

Review for some of BOWNESS BAY BLUES @ Bowness on Windermere, Cumbria – April 2019



A breath-taking location to have a blues festival, on the banks of the beautiful Lake Windermere. One couldn't think of anywhere nicer!

Friday

Opening the festival, at the Lake District Boat House were two well-appointed blues men in their own right. **Mat Walklate**, a formidable harmonica player and vocalist and **Alex Haynes** guitarist and soulful vocals. A great opener to a full house, with a great vibe playing as a duo.



Mat Walklate and Alex Haynes

On to the Wheelhouse for local band **Blank Canvas**, playing to a good crowd with a mix of classic and blues rock. They were well received



Blank Canvas (photo Jan Fialkowski)

Following at the Wheelhouse were the 'once seen never forgotten' West Cumbrian band **Five and Dangerous**. As a Thin Lizzy tribute, they certainly knew how to captivate the crowd. With plenty of audience interaction and showmanship from the front man Steve and the rest of the band, they put their hearts and souls into the performance to great effect. Superb musicianship throughout, especially with two first class lead guitarists. Well recommended.



Five and Dangerous (photo Jan Fialkowski)

Closing the first evening were the class **Billy Walton Band**. From the US, Billy and his band rocked the Wheelhouse with a mix of well crafted blues, soul and funk.



Billy Walton Band

Saturday

Kicking off the afternoon in the Boat House were **The Elderly Brothers**, no strangers to Bowness Bay Blues. With a motley mix of tunes and great entertainment they earned the accolade of the audience from the off.



The Elderly Brothers

For some quieter moments we headed for the Quayside Bar for an acoustic set by the young and very talented **Dean Newton**. Playing a variety of well put together songs, some self penned and some covers, of blues, jazz and hints of rock. A great song by gypsy jazz man Django Reinhardt when he played with violinist Stéphane Grappelli. Dean created a live loop and demonstrated what one guy can do with modern technology, superb. He finished off with a killer version acoustic style, of Hendrix's 'Killing Floor', a big Wow!



Dean Newton

Certainly one of my highlights of the festival were **The Mike Ross Band**. Playing in the open at the Lake View Garden Bar, they gave an exceptional performance of swampy blues, southern rock and Americana. Mike's profile continues to rise and those who hadn't seen him and the band before, will certainly be back for more. With a new album on the table 'The Clovis Limit', Mike is certainly heading for bigger and better things.



Mike Ross Band

Sean Webster, no stranger to the festival, was the guest artist aboard the Blues Cruise on Lake Windermere. A versatile artist, Sean can play the best of acoustic blues and today was no exception. Enjoyed by all who were there.



Sean Webster (photo Jan Fialkowski)

Opening the evening session in the Wheelhouse were **Rev Doc & The Flying Squad**. Fronted by Glasgow harmonica player Rev Doc appearing with his Irish band, played some down to earth and gritty 'old school' blues.



Rev Doc & The Flying Squad (photo Jan Fialkowski)

This lovely Scouse lady needs no introduction, after so many years on the circuit, Connie now has her 'Brick' in the Liverpool Cavern wall. The **Connie Lush Band** were the final performers on the Wheelhouse Stage tonight. As always, she provided high class entertainment and superb music, showcasing so many of her wonderful tracks from her many albums of blues and soul.



Connie Lush Band

Sunday

A lovely way to spend a Sunday early afternoon at the Lakeside Garden Bar, listening to the dulcet tones of the talented singer songwriter **Sean Taylor**. Sean has toured widely and is a rising name to be heard on the roots and blues scene. He certainly is an artist with a 'message', his new album *The 'Path Into Blue'* is a testament to that.



Sean Taylor

At the Wheelhouse the amazing band **Catfish** took to the stage. It's always a pleasure to listen to a band that has 'an edge'. With blues based rock as the main influence, there were certainly some powerful moments as the band were showcasing their new album 'Burning Bridges'. The young and incredibly able Matt Long co-fronts the band on superb guitar and vocals, but for me holds the candle. Nobody could deny the impact of the ore inspiring 'Make It Rain' had on the audience, with silence as Matt dropped the sound on his guitar to minimal, just breath taking. One of those 'special' moments and another highlight for me.



Catfish (photo Jan Fialkowski)

Late afternoon in the Wheelhouse listening to the Prestonian band **The Stumble** - doesn't get much better. The last band in the Wheelhouse played the best of Chicago blues and classic rhythm and blues. These well seasoned, high class performers didn't disappoint, another highlight of the festival for me.



The Stumble

We caught part of the **Dean Newton Trio**'s set at The Boat House and were the last band to play at this year's festival. Dean is a talented young singer songwriter and guitar player, supported by some well seasoned musicians on bass and drums. With a mix of blues rock with a hint of jazz, Dean's musical training certainly showed.



Dean Newton Trio (photo Christine Moore)

The finale of the Festival was at the Hole in t'Wall, with acoustic player **L J Darley**, who was a previous member of the NE's Jar Family. Now forging a niche as a solo artist, he played to a small but attentive audience.



L J Darley (photo Christine Moore)

This had been a well run and well supported festival so thanks have to go to Sandra Walling, The Rotary Club and the band of volunteers, who made it all possible. All the money made goes to charity. Roll on next year!

Rosy Greer – Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer