

# Rod Stewart, maybe, but bell bottoms and hideous tartan tank tops? Absolutely not!

40 years on, the music and fashion of the 1970s is still haunting us, as **DICK LUMSDEN** discovers

**W**hat is the fascination with the 1970s? For me, they were my formative years, growing from a teenager into a married man – a time punctuated by strikes, power cuts, civil unrest and pretty severe winters as I recall.

To be honest, I was pretty glad to see the back of them... but everywhere you turn these days there are constant reminders.

Last week for instance, while getting comfy on my sofa in that post-dinner, pre-bedtime twilight zone, hoping for something decent to watch on TV, I stumbled on a prime-time ITV showing of the “best” music of the 70s, with accompanying sound bite interviews with some of those who have survived.

Really? Prime-time Thursday night TV? Sandwiched between *Emmerdale* and *News at Ten*?

The music wasn't bad for the time I suppose, but to keep banging on about it 40 years later is a bit much. They even ran ads for the soundtrack of the show, creating more royalties for those self same survivors – maybe they need the cash to fund their retirements.

A quick look on Amazon shows there are, literally, dozens of albums available with various compilations of music from the 70s – surely they can't all be selling well?

In the 70s, you would never have heard music from the 30s being played on the radio. You would be highly unlikely to get *In the Mood* with Glenn Miller, or think about Bing Crosby's *Pennies from Heaven*. Yet nowadays, you can't move for Abba, Blondie, Queen, Rod Stewart et al....

I wonder if, in another 40 years, in 2055, people will still be worshipping One Direction or whether Justin Bieber will have grown up enough to wear his trousers properly. Will Lady Gaga be living up to her name in the medical sense? Will Cheryl



■ Do the 1970s deserve their iconic status, asks Dick Lumsden who found himself watching a musical homage to the decade, including Debbie Harry's Blondie, above and inset.

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“As if keeping 70s music alive wasn't bad enough, I also read that 70s fashion is coming back. Actually, what we wore in the Seventies was never ‘fashion’ in the first place

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alive wasn't bad enough, I also read last week that 70s fashion is coming back. Actually, what we wore in the 70s was never “fashion” in the first place. I had our wedding photographs out a few months back and was amazed I managed to stand up on the chunky black platform soles... and small children could have used my flares as Indian tepees.

But, kicking and screaming all the way, flares were dragged back into the fashion spotlight by Gucci at the launch of their latest menswear collection in Milan last week.

High waisted, bell bottomed and as hideous this time as they

all around us, and flared trousers swishing their way back... is history going to repeat itself in other ways this year?

With a general election looming and public confidence in politicians at a very low ebb... could we see an unworkable hung parliament and the need for a second vote later in the year like we did in 1974?

More importantly, will Snickers revert to being the good old Marathon bar? Can we have Opal Fruits instead of Starburst, will someone please bring back the Aztec bar, the Toffee Cup and tubes of Toffos? And what about Old English Spangles? Come on... if retro works, then let's overdose on it.

It does seem quite strange that in today's world where predominantly young consumers demand instant gratification with everything – fast food, fast internet, instant messaging, everything available 24/7 through apps on their mobiles – that we should still be looking back on things that were created 40 years ago.

Innovation for me in the 1970s was the arrival of colour TV. I remember my dad – who, to be fair, never liked football – agreed to rent a new colour set in time

of money... Scotland crashed out in the first round on goal difference. And even though 40 years and more have passed, there is virtually no chance of Scotland ever reaching another one sadly. But on the bright side, there is probably even less chance of the Scotland World Cup squad song – “Scotland, Scotland” which appeared to consist mainly of the word Scotland repeated 379 times in three minutes – appearing on one of Amazon's 70s compilations.

Overall, the 70s for me was a decade best consigned to the dustbin of history. With the possible exceptions of my wedding day and Ipswich winning the FA Cup, there are precious few things to recommend it.

But with everything we have seen over the last 40 years, and the way things are changing so fast today, wouldn't it be fantastic to see what things will be like in 2055 and to hear what our children and grandchildren think of 2015?

Will Debbie Harry still be touring? Scary thought....

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