

# They're obnoxious, arrogant, outrageous

## KINGS OF THE PUNK CULT..

**THEY WEAR** torn and ragged clothes held together with safety pins. They are boorish, ill-mannered, foul-mouthed, dirty, obnoxious and arrogant. They like to be disliked.

They use names like Johnny Rotten, Steve Havoc, Sid Vicious, Rat Scabies and Dee Generate. They are the teenage punks of the Punk Rock bands, nervously hailed in some quarters as perhaps the most exciting development in rock music for a decade.

Punk rock is the aggressive, fast and loud music of kids with cheap guitars and more enthusiasm than talent. It grew, they say, out of the boredom and frustration of being on the dole.

A few months ago no one had heard of it. Today, three punk rock records are in the charts and one band, the Sex Pistols, have signed a \$400,000 contract with EMI.

Tomorrow, the three leading punk bands—Sex Pistols, Clash and The Damned—begin a nationwide tour.

### Destroy

"It is very likely there will be violence at some of the gigs," says tour organiser Malcolm McClaren, "because it is violent music."

"We don't necessarily think violence is a bad thing because you have to destroy to create."

McClaren, 28, is the owner of a Chelsea boutique called Sex which specialises in punk gear—ripped T-shirts, dresses made from plastic rubbish bags, moth-eaten sweaters and "Cambridge rapist" leather masks with zips across the mouth.

The essence of punk is anarchy and outrage. So the bands and their followers dress and behave in a manner calculated to shock or disgust—like wearing safety pins through their ears, noses or even their cheeks.

"We even try to outrage each other," says Rat Scabies, 19-year-old

by **RUSSELL MILLER**

drummer of The Damned.

"At a gig in France we were drunk out of our heads all the time, urinating on the floor and out of the hotel windows. It was incredible."

Incredible, yes, but no more so than the sudden rise of punk music. Dozens of bands turned up to play at the first Punk Rock Festival held in London in September.

The event ended with fist fights, chaos and a girl losing an eye when she caught a flying glass jug in the face.

Since then, punk rock groups have been banned from most London clubs—but the music industry has decided the punk bandwagon is one it can not afford to miss.

### Natural

"As a record company we are very much involved in what is new and exciting and so it was natural we should sign the group in the forefront of the movement," Paul Watts, manager of EMI's pop division, explained.

"It is true they may not be very proficient musically, but we don't think that is a major consideration. What is important is that they generate excitement."

Some punk rock bands are so terrible that

entire audiences have walked out.

At High Wycombe last month The Damned found themselves without an audience after Captain Sensible, the inaptly named bass guitarist, abused the small crowd.

"I gave them a verbal lashing because they didn't seem to be enjoying it," he said. "I can't understand it. We're the greatest."

Captain Sensible, like most punks, was on the dole before he joined a band. Unemployment and a deep sense of disenchantment created the climate for punk rock.

### Boring

It was a feeling of being deserted by their heroes—the pop superstars with private jets and country mansions—which led to kids making their own music.

"I have every sympathy with them," said disc jockey John Peel.

The big groups are predictable and boring.

"I am rather grateful for the appearance of punk rock and glad to see a little energy coming back."

Punks claim they are a social movement. "Kids want something that can change their whole way of life," said Malcolm McClaren.

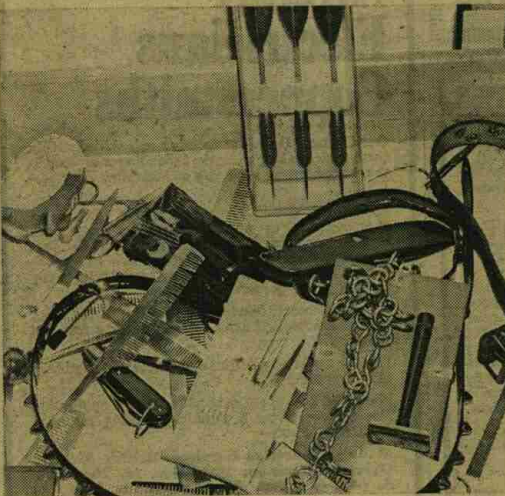
"It is the biggest thing to happen in years and no one can stop it now."

"People don't like it because they feel threatened by it—it is like having a bucket of cold water thrown in their faces."

see what they are trying to do.

"I think it is great really. You should see him walking around—he looks like an old ragbag. It's so funny."

"Unfortunately, we are having a bit of trouble with his school right now because he has taken so many days off. His headmaster doesn't seem to understand about punk rock."



**PUNK WEAPONS:** A bizarre and deadly collection taken from fans at a London concert.



**JOHNNY ROTTEN:** Leader of the Sex Pistols, a top punk band.

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## Roger's mum gives her blessing

**THE LATEST**—and youngest—punk rock band played their first professional gig in North London last night.

Called Eater, their average age is just 15. Their drummer is Dee Generate, otherwise known as Roger Bullen, a 14-year-old schoolboy from Caterham in

Surrey. Unfortunately his voice has not yet broken, so he sounds slightly incongruous when he is talking about his commitment to punk.

"Some bands might get accepted," he piped, "but WE will never be acceptable."

His mum, Mrs. Helen Bullen, is fully behind him. "I was a bit frightened for him at first, but now I have seen the band play I can