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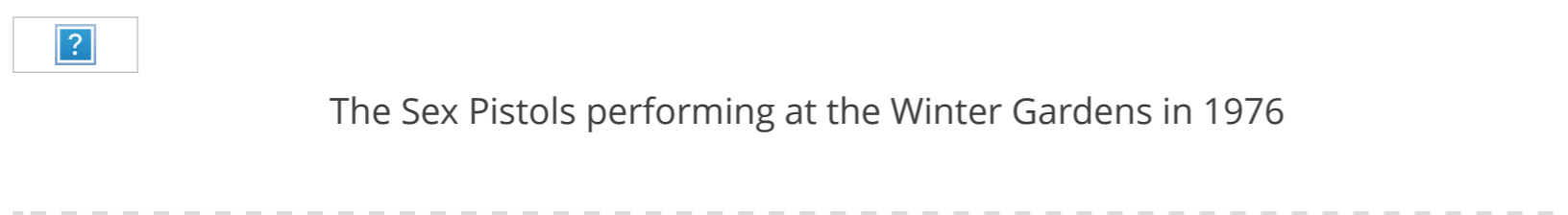
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December 20, 1976 - the day the Sex Pistols came to Cleethorpes' Winter Gardens

By Hannah Corken | Posted: December 20, 2016

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The Sex Pistols performing at the Winter Gardens in 1976

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DO YOU remember the day the Sex Pistols brought punk to Cleethorpes?

It was December 20, 1976 - exactly 40 years ago today - and the international punk superstars were playing the Winter Gardens with The Clash.

The original gig formed part of the Anarchy tour, which also featured Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers - descendents of the New York Dolls.

The Winter Gardens was one of just five venues in the country with the foresight to host the tour, after punk music was boycotted by the majority of the British press.

However, the Winter Gardens' Anarchy show is often overlooked in books and websites, leading to the night being referred to among die-hard punks as the "lost" Anarchy gig.

With a crowd of 350, and a £1.50 admission fee it certainly went down in the area's history and also featured "new group" The Clash.

Then manager of the venue, Jimmy Jackson, told the Telegraph in an interview in 2003: "That was a very lively night... let's just leave it at that!"

Steve Stanley, of Solid Entertainments in Grimsby has helped organised events to recreate the night on anniversaries since.

He said "It was such a special gig because the Sex Pistols went on tour and they were getting banned from all the venues because of the general punk thing. All of the venues were getting cold feet and they were cancelling the concerts so it was quite special that they played in Cleethorpes.. I think Cleethorpes was one of the last dates of the tour.

"It was special and unique because of all the controversy. It was all quite low-key and it's more talked about now. Since then a lot of people have claimed they were there when they weren't. There wasn't a buzz around the town until it had happened ."

He added: "The punk movement gave the music industry the kick up the bum it needed. All the big name acts had stopped making music because they were making so much money from royalties; The Rolling Stones hadn't toured for about nine years.

"They must have thought 'oh God, punk is going to take over' so they started working again and then it all changed. Punk was a great thing for music in the UK."

The Sex Pistols were an English punk rock band formed in London in 1975.

Although they initially lasted just two and a half years and produced only four singles and one studio album, they are considered one of the most influential acts in the history of popular music having initiated a punk movement in the United Kingdom, and inspired many punk rock, thrash metal and alternative rock musicians.

The first incarnation - and the one that appeared at the Winter Gardens - included singer Johnny Rotten (John Lydon), lead guitarist Steve Jones, drummer Paul Cook and bassist Glen Matlock.

The latter was replaced by Sid Vicious (John Ritchie) early in 1977 - just months after their Cleethorpes gig.

The band provoked controversies that garnered a significant amount of publicity, with their concerts repeatedly facing difficulties with organisers and local authorities.

Public appearances often ended in mayhem.

In January 1978, at the end of a turbulent tour of the United States, Rotten left the Sex Pistols and announced its break-up.

Vicious died of a heroin overdose in February 1979, following his arrest for the alleged murder of his girlfriend. In 1996, Rotten, Jones, Cook and Matlock reunited for the Filthy Lucre Tour; since 2002, they have staged further reunion shows and tours.

In 2004, Rotten continued to cause controversy when he stormed out of I'm A Celebrity in 2004.

In February 2006, the four original, surviving members and Sid Vicious—were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, but they refused to attend the ceremony.

Set list from the Winter Gardens performance

- 1. Anarchy In The UK
2. I Wanna Be Me
3. (I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone
4. Satellite
5. God Save The Queen
6. Liar
7. No Feelings
8. Pretty Vacant
9. Substitute

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