

Chapel Arts Creative Writing Group

presents

“The Secret Gardens”

Celebrating 150 Years of the Pavilion Gardens

in stories, poems and a short play



VOLUME 4

Texts of the fourth YouTube video

- Play** Anne Cawthorn *The Pavilion Gardens in the 1960s*
performed by Anne Cawthorn, Steph Billen and Pete Stellings
- Story** Simone Hubbard *A Hard Day's Night*
read by Simone Hubbard and Mark Henderson

THE PAVILION GARDENS IN THE 1960s

Anne Cawthorn

Narrator: Doris and Ethel are two elderly neighbours who meet up each morning for a chat over a cuppa. Doris has been a widow since her Bert died five years ago and Ethel lives with her long-suffering husband, Fred. They normally meet up in Fred and Ethel's kitchen, but today they have taken the 199 bus to Buxton to have coffee in the Pavilion Gardens café.

Ethel: This is a lovely treat, being able to meet up indoors, since Boris said we can.

Doris: Isn't it just? I was beginning to go stir crazy looking at the same four walls.

Fred: It wasn't much better for me with just Ethel to look at!

Ethel: Cheeky devil! You never used to say that all those years ago when we were courting.

Fred: No; true (*looks wistful*).

Doris: Where did you do your courting, then?

Fred: Mainly here in the Pavilion Gardens. There were so many things to do in the 1960s when we were teenagers.

Doris: I agree. Me and my Bert met here as well.

Fred: Did you? (*sounds surprised*).

Doris: I bet this place has been responsible for a lot of couples getting together over the years.

Ethel: I'm sure it has. My parents never minded me coming here. They thought it was a safe place.

Doris: They didn't bank on randy young men like Fred and Bert leading us astray.

Ethel: No, I left home with a load of girls. My parents didn't realise that we parted company at the gates and then met up with the boys in the park.

Fred: Did you know that it was the Gardens' 150th anniversary this year?

Doris: No, I must have missed that!

Ethel: It said in the paper that it was built to coincide with the railway coming to Buxton.

Doris: I used to come up on the train to Buxton, probably four times a week. I went home from school in Buxton on the train, and then used my pass to come back up at night or the weekend.

Fred: The Gardens haven't changed a lot over the years; just the entertainment is different. When we couldn't afford to go inside, the grounds were always a good place for a kiss and a cuddle. Especially near the Serpentine. Free night out.

Ethel: And if you were on the 'pick up' there were gangs of girls and boys roaming around on a Sunday afternoon.

Doris: That's when I met Bert. He kept turning up where I was walking with my friends. I knew he was keen on me when he asked me to go on a rowboat with him, and when we got off, he bought me a cornet from the ice cream kiosk.

Ethel: Yes, you knew you'd clicked when that happened.

Fred: The next step was to meet them at the indoor events during the week. I always went in with my mates and met the LUCKY girl inside.

Ethel: That's so he wouldn't have to pay for them to get in, Doris. He's always been tight.

Fred: Well, you wouldn't want to waste good money on someone you weren't sure you fancied. I also needed to know if they were good at dancing and skating.

Doris: You wouldn't think it now, but I was a really good skater. I used to come here to the Octagon on a Wednesday night.

Ethel: You had to be a good skater. Do you remember how we all skated around the outside of it holding hands?

Fred: Then one of the lads on the inside of the line grabbed hold of one of the middle posts and swung the others round.

Doris: If you were on the outside you had to skate hard to avoid falling over. Scary but exhilarating.

Ethel: I also loved the Friday night disco.

Fred: Yes, me too. If you were lucky, you could have a good smooch to the slow tunes at the end of the night.

Doris: For me, the best nights were Saturday nights when groups like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones played in the Octagon.

Ethel: I think the tickets were six and eight to begin with, and then they went up to seven and six. I earned a pound on a Saturday working in the local record shop so I could afford to go.

Fred: I was there the first time the Beatles came. What a crush! Everybody wanted to get to the front so there was a lot of pushing going on.

Ethel: You couldn't hear them for the screaming, either.

Doris: It was so hot; we were all wet through from the condensation dripping off the ceiling.

Ethel: We got to the front and a few of my friends fainted.

Fred: I remember passing them up to the police who were on the stage, who passed them to each other. I guess the St John's ambulance people were looking after them at the back.

Doris: My friend's dad was one of the young policemen. Best night of his career, he always said!

Fred: It was memorable for me too, all the young girls in their miniskirts. Happy days.

Ethel: He never changes, does he, Doris?

Doris: You wouldn't want him to, Ethel.

They all laugh.

A Hard Day's Night

Simone Hubbard

A short fiction story based on the Beatles visiting the Pavilion Gardens on 19th October 1963.

'Morning, dear. You were late back last night. Did something happen?'

'Oh, yes, something happened alright, Dorothy, something called The Beatles. I've never seen anything like it in all my years been on the beat. I'm glad I put my foot down with our Margaret. There was about 2000 young lasses there last night and the occasional lad dragged in by a girlfriend - all standing. They were screaming, fainting... and that's not the worst of it. Sergeant Hawkins and I were pulling lasses that were getting crushed at the front, up onto the stage. At one point he had to address the crowd and plead with them to calm down for fear of someone getting seriously hurt. It kept the St John's ambulance lot busy, bringing all those who'd fainted round. The Pavilion Gardens manager was beside himself with worry. He thought the crowds they'd had for Gerry and the Pacemakers and Freddie and the Dreamers were rowdy but he'd never seen anything like last night. Not even in April when them Beatles were last here. It wasn't even that they were drunk. They were just off their heads on euphoria!'

'Oh my word. Who'd have thought it? Besides all that, were they any good?'

'Dorothy, it was all a big din to me; and besides, with all that screaming, they could have been singing anything. The roof nearly lifted with one of the songs that I recognised from the drivel our Margaret plays incessantly. If you said a title it might ring a bell.'

'What about the one that's in the charts now, *She Loves You*? The chorus is "She loves you, yeryeryer". They were singing it on Granada TV the other night. You remember, you made a comment to Margaret and she went all quiet. Someone must like it, Derek. It was number one a couple of weeks ago. In fact, there's an interview with the Beatles in my Woman's Own magazine about that song. It made me laugh. You'll have to read it all later, but it said Paul McCartney and John Lennon wrote *She Loves You* in a couple of days and it was the first time they'd written in the third person.'

'Well, they might write songs quick, Dorothy, but if they ever do a gig in Buxton again we'll need to be better prepared. We had trouble even before them performing.'

‘What sort of trouble?’

‘We had to send bobbies over to Bakewell. Luckily it was just before I went on duty. A group of girls got it into their heads that the lads were stopping at the Rutland. They were chanting “We want the Beatles, we want the Beatles”. It caused mayhem. The crowd got bigger and bigger and brought the traffic to a standstill. Peaky said they were screaming hysterically. The chief should have realised by the size of the queue at the gardens that we needed more hands on deck. What a night! If you hear any mention that they’re coming back I want to know because I’ll book some leave.’

‘Oh, Derek, you’re turning into an old frump. You need to embrace this new music.’

‘Embrace? More like turn the dial on the radio to another station!’

‘Anyway, with all the hullabaloo of the night, did you manage to get that album cover signed for our Margaret?’

‘I most certainly did. I asked one of the Trixon lads that were the support band to sort it for me, seeing as I had me hands full of screaming, fainting lasses to deal with. Where is Margaret? She’s very quiet this morning.’

‘Oh, she stopped over at Janet’s house. Said they were going to listen to Janet’s Beatles albums all night, being as though they weren’t allowed to go to the concert.’

‘Janet as in Janet Dixon?’

‘Yes, Janet Dixon. Why?’

‘It’s just I could have sworn I saw Janet Dixon at that concert last night.’

‘Are you sure it wasn’t her older sister, Pat? They do look very similar.’

‘Who knows, Dorothy? I wasn’t exactly in a position to pay attention to detail. There were loads of lasses that looked a similar age to our Margaret. Maybe I should have let her go seeing as it was a Saturday night. Oh, well, hopefully she’ll forgive me when I give her that signed album cover.’

‘I’m sure she will, Derek. You know our Margaret, she’s never been one for bearing a grudge. And by the time Pat Dixon’s regaled Janet and Margaret with the night’s events it will be like they were actually there!’