

BLUES IN BRITAIN

BLUES NEWS FROM BRITAIN BY NORMAN DARWEN



Skrivent bosatt i Bolton, England. Har skrevet om blues og bluesrelatert musikk siden 80-tallet, bl.a. for 'Blues Unlimited', 'Living Blues', 'Blues & Rhythm (The Gospel Truth)', 'Blues In Britain', 'Blues Matters', 'Blues News Finland' og 'R2 (Rock 'N' Reel)'. Han har også skrevet linernotes på oppdrag fra artister og plateselskaper.

STIVALS

annual Edinburgh **Jazz & Blues Festival** took place at the end of July. This year's line-up included Mr. Sipp, The Music Revue, singer/harmonica players Brandon Santini and in Nemeth, guitarist Hamilton James and singer Lisa Mills. The two acts also undertook tours across the UK in July.

NTOUR

We saw the number of blues visitors to Britain increase. Among them were Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges, Debbie Bond (touring through to August), and guitar ace Stefan Grossman. Scotland did well, with appearances by The North Mississippi All-Stars, Madeleine Peyroux and Del Rey.



Bruce "Mississippi" Johnson.

New York singer and guitarist Russell "Hitman" Alexander had a long tour in June, bringing over his own band including his "New York Horns". His eighteen gigs took him through to the end of July.

Wisconsin's blues-rockers John Jared Nichols arrived in Britain to tour on 21st June and played ten dates, including some as opening act for rock bands UFO and Blue Oyster Cult. Kenny Wayne Shepherd played two shows in Britain in July, and returns in late October for a further three. Kenny co-headlined July's London Blues Festival with Gov't Mule.

Mali's **Vieux Farka Touré**, sometimes dubbed "the Hendrix of The Sahara" played eight shows across Britain in June to promote his new album "Samba" for Six Degrees Records.

Chicago born **Ronnie Baker Brooks**, son of the late Lonnie Brooks, played a London show with his own band as part of his three date European tour to coincide with the release of his album "Times Have Changed". He appeared at Nelf's Jazz & Blues Club on Thursday 6th July, his first gig in the country as a headliner, although he had appeared here before as part of his father's band.

Later in the same month, Ronnie's brother **Wayne Baker Brooks** also played a one-off London show, at the Fiddler's Elbow in Camden, north London on 19th July.

Blues and soul singer **Bruce "Mississippi" Johnson** (yes, he was born in Starkville, Mississippi) has now relocated to London after working in mainland Europe, especially France. He had a couple of shows in north London during May and a show at London's Blues Cafe at the end of July. Hopefully he will become more active on the national scene. Bruce has a very fine new album of contemporary blues and southern styled soul entitled 'The Deal Baby' out on his own label.

July also brought **Taj Mahal and Keb' Mo'** (together) to Britain, whilst the more regular visitors **The Billy Walton Band** and **Debbie Bond** also returned. **Z.Z. Top** were also in town.

Oakland's new star **Fantastic Negrito** was highly acclaimed for his shows at the end of July, and was interviewed in several major newspapers – it was strange but very welcome to see that he mentioned such names as Skip James and Charley Patton.



King King. (Photo: Rob Blackham).

August visitors included **Lucky Peterson**, **Eric Bibb**, **Rev. Peyton's Big Damn Band** and German bluesman **Henrik Freischlader**, who appeared with the UK's **Matt Schofield**. **Seasick Steve** had a one-off appearance in Glasgow in Scotland. The harmonica and guitar duo of **Joe Filisko** and **Eric Noden** also had several low-key shows. Chicago harmonica ace **Billy Branch** had five UK shows in August, touring with local outfit The Giles Robson Band.

The Caribbean born funky jazz, reggae and occasional blues saxophonist **Arturo Tappin** played a two week residency in Edinburgh at the end of August. His shows were extremely well-received and he is extremely popular in the Scottish capital.



RIP Paul Oliver

It is sad to report the death on 15th August of pioneering and world renowned blues researcher Paul Oliver. Paul was born in Nottingham, England on 25th May 1927, making him 90 when he died in Oxfordshire. He published his first article in 1951 (for the magazine "Jazz Journal") and he went on to write many books most blues lovers regards as essential, among them "The Story of The Blues", "Blues Fell This Morning", and "Blues Off The Record". He undertook several field trips, and some of his interview material was included in the book "Conversation With The Blues". His writing was always of a very high standard, and his research is invaluable.



The Jive Aces.

NEW RELEASES

The Jive Aces, one of the UK's top jump and jive bands, mark twenty years of the same line-up with the release of the excellent album "Diggin' The Roots Vol. 1. Rockin' Rhythm & Blues (Golden Age GARC004). It is a lovely set of big, bold, brassy R&B, and will be followed later this year by a second set focusing on the hot jazz that has also influenced the band. (www.jiveaces.com)

Veteran guitarist **Robin Trower** (photo left by Laurence Harvey) released his new album "Time And Emotion" (Manhattan HATMAN 2047) on 4th August. It is a fine set of bluesy, often Hendrix-tinged rock, played with taste and subtlety. (www.manhattanrecords.com). He will play just one show in Britain this year, at the Islington Assembly Hall on 29th November. (www.trowerpower.com)

Singer **Mollie Marriott** is the daughter of Steve Marriott of 60s and 70s UK outfits The Small Faces and Humble Pie, but she is most definitely pursuing her own path. She releases her debut album "Truth Is A Wolf" (Amadeus Music) at the beginning of November. It is a fine mix of bluesy, soulful rock. (www.molliemarriott.com)

King King will release their fourth studio album "Exile & Grace" on 6th October, in conjunction with their longest ever UK tour. Alan Nimmo says that "the album has a rockier feel and sound to it. We are following our classic rock influences, Bad Company, Whitesnake, and Thunder". The band released a fine track, (She Don't) Gimme No Lovin" as a single on Manhattan Records in the end of June, showing just what they mean.

OTHER

British blues researcher **Richard Noblett** died on 29th April this year, at the age of 70. He was best known for his research into the vintage piano blues - he wrote for "Blues Unlimited" magazine and several other publications and record labels, as well as writing on many other forms of roots music.

Rolling Stone **Ronnie Wood** revealed in early August that he had had surgery for lung cancer, prior to the band's latest tour. He revealed he did not have chemotherapy as he did not want to lose his hair!

Alan Nimmo of King King announced in early August that the band will be taking a three month break after he suffered another setback with his vocals, with him having to stop a show in late July. The proposed October tour to coincide with the release of the new album has now been put back until January 2018, to allow him to make a fully recovery. He sends his apologies to all his fans.