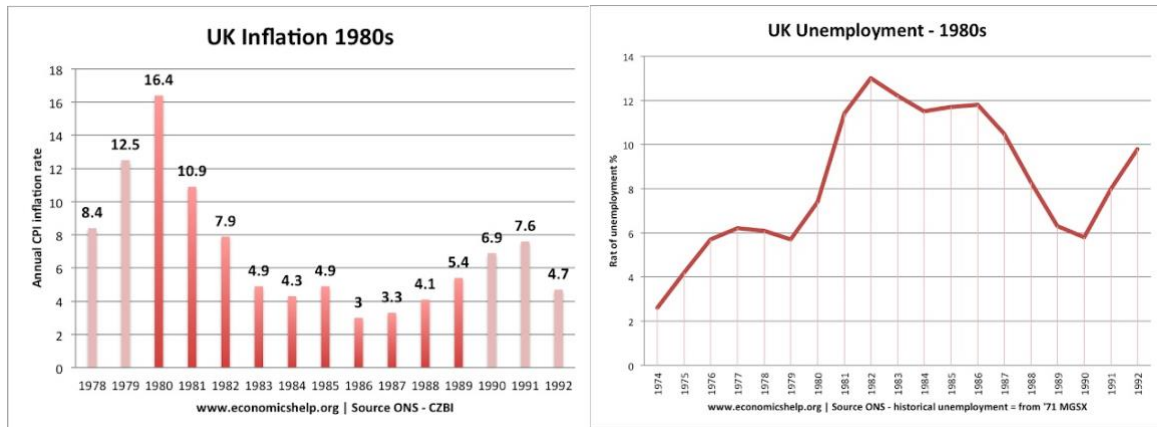


LIFE IN THE 80's

When the Conservative Government under Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979 they inherited an economy creaking under the weight of severe structural problems. Inflation was in double figures, the all-powerful Trades Unions were causing wage inflation and endless strikes, and unemployment was reaching a post-war high. There were high levels of Government debt, (which required sensitive borrowing from the International Monetary Fund) and, a rising value of the Pound Sterling (from £1 to \$1,5 in 1970 to \$2.5 in 1980) causing British goods abroad to become increasingly expensive. Demand dropped. By 1980 order books were down from between 10 and 40%. Businesses, especially manufacturers, were being driven perilously close, if not over, the edge.

For more than a decade successive governments had been fighting for control without success. New solutions were needed urgently. The Thatcher Government stepped up. Committed to free-market economics and dismissing devaluation of the currency as a short



term fix, they threw themselves into an aggressive attack on inflation. Margaret Thatcher blasted that “We have paid ourselves 22% more for producing 40% less”. Almost immediately they raised Interest Rates, raised Taxes, cut Government spending and made strenuous efforts to control the supply of money as prescribed in the ideology of monetarism. The immediate aim was to take the heat out of the economy by curbing spending and lowering demand. The policy hit businesses hard. Already struggling on international markets they were now hit by increasing costs. Many businesses went under, almost all were forced to restructure and slim down in order to survive. There was a clamour for the Government to change course, famously put down by Margaret Thatcher in her “This Lady is not for turning” a speech to the Conservative Conference. They stuck to their guns and the country plunged into recession. There was a flood of redundancies. British Steel, for example, axed over 11,000 jobs; Lucas Industries, 3,000; the Coal Board announced the closure of 50 pits with the loss of 30,000 and British Leyland revealed they were in desperate trouble. Across the Country unemployment soared from 1.5 million in April 1980 to 3 million by the following January. No Government aid was forthcoming. There were no rescue packages. The message was clear. Adapt or go under. To deter the inevitable threats of strike action State benefit to strikers was

halved in January 1980, the first shot across the bows of the Trades Unions and a declaration of intent that the State would not 'Nanny' self-inflicted problems.

The recession hit hard. The threats of unemployment brought some sanity to the situation and Conservative propaganda emphasising free-market economics with minimal State interference encouraged a need for greater self-reliance. The culture of working life changed. The need to earn your keep became of paramount importance as businesses slimmed and reorganised. The emphasis moved to the wealth creators – the shop floor workers, to mechanisation / computerisation, and to the efficiency of production. Non-productive workers were pruned to a minimum. Bloated management structures were severely cut. Older workers were ousted by tech savvy youngsters with enthusiasm for development and change. The need to become indispensable slowly became the only insurance against unemployment. Union petty squabbling and mischief-making became less relevant. As the decade wore on no one felt safe. Even workers in the monolithic, nationalised monopolies, not so incentivised by competition and more secure in their employment, found the carpet swept from beneath their feet as one by one they were privatised and reorganised. The life of professionals in Education, Medicine and the Law also became less assured as their personal performance was, for the first time, brought under scrutiny each year by enforced appraisal systems.

The graphs (above) reveal that the policies met with some success. Inflation fell, economic growth grew appreciably, and unemployment fell. By 1987 GDP had risen from -2.3% to +2.4%. It had gone from Bust to Boom although regrettably it was not to last. 'Boom' increased demand which, in turn, raised inflation, a situation exacerbated by a far greater uptake of imported foreign goods. By 1990 the economy was, once again, sliding into the doldrums. There followed yet another wave of strikes across a broad range of service industries from Dockers to London Transport, the Railways, Local Government, and even the Civil Service. Job security was once more threatened. Change in the workplace was accelerating. The idea of a career for life dwindled and personal stress levels edged upwards in an environment of change or die. The jitters were not just a UK phenomenon. The fragility of the world economy hit home on 'Black Monday' – October 19th 1987 when there was a Stock Market collapse wiping 36% off the value of shares in 2 days. It was an earthquake in confidence arising from widening trade deficits in the USA and a distrust in new computer trading systems. It rocked the financial world. Hesitancy curbed investment at a crucial time slowing development and opportunity just when it was needed.

The Thatcher Government was equally determined to cut bureaucracy, root out cronyism and remove all impediments to the efficiency of production. In the early days of her administration she wound up some 400 quangos but the chief target was the Trades Unions which she saw as the "enemy within". With her sights on the National Union of Mineworkers, who had inflicted so much damage in the 70's and who were regarded as the leaders of the pack, she plotted a careful strategy to weaken their influence. Slowly but surely the strike weapon of the Unions was emasculated. Strike ballots were required by law, walk-outs on a show of hands became illegal and flying pickets and secondary action was outlawed. She also prepared thoroughly for the confrontation which inevitably was to follow. Whilst conceding

a pay claim by the Miners in 1982 she bought time to prepare. A strategy was developed to stock-pile coal, to organise police response to violence and to plan the 'trigger' which would ignite the Union. On March 6th, 1984 the National Coal Board announced the closure of 20 collieries with the loss of 20,000 jobs. Sensitive to the impact of proposed closures miners in some pits in Yorkshire were already on unofficial strike and pickets were descending on mines in the Midlands – all illegal. On March 12th the National Union of Miners declared support for strikes in Scotland and Yorkshire on the basis of ballots held in 1981 and called for action in all other areas. The strike was almost universally observed though there was less support in

the Midlands and North Wales. As a result, Nottinghamshire became the target for aggressive and violent picketing. Bloody battles between pickets and police took place, most notably at Orgreave near Rotherham where confrontation between 5000 miners and an equal number of police



broke into violence after police on horseback charged with truncheons drawn. 51 pickets and 72 policemen were injured. Other battles also occurred in Maltby and elsewhere. In total 11,291 people were arrested for Breach of the Peace of whom 8,392 were charged and nearly 200 were imprisoned. Early on the Courts declared the strike illegal. Arthur Scargill, the miner's leader was fined £1000 and the Union £200,000. In the meantime social security benefits were withdrawn from striking miners who were forced to rely upon the Union and the subscription of others for subsistence. Some miners trickled back to work in September but it was not until the following March, nearly a year after it had begun, that the strike was called off. It was a total victory for the Government and sent shock waves through the Union Movement.

The miner's strike might have been the main event but it was certainly not the end of industrial strife in the 80's. One year after the Miner's strike had ended another year-long



dispute erupted at Wapping in London. This time it was large-scale automation rather than closure that was depriving people of work. Rupert Murdoch's News International Group, who published a raft of Newspapers, relocated from Fleet Street to a new plant at Wapping. Here new computerised technology replaced traditional, labour intensive Linotype methods reducing manpower requirements from 6,800 to 670. The Unions reacted

were destroyed, some overturned or set alight; and 28 shop premises were burned with another 117 damaged and looted. Reports suggested that up to 5000 people were involved in the riot. 82 arrests were made. The level of violence across the country was unprecedented. In Toxteth on July 4th 150 buildings were burnt and 781 police officers injured, the police using CS gas for the first time to quell the rioting. The Thatcher government continued to take a hard line insisting, above all, upon the rule of law. Public opinion followed in her wake. In the General Election of June 1983 she was returned to power with a triumphant majority of 144. Hostility between the black community and the metropolitan police in London, however, continued to simmer leading to another major riot in Brixton in September 1985. Here the police lost control for 48 hours. A total of 55 cars were burnt out, some upturned to create a defensive wall from behind which youths threw petrol bombs and looted shops. A large furniture shop was set alight and totally destroyed along with some adjoining residential flats. Once again large shock-waves were sent across the bows of the Establishment but no immediate action was forthcoming. An Enquiry was commissioned after the first Brixton Riot resulting in the 'Scarman Report'. This warned of the need for a change in police tactics and an effort to improve community relations. It concluded that

“Without close parental support, with no jobs to go to, and with few recreational facilities available, the young black person makes his life the streets and the seedy commercially-run Clubs of Brixton. There he meets criminals, who appear to have no difficulty in obtaining the benefits of a materialistic society.”

It therefore accepted that 'hard' policing was necessary.

The issue of youth unemployment was, however, taken very seriously and a scheme was developed to ensure that some opportunity was offered to all 16 and 17 year-old school leavers. The 'Youth Training Scheme' (YTS) introduced in 1983 promised training in a variety of businesses, Colleges of Further Education or Training Workshops. Initially for a period of 6 months to a year, it was extended to 2 years in 1986. It provided work experience backed up by specialist College courses including Life Skills and Social Skills. Trainees were paid, but lost eligibility for unemployment benefit.

Unemployed adults fared worse. With raging price increases they were severely pinched and, with Interest Rates close to an all-time high, there was no borrowing yourself out of difficulties. Mortgagees suffered badly. Interest Rates averaged at between 12 – 14%. Many found their homes at risk. As a result there was competition to fill any job going and there was growing pressure, even for young mothers, to find any paid work. Amazingly the housing market remained ebullient. Mortgage lenders adjusted to the circumstances by easing restrictions and the Government, with an explicit policy to encourage home ownership, produced tax incentives. They even legislated for Council House tenants to be given the option of buying their homes at a reduced cost. Demand for houses therefore outweighed supply and prices almost tripled in a decade.

Average House Price	1980 = £22,677	1990 = £61,495
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The extent of price inflation during the 80's can be seen in the following examples:

PV= Present value – Inflation adjusted to 2020/2021				
	1980	PV	1990	PV
Average House Price	£22,677	£99,445	£61,495	£154,352
Average Earnings	£5720	£25,083	£13,760	£31,984
Petrol	£1.28 pg	£5 pg	£1.86 pg	£2.51
Standard Loaf	27p	£1.28	50p	£1.25
Milk	15p	77p	28p	70p
Cigarettes	67p	£3.42	£1.64	£4.12
Newspapers	10 -12p		20-22p	
Colour TV	£259.95	£1324	£299.99	£798
Pocket Calculator	£12.95	£66		
Cassette Tape Recorder	£75.95	£387		
Automatic Washing Machine	£199.95	£947	£269.99	£658
VHS Recorder			££299.99	£798
Fridge Freezer	£147	£749	£199.99	£532
Mobile Phone Motorola			£1765	£4695
Miscellaneous Prices :				
Findus Lasagne (1987) = 99p	£2.93	Chicken Kiev 2X2 pack 1988 = £3.68	£10.45	
Walls Viennetta (1985) = 72p	£2.34	Weetabix (1983) = 43p	£1.55	
Marmalade (1980) = 25p	£1.28	Orange Squash (1983) = 75p	£2.67	

It is immediately apparent that House prices remained very cheap by today's standards as did petrol and cigarettes. Electronic and White Goods were then very expensive but were falling in price quickly as mass production lowered costs. Not surprisingly the newly introduced frozen ready-meals were also highly priced whilst food prices in general were broadly compatible with today's values.

Despite the economic turmoil, those in work continued to benefit from a rising standard of living. Across the decade Wage Inflation (96.1%) once again superseded Price Inflation (72.91%). However, concealed within the statistics are disparities which distort the picture. The 80's saw the emergence of Performance Related Pay in some sectors of the workforce. Bonus schemes were more widely introduced especially for sales and executive staff in the progressive industries. The YUPPIES – the young upwardly mobile professionals in the City of London, for example, boasted bonuses as big as telephone numbers. It became necessary to pay exorbitant bribes to attract the best, most computer literate people if you were to attain and keep the competitive edge over business rivals. The result was a widening gap between the rich and the poor. The fruits of success were not evenly distributed.

The squeeze on family budgets had far reaching consequences which rippled through the economy and triggered cultural change. The national Supermarket chains prospered and expanded into almost every community. They also broadened the range of products on offer to include health products, clothing, household goods, gardening products, frozen goods and alcohol at prices well below that of the local retailers who were gradually squeezed out of business. Corner Shops disappeared at a pace. Those that clung on did so on the back of 'convenience', offering personal services and extreme opening hours. There was also a surge in Catalogue Shopping with the facility for short-term credit over a fixed number of weeks. This brought within range products which would otherwise be unaffordable. There was also a massive rise in 'Do It Yourself', 'Grow Your Own', and 'Camping and Caravanning', all initially aimed at cutting costs but which ultimately brought about a change in behaviour – a movement towards healthy living which also saw savings through a substantial drop in smoking. At the same time the emphasis swung towards 'Home Entertainment' as technology extended the possibilities. Cinemas and Theatres closed in their hundreds as 'Video' shops, offering films for rent, opened on the shopping parades. The other winners of the time were fast Food outlets offering a tempting solution to ever more- busy and complicated lives, not least because they were 'cheap'.

Financial pressures, however, had a down-side. Home consumption of alcohol increased substantially. Off Licenses opened to serve the growing demand local communities. The promise of riches through gambling also became more enticing and a proliferation of 'Betting Shops', Arcades and Casinos also invaded shopping areas in both High Street and suburb. Most notable, perhaps, as a more revealing sign of the times, was the arrival of the 'Charity Shop'. Charities, in general, suffered cruelly during the height of the 80's recession and resorted to every means possible to raise funds. Charity shops immediately found a niche in satisfying the need of both the charity and the less well-off. They readily filled the premises left vacant by the exodus of small shop-keepers.

Economic and social instability were not the only disturbance to peoples' lives in the 80's. Political unrest also interrupted the peace, cost lives and menaced the security of a great many people. Whilst the on-going troubles in Northern Ireland were beginning to wane under the weight of a growing peace movement, the divide remained severe, and the struggle to relieve tensions continued to hit obstacles. In 1981 hunger strikes amongst IRA prisoners

caused eruptions, and there was no let-up in the long-running bombing campaign on the British mainland:

Oct 1981	Chelsea Barracks	2 killed, 39 injured
	Wimpy Bar, Oxford Street	1 killed
July 1982	Hyde Park and Regent Street	11 killed
Dec. 1983	Harrods, London	5 killed, 90 injured
Oct 1984	Brighton Hotel	5 killed
	(Assassination attempt on Margaret Thatcher)	
Sept. 1989	Deal barracks	11 killed, 22 injured.

Public anger and concern over the proliferation of Nuclear Weapons also showed no sign of abating. Major demonstrations were mounted in London in both 1981 and 1983 involving several hundred thousand people. There was also an outpouring of rage at the prospect of a Poll Tax in 1990.

Beyond the British Isles the most persistent state sponsored terrorist threat came from Colonel Qadhafi of Libya, characterised by the shooting of police-woman Yvonne Fletcher by a gunman inside the Libyan People's Bureau; the widespread supply of arms and explosives to the IRA; and the downing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 with the loss of 271 lives. Most notable, however, not least because of its success, was the Falkland War of 1982. Exploiting the perceived weakness of Britain at the height of the recession, Argentina invaded the British Crown territories of The Falkland Islands and South Georgia in the South Atlantic. A Naval and Air Force Task Force was despatched and military action ensued costing 649 Argentinian lives and the lives of 255 British servicemen. Sovereignty was regained in 74 days with the surrender of the Argentinian forces. The events captivated the British public as day-by-day reports were broadcast on television. The rejoicing which followed success helped float the Thatcher Government through the next General Election.

Back in Britain where the 'Englishman's home is his castle' the drawbridges were raised to protect families from as much of the upheavals as possible and to smooth the passage into a new age. Efforts accelerated to keep heat in and unwelcome visitors out. New 'sealed' Double Glazed windows and doors were installed with bolts and deadlocks for security and acres of 'glass fibre' insulation was rolled out in lofts to cosy people in. The motive in each case was to save on energy costs and insurance premiums. Protecting the planet was then a distant concern.

New technology and fashion trends continued to infiltrate the home slowly but surely. The kitchen was the focus of most change. Microwave Ovens, Automatic Washing Machines, and Fridge Freezers all became virtually universal as mass production lowered prices. All three were influential in changing household routines. At the same time technology provided ever cleverer mixers and mincers, toasters, grills and sandwich makers, not to mention, automatic timers and programmers to control ovens. New on the scene were the first domestic



Washing-Up machines, gadgets like the 'Soda Stream' for carbonating drinks and a range of equipment, like 'Woks', to satisfy the increasing interest in international cuisine. There was also a surge of interest in 'Fitted Kitchens' with fully integrated appliances. The advent of mass-produced 'Flat Pack' furniture using new materials like MDF (Medium Density Fibre Board) along with improved methods of lamination enabled the cheap production of a range of standardised designs.

Bathroom make-overs were more about fashion. White ceramic baths, basins and toilets fell from favour to be replaced by a range of colours chiefly avocado, pink, yellow and blue. Moulded fibre-glass bath tubs were also introduced breaking tradition by opening up new design possibilities. Wall and Floor tiles of varying patterns and styles also became popular. By the 1980's hot water on tap provided by central heating boilers or electric-immersion tanks had become almost universal.



Living room design was, perhaps, the least changed. There was no revolutionary mutation of furniture design and the television continued to be the focal point of the room. However, there was a move towards off-centre lighting to enhance the atmosphere of relaxation, aided and abetted by simulated 'flame' electric and gas fires which, by this time, had largely replaced traditional coal. The

major additions to the room were, of course, technological. New technologies initiated a whole new world of home entertainment expanding the capacity of televisions and sound systems hugely. Whilst TV sets themselves continued to be operated by large, bulky Cathode Ray Tubes in an analogue 625- line format and screen size remained relatively small at around 27 inches, functionality improved considerably. Channel 4 was added in 1982 with regional channels commissioned by ITV coming on stream in 1986 -87. Transmission times also lengthened. TV AM (ITV) and Breakfast Time (BBC) were added in 1983 and by 1988 all regions were providing a 24- hour service. The use of new Video Cassette Recorders and Video Cameras opened up a new world of opportunity. The ability to create home movies, record programmes and hire and watch films extended choice, whilst the connectivity of the TV to Games Consuls added an entirely new dimension to the television experience. The quality of

programming also improved significantly as the new technologies were adopted by the TV Production Companies. There were new insights into the natural world and greatly improved outside broadcasting. New programmes to the television screens in the 80's included:

Sit Coms: Allo Allo (1982); Blackadder (1983); Only Fools and Horses (1981); Red Dwarf(1988); Yes Minister (1980); Bread (1986); Butterflies (1980); Don't Wait up (1983); Ever Decreasing Circles (1984); Hi-de-hi (1980); Open all Hours.(81)

Drama Series: Poirot (1989); Bergerac (1981); The Bill (1983); Juliet Bravo (1980); Taggart (83); Brideshead Revisited (1981)

Games Shows: Countdown (1982); Blind Date (1985); Bullseye (1982); Family Fortunes (1980); Play your Cards Right (1980); Strike it Lucky (1986);

Children's TV: Chucklevision (1987); Byker Grove (1989); Fingermouse (1987); Postman Pat (1981); Razzmataz (1981); Saturday Superstore (1987); Superted (1983)

Many old faithful's continued to be shown across the categories, not least the enduring Soap Operas of Eastenders, Emmerdale Farm and Coronation Street. Individual episodes of East Enders and Coronation Street were among the most watched programmes of the decade attracting in excess of 25 million viewers. The wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer topped the charts with around 750 million viewers worldwide. The most watched films broadcast on TV were Live and Let Die (1980); Jaws (1981); The Spy who Loved Me (1982); Diamonds are for Ever (1981); Crocodile Dundee (1989).

By the 1980's music was available by transistor radio in every corner of the house and by Sony-Walkman on the streets. It had become an essential accompaniment to many people's lives. In the living room stereo or quadraphonic sound systems from vinyl records or CD's allowed immersion in complete 'surround sound' whilst more active participation was invited by the 'Video Karaoke' machine which was beginning to make an appearance in Pubs, and Clubs as well as at home.

Popular music is continually mutating reflecting the mood and temperament of the times. Indeed, it is born from culture and contributes to its evolution, aided and abetted by the mass media which ensures its accessibility and penetration. Primarily the domain of the young, it has come to provide something of a signature for each passing era. In the 50's Rock and Roll, such a departure from convention, announced the 'youth-quake' and a major shift in attitudes towards the young. It came to define the age. The early to mid-60's was different. It was a period of optimism and opportunity for a better, wealthier future. It was the age of the pop idol, of feel-good music emphasising a bright future of love and romance. Rock and Roll was scaled back and was overtaken by ballad and melodic pop. By the late 60's as the promise of El Dorado receded, the public mood turned against the establishment who had blatantly failed to deliver. Discontent erupted against social injustice, race, atomic weapons, the economic woes and government incompetence. Music turned angry and riotous with Hard Rock and Heavy metal. It became the vehicle for political messaging with demands for change and carried strong statements about personal liberty and the ability to be and do anything

without interference. Convention was challenged at every turn. The young made known their frustration.

The 80's were different. The climate changed and pop music went with it. Once again economic boom, all be it temporary, raised hopes and aspirations. The world showed its determination to rescue itself. The Cold War ended with the dismantling of the USSR and the fall of the Berlin Wall and there was a global economic recovery. In Britain the Falkland's victory raised nationalistic spirit; determined efforts to modernise industry and stamp out discontent raised confidence in government; and a new mood of personal responsibility and ambition raised hope for the future. Popular music and fashion responded.

In Britain the New Romantic, pop culture emerged. Whilst essentially a fashion movement epitomised by flamboyant, eccentric fashion with facial make-up, quiffs and flouncy shirts – an echo of the Glam Rock style on the 70's, it became the mode for pop stars in the early 80's. Adam Ant was in the vanguard with song successes like 'Stand and Deliver' and 'Prince Charming' followed by image conscious and media savvy 'Wham' with hits like 'Before you Go Go', 'Freedom' and 'Last Christmas'. Other notable groups included Duran Duran, Culture Club and Spandau Ballet. Their music made extensive use of synthesisers. New technology stimulated the development of genres featuring non-traditional instruments giving rise to 'Electronic Dance Music' and New Wave, known as 'Modern Rock'.



There was also a rise in urban genres particularly Rap and Hip Hop. But all was over-shadowed by the emergence of the 'Mega Star'. The 80's saw the globalisation of the music industry and the dominance of a small group of artistes with extra-ordinary appeal. In the vanguard was Michael Jackson. His 1982 album 'Thriller' became the best-selling album of all time selling 25 million during the decade, whilst his follow-up album 'Bad' contained 5 number 1 singles. He was voted Artiste of the decade with 9 No 1 singles and enjoyed world tours of overwhelming success.



Madonna also achieved global domination as a singer and fashion icon. She made the Music Video a powerful marketing tool. With albums including 'Like a Virgin' and 'Like a Prayer' she too was voted artiste of the decade by a number of magazines. The elite group also included Whitney Houston, Bruce Stringsteen, Stevie Wonder, Lionel Richie, Billie Joel, Prince, and Tina Turner to name but a few. Several British artistes made the transition to Pop in the 80's and saw commercial success including David Bowie, Phil Collins, Billy Ocean and Paul McCartney. Together they created what has become known as the 'Tune' decade. Not surprisingly perhaps, as the 80's drew to a close and boom once more turned to bust, there was a resurgence of Hard Rock and Heavy Metal with bands like AC/DC, Queen, Def

Leppard, Kiss, Bon Jovi, Scorpions and Ozzy Osborne, Iron Maiden and Judas inserting a taste of rebellion.

Fashion in the 80's placed a heavy emphasis upon cheap clothes and fashion accessories and big 'poofy' hair. There were a number of definable movements:

1. Unisex clothing
2. Bright colours
3. The emulation of Pop stars, especially Madonna who initiated a street urchin look with short skirts, worn-Over leggings, necklaces, rubber bracelets, fishnet gloves, hair-bows, strings of beads, bleached untidy hair and headbands.
4. An Aerobics craze resulting in street clothing including ripped sweat-shirts, sweat-pants and tracksuits along with leg warmers and sneakers.
5. Power Dressing with over-sized shoulder pads and long-sleeves designed to make people feel more capable. For women in the workplace there was a move towards emulating masculine appearance.

In the world of sub-culture the Punk movement of the late 70's mutated and divided. Some came to be identified with the New Romantics, a group whose preferred music was 'electropop'. They tended to be 'campy' and there was an androgynous vibe to their preferred fashion. Others took punk rock into a harder, faster genre known as 'Hard-Core Punk', whilst others gravitated to the dark-dressed and gloomy world of 'Goth' culture. There was also a developing urban culture much influenced by multi-raced communities, especially in America, identified by Break-dancing, Hip Hop and Rap. Free parties and Raves associated with electronic dance music also became common as did the Music Festival. Vestiges of the Hippy Movement were reincarnated as 'New Age Travellers' in the 80's. Moving from one festival to another they coalesced in 1985 into a Peace Convoy and descended upon Stonehenge in Wiltshire for the solstice celebrations in their hundreds. A major confrontation with the police developed, known as 'the Battle of the Beanfield' where 537 arrests were made - the largest mass arrest in English legal history.

Within main-stream culture increasing disposable incomes continued to provide life changing opportunities. Holidaying became a more central part of life. By the 1980's foreign holidays had become commonplace. The package holiday industry boomed and free-roaming independent breaks were greatly eased by membership of the Common Market and the reduction of bureaucratic restraint. With Greece joining in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986 the gateway to the sun opened still further. Winter breaks to the Ski slopes also broadened opportunities. Whilst European destinations dominated, the beginnings of long haul holidays to the Caribbean, North Africa and the Near East were also emerging. The airline industry blossomed. The major airports expanded and many provincial airports sprang to life. Back home the appetite for short weekend breaks also increased. Humanity was on the move like never before.

The motor car topped the want list. The number of vehicles on the road rocketed from 19.5 million in 1980 to an amazing 29.8 million in 1990. It came to be recognised as the key to freedom and independence especially amongst the younger generation, who, with the assistance of credit, were increasingly able to afford the luxury. The 80's was a decade of continuing automotive innovation as features like fuel injection, turbo-charging and air bags became commonplace. It was also the golden age of car 'tech' with the invasion of car audio systems, including CD players, as well as digital dashboards. All the major manufacturers launched new models in 1980. British Leyland introduced the 'Metro', Ford presented a new 'Escort' and Vauxhall the 'Astra'. All were best sellers and all fell in line with the predominant style change of the times – the 'Hatch Back'. The top 6 selling cars of the decade were:



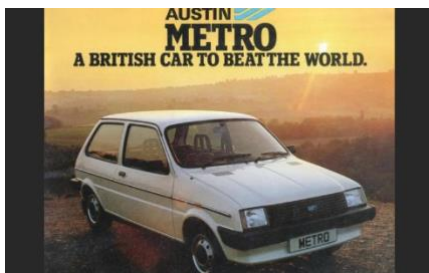
Ford Escort



Ford Fiesta



Ford Sierra



Austin Metro



Vauxhall Cavalier



Vauxhall Astra

All were built and assembled in Europe using parts manufactured across the continent and increasingly employing robotic technology. There was, however, increasing competition from abroad and by the mid-80's 50% of the market was taken by foreign imports, most notably from Japan.



Toyota Corolla



Honda Civic

The surge in road traffic became a serious irritant to people's lives. The freedom to travel became increasingly restricted at rush-hour, Bank Holidays and at peak holiday times, especially in the south west. The 80's witnessed the worst traffic jams in UK history. The Guinness Book of Records highlights :

1. Easter - April 17th 1987 – A traffic jam on the M6 between Charnock Richard and Cranforth involving around 200,000 people and 50'000 vehicles.
2. Easter 1985 – April 5th – a 40-mile jam on the M1 between Junctions 16 and 18
3. August 17th 1988 – 22 miles of stationary traffic on the M25 between Junctions 8 and 9.

The ability to travel enabled public events to expand in scale. Music Festivals attracting many thousands to the open fields at Glastonbury and elsewhere pointed the way to large-scale 'Stadium Concerts'. The Wembley Arena in London hosted around 45 concerts across the decade. Perhaps the most notable, because of its world-wide following, was 'Live Aid' in July 1985 where the world of popular music united to raise funds for famine relief in Africa. 72,000 fans packed the stadium and many millions more across the globe followed events on television. It demonstrated what was possible in the new world of technology. Not surprisingly the lucrative returns from such gatherings ensured the spread of concerts to other large venues across the country. The days of theatre tours for global stars were over.



Globalisation also gained influence in sport as Television brought talented stars and teams to public awareness. This was particularly true for World Cup Football where talents like Maradona (Argentina), Socrates (Brazil), Paulo Rossi (Italy) and Sanches (Brazil) became famous, and for the Olympics which brought the sensational talent of athletes like Daly Thompson, Seb Coe, Torvil and Dean, Linford Christie and Fatima Whitbread to the fore. Their fame, however, failed to reach the dizzy heights of the Pop Star. The exposure of sport on television was limited. There simply was not the technology to support outside broadcasting in anything other than major events like the FA Cup Final. As a result, from the beginning, the only sports televised live were small arena sports like Boxing, Wrestling and tennis. Cricket, as a moderately confined and static sport, was also included. Most other sport broadcast on television was recorded 'snippets' from well-positioned cameras, like goalmouth cameras in soccer. Colour TV introduced in the 70's broadened the possibilities allowing the inclusion of games like Snooker and Darts, but it was not until the late 80's, with the use of miniaturised digital equipment, that live sports broadcasting took off. Then interest in the National Game grew massively, not least because the national team was then a dominant force in European football. By this time, reflecting a growing global interest in football, the World Cup expanded its final rounds from 16 to 24 nations to provide a more exciting finale to two years of national play-offs between competing countries. Football was, however, nowhere near the scale that exists now. There was no Premier League and the game was plagued by hooliganism and tragedy. There were 3 stadium disasters during this period at Bradford in 1985 where 56 fans were burnt to death; at Heysel in Germany where 39 perished after a wall collapsed; and at Hillsborough where 96 Liverpool fans were crushed. With the arrival of live TV they provided

a watershed moment leading to the commercialisation of the game and the construction of all-seater stadia.

Television is hugely influential in changing lives. In the 80's, following cultural trends, it put the spotlight on health and fitness encouraging participation in the new craze of Aerobics. Televised training regimes fronted by people like Mr Motivator, Jane Fonda and others captivated and engaged a huge following. Fitness and Body-building became a pre-occupation for many. Gymnasias opened across the country to satisfy the growing demand. Well-being entered the language and an important new hobby emerged.

The young were not so engaged. Too active for TV, and exercised enough by the vibrancy of youth, they increasingly found recreation within the night-time economy of Bars, Cafes, Takeaways and Nightclubs or more usually, for adolescents, loitering in groups in parks and other public spaces. At the weekends, with improved accessibility to transport, they found their way into less familiar territory in resorts, neighbouring towns and growing attractions like Theme Parks. As we have seen, however, the 80's were not a good time for young adults. Too many suffered the demoralisation of unemployment and of being unwanted and unvalued. Many were seduced by more artificial ways of attaining a 'lift', particularly those in deprived areas of cities. Drug-taking and acquisitive crime both rose considerably.

Human life is regulated by Mother Nature and the decisions of mankind. Both are unpredictable. Both have a bite. We can all recollect bad decisions and wrong turns which led to negative consequences. As the years unfolded, and as scientific understanding broadened, more and more, decisions of the past, made with every good intention, have proved to be problematic, even dangerous and life-threatening. Asbestos, DDT, chemical toxins of various kinds, tobacco, plastics, recreational drugs – the list goes on - have all proven to be injurious to natural habitats and to life within them. Nature too throws in its side-balls. New diseases and mutations of existing viruses arise to plague the natural world. In the 80's AIDS, Mad Cow Disease and Dutch Elm Disease, to name but a sample, have marched across the Continents wreaking havoc along with mutating strains of viruses like influenza. There are also the seismic events of earthquakes, eruptions and tsunamis and the less predictable weather events – cyclones, tornadoes, sandstorms, gales, rain storms and blizzards causing flooding and widespread damage. All torment humanity and change lives. Fortunately, Britain, situated on a stable tectonic plate, is less prone to such earth shattering disruption though our maritime location makes us prone to the occasional severe weather event. One such storm – 'The Great Storm of 1987' tore through the country on October 15th /16th. With wind speeds in excess of



120mph, the strongest in more than a century, it tore down trees in swathes and inflicted considerable damage to property

The 80's then was a decade of accelerating change. Driven by economic necessity, technological advancement and political ideology it had a profound impact on the workplace. Traditional skills were forced into obsolescence. Re-skilling became essential. The tempo of working life increased as machine vastly outpaced and out-performed man. Everything seemed to race to keep up. Restructuring became a regular event. Working life became edgy and stressful, the more so for those of middle or older years who were not so amenable to changes which were largely beyond their comprehension. Pressures were such that it became every man for himself. There was significant cultural change. The prospect of a career for life began to fade. Week by week the tremors of readjustment could be felt throughout the commercial world. No one was safe. The level of selfishness and distrust increased. There was no Union to save you and no government scheme to prop up your standard of living. Job security was a thing of the past. Home became a sanctuary. Leisure and relaxation an essential balance to the stress of earning a living. The holiday a tonic for the soul!