

# For £7, I'll keep the customers satisfied

Piece of pop history: The letter that Simon

June 12, 1964

Dear Ted,

sent to folk club organiser Ted Poole

Last Tuesday evening I was working at the Troubadour in London with Paul McNeill and Redd Sullivan. Tom Cordery approached me about doing a tour of the Western folk clubs. He said that you were the man to contact concerning this matter. I have worked in all the major clubs in London including the Troubadour, The Black Horse, The Roundhouse and the Enterprise. I also record for Columbia Records in the States and will cut my first LP for Topic Records over here. I would appreciate any work that you could give me between the first week of August to the first week of September. My fee is seven pounds and expenses. If you are interested you can write to me at 184 Haverstock Hill, London NW3.



Looking for work: Paul Simon pictured in his early twenties

By James Mills

Respectfully,

HITS such as Bridge Over Troubled Water have turned Paul Simon into a multi-millionaire.

Yet there once was a time when he was happy to perform for £7 a night (plus expenses).

In 1964, shortly before his first hit album with Art Garfunkel, the future superstar offered his services to a folk club in Swindon.

Simon, 22 at the time, sent a typewritten letter to Ted Poole, who ran the club with his wife Ivy.

'I would appreciate any work that you could give me in between the first week of August to the first week of September,' wrote the young American from his lodgings in North-West London.

'My fee is seven pounds and expenses.'

The Pooles were happy to offer work to their eager correspondent, even though his fee was more than they usu-

## Communist sympathies

ally paid. But Simon turned them down after he discovered the club had links with the Communist Party.

The Swindon Folk Club grew out of the protest movement of the 1950s and started in a cellar beneath the party's branch office.

At the time, the U.S. government was investigating those suspected of having Communist sympathies and Simon apparently did not want to be 'put on the list'.

Mr Poole, 79, who still runs the club, said: 'He felt it might label him. But it was about traditional music and song, and celebrating

working people's culture.' He added that £7 for a gig was above the going rate in those days, as the usual fee was £5 or £6.

'He was from the States so it was more expensive.' In the letter,

unearthed this week among long-forgotten paperwork, Simon assured Mr Poole that he had 'played all the major clubs in London', including the legendary Troubadour. Based in Earl's

Court, and still open today, the club provided a stage to young hopefuls such as Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix.

It was here that Simon rubbed shoulders with other musicians,

producers and agents, who recommended he contact Mr Poole for more work.

Simon wrote: 'Last Tuesday evening I was working at the Troubadour in London with Paul McNeill and Redd Sullivan.'

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'I also record at Columbia Records in the States and will cut my first LP for Topic Records over here.'

Shortly afterwards, Simon returned to the U.S. and began writing again with school friend Garfunkel. Their album Wednesday Morning 3am was released in October 1964 and was initially a flop.

But when the track Sound of Silence was released as a single it became a Number One hit across the world.

The duo's subsequent hits included Mrs Robinson, from the movie soundtrack of The Graduate, The Boxer, Homeward Bound, America and Keep The Customer Satisfied.

But they had a turbulent relationship and split acrimoniously in 1971, only occasionally reforming for tours and concerts.

Last year they held a series of concerts at London's Hyde Park, where tickets sold for up to £130.