

Review for MARYPORT BLUES FESTIVAL @ Maryport, Cumbria. - 24th -26th July 2015
<http://www.maryportblues.co.uk/> Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive



A welcome return to one of my favourite festivals in the north of England. With a great line up in the main marquee and plenty more to entertain the revellers on the trail, Maryport pulled out the stops, yet again!

With a comprehensive outside stage, giving a wide range of alternative music and packed trail venues, the whole 'Maryport' experience was complete. I stayed within the main marquee for most of the festival, with plenty of good music on the table.

Friday

Kicking off the festival on the main stage in the marquee, was '**Lenny 'Fuzzy' Rankins**'. From the USA, Lenny and his band played a great mix of soul, blues and funk. <http://fuzzyrankinsblues.com/>



Lenny 'Fuzzy' Rankins

Following was a band that is growing in stature day by day, 'Rhythm Zoo' hailing from Shrewsbury, Yorkshire and the Northeast. Fronting the band on sexy vocals was the lovely Andi Hall, ably supported by the impressive Phil Dean on amazing lead guitar and vocals, Pete Rea on rhythm guitar, with Pete Betts on bass and Dermot Hall on drums. They played a mix of classic blues from Etta James to Muddy Waters, some funky and rocky numbers and self penned works that will appear on their forth coming album 'Tempest Sky'. A great set from a superb band.

<http://www.rhythm-zoo.com/>



Rhythm Zoo

A treat next with 'The Brew', a full on three piece meaty rock band, with superb guitar playing. From the Northeast they are Jason Barwick on excellent guitar and vocals, Kurtis Smith on hard hitting drums and Tim Smith on pounding bass and vocals. A rockin' set with an amazing drum solo from Kurt, towards the end, (even though he'd just recovered from a dislocated shoulder!). Watch out for these guys! <http://www.the-brew.net/>



The Brew

The final act for the Friday evening and no stranger to Maryport, the lovely singer songwriter 'Sandi Thom', which was a treat for all. Although living in the US at present, her roots are firmly in Scotland. Sandi, on vocals, guitar and harmonica, was ably supported on this tour by Calum Ingram on cello, Mike Smith on keys and Scott Cowie on percussion. She played a beautiful collection of self penned songs with superb voice and guitar style, also playing the harmonica. She also played some classics from Buffy St Marie along the way, with a mix of soft rock, folk and blues. A great way to end the first evening of the festival. <http://www.sandithom.com/>



Sandi Thom

Saturday

The opening act for the Saturday on the main stage, were 'Weathered Rock', from Cumbria, who moved away from 'the blues', giving us some excellent a classic rock.



Weathered Rock

We took a brief wander into town to sample a couple of Lancashire based acts on the trail. First at the Labour Club were 'J-Bear & The Giants' from Burnley, playing a mix of funky blues covers and self penned work. Then onto the Golden Lion to catch solo man, 'Ged Wilson' from Manchester, playing class acoustic blues with harmonica, giving us self penned work from his current CD.

Back on the main stage, the excellent Scottish based Brian Rawson Band. With great vocals from the female lead, Tamira Herrenburgh from Amsterdam, Brian Rawson on guitar and vocals, Jim Carr on bass and Calum Wilson on drums, this four piece played a mix of Southern rock and blues rock with covers and self penned works. <http://www.brianrawsonband.com/>



Brian Rawson Band

A big band sound to follow with the Laura Holland Band from London. The seven piece band fronted on vocals by Laura Holland - with Nick Sharples on guitar, Tris Llewellyn on keys, Jules Kleiser on bass, Gerard Atkins on trumpet, Chris Whiter on sax and Stuart Brown on drums - had a great sound and Laura has a fantastic voice. With a mix of classic blues, funky blues and some foot tapping rock 'n' roll, all made for a great set. <http://www.laurahollandband.co.uk/>



Laura Holland Band

One of my favourite bands on the circuit today, 'Brothers Groove' were on the main stage next. Running a bit late after being stuck in traffic, they played a shorter set, but what a set! On guitar and vocals, Shaun Hill, who is in a guitar class of his own with vocals sung with true passion, especially on 'Another Girl'. Nige Mellor also on lead guitar and vocals brings a great dimension to the band especially on the funky 'Black Cat Bone', with Deano Bass adding the 'groove' on bass and keeping tight rhythms with Jim Simpson on drums. Opening with 'Cissy Strut', they continued with their individual blues funk sound with self penned tracks from their amazing album 'Play The Game' plus a couple of covers, Brothers Groove style. The guys have been nominated for 'Blues Band of the Year' and Deano for 'Bass Player of the Year, in the British Blues Awards this year, and deservedly so, it was a brilliant set from a superb band. <https://www.facebook.com/brothersgroovepage>



Brothers Groove

A touch of classic blues rock with the three piece 'Vargus Blues Band' from Spain, giving us some Latin Blues, with influences from Santana in evidence. With some covers and some excellent slide guitar, it was a good performance and was quite refreshing to hear a drummer on vocals. <http://www.vargasblues.com/>



Vargus Blues Band

The final act of the evening really needed no introduction - 'Lulu' !! There had been reservations as to how appropriate she was for a blues festival, but as the marquee filled up it was obvious she was a popular choice. (Still the debate goes on whether the crowd were there for the 'blues' or just Lulu!) She did all the crowd pleasing stuff such as 'Shout' and gave a well put together varied set. She does have an excellent voice and her backing band were superb. A good end to a great day of music.

<http://www.luluofficial.com/>



Lulu (photo courtesy of Jan Fialkowski)

Sunday

First up on stage on Sunday afternoon were 'The Motives' feat Matt Taylor. A great performance from a well put together, tight, blues rock band. They did a great version of the Cream classic 'Politician', with superb keyboard/piano solo, guitar solo and a strong base line. With a mix of self penned works from their album and some popular covers plus some interesting rhythm changes in the tracks, it made for good listening. <http://the-motives.com/>



The Motives - feat Matt Taylor

Great to see 'Rosco Levi & The Southern Slide' again. With a great mix of rockin' blues, funk and country blues interspersed with slide guitar by Rosco Levi, taken from the current and previous albums. Also a great new song was aired, 'Woman I Told You So', a heavier rock number with a powerful back beat. Nominated for Keyboard Player of the Year in this year's British Blues Awards, Stevie Watts opened an excellent funky number with full on Hammond, superb. A great set from an exceptional band. <http://roscolevee.com/>



Rosco Levi & The Southern Slide

Next up, a lady with presence. 'Kaz Hawkins & Her Band O' Men' from Northern Ireland, opened with a raunchy blues number, setting the scene for the whole set. Kaz Hawkins - nominated as 'Emerging Artist' in the British Blues Awards - fronts the band on amazing vocals, guitar and percussion, with Nick McCokey on guitar, Michael McKinney on bass and Pete Uhrin on drums. They performed a great take of the Nina Simone 'Feeling Good' and a rockin' version of the Etta James classic 'I Want To Make Love To You' finishing a brilliant set with a rockabilly number. The band have great stage charisma which works well on a big stage. <http://kazhawkins.com/>



Kaz Hawkins & Her Band O' Men

The final band on the main stage of this great festival were 'The Boom Band'. Bordering on a super group the Boom Band are, on guitars and vocals, Marcus Bonfanti, Jon Amor, Matt Taylor and Mark Butcher. Member Paddy Milner was unable to be there on keys, so depts on keys, bass and drums. Playing a mix of blues, Southern rock and country they worked their magic, alternating leads. A brilliant Lightnin' Slim number with Jon Amor on vocals gave us a raw and rockin' 12 bar. Marcus Bonfanti took the lead on his own tune 'When You Come Home' on acoustic guitar and vocals, a number with a country feel and ably aided by the Boom Band choir! Towards the end of the set the band played an outstanding take of the Blind Faiths classic 'Can't Find My Way Home'. The band have been nominated for 'Blues Band of the Year' in the British Blues Awards and deservedly so.
<http://www.theboomband.co.uk/>



The Boom Band

Thanks go to Debra Park for putting the festival together with the help of Ian Lambert and the band of volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout the festival to make this an event to be remembered!

Rosy Greer -Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer
www.facebook.com/lancsbluesarchive