

COCK SPARRER

BIO

Cock Sparrer are widely considered to be one of the most influential Street Punk bands in history.

2012 sees them celebrate their 40th Anniversary.

The thing about Sparrer is that they're not just a band. They are childhood friends and have been making a noise since they got together way back in 1972. They were playing, drinking, going to football and generally making a nuisance of themselves when the late 1970s punk scene started in London. Finally it seemed that there were hundreds of likeminded people with the same attitude.

However, the boys were from the wrong side of town and didn't quite fit in with the 'art school' scene - they were more at home on the terraces wearing jeans and Dr Martins boots than being fashion victims in bondage trousers. They've always done things the way they wanted to. As Punk ended up with its own set of rules they were always on the outside as they just didn't buy into it.

Despite being courted by Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren (who they turned away for not buying a round of drinks), early tours with the Small Faces, Thin Lizzy, Motorhead, Slade amongst others and a record deal with Decca, the 'music industry' just wasn't ready for Cock Sparrer.

British music paper SOUNDS sums it up perfectly in a live review from April 1978:

"Musically and visually, the Cock Sparrer crew are just about as motley and uncouth as its possible for a band to project. Imagine five collectively imageless Cockneys with hair length varying from skinhead to Woody Roller, wearing clothes that looked they pool from the jumble sales, and singing about how East End life is tough but fun...(they)...create a good time sound that occasionally approximates to the original spirit of Slade."

When the Oi! Scene started in 1980 the band found themselves on a number of compilation albums and a new breed of fans discovered them. This was Punk from the streets and Sparrer and their fans just seemed to fit in. 1983 saw the release of the bands first official album, the seminal SHOCK TROOPS which today is a certified classic and regularly features in the 'most influential punk album ever' polls.

Never having got (or needed) the critical acclaim they deserved from the music press the band went largely unnoticed by the masses. However, this brought them cult status amongst those that mattered; the real punk fans and the band have kept that spirit alive for the past 40 years.

1992 saw the resurgence of the band to a level that they never expected. Many new bands had come along and all cited Cock Sparrer as an influence or "the Godfathers of Street Punk". What followed was the ability to go anywhere in the world, any night of the week and play to packed venues all singing their hearts out.

Rarely do a band get the reaction that these guys do. A Cock Sparrer show is an event. It's like cup final day. A family singalong. Theirs is a career in reverse, they're bigger now than they ever were. Regularly headlining all the major punk festivals in Europe and occasionally hitting the US to headline events such as Punk Rock Bowling and Riot Fest.

This year is a year of celebration – with friends. And to start it off the band are hooking up with RANCID, who themselves are celebrating 20 years together, for a joint show on 23rd March at the Warfield in San Francisco.

Cock Sparrer – 40 years on, still five blokes in a pub, five mates having a laugh, more than just a band.