

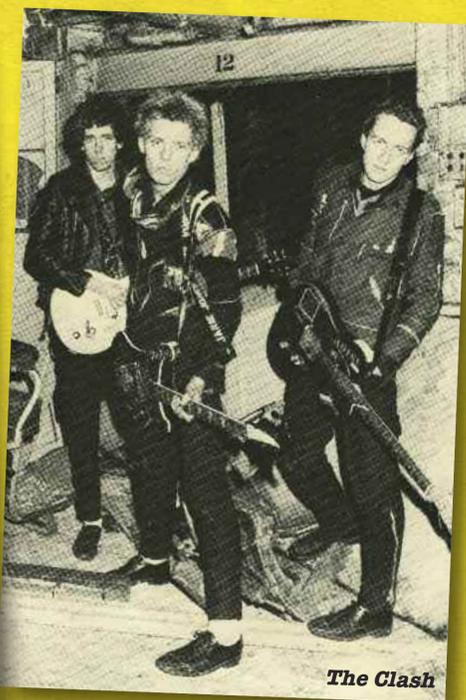
# PUNK: MILTON Keynes

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

## INTRODUCTION



The Sex Pistols  
'Johnny Rotten'



The Clash

In 1976 the Sex Pistols released their first single, **'Anarchy in the UK'** and the Punk movement was unleashed on Britain. Whilst despised by many, it influenced the music, fashion and attitudes of a generation and continues to do so to this day.

At the time Milton Keynes was a brand new city, and Punk was a brand new movement. The youth of Milton Keynes embraced the new culture and made it their own.

This exhibition invites you to take a small glimpse into the Punk scene in Milton Keynes. If you have any stories or memorabilia you'd like to add please get in touch with Living Archive: [admin@livingarchive.org.uk](mailto:admin@livingarchive.org.uk)

**"Punk wasn't just about safety pins, ripped jeans and a Mohican hair cut; it was much, much more than that. It was a mindset, a belief that anything is possible and as a band we were devoted worshipers to the Punk ethos."**

Lee Scriven

**"You weren't allowed in pubs, you weren't allowed in the city centre. Everywhere you went you were banned if you looked like a Punk rocker."**

Mark Jeavons

**"My friend and I went on a school trip to the National History Museum but we decided not to bother. We ended up on the Kings Road outside Vivienne Westwood's shop. We saw Punks hanging out and thought they looked cool."**

Ray Clay

**"Saturdays were a big day hanging out down Bletchley town centre outside the Co-op. Then when they built Central Milton Keynes hanging outside Virgin records."**

Nick Oakley

**"At the back of Woolworths in Bletchley they had a music booth where you could listen to records - that's where I first heard the Pistols."**

Ray Clay



**Living Archive Milton Keynes would like to thank the following people for contributing to these exhibition panels:**

Alison Bancroft, Dave Bancroft, Ray Clay, Tim Dunbabin, Andy Ford, Steve Hastings, Chris Hodge, Nick Hodge, Nicole Ioannou, Sonya Julia, Mark Jeavons, Nick Oakley, Lee Scriven, Anthea Sieveking, Caz Tricks, Nick Whyte and Julian Wolfendale.



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# PUNK: MILTON KEYNES

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

## A PUNK WEDDING



**The bride wore punk**  
— and Grandad was there, too



Happy bride... proud grandad  
Pictures: RON FAIRLEY

IT was awfully good of grandad to come. But did he HAVE to show everyone up by dressing so outlandishly?  
He was, after all, wearing a jacket (see small picture). And his shoes were polished. And he had a strange piece of material knitted around his neck. Called in Old Waves circles, a tie.  
But his young grandson, David Bancroft, could easily forgive the old chap's way-out behaviour.  
It was David's wedding day — and the groom cut a dash in his card-spotted hairdo and chain-traditional fireworks.  
His bride, pretty fellow Mohican-haired Alison Wyn-de-Bank, looked radiant in studded combat fatigues and stunning eyeliner.  
And their wedding at the registry office in Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, went off in true punk style.  
The pageboy was a 16-year-old punk called Billy. And the 20-year-old bridesmaid, who was also a punk, greeted the couple's vows with loud cheers and applause.  
Then the newbrides were seen off with the traditional shower of confetti — and not-so-traditional fireworks.  
The groom's father, Christopher Bancroft, a 45-year-old middle-aged lecturer, said proudly: "Although they look frazzled, they are a nice, normal young couple. I think some of their friends look quite attractive!"  
The happy couple have a lot in common. They're both 18, both unemployed and — if it's not too old-fashioned a phrase — they're both in love.

In October 1980 when a local couple did the traditional thing and got married, their Punk wedding made the national newspapers. Dave and Alison Bancroft met at a band practice at Pear Tree Centre — they were both in the Punk band **Ethnik Minority**.



**"Six weeks from meeting each other to getting married. At the time I had a bleached Mohican... for the wedding I dyed his (Dave's) hair Leopard print."**

Alison Bancroft

**"It was at Bletchley Registry Office and they said that no more than fourteen people were allowed in, but it ended up with sixty people in that little room."**

It was great."

Dave Bancroft

**"I wore an army overall with all bondage straps and studs on it and I had my Mohican and Dave wore bondage trousers. On the car we had black ribbons."**

Alison Bancroft

**"It was in all the papers, Sunday Mirror and everything."**

Dave Bancroft

**"I told the reporters not to put anything stupid but they did as usual."**

Alison Bancroft

**"They put a little photo of my granddad with us in the paper. But they wrote about how he is wearing 'what is known in old-wave circles as a tie'. And they put pathetic headlines like 'Punk Love'."**

Dave Bancroft

**"We had a party afterwards at Peartree and Fictitious played. It was a good night."**

Alison Bancroft

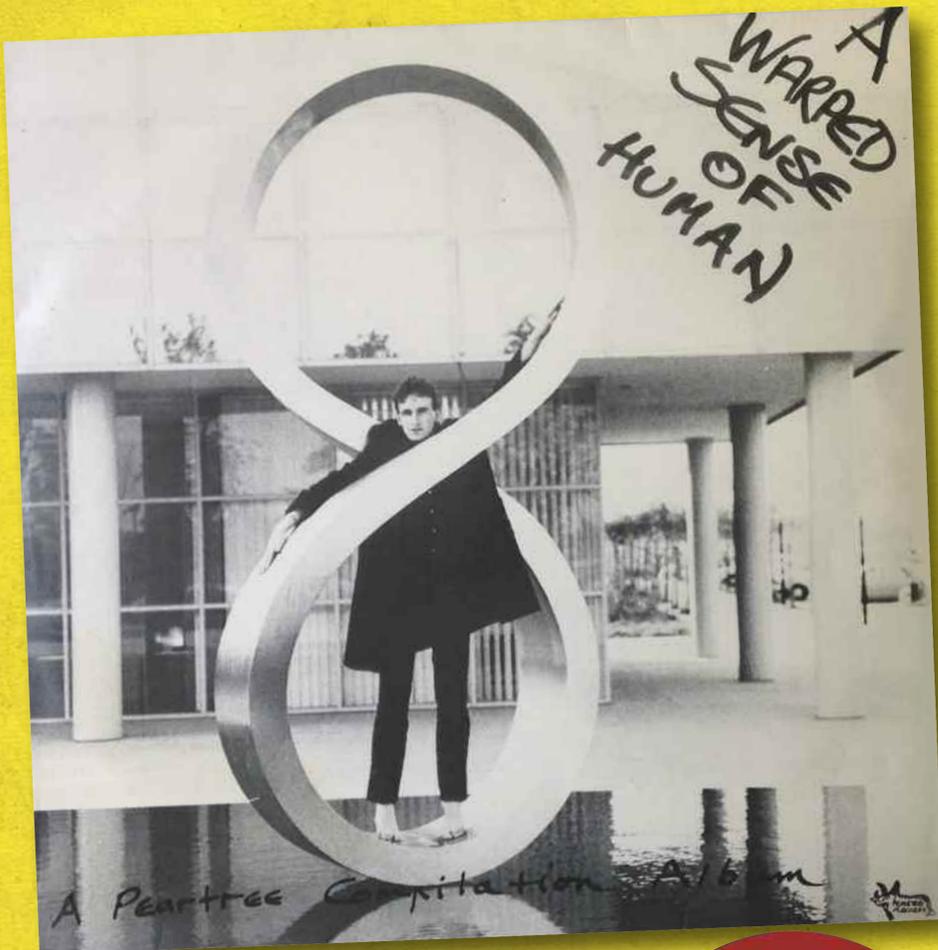
Scan to watch Ethnik Minority's 'Cult' video.



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## A WARPED SENSE OF HUMAN



In 1980 pop group **The Police** played at the Milton Keynes Bowl. The band enjoyed the gig so much that they decided to give something back to the City. After making enquiries their manager, Miles Copeland, made a generous donation to Peartree Centre – a local youth club. ‘Peartree’ was the hub of Milton Keynes youth culture at the time, providing rehearsal space for bands, dance and theatre groups as well as a platform for performances.



The money allowed the Centre to purchase PA equipment, lighting and recording facilities. The funds also helped finance a compilation album featuring the bands that rehearsed at the Centre. The album was called ‘**A Warped Sense of Human**’.



The youth leader at Peartree Centre, Dick Emmings, oversaw the whole project and, on completion, managed to bring it to the attention of Radio 1 DJ **John Peel**, who played tracks from the album repeatedly.

In recent years the album has become sought after by record collectors and – if you can find one – it could cost you well in excess of one hundred pounds.

**“It’s the same as someone might start a football team or stick stamps in an album. I’m just trying to encourage young bands.”**

Dick Emmings

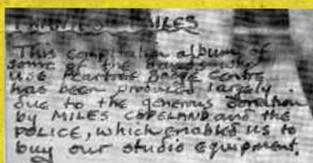
**“Dick was an amazing character. He encouraged us youngsters to get involved with music, dance or theatre – whatever you fancied – then helped you develop in a very practical way. For my band he arranged gigs, recording of demo tapes and even sent them off to record companies. He is sorely missed.”**

Caz Tricks

Scan to listen to Fictitious’s ‘New Expression’.



**Above:** A4 inserts sheets list all the featured bands



**Left:** A hand-written thank you on the record sleeve



**Below:** The poster promoting the album launch night



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## LOCAL BAND: EXIT-STANCE

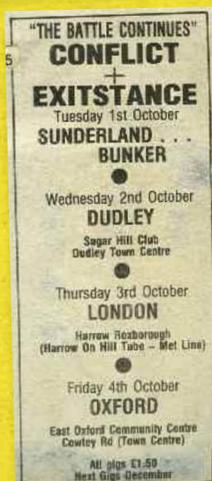


A local band of note was **Exit-Stance**. Formed in 1982, they thought that there was a distinct lack of Punk music in Milton Keynes so decided to make their own.

By 1982 Punk music had diversified and Exit-Stance were part of a new scene of '**Anarcho**' bands. As the name suggests, this movement was much more political and subversive than previous Punk music. Their protest music targeted vivisection, racism, apartheid and the nuclear arms race amongst other things.

After plying their trade in pubs, clubs and squats the band were offered the chance to record their music. Their debut single '**Crimes Against Humanity**' was well received and became single of the week in the music newspaper 'Sounds'.

Exit-Stance became very successful in their field and toured extensively with many bands including the controversial act '**Conflict**' (one of the biggest bands of their genre). Conflict also helped the band by releasing their records through their own label '**Mortarhate**'.



**"In the early days we used to borrow other bands equipment. We used to play loud and hard and we did blow up a few amps. In the end I had to borrow money to buy my own equipment as other bands wouldn't lend us theirs."**

Mark Jeavons, bass guitar

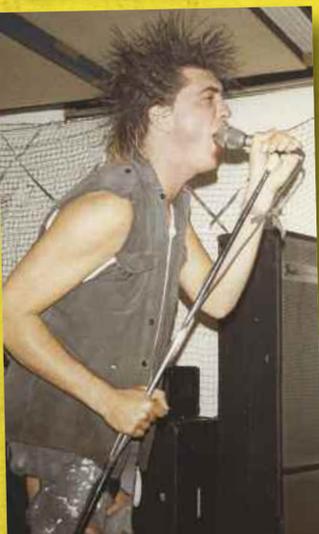


Scan to listen to Exit-Stance's '**Ballykelly Disco**'.



Exit-Stance were:

- Sean Finnis:** Vocals
- Dave Paul:** Guitar
- Mark Jeavons:** Bass
- Andy Williams:** Drums

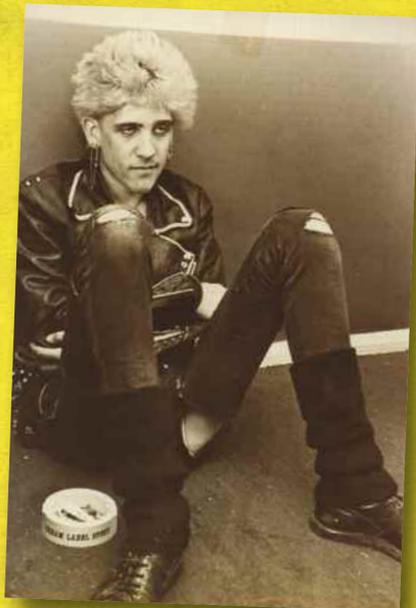


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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

## PUNK FASHION



When Punk first emerged it was as an anarchic and anti-establishment movement. It inspired a rebellious and youth-oriented fashion of its own.

Punks cut up old clothes from charity shops and jumble sales, destroyed the fabric and refashioned outfits, making garments designed to shock and attract attention. Safety pins and chains held bits of fabric together. Neck chains were made from padlocks and chain and even razor blades were used as pendants.

Forty years ago it was true anti-fashion but now it is commonplace. Vivienne Westwood was a pioneer of Punk fashion and over the years the style has been commercialised. Many well-established fashion designers such as Jean Paul Gaultier have used Punk elements in their designs.

**“My dad used to go mad at me that I used to have fourteen earrings in my ear.”**

Andy Ford

**“DIY not EMI - you'd do it for yourself. You looked really weird if you had tight trousers on because everyone had flares. Your leather jacket would say something about you - you'd put badges on, you'd paint it - it would be like your blackboard. You were kind of labelling yourself wearing this stuff but it was in a different way.”**

Mark Jeavons

**“You'd walk down Bletchley High Street and people would actually stop and watch you as you walked past because... they'd never seen it in their town.”**

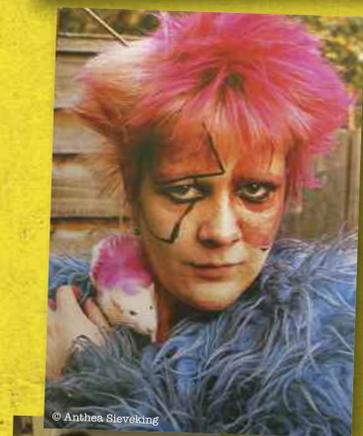
Alison Bancroft

**“I don't think they (parents) liked it at first. My extended family, my aunts and uncles and cousins. I'm not sure they accepted what I looked like. They didn't understand, they didn't know about the scene... they were perhaps worried.”**

Nicole Ioannou

**“If I wasn't scared of my dad I would have had Punk Rock tattooed on my forehead.”**

Nick Oakley



# PUNK: MILTON KEYNES

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

## LOCAL BAND: FICTITIOUS



**Fictitious** were one of the more prominent Milton Keynes Punk bands of the early 1980s. They had a committed local following, packing out venues wherever they played. Their success spread further afield too, often performing at renowned venues in London.

**“The whole musical world was exploding (Punk). It said you don’t have to stick to the tradition - you can go your own way.”**

**We put up the posters ourselves. We used to go out at midnight and poster the bus stops in Milton Keynes - none of the people of our age really had cars... so a poster at a bus stop was a very good idea.”**

Tim Dunbabin, vocals



**“Fictitious were a band who changed my life. I had been in various bands before (and since), but none had the impact of that gifted ensemble. First and foremost the band wrote some great songs, proper tunes that have stood the test of time. But it was the band’s collective ‘Punk’ spirit that had such an influence on me and I believe others around at the time.”**

**The band opened a creative door to a local alternative cultural world, and it was one I felt very at home in.**

**Fictitious enjoyed some golden times during an era when the city’s artistic community thrived diversely and ethically on a scale hard to comprehend in such a mundane modern age.”**

Lee Scriven, drums



**Fictitious were:**

**Tim ‘Tiggles’ Dunbabin:** Vocals

**Patrick Milne:** Guitar

**Trevor Knowles/Jamie Archibald:** Bass

**Lee Scriven:** Drums

**Biffo:** Keyboards



Scan to listen to  
Fictitious’s  
‘I Must Adjust’.

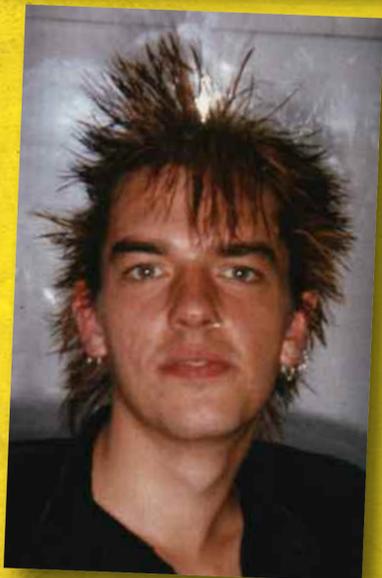


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MILTON KEYNES

# PUNK: MILTON KEYNES

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

## PUNK HAIR



Just like the music, Punk hairstyles were loud and proud. Probably the most iconic hairstyle was the **'Mohican'**, but many more striking hairstyles emerged.

You didn't go to the hairdressers, the Punk DIY ethic applied to hairstyles too. If you couldn't do-it-yourself you got your friends to do it for you.

Hair was spiked up, bleached, and brightly coloured with hair dyes, **'Crazy Colour'** and even food colouring. Hair had to be bleached as white as possible to allow the colours which would then be applied to 'glow'. Sometimes this was done with such regularity that the hair condition would deteriorate and literally break off!

A concoction of soap, sugar and hairspray kept these gravity-defying hairstyles in place. Rain was the dreaded enemy of the Punk!

**"There was something really empowering about having white hair that was all crimped and all over the place."**

Caz Tricks

**"It was time to cut your hair - get rid of your flares."**

Tim Dunbabin

**"First time I went home with my hair all chopped off and spikey my Mum was a bit shocked."**

Sonya Julia

**"It was 'Crazy Colour' in those days. I used to bleach my hair first to get a better colour."**

**I worked at Our Price (record shop) and I wasn't allowed on the shop floor because my hair was too short. I'd got it shaved at the sides."**

Nicole Ioannou

**"There I'd be with my mohair jumper my mum had knitted me and my hair bleached then dyed with food colour... small town Bletchley Punk done in our own way."**

Alison Bancroft



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# PUNK: MILTON KEYNES

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

## THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE

Ethnik Minority



In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a vibrant live music scene in Milton Keynes. The Punk attitude of **'anyone can form a band'** meant that they did just that. You didn't need to know how to play an instrument - this was basic, raw music - you could simply tune your guitar to 'E' and play with one finger!

This ethos led to an abundance of new, exciting young bands and the live music scene blossomed as a result. As well as the regular live venues, youth clubs, pubs and even village halls were hosting live music on a regular basis. Punk in general had a 'can do' attitude, so putting bands together and arranging gigs was all part of the culture. As a result gig-goers could often be spoilt for choice as to where to go at a weekend.

The Transistors



Politics aside, the musical style of Punk was a backlash against disco and 'prog rock' which had dominated the charts for some time. For Punks, self-indulgent and superficial rock and pop was history - their new raucous music was the way forward and discos gave way to live bands.

**"I was 12. My mate said "why don't we get dressed up like my brother." We looked at what Punk was all about at the time and got dressed up as best we could in weird and wonderful clothes and went off to the gig (Vibrators). It was an amazing experience. When The Vibrators came on they just blew me away and I thought, that's it, Punk Rock's for me.**

**... loads of bands coming to Pear Tree to practice. Dick Emmings (Youth Leader) encouraged us to create a Punk band. We said we can't sing or play and he said that doesn't stop Punk rockers does it? So we thought that's true so why don't we give it a go. I picked up my brother's bass guitar and learnt a few riffs."**

Mark Jeavons

**"I arrived here in 1982. Milton Keynes had kind of this thriving Punk community which was of it's own, it wasn't London Punk, it was Milton Keynes Punk.**

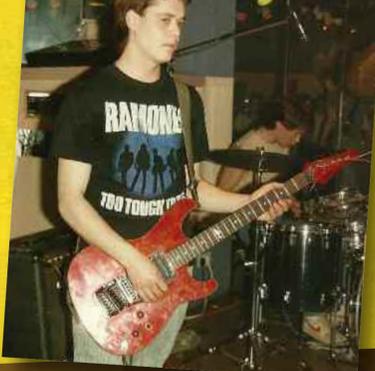
**It was very different but it kept the soul of the original movement. There was no commercialism involved. It was creative and inventive still."**

Steve Hastings

Fictitious



Jive Pilots



Scream & The Fits



UK Decay



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MILTON KEYNES

# PUNK: MILTON KEYNES

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

## LOCAL VENUES



Mark Jeavons with Peartree Centre in the background

Milton Keynes was a rapidly growing city at the time and live music was crucial to the young incoming population. Venues such as **Pear Tree Centre**, **Derwent Drive Youth Club**, **The Compass Club** and **The Craufurd Arms** provided places for young people to express themselves.

The theatre at Woughton Leisure Centre was large enough to host more famous bands. Later to be named **'The Pitz'**, the venue provided an opportunity for local bands to support national bands visiting the city.

Outside Milton Keynes venues like **Friars** in Aylesbury and the **Queensway Hall** in Dunstable were hosting all the biggest acts of the time. London was also accessible in the evenings with a very affordable **'Nightrider'** train ticket. When local bands played London gigs they would often hire coaches for their Milton Keynes followers.

**"We all used to go to gigs at the Compass Club, where after 'Jah Lizard's New Wave Disco' there were sometimes famous Punk bands, and sometimes local ones."**

Julian Wolfendale

**"I used to go and see a lot of local bands but then Milton Keynes was growing and other bands were coming in from different areas and playing."**

**I used to go over to Aylesbury Friars quite a lot. Sometimes I'd venture down to London too - there's loads of little venues down there - Punk's a really good scene."**

Sonya Julia

**"We used to go to gigs at Derwent Youth Club. Ethnik Minority played down there a few times and yeah, I remember the posters and everything... they just blew me away, you know, it was just great."**

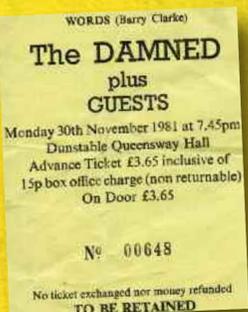
Andy Ford

**"There was a gig at The Pitz. There was these three blokes selling this fanzine (The Spot), 40p, quite affordable, lots of stuff in there. They're all home done... it's a more personal touch."**

Nicole Ioannou

**"Peartree Bridge was a magnet for all Punk bands."**

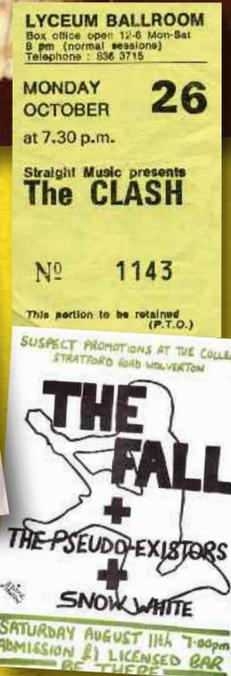
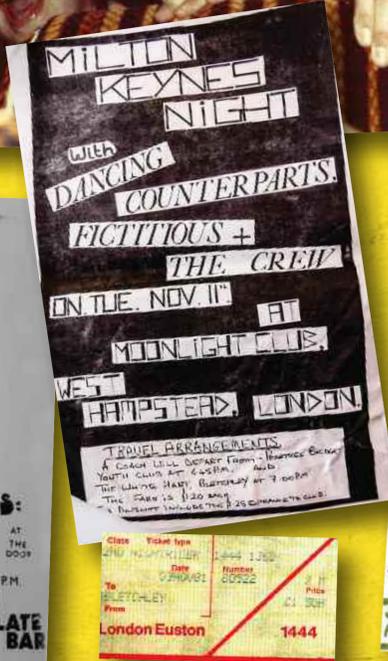
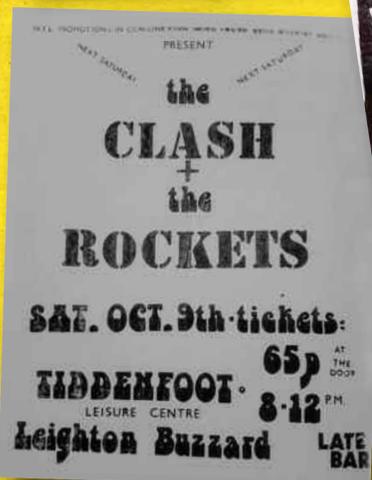
Nick Oakley



A gig at the Compass Club (Bletchley Leisure Centre)



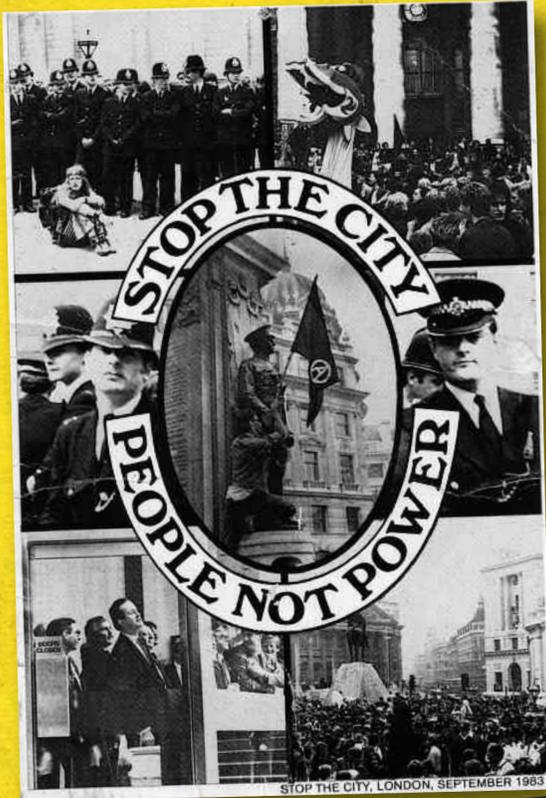
A coach-load of fans on their way to see Fictitious play in London



# PUNK: MILTON KEYNES

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## PUNK POLITICS



Like most cultural movements, Punk was a reaction to society. To a background of three million unemployed, strikes and recession, Punk was born. The disaffected youth felt ostracised from society because they didn't have jobs, money or self-worth. They were angry, so their music, attitude and style reflected that. Although anti-establishment, Punk did have a conscience and protested loudly about injustices at home and abroad.

**“When I found this movement it was like - wow - I really fit in here. Even though people might have been scared of us because we all looked a little bit crazy, we were actually all the most peaceful people you could find on the planet, and still are. The old Punks that I see have still got the same heart, the same values, still down to earth, decent, salt-of-the-earth people.”**

Sonya Julia

**“Punk is in my heart even though I drifted away from it... it's the best relationship you've ever had in your life that came to an end. When I was thirteen, fourteen all I wanted to be was a Punk, for me there was nothing else in life.**

**We didn't have much money. Any spare money you'd probably spend on records.”**

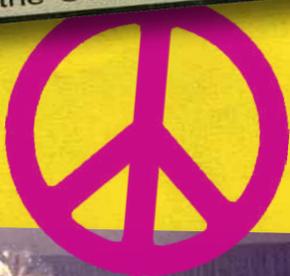
Nick Oakley

**“It was about adapting and utilising what you could and surviving on very little money. Arguably that's where the creativity came from. You don't throw away that pair of boots - if you don't like them you paint them a different colour. If you don't like your shirt with a few slashes of a razor you can actually make it different, and also it got stares from other people because you were doing something that they didn't dare. We were ripping up the rule book as best we could.”**

Tim Dunbabin

**“Originally it was very much about 'males' getting into Punk. I think I was one of the original female Punks... in Milton Keynes. So that's where I get the thing 'the queen of Punk'.”**

Alison Bancroft



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