

cover. They delivered some great self-penned numbers with strong lyrics, but there was no real emotion in their delivery and again, I thought the bass needed to be stronger to balance the guitar sound.

Then **The Hoax** stepped onto the stage. They are a collection of formidable talent and one of the best British blues bands around, exciting and delighting the crowd with a combination of super solid rhythm section providing the bedrock for the two stylish guitarists and Hugh Coltman, with scrumptious vocals creating the Hoax sound. Delivering a mixed set of Hoax classics and numbers from their much awaited CD, with the band's thanks to their fans whose pledges ensured the album was produced and *Big City Blues* became a reality. The song *Don't Shake My Hand* was a spellbinder, sending shivers down the spine, the music hitting core emotions, new track *Hipslicker* was another I liked. They took the roof off the Palace Theatre, the audience would have loved them to play all day.

SATURDAY

A Newark Tradition is Saturday afternoon is free, this works well in the Castle as shoppers hear the music and wander in and stay, but was not possible in a formal theatre environment. Opening the afternoon; **Brothers Groove**, producing a really good groovy sound using the two different guitar tones of the lead and rhythm guitar to good effect, the set definitely won them new fans with a very tight set proving that the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts; Brothers Groove definitely hit the right groove; blues with a melodic funky edge.

Now for a change of tone and approach to the blues, with a soulful set delivered by **Rhythm Zoo**, fronted by vocalist Andi Hall provided an entertaining set of covers that suited her vocal range

and style; pleasing the crowd fitting the slot like a glove, the band supporting Andi are a team of excellent musicians with Dermot (Drums), Pete (Bass) and Phil (guitar).

The Mustangs closed the afternoon with a set that always pleases, strutting their blues across the stage, as they delivered their signature mixture of solid covers and numbers of their well-received current CD *Speed of Love*. This is a high energy band who really enjoy playing together creating an infectious rapport between band and audience no wonder they are so popular on the circuit.

The evening started; with local band **Blues Boys Kings**, who delivered a set of self-penned and standards which got the crowd warmed up and ready for some fun and more blues music. The short set ended far too soon, but they definitely got everyone present into the mood for the good times ahead.

Bare Bones Boogie Band, with the strong vocals from Helen giving this band a distinctive sound as they deliver a boogie sound that reflects their name. They treated the crowd to a pleasing mix of numbers from their CDs, including the latest *Tattered and Torn* creating a varied sound including blues, blues/rock definitely a feel good sound.

Highlights of the evening, two very different acts, **Ron Sayer Jr. Band**, followed by **Jo Harman & Company**. Ron with his guitar and song writing skills brought some class to the proceedings showcasing his musical talent, and who, with his band generated a likable high quality, three dimensional sound. Ron engaged with the crowd and had great rapport, building a festival atmosphere with his varied set; slow, funky, rocky, but always the blues. Ron and Charlotte are a real team, harmonising, singing duets and taking the lead vocals on various tracks, the rest of the band

build their sound around this solid heart, creating a sound that filled the auditorium and warmed up the crowd, they certainly wanted more.

The festival was now ready for the last act, headlining tonight **Jo Harman and Company**. She bounced on to stage in her gold boots, full of energy, she delivered a polished performance, winning her even more fans that night, especially with her stellar performance of *My Amnesty*. She wooed the audience and the musicianship provided by **The Company** were excellent, allowing her voice to shine through. Jo is a class act who entertains you every time, no wonder she is appearing at festivals and clubs across the UK and Europe.

With the mix of Pubs and the main festival venue there was no excuse not to catch some fantastic live music over the weekend..

LIZ AIKEN

LINTON BLUES FESTIVAL

ALMA INN, LINTON, ROSS ON WYE
JUNE 21ST – 23RD 2013

FRIDAY

Ben Poole Band. On a fine sunny evening (after weeks of rain) Linton was set to stage yet another festival, and to open was Ben and his band. It all started so well with Ben blasting out loud and clear some real good rocking, soulful blues and then-disaster! One of the generators smouldered and died. Undeterred at the behind the scenes drama unfolding to his defunct power source, Ben grabbed his acoustic guitar and leapt from the stage to wander through the straw bale amphitheatre full of folks! His journey through the audience was very much appreciated, whether you heard much or not – it was the gesture that counted – the punters should not be let down. Technical let down it may have been, but not