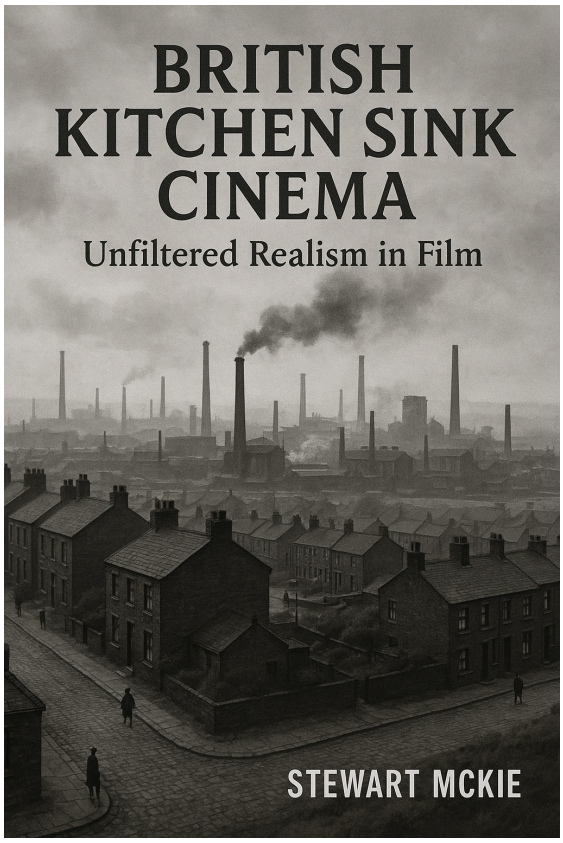
A JACKDAW-STYLE DOSSIER



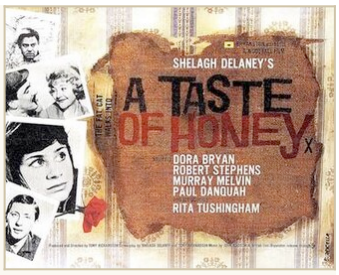
A Taste of Honey

1961

THE WORLD OF THIS FILM Salford, 1961

Delaney's Salford; shot on location around Salford and Manchester.

The world of Salford, 1961



WHAT PEOPLE EARNED

Manual wages in Salford, 1961 UNVERIFIED

The average weekly wage for a male manual worker in Britain in 1961 was approximately £14 10s. In Salford's textile and engineering trades, women could expect closer to £6–£7 a week. Unemployment in the Salford area ran at under 2%, as dockland and factory work still absorbed most school-leavers at 15.

AI-sourced — verify against ONS/Hansard/period sources before publishing.

WHAT THINGS COST

Everyday prices in Salford, 1961 UNVERIFIED

A pint of bitter in a Salford pub cost around 1s 2d (about 6p). A loaf of bread was roughly 10d, and a packet of ten Player's cigarettes cost 2s 4d. Weekly rent for a back-to-back terraced house in the Ordsall or Regent Road area ran to about 12–15 shillings, paid to the council or a private landlord.

AI-sourced — verify against ONS/Hansard/period sources before publishing.

ON THE RADIO

Runaway (Del Shannon song)



"Runaway" is a 1961 number-one Billboard Hot 100 song by Del Shannon. It was written by Shannon and keyboardist Max Crook, and became a major international hit. It topped the Billboard charts for four consecutive weeks, and Billboard ranked it as the No. 5 song for 1961. It was No. 472 on the 2010 version of Rolling Stone's list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time and No. 466 on the 2004 version.

Del Shannon's 'Runaway' reached number 1 in the UK charts in May 1961 and stayed there for three weeks. On Salford's dance floors — in venues like the Ritz Ballroom just across the river in Manchester — it was one of the defining sounds of that summer. Its distinctive Musitron solo made it immediately recognisable on the newly ubiquitous transistor radio.

Wikipedia ↗

ON THE TELLY

Coronation Street



Coronation Street is a British television soap opera created by Granada Television and shown on ITV since 9 December 1960. The programme centres on a cobbled, terraced street in the fictional town of Weatherfield in Greater Manchester. The location was itself based on Salford, the hometown of the show's first screenwriter and creator, Tony Warren.

Coronation Street launched on ITV on 9 December 1960 and by 1961 was drawing audiences of over 13 million. Set in a fictionalised Salford-Manchester terrace, it was filmed at Granada Television's studios on Quay Street, less than a mile from the streets A Taste of Honey depicts. Salford viewers recognised the corner shop, the cobbles and the accent as emphatically their own.

Wikipedia ↗

IN THE NEWS

Suicide Act 1961

The Suicide Act 1961 is an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It decriminalised the act of suicide in England and Wales so that those who survived a suicide attempt would no longer be prosecuted.

The Suicide Act received royal assent on 3 August 1961, decriminalising suicide and attempted suicide in England and Wales for the first time. Before this date, a survivor of a suicide attempt could be prosecuted; families of those who died could face coroner inquiries with criminal implications. The Act reflected a broader shift in public attitudes to mental health and personal desperation that ran alongside the social realism of films like A Taste of Honey.

Wikipedia ↗

STREETS AND HOUSING

Salford



Salford is a city in Greater Manchester, England, on the western bank of the River Irwell which forms its boundary with Manchester city centre. Landmarks include the former town hall, Salford Cathedral, Salford Lads' Club and St Philip's Church. In 2021 it had a population of 129,794. The demonym for people from Salford is Salfordian.

Salford Corporation was in the middle of a major slum-clearance programme by 1961, demolishing the worst of the Victorian back-to-backs in Ordsall, Greengate and Hanky Park. Residents were moved to new council estates such as Pendleton and Worsley Mesnes. Over 9,000 houses were declared unfit for human habitation in Salford during the 1950s survey, driving the clearances that re-shaped the borough through the 1960s.

Wikipedia ↗

WORK

Salford Quays



Salford Quays is an area of Salford, Greater Manchester, England, near the end of the Manchester Ship Canal. Previously the site of Manchester Docks, it faces Trafford across the canal.

Salford Docks, the inland terminus of the Manchester Ship Canal opened in 1894, still employed several thousand dockers and warehousemen in 1961, handling around 16 million tonnes of cargo a year through the canal. Casual daily hiring on the dockside was common, with men gathering each morning at the dock gates hoping to be picked. The docks were one of the few employers offering relatively high wages to unskilled men — up to £18 a week with overtime.

Wikipedia ↗

EATING AND DRINKING

Fish and chips



Fish and chips is a hot dish consisting of battered and fried fish, served with chips. Often considered the national dish of the United Kingdom, fish and chips originated in England in the 19th century. Today, the dish is a common takeaway food in numerous other countries, particularly English-speaking and Commonwealth nations.

Fish and chip shops were a cornerstone of working-class eating in Salford; a portion of chips cost around 4d and a piece of cod 8d in 1961. Most families ate chips at least twice a week, often wrapped in newspaper. Mushy peas, scraps and pickled onions were standard accompaniments in Lancashire chip shops, distinguishing them from southern equivalents.

Wikipedia ↗

WHAT PEOPLE WORE

Mod (subculture)



Mod, from the word modernist, is a subculture that began in the late 1950s London and spread throughout Great Britain, eventually influencing fashions and trends in other countries. It continues today on a smaller scale. Focused on music and fashion, the subculture has its roots in a small group of stylish London-based young men and women in the late 1950s who were termed modernists because they listened to modern jazz.

By 1961 the Mod look was spreading outward from London to northern cities including Manchester and Salford, carried by Italian-cut suits, narrow lapels and winkle-picker shoes for young men. Young women were wearing shift dresses, stiletto heels and beehive hairstyles popularised by singers such as Helen Shapiro. Ready-to-wear chain stores like Burton and C&A on Market Street provided affordable versions of these looks on a factory wage.

Wikipedia ↗

ONE NUMBER

Illegitimacy rate in England and Wales, 1961 UNVERIFIED

In 1961 approximately 5.8% of live births in England and Wales were registered as illegitimate — around 48,000 children. Social stigma attached strongly to unmarried mothers, who were routinely pressured into adoption or hasty marriage. Salford, with its high density of young working-class women in factory and domestic work, reflected these national patterns; welfare support was minimal and the National Assistance Board means-tested any claim rigorously.

AI-sourced — verify against ONS/Hansard/period sources before publishing.

From the page

A Taste of Honey

play, 1958 — by Shelagh Delaney

The people

DIRECTOR

Tony Richardson

WRITER

Shelagh Delaney

In 1961: Shelagh Delaney is a young working-class playwright from Salford who wrote the original stage play 'A Taste of Honey' at the age of eighteen, which premiered in 1958 at the Theatre Workshop under Joan Littlewood. The play transferred to the West End and Broadway, making Delaney an overnight sensation of British theatre. She has co-written the screenplay adaptation with director Tony Richardson, marking her first work for film.

ACTOR

Rita Tushingham as Jo

In 1961: Rita Tushingham is a Liverpool-born actress trained at the Liverpool Playhouse who makes her feature film debut in 'A Taste of Honey.' Her unconventional looks and naturalistic acting style brought her immediate critical attention. This film represents the very start of her screen career.

ACTOR

Dora Bryan as Helen

In 1961: Dora Bryan is an established British actress and comedian who has worked extensively in West End theatre and British film comedies throughout the 1950s. She has appeared in numerous supporting roles in films such as 'The Fallen Idol' (1948) and 'Now and Forever' (1956). By 1961 she is a well-known face in British popular entertainment taking on a more dramatically substantial role here.

ACTOR

Murray Melvin as Geoffrey

In 1961: Murray Melvin is a British actor associated with Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop at Stratford East, where he originated the role of Geoffrey in the stage production of 'A Taste of Honey.' He has built his reputation primarily through Theatre Workshop productions and brings considerable familiarity with the material to the film adaptation.

ACTOR

Robert Stephens as Peter

In 1961: Robert Stephens is a British stage actor who trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and has risen through the ranks of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre. He has appeared in notable productions alongside the leading figures of the British theatrical new wave. By 1961 he is establishing himself as one of the most promising actors of his generation on stage.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Walter Lassally

In 1961: Walter Lassally is a German-born British cinematographer who became closely associated with the British Free Cinema movement, shooting Lindsay Anderson's early shorts and Karel Reisz's 'We Are the Lambeth Boys' (1959). He has also worked with Tony Richardson before on 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner.' His naturalistic, location-based cinematography is central to the aesthetic of the British New Wave.

PRODUCER

Tony Garnett

PRODUCER

Oscar Lewenstein

In 1961: Oscar Lewenstein is a British theatrical producer associated with the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre, which he co-founded as a central institution of the British theatrical new wave. He has produced a number of important stage productions and is moving into film production. He serves as producer on 'A Taste of Honey' alongside Woodfall Film Productions.

What it dramatises

Housing — slums, clearance, prefabs, new estates, the high-rise promise

Women, marriage, abortion and unwanted pregnancy

The North vs London

Race and immigration

Homosexuality before decriminalisation

Sex - infidelity, before marriage, dating

About the film

A Taste of Honey is a 1961 British New Wave drama film directed by Tony Richardson and starring Rita Tushingham, Dora Bryan, Robert Stephens and Murray Melvin. It is an adaptation of the 1958 play of the same name by Shelagh Delaney. Delaney wrote the screenplay with Richardson, who had directed the original Broadway production of the play in 1960. As with the play, the film is an exemplar of a social realist genre of British cultural movement known as kitchen sink realism.

Wikipedia ↗

Items marked with a source link are verified against that source; items marked UNVERIFIED are AI-drafted period colour awaiting a primary source. Dossier assembled from the Kitchen Sink atlas.