

CHICK



GROUPIE: Geraldine with her VIP pass



RARE OLD TIME: Music fans on board in the VIP area, enjoying the Rock Bus tour

that young Philip only had 18 shillings – but he played the gig anyway.

It's also nice to be reminded that Ballybough was the home of Luke Kelly.

The tours, which are aimed at both locals and visitors, are a real treat for music-lovers and even bookworms and theatre buffs, as the guide also mentions great writers who inspired Ireland's musicians.

It's not often you hear Jonathan Swift, Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw in the same breath as Bob Geldof and Boyzone. But it's easy to see how the likes of Brendan Behan would have inspired Phil Lynott to sing about Whiskey in the Jar.

It was also fascinating to see where the legends started out – in humble pubs and underground clubs such as The Five on Harcourt Street (where

Van Morrison used to jam with Jimmy Page in the days before Led Zep-

pelin) and the Crystal Ballroom where Paul Brady got his big break.

And anyone who dreams of superstardom should be inspired when they see where Sinead O'Connor used to work – flipping burgers in Temple Bar's Bad Ass Café!

Deaf

But my favourite snip-pet was the one about how Bono got his name.

The Edge, Larry and Adam said Paul Hewson's voice was so loud even the deaf could hear him – so they named him Bonovox after the hearing-aid shop on North Earl Street.

I was also surprised to learn that rock stardom is not a modern phenomenon. Back in the 18th century, the great composer Handel, who was living in Abbey Street, played his

Messiah to a packed Music Hall on Fishamble Street. He convinced Jonathan Swift to let him use the Christchurch choir by offering to give the takings to charity.

Punk also gets a good airing on the tour, with footage of the Boomtown Rats performing as we pass the top of Grattan Street – Bob Geldof wrote 'Rat Trap' in Bewleys.

Rory Gallagher's fenderstratocaster popped up quite a few times – the Corkman has the corner of a street in Temple Bar named after him and gagged all over town. It was touching to hear that he had turned down the chance to join the Rolling Stones because he didn't care about fame. He played his last gig on College Green.

● The bus leaves Westmoreland Street five times daily. It costs €15, lasts an hour and 15 minutes. Book on www.dublinrocktour.ie.

Sunday World, 31st April, 2008