



# BIG PLAYERS

in Milton Keynes: Sports, Arts & Media

## BIG STARS and the National Bowl

**'Every rule in the book was broken!'**



**Above:** A packed crowd at the Milton Keynes Bowl, 1983

**Left:** One of many 'Classical Spectacular' concerts held at the Bowl

**'The Bowl used to be a Fletton's Brick Pit – a great hole in the ground 120 feet deep. It was ideally suited for utilising spoil from the big housing areas being developed at the time – Netherfield, Coffee Hall, Bean Hill. We kept going to build the amphitheatre shape... The first event was Soul in the Bowl in 1979. Then in 1980, The Police, notorious because of the mudslides. Then Thin Lizzy the following year. 1983 was the big one – David Bowie for three days on the trot. The sun blazed down and every rule in the book was broken about capacities, with the Bowl looking like a swarm of bees – people everywhere.'**

(Brian Salter, former member of the MKDC Landscaping team, and first Chief Executive of the Parks Trust Milton Keynes)

The National Bowl in Milton Keynes which began in 1971 was modelled on the Hollywood Bowl in the USA - a huge venue for concerts, open air shows and bands with a capacity to hold 65,000 concert goers.

### Three Decades of BIG STARS at the Bowl:

- 1979: Desmond Decker and Geno Washington in concert
- 1980: Police, Squeeze and UB40 bands appeared
- 1981: Thin Lizzy and Judy Tzuke
- 1982: Queen and Genesis
- 1983: David Bowie
- 1984: Status Quo, Gary Glitter, Murrillion & Nazareth
- 1985: U2 and REM
- 1986: Simple Minds and The Cult
- 1988: The Stranglers and Michael Jackson
- 1989: Bon Jovi and the biggest Hindu Festival outside India
- 1990: David Bowie and Erasure
- 1991: ZZ Top, Bryan Adams, Simple Minds and The Stranglers
- 1992: *The Bowl was bought by Sony/Pace and renamed the National Bowl.*
- 1993: Bruce Springsteen, Metallica, Guns and Roses, and Bon Jovi
- 1994: UB40 and Jamiroqui
- 1995: REM and Blur
- 1996: Bon Jovi
- 1997: *Discussions about creating an indoor venue with seating for 20,000*
- 1998: Black Sabbath
- 1999: Nigel Kennedy, Metallica, Marilyn Manson and Placebo
- 2000: *English Partnerships buy the National Bowl*
- 2001: Robbie Williams, Bon Jovi, Black Sabbath and AC/DC.
- 2002: Ronan Keating, Beverley Knight, The Lighthouse Family
- 2003: Eminem, Simply Red, Ronan Keating and Busted
- 2004: McFly, Natasha Bedingfield and Emma Bunton
- 2005: Green Day, Oasis, Charlotte Church, Rachel Stevens and McFly.
- 2006: Bon Jovi, Take That and Robbie Williams
- 2007: *Live Nation and Gaming International win a tender bid to run the Bowl*
- 2008: Linkin Park and Jay-Z; Nick JR's Jump Up