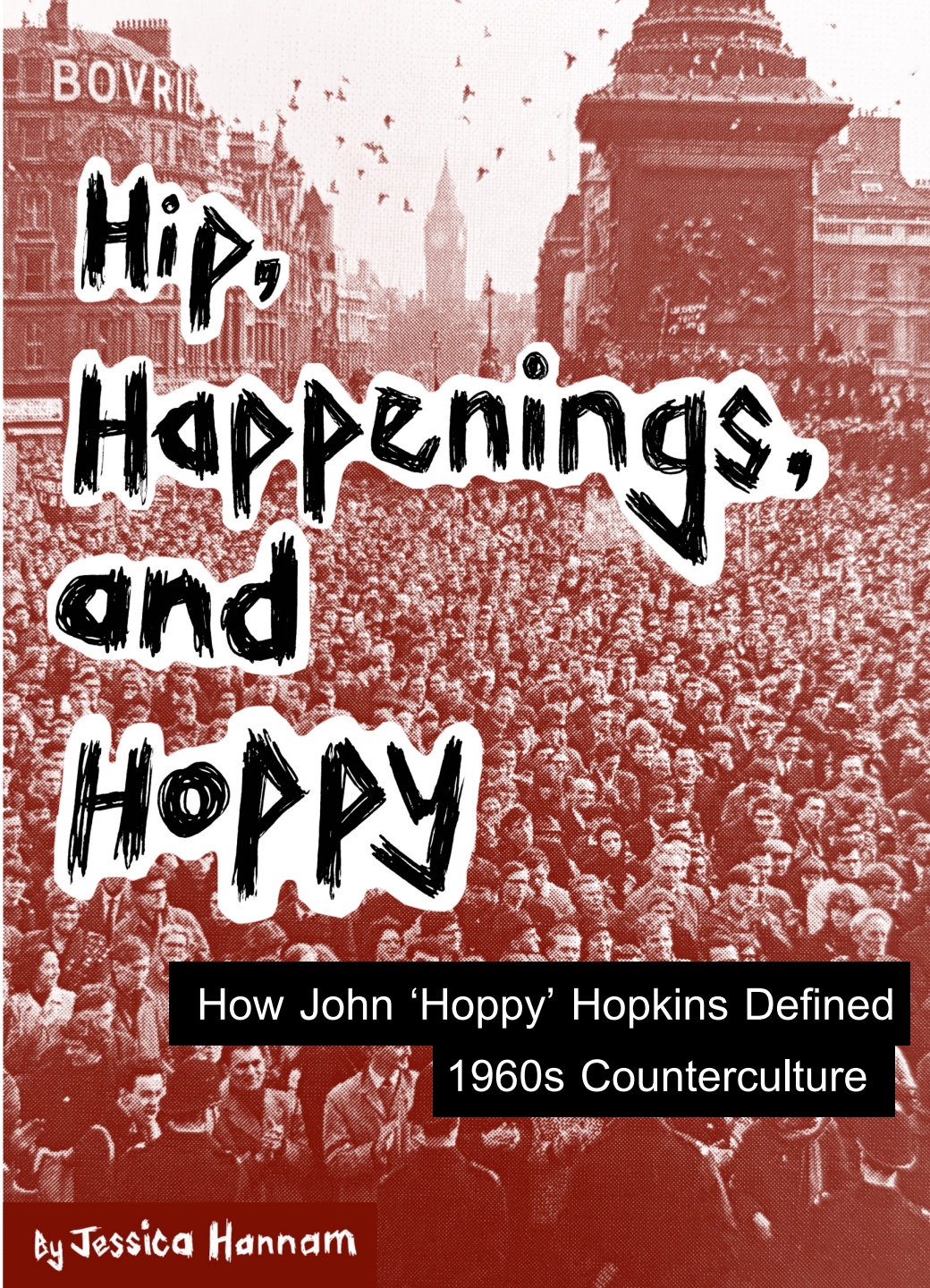




Cover image – Hopkins, J (1964) from the Hoppy Hopkins Archive at the Bishopsgate Institute



Hip, Happenings, and HOPPY

How John 'Hoppy' Hopkins Defined
1960s Counterculture

By Jessica Hannam



The sleepless man and his cat, c.1960s, HoppyX.com

OPENING STATEMENT

The 1960s were a decade of profound cultural, social, and political transformation in Britain. This period saw the rise of civil rights movements, anti-war protests, and countercultural revolutions that challenged the everyday and reshaped societal norms. Against this backdrop, John 'Hoppy' Hopkins emerged as a pioneer in creativity, activism, and resistance. A photojournalist, cultural organiser, and co-founder of the first British underground newspaper, *International Times* (IT), Hoppy's work embodied the intersection of art and activism, documenting the struggles and triumphs of a rapidly changing society. Hoppy's photography and his contributions to the underground press captured the essence of a rebellious generation. Through his lens, he contributed to many of the smaller movements in Notting Hill, a neighbourhood

associated with resistance to racial injustice. His role as a cultural catalyst was not confined to photography; as the co-founder of *IT*, he created a platform for alternative voices that shaped Britain's countercultural identity. This curatorial catalogue focuses on three key objects from the Hoppy Hopkins archive at the Bishopsgate Institute: Hoppy's photography book *From the Hip* (2007), a series of photographs of an anti-racism march in Notting Hill (1963), and an *International Times* cover (1966). Together, these works offer a window into the activism, art, and counterculture of 1960s Britain, underscoring their enduring relevance in contemporary struggles for social justice and creative freedom.



The process of researching John 'Hoppy' Hopkins has been both thrilling and eye-opening, revealing the depth of his contributions to Britain's countercultural and activist movements. Hoppy was a figure whose influence is difficult to overstate, yet history books often fail to give him the recognition he deserves. He was not only a countercultural icon but an individual who profoundly impacted the communities around him through his creativity, activism, and unwavering dedication to social change. Through his photography, Hoppy immortalised moments of resistance and activism that might otherwise have faded into obscurity. For example, his documentation of the St. Stephens Tenants Association march in 1963 captured a working-class campaign for housing rights that was largely ignored by mainstream media at the time. Despite extensive research into this day and the association itself, archival material remains scarce beyond Hoppy's photographs. Without his work, this moment in the fight for equality and liberation may have been entirely forgotten, leaving the struggles of ordinary people undocumented.

Hoppy's influence extended far beyond photography. In 1966, he co-founded the London Free School with community activist Rhaune Laslett, an initiative aimed at empowering local residents by providing free access to education. The London Free School served as both a hub for countercultural thought and a practical resource for the community, offering classes and discussions on a wide range of topics, from philosophy to music. The school's newspaper, also spearheaded by Hoppy, was a platform for countercultural ideals, advocating alternative lifestyles and challenging the societal norms of the time. Hoppy's role as a media pioneer was further cemented with the founding of *International Times (IT)*, Britain's first underground newspaper, in 1966. *IT* broke new ground by addressing topics that mainstream media often avoided, such as anti-war protests, drug culture, and sexual liberation.

IT became a cornerstone of Britain's underground press, inspiring a wave of independent publications that followed in its footsteps. Hoppy's vision for *IT* reflected his belief in the power of alternative media to challenge the status quo, amplify marginalised voices, and create a sense of community among readers who sought change.

Another of Hoppy's significant contributions to the countercultural movement was the UFO Club, which he co-founded in 1966. This short-lived but iconic nightclub became London's first psychedelic music venue, serving as a focal point for the budding psychedelic scene. The UFO Club hosted legendary acts of the 1960s, including The Soft Machine, Jimi Hendrix and Pink Floyd, who were the house band. The club was more than just a music venue, it was a cultural experiment, blending light shows, experimental

art, and groundbreaking music to create an immersive experience that embodied the countercultural ethos.

Hoppy's legacy is one of boundless creativity and commitment to social progress. Whether through his photography, community activism, or contributions to underground media and music, he left an indelible mark on Britain's cultural and social landscape. His work not only documented the struggles and triumphs of his time but also actively shaped the countercultural movements that defined an era.



John 'Hoppy' Hopkins 1937-2015



Hoppy, seen laying down,
attending the last day of the
Aldermaston to London CND rally with
his friends on Easter Monday 1966

OBJECTS

Object 1 - HOPKINS/1/7/1

From the Hip: Photographs by John 'Hoppy' Hopkins, 1960–1966

Date: Published 2007

Medium: Photography book (black-and-white)

Dimensions: 12cm x 30.5cm

Provenance: Published by Damiani, this book compiles Hoppy's most iconic works spanning activism and cultural documentation.

Description and Context:

From the Hip is a collection of Hoppy's photography, capturing the essence of Britain's 1960s counterculture. The book juxtaposes images of anti-nuclear protests and civil rights marches with candid portraits of cultural icons, including The Beatles, Allen Ginsberg, and Malcolm X. Through these photographs, Hoppy transcended the boundaries of photojournalism, using his camera as a tool of resistance and advocacy. The book also features essays by Joe Boyd, Val Wilmer, Barry Miles, and Addie Vassie, offering critical insights and context to Hoppy's work. The collection's images of grassroots activism in Notting Hill highlight the neighbourhood's role as a crucible of civil rights movements. This book situates Hoppy's work within the broader narrative of the 1960s as a decade of cultural and political upheaval, illuminating the connections between art, social change, and collective resistance.



Object 2 - HOPKINS/1/4/32

Anti-Racism March, Notting Hill, 1963

Date: c.1963

Medium: Black-and-white photographs mounted on foam board

Dimensions: 12 x 18 inches (estimated)

Provenance: Taken by John 'Hoppy' Hopkins in Notting Hill, these photographs became part of his personal archive documenting the era's activism.

Description and Context:

These photographs capture a pivotal moment in Notting Hill's civil rights movement. The images show a diverse crowd marching through the streets of Notting Hill, carrying banners that read "No Colour Bar on Immigration" and "No Racism, No Imperialism." Activist Claudia Jones, a central figure in the movement and the founder of the Notting Hill Carnival is among the leaders of the march.

Notting Hill, a hub of Britain's Caribbean community, became a point for resistance against systemic racism and inequality. Hoppy's photographs not only document this historical moment but also emphasise the power of grassroots action. By framing ordinary people as agents of change, the images underscore the collective effort required to challenge oppression. It remains a powerful testament to the enduring struggle for racial justice in Britain.



Untitled,
c.1963



Anti-Racism
March 2,
c.1963



Notting Hill
Demo 1963,
1963



Anti-Racism
March, c.1963



Object 3 - HOPKINS/1/4/33

International Times Cover Poster

Date: 1966

Medium: Print poster

Dimensions: 42cm x 30cm

Provenance: Created as a cover for *International Times* (IT), an underground newspaper co-founded by Hoppy in 1966.

Description and Context:

This bold cover represents the spirit of *International Times*. *IT* served as a platform for countercultural voices, challenging societal norms and amplifying radical ideas. The cover's striking design reflects the magazine's avant-garde aesthetic and its commitment to creativity and dissent.

Hoppy co-founded *IT* alongside Barry Miles, envisioning it as a space for alternative perspectives on art, politics, and culture. Its pages featured contributions from figures like Allen Ginsberg and Yoko Ono, making it a foundation of Britain's 1960s counterculture. The poster showcases Hoppy's upcoming exhibition, highlighting his use of media to inspire resistance and community.

OBJECT IMPORTANCE

The process of exploring the archives presented an initially uncertain path for this research. The sheer volume of documents, scrapbooks, and images felt overwhelming, but encountering Hoppy's photographs transformed that experience. His images resonated deeply, evoking a powerful emotional response that made it clear they should become the central focus of the research. His unwavering dedication to capturing pivotal moments is both admirable and unforgettable. Re-exhibiting some of his work is a significant opportunity to share his life and values with audiences who may not yet be familiar with his impact. This section provides a detailed analysis of the selected objects and evaluates their importance within the archival display. Their importance has also been informed by John Berger's 'Ways of Seeing'.



Hopkins, J (1964), *The Beatles*, HoppyX.com

Object 1 – From The Hip Book, 2007

From the Hip captures a transformative period in British history, using art and activism to showcase a pivotal moment in history. Hopkins' photographs in the book range from anti-nuclear protests to civil rights marches and countercultural movements, illustrating the interconnectedness of working-class activism. This book underscores the significant role photography plays in preserving voices and local histories, many of which remain underrepresented in mainstream narratives. John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* offers a framework for understanding the impact of Hopkins' work. Berger argues that images are not neutral; they are imbued with meaning shaped by cultural, political, and social conditions. In the case of *From the Hip*, Hopkins' images challenge dominant narratives by shifting the gaze towards individuals and communities often excluded from official histories. For instance, his documentation of the CND rallies highlights the power of ordinary people standing together for their beliefs. By presenting these images in *From the Hip*, Hopkins disrupts the traditional, hierarchical narratives of history, instead offering insight into lesser-covered resistance and solidarity.

The decision to display *From the Hip* is to showcase Hopkins' approach as both a documentarian and a participant in the movements he photographed. His images are not just records of events but are bursting with a sense of purpose and alignment with the causes they depict. As Berger states, "*The way we see things is affected by what we know or*

what we believe". Hopkins' belief in social justice and equality spread through his work, shaping how viewers interpret these moments. The inclusion of *From the Hip* in this display encourages audiences to consider how the medium of photography can be wielded as a tool for activism and change. The book's relevance extends beyond its historical significance. In contemporary times, the themes explored in Hopkins' work - racial equality, anti-imperialism, and the fight for civil liberties - resonate with ongoing struggles for justice. Displaying *From the Hip* provides an opportunity to connect the 1960s countercultural movements with today's social struggles, highlighting the unchanging pattern of these challenges. Moreover, The title of this archival display also derives from the book's title, '*from the hip*', meaning a fast opinion-giver. However, just the 'hip' has been used as an ode to the Oxford dictionary meaning of the slang term 'hip' being "*one who is in the know, especially about jazz music and culture*", as Hoppy very much was.

Selecting Hopkins' *From the Hip* is a vital curatorial decision that aligns with both historical knowledge and contemporary relevance. The book serves as a visual archive of resistance, documenting pivotal moments in British history while challenging dominant narratives. By applying Berger's theories, the display underscores the transformative power of photography as a medium that not only documents reality but also reshapes how it is perceived. Hopkins' work continues to inspire new generations, reminding audiences that the fight for justice is as urgent today as it was in the 1960s.



The Rolling Stones, c.1960s, HoppyX.com



Object 2 – Anti-Racism March, Notting Hill, 1963

Hoppy's photography of the St. Stephens Tenants Association exemplifies the intersection of art and activism that defined much of his work. By choosing to document smaller movements, he ensured that the struggles of ordinary people, often overlooked by mainstream media, were not only preserved but also given the respect and attention they deserved. His photographs bring to life the stories of those who stood against systemic inequality and lesser-broadcasted forms of racial injustice, capturing moments that might otherwise have been forgotten. Hoppy's lens framed the resilience, determination, and solidarity of marginalised communities, emphasising their agency in the broader fight for justice. Notting Hill, where Hoppy was active during the 1960s, was a vibrant and culturally rich area that had become home to many Caribbean immigrants from the Windrush generation. These communities brought traditions, music, and values that deeply enriched British society, even as they faced the harsh realities of racism, economic hardship, and discrimination. The area was also a hub for activism, with residents often coming together to challenge housing inequality, police harassment, and other injustices. Though seemingly small in scale, the marches Hoppy photographed carried

profound significance. They resonated far beyond the streets of Notting Hill, linking the struggles of local tenants and activists to global movements for civil rights and liberation. The images evoke a sense of shared purpose, drawing parallels between the experiences of Caribbean immigrants in Britain and the wider anti-colonial struggles unfolding across the world in the 1960s. These connections symbolised an era where movements for racial equality, decolonisation, and social justice were gaining momentum across continents.

Hoppy's photographs also serve as a poignant reminder of the power visual media has to challenge dominant narratives and reshape how we see the world, echoing many of the ideas articulated by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*. Berger argued that the way images are framed and presented influences our understanding of the world, urging us to critically question whose perspectives are privileged and whose are excluded. Hoppy's work aligns with this approach by giving visibility to marginalised communities and overlooked struggles, inviting viewers to see these individuals not as passive victims of systemic injustice but as active agents of change.

By focusing on the efforts of communities in areas like Notting Hill, Hoppy's photographs act as a counterpoint to the dominant media representations of the time, which often ignored or misrepresented the experiences of Caribbean immigrants and other minority groups. His images highlight the humanity and dignity of individuals fighting for a better future, encouraging viewers to see these struggles through a lens of solidarity and shared humanity. Berger highlights the power of images to challenge conventional ways of seeing and to question the norm. Hoppy's work embodies this ethos by reframing local struggles as integral to global movements for equality and justice. Hoppy's photography also draws attention to the interconnectedness of resistance, illustrating how localised actions, no matter how small, contribute to larger narratives of change. As Berger might suggest, Hoppy's images do not simply depict, they demand engagement and reinterpretation, asking viewers to look beyond surface appearances and understand the broader socio-political context. In doing so, Hoppy contributed to a growing consciousness that resistance and activism are part of a much larger tapestry of change, one that challenges oppressive structures on both local and global levels. Through his lens, he created a way of seeing that not only documented history but also envisioned a more inclusive future.



Object 3 – International Times Cover Page, 1966

The International Times (IT) cover page featured in this archival display is a vital object for understanding John 'Hoppy' Hopkins' impact on the counterculture of 1960s Britain. As a co-founder of the International Times, Hoppy was instrumental in creating a platform that challenged dominant societal narratives and celebrated alternative lifestyles. This cover page not only embodies the rebellious spirit of the 1960s but also visually conveys the essence of a countercultural movement that sought to redefine art, politics, and personal freedom.

John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* can also be applied to the IT cover page. Berger argues that images are powerful tools for constructing meaning, reflecting the socio-political conditions of their time. This particular cover of IT exemplifies Berger's notion that visual media shapes our understanding of the world. The use of bold, unorthodox imagery and typography on the cover reflects the era's sense of rebellion and nonconformity. The chaotic yet deliberate visual arrangement mirrors the Sixties' free-spirited energy, symbolising a break from traditional forms of communication and aesthetics. The juxtaposition of the joyful crowd, diverse faces, and subversive text demonstrate how Hoppy used visual language to engage audiences

emotionally while challenging mainstream ideologies. The cover also features imagery of Notting Hill, highlighting scenes of community activism and celebration, illustrating the importance of the civil rights movement and counterculture in the area. By centring on the people of Notting Hill, the image reflects Berger's idea that photographs are not merely documents but intentional representations that invite viewers to question their perspectives.

Despite the piece slightly differing from the other two objects, which focus on Hoppy's photography, the International Times cover page is a powerful piece of media that captures John Hopkins' influence on the counterculture of the 1960s. Through its visual and symbolic language, it illustrates how Hoppy used media to amplify ignored voices, promote activism, and create community. When placed alongside his photographic work, the cover's history is elevated, and its narrative becomes a broader and more significant one.





Sex Worker Cree in Notting Hill, c.1960s

INSPIRATION



This brief section explores the inspiration behind the curatorial choices made for this archival display. The catalogue was designed to embody an almost improvised, throw-together aesthetic, reflecting the unrestrained and rebellious spirit of the 1960s. Subtle references to John "Hoppy" Hopkins' life and work are woven throughout, such as the inclusion of the CND symbol, commonly recognised as the peace sign. This emblem, prominently featured in Hoppy's photographs and deeply associated with the activism of the era, serves as a unifying motif across the catalogue. Its presence reinforces the connection between Hoppy's visual storytelling and the larger cultural movements of the decade.



The paper that condemns ALL H-bomb tests

YOUR LETTERS see page 8

TRIBUNE

Vol. 26 Number 25

SIXPENCE

June 22, 1962

Labour's Independent Weekly



PLEASAS AT THE FESTIVAL—they put across the political message in many forms.



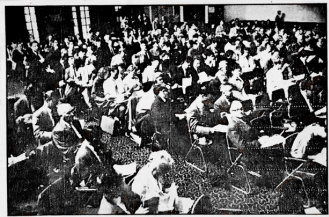
PLATFORM PARTY—Casson Collins addresses delegates to the annual conference of CND.



What happened at Brighton



MICHAEL RANDLE RELEASED FROM PRISON—a service to all prisoners



CAMPAGN IN MASSON—planting a great big forward for anti H bomb work in the coming year.



Richard Kelley, MP, distributes leaflets outside the Royal Academy.

TOPIC

The British News Weekly

1 Sept 62

1 shilling

The banning, marching, sitting people



1 SEPTEMBER 1962

The banning, marching, sitting people

Story by Sidney Cooke; pictures by John Hopkins

BAN THE BLOODY BOMB

UNLATERALITY DUKE

MOGGS AND STICKERS

CAMPAIGNERS

The use of text in this catalogue draws inspiration from the liberating essence of the 1960s while paying homage to Hoppy's scrapbooking practices. The handwritten titles, later scanned and integrated, reflect this era's unrestrained creativity and serve as a nod to Hoppy's personal notebooks, particularly his 'Life's Highway' scrapbook. This scrapbook, compiled with magazine and press clippings as well as his own published images, played a significant role in shaping the curatorial vision for the catalogue. By blending hand-drawn elements, such as the titles and CND symbol, with professional digital additions, the design captures the scrapbook-like essence of Hoppy's work while maintaining a polished, cohesive presentation.

Images of Hoppy's scrapbook titled 'Life's Highway' from Hoppy Hopkins Archive item HOPKINS/1/5/20

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Hoppy's impact on counterculture in Britain was far bigger than perhaps he anticipated. Through simply being himself and doing what he loved, he had an effect far greater than the 1960s but one that is still shared and looked to today. His work is to be admired and paused upon to remember a seemingly distant time yet one with so much in common with that today. Hoppy used his lens to make a difference and, in the process, immortalised not only scenes but the subjects' lives who are seen within them. Though he focused on documenting the everyday, the way Hoppy wielded his camera made for a more powerful image-making that's emotion and impact can still be felt so deeply all these years later.



John 'Hoppy' Hopkins, (2000), Sarah Lee for The Guardian



Bibliography

- I. **Berger, J.** (1972). *Ways of seeing*. London: Penguin.
- II. **Berger, J.P.** (2013). *Understanding a photograph*. London: Penguin Books.
- III. **Bishopsgate Institute.** (2017). *Bishopsgate Institute*. [online] Available at: <https://www.bishopsgate.org.uk/collections/the-hoppy-hopkins-archive>.
- IV. **CND.** (2021). *Who we are - Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*. [online] Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Available at: <https://cnduk.org/who/> [Accessed 18 Nov. 2024].
- V. **Deakin, R.** (1999). *The British Underground Press, 1965-1974: The London-Provincial Relationship, And Representations Of The Urban And The Rural*.
- VI. **Elliott Gallery.** (2017). [online] *Elliott Gallery*. Available at: <https://elliott.gallery/exhibitions/60s-through-the-eyes-of-a-revolutionary>
- VII. **Hippy, n. & adj.** meanings, etymology and more | *Oxford English Dictionary*. (2024). Oed.com. [online] doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED//4113283290>.
- VIII. **Hoppy X.** (2024). *Galleries - Hoppy X*. [online] Available at: <https://hoppyx.com/image-gallery/>.
- IX. **Lewis, P** (2015). *Letter: John 'Hoppy' Hopkins continued to promote the idea of community media*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/mar/26/letter-john-hoppy-hopkins-obituary>
- X. **Phillips, M. and Phillips, C.** (1991). *Notting Hill in the Sixties*.
- XI. **Reeves, S.** (2023). *Activism in Notting Hill*. [online] Available at: <https://www.hoddereducationmagazines.com/magazine/hindsight/33/3/activism-in-notting-hill/>.
- XII. **Underground.** (2021). *EVER HEARD OF... THE UFO CLUB? - Underground*. [online] Available at: <https://underground-england.com/the-ufo-club/?srsId=AfmBOoqcj6hYIFsSOWXr3jRfZ92jXT5q5VZMkRH22ltG6oJ4ZpNSTfww>
- XIII. **Yemm, R.** (2018). *Immigration, Race, and Local Media in the Midlands: 1960-1985*. [online]. Available from: doi:10.24385/lincoln.24325951.v1.



WAY OUT
STREET ONLY