

## Review for The Great British R&B Festival @ Colne 2013

Lancashire Blues Archive goes to Colne - by Rosy Greer

A 'Trail' viewpoint of one of the best blues festivals in the North West



Arriving at the campsite, based at the Nelson & Colne Rugby Club, on the Friday, was a pleasant experience this year. The sun was shining and the ground was firm, unlike previous years when torrential rain had caused mayhem.

Meeting up with like minded people, the campsite becomes a meeting place for blues lovers from across the country. We prepared to head off to town to enjoy the trail and roadhouse venues and there was plenty in store.



## Friday Evening

The British Stage as a trail venue, was a 'must' tonight for me. Going out on Radio Lancashire and flagging up local Lancashire bands, the first act for the evening were **After Hours Blues Band**, all the way from Preston! Guitarist and vocalist Lee Wharton fronts the band and is well supported by Doug Long on bass and Ann Batty on drums. Some well put together blues numbers, with a definite leaning towards Hendrix. <http://www.afterhoursbluesband.co.uk/>



**After Hours Blues Band**

Next up were **Dr Truth** from Salford. Previously fronted by Mike Bowden, the new vocalist Jocelyn Knight, gave the words 'soul blues' a new meaning. Some great guitar work from Chris Roach and keys from Paul Ashton, while Rick Lacey and Dave Luvlin on drums and bass kept that rhythm thumping. Definitely a band to catch up with if you can. <http://www.doctortruth.co.uk/>



**Dr Truth**

The final act for this evening were old time Lancashire favourites, **The Legendary Slack Alice** with Cliff Stocker fronting the band on vocals with his distinctive 'gravel' voice. Class guitarists Chris Preston and Colin Redmond both gave superb solo's, with super bass player Alan Sagar and Liam Barber on drums. A fantastic performance with true professional style as usual. A great way to end the first evening of 'class' entertainment on the British Stage.

<http://www.slackaliceband.moonfruit.com/#>



**The Legendary Slack Alice**

Up the road at the Legion road house, on the trail, **The Bridgewater Blues Band** and **Rhythm Zoo** were giving their all at one of the best road house venues.

### **Saturday**

Starting off on the British Stage, **The Alligators**, a three piece blues/rock band played to a good atmosphere. They were followed by **The Charlie White Project**, who for me were disappointing, so we headed off to the Legion to see **The Junkhouse Dog Blues Band**. From Manchester, they provided an entertaining, if slightly quirky earthy harp driven blues. With Luke Shaw on vocals and blues harp, Nic Elsby on guitar, Martin Cox on double bass and C Taylor on drums, it was certainly a highlight of the festival. They were also joined on stage for a couple of numbers, by Mike Bowden of Blue Swamp, which was the icing on the cake!! <http://www.junkhousedog.com/>



**Junkhouse Dog Blues Band**

Heading back to the British Stage we sadly missed **The Sharon Colgan Band** who had reportedly had a really good set. But we caught the amazing performance of **The Idle Hands**, a blues/rock band from Chesterfield. Fronting the band in his individual style was Phil Allen on vocals, with Dave Robinson on guitar, supported by Jamie Burns on bass and Paul Heydon on drums. Once seen never forgotten with some great self penned tracks as well as some classics.

<http://www.the-idle-hands.co.uk/>



**The Idle Hands**

The last act for the evening was **Blues Boy Dan Owen** and his band. All I can say is if you haven't seen him live .... do it!!!! A truly amazing young man on vocals with his acoustic guitar, harmonica and stomp box. He was well supported by his band and played some great traditional Delta blues.

<http://bluesboydanowen.com/>



**Blues Boy Dan Owen and Band**

## Sunday

Mr **Gary Grainger** performed a great solo acoustic set, prior to being host and presenter for the [British Blues Awards 2013](#). A great occasion to celebrate the best of British Blues. Some of my favourites received awards, including Lancashire lass, **Lucy Zirins**, who gained the 'Best Young Artist' jointly with **Blues Boy Dan Owen** and **BabaJack**, again received awards with **Becky Tate** gaining the 'Best Instrumentalist' for a second time!

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

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



**Blues Boy Dan Owen & BabaJack's Becky Tate**

**Lucy Zirins**

Following the awards ceremony, the **Revolutionaires** from the North East, hit the stage. Magic! With their own take on 'Be Bop' and the best of 50's 'Rock n' Roll' they 'rocked' the place.

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



**Revolutionaires**

Next were **Blue Swamp**, from Manchester. Fronting the band were Mike Bowden and John Williamson. They always give a great performance and today was no exception, with many of their self penned tracks. <http://www.bowdenandwilliamson.com/>



**Blue Swamp**

The afternoon session finished with **Tom Byrne and Friends**. A young band from Manchester with a lot of brass, who's aim is 'to bring Blues, Rock n' Roll, Gospel and Soul music back into the pubs and clubs of Manchester'. A great sound! <https://www.facebook.com/tbandfriends>



**Tom Byrne and Friends**

Sunday evening kicked off with the well seasoned **Maz Mitrenko Band** from the Midlands. A brilliant set, as would be expected from this 'class' band. Fronted by Maz on guitar and vocals, with Paul Turner on bass and the 'once seen never forgotten', Phil Brittle on drums. Just superb. <https://myspace.com/themazmitrenkoband>



**Maz Mirenko Band**

Following on were The Dale Storr New Orleans Big Band from Sheffield, with a piano driven rockin' sound and some great brass to add to the New Orleans flavour. <http://www.dalestorr.com/>



**Dale Storr New Orleans Big Band**

We headed off to the Acoustic Stage on the trail, to catch the end of a set from **Elrieke & Leopold**, a folky duo from Holland. Elrieke had a great voice and it made a pleasant change. Following them and the last band for the evening, were an up beat and certainly lively rock n' roll, swing band, **Cats**. A three piece with guitar, double bass and drums, certainly had the audience on their feet.



**Cats**

## **Monday**

Monday kicked off with a visit to the Rugby Club and Camp Site marquee on the trail, to see The Welsh T Band. These guys have been doing the Great British R&B Festival for many years and have almost become a 'household name' at the festival. The line up was a bit different today as illness had prevented the lead singer being present. But with a stand in on guitar and vocals they did an amazing job and the band were 'a rockin'. They have a CD due to be released soon, 'Where The Road Leads' let's hope it goes places! <http://www.welsh-t.co.uk/>



**Welsh T Band**

We then headed off into town to the outside stage on the trail. A great acoustic band from Wales, Bad Moon, with festival artist Pablo on guitar and vocals, they performed a great set. It was so nice to see so many people just 'chillin' out' in the square, listening to good music.

<http://www.reverbnation.com/stevepabloandfriends>



**Bad Moon**

Next on the outside stage were a band I'd not come across before, **Brothers Groove**, from Birmingham. What a truly amazing bluesfunk band. This was certainly one of the highlights of the festival for me. Such a tight band with seamless solo's. On guitar and vocals was Shaun Hill with Nige Mellor on guitar, Deano Bass on bass and Darren Canny on drums. Such incredible musicians and what a 'cool' performance. These guys are well worth seeing if you get the opportunity. They have a new CD which is due to be released shortly 'Play The Game', I would definitely say, catch them if you can. <http://www.brothersgroove.org/>



**Brothers Groove**

The last band of the festival for us was **Moist**, at the road house venue The Admiral Lord Rodney, a quirky pub with great ale! **Moist** are an occasional band who were formed while the lads were at Durham Uni. On lead guitar and vocals, a young Lancashire lad Alex Danson, who also goes out as a solo artist in and around Lancashire, so watch this space. A great combo with sax and drums to complete the line up. With some well put together blues/rock covers they impressed the small crowd, some who had already seen the band on the outside stage the previous day.

<http://alexdansonmusic.com/>



**Moist**

Sadly, there ended the festival for us for another year. It was certainly a powerhouse of talent and we didn't miss visiting the International Stage one bit! The variety and the quality of the artists and bands was brilliant, so a big 'thank you' to all those involved in putting together such a cracking festival and I shall be looking forward to next year, especially as it will be the 25th Anniversary of this wonderful Lancashire event.

**Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive**

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