

The fanzine that documented when punk landed in Leeds



Martin Tindall, and The Ramones, below.

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1977 Revisited: It was the musical era that polarised Britain, shocking and inspiring in equal measure - and Martin Tindall was there. He looks back with Duncan Seaman

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MARTIN Tindall vividly remembers his one and only encounter with Sid Vicious.



The Ramones

The spiky-haired, snarling face of punk was at a gig in Doncaster in 1977 when the teenage fanzine writer approached him for an interview about his band the Sex Pistols.

“Sid was there with two girls,” Martin recalls, 35 years later. “He picked up the fanzine, did a stupid laugh and threw it up in the air. That was the end of that.”

The bass player – who would die two years later of a heroin overdose while on remand for the alleged murder of his girlfriend, Nancy Spungen – may not have been very accommodating towards the would-be music journalist from Leeds but many of his contemporaries were – as newly-republished editions of *New Pose*, Martin’s fanzine, show.

As such, they are remarkable documents of an era in British music that shocked and inspired in equal measure.

They are also perhaps the best-preserved records of the rapidly emerging punk and new wave scene in Yorkshire.

Martin was a 19-year-old art college dropout when he founded *New Pose* with his then girlfriend Jayne Cobbe. “Towards the end of 1976 the punk scene was happening in London,” he remembers. “We’d been there a couple of times – once for The Stranglers and the Buzzcocks at the Roundhouse or the International College of Art.

“They were full of students sitting cross-legged on the floor with long hair then there was the early 70s type of rock fan and at the front were 20 or 30 thin-looking blokes with spiky hair and drainpipe trousers, pogging to the band. We’d not seen anything like that in Leeds.”

The arrival of the Sex Pistols’ Anarchy in the UK tour in Leeds in December 1976 changed everything.

The band, fronted by the outspoken Johnny Rotten, had been banned from venues across the country after their guitarist Steve Jones swore in a televised interview with Bill Grundy.

Despite tabloid fury, the gig at Leeds Polytechnic – where the Pistols were supported by The Clash and Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers – was given the go-ahead.

“Before the Anarchy tour we’d had Generation X and the Sex Pistols at the Fforde Green [the infamous pub venue in Harehills] but they had not been well-publicised,” says Martin. “The ninth gig [on the Anarchy tour] was the Leeds one – and Leeds City Council passed it.

“At that gig there were a lot of punks there but there was not really any trouble. A lot of people got converted that night. Though there were a lot of sound problems it was an exciting gig. Punk had announced itself.”

By the following spring many of the hottest names in London’s punk scene were heading for West Yorkshire and local musicians were starting punk bands of their own. They were helped by the fact that John Keenan, the influential Leeds promoter, was keen on the music.

For Martin Tindall, punk was easy to relate to. “Everybody admires bands where the singers are about eight years older than they are – so they say. What we were looking at were bands where the singer was about the same age as you. They were people you could speak to before gigs.”

The first edition of *New Pose*, in June 1977, carried interviews with The Ramones and Talking Heads, who had played at Leeds Polytechnic a couple of weeks earlier, along with gig review of The Clash and Subway Sect and reviews of new singles by Blondie, Iggy Pop and The Jam.

“Me and Jayne thought what we had to do is get something as good as the NME,” says Martin. “If you went to a gig with a camera and wrote down as much as you could then you could start a magazine.”

Unfortunately when the photographs were developed they realised their limitations. “They were shocking, absolutely terrible,” Martin chuckles. So they advertised for a photographer – and by the July edition, with a cover feature on The Stranglers, Steve Dixon had come on board.

Those first fanzines were photocopied by Jayne in her lunchbreaks at work. All the money from the 150 copies sold of edition one was poured into edition two, which had a print run of 200. By issue three they were confident enough in their handiwork to have 300 copies produced professionally – at Ipsos Print in Leeds.

“We sent it to major music papers to get it reviewed,” says Martin. “The NME said it was the second best fanzine in the country. Sounds did a centre spread on it.”

Gaining access to bands was surprisingly straightforward. “Everybody was really nice because they had not got a lot of press in the papers. The NME was dragging its heels a bit – it had to advertise for younger writers who were into this stuff [the new starters included Tony Parsons and Julie Burchill].

“We’d knock on the [dressing room] door after a gig. We were in the Polytechnic anyway.”

The *New Pose* team were also fervent concert-goers. “We went to every gig at that we could go to,” says Martin. “We went to Sheffield, Lancaster, out of the county. We had more energy in those days. You didn’t mind coming home on the last train at night or the first train in the morning. We were not bothered. You’d do a day’s work and get changed on the train into your punk gear. We did it many times.”

A key feature of the fanzine was its cartoons. Mark Manning – later famous as the rock star Zodiac Mindwarp – drew a caricature of The Clash. “He went to every gig,” recalls Martin. “He was there when I said I wanted to start this fanzine. I wanted illustrations like Punk magazine in the US which was almost as glossy as Playboy, but not quite. I’d go into Virgin Records [then on Queen Victoria Street, Leeds] and buy them or pinch them or borrow them.

“Having been to art college, I didn’t want it to be like other fanzines. Mark said, ‘I’ll do drawings for you.’”

Ray Burns – better known as Captain Sensible – also drew an illustrated history of his band The Damned. “I met Captain Sensible in London,” says Martin. “He actually got the wrong end of the stick. I thought he’d just do one drawing but he did a comic strip. We couldn’t really use it but we put it in anyway. People loved that. It’s one of the funniest things I’ve ever seen. He’s a natural comedian.”

In the wake of *New Pose*’s success, Martin got a job at the Virgin store. Because of his knowledge of punk, he became their singles buyer. “I had no training. It took me a number of weeks but I got it up and running.”

As the day job took over, Martin found he had less and less time to devote to the fanzine. “The other side was all the trouble-makers turning up to gigs. Also, bands I had written about, by the end of 1977 they were getting into the charts. I thought they didn’t need me any more. The Clash, The Adverts and The Stranglers were not selling records in the tens or twenties but in the hundreds.

“Even Siouxsie Sioux said mid-’76 to ’77 was the original punk scene, then it diversified. New bands started wearing swastikas.”

The fifth edition of *New Pose* – featuring SOS and Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers – was its last. “I still went to all the gigs,” Martin says. “But I never had to pay for another gig. When you’re not in the crowd any more, you’re in the guest bar, you’re not at the cutting edge.”

By 1981 Martin was manager of the enlarged Virgin store, on Briggate, working alongside Ian De-Whytell (who now runs Crash Records on The Headrow). After that, he worked for the film company Palace Pictures for eight years before becoming a taxi driver. Now aged 55 and living in Alwoodley, he’s proud of his achievements, which have been subsequently been recognised in a couple of television histories of the punk era. “A lot of guys ended up being plumbers or working in an office, but I did not,” he says.

He takes it as a badge of honour that *New Pose* has been pirated. “I was impressed I’ve been bootlegged by a guy in Manchester. I’m quite happy about that,” he smiles.

Complete sets of *New Pose* are available from Crash Records and Jumbo Records in the St Johns Centre, priced £10, or by mail order on eBay.

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