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# Rock 'n' roll birthplace saluted



The 2 i's as it was - these days it is a restaurant

**Sir Cliff Richard has unveiled a plaque to mark a tiny basement said to be the birthplace of British rock and roll.**

Fifty years after the "2 i's" coffee bar opened its doors in London's Old Compton Street, some performers and fans returned to see it honoured.

Tommy Steele, the Shadows and Adam Faith were among stars who started out as acts at the 2 i's.

Sir Cliff said it was a great idea to have the plaque "because it's too easy to forget how we got where we are now."

"When I look at the old photographs, I wonder how I ever got started - I was a greasy slob who couldn't sing," he said.

"I wish this restaurant well and I hope people who come and eat here will have a ghostly vibe about what used to go on down below."



Sir Cliff - 'a greasy slob who couldn't sing' - was among stars at the 2 i's

The 2 i's is now the Boulevard Bar and Dining Room and its basement is just a lobby area for the toilets.

But in 1956, audiences crammed into the tiny room to watch acts like Sir Cliff perform.

"You'd never get away with it now, with today's health and safety rules," said Clem Cattini, drummer with The Tornados.

"But it was incredible, fantastic."

The building was awarded a green plaque by Westminster Council.

Councillor Robert Davis said: "In the early days of rock 'n' roll in this country, before The Beatles had even formed, pretty much every act that made it big cut their teeth at the 2 i's.

"It is only fitting that, half a century since it opened its doors, it is commemorated with a plaque so that the thousands of people who walk along Old Compton Street every day know they are passing the place where British rock 'n' roll was born."

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