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music!

Camden
Town

48
hours



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MAYOR OF LONDON

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Camden Town by night

'Camden, north London; formerly the destination of choice for ageing, moulting punks and young Italian tourists in search of soft drugs – now, suddenly, the spiritual property of the grubby hipster twentysomething...'
'...gorgeous good fun. Ramshackle and haphazard, a top laugh...'

– Polly Vernon, Journalist
February 25 2007

Too right it is. As The Strokes were putting the finishing touches to their seminal first album 'Is This It?', heralding the return of guitar rock to the cutting edge of cutting-edge, a new dawn was rising over Camden Town. In these pages, you'll read about some of the musicians and bands, famous and infamous, and the venues where

MAYOR OF LONDON

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they partied. Historically the heartland of emerging British talent, Camden Town leads the way in creating and supporting the hottest signed and unsigned guitar bands in the UK. On any given night of the week, over 12,000 people will be out watching bands, dancing and singing in Camden Town. That means that if our venues are full every night (and most nights they are), nearly four and a half million people will see live music right here every single year, inspiring the next generation of stars like Johnny B, Faris Badwan and Beth Ditto. This is why Camden Town continues to be the breeding ground for hundreds of new bands and the spiritual home of everyone who loves new music.

WELCOME

48 hours

Forty-eight hours of fun and games in Camden Town



Proud Galleries



The Marathon

Look out for **Club NME** nights, with live sets from up-and-coming bands, selected cheap drinks and a ridiculously cool clientele.

Midnight, Friday

If you're booted out while your eardrums are still intact, head to **Barfly** (49 Chalk Farm Road, 020 744 0800), which is a much more intimate venue, hosting a rotating range of nights, most of which centre around trendy electro and live bands with a more leftfield feel. Often it's a great chance to catch



Barfly

7pm, Friday

To spend a weekend in Camden Town without taking in the cutting-edge gig scene would be looking a musical gift horse straight in the mouth. Set the scene at somewhere steeped in modern pop's history, like legendary hangout the **Good Mixer** (30 Inverness Street, 020 7916 6176). It was the destination for all Britpop gods in the mid-'90s and more recently has been favoured by the likes of Amy Winehouse, Alex Zane and Noel Fielding.

Rubbing shoulders with musical royalty should get you in the mood for some live action, so head round the corner to **Koko** (1a Camden High Street, 0870 432 5527). Here, amongst a graceful backdrop of enormous chandeliers and velvet banquettes, you will find major live events and special showcases by a list of artists from the Scissor Sisters to Muse.

Stacey 'We are a gallery by day and a night club at night. We play a lot of indie, rock, electro music – Proud is the cool place to be. Camden has a very relaxed and bohemian feel to it. It's a mix of all different sorts of genres.'

Camden PEOPLE



unsigned talent before they hit the big time and start selling out the major venues.

3am, Saturday

It's not just Jack White (who once played an impromptu acoustic set here) who has found himself whiling away the small hours at the idiosyncratic **Marathon** restaurant (87 Chalk Farm Road, 020 7485 3814). Possibly the world's only live venue and late-night drinking hangout in the back room of a kebab house, the Marathon is where all drinking roads end for many a musician, bartender or thirsty reveller. The Marathon has a deserved place in Camden folklore. With rough 'n' ready live music provided by rockin' guitarslinger Daniel Kingsnake, it is simply the only place to be in NW1 at this time of the morning.

11am, Saturday

Sore head? Feel sick? At **Bar Vinyl** (6 Inverness Street, 020 748 5545) you can get yourself the finest English breakfast this side of the Thames and be soothed with some relaxing tunes. There's a good record shop in the basement, too. Another good recovery spot favoured by local revellers is **Café Goodfare** (26 Parkway, 020 7485 2230), which does great fry-ups and Italian dishes.

2pm, Saturday

It's been one of the busiest attractions for international visitors to London for years, but

Stables Market is always entertaining for newcomers and old regulars alike. Get some vintage Levis that might have been worn by a punk legend! Buy yourself one of Chris Evans' old rugs! Or a sitar! If you're ready for a drink, try Camden Town's biggest pub, the lively **World's End**

Jeff 'Camden is regaining that tag of where the new music is happening... it's the music centre of London.'

Camden PEOPLE





Cyberdog

Joshua

'Raving, basically – that's pretty cool, isn't it! You get to see things here you've never seen in the world before... you can just generally be cool.'

Camden
PEOPLE



The Good Mixer

the High Street, starting at **The Crescent** (020 7387 2749), then Irish pub the **Cobden Arms** (020 7209 2472) and the cosy **Liberties** (020 7485 4019). If you're after a more sedate start to Saturday, the **Crown and Goose**, off Delancey Street (100 Arlington Road, 020 7485 8008) is a gastro-style pub with tables outside, normally replete with beautiful people.

A detour down Parkway brings you to **Young's** pub the **Spread Eagle** (141 Albert Street, 020 7267 1410) and **NW1** (32 Parkway, 020 7485 2815). Britpop nostalgists should visit the **Dublin Castle** (94 Parkway, 020 7485 1773), whose jukebox is filled with seminal '90s tunes and crowded with youngsters in wincingly tight jeans. Back on the High Street are local institutions the

Buck's Head (020 7284 1513), **Elephant's Head** (020 7485 3130) and **Oxford Arms** (020 7267 4945) **Proud Galleries** (Stables Market, 020 7482 3867), has DJ sets and club nights that attract a crowd of louche young things. Also ace is goth pub the **Devonshire Arms** (33 Kentish Town Road, 020 7284 0562).

With a deserved place in Camden folklore, the Marathon is where all drinking roads end...

Midnight, Saturday

Club action on Saturdays is more varied, with **Koko** hosting a range of different dos, from Sean Rowley's celebrated **Guilty Pleasures** to the metal-tastic **Club Kerrang!** to some very moody house and garage

nights. The **Electric Ballroom**, (184 Camden High Street, 020 7485 9006) becomes 'strictly '70s disco ballroom' with **Shake**. Famed gay bar the **Black Cap** (171 Camden High Street, 020 7428 2721) has cabaret acts on Saturdays and entertainment on most other nights, until 2am.



Electric Ballroom

Midday, Sunday

If you leave NW1 without tasting a legendary square pie from

► (174 Camden High Street, 020 7482 1932), on the site of the area's oldest pub, the 18th-century Mother Red Cap.

5pm, Saturday

Take the weight off your feet and chill out by the canal. **Lock 17** (020 7428 5929), above **Jongleurs** (0870 787 0707) and Dingwalls, is a bar that's right on Camden Lock – hence the name. It has a market bar and a lockside bar, with a patio and terrace. Near Chalk Farm tube, the **Enterprise** pub (2 Haverstock Hill, 020 7485 2659) is good for a quiet afternoon pint, before the crowds arrive for the gigs and comedy nights upstairs.

Izzy 'I think Camden Town is very eccentric. You can be yourself... you are not going to get a lot of abuse, so you can be who you want to be. It's good for families, it's good for clubbers, it's good for everyone – it's just got a really great atmosphere.'

Camden
PEOPLE



7pm, Saturday

If you're gipped out, try Camden Town's many drinking holes. Walking up from Mornington Crescent presents you with a massive choice for a pub crawl. By the station is the **Purple Turtle** (61-65 Crowndale Road, 020 7383 4976), then head up



The Lock Tavern

Daniel 'I came here today to look for a jacket. Shopping is a lot different here; you get more punk and gothic stuff. For me, the military-inspired gear is the best of all.'



Camden PEOPLE

▶ self-confessed 'tarted-up boozier' the **The Lock Tavern** (35 Chalk Farm Road, 020 7482 7163), you're a fool. What's more, you'll usually be treated to a DJ set from Simian Mobile Disco, Sean McClusky or an indie band while you peruse the Sunday papers. More often than not, someone like Fearne Cotton or Lauren Laverne will be clutching a bottle at the bar, and if not, you can always just gaze upon the bar staff, all of whom appear to be filling in time between modelling jobs.

2pm, Sunday

If you need some noise to liven up your afternoon, **Underworld** hosts the hard-rocking alcohol-free **Subverse** club for all ages, now in its

sixth year, with live gigs on the first Sunday of every month. The doors open at two and the gigs finish at six. If you still have some coinage left after the weekend's excesses, get the most out of it at Camden Town's stores of well-thumbed records. They offer the discerning record collector everything he or she could possibly desire – a



The World's End

Remmi 'For me, Camden is good live music and excellent clothes shopping!'



Camden PEOPLE



The Dublin Castle

tradition that spread to shops from the original record stalls in the market. Two of the best record stores are **All Ages Records** on

If you leave without tasting a square pie from the Lock Tavern, you are a fool

Pratt Street (020 7267 0303) and **Sounds That Swing** (46 Inverness Street, 020 7267 4682), with a fabulous old reggae and vintage vinyl selection. We also love this one for the retro signage out front. Then it's time to head home, with tales of your weekend in your head and your shopping under your arm, leaving the street cleaners to tidy up in readiness for someone else's 48 hours to begin...

Camden Innovators

Vince Power

Club owner and live music promoter



What makes Camden Town unique?

Since the '60s, it's been known as a place where you can buy clothes and other trinkets that you can't find anywhere else in the world.

Fondest memories?

My inspiration as a promoter is still drawn from nights spent at the Buffalo [now the Electric Ballroom] and the Roundhouse. There was always such an organic and spontaneous vibe about Camden Town.

What's great about it?

Tourists love it, but it's also filled with young Londoners every weekend. I think it really is the ultimate London destination.

Axl Rose ate his first spotted dick here. What was your watershed moment?

Seeing 3000 Suede fans go mental at a Roundhouse gig I put on.

Sum up Camden Town in five words...

Good for fun, frolicking [and] fantasy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO



A year in Camden Town

Something new is always happening in Camden Town, but there are some major annual events too

Spring

Camden Crawl

Various venues, April 18-19

The venues of Camden Town get to showcase the best in brand-new indie rock as well as featuring classic acts who have influenced the latest sounds. One ticket gets you into all the gigs, and you can travel between each one as you please. (One- or two-day tickets available.) www.thecamdencrawl.com

Summer

Camden Green Fair & Bikefest

Regent's Park, June 1

An annual event to celebrate a brighter ecological future.

Expect music stages, a green transport zone and areas dedicated to green living. Bikefest will have cycles to try out and a kids' obstacle course. There will be lots of stalls selling arts and crafts, children's activities,

and Fairtrade and organic foods too. www.camdengreenfair.uk.com

Camden Fringe Festival

Etcetera Theatre and Liberties Bar, July 28-August 24

Who needs Edinburgh? Four weeks of great new comedy, theatre, music, poetry and cabaret. Check out the website for line-up updates.

www.camdenfringe.org

Autumn

Camden Fashion Show

Camden Lock Place, usually September

Around London Fashion Week and Design Week, Camden traditionally celebrates its

homegrown talent with a

catwalk show involving local retailers and designers. See the website for news about a 2008 show. www.camdenfashionshow.com



Frieze Art Fair

Camden
Crawl

Camden Innovators

Faris Badwan



The Horrors, singer

Why is Camden Town unique?

The rat versus pigeon Stables war. The good selection of insane pseudo-preachers. The Goth-Ravers, pre dating both us and the Klaxons. The Irishman who tells jokes for money and gets enraged if he doesn't get a laugh in addition.

What was your watershed moment here?

I ate my first – and last – market Chinese takeaway. I had my first job working in a '60s clothing store called Velvet Illusion.

Who's your Camden Town hero?

The tramp dressed like Captain Birdseye, who switches between jolly sailor and cantankerous bad-tempered bloke periodically.

Town venues. Watch the website for news about this year's event. www.bbc.co.uk/electricproms

Winter

Camden Happening

Various venues tbc
Camden promoters Adventures in the Beetroot Field usually present a festival of live gigs of all musical styles, plus cabaret, film, spoken word and exhibitions. Keep an eye on their website for any news of a 2008 festival. www.adventuresinthebeetrootfield.com

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Frieze Art Fair

Regent's Park, October 16-19

This internationally renowned event features 150 of the world's most exciting contemporary art galleries. If you want to buy art, go to this. www.friezeartfair.com

BBC Electric Proms

Various venues, October

This rock and pop festival, launched in 2006, was an instant success. Centred around the Roundhouse, it also hosts events at other Camden

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO

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Scene and not herd

Jongleurs
LIVE @
DINGWALLS



Camden Town's jazz and soul heritage lives on, and the Roundhouse ain't no museum piece

Long before **Damon Albarn** and the **Britpop** kids pitched up at the **Good Mixer**, Camden Town was colonised by jazzheads and B-boys.

In the mid-'80s, working-class soul boys mixed with middle-class bohos and sharp-suited black kids at **Dingwalls**. On Sundays, DJ **Gilles Peterson** used to play a fast and furious mix of hard bop, Afro-Cuban rhythms and jazz-funk. This dancefloor-friendly take on jazz soon spread through Camden

Town's venues – most famously, to the **Jazz Café**, still one of London's best music venues, with shows from jazz, soul and pop superstars and club nights with jazz DJs.

Forthcoming gigs include Omar, Terry Callier and Jazzie B in a busy line-up for March. Camden Town's funky legacy also lives on in several places, including the record shop **Sounds That Swing** on Inverness Street, venue **Bar Zensai** (Inverness Street), and **The Lock Tavern** (Chalk Farm Road, Sundays) for various sessions.

The Roundhouse

Sitting magnificently at the top of Camden Town, the Roundhouse was

built as an engine shed in 1846, but within 20 years was too small for the new trains and thus its identity changed many times, as industry evolved.

In 1964, it was



Razorlight at The Roundhouse

adopted as a potential home for arts outside the West End elite. Playwright **Arnold Wesker** had a vision for a great, democratic venue. But after a decade of wild psychedelic

A collision of post-modern pop and global beats; fittingly eclectic for Camden Town

gigs and ground-breaking theatre, it lay almost dormant for 20 years.

In 2006, the Roundhouse was newly launched as an arts space. Its **re-opening night** may not have had tripped-out female celebrities stripping naked to wade to the toilets (as word has it they did on its first night as a venue in 1966), but **summer schools** for young people and major events like the **Electric Proms** have seen it come

close to Wesker's original vision.

The dimensions of the place have inspired many artists; last year a production of **'A Midsummer Night's Dream'** used the venue's height to add stunning acrobatics to a dynamic reinterpretation of Shakespeare's much-loved comedy.

For spring 2008, the Roundhouse plays host to the **RSC Histories series** (Richard II, Richard III, Henry IV part 1 and 2, Henry V and Henry VI parts 1, 2 and 3). And on a musical note, there is a diverse array of forthcoming bookings, from **Billy Bragg** to **DJ Shadow** to the reformed, seminal **My Bloody Valentine**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO



The Lock Tavern



Behind the music

The Roundhouse
c.1960



How Camden Town shaped modern pop culture

It's all about changing, innovating, moving on... The **Roundhouse** was converted from a railway relic into one of the most influential venues of the '60s and '70s.

Dingwalls became a destination for soul legends and new punks when it was reshaped from an old timber yard. The **Electric Ballroom**, which has seen countless musical greats at their sweaty, rock 'n' roll best, spent its former life as the **Buffalo Ballroom**, where Irish labourers spent their free time.

And as all these venues were rising and falling and rising again, the pubs and record shops were nurturing the future of music. Over the years, the likes of **Lemmy**, **John Lydon** and **Shane MacGowan** (mis)spent their youths at gigs in Camden Town. **Elvis Costello**, **Joe Strummer** and **Madness** snapped up vinyl that would inform their own classics. Band line-ups were formed during drinking sessions and record deals clinched in backstreet boozers.

Punk brought a new wild era, onstage and off. **Sid and Nancy**

loved the **Music Machine**, and **Debbie Harry** enjoyed a gig or two whenever **Blondie** were in town.

In the '80s, the **Camden Palace** was home to the new romantics, while the Electric Ballroom hosted indie gigs for bands on the up, like **U2** and **The Smiths**.

In the early '90s, press darlings like **The Sundays** and **PJ Harvey** played to a packed back room at the **Falcon**. Music journalists took up permanent residence at the bar and



Heavenly Records' Jeff Barrett would stop for a chat as he stamped your hand in the sweaty, narrow entrance to a club where pop stars often drunkenly joined their mates onstage for impromptu performances.

Camden Town's streets were still home to plenty of squats. Young people with no money could set up a venture without a business plan or a financial advisor. Pubs like the **Devonshire Arms** saw creative partnerships forged and sometimes spectacularly broken.

In the mid-'90s, **Britpop** arrived as **Blur** revived a north London pop tradition and music labels and PRs opened offices a pint's-throw from the **Laurel Tree**. The birth of the **Camden Crawl** followed in '95, but the appearance of **The Wedding Present** proved so popular it nearly caused riots!

A period of snooze-rock followed, but the dawn of a new decade saw The Strokes shake London's guitar-totin' kids out of their slumber, and our home-grown reply, **The Libertines**, led a new **Britrock** fraternity. And where was the home of this **New Rock Revolution**? Camden Town, of course.

The Crawl came back in 2005 and, last year, was *the* place to find the next big thing. It's in the vibe of the clubs, the thrill of each new live band discovered, and even amongst the market stalls where the likes of **Razorlight** still buy their gear, that Camden Town continues to be at the heart of London rock 'n' roll life.

Camden
Innovators

Alan
Donohoe



The Rakes, singer

Fondest memories?

In the late '90s, when me and my friend Charlie would go there when we were 17, 18. It was the first time we'd really been to pubs, and especially clubs. It all seemed very exciting: the dirt, the drinking... and the foreign girls with dyed hair.

What do you think makes Camden Town unique?

I still think it's a good place to go out at night – somehow it's not as pretentious as Shoreditch or other parts of the East End.

Watershed Camden Town moment?

Selling out the Dublin Castle for one of our first gigs and then selling out Koko, what used to be the Camden Palace. Both are Camden institutions I used to regularly frequent long before The Rakes ever happened.

Who's your Camden Town hero(ine)?

The barmaid in the Washington who offered to give The Rakes free drinks for helping out animals.

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