

HOW DO YOU IDU?

THE CLASH

PUNK ROCKERS in the UK, all right, lend an ear to this one. The latest in the short line of rumours became a reality. The Clash had rolled into town.

The buzz was deafening. And, buskers that The Clash undoubtedly are, it wasn't easy to ignore. Inside the tiny Rock Garden Bar, the lucky few hundred broke a new world record, were compressed into a shoebox to sweat anxiously. Even

shouts of 'Free drink upstairs!' failed to remove them. Strummer squeezed out of the kitchen and on to a chair for the opening 'Straight To Hell' and did well not to be completely drowned out. Simonon tried hard to hold on to his guitar strings but failed to prevent breakages. The temperature was rising. The Clash were playing – all five in glorious tunelessness. Three acoustic guitars, borrowed snare drum (with draped tea towel) and the

powerful vocals met the Glasgow city rockers.

'Guns Of Brixton', 'Police On My Back', 'White Man In Hammersmith Palais', 'Brand New Cadillac' and 'Be Bop A Lula' all received typical Clash treatment. Then a new song, as yet untitled, a rousing 'Bank Robber' and obligatory – this is the bit you've been waiting for – 'White Riot'.

A stroll into the audience, a whip round for beer money, instigated by Strummer and

begrudged by no-one. The reasons aren't clear but The Clash have brought us back to basics. Perhaps it's dissatisfaction with CBS. Perhaps they're bored with the *company* they keep. Perhaps they're skint! Whatever, they aroused the badly needed excitement.

It's one to whisper to your grandchildren in years to come. Me and Strummer were in a bar, with the Clash, together. Believe it.

JOHN DINGWALL