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Tired of the same old festivals?

Then it's time to try something a little bit different



By Angus Auden

There are so many festivals going on all over the UK every year providing plenty of opportunities to escape the city and spend a weekend in the surrounding countryside listening to some of the UK's up and coming talent across all genres of music.

Celtic Blue Rock festival in West Wales is a festival that caters for families as well as party-goers. The festival starts on Friday 6th August until Sunday 8th August. Angus Auden talks to the founder Bill Davies as well as Cris who is on the committee and Holly who is the volunteer coordinator to find out more about their event.



Bill, how did the Celtic Blue Rock Festival come about?

The Celtic Blue Rock festival was founded in 2004 but there was an event in 2003 that was the first event that we organised. That was because the local primary school was facing closure so we decided to hold a festival and donate all the profits to the 'save the school campaign'.

You had about 400 people turn up for the first festival in 2003, what was the turnout last year?

In 2010, we're organising the 4th

festival to cater for 10,000 people, it sort of mushroomed up from the 2003 event. I think it's the right capacity for a festival like ours which is a community festival.

How long does the festival go on for?

Well, the campsite is opened on Thursday night and the event starts on Friday and carries on through Saturday and into Sunday. This year we are concentrating on the eco-side of the event and are hoping to have the Sunday open to the public as a free entry to promote this.

What kind of bands will be performing-



ing at the festival this year, have you got any big names?

Well we've already signed up Goldie Lookin' Chain to play, and we have 70's band, Eddie and the Hot Rods confirmed. But mainly it's local West Wales' bands, probably about 80 to 90 bands playing across 5 live music stages which include an Acoustics stage, the main stage which is the Cromlech stage. We also have the Annwn stage which will feature all kinds of music from Blues and Indie to Punk and Ska. There will also be a stage featuring up and coming bands and school bands. We are hoping for one of the stages, this year, to incorporate world music and

a bit of theatre too.

Who is the target audience for the festival, who would enjoy it?

The target audience is everybody really. We encourage families to come along because we have a fantastic kid's area. We've got craft areas and eco areas. We also have the Glam Rock Bar which is a famous bar in Wales where all kinds of wacky things go on and you'll be amazed at the entertainment that you'll see there!

How would you compare the festival to Glastonbury?

Well, Glastonbury is the mother of all festivals. We have a capacity of 10,000 whereas they can hold 170,000 so we are a lot smaller but I think the idea behind it is a lot similar. It's a community arts festival and we will have all sorts of entertainment including street performers, wandering minstrels, samba bands, and processions.

What would be the main type of accommodation during the festival?

We've got a tent field and a caravan and camper-van field too which is all included in the price of the ticket which also includes a free car park.

Do you stay in a caravan or tent while you're at the event?

Actually, I stay in a top-of-the-range camper van, my very trusted 1988 Volkswagen LT35.

Cris, in terms of local economy, what's the tourism trade like during the festival?

Well we are in Pembrokeshire, which is very scenic with the Preseli Mountains, and it offers a great opportunity for many families to come to West Wales. The festival brings up to 10,000 people into a rural location and it boosts trade for local garages and shops, and a lot of people tell us that they are really glad that we hold this event.

A lot of the bands will be performing for free, what hap-

pens to the money raised from the ticket sales?

We are a non-profit organisation, we are a charity-based event, and everybody involved, from the organisers to the stewards, are giving their time for free so the money raised goes towards training courses for young people, who may be unemployed or from a disadvantaged background, to get training in using technical equipment such as lighting and sound systems to give them a chance to have a career in the music industry. A lot of the people that have been trained will be helping to set up and run the stages at the festival this year.

Bill mentioned earlier, the focus on the eco-side of the festival, can you tell us a bit more about that?

Renewable energy is a big factor now and one of the projects involves putting up two wind turbines in nearby fields within the next year or so, which will eventually provide energy to the festival.

Holly, if people want to volunteer at the festival, what kind of volunteers are you looking for and how would they get involved?

Well we need a lot of stewards as well as first aiders who can cover the beginning and the end of the festival when the NHS are not around. We also need people to help set up the stages and liaise with the bands. There are positions for everyone with an interest. We also need volunteers all year round to help with the planning of the event. They can volunteer by going to the website www.celticbluerock.org and downloading the volunteer form.

Where can people get tickets for the festival?

Tickets can be bought from the website which is www.celticbluerock.org and lazy bird tickets are available now until 1st March which is St. David's day, for £35. From the 2nd March the tickets go up to £40. Kids under 12 get in free.