

A national treasure?

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Time does indeed fly. It seems like only yesterday that we were at Buck House, sipping Pimms and nibbling on cucumber sandwiches, celebrating the 50th birthday of Her Madge (no, not that one). What, you mean that you weren't invited?

Anyway, according to the red tops, opening hours in public houses around the country are to be extended to mark the Queen's 90th, so anyone who can't afford £150 for 'not just any hamper' can still feel like we're all in it together.

Of course, not everyone will consider this a cause for celebration.

Personally, come April 10th I'll choose to acknowledge the 39th anniversary of The Clash playing London's Roundhouse.



Either way, what better way of marking this special day than getting hammered on cheap cider and fighting and vomiting in the streets of dear old Blighty?

You see, punk rock has been given national heritage status - supported by the National Trust as well as Liz W herself, no less (you remember, the "moron" from the Sex

Pistols alternative national anthem).

It's maybe less of a surprise that that one of the descendants of that dynasty - Joseph Corr , the son of Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood - has decided to take anarchy to its logical conclusion and burn all his memorabilia.

The reason? Punk.Lon-

don, a corporate and state-sponsored series of gigs, exhibitions, talks and film screenings.

Set up thanks to a £100K Lottery grant and the support of Boris Johnston, it seems to be the exact opposite of everything punk stood for (even given BoJo's haircut).

Corr  has said the bonfire he's setting is worth £5M, though that'd suggest either he has all the rare EMI copies of 'Anarchy in the UK' - suggesting a chart hype admittedly not beyond the nous of his father - or that a flair for overstatement runs in the family.

Now that safety pins and bondage trousers appear to be "By Royal Appointment" it seems that all that's worth preserving is the spirit of punk rock itself.

Although not if officials in Cornwall have their way. The council have tried to ban a band, Black Leaves of Envy, from practising in their garage despite being hundreds of yards from their nearest neighbour.

They appealed to Dave

Grohl for support, and the Foo Fighters frontman has written to the council, asking that they reconsider, citing how music made in a garage got him through his "difficult years" growing up in Springfield, Virginia.

With the constant doom-mongering about the music scene (yes, guilty as charged) it's surprising, especially under our current government, that the Music Venue Trust has hailed a victory.

Developers will be prevented from, say, changing offices to flats if a music venue is nearby.

Given that around 40 per cent of small venues have closed over the past 10 years, often for precisely this reason, it gives us some hope that the ailing industry can recover, and get back to the halcyon days of the 1970s. Maybe the establishment are on the side of the kids after all?

Perhaps next year, in the 55th anniversary of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, we'll all be singing 'God Save The Queen'. (No, not that one. Yes that one!).

On the stereo...



ARIES

Adieu or Die

Spanish-language pop rarely makes an impression on the UK - Julio Iglesias, anyone? Isabel Fern ndez Reviriego, aka Aries, is far-removed from that stereotype, giving us an insight into the true state of music on the continent. A fair distance from the USA's west coast, there's still a sense of summer and fun to be had here, as Aries builds up multi-layered harmonies and beats. Opener 'Lagrimas 1' sees her setting out her stall, a one minute jingle with a gathering choral effect, while 'Eclipse Total' continues the theme, with great waves of sound and sweetly sung but incomprehensible lyrics becoming another part of the complex aural construction. A handy introduction to a whole untapped musical continent.

★★★★☆