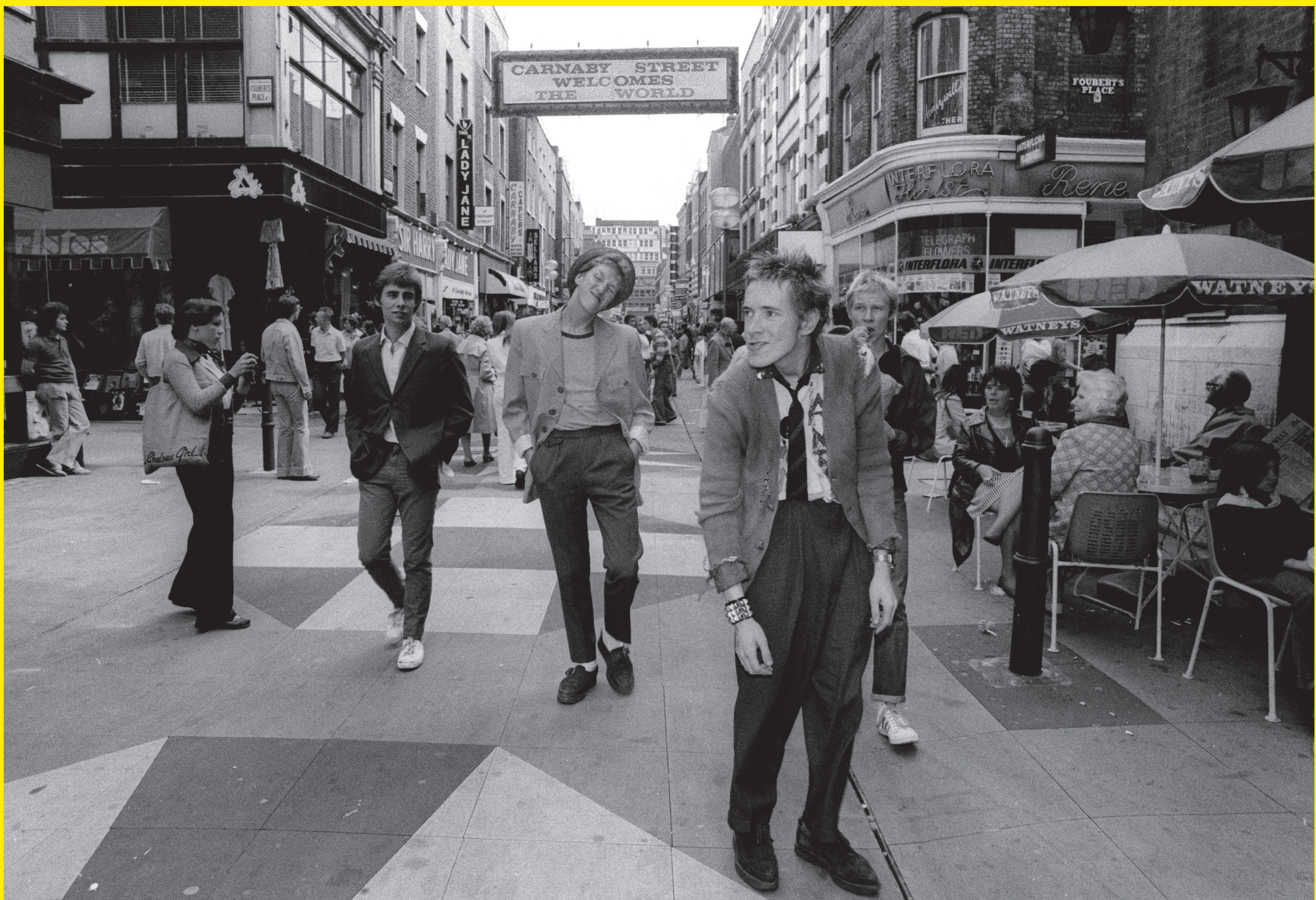


'WE' RE INTO CHAOS



Meanwhile, 192 miles from Scarborough.

In spring 1976 the Sex Pistols prepared to venture north to play their first gigs outside of the trendy safety net of the capital and outlying art colleges. Malcolm McLaren set the tour up but elected to stay behind for 'business matters'. Punk as a scene and a music genre was still bubbling underground, and McLaren was busy changing that.

Careful scrutiny of the music papers revealed mentions of the band causing trouble at their London appearances, upstaging the headline band on the night and instigating numerous scuffles. By April the term punk was being loosely applied, covering the Sex Pistols, a few rough-and-ready pub rock bands and the impending arrival of American band The Ramones. The Pistols would get an unexpected feature in Sounds newspaper at the end of April, lighting punk's blue touchpaper.

There is a convincing argument that the band were originally conceived as a vehicle to sell clothing, the principal business - along with agitation - of McLaren and his partner Vivienne Westwood. As a creative pair they were a whirling dervish of mischief and invention, plundering the explicit and taboo, the subcultural and countercultural, the political and the downright weird. Everything dredged up and incorporated into clothing as slogans or imagery. This was sold from their shop SEX at the end of King's Road. It would soon be rebranded as Seditious as their punk brutalist look took shape.

Photographer Ray Stevenson worked with the band. Around the time of the North Yorkshire excursion he photographed the quartet cutting a swathe through London's pop-tourist hotspot Carnaby Street. The band look like depraved rock stars lampooning the sybaritic seventies. Johnny Rotten holds the focus, resembling a roughed-up Teddy boy on day release from borstal, gurning and goofing like a Dickensian projection of Albert Steptoe. Everything about him is screaming "I don't care".

You wondered, would Scarborough and the rest of the UK be ready for this anarchic freak show?

Top: Ray Stevenson's iconic spring 1976 photograph of the Sex Pistols marauding down Carnaby Street
 Above right: February 1976 and Jane England perfectly captures the mystery and magic of 430 King's Road with its loyal guardian Jordan. Photo © Jane England @englandgallery.com
 Left: The Sex Pistols first publicity in NME, February 1976
 Right: Early flyer designed by Helen Wellington-Lloyd for the 100 Club gig as the band returned from their Yorkshire excursion
 Bottom: Rotten resembled outcast TV character Albert Steptoe whilst the band subverted the Confessions story of salacious popstars

