



The perfect venue

Transcription of excerpts from interviews with John Sanders, Malcolm Orgee, Persefoni Salter, Sean Taylor and Simon Murphy, who recall what it was like inside Malvern Winter Gardens in the 1970s

John: My biggest recall of the Malvern Winter Gardens was it was about 1000 degrees. And I remember there was always a massive queue at the bar. There was always a massive queue at the bar, even when the bands were playing, there was always a massive queue at the bar. And then it just used to be hot, so hot in there it was quite scary. Because they never used to open the side doors because, obviously, people would get in for nothing, and it was just all glass, and it was just a nightmare. And then you had that, you had the fountain, which everybody would meet you by the fountain, and so did the other 300 people meet you by the fountain. So, yeah, it was just--, it just seemed to have everything, it had character, it had sweat dripping off the ceiling and the walls, and horrible stuff, but it was, to me it was what a punk venue should be, even though it wasn't really a punk venue 'cause it had much bigger groups playing in well before then. But it was just perfect, it was perfect. It was just lovely.

Malcolm: I just remember the sort of feeling really, and being very, very excited about going to the gig, and you know, it was a big event, and I knew that all my mates and acquaintances would be there. And it was the sort of place to be seen and to see people really. You know, it was very exciting. Some of the bands were great, and some of the bands were not so good. I remember going into the big hall and they had all those curtains all around, and it was a very sort of dark space. No, it

was just, you know, if I wasn't really that interested in the music, you know, I'd spend a lot of time sort of hanging off the fountain in the Pump Room, you know, sort of congregating around there and talking to people, you know, which was great.

Persefoni: I just remember how nice the kind of punks and the skinheads from like Gloucester, Cheltenham, Malvern, where everyone used to come from, how nice they were. And if they could see that actually you'd had enough and you wanted to get out from the front they would just pull you back and help you to get out from the kind of crush. Being in the front you were going to kind of have spit going on you, beer going on you, whatever. But it was all part of the kind of experience, I'd say, at the time, and it was all quite good fun.

Sean: It was a place of absolute wonder. You opened the doors, they took the tickets off you, you walked in, and it was just amazing. If you could bottle that atmosphere now you'd sell bottles of it 'cause it was just electric. It was, to me, it was the best time of my life. The atmosphere and the smell of the place always made you feel as if it was an occasion. The characters that were there, you'd get them from all over Hereford come, all over Evesham come, you'd get other bands that would turn up. That's, you know, it was more like a meeting place where you met, but it was the place to meet. I would rather see bands there than I would go to Bristol or Birmingham.

Simon: It was very crowded, I remember that. I can remember walking in and it feeling very hot straightaway. It was quite dark. And it was your typical punk audience, you know, it was just a riot of colour and hairstyles, and you know, pins and safety pins, and all sorts of looks.

*Transcripts of the full interviews are available from Rock Around the Hills
rockaroundthehills@gmail.com*