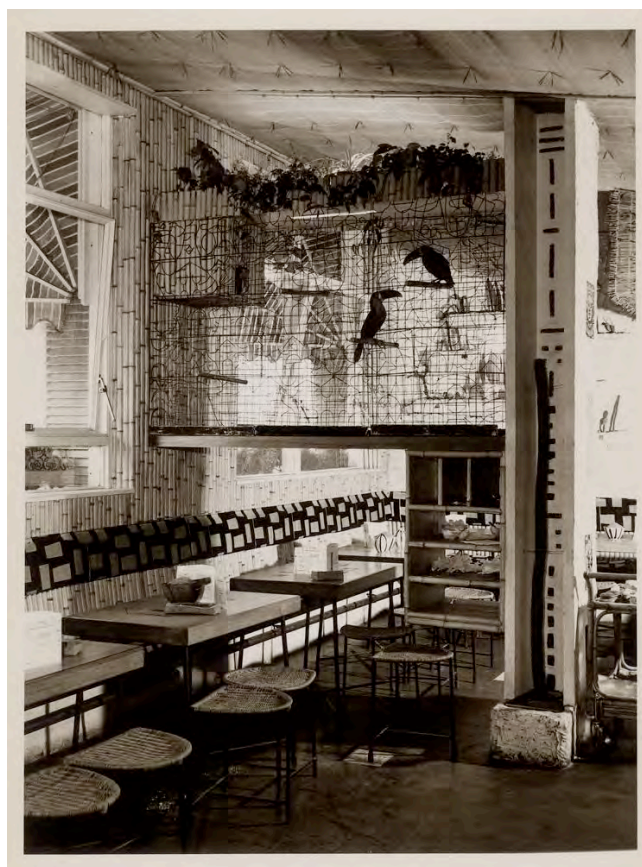


Figure 1: El Cubano Coffee Bar, Knightsbridge, 1955, designed by Douglas Fisher. (Photograph courtesy of Design History Research Centre Archives, University of Brighton).

Gardiner defined a 'good coffee bar' as one that engaged with humour in some way – to him the serious, plain and functional design of the trained architect often did not fulfil the 'brief'. Writing in the decidedly Modernist *Architectural Review* Gardiner was acknowledging that good design in a coffee bar was very different to 'good design' in architecture more generally.

In December 1956 the satirical magazine *Punch* ran an article titled 'Coffee-Bar Theory and Practice' which begins, 'we have reached the stage when virtually the entire population of these islands goes in hourly danger of opening a coffee-bar'.¹² Accompanied by a cartoon showing a 'scientist' indicating that an interior with a rubber plant, bamboo and contemporary furniture equals a coffee bar, the article poked fun at their ubiquity and the amateurish nature of their décor, management and staff. In the 1956 'Espresso Bar' episode of *Hancock's Half Hour* the eponymous 'hero', when asked where he would get the money to open a coffee bar replied, 'that's just it, you don't need any – the worse the place is the better. That's the vogue these days, find yourself a dirty old cellar, get a couple of barrels and a long plank, candles in bottles and you're in business'.¹³ It is apparent that the reader of *Punch* was expected to recognise the 'typical' coffee bar features despite the fact that the article was published only three and a half years after the first bar opened in 1952.

A 1954 'report on coffee bars' in the journal *Architectural Design* states that, 'Many bars appear to be run by catering amateurs, but making a professional job of this new type of

establishment – and a good income'.¹⁴ A question which has not previously been addressed is how so many amateurs¹⁵ were able to open coffee bars? In the early Twenty First century, amateur owners would be unlikely to open a coffee bar in central London due to the extremely high commercial property prices and rents. However, in the early 1950s due to the low inflation in regard to property renting and leasing and the general economic recession, commercial property prices were low enough to allow someone with very little capital to rent or lease business premises - it was a chance worth taking.

The fact that an amateur was involved did not mean that the results were invariably amateurish but in the design of the bars, the size of the budget often meant that professional help was financially impossible. Martha Gellhorn, writing in 1956, is clear that amateurism was a key aspect of opening a coffee bar, 'No previous experience or training is necessary, and little capital... The interior decoration can just as well be home-made as not, if funds are low...Amateurism in fact pays, perhaps by setting the desirable tone of intimate harum-scarumry'.¹⁶ Coffee bar owners who could afford to, used an architect and shop-fitting contractors but others did as much as they could themselves. Whilst domestic DIY enthusiasts were seeking to create a home which stood out from their neighbours (but usually within the bounds of accepted 'good taste'), the coffee bar DIY-er was concerned with the self identity of the bar in relation to others with which they competed. They therefore often used whatever devices they could to stand out, regardless of what might have been considered 'good taste'.



Figure 2: Gondola Coffee Bar, Wigmore Street, 1955, designed by Helen Low (with Wareite graphics by Humphrey Spender). (Photograph courtesy of Design History Research Centre Archives, University of Brighton).

Writing in 1955, Stephen Gardiner tried to identify why some of the more effective bars were designed by amateurs and why professional architects rarely succeeded. He begins by discussing the Gondola in Wigmore Street (fig.2):

Architecturally, the Gondola gives you a simple, nicely designed room...it gives you 'honest-to-goodness' design without any fun. Architecturally, El Cubano gives you nothing. Instead, it gives you lavish decor, mystery, excitement and a sense of unreality: it is completely escapist - an exhibition designer's opium dream.... the shirt

materials of the waiters run away, as the furnishings of a house might, with the whole of the architecture.¹⁷

Gardiner argued that the El Cubano's interior was overwhelming the architecture, thus creating an escapist paradise in which the architecture was redundant. However, as a coffee bar he was adamant that it succeeded because the amateur designer Douglas Fisher created a place to escape to whereas the architect of the Gondola created a formal and ordered café. In other words a coffee bar design was about creating atmosphere and ambience rather than a formally correct, architect designed Modernist interior. Gardiner was not saying that the creation of atmosphere precluded modern design but that modern design alone was not enough to create the atmosphere that signaled the successful coffee bar. Interviewed in 2004 Gardiner further reflected on the coffee bar designers he had met during the research for his 1955 article:

'...They were really amateurs...Most important that they weren't in any way limited by architectural theory and architectural aesthetics as that would have killed them straight off, in my view. I don't know of all the architect friends I had I don't think one of them was involved in that sort of thing, however good, you know. I mean Hidalgo Moya I'm sure would have done a lovely coffee bar but it probably would have been too architectural'.¹⁸



Figure 3: Sombrero and rug light, set against brick wallpaper, designed by Jack Williams, Las Vegas Coffee Bar, Old Brompton Road, 1956. (Photograph courtesy of Design History Research Centre Archives, University of Brighton).

As far as Gardiner was concerned, a good coffee bar was not about conforming to Modernist aesthetics - what was needed for a successful coffee bar was atmosphere (usually suggestive of escape and unreality). The difficulty was and which still remains is that 'atmosphere is

ethereal, evasive and indeterminate'.¹⁹ For an architect working in the profession in the early 1950s and trained in the European Modernist tradition, the idea of designing an interior whose purpose was to create the impression for the customer of being somewhere other than a dreary London was never going to be a straightforward proposition.

Interior Design

The fact that a significant number of the coffee bars were owned and designed by amateurs has been cited as one of the reasons for their success but it was also the result of the lowly status of interior design which meant that architects shied away from designing coffee bars. When written about in *Architectural Review* and other journals coffee bars were treated in a similar way to shop-fitting and were included in features on interiors. The main reason for this was that coffee bar designs were almost exclusively alterations to existing premises rather than new buildings. The coffee bars did not interfere with the serious business of architecture, by which Stephen Gardiner meant the façade of the building - they could be wild and exotic because they were literally 'behind closed doors'. The *Fantasie* on the King's Road in Chelsea is a good example of this practice at work – an electricians 'shop' was renovated on a tight budget to accommodate a coffee bar. Apart from the signage on the fascia, the façade of the building was unchanged. The work was designed and completed by the owner Archie McNair and a friend because they couldn't afford the services of an architect. It is perhaps ironic that it was partly because architects did not get involved that they looked so different and made such an impact.

In February 1957 an article on 'Shops' appeared in *Architectural Review* which acknowledged the lowly status of shop design and made a case for architects to get involved in their design. The writer, Herbert Tayler argues that:

...the architect still loves a princely client and cherishes Renaissance ideals; artistically an architect must be an autocrat to be any good and is it this which so readily predisposes the profession to oligarchy and thence to abstract preciousness? If so, heaven defend the High Street from being cleaned up by architects. Better vulgarity than preciousness. Yet the average shop *does* need cleaning up badly and the job would appear to belong to an architect; only he must come off his polished pedestal.²⁰

Tayler's apparent preference for vulgarity over preciousness recalls Gardiner's comments about the 'vulgar, flashy' coffee bar architecture, which had been generally misunderstood by architects.²¹ Tayler also discusses the fact that architects shunned shop design: 'The traditional architect, by training and profession a man of fastidious taste, passed by them, like the Levite, on the other side'.²² He went on to quote a businessman who argued that architects either 'wear their corsets too tight...or they need some Ex-Lax' and concluded that 'architecture is still being confined to the upper deck, out of reach and precious'.²³ Tayler was arguing that Britain's high streets were crying out for architects to get involved and loosen their Modernist corsets by deigning to become involved in shop design. His point was that architecture was 'now practiced as a business, and not as an art' and that in order to 'clean up' shop design architects needed to accept the commercial realities of modern architecture.

Whilst the earliest bars were designed by architects the fact that many of the later designers had no experience or training meant that a significant number of their designs were different and eye-catching enough to create a loosely defined coffee bar look. This somewhat oxymoronic sense of a 'diverse style' was described by Gardiner (in a nod to the *Fantasie*) as

follows:

It is, in fact, by the dissimilarity of design within a general framework of bamboo, black ceilings, brick-wallpapers, string, murals, brilliantly clever lighting arrangements (fig.3) and so on that we at once recognize the style. If one coffee bar is in more or less total darkness and the next is brightly lit, it doesn't matter: that's 'contrast' or 'variety,' a different 'approach,' another 'idea': all that does matter is that we know we are in a coffee bar, we recognize the style.²⁴

Gardiner's comments touch upon issues raised by the 1956 *Punch* article in which it was posited that a set of common constituents were all that were needed to create a coffee bar. Given the sheer numbers of coffee bars, it is not surprising that there were common features but Gardiner was stressing that ultimately coffee bar design was all about creating difference between them in order that they stood out from one another. The coffee machine, the rubber plants and the bamboo may have signified an interior as a coffee bar but the ultimate aim was the creation of difference within this basic framework.

The Coffee Bar 'Consumer'

Writers since the 1950s have tended to refer to the coffee bars as if they were one distinct type of teenage social space.²⁵ Whilst it was evident by the late 1950s that 'the teen scene revolved around coffee bars',²⁶ they continued to cater for a clientele beyond just the teenager. Coffee bars did not appear in 1952 fully evolved. The fictional 'Lucky Charm' coffee bar depicted in the 1958 film *The Golden Disc* has a horse-shoe shaped bar, a gleaming Gaggia coffee machine, 'mad line drawings' on the wall, high stools, a juke-box, teenage customers and live music.²⁷ The 'Lucky Charm' was an amalgam of elements from coffee bars throughout the 1950s. Coffee bars began in 1952 with a number of these elements but evolved to include others. Dominic Sandbrook argues that,

...the basic design of the typical coffee bar was simple enough: a pine bar, behind which steamed one of Gaggia's clattering machines; a series of little plastic tables at which the customers sipped their little glasses of coffee; a dancing area, or an area for a singer in the evenings; and, of course, a juke box to play the new hit singles.²⁸

Sandbrook believes that such a thing as a 'typical' coffee bar existed and emphasises that 'of course' there was a juke box. He is mistaking the 'Lucky Charm' version of the coffee bar as the reality because it supports his understanding of the coffee bar as catering solely for the teenage consumer. There was in fact no definitive coffee bar but a number of types which catered for different audiences and expectations.

Whilst there is evidence to suggest that coffee bars immediately attracted a teenage audience,²⁹ photographs show that the coffee bars were popular with a wide range of age groups.³⁰ The longer opening hours and modern décor drew older customers to the bars as well as the teenagers. A photograph taken around 1955 shows the Gondola at night with tables out on the pavement and a neon sign above the door reading 'GONDOLA 10am–MIDNIGHT'.³¹ On the door, a printed sign shows that it also opened at 1pm on a Sunday and stayed open until midnight. Apart from Soho Private Member's Clubs there were no other places for people to socialise so late each night of the week. A June 1954 report on coffee bars in *Architectural Design* stated that most coffee bars 'depend on the luncheon trade for their main business'.³² Gardiner refutes this: 'to succeed at night does seem to be the most important measure of a coffee bar's success'.³³ In reality, many bars relied on the lunchtime

and evening trade to keep the business going. The rapid growth in coffee bars opening in the Greater London area meant that each one was seeking to stand out from its neighbour and as such every customer, at whatever time of day and night, was essential to their success.

The arrival of rock n' roll music led to a new type of coffee bar, which revolved almost exclusively around music and the teenagers towards whom the music was marketed. It is important to make clear however that other types of coffee bars continued to operate but due to the media interest in them it was the rock n' roll type of coffee bar that garnered all of the media coverage and consequently came to be seen as indicative of coffee bars more generally. In discussing the importance of the teenager as a coffee bar customer it should also be pointed out that not all coffee bars welcomed the teenage consumer. Whilst the majority were run independently, a number were part of chains such as Coffee Inn and Kardomah. In a 1958 *Times* article titled "Coffee bars for 'teen-agers'", the writer states, 'commercial coffee bars usually attract young people, but often the management are reluctant to encourage them because they tend to be noisy'.³⁴ Some of the 'chain' coffee bars were reluctant to encourage the teenage consumer if it meant neglecting the more traditional adult customer base but many independent coffee bars began to cater to older people and those people wanting food during the day and to younger people at night.

The Modernist notion that designed objects and spaces 'could have a predetermined meaning that is in existence prior to the user experiencing [it]'³⁵ is put in question by a coffee bar's changing daily users and uses. In his article on 'The Changing Role of Designers in Postwar Britain', Andrew Jackson argues against the Modernist position of the universal meaning of an object and in favour of a Postmodern reading whereby meanings have 'a floating quality that can be manipulated and utilised by the designer and the consumer alike'.³⁶ The act of consumption therefore acts as a key determinant of meaning. Jackson states that 'the primary motivation for consumption activity, whether conscious or unconscious, is the establishment of social status...as a means of sustaining personal identity and confirming membership of a social group'.³⁷ For teenagers, a coffee bar which stayed open late, had modern décor and played music was a place which they wanted to be identified with and which confirmed their membership of the social group which congregated there.

At Le Macabre coffee bar in Soho, 'you could have your coffee on a coffin in a cobweb festooned house of horrors, wearing sunglasses at night whilst having earnest discussions about the difference between Jean Paul Sartre and Dizzy Gillespie'.³⁸ In a 1958 Pathé short film titled *It's The Age of the Teenager*, the interior of Le Macabre is featured and a teenager boldly states, 'this is us see, we're today, if you don't dig us shoot away to some square joint with the rest of the creeps'. The teenagers had appropriated Le Macabre as a place to be and in direct contrast to a 'square joint' where the older generation might congregate. Teenagers identifying with coffee bar features such as the death related décor of Le Macabre were actively consuming a new type of brand identity which they were partly responsible for and partly responding to. The fact that the often amateur designed and run bars were so diverse in their names, décor, food and ambience was doubtless part of their attraction to young people used to a homogenous catering landscape dominated by large businesses such as Lyons Corner Houses, which focused almost exclusively on an older customer base.

In her 1987 book *Streetstyle*, Catherine McDermott states that 'coffee bars were a response to teenage demands for their own lifestyle'.³⁹ Some coffee bars of the later 1950s certainly were

a response to teenage styles and needs but McDermott makes the link between teenagers and coffee bars without acknowledging the bars which were also aimed at non teenagers and which came first. McDermott lists the Gondola, Mocamba and El Cubano as the bars which were a 'response to teenage demands for their own lifestyle'.⁴⁰ These were the very bars which were consciously attracting as wide an audience as possible and which were known at the time as more 'adult' oriented spaces. Some bars such as Le Macabre were indeed examples of 'the first exclusive teenage meeting place...where...the secret codes and pass words were formulated'⁴¹ but by no means did all coffee bars respond to the emergence of teenage markets.

The rise of the affluent teenage consumer saw the catering market acknowledge this new consumer with coffee bars at the forefront in welcoming their custom. However, as the coffee bar increasingly became identified as a teenage space so its existence as a space frequented by a wide range of ages and social types became subsumed by the stronger myth of the teenage coffee bar, thus obscuring the reality of the great diversity and complexity of coffee bar culture which thrived in to the 1960s.

Conclusion

A central premise of my research has been that no two coffee bars were exactly alike. This is an important issue because the current writing on coffee bars tends towards the depiction of a generic social space easily identifiable as such. In respect of the amateur status of their designers, owners and staff this dissimilarity continued. There were of course coffee bars that were entirely professional but amateurism was a defining feature of the 1950s coffee bar and it appears to have been self-perpetuating. Whilst the earliest bars were architect designed, as more and more began to appear, more and more people saw it as a way to make money and an increasing number of amateurs became involved.

It has been shown that the relatively low costs of setting up a coffee bar in the post-war period meant that a significant number of people who were new to the catering trade felt able to open bars and restricted budgets meant that amateurs were often engaged to design the interiors. The architectural establishment's attitude towards the often amateur designed coffee bars was indicative of its wider scepticism about the importance of interior design, a subject matter treated by some architects as unworthy of serious attention. A coffee bar design demanded different things to other architectural commissions, not least the need to create an atmosphere of fun and escape. Coffee bar designers were not setting out to challenge the architectural establishment; they were seeking to design an interior which stood out sufficiently to attract customers who had dozens of bars to choose from in any one area of central London. Coffee bars were a phenomenon which could not be ignored but in their 'spectacular décor' and amateur designers, they not so much challenged Modernist design practice as largely ignored it.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Architect and Building News*, (15 December 1955), p.765-766.
- ² Bramah, E. and Bramah, J. (1989) *Coffee makers: 300 years of art and design*. Quiller Press, p.143.
- ³ Ellis, M. (2004) *The coffee house – a cultural history*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, pp.225-245.
- ⁴ Colin MacInnes' *Absolute beginners* was published in 1959. Films such as *The Golden Disc* (1958), *Expresso Bongo* (1960) and *Beat Girl* (1959) all featured coffee bars as central locations in their narratives.
- ⁵ Further references are made in this paper to writing by Jonathan Woodham, Dominic Sandbrook and Catherine McDermott in which coffee bars are treated as spaces with common features and a recognised 'style'.
- ⁶ First patented in 1946 by Achille Gaggia.
- ⁷ Bramah, E. (1972) *Tea and coffee: a modern view of three hundred years of tradition*, Hutchinson, p.71.
- ⁸ Woodham, J.M. (1990) *Twentieth century ornament*, Studio Vista, p.206.
- ⁹ Reilly, P. (March 1955) 'London coffee bars', *Architecture and Building*, p.85.
- ¹⁰ Bramah, Edward (1972). *Tea and coffee: a modern view of three hundred years of tradition*, London: Hutchinson, 1972, p.72.
- ¹¹ Gardiner, S. (September 1955) 'Coffee bars', *Architectural Review*, p.168.
- ¹² Young, B.A. (December 5 1956) 'Coffee-Bar Theory and Practice', *Punch*, p.670.
- ¹³ Galton, R. and Simpson, A. (December 1956) 'The Espresso Bar' (*Hancock's Half Hour*). BBC Productions.
- ¹⁴ *Architectural Design*, (June 1954) '9d. a cup: a report on coffee bars (illustrating the greatest social revolution since the launderette)', *Architectural Design*, p.175.
- ¹⁵ For the purposes of this paper amateur refers to someone without professional qualifications, either as a caterer, architect or interior designer. It is not meant to imply a lack of quality or skill.
- ¹⁶ Gellhorn, M. (May 1956) 'So awful to be young, or, morning to midnight in Espresso bars', *Encounter*, 6:5, p.43.
- ¹⁷ Gardiner (1955), p.168.
- ¹⁸ Interview with Stephen Gardiner, 22.06.2004, Royal Tunbridge Wells.
- ¹⁹ Newell, Malcolm. (1965) *Mood and atmosphere in restaurants*, Barrie and Rockliff, p.1.
- ²⁰ Tayler, Herbert. (February 1957) 'Shops', *The Architectural Review*, p.104.
- ²¹ Gardiner (1955) p.168.
- ²² Tayler (1957), p.104.
- ²³ Tayler (1957), p.104.
- ²⁴ Gardiner (1955), p.167-168.
- ²⁵ Hebdige, D. (1979) *Subculture, the meaning of style*. As with a number of writers since the 1950s Hebdige does not go in to sufficient detail about the coffee bars to give more than a very cursory picture.
- ²⁶ Granada Television (January 2004), broadcast on ITV1, '*The 50s and 60s in living colour*',.
- ²⁷ Sharp, D. (1958) *The Golden Disc*, British, (black and white film).
- ²⁸ Sandbrook, D. (2005) *Never had it so good - a history of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*, Little Brown, p.133.

²⁹ In an article by Peter Graham in *Picture Post*, 21 August 1954, a tour of the coffee bars clearly identifies the customers as boys and girls. Whilst adults were part of the clientele, what stood out to the media was the prevalence of the young as customers.

³⁰ An image of the *Sirocchi* Bar in the Gaggia archive and the *Mocamba* in the Hulton Getty archive (both 1955) clearly show customers ranging in age from around 18 – 50.

³¹ The photograph belongs to Australian businessman Peter Bancroft and was given to him by the Gaggia company as a promotional image in the 1950s. The author has a copy of the image but cannot ascertain copyright.

³² *Architectural Design* (1954), p.175.

³³ Gardiner (1955), p.168.

³⁴ *The Times* (March 22nd 1958), p.4.

³⁵ Jackson, A. (2002) 'From solving problems to selling product: the changing role of designers in postwar Britain'. *Designing Britain, 1947-1975*, a JISC funded project hosted by the University of Brighton. <http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/learning/designingbritain/html/crd.html>

³⁶ Jackson, <http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/learning/designingbritain/html/crd.html>

³⁷ Jackson, <http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/learning/designingbritain/html/crd.html>

³⁸ <http://www.saber.net/~orb/ch1b.htm>

³⁹ McDermott, C. (1987) *Street Style: British designers in the 80s*. The Design Council, p.20. McDermott's section on Italian design contains several errors and generalizations which are typical of writing on this subject. Douglas Fisher was not the owner of the Gondola. 'The Italian café soon became an important feature of 50s youth culture' – it would be very hard to argue that the 1950s coffee bar was Italian in any meaningful way. They were much too diverse to be categorised so clearly as this.

⁴⁰ McDermott (1987, p.20.

⁴¹ McDermott (1987, p.20.

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