

British Blues Awards @ Newark Blues Festival 2012



The British Blues Awards are held annually and have, over the past 3 years, been hosted by [Newark Blues Festival](#). This was my first visit to this prestigious festival and as a member of the [British Blues Archive](#) it was a great opportunity to be part of the festivities.

The main festival event took place on Saturday 8th September in the fantastic location within the Castle grounds. The weather surpassed its self which added to the success of the day and evening.



In the afternoon - 'Blues - The next generation' - gave us rising young stars - [The Alex McKown Band](#), Vanquish Blues Band and Platform 58

The 'Acoustic & Traditional' - Showed off the talents of [Derrin Nauendorf](#) and [Clare Free](#)

For the evening, and the only ticketed event for the festival, 'Blues at the Castle' - kicked off with The [Unusual Suspects](#), followed by [Cherry Lee Mewis](#) and her Band. The [August James Blues Festival Jam Band](#) did the 'filler' between the main acts on the band stand....and they were very good! Next up were [24 Pesos](#) and the evening finished off with the amazing [Nimmo Brothers](#).

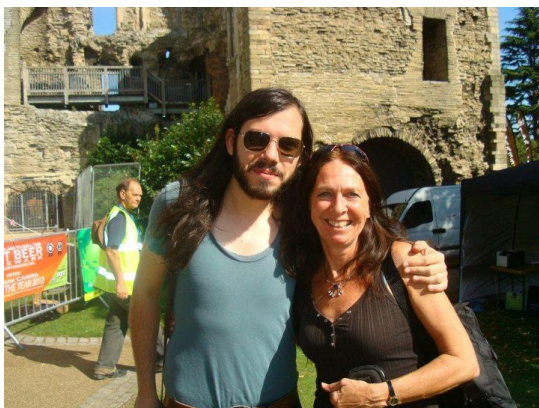
On Sunday 9th September was the turn and return of [The British Blues Awards](#). There were some fantastic nominations in a host of categories and the presentation of the awards were interspersed by some fantastic music.

The afternoon was kick started by a young man from Shrewsbury, who we will be hearing a lot about in the near future I'm sure, ['Blues Boy Dan'](#). Dan Owen played a magic set and for such a young man he has a voice that could be confused with that of the 'old' blues men. Great acoustic guitar playing too



'Blues Boy' Dan Owen

First to receive his award was [Marcus Bonfanti](#). A well deserved accolade to his writing talents, he received 'The Kevin Thorpe Memorial Reward - Song Writer of the Year' for his song 'Bittersweet'. I've seen Marcus play many times and most of his set list is self penned. An extremely talented young man. He was also runner up in the 'British Acoustic Act' and 'British Male Vocalist', so a big 'well done!!!



Marcus Bonfanti

The afternoon continued with more music from [Del Bromham](#). He gave great solo guitar set. Del also received the 'British Blues Greats Award' for his work with Stray over the past 45 years.



Del Bromham and [Tony McPhee](#) who also received the 'British Blues Greats Award'

[Bex Marshall](#) was an added extra to the event. She gave a great solo set.



Bex Marshall

The Award for the 'British Young Artist' was a 'hot' talking point. It went to [Oli Brown](#), who was also runner up in the 'British Blues Guitarist'. Lancashire lass [Lucy Zirins](#) was runner up, which I'm really pleased about such a hard working young lady.



Lucy Zirins

The band [Hokie Joint](#) were nominated for a raft of awards, their drummer, Stephen Cutmore, took 'British Drummer', Giles King was runner up for 'British Harmonica Player' and Fergie Fulton was runner up for 'British Bass Player'. A great band, a definite on my list of 'must see'!



Stephen 'Cupsey' Cutmore



Fergie Fulton and Paddy Maguire

The 'British Blues Festival' award went to [Hebden Bridge Blues Festival](#) which was a popular choice. Only in its second year, it has made a significant entry onto the festival field and planning has already begun for 2013. I call it the 'personal' festival, as the organizers Paddy Maguire and Jason Elliot are the 'face' of the festival.... If you don't know them when you get there, you certainly will by the end! I was so pleased for the guys and the 'helpers' as there was so much work done to put it all together. So let's give them good luck with the next one....and hope it doesn't rain!



Paddy Maguire and Jason Elliot for Hebden Bridge Blues Festival

[Babajack](#), one of my favourite acoustic bands, performed a brilliant set. Something a bit different from the usual acoustic blues band with a mix of their own material and roots blues. Winebox slide guitar and homemade cajon (drum box), makes for a refreshing change and the band were worthy runners up for the 'British Acoustic Act' award. Becky Tate, who plays a variety of percussion instruments, took the prestigious award of 'British Instrumentalist' a well deserved reflection of her talents. A great band with an individual sound.



Babajack



Trevor Steger and Becky Tate of Babajack with Tony Winfield of the British Blues Awards team.

A very talented young lady took the award for 'British Female Vocalist'....[Chantel McGregor](#), a well deserved choice.

[Ian Siegal](#) was crowned the 'British Male Vocalist' and 'British Acoustic Act'. He was also runner up for the 'British Blues Band' and 'British Blues Album'.

[King King](#) were 'British Blues Band' and 'British Blues Album', with Alan Nimmo of King King, runner up for 'British Blues Guitarist'

[Paul Jones](#) was yet again 'British Harmonica Player'. [Matt Schofield](#) was 'British Blues Guitarist' and Andy Graham 'British Bass Player'

The 'Independent Blues Broadcaster' was Gary Grainger and the 'Overseas Artist' was [Joe Bonamassa](#).

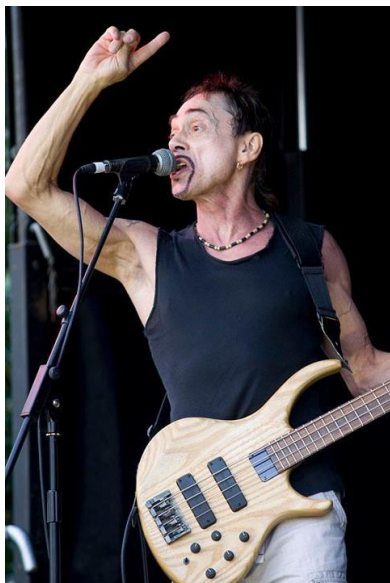
[Paddy Milner](#) took the 'British Keyboard Player'. He and [Marcus Bonfanti](#) joined forces on the stage with the [Paddy Maguire Band](#) for an excellent couple of numbers. Total 'class' players!



The Paddy Maguire Band with Paddy Milner and Marcus Bonfanti

[The Paddy Maguire Band](#) did a 'rockin' set with several invited guests. Paddy, renowned for his 'jam' sessions, knew how to get the crowd on their feet!!!

The final act of the afternoon were surprise guests ex Rolling Stone, [Mick Taylor](#) and ex Free, [Andy Fraser](#) who also gained the 'British Blues Greats' award. Andy is a songwriter and bass guitarist and was one of the founding members of Free over 40 years ago, at the age of 15! He wrote or co-wrote most of Free's hit songs. Prior to joining Free he had been playing with John Mayalls Bluesbreakers. They did a relatively short set but played some 'classic' numbers from the past. A great way to end a wonderful day.



Andy Fraser



Mick Taylor

It was a wonderful weekend and of course the weather was just perfect. Saturday was a great day, full of festival spirit, glorious surroundings and a sunset to die for. The bands that played were excellent too. Sunday, for me, was a magic experience. So many of the nominees for the British

Blues Awards were there, milling with the crowds in an atmosphere not unlike a garden party. It was so nice to catch up with so many people in one place.

So well done to all the bands and artists who gained such prestigious awards and well done to all those artists who were nominated. Thanks to all the bands and artists that played over the weekend to make it such a success and to the organisers. It proves that British Blues is alive and well and let's hope this will continue. I will look forward to another great weekend next year in Newark.

Rosy Greer - [Lancashire Blues Archive](#)

