



That's me in the picture
Photography

That's me in the picture: Simon Wright remembers seeing the Sex Pistols at the 100 Club in September 1976

I was in black leather from head to foot. You couldn't buy fashionable leather trousers then, only thick biker leathers, so the sweat just flooded off me'



Simon Wright, fourth from left, in leather jacket. Photograph: Barry Plummer

I had been following the Sex Pistols ever since they turned up at my college in Weybridge in November 1975. Malcolm McLaren had been booking them into obscure colleges outside London, to get them some live experience. They basically emptied the hall. There were about five of us left at the end of the gig, and it was the best thing I'd ever seen.

The following summer I was 19 and working at United Biscuits, spending most of my time getting the chocolate digestives to set (it was a very hot summer) and going to as many gigs as possible in the evenings. There was an explosion of interest in punk that culminated that September in the two-night Punk Special at the 100 Club on Oxford Street in London.



I went the first night when the bill was Subway Sect, Siouxsie And The Banshees, the Clash and the Sex Pistols. This gig really put the Pistols on the map. It was incredibly crowded. I had decided that the best way to do gigs was to go right down to the front so I could hang on to the monitors. That way the mosh pit would be happening behind me. I went with my friend Jane, but she didn't fancy going to the front and hung around the back so she never made it into any of the photographs.

I was dressed in black leather from head to foot, which wasn't sensible. You couldn't buy fashionable leather trousers at that point, only thick biker leathers, so the sweat just flooded off me.

One of the bizarre things about the 100 Club is that there was a Chinese takeaway in it. So in addition to the usual smells of beer and sweat, it smelled of egg fried rice, too. I don't remember it being incredibly loud, but I suspect that was because I was so far forward the speakers were probably behind me. It was very boisterous - I was most concerned about staying upright. I was glad I didn't go the second night, when Sid Vicious threw a beer glass at one of the pillars and it shattered, blinding a girl. The first night, like all the early punk gigs I went to, was noisy and physical, but good-humoured. The spitting and the gobbing and the pogo-ing came later.

It wasn't unusual for people to be taking pictures at Sex Pistol gigs, but I had no idea a professional photographer was there that night. I first saw my picture in Caroline Coon's book 1988: The New Wave Punk Rock Explosion, which actually came out in 1977, and have subsequently seen more of the set in publications such as Melody Maker, Uncut, Record Collector and Sounds. I'm in them all. My chin was in Mojo the other month.

In 1976, I formed a band with the other people left in the hall that first time I saw the Sex Pistols play. We were called the Trash and got a recording contract with Polydor. There was a six-month window at that time when record companies would sign any band that could manage about three chords as long as they had short hair and played fast. We gigged for a couple of years, put out two singles that were both massively unsuccessful, but had a great time. It wouldn't have happened without the Sex Pistols. That era was like my 15 minutes of fame. I would never be as cool as that again. I just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

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