

# Britain at Work

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1963 Profumo affair/Rachman slum housing scandal/fall of Harold Macmillan/  
Claudia Jones anti-racism march/US President Kennedy assassination

1973 Pay freeze/strikes/state of emergency/fall of Ted  
Heath/Chilean President Allende assassination



## 1963 Celia Hewitt/Vee Davis on anti-racism march 50th



**Celia Hewitt (pictured in her antiquarian bookshop Ripping Yarns in Highgate) on the start of her acting career** I wanted to be an actor, nobody would pay for me to go to drama school, so I did more work and saved up and went to drama school in Oxford... I couldn't work in London in those days because it was a closed shop, an Equity (union) closed shop, you had to do about a year out of London at different theatres before you could get an Equity card. I was paid £4.50 a week, you could just about live on that. You see, you are doing one or two or three plays a week. So you had to have in your head all these words, you had to remember how to set out all the props, because that was your job, stage management. You did pot-boiler plays like 'Sailor Beware'. I had parts in films, Pinewood and Elstree, all the studios were very busy then, and you'd get the Green Line, because I was very young I had no money and I'd have to get the Green Line bus out every morning to Elstree. Whereas the stars or the people with money who were well-heeled would come in their cars and if you were lucky you would get a lift back with somebody... Suez, 1956, the first demo I ever went on. When I met Adrian (Mitchell) we did lots of demos, we went on every demonstration. Do you remember when Vietnam came and people wanted us, our government to send soldiers to Vietnam, they didn't, they weren't able to, Grosvenor Square, because of that. People like EP Thompson, that book ('The Making of the English Working Class', 1963), it's a seminal book, I always recommend anyone doing a degree, they read it before they do the English degree, because literature is not some airy-fairy thing but tie it down to real history. *Celia Hewitt has appeared in 'Dixon of Dock Green', 'Follyfoot', 'Softly Softly', 'Satan's Slave', 'The Bill' and 'Surviving Picasso'. She co-edited 'Just Adrian', published by Oberon Masters 2011.*

**Vee Davis on the 50th of the Claudia Jones anti-racism march in London at the time of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech** Pearl Prescod had a march from the station, from Ladbroke Grove station to the American embassy. But I had a baby, I'd just had my little boy, I think he was a few months old, so I would still be breast-feeding him and stuff like that, but I went in and I said to my husband there's a march going on there, I won't be long, I just want to go and see. So he said okay but I ended up at the American embassy. This was a peace march, like 'We Shall Overcome'. 63, yes, it was the year my boy was born, 63, and it was this big march, Pearl Prescod was conducting everyone. I remember that march, they were having problems in America with the same black and white thing, you black you stay at the back and stuff like that, and I remember Pearl organised this march to the American embassy, singing all the way from Ladbroke Grove 'We Shall Overcome'. It had nothing to do with Luther King or nothing, it was Pearl Prescod organised it and it was for this blackness, this black awareness stuff. Everybody who believed it wasn't fair, whether they're black or white or whatever, who thought the whole system was corrupted with this. You know the colour of your skin mattered so much. So everybody was marching, black and white. It was happening in America and they brought it over here. We're all going through the same thing, we're all getting the same problem, so they marched, they had this day of the big march. 1963 also saw the re-publication of CLR James's influential book on the Haitian revolution, 'The Black Jacobins'. This was a seminal time for James's work, as he acquired a big audience in the States and his cricket book 'Beyond a Boundary' gained him a worldwide following. Up till then James was part of the Facing Reality group in the States and a relatively unknown figure internationally.

## 1973 Victor Jara and the Chile Solidarity Campaign

**Dave Welsh on the 40th anniversary of the Allende assassination** People say they remember exactly where they were when US President John Kennedy was assassinated. I don't. But I do remember that on September 11 1973 I was on a ladder helping to decorate an Iranian friend's flat in Notting Hill Gate when news of the military coup in Chile came through on the radio. Of the many who were murdered, Victor Jara, the great singer/songwriter, was one of the most prominent. I felt very honoured to meet his widow Joan Jara in London after the Chile Solidarity Campaign was formed shortly after the coup (on the Seven Sisters Road in Finsbury Park). I designed and screen-printed the posters for a demonstration in London and helped with a concert for Chile at the Royal Albert Hall featuring the Chilean bands Quilapayun and Inti-Illimani. Then, having moved to west London, I went to help out at a house for Chilean refugees just off Shepherd's Bush Green. We would walk and talk in Shepherd's Bush market and although my Spanish was not brilliant, it didn't really matter as we were supposed to be speaking English. By the time I had moved again to Willesden Green, I was involved in a local Chile Solidarity group in west London. A boycott of Chilean goods (including wine) was in full swing and we gave out leaflets and did fly-posting (including one occasion in Shepherd's Bush market

when the police followed us ripping down all the posters we had carefully stuck up). The lines of a song by Victor Jara called 'I remember You Amanda' have remained with me to this day: *'I remember you Amanda when the streets were wet, running to the factory where Manuel was working, with your wide smile and the rain in your hair, nothing else mattered, you were going to meet him.'* (Joe Strummer's pre-Clash group, the 101'ers featuring the Chilean Alvaro Pena-Rojas' first gig was a Chile Solidarity Campaign benefit in 1974.)

January 1973 Britain joined the EEC and phase 2 of the pay freeze was announced. February Gas, railway and civil service strikes began over pay. March The Counter-Inflation bill became law. April VAT was introduced. May 1.6 million workers took part in a one day strike over pay restraint. September As Allende was assassinated, 20 unions were expelled from the TUC for obeying the Industrial Relations Act, and the Equal Opportunities for Men and Women report was published. October Denis Healey promised that Labour would increase taxation of the rich, as Ted Heath announced phase 3 of the pay freeze. November A state of emergency was declared as power workers and miners' industrial action began. December A 3-day week started as Chancellor Anthony Barber announced £1,200 million public spending cuts.



## Bert Addinall: Maximum wage era footballer Joanne Connolly

In these times in which a boy from very humble beginnings in Croxteth, Liverpool (Wayne Rooney), is valued at £57 million and can command wages of £250,000 per week as a professional footballer, it is very easy to forget that his predecessors in the game such as Bert Addinall, who began his career at Queen's Park Rangers in 1943 and who scored 74 goals in 174 games in an illustrious ten-year service for the club, were hamstrung by the fact that they were playing at the time of the maximum wage and the 'retain and transfer' system, whereby players were nothing more than chattels to their respective clubs.

Bert Addinall was born in Marylebone in 1921 and moved to Paddington at the age of nine. He was the youngest of 13 children, large families were the norm and many felt the pinch of penury. Bert left school in 1935 and trained to be an engineer with the British Oxygen Company in Park Royal. This was a reserved occupation during World War 2 but Bert still joined the army in 1943. Training as a PE instructor, he rose to the rank of sergeant, and was posted to Egypt as part of the 'clear-up operation' after El Alamein. Bert, being a sergeant, was seconded a servant and now assumed the role of colonial master and 'better'—an irony that would not have been lost on Bert, who had suffered the privations of poverty in pre-war Paddington.

On his return to England he played football at weekends for the BOC works and the Paddington Civil Defence teams on Paddington recreation ground, where he was to be spotted by a QPR talent scout and signed up in 1943. However, due to the suspension of football league games throughout the war Bert's full league debut would not be until September 1946. Bert's wages when he started at Rangers were £14 for a win, £12 for a draw and £10 for a loss—the average wage then was £5 a week, but as Bert's wife Mary pointed out he always had to look smart, therefore a large amount of his wages went on being "suited and booted." Also during the summer months (close season) he was paid considerably less and forced to take on casual work—with one of his brothers who was a builder. For the ten years that Bert was a Rangers player he lived with his family in Shirland Road, Paddington, amongst the people who were paying to see him play.

Bert retired from football in 1956 and became the landlord of a pub in Shoreham. In what was a typical post-football move, he invested in a small business with the little money he had eked out of the game. However, after a couple of years he returned to London and embarked on a career as a cab driver, and his



association with Rangers continued as he was ever present at home games. But he had swapped his shirt to stand on the Loftus Road end as a spectator, paying his two shilling entrance fee along with thousands of others to whom he had been a hero. Bert like so many other players was never a beneficiary of any schemes of welfare as these were and are virtually non-existent. It took Rangers until 2001 to finally see fit to pay him a tribute in the presentation of a match ball to him on the pitch before a game, an approbation that he richly deserved. Bert was so affected by this small gesture that he cried. This article is dedicated to the memory of Albert William 'Bert' Addinall January 30 1921-May 2 2005. *Joanne Connolly is a contributor to the QPR fanzine 'A Kick Up The R's'. This is an edited version of her article which appeared in issue 280 in April 2013.*

Britain at Work is a national programme collecting oral histories of the working lives of people in Britain 1945-1995. The Britain at Work London Group has recorded over 100 interviews in west London and is continuing in north and central London. The TUC Library has produced a new Britain at Work postcard which is available from [tuclib@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:tuclib@londonmet.ac.uk) 0207 133 3726. We will also be publishing a book *All in a Day's Work* in 2014. All interviews will be placed on the TUC Library Collections website [www.unionhistory.info/britainatwork](http://www.unionhistory.info/britainatwork) If you would like be interviewed or be on our mailing list contact [dave@britainatworklondon.com](mailto:dave@britainatworklondon.com) secretary Dave Welsh/chair John O'Mahony/treasurer Jan Pollock/outreach/IT Rima Joebear/newsletter editor Tom Vague

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