

up from Johnny Shines, before going back to his failed marriages and then in turn to the first Willie Dixon song of the night 'Seventh Son', and to Little Willie John's 'Fever', a song Kent makes into a real blues including some tasty slide, and his solo here showed him a master of this type of playing.

Throughout his shows his passion for live music and the blues that is his life shines through. Tonight he took everyone present on a journey, first to a concert in Minnesota before driving back to New Orleans, a round trip of well over three thousand miles. The journey south took him through Mississippi following the river, and the clubs and bars along the way where these old blues singers still gather. "This is Robert Johnson country, but visiting the famous crossroads was so disappointing, Burger King on one corner, K-Mart

on another and MacDonald's as well! Sad, so I drove on somewhere else", but he did perform 'Crossroad Blues' as it was originally done and 'Long Way From Here' better known as 'Come On In My Kitchen'. Juke joints, biker bars, loose women bars, even wine bars: for these low down places he sang 'Travelling Riverside Blues', another Johnson song.

What makes a Duchaine show so special is you feel you're joining a personal journey to the places the blues came from: the songs, the stories and the people. A visit to Clarksdale, "A dusty hot town, quite run-down but helped since Morgan Freeman set up his Ground Zero venue there, plus the Delta blues museum which contains the remains of Muddy Waters shack".

After a short break he spoke of folk like Bukka White, and sang his 'Aberdeen

Mississippi Blues', about the place White called home. The night ended with two of the songs that in many ways Kent has made his own, although they go way back: 'Trouble In Mind' (a song written in 1926) he'd originally recorded with Snooky Pryor and Johnny Shines; then winding the night up with a song dedicated to wife number two 'I'll Be True To You'.

There it was, a man and the blues he loves to play, not to mention one of the friendliest and most original talents, who takes us back to the great days when these giants of the blues walked and played, where the roots of all today's music got its beginnings.

If you've not been to one of his gigs he will be back from his home by a hickory lake in Alabama next year. A National treasure in more ways than one.

Pete Clack

FESTIVAL

Mini Cruise Blues Revue

Hull to Rotterdam/Amsterdam 4

6.11.2016

I'm always up for trying something a bit different and crossing the North Sea in November is one of them! This was our first trip on the infamous Blues Cruise and what a spectacular event it turned out to be.

On Friday evening as the boat set sail the music kicked off with the wonderful Lisa Mills from Alabama. Lisa, playing a solo set, gave us superb country blues and gospel, playing songs from her current album *Mama's Juke Book* and previous albums. With superb and powerful vocals from sweet to raw, and earthy guitar, she wowed us with 'Son Of A Preacher Man' and a tribute to Freddie King. Kyla Brox was invited to the stage and the girls performed

the Etta James classic 'I'd Rather Go Blind': considering this was the first time they had met there was an immediate rapport. The excellence continued with a Sam Cooke number 'Bring It On Home' before Lisa finished her set with some audience participation on 'This Train'. What a great start to this fabulous weekend.

Next were the Norman Beaker Band. Norman, hailing from Stockport, has had a long

career, playing and touring with many "blues greats" over the years, including Graham Bond, Jack Bruce, Chuck Berry, B.B. King, Alexis Korner, Buddy Guy and more. As a four-piece today, with Norman on guitar and vocals, John Price bass, Nick Steed keys and Steve Gibson drums, they played some excellent classic electric blues: a mix of blues shuffles, a touch of funk and a dash of rock 'n roll, including the great Jack Bruce number 'Sitting On Top Of The World' and a Chris Farlowe classic 'Tough On Me, Tough On You', it all set the scene for the rest of the evening.

Lancashire-born Kyla Brox returned to the stage with her flute for her own set, supported by the Norman Beaker Band. Kyla's



vocals would take a lot of beating, with velvet blues and soul overtones, in numbers including Etta James' 'I Just Wanna Make Love To You' and '365' a classic blues shuffle from her new album *Throw Away The Blues*. Daughter of the renowned Victor Brox, she has such presence on stage and an air of total professionalism that would not be out of place at the Royal Albert Hall. I still can't understand why she doesn't have a higher profile.

Larry Garner (backed by the Norman Beaker Band again) was next up, a guitar playing, singer/songwriter blues master from Louisiana, giving us a mix of flavours from swamp blues to raw funk, from Americana to even a bit of rap!

Friday's final band was the excellent Revolutionaires from the North East: they blasted onto the stage with their own hard-hitting style of jump jive and rhythm and blues. Fronting the band on vocals, guitar, keys and harmonica was the charismatic high-energy

performer Ed Stephenson, with the talented Gary Hoole on various saxes, Rich Stephenson on excellent double and electric basses and Mark Matthews on drums. Their great mix of uptempo numbers from 'Keep a Knockin'' to 'Tequila', and 'Burnt Toast And Black Coffee' in a Ska-style to rockin' blues shuffles, all made this a fantastically exciting set and a great way to end the first evening.

Saturday brought an early start as the boat docked at Port Rotterdam. The Blues Revue audience were transported to Amsterdam by coach, to one of two private shows with the great Ian Siegal at the Waterhole in central Amsterdam that afternoon. It was great to see Ian doing a solo acoustic set in such a relaxed atmosphere, with plenty of Delta blues, country blues and gospel, all performed in the unique "Siegal" style. It was much appreciated that he took time out from his intensive solo tour 'Celebrating 25 years Touring' in the UK and Europe.



After a wander around Amsterdam we were brought back to the boat ready for the Saturday evening session of great music. First to kick off were The Revolutionaires again, who got the party started in style! The next band, Little Steve and the Big Beat from the Netherlands, gave a fiery big band performance with rhythm and blues at its best.

Fronted by the incredibly talented guitarist and vocalist Steven van der Nat, with Martin van Toor on tenor sax, Evert Hoedt on baritone sax, Bird Stevens on bass and Jody van Ooijen on drums, they gave us a mix of swing and blues. With a great take on Otis Rush's classic 'Double Trouble' and Ike Turner's 'One More Time' the band were tight with superb vocals. Little Steve's accomplished blues guitar solos made the hairs stand up on the back of your neck - an outstanding performance. The band have a new CD out at the moment *Another Man*, let's hope we see this band in the UK soon.

More from the Norman Beaker Band and Kyla Brox. Kyla performed amazing versions of the Etta James classics 'At Last' and the mighty 'I'd Rather Go Blind' before the return of Larry Garner.

For the final leg of the set there was an epic jam with Kyla, Ed Stephenson on harp and Little Steve on guitar, backed by the Norman Beaker Band, and Steve wowed us again with his superb guitar playing. What a fantastic way to end the brilliant experience.

Thanks go to MC 'Cowling Wolf', to P&O Ferries for hosting, and to all those involved in putting the event together. I will be booking again for next year!

Rosy Greer
Images: John Ashton

Hereford Blues Festival

Left Bank, Hereford 19.11.2016

Not the ideal time of year to hold a one day blues festival, but with an inside location it turned out to be a great way of spending a cold blustery November day.

First out of the blocks were J. Alexander And The Blues Devils: a "no frills, no bullshit" band, and by the time they cut the 'Deck Of Cards' every call was a winning hand as they delivered a sparkling set of classic blues: Dave Dearnley, Paul Higgins and Ian Davis are the engine room behind Justin Holly on harp and vocals sung through his Bullet mic. As that railroad shuffle pulsed out, the girls were up and dancing and it was only mid afternoon!

I have no idea why sizzling rock-out band Slowburner were on so early, but thankfully the light rapidly faded as they burnt their way through the Left Bank, with everyone following

