

Review for some of THE GREAT BRITISH ROCK & BLUES FESTIVAL 2017
 @ Butlins, Skegness, Lincolnshire - 20th -22nd January
 Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive



Arriving at the Butlins complex with plenty of time to spare, it was a pleasure to find we'd been upgraded. After settling in we headed to the main arena to sample some of the acts on this year's Introducing Stage.

Friday

The first act of the festival, on the Introducing Stage, were the **GT Boos Band** from Scotland. Fronting the band on lead vocals was Greig Taylor, with John Boos on lead guitar, David Atkinson on bass guitar and Allan Huntly on drums. They kicked off with a great rocky opener and pleased the crowd with plenty raunchy and standard blues with excellent vocals. They performed a wonderful take of the Duster Bennett's slow blues 'Jumping At Shadows', the only cover in the set, but played in their individual style. Some solid playing with a great blues shuffle from their new album, finishing off the set with a beautiful slow blues. An excellent performance and a great start to the festival.



GT's Boos Band <http://www.gtsboosband.co.uk/>

Next to the Introducing Stage were the **Tom Walker Trio**. Hailing from the Birmingham area, Tom Walker fronts the band on vocals and guitar and is ably supported by Deano Bass on bass guitar with new boy Nathan Anderson-Barr on drums. An excellent funky start with 'Black Cat Bone' then onto a bit of heavy rock, Bonamassa style, executed brilliantly. With a mix of self penned and covers of blues, funk, rock and shades of Americana, they gave an excellent all round performance. Tom has a superb voice and the maturity of his guitar playing is well beyond his 21 years. They went on to win a place on the main stage for 2018 and deservedly so.



Tom Walker Trio <http://www.tomwalkerofficial.com/>

An interesting band next on the Introducing Stage, The **Leeds City Stompers**, playing a mix of vintage blues, ragtime and swing, steeped in the 1920's to the 1950's. With a mix of interchangeable instruments of guitar, double bass and drums, also sharing lead vocals, the band are Christopher Fox, Martyn Roper and Jack Amblin. An acquired taste for me, but very good at what they do and went down very well with the crowd.



Leeds City Stompers <http://www.leedscitystompers.com/>

A solid six piece blues band in the form of **Backwater Roll** next. Harmonica infused with a Chicago influence they gave a great classic blues performance.



Backwater Roll www.facebook.com/Backwater-Roll-Blues-Band

Later we paid a visit to the excellent Blues Matters Stage of JAKS and briefly caught **Fran McGillivray Band**, before heading to the Centre Stage for Eric Sardinas.

With slide driven blues rock, **Eric Sardinas** strutted his stuff with his resonator guitar giving a 'rock star' presence with his long plaited hair and top hat. Supported by bass and drums he gave a wild performance, but perhaps not as dynamic as expected.



Eric Sardinas <http://www.eric Sardinas.co.uk/>

Back to JAKs for the end of Husky Tones with what they call punk blues, delivered by female drummer and vocalist Victoria Bourne and guitarist Chris Harper. As tiredness crept in, along with the cider, we headed back to the chalet, missing the fantastic jump jive performance that we have seen many times before, by the Revolutionaires. Hailing from the Northeast they played to a totally packed house and enthusiastic crowd in JAKS until the early hours.

Saturday

A 12.30 start for the rockin' **The Texas Flood** from Wales, on the Centre Stage. They earned their place from last year's Introducing Stage to perform on the main stage this year. With Tom Sawyer on guitar and vocals, Ben Govier on bass and Tom Williams on drums playing pure hard rock. They certainly owned the stage with great power and image. An excellent start to the day.



The Texas Flood <https://www.facebook.com/TheTexasFlood/>

We headed to JAKS to catch the infamous 'jam'. On stage while we were there was the talented **Jack Hutchinson** from London. Singer songwriter and guitarist Jack played some excellent blues with great banter with the audience. Also on stage was ace harmonica player **Nick Garner**. It was busy for the jam and a great atmosphere for the afternoon.



Jack Hutchinson jackjhutchinsonmusic.com/ and Nick Garner twitter.com/nickbbgarner

The first act on the Introducing Stage today were **The Alligators**. They were a proficient three piece band from Yorkshire, playing a mix of Americana, R&B and Southern rock. A good sound with slide guitar.



The Alligators

An excellent performance from singer, songwriter and guitarist **Matt Edwards** and his band, playing on the Introducing Stage. Matt has certainly been finding his feet in the last couple of years and as a three piece, the band gave a well put together sound with blues rock overtones. Some powerful material was played and he is in the throws of getting his third album recorded, which I shall look forward to hearing.



Matt Edwards Band <http://www.mattedwardsmusic.com/>

Following was a smooth five piece blues rock band, **Southbound**. Plenty of slide with a Southern rock feel. A good all round sound with some standard blues numbers and great audience interaction.



Southbound <https://www.reverbnation.com/southbound9>

Just vocals and guitar for the next set on the Introducing Stage, with **Amy Eftekhari**. She has a great voice, but a hard job for the guitar.



Amy Eftekhari <http://www.amyeftekhari.com/>

The final band tonight on the Introducing Stage was a big band outfit, **Bourbon Street Revival**. An eight piece with a full on brass section.



Bourbon Street Revival <http://www.bourbonstreetrevival.com/>

Heading to JAKS we were totally blown away with the Sussex based band **Catfish**. They are certainly a cut above the average blues band, giving us Hammond drenched blues and epic guitar solo's. Award winning Paul Long fronts the band on keys and vocals, with the young and talented Matt Long on guitar and vocals, ably supported by Dusty Bones on bass and Kevin Yates on drums. Both Paul and Matt have great voices and the set was certainly one of the highlights of the festival.



Catfish <http://www.catfishbluesband.co.uk/>

Staying in JAKS we sampled the New Orleans flavoured band, **Don Pipkin & The Iko's**. From London this five piece played mix of piano led New Orleans boogie with a dash of rockabilly and Cajon, with plenty of brass. <http://www.dompipkin.co.uk/>

The last band on in JAKS were the wonderful **LaVendore Rogue**. True to form they gave a blasting performance at this late night extravaganza. They are undoubtedly one of the most original and exciting bands on the circuit today, with their own take of alternative blues inspired Americana - but you really can't put these guys in any 'box' as their music is 'LaVendore Rogue' and speaks for its self. The flamboyant JoJo Burgess fronts the band, with fantastic vocals, aided by Joel Fisk who also plays some 'mean' guitar - electric and slide. Stephen 'Cupsey' Cutmore continues to keep the rhythm in check on drums and percussion, along with the cool Rob 'Tank' Barry on bass and Warren Lynn on keys. I suspect it will be an evening to remember for many.



LaVendore Rogue <http://lavendorerogue.com/>

Sunday

On the Centre Stage, the day began with the excellent **Rainbreakers** from Shrewsbury, who earned their place with votes from last year's Introducing Stage. They gave a powerful opener at this early afternoon session. With a mix of well put together blues rock and funk, they performed some of the numbers from their exciting forthcoming EP, 'Rise Up'. Great vocals and guitar from front man Ben Edwards, with Charlie on excellent lead guitar, Peter on bass and Sam on drums. They also performed poignant ballads that showed the true versatility of the band, there is certainly nothing average about these guys!



Rainbreakers <http://www.therainbreakers.com/>

Continuing on the Centre Stage, was the amazing charismatic performer **Popa Chubby**. From the USA, this three piece, with Popa Chubby at the forefront on resonator slide guitar and vocals, played a blistering set with classic blues shuffles and rhythm and blues with slide guitar at its best.



Popa Chubby <https://www.popachubby.com/>

The first act on the Introducing Stage for the afternoon were the **Zoe Green Band** from the Midlands. As a five piece, Zoe gave raw, raunchy vocals supported by her able band playing a mix of blues, rock and funk.



Zoe Green Band <https://www.facebook.com/zoegreenband/>

The Lol Goodman Band as a six piece band were next up on the Introducing Stage. From Manchester, they played classic electric blues with a good all round big sound.



Lol Goodman Band <http://www.lolgoodmanband.com/>

We sadly missed **The Wang Dang Doodle** and **Greg Coulson** on the Introducing Stage, but caught the last act, the amazing **Elles Bailey** and band. From Bristol, Elles certainly had the ownership of the stage and what a voice this young lady has. Playing a mix blues and rock which was raw and earthy, the well put together band also played some great slide guitar. Elles played keys on some of the numbers and has a single soon to be released, 'Wildfire'. A superb set from a promising star.



Elles Bailey Band <http://www.ellesbailey.com/>

Deciding to take a rain check from the Centre Stage, which was full to bursting as the Laurence Jones Band took to the stage, we headed to JAKS for the treat of **Ash Wilson and Friends**. What a fantastic set of blues, showcasing his new album 'Broken Machine' and more - his band tonight was an all star cast with Wayne Proctor(King King) on drums, Bob Fridzema(King King) on keys and Roger Inness(ex Laurence Jones) on bass with Ash Wilson on guitar and vocals. An outstanding performance and another highlight of the festival.



Ash Wilson and Friends <http://www.ashwilsonmusic.com/>

We headed back to the Centre Stage to catch **Joanne Taylor Shaw**. The place was packed and it was difficult to see, but from what we heard the lady certainly has an edge with her guitar and vocals giving us raw rock.



Joanne Taylor Shaw <http://www.joanneshawtaylor.com/>

We headed to the REDS Stage to catch **The Blues Band**. They do what they do in their usual professional fashion, with plenty of great old school blues and some super harmonica playing from Paul Jones. Always a relaxed and easy listen performance.



The Blues Band <http://www.thebluesband.net/>

The final band for us were **Jamie Williams & The Roots Collective**. A six piece harmonica driven country blues band and a great end to what had been a superb festival. Roll on next year!



Jamie Williams & The Roots Collective <http://www.jwroots.co.uk/>

Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer
<http://www.facebook.com/lancsbluesarchive>