

► One of the first pieces of social legislation passed by the Fianna Fail Government for the Irish Free State was the **1935 Public Dance Halls Act**. This was a response in part to the danger posed to the Irish youth by Jazz music. In particular the wild abandonment hinted at in 'negro jazz' was deemed as a threat to De Valera's ideal of Irish Youth. Not only were his youngsters supposed to be dancing only at the crossroads but it was better that they were supervised doing it as well.

In 1922 the Freemans Journal called for 'broadminded sensible men of different ages, women also, and some of the Clergy who understood the atmosphere of the cinema and the Theatre ' to be the **Catholic guardians of public space**.'

By the mid Sixties those guardians had a hold on rural dancehalls and it appeared the threat posed by of Negro Jazz had receded. Yet the dangerous sounds of young black America remained. Elvis and the Beatles had Irish audiences for their version of American rhythm and blues but it was the genuine passion in the soul music of Detroit city's Motown record label that really left a mark in Limerick. This was the new generational version of that wild abandonment so feared by Irish guardians in the jazz **Twenties**. Although not obscure, Motown songs were not playlisted on Sixties national radio nor were they or covered by the Show bands who serviced the dancehalls.



Limerick youth listened for the sound of their own generation abroad on the pirate broadcasts of Radio Caroline or Radio **Luxembourg**. Those stations played records by the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, The Small Faces and The Pretty Things alongside Motown soul. These were essential playlists. ▶

And those groups looked as good as they sounded. This was confirmed weekly in Fabulous, a UK pop magazine that was eagerly read in in the city. Before the impact of RTE, television magazines such as 'Fab' were style blueprints. One made key decisions on hairstyles, shirts and dresses from each magazine pictures. New Limerick styles became fashioned from rolls of paisley and polka dot from Denis Moran's shop.



Radio Caroline promo 1967.

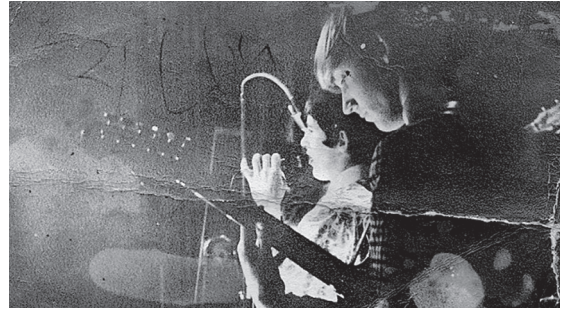
Irish 'beat' culture had arrived. It was a generational but more importantly it contested the social rituals of show band culture. With urban outposts in Limerick, Cork, Dublin and Belfast and fans unwilling to accept the social rituals held in the halls of their parents, the beat scene sought to distance itself from anything that had been imported and adapted before. The media label 'beat' probably came from the Irish media referencing the remnants of 'Beat-le-mania' that remained after the 1963 Dublin visit by the fab four.



Cha and Maureen  
**1965**

By 1965 a group of Limerick youth stepped up to represent Mod culture by forming a band to share their passion for the music. A sharply dressed youth named James 'Cha' Haran fronted the **5<sup>th</sup> Dimension** backed by Joe Heedren, Paul Hanrahan and Tony d'Arcy. They became Limericks first beat band.

Cha Haran and Joe Healean in Sexton St Hall circa 1966.



They bought the records heard on Caroline from Clancy's and practised their dance moves in the Shelbourne Lawn Tennis Club on the Ennis Road. In solidarity with their counterparts across the Irish Sea they even had occasion to avoid some rebel remnants of the fifties in the shape of the few Limerick Teddy Boys that patrolled **O'Connell St**.



The Intentions 1966

In 1966 Cha and Johnny Duhan became singers together in **The Intentions**, the band that would negotiate the late Sixties with many adventures and participants to finish as **Granny's Intentions**. Previously, aged 12, Johnny and Cha had once entered a talent contest singing **Rock n Roll** songs while covered in Elvis badges. Now as forward looking 17 year olds they sought a sound that looked to the future.

The first line up that established the Intentions had Johnny and Cha as singers, Guido Di Vito on Drums, Jack Costello on bass, Johnny Hockedy on guitar. Early members featured Joe Heelan and the renowned fiddle player Joe O'Donnell.



A young Cha Haran.

The RnB scene.

The space of the Go-Go Club in Post Office Lane 2014.

# MOD

## INTENTIONS in Limerick



Limerick mods had the Tennis club and danced in the youth clubs in Sexton St and Cecil St. The Augustinian hall was another place and you could also play the Jukebox in the Continental Café, but when you turned 18 the real place to be seen in was The Club a Go-Go (aka the GO-GO club), which was located in Post-Office lane. The Cavalier club in Hartstonge St was another vital spot and though both clubs were Dublin franchises they quickly became spaces owned and shaped by Limerick youth.

The Go Go with Valarie Roantree 1966.



The Intentions played Motown and raw RnB at the Go Go's in Limerick and Cork building a fan base as well as connecting with their Dublin and Belfast peers. Other bands like the Action and the Chosen Few became friends. These spots were far remove from the dancehalls of the fifties where men and women followed set rituals. Boys and Girls danced as equals in these clubs to the bands and the likes of Djs Peter Jackson and Danny Hughes who were spinning records alien to the programmers of RTE radio. 'Green Onions' 'The tracks of my Tears' 'Roadrunner.' These were classic beat sounds covered by the Intentions and their peers.



A membership book from the Club a Go Go.



The Go Go Club. 1966. Kevin Flanagan, Dave Browne, John O Mahoney.

Quickly **Granny's** Intentions became a tight outfit standing **stood** shoulder to shoulder with the best of the Irish and even the English bands of the Beat Scene. The band had a look as well. For stage wear Cha had found some pinstriped double-breasted suits in a Limerick's Army and Navy store and this became quite a look for them before mod as a neat style drifted into psychedelia.

In 1967 the young group moved to Dublin becoming a popular attraction in spots such as the (Radio) Caroline Club and the Empire in Dun Laoghaire. After a short tour of Scotland, England and Germany The Grannies decamped to London and landed a record contract. Deram records released their single 'The Story of David:' followed by 'Julie don't live me any more' and eventually an Album in 1970 called 'Honest Injun.'

Their reputation live was always high and the beat scene in Ireland welcomed them back on visits but by 1968 Cha and Guido had left the band and returned to Limerick. The last version of the band took on board the country folk sounds that were then coming out of America. In 1972 the name **Granny's Intentions** was retired.

Cha may have left London but he returned to a Limerick as a mature mod bringing some of the scene with him. He opened a shop called the Miss Ellen Boutique in Little Ellen St. Limerick now had a happening clothes spot very much in line with the now flamboyant styles of the London scene. The new wave of Limerick musicians such as Sweet Street were styled and photographed there. Sweet Street featured a young, pre-Horslips Johnny Fean on guitar, Joe O'Donnell on electric fiddle and the singer Eugene Wallace.



Looking at the space of Limerick in 1966-72 this era's activity is a distinct part of the city's cultural identity. Psychedelic and beat related activity were shaped for tools as Limerick youth addressed not only the prescribed rituals of their parents generation but the idea of creating a forward looking Irish scene for themselves far from De Valera's crossroads.



The Sweet Street Circa 1969.

The impact of Television allowed more access to contemporary material for the youth still dancing in the Go Go but, conventionally in the international sense, they were still not described as teenagers and mini skirts were just about tolerated. Being mod-ish in Limerick City still had rebellious currency.

The window the Miss Ellen boutique was a painted by the artist Mick O Sullivan. A conceptual blue field glowed with a white border suggesting perhaps a gigantic TV. Records were played in the boutique and this was another feature setting it apart from any other shop in the city. At this time Cha ran gigs too. In Amharclann na Féile in O'Connell St- the venue that became the Bell table - a gig featured Dublin guests Brush Shields and Phil Lynott. As well as performing Shields and Lynott brought (and operated) a psychedelic light show with them for the gig.



Brush Shields and Guido Di Vito in the Cecil St former Red Cross hall 2014



Hanging out in Ellen St circa 1970. This space is where Cobblestone Joes bar is today.



Cha Haran 2014.

The Go Go closed in the early 70s. Every year the business that now occupies this space in Post Office Lane receives visitors from those who had danced there in their youth who always will be Mods at heart. The last remnants of the marks they left on the walls are there too. What also remains in 2014 is the **Dance Halls Act** but so do Cha and Guido from the Intentions. They regularly gig alongside Sweet Street's Johnny Fean sounding as vital as ever as the Cha Haran band.



The Cha Haran Band featuring Johnny Fean 2014.