

CLASH MYSTERY: JOE GOES AWOL

Clash postpone first dates — and rest of UK tour in jeopardy

JOE GOES MISSING

THE CLASH postponed the first two dates in their 'Know Your Rights' UK tour this week — at Aberdeen (Monday) and Inverness (Tuesday) — because lead singer Joe Strummer went missing. And the remaining 18 dates in their schedule are in jeopardy, unless he shows up without further delay.

He was last seen on Wednesday of last week, when he completed a phone

interview with a Scottish newspaper. He then walked out of the Clash office — and at press time on Tuesday there was still no sign of the elusive Strummer. So now the band's manager Bernard Rhodes is appealing for help in finding him.

Rhodes told *NME*: "Joe's personal conflict is — where does the socially concerned rock artist stand in the bubblegum environment of today? I feel he's probably gone away for a serious re-think. The

first two dates have been postponed, but we must have him back by Wednesday (28) at Edinburgh. Please can you help us find him."

"We need the help of people to try and find Joe. We are concerned about it, but I think he will be back once he gets wind of how important it is. At the moment we've got everything on hold and it's costing us a lot of money. If I knew where he was today then we would be playing tonight.

"I think Joe has just gone away to examine what it is all about. He's not gone religious or taken drugs or anything like that. He was feeling really positive about things but I think

he feels some resentment about the fact that he was about to go slogging his guts out just for people to slag him off, saying he's wearing the wrong trousers. It is a bit of a drag. He just got the feeling people were being belligerent about things.

"A lot of people want to destroy the group, but that won't happen because we are an international group. But they could still destroy The Clash in this country — which we don't want to happen.

"Everyone is making out that punk is old-fashioned, but it doesn't look as if anything important has taken over from it. Joe was one of the people



Joe runs out on Clash

who came up with punk and he's been through the whole thing, so if people are going to turn around and blow him out they'd better make sure there's someone better to take his place.

"The kids are going to have the opportunity to get their money back for the postponed shows. They can either save it to buy a new ticket when the gigs are rearranged or they can go out and spend it on a new pair of trousers.

"But we've got to find this bloke. He'll get a bollocking when he gets back, but it's still better that he comes back."

Anyone with information about Strummer's whereabouts should contact Sheila at the Clash office (01-485 8113).

EXCLUSIVE

Clash blow last dates

ALTHOUGH JOE Strummer was reportedly on the point of returning to the fold on Tuesday, it was decided — as a safeguard — to re-schedule the last three dates in The Clash's tour, in order to catch *NME*'s press deadline.

Events took a dramatic turn last weekend, when the band's spokesman Kosmo Vinyl claimed that a private detective had been working on the Strummer case, and had now located the absentee. On Monday, Vinyl told *NME*: "I think we'll soon be back in business. I'm just off now, hopefully to bring Joe back."

When last seen, Vinyl was

heading in the general direction of Paris. But on Tuesday morning, agent Ian Flukes of Wasted Talent took the decision to re-schedule the remaining dates. He explained: "I've not heard from Kosmo since he left for Europe — so, in view of the time factor, I've had to take the initiative."

The two concerts at London Brixton Fair Deal, planned for this Saturday and Sunday (22-23), are now re-set for July 10 and 11 — existing tickets remain valid for the respective dates, though cash refunds may be claimed if desired. The Leeds University Show next Monday (24) is also being moved, and the revised date will be announced next week.



Joe — still missing

Strummer back drummer gone

A SPOKESMAN for The Clash Kosmo Vinyl called from London to tell me that Joe Strummer returned after a month's disappearance and that the band (which arrives here today for the first leg of its U.S. tour), headlined a big festival in Lochem, Holland, last week, and starts its U.S. dates in Asbury Park, this weekend.

Strummer isn't saying much about his disappearance other than he "had his reasons," but he is, apparently, in great shape having run in, and finished, a 26-mile marathon in Paris last week.

But the big Clash news is that drummer Topper Headon has left the band over political differences and that the band will continue as a trio, using guest drummers. It seems as though Topper's main interest is the music, and the rest of the band is concerned that they don't lose sight of their determination *not* to just become part of the "rock industry." Strummer, Mick Jones and Paul Simonon tried out drummers last week in London and will have one for the first leg of the U.S. tour. **L.R.**

STOP PRESS
At press time *NME* received a report from *Face* journalist Steve Taylor who told us that he had shared a compartment with Strummer on last Thursday's boat train from London to Paris. Strummer was travelling with a girlfriend and was described as "looking tired, wearing shades, travelling light and consulting a cheap paperback guard to Paris. It looked like he was planning to stay in the city."