THINGS TO DO

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and hear from the Head of School and Senior Leadership Team.

Open House

Thursday, 29 September

Thursday, 13 October at 6 pm

at 8:45 am and

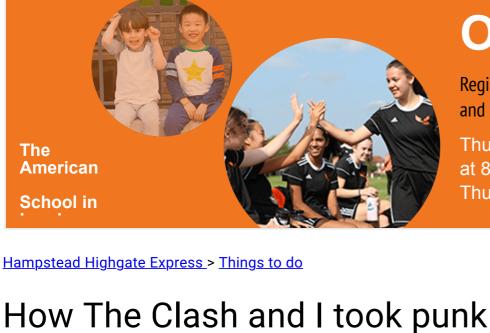
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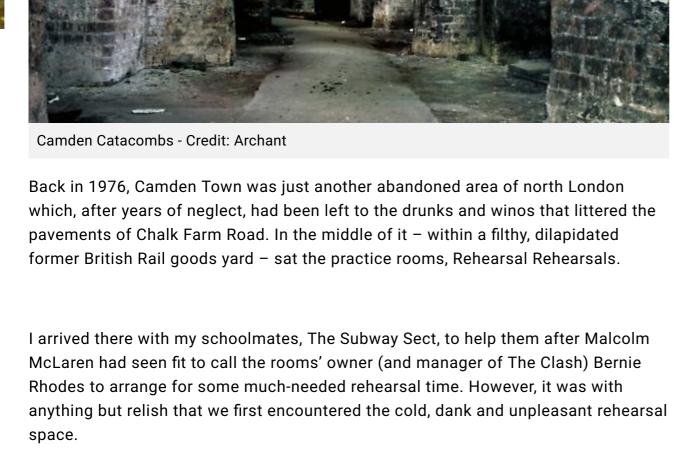


underground in 1970s Camden

Barry Auguste

The Clash band memorabilia on display at the Black Market Clash pop-up exhibition and store in Soho to mark the release of the group's remastered collected works Sound System box set and new best of collection, Hits Back. - Credit: PA Archive/Press Association Images





depressing environment. Paul Simonon hung around the rehearsal room more than anyone else back then and was the first member of The Clash to befriend us. One night he said conspiratorially: "Want to see something really cool?" He led us to the back of the rehearsal room behind the jukebox, through the drapes that served as sound-baffling, and down a gentle ramp to a huge, ancient door.

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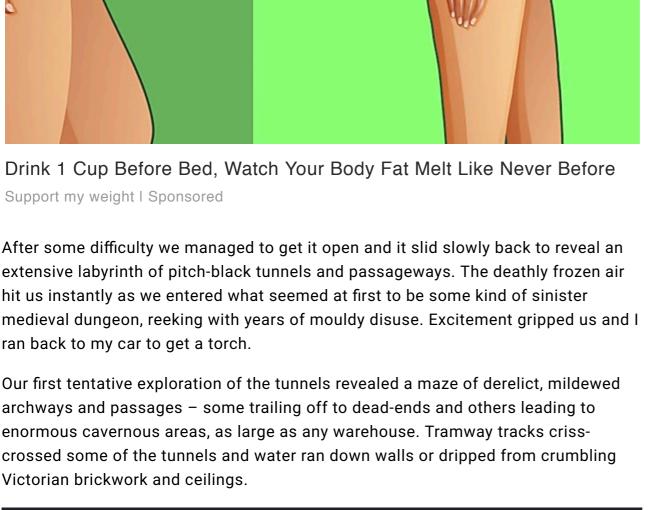
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Its crumbling, musty atmosphere reminded me of my grandmother's old coal cellar

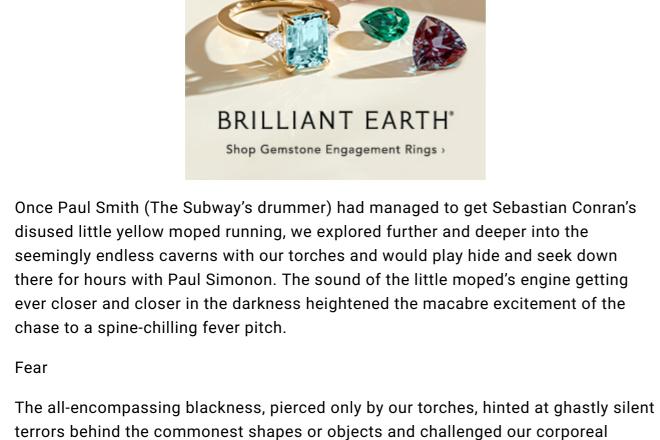
Rehearsals was a place you didn't feel you wanted to hang around any longer than you had to. Though attempts had been made to make it bearable, it was a bleak and

and the damp cold penetrated everything, even in that hot month of August.



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and pit ponies that were used to shunt railway wagons. The tunnels run under the Euston mainline, under the goods depot at Primrose Hill, beneath Gilbey's Bonded Warehouse on the Regent's Canal and under Camden Lock Market. Their route can be discerned by the distinctive cast-iron grilles set at fixed distances into the road surface; originally the only source of light for the poor overworked horses living their wretched lives in the darkness below.

Some sections were demolished during the redevelopment of the area while others belong to Camden Market who dissuade access. The 650 or so railway horses were stabled in Chalk Farm Road (now Stables Market), and a labyrinth of tunnels built from 1865 allowed them to travel underground from their stables to their work in

network of tunnels was used by other heavy horses, such as shire horses of Gilbey's, the wine and liquor company that owned warehouses and goods sheds with access

In our innocence, and unaware of the sinister nightmare that these cold, dank cellars must have borne witness to, we continued amusing ourselves in the tunnels until around the time of the 100 Club Punk Festival, when everything on the burgeoning

Camden Town Goods Yard so they did not have to cross the tracks. The same

senses to the point at which boundaries dissolved. I cannot convey the nightmaresensation of those vast subterranean passages. The inexorable fear of running into

Lovecraft fiction fed into our imaginations and kept us from delving too deep into

Unknown to us, this warren of cold menacing passages and tunnels hadn't known warmth or light for almost 100 years. Back then, they had echoed to the sound of an

The Camden Catacombs, as they have become known today, were once owned by British Railways. They were constructed in the 19th century as stables for horses

something unknown and unpleasant waiting to pounce in the darkness like a

punk rock scene started to get very serious. I remember Joe Strummer came down there a few times but Mick Jones and Terry Chimes never did to my knowledge – mostly it was Paul and us who spent many frenzied hours in the network of pitch-dark caverns deep in the dark recesses behind Rehearsals. Trendy

Just two years later, The Clash would part company with Rhodes and bid goodbye to

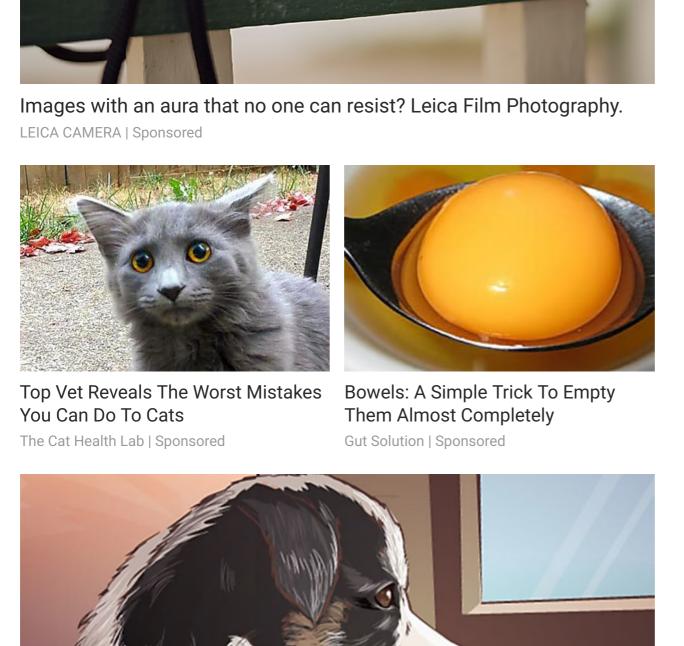
the cold, damp rehearsal rooms (if only for five years). So too would the Subway Sect when Rhodes fired the whole band in autumn 1978 and kept Vic Godard as

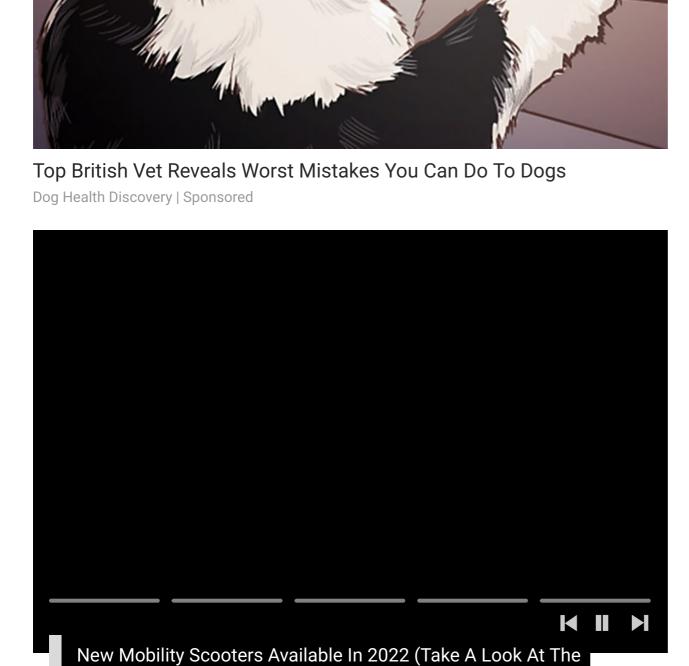
It seems ironic that the Camden Town area has become so trendy with its markets and expensive high street mainly because of the presence of a punk rock band for so short a time when, in fact, the railway yard complex was built more than 100

an eye in the long history of those dark, disused warehouses. And now we too have become part of their past. Read more of Auguste's The Clash memories at www.thebaker77.wordpress.com

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Now, with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that our own temporary and ephemeral use of the warehouse was but a floating, vain appearance - a moment, a twinkling of





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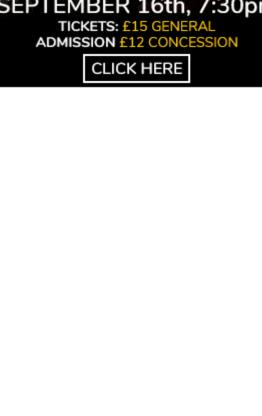












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