

Review for THE GREAT BRITISH RHYTHM & BLUES FESTIVAL @ Colne, Lancashire. - August 2017

<http://www.bluesfestival.co.uk/>



This was the first year for the new management, but the 28th year of the **Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival** in Colne, Lancashire. With a new format for the festival and a fresh approach there was a feeling of anticipation to whether it would be a success. They needn't have worried, with the bonus of good weather, the crowds rolled into Colne and with the trail having more venues than ever and numerous Busker stations, there was a carnival atmosphere throughout the town.

The three main stages at the Muni, Hippodrome Theatre and The Little Theatre (Acoustic Stage) were well attended, even though there had been some issues over the ticketing set up.

Friday

The first band for us were '**Tom Attah & The Bad Man Clan**' at the Hippodrome. Tom, from Leeds, is a well thought of academic and musician and describes himself as half man, half blues machine. Guesting with his band was harmonica guru Mat Walklate. They gave us some excellent earthy rhythm and blues at its best.



Tom Attah & The Bad Man Clan <http://www.tomattah.com/>

On to the Muni for **'The Revelator Band'** from Halifax. An off the wall five piece outfit which had shades of Bonzo Dog meets the blues. Fronted by Barnaby 'Doc' Neale on vocals and harmonica provided superb entertainment value, even with a broken leg.



The Revelator Band <http://www.revelatorband.com/>

Next on stage were the **'Stevie Nimmo Trio'**, always a crowd pleaser and tonight was no exception. With a superb style of guitar and vocals, Stevie has an air of professionalism along with his band. Some classic blues rock along with country blues and Americana, also providing an epic guitar drenched ballad.



Stevie Nimmo Trio <http://www.stevienimmo.com/>

'Joanne Shaw-Taylor' followed with her own individual take on blues rock. It's sometimes hard work to carry off lead guitar and vocals in this male dominated role, but she did in style. From Birmingham UK, she now lives in Detroit USA and is regarded as one of the top UK artists in the blues rock world.



Joanne Shaw-Taylor <https://www.joanneshawtaylor.com/>

We headed for the Hippodrome to catch headliner '**Ian Siegal**' and his excellent band. Mr Siegal was on top form with great country blues. He played an outstanding set and was also joined on stage by harmonica master Giles King, a wonderful treat for the audience.



Ian Siegal <https://iansiegal.com/>

Back at the Muni, Paddy Maguire's Midnight Jam Session - an ever popular activity - closed the first night of the festivities.

Saturday

As there was so much going on it was difficult to catch all the acts on offer. In the Muni the first of the Jessica Foxley Unsigned (JSU) acts took the stage. '**The Tom Walker Trio**' from Birmingham

showed just how much young talent there is out there. Singer songwriter Tom, at only twenty two, has certainly one of the best bands on the circuit, playing his mix of blues, rock and funk. Tom leads on amazingly mature vocals and superb guitar. He was well supported by Deano Bass on bass and Jimmy Simpson on drums. Many of the tracks played were taken from the current EP 'Into Space'. Certainly a band to watch out for.



The Tom Walker Trio <https://www.tomwalkerofficial.com/>

The second JFU band were 'The Jennifer Ewan Band' from Scotland. Described as acoustic pop with a Cajun influence, they were well put together for what they do, fronted by vocalist guitarist Jennifer Ewan



The Jennifer Ewan Band <http://www.jenniferewan.com/>

Rushing up to the Hippodrome, but with a change in the order, I sadly missed the '**Matt Edwards Band**', rising stars from the Oxford area. On stage at this time was another JFU act, seventeen year old '**Tom McCartney**' from Nottingham, with his own flavour of county blues with a dash of rock 'n roll.



Tom McCartney <https://www.facebook.com/tommccartneymusic/>

There was plenty of good music happening on the acoustic stage with Manchester based '**Mat Walklate & Paolo Fuschi**' and the lovely Burnley lass '**Lucy Zirins & Company**' who now lives in London.

Staying at the Hippodrome we had the full on performance from '**The Paddy Maguire Band**' featuring Jenna Hooson. Fantastic earthy blues rock, they had the audience jumping and with a voice like Jenna's it certainly was a memorable set.



The Paddy Maguire Band <http://www.paddymaguire.com/>

Sadly we missed 'Miles Gilerdale', 'Northsyde' and an evening with the blues divas of 'Kaz Hawkins', 'Jo Harman' and 'Janiva Magness', which were, from all accounts, a resounding success.

Sunday

At the Muni the wonderful Bristol based 'Elles Bailey' and band, kick-started the afternoon. A young lady with a big future ahead of her, gave a superb performance. Showcasing her debut album 'Wildfire' she certainly made a statement with vocals straight from the heart. Playing a mix of material ranging from Americana to traditional blues, interlaced with raw rocky numbers her amazing voice is made for the blues. She describes her music as 'rootsy blues, country and soulful rock' and along with vocals she also plays keys, ably supported with superb slide guitar from the lead guitarist and from the rest of the band.



Elles Bailey <https://www.ellesbailey.com/>

Next on at the Muni was the lovely 'Lisa Mills' all the way from Mississippi. A brilliant solo set showcasing her album 'Mama's Juke Book'. It is always a treat to see Lisa, she has a great rapport with the audience and plays and sings from the heart with blues, country gospel a soul influences.



Lisa Mills <http://lisamills.com/>

Off to the Hippodrome to catch **'Will Wilde'** and his band for a harmonica driven experience. A wonderful performance culminating in a fantastic take of 'On The Road Again'.



Will Wilde <https://www.willharmonicawilde.com/>

Next on, were the band **'Walrus'** featuring Rosco Levee and Mike Ross, with a great mix of blues and blues rock.



Walrus <https://www.facebook.com/pg/walrusbanduk/community/>

Back at the Muni a treat to see the young **'Alex McKown Band'**, now as a six piece with the addition of brass and keys. What a fantastic sound, giving a whole new dimension to twenty one year old Alex's band, playing a fabulous mix of classic blues and blues rock. Superb.



Alex McKown Band <http://www.alexmkown.com/>

Closing the afternoon session at the Muni was the wonderful **'Tim Aves & Wolfpack'**, with their good time rhythm and blues and plenty of Howlin' Wolf and B B King. Tim Aves fronts the band on vocals and guitar, Joel Fisk on lead guitar and slide, Rob'Tank' Barry on bass and Paul Lester on drums. The whole ensemble gave us good down to earth old school R&B which was enjoyed by all.



Tim Aves & Wolfpack <http://www.timwolfpack.moonfruit.com/>

A break from the music for a history talk and visuals from blues historian Alan White at the Town Hall made an interesting interlude.

Back at the Muni for the evening session, the hard working one man extravaganza **'Gwyn Ashton'** hit the boards. A Welsh born Australian who now lives in the UK is certainly a 'once seen never forgotten' with his individual stance on psychedelic blues and variety of guitars for his one man band. Showcasing his interesting album 'Solo Elektro', with a throw-back to the 70's, you certainly wondered how one man could really produce the sound of a full band.



Gwyn Ashton <http://www.gwynashton.com/>

At the Hippodrome '**Clay Sherburn**' from the US was playing some exceptional country blues rock. With a special guest on keys Dan Burnett, who had been playing his own solo sets at Carlo's Roadhouse during the weekend. A great sound.



Clay Sherburn <http://www.clayshelburn.com/>

Back at the Muni a raft of high energy swampy slide driven blues rock, in the form of the '**John Fairhurst Band**'. Hailing from Wigan, John fronts the band with his definitive gravel tones, certainly a crowd pleaser, especially when the shirts came off!



John Fairhurst Band <http://www.johnfairhurst.com/>

The final band of the festival were the iconic '**Ten Years After**', now boasting front man Marcus Bonfanti on guitar and vocals. A brilliant set moving away from the classic material to a new fresh approach. They are certainly a band to raise the roof and what a great end to this excellent new look festival.



Ten Years After <http://ten-years-after.co.uk/>

The Paddy Maguire's Midnight Jam rounded the whole weekend off brilliantly. Thanks must be given for all the hard work of the people behind the scenes, from Jason Elliot and Paddy Maguire who were at the forefront of the new style festival to the Town Council who bravely stepped in to host the event. Big thanks go to the many volunteers who kept the wheels of the festival oiled and to all the bands who performed on the main stages and throughout the town in the Roadhouses. We are looking forward to a welcome return next year of the festival in 2018.

Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer

<http://www.facebook.com/lancsbluesarchive>

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