



Review for the GREAT BRITISH R&B FESTIVAL @ Colne 2014 - A Trail viewpoint.

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

Rosy Greer from Lancashire Blues Archive goes to Colne

For 25 years **The Great British R&B Festival** has graced the streets of Colne, so this was a special celebration for a special festival on the Lancashire calendar.

Friday

For us the festival kicked off on Friday afternoon at the Rugby Club, Roadhouse venue, with the delightful '**Clare Free**', playing an acoustic medley of songs from her lovely album 'Butterflies' and more. A great way to start the day. <http://www.clarefree.co.uk/>



Clare Free

Heading on down into town we dropped by the Acoustic Stage to catch **'Mal Gibson'** doing his acoustic set with a bit of Dylan-esque, country blues. Mal runs the Acoustic Stage throughout the festival and what a show case of bands have been on the table! <http://www.malgibson.co.uk/>



Mal Gibson

Then it was off to the Mathew Clark British Stage for the Radio Lancashire Night with **'Nick Dow'** presenting. **'Ged Wilson'** from Manchester was providing the acoustic interludes throughout the evening with some honest acoustic blues. <http://www.gedwilson.com/>



Nick Dow



Ged Wilson

It was a milestone for **'The Welsh T Band'**, from Yorkshire, as it was their 50th performance at the festival and it was wonderful to see it celebrated on the British Stage. They have been stalwarts at Colne every year, for many, many years and hopefully will continue to do so. They did a magnificent set showcasing their excellent album 'Where The Road Leads'. Good down to earth honest blues with some great musicianship. <http://www.welsh-t.co.uk/>



Welsh T Band

A bit of harp driven 'rockin' boogie rhythm and blues next, with the **'Marauders'**. From Lancashire they gave us a taste of the great rock 'n roll era with a touch of Stevie Ray Vaughan. Some powerful blues harp and vocals, a great set and great for a boogie! <http://www.timeware.co.uk/marauders/>



The Marauders

The final band of the evening on the British Stage were **'Doublecut'** from Manchester, delivering classic rhythm and blues. A rockin' end to a great first evening. <http://www.doublecut.org.uk/>



Doublecut

Heading back to the campsite we popped into Rugby Club Roadhouse. The local solo guitarist **'Baxter Rhodes'** was playing finger picking country folk. Although not hitting the 'blues' note he has a great voice and writes his own material and the music was a good 'wind down' to a busy day.

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

Saturday

A bit of a late start today, but we decided to hike up to the Legion Roadhouse to take a peek at **'Maia'**. An interesting group of four acoustic musicians from Huddersfield, playing what I could describe as world music, an alternative band leaning towards folk. Using a variety of instruments, including ukulele, cajon, trumpet, banjo and mandolin it was enjoyable set which went well with the beautiful views from the Legion. <http://maiatheband.com/>



Maia

Getting stuck in an Italian restaurant, we sadly missed the '**Mentulls**' on the British Stage, but listening to the reports from other friends, I think they did an outstanding job. A great young band from the north east, their music has influences of 70's progressive rock, blues. As a young band they are growing from strength to strength, especially Andrew Pipe, whose guitar playing is faultless, with his vocals getting stronger as he matures. <http://www.thementulls.com/>



The Mentulls

We were delighted to see '**Kyla Brox**' and her band again. From Manchester she is one of the best female blues soul jazz artists around at this time. She and the band have an ease on stage and having listened to her 'Live At Last' double album, what you see is what you get, superb. An amazing set throughout, with the added bonus of an appearance from her dad, Victor Brox, magic!

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



Kyla Brox with Victor Brox

The final band on the British Stage, '**Bad Moon**' from Wales, fronted by artist in residence Pablo, gave a rockin' set. This was the first time I'd seen the band electrified and I wasn't disappointed. Great showmanship and good rockin' blues. <http://artpablo.com/>



Bad Moon

Back up to the Rugby Club Roadhouse marquee for '**The Ramblin' Riversiders**', from Leyland in Lancashire. They are a brilliant seven piece rock 'n roll, skiffle band with guitars, double bass, bucket drum and washboard, and have been going now for 50 years or more, great music and a whole lot of fun! There was such energy and I think the band enjoyed it as much as the audience did! <http://www.ramblinriversiders.com/>



The Ramblin' Riversiders

The final act at the Rugby Club were '**Jamie Williams and The Roots Collective**'. They are an Americana band with blues roots hailing from Essex. A really good sound from this band in such a small space with some cracking vocals. A great way to end the Saturday nights entertainment.

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



Jamie Williams and The Roots Collective

Sunday

A big day today at the British Stage, with the 'British Blues Awards' taking place. Opening today were the high class '**Stumble**', a powerful six piece band from Preston, Lancashire. They play Chicago blues based on the 50's and 60's and what a performance of old and some new material, possibly one of the best sets I've seen for a while. They played to a packed crowd with a great following in and around Colne. Top class musicianship and what a brilliant set to start the day.

<http://www.thestumble.com/index.html>



The Stumble

We now had the prestigious '**British Blues Awards**', giving a chance for bands and artists, well known or not so well known, to be nominated in various categories, with the final votes from the public. There were also awards for the 'Blues Greats' and 'Lifetime Achievements' . I was honoured to be asked to present an award for Victor Brox, one of the Blues Greats.

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



Victor Brox receives his award for 'Blues Greats' (Photo by Brian Kimberly)

To round off the Blues Awards, a solo artist, singer songwriter and roots blues musician '**Half Deaf Clatch**' took to the stage for a couple of numbers. He was also a runner up in the Emerging Artist category. Some great raw acoustic slide guitar and an earthy gravel voice that takes you straight back to the Delta. He has a great new album out 'Blues Continuum' which highlights the 'live' feel.

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



Half Deaf Clatch

Next on the British Stage were the blues rock band '**Cold Flame**' from Derbyshire. A great no frills band that just play good music, as they did today. They play their own style of blues rock with some self penned works and some covers, many taken from their new album 'Blue Shadows'. A great band to see live and all players are excellent musicians. It was a shame that there were so few people in the hall, but those there, appreciated what they heard. <http://www.cold-flame.co.uk/>



Cold Flame

It was a great treat for me to finally see '**Chris Bevington and Friends**' live on the British Stage. Hailing from the Stoke on Trent area. Chris had a vision of putting together an album to include many of his notable friends. The album, 'Chris Bevington and Friends' was the product of a lot of hard work and time, but it has certainly paid off!! Now Chris and the band have been able to play some of the excellent album to the discerning public. The performance was a great success with full on brass, superb guitar solos and excellent vocals. A great big band sound giving us blues with a funky edge. The musicianship was second to none. <http://www.chrisbevingtonmusic.co.uk/>



Chris Bevington and Friends

Next a set from Yorkshire band, '**Lions For A Day**' who played some good rock blues. <http://www.lfad.co.uk/about/>



Lions For A Day

A treat from Liverpool followed, '**The Midnight Ramble**'. As a six piece band, they gave a great performance with a big band sound leaning towards Southern rock, soul and blues. With superb earthy vocals and brass input, what an excellent set, definitely a band to watch out for.

<https://www.facebook.com/themidnightrambleuk>



The Midnight Ramble

A favourite at Colne, '**The Franny Eubank Band with Tom Attah**' played a great set. From Manchester, Franny fronts the band on vocals and a mean harp, with Tom giving a great blues take on guitar. They gave a class performance supported by the rest of the band with some super raw harp driven blues. <http://franyeubank.com/>



Franny Eubank Bank with Tom Attah

The final act for the Sunday evening was '**Ron Sayer Jr**'. A well established guitarist, singer songwriter, he played a mix of blues, rock and funk, alongside Charlotte Joyce on keyboard and vocals and the rest of the band. <http://www.ronsayer.co.uk/>



Ron Sayer Jn

Monday

On the last day of this great festival, one of the best bands on the circuit at this time, **'Brothers Groove'** from Birmingham opened on the British Stage. They were runners up in the Emerging Artist category in the British Blues Awards this year, which was well deserved. They played an amazing set of blues funk, with most of the tracks from their brilliant self penned CD, 'Play The Game'. The spine tingling number 'Another Girl' was sung to perfection by Shaun Hill and the guitar solos from Shaun and Nige Mellor were faultless. Deano Bass kept in the groove, especially on a bass solo, with Jim Simpson maintaining the rhythm on drums. A superb set from a superb band.

<http://www.brothersgroove.org/Home.html>



Brothers Groove

Following were the **'The Steve Fulsham Band'**, a standard blues rock band from Yorkshire.

<http://thestevefulshamband.co.uk/>

Off to the Acoustic Stage we caught an acoustic duo '**New Rendition**' from Colne, certainly not blues but good at what they do. <https://www.facebook.com/NewRendition>



New Rendition

Again on the Acoustic Stage, a second set for the brilliant '**Brothers Groove**'. Unaccustomed as they are to playing an acoustic gig, they compromised by using a cajon (beat box) instead of a full kit, but continued with the electric take. What a set, it raised the roof, certainly one of those 'magic moments' and what an applause. Just brilliant!!! <http://www.brothersgroove.org/Home.html>



Brothers Groove

Back to the British Stage to catch the excellent '**Slack Alice**'. From the North West, the band is fronted by the original member of the 1970's Slack Alice band, Cliff Stocker. What a fantastic set with great gravel vocals and excellent guitar solos, fabulous rockin' blues as it should be played. A very young lady on saxophone also joined the band for a couple of numbers and went down a storm. A memorable set. <http://www.slackaliceband.moonfruit.com/>



Slack Alice

Following, a young and lively rock blues soul band, '**The Red Butler Band**' from Brighton. Full of energy, they did a great job. <http://www.redbutlermusic.co.uk/>



The Red Butler Band

Back again to the Acoustic Stage where our Lancashire lass, singer songwriter, '**Lucy Zirins**' was just starting her solo set. Lucy has had great press over the last couple of years and her album 'Chasing Clocks' has made good inroads. She was also runner up in the Young Artist of the Year category in this year's British Blues Awards. All I can say is she has the voice of an angel, can play guitar beautifully and keeps an audience well entertained. She gave us great arrangements of traditional blues songs and her own tunes. A truly talented young lady. <http://www.lucyzirins.com/>



Lucy Zirins

Following Lucy, a bit of 'weird and wonderful' from **'The Devils Jukebox'**. Theatrical springs to mind, but it's all entertainment. Cabaret time with ragtime music from the 20's and 30's and a smattering of Hungarian folk , with clarinet, ukulele, harmonium, beat box and an interesting drum shaped bass. A front man like a Johnny Depp meets Tom Waits, it made an interesting change from the 'blues' per say. <http://www.devilsjukebox.co.uk/home>



Devil's Jukebox

Back again for the last act of the evening and of the festival on the British Stage, '**The Country Blues Band**'. A coming together of some prestigious personnel, playing a mix of easy listen country and smooth southern blues, with Mr John E Williamson (Animals & Friends) on guitar. An easy listen set from these quality musicians.



The Country Blues Band

So there endeth the **Great British R&B Festival** for another year and what a good'n!!! Having missed so much of the good music on offer, I thought it only fare to share some of the highlights from others.

Matt Woosey and Dave Small on the Acoustic Stage, **Callum Ingram** on the Acoustic Stage, **The Maz Mitrenko Band** at the Rugby Club, **Peoples Republic of Mercia** at the Legion, **TC & the Moneymakers** on the Acoustic Stage and **Bluesoul** on at various venues through the town. It's well done to all the artists who have played at the festival and well done to all the organisers and volunteers who made it all possible.

Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer

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