

## Did You See Punk Band The Clash At Guildford Civic Hall in 1977?

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A music fan and freelance writer who grew up in Shalford wants to hear from people who went to punk band the Clash's gig at Guildford Civic Hall on May 1, 1977.



Writer Malcolm Wyatt.

Malcolm Wyatt, who now lives in Lancashire, is hoping readers will have memories of the gig. It was the first date of a UK tour that featured other emerging punk bands and included the Buzzcocks, Subway Sect, the Slits, and the Prefects.

Malcolm says: "The Jam were also set to feature, but a fall-out followed between Clash manager Bernard Rhodes and the Jam's manager John Weller, father of singer and guitarist Paul Weller, prevented that.

"While it was the Clash's second punk package tour, this time they were headlining. And as roadie and friend of the band Robin Banks put it, recalling that first night, 'We couldn't believe what was happening to us. We looked out into the auditorium at all the people packed in there. Suddenly it was like the dream of becoming rock stars had come true."

There is a fair amount of detail about the tour from musicians' memories that can be found in music books, while Malcolm is particularly interested to hear from music fans.



Cover of Malcolm Wyatt's book This Day in Music's Guide to The Clash.

Malcolm has written and had published his own book about the band titled *This Day in Music's Guide to The Clash*. He adds: "I'd like to follow this book up with an 'I Was There' style book on the band, and already have memories of that visit to Guildford in writing.

"One example is that of Steve Smith of Guildford band the Vapors who worked in the loading bay at Debenhams in Guildford before becoming a full-time musician.

"He got his personal music apprenticeship pre-punk, but saw the Clash at Guildford Civic Hall on that important night in 1977 and that proved to be the catalyst in finding his future direction. He told me: 'I was a bit of a hippy, to be honest. I had long hair and sat up in the balcony. But the next day I thought, 'I'm a punk rocker', I cut all my hair off and threw all my records away. The Clash completely changed my life, just from going to see them at the Civic Hall. Music was so boring at that time. All of a sudden I was looking at this thing and thinking, 'This is great!'"

"Incidentally, I've also mentioned in my book a vague note of another Clash visit to the area, one that pre-dated the White Riot tour. It was in October 1976 in Guildford at a pub disco run by pop band Marmalade's ex-bass player. Was that bass player Graham Knight, who was with them from 1966 to 1973 and 1975 to 2010?"

"The Clash's Paul Simonon and Joe Strummer reminisced about that date in a 1982 NBC TV interview as having 'only one person in the audience'. It would be good if that person could come forward now and corroborate that memory!"

If you have any details of the Clash in Guildford in those early years, please leave a reply in the box below, or contact Malcolm direct by email to: [ml.wyatt@btinternet.com](mailto:ml.wyatt@btinternet.com)

*This Day in Music's Guide to The Clash* by Malcolm Wyatt is available from Ben's Collectors Records in Tunsgate, Guildford, for £12. You can also order from Amazon and other online sellers, and from the author himself, with more details by [clicking here](#).

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### test 2 Responses to Did You See Punk Band The Clash At Guildford Civic Hall in 1977?

**Richard Cooper** Reply  
January 30, 2020 at 8:51 am  
I attended the gig with my best mate Andy Stratton and my then girlfriend Diane James.  
I was 18 and had followed punk since Andy bought home the first New York Dolls' album.  
We were a bit of an oddity in Streatham at the time as punk wasn't really established.  
I digress. We travelled from Streatham on the night. And certainly felt the buzz.  
An abiding memory was of a rather large and very frightening punk following us around all night.  
At the time, I don't suppose we realised or saw the importance of the gig or the band.  
The support band was brilliant. And we later saw some of the band in the audience.  
I was lucky enough to immerse myself in the scene. Moving to Stockwell (a bedsit) to be at the epicentre of it.  
Meeting all those who later went on to do so much in music, I became great friends with Nick Simonon (brother of Paul who played in the Clash) who is still my great friend today as is Andy Stratton.

**Nigel Hall** Reply  
May 6, 2021 at 9:31 am  
I went to the Guildford gig, pretty certain Subway Sect were the support. I came up from Portsmouth for this show. There had been some punky gigs in Pompey and the Isle of Wight, with the Vibrators, Generation X, Eddie and the Hot Rods.  
This though was my first meeting up with London punks, the gig was amazing. My main recollection otherwise was there were a lot of punk, some of them covered in shaving foam after shoplifting in Boots! A great day.

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