

Review for some of the BOWNESS BAY BLUES @ Bowness on Windermere, Cumbria  
7th-9th April 2017 - <http://www.bownessbayblues.co.uk/> - Rosy Greer- Lancashire Blues Archive.



Glorious weather greeted us at this fabulous location of Bowness on Windermere in the Lake District, Cumbria. This was the 6th edition of **The Bowness Bay Blues Festival**, held at venues throughout the town.

#### Friday

Much had been going on throughout Friday afternoon, but our first port of call was the Wheelhouse to watch the Preston based band **The Stumble**. It's always a treat to see this band of superb musicians and they certainly didn't disappoint. As Lancashire's finest blues men, the six piece Chicago style rhythm & blues band, never gave less than one hundred per cent in an excellent performance. Fronting the band was Paul Melville on amazing charismatic vocals, Colin Black on excellent and technically brilliant guitar and slide, Ant Scapens on rhythm guitar, Simon Anthony Dixon on super sax, Cameron Sweetnam on bass and songwriter Boyd Tonner on drums and vocals. With a mix of old and new material they received wonderful support from the packed audience.



The Stumble <http://www.thestumble.com/> photo Jan Fialkowski

**Geoff Achison and the UK Soul Diggers** were next to grace the stage at the Wheelhouse. From Australia, Geoff is an award-winning artist known for his energetic live performances and unique guitar mastery. Joined by his UK band they played an excellent set with a mix of blues with jazz overtones closing an excellent first evening of the festival.



Geoff Achison <https://www.geoffachison.com/> photo by Sam Tilders

#### **Saturday**

Young and talented **Benjamin Bassford** played a classic acoustic blues solo spot at the Beresford. Ben has grown in confidence over the past couple of years and at such a young age he is the gem for the youth of blues roots. With superb acoustic and resonator guitars and poignant vocals, I'm sure we will see a lot more of this talented young artist in the future.



Benjamin Bassford <https://www.benjaminbassford.com/>

**The Robin Bibi Band**, took command at the Lake District Boat Club (LDBC) with great classic blues rock. The charismatic performer knew how to entertain, wandering through the audience and playing up on the tables. He has played with many of the greats over the years, with an air of professionalism that set him apart. Playing a great selection of numbers including some from the new album '**No More A Secret**'.



Robin Bibi Band <http://www.robinbibiband.co.uk/> photo by Jan Fialkowski

The next band at the LDBC were Sussex based **Catfish**. A cut above the average blues band, they gave us Hammond drenched blues and epic guitar solos. 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 five string bass and Kevin Yates on drums. Paul and Matt have great voices and both took the lead on vocals playing a number of tracks from their new album '**Broken Man**' along with some blues classics.



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

The final band in the LDBC were the wonderful **Rainbreakers**. From Shrewsbury this young band are raising their game. They played an excellent set with a mix of well put together blues rock and funk, with some of the numbers from their exciting new album, '**Rise Up**'. Great vocals and guitar from front man Ben Edwards, with Charlie Richards on excellent lead guitar, Peter Adams on bass and Sam Edwards on drums. They also performed meaningful ballads that showed the true versatility of the band and a brilliant version of 'Bright Lights' with an epic guitar solo. They are certainly a band to watch out for.



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

Moving to the Wheelhouse it was the turn of **The Troy Redfern Band**. With high energy rocky blues and raw slide drenched solos it certainly livened up the evening. From Herefordshire, Troy Redfern fronts the band on vocals, lively guitar and slide guitar, with driving bass player Stjohn Milinzcuk and Alex Bridge on pounding drums. With a mix of their own material including numbers from the new album '**Dirt Blues Ritual**' and some classic covers they performed an exciting and full on lively set.



Troy Redfern Band <http://troyredfern.com/> photo by Jan Fialkowski

Always a favourite and tonight was no exception, **LaVendore Rogue** hit the boards at the Wheelhouse. True to form they gave a blasting performance to a packed house with a mix of old and new material. They are undoubtedly one of the most original and exciting bands on the circuit today, with their own take of alternative blues inspired Americana, which is really like no others. The flamboyant JoJo Burgess fronts the band, with fantastic vocals, aided by Joel Fisk who also plays superb guitar - electric and slide. Stephen 'Cupsey' Cutmore continues to keep the rhythm in check on drums and percussion, along with Rob 'Tank' Barry on solid bass and Warren Lynn on outstanding keys. I suspect it will be an evening to remember for many after earning two well deserved encores.



LaVendore Rogue <http://lavendorerogue.com/> photo by Jan Fialkowski

### Sunday

Another gem to appear at the Wheelhouse were the **Ash Wilson Band**. With songs from the new album '**Broken Machine**', along with other self penned material and blues classics they were a force to be reckoned with. As a three piece today, they played a mix of blues, rock and funk including superb takes of Pink Floyd's 'Another Brick In The Wall' and Michael Jackson's 'The Way You Make Me Feel' with an Ash Wilson bluesy stamp. Ash is a technically brilliant guitarist and is beginning to make waves on the blues circuit. A fabulous live performance which was appreciated by all.



Ash Wilson Band <http://www.ashwilsonmusic.com/> photo Jan Fialkowski

At the Lake District Boat House, the blues band **Backwater Roll**, a solid six piece from Southampton, played Harmonica infused, Chicago influenced classic blues. A talking point for many who caught their set.



Backwater Roll Blues Band <https://www.facebook.com/Backwater-Roll-Blues-Band->

The final band for the afternoon at the Wheelhouse were jump jive rockers **The Revolutionaires**, from the North East. With their own individual take on 1950's rhythm and blues and rock and roll, they certainly were crowd pleasers. With a high energy performance with a variety of classic material they certainly got the dancers to the floor. Fronting the band on vocals, guitar, keys and harmonica was the charismatic, full on performer, Ed Stephenson, with the talented Gary Hoole on various saxes, Rich Stephenson on excellent double and electric bass and Mark Matthews on drums. A fantastically exciting set and a great way to end the main event.



The Revolutionaires <http://www.the-revolutionaires.co.uk/> photo by Jan Fialkowski

Heading off to the final venue of the day for us, at the Hole in the Wall, we caught **Matt Woosey** doing a solo set to a packed pub. Matt had been the highlight of the Blues Cruise the day before and was now giving it large with his distinctive acoustic style and a repertoire of his many self penned numbers. An excellent performer and a popular acoustic master.



Matt Woosey <http://www.mattwoosey.co.uk/>

Although we didn't manage to see all the acts throughout the town, from all accounts all the artists and venues were well supported at this sell out festival. The event provided something for everyone, with money raised going to worthy causes. So thanks go to the organiser **Sandra Walling**, the **Rotary Club** and all the volunteers and venues whose hard work made it possible. Also thanks go to all the bands who played and made the Bowness Bay Blues weekend a festival to remember. Roll on next year!

**Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer**

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