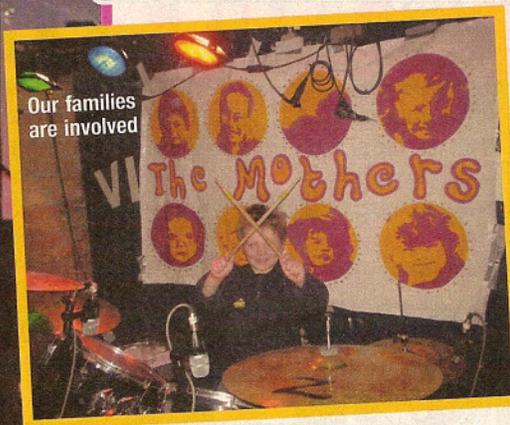


it changed my life

Us playing in New York



Our families are involved



BAND OF MOTHERS

When Sarah, known as Henry, Hinds, 33, became a mum, she didn't join a mother and baby group. Instead she joined something far more radical...

I took my seat among the prams and pushchairs and pulled my daughter Jasmine on to my lap.

'Today we're going to talk about breastfeeding,' the organiser said. I grimaced.

I was at another mother and baby group and this one promised to be as dull as all the others.

Coffee mornings were worse.

I loved being a mum. It was just that sometimes it seemed the only conversations I had these days were about how much our babies weighed and whether they slept through the night.

Then when Jasmine was about 10 months old, a friend of mine called Beth popped round.

'A few of us are thinking of starting a band,' she said. 'Would you be interested in joining us?'

'I'd love to,' I said.

Before Jasmine was born I'd been a part-time singing teacher. And when I was younger I'd learned to play the guitar.

Weeks later we met for our first rehearsal.

There were five of us altogether: me, Beth, Nicci,

Izzy and Claire.

Between us we had eight children and Nicci had another one on the way.

We didn't know each other very well, but before long we were nattering away like old friends.

'I'd rather eat baby food than go to another coffee morning,' Beth said.

'Me too,' the others added.

At last - some like-minded mums, I thought.

I stuffed cotton wool in Jasmine's ears and strapped her to my back.

We started to play. She loved jiggling along to the songs.

We started meeting every week. It wasn't just about the music, the band also

became a support network. Every week we gave each other advice on raising our children. And we listened to each other's worries about everything

from potty training to tantrums.

After a few months we decided we needed a name for our band.

'What about the Milk Pistols?' Beth said.

'How about I'll Be Mother,' said someone else.

In the end we settled on The

Our first gig

was a success

Mothers. It was simple and summed us up perfectly.

We wrote all our own songs, a mixture of punk and pop. They were all about motherhood. There was *Baby Madness*, *Baby-sitter* and even *Wicked Stepmother*.

Then when we'd been together for nine months Beth had an idea.

'Let's do a gig,' she said. 'Do you think we're good enough?' I replied.

We decided to give it a go.

A few weeks later we had our first performance at a pub in Derby called The Vic.

We nervously picked up our microphones and

instruments and the music started.

There was Beth on lead guitar, me on bass, Izzy on drums and Nicci and Claire on vocals.

Our first gig was a success. Afterwards we even recorded a CD. We called it *Ovulation!*

A few months later we heard about a music festival in New York where all the bands were made up of mums.

'I'll send a demo tape,' Nicci said.

I was sure it wouldn't come to anything. But the festival organiser wrote back asking if we'd like to take part.

A few weeks later I left my home on Arthur Street, Derby, and we set off for America.

It was great to meet even more women who loved their kids but didn't want to spend the whole time talking about nappies.

We spent five days in New York and when we came back we were buzzing.

Now we do a gig about once a month.

I thought that when I became a mum I'd have to become sensible. But The Mothers has proved it's still possible to have fun. We want to remind other mums that it's OK to express themselves.

Though if we carry on playing we might have to change our name to The Grandmothers!

● For more information go to www.themothers.co.uk

... and our audience



Our first gig...



Beth, me, Nicci, Claire and Izzy