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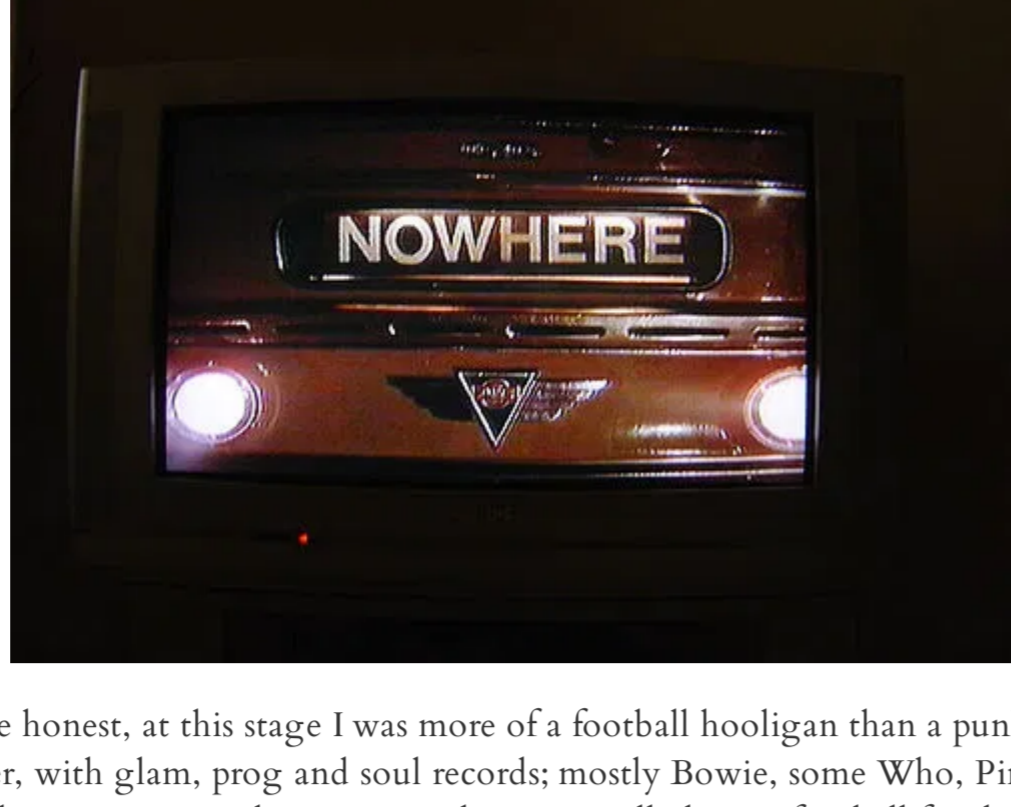
:: buzzwords

the summer of hate 9: tom vague



Tom Vague edited an influential punk fanzine called *Vague* and contributed to *Zigzag* magazine. He has since written the liner notes for the Clash's *London Calling* CD set and continued *Vague* as the London Psychogeography series of books and websites.

In the summer of 1977 I was 17 and living in the middle of nowhere; Mere in Wiltshire, on the A303 between Stonehenge and Glastonbury (my dad was from London, my mum from Bristol and that's where I ended up); suitably bored and frustrated with small-town life. I'd just dropped out of Salisbury Tech College for the first time and was about to embark on the only year of my career (so far) in full employment, in some of the worst jobs in history: a couple of weeks working in a fibreglass factory – when "Pretty Vacant" came out – and the rest in an abattoir. How about that for punk cred?



To be honest, at this stage I was more of a football hooligan than a punk rocker, with glam, prog and soul records; mostly Bowie, some Who, Pink Floyd, Supertramp and Stevie Wonder. I was still playing football for the local town/glorified village team and, to my undying shame (greater even than that which I carry for once possessing a Supertramp album), occasionally going to Man Utd games in the "Red Army" hooligan days (I've always been an Everton supporter). The highlight of my playing career was a college charity match against a celeb XI, in which I hacked down the drummer of the group Kenny (of "The Bump" fame).

There was already a punk scene at Salisbury Art College, featuring the legendary Richard and Nancy – I remember green hair, Oxford suits, plastic sandals – and Gareth who looked like Alex Harvey. Richard knew the Buzzcocks, and they saw the Pistols at the 100 Club punk festival. Richard and Gareth were photographed at the front of the queue, and duly brought the word back to the west country. In my Bowie/bootboy tech scene, they were originally referred to as art college freaks. In early '77 I saw the Pink Fairies, the attempted street hippy freak-punk crossover group, at the college but only remember it as a pub rock experience, and the art college punk group Elliot Ness and the G-Men performing in the college canteen, but missed the Doctors of Madness with the Pat Travers Band at the City Hall. At this point, the jukeboxes in the college common room and the Salisbury rock pub the Star featured Lynryd Skynyrd's "Freebird"/"Sweet Home Alabama", Genesis, Supertramp, Led Zep and Black Sabbath, but also the Ramones' "Blitzkrieg Bop", Eddie and the Hot Rods, Count Bishops and of course "Silver Machine" by Lemmy's Hawkwind. My first proper punk moment was playing "Anarchy in the UK" at a predominantly James Brown soul party; I acquired my copy from my school football mate Tim's sister, the actress Jane Gurnett (of *Casualty* and *Crossroads* fame). My first copy of *Sniffin' Glue* fanzine came from my biker mate "Skin" (Derek Skinner), who got it at a gig by John Cale of the Velvet Underground, Count Bishops and The Boys at Bournemouth Winter Gardens. Skin also possessed a New York Dolls album.



In Gillingham, in Dorset, where I went to school and worked for a year, some of the older soul boy guys were wearing peg-top trousers and plastic sandals; one of them, "Dogs" (Colin Doggerle), had been to northern night discos; and in the summer of '77 my football drinking mates went punk. This consisted of spiked-up hair, big badges, ripped up blazers with crisp packets and beer mats attached by safety pins, straight jeans and baseball boots, pogoing at village hall discos, spitting at the DJ and each other, and generally benign vandalism. After I'd gone to London for an oil rig job interview and first visited the King's Road on Jubilee night, the oil rig soul boy-punk, "Coke" (Keith Dukes), was going to beat me up for "wasting taxpayers' money" by dropping out of college. But senior football hooligan guys, Doug and Den Knox, took me under their wing on a flag collecting expedition around Dorset.



Shortly after the Jubilee, I ended up bloodied but unbowed outside the sports centre disco – with Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" playing – after attempting to attack the Radio 1 DJ Simon Bates, on a rum and black session. Then the punk hairdressers Deb and Chris got the **Unwanted** to play at the Red Lion pub in Gillingham, but I was banned for being implicated in another hooligan incident which caused a village hall disco to be closed down.

In the wake of the Jubilee and my split with Chris and Deb, I drifted away from my football mates and teamed up with the other two punks in my village, Christine Nugent, a former Carnival queen T Rex fan who had seen the Damned supporting Marc Bolan, and Jane Austin (not Austen), who I had a west country literary punk romance with. Our first forays into the outside world were to the Frome Hexagon Suite punk nights in Christine's Mini, listening to tapes of *The Clash*, *Damned Damned* and the *New Wave* US punk compilation album. The Frome lot were particularly into Patti Smith's "Piss Factory" and the pub jukebox selection "Oh Bondage Up Yours" by X Ray Spex. (After, punk Christine got into horses and has since become a fervent huntswoman, apparently.)

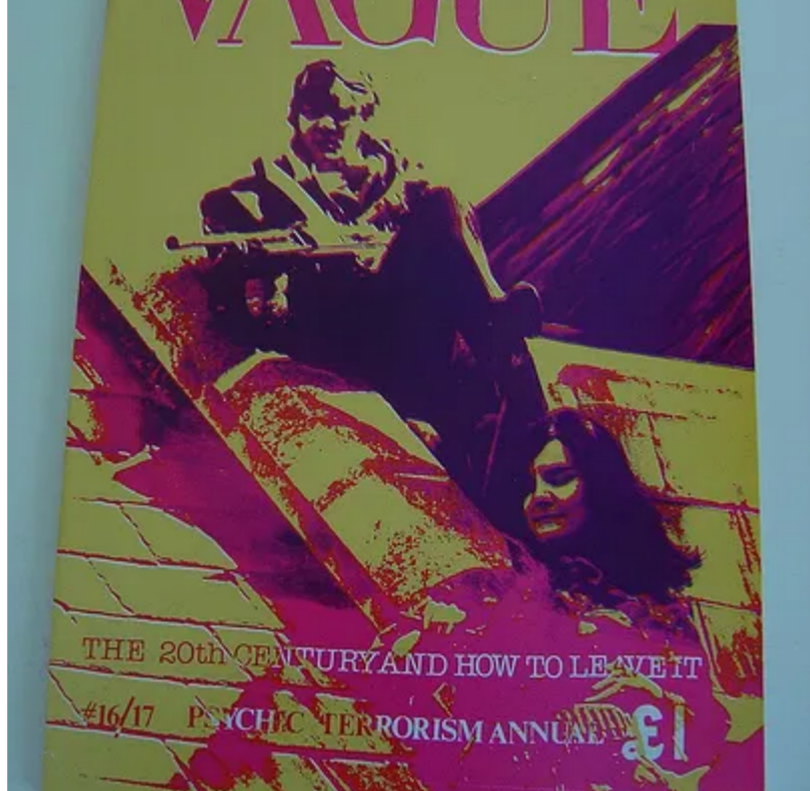
Clash fans' "havoc" in Bournemouth

Clash fans' "havoc" in Bournemouth

Our first proper punk gig was the Clash, with **Richard Hell** and the Voidoids and the Lous at the Bournemouth Winter Gardens. This was a youth club trip in a handicapped kids' minibus, much to the embarrassment of Coke who insisted that we park some way from the Winter Gardens, and Ditcher let the side down turning up without having a haircut or taking in his flares, draped in a Union Jack flag. I was wearing the then regulation Fonz-style black leather bomber jacket, ripped and safety-pinned T-shirt, big punk badges, turned-up drainpipe jeans and baseball boots. *Sniffin' Glue* and the pre-*Vague* Salisbury fanzine were being hawked outside, and there was a bit of a punk riot in which a few rows of old seats collapsed from being pogoed on. (This contributed to the Pistols' '77 tour being banned.) My main memory of the gig is the bald Voidoids guitarist Robert Quine playing with green gob on his forehead. We duly missed the Pistols at the Bristol Bamboo Club on the SPOTS tour, after the venue (which was owned by the yachtsman Tony Bullimore) burnt down, but over the next few months saw the Clash a few more times, the Damned and the Dead Boys, the Jam, Generation X, Slaughter and the Dogs and Eater, Buzzcocks and Penetration, Adverts, X Ray Spex and Sham 69, mostly at the Bournemouth Village Bowl. At its height, the Bournemouth punk scene was the hippest outside London; featuring peroxide hair, leather jackets, Sex and Seditious shirts and bondage trousers, lots of speed (in the form of French 'blues' pills from Southampton) and heroin, the punk/vintage clothes shop Katz (which also had a branch in Salisbury), Armadillos record shop, the Double 0 Egg caff and the Triangle punk quarter. I had a pair of peg-top trousers from Katz that Coke approved of but said I didn't wear properly. The Bournemouth nightclub complex, incorporating the underground car park Chelsea Village venue and the Badger Bins punk hangout, was owned by Jimmy Saville (of Radio 1 and *Jim'll Fix It* notoriety). Punk gigs were attended by the notorious England football and cricket mascot Ken Bailey, and the equally renowned glam rock drummer Mickey Finn of T Rex was also on the scene.



In 1978 I went back to tech college, got into post-punk and reggae – Adam and the Ants, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Joy Division, the Pop Group, PIL, Slits, Rough Trade groups – and started *Vague* fanzine; more for something to do, other than attempting to play guitar or sing, than with any literary aspirations. The Bournemouth punk scene ended pretty violently, with Bobby glassing Iggy for shoving Sharon in a *Vague* editorial dispute at a Cure gig, and a drugs bust. After a post-punk on the road period, hitching round the country following tours of the Ants and Banshees, selling fanzines/programmes and T-shirts, and writing for *Zigzag*, I dropped out of the music business and spent most of the 80s squatting around London – in Brixton, Elephant and Castle, Islington, Stoke Newington – attempting to be a cyber-phunk Situationist or something; finally becoming a fixture on the Ladbroke Grove scene. I've been trying to write the radical history of Notting Hill, to counter the media hype, ever since.



Check out the previous episodes:

The Summer of Hate 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8



First posted: Wednesday, July 25th, 2007.

There are currently 9 comments on this post. You can follow all the comments on this post through this RSS feed.

1. Long time no hear. I remember you well!!

/ Posted by Kaye on September 18th, 2007 at 5:27 pm / [Permalink](#) /

2. Hi there,

I'm doing a media project on the history of Bournemouth Winter Gardens (which you probably know is now no longer)and it sounds like you have a brilliant story to tell. So far research has brought up mostly stuff about the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, so would be great to hear a bit more about collapsing seats and the Punk scene. Please get in touch and redress the musical balance.

Thanks, Kaye

/ Posted by Kay Karadakis on October 8th, 2007 at 10:29 am / [Permalink](#) /

3. Oh and you can get me at g9031938@bournemouth.ac.uk ...

/ Posted by Kay on October 8th, 2007 at 10:31 am / [Permalink](#) /

4. Ah,Bournemouth of late 70s,was a surprising hive of activity punk wise.Clash gigs Poole and Bournemouth,Jam played a couple of times i recall,last time i saw at Poole with Vapours as support..Uk Subs bringing down the roof Stateside,hanging out at Pineapple Rock,Vibe Records ,Setchfields was always good for vinyl...Winter Gardens had a stage encounter with a Fergal,Undertones chap and Adam Ant for the price of 50p down Stateside..Then we all went ..Ska..Two Tone ..that was a bloody good time...Bests Wheelz...nice..Piece in echo..

/ Posted by wheels on October 9th, 2007 at 7:18 pm / [Permalink](#) /

5. Was a south londoner who travelled down to bournemouth on a regular basis for bank holidays etc with loads of mates. We used to visit the badger/stateside/longs bar/etc etc. One of the best places was an old pub called the criterion.....upstairs. Fantastic days.

Still travel down with a couple of mates when we get the chance. One lives in scotland, the other in kingston and me in suffolk. 48 and still rocking ☺

/ Posted by reeve on November 9th, 2007 at 2:03 pm / [Permalink](#) /

6. Hey Tom

Hope you remember me Wally from warminster we used hang together with Puddle – anyway we have reformed the AHEADS – and needs some good gigs – got any ideas – ive still got 1st issue Vague 1 – brill

Hope you are ok all the best Dave

/ Posted by Dave Stephens (wally) on December 15th, 2007 at 6:27 pm / [Permalink](#) /

7. Interesting read, thanks. Bournemouth still has a very active punk scene, many punks from around the country still travel to Bournemouth on a regular basis ☺

Still lots of gigs going on too!

<http://www.myspace.com/demoniccupchucks>
upchucks@hotmail.co.uk

/ Posted by Dominic on April 22nd, 2008 at 1:44 pm / [Permalink](#) /

8. was a big fan of vague, how do you get hold of tom now? maybe you could give him my email address, he knows who i am

/ Posted by James Ingg on April 22nd, 2008 at 5:13 pm / [Permalink](#) /

9. Hey Tom, remember me, spent many hours lingering over space invaders in The Star. Last saw you at party with Simon M and Lurch in Notting Hill. I remember our all night rants with fondness! And i remember the AHeads well!

Andinorthbank179@aol.com

/ Posted by Andrea [Andi] Dalton on November 6th, 2008 at 11:30 pm / [Permalink](#) /

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