



Mike Sanchez

Talk of show stopper and you get the picture.

years back. Singer Eric is, very visual and a head banger taboo. His band members are not too far behind in those stakes too! It was with some reluctance we made our way across the road to The Sparrow Hawk again for our last night's stay after the show eventually finished. Everyone was happy and jubilant as Burnley had exceeded our expectations yet again! Thanks Burnley!

Diane Gillard - Sister Feelgood

Unfortunately we were unable to bring you Darren Howells' alternative take on the Burnley Blues Festival, or Diane's Linton report, this issue due to a lack of space... we hope to be bring you both these reports in issue 28.

LINTON REAL ALE AND BLUES FESTIVAL 2005 @ Alma Inn, Linton, Ross-on-Wye

What a sizzler of a weekend weatherwise and music wise. It was the hottest of June days so far and the best of a line-up by far for this little festival. First on was the very much in vogue trio of Matt Schofield. The audience was small in number at the start but during the course of their festival set it began to fill up. The temperature was soaring and so was the atmosphere as Matt et al really got to grips of wakening this slow moving over heated Blues crowd. How they remained so 'cool' in all senses of the word up on stage I do not know - but cool and calculated guitar genius and keyboards and drums did just that. What a way to open a festival. One of the most talked about bands on the circuit to date dishing up perfect tasty starters wetting the appetites well and truly. Highlight for me? A brilliant rendition of Albert Collins' 'Lights On, Nobody Home' Next band on were Big Joe Blues and the Blues Kings who took us through a handsome collection of rockabilly/country blues with a dash of sauciness. The crowd had again swollen in size by the time they were through their set. By the time Dana Gillespie, 'First Lady of the British Blues scene', arrived with her London based Blues Band it was full. Dana sailed majestically through her solid, sexy and superb brand of Blues, 'Ten Ton Blocks', 'Come On If You're Coming', 'St. Louis Blues', 'Up Your Sleeve' and a delightful 'Spoonful' and many more from her voluminous songbook. Having somewhere in the region of 26 or so albums under her belt to date - well - she's got a mine full of material. Great stuff! Great Lady!

It was still stiflingly warm when the headliners this day took to the stage - Sherman Robertson and Blues Move. Robertson is a terrific performer, guitarist, singer/songwriter and a stage presence that captivates from the first note. You know you are in for some BLUES! Sherman, too, passed comment on the weather as it had surpassed itself this Saturday Linton Festival. This weekend we were having the very best of everything, music, weather, ales, food, and company.

Watching and playing with Robertson is a bit like going to war! He rallies his troops (Blues Move) fiercely and with hand of steel governs them throughout the performance. He's a hard task master but fair. He attacks his guitar and music with a passion. He

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photo Diane Gillard

photo Alan Harvey

(above) Richochet. (right) Matt Schofield.

defies the audience to ignore him or his band and makes forays out into the audience to keep them under his control. Yet he is able, at times, to reduce to a solitary figure and play the thinnest, quietest notes... then he spins around in a split second and let's fire again a salvo of riffs that you almost have to duck the flying shards of Blue bent notes and chords. The 'Last Post' sounds the battle over - the audience retire shell shocked and battered but determined to rally the next day for the final push!

Sunday, too, had a fine selection of Blues styles and variation in band personnel. Unfortunately The Harrisons had to cancel and so in their place the organisers had secured a Bristol band Out Go The Lights. A well tried and tested bunch (of maturing age) with a well trod pathway of Blues and R&B anthems in their pockets. These trinkets of well known Blues were handed out in heaps throughout their time on stage. The wit and repartee was priceless - a sign of much time spent in the company of wild live audiences around the pub circuit! Then next on was a surprise, and a pleasant diversion. A young band were introduced to us having been head hunted when talent spotted by the Linton Festival organisation whilst at an Oxfordshire musical festival. The youngest 15yrs old the oldest 17yrs! - Ricochet. Hailing from Banbury they've been together for two years playing a mix of 60's 70's and 80's rock/pop and other! Very heavily into Status Quo by the sounds of it (and heaps of Beatles and Stone)... they were very good and entertaining. Although they would have liked a little more audience participation from us they did at the end manage to get a few up dancing but I think the excesses from the previous evening and visits to the beer tent and the weather of course didn't do much to stimulate us into action! Like all bands that weekend they got an encore and deservedly so. The final act to close this festival - Lightnin' Willie and The Poor Boys. I was happy to see that amongst the ranks was none other than the great Sam Kelly on drums. The harp player was extraordinarily good and the bass also a gem of a player and it all proved a recipe for a mighty fine ending to the show. It began with an acoustic 'moment' and went into a grand performance of driving Blues and his speciality of rockabilly blues and country swing. He did his general walk about with forays into the Blues sated audience with his National Steel that glinted in the dying rays of the evening sun. What a grand little festival this Linton arena has produced yet again and a charity fund raiser event at that. I actually won the very last raffle prize of the weekend and clutched my Cotton Traders portmanteau as I left the Alma Inn to drive back home through the glowing Hereford countryside.

Diane - Sister Feelgood

RAMSBOTTOM BLUES FESTIVAL 2005

The Ramsbottom Blues Festival entertained 62 gigs, over 7 venues - as well as entertainment on the Steam Trains. The main stage was the Civic Hall, a wonderful venue with a good sound: On the bill for Friday night was Will Tang who played solo acoustic guitar

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