

# RELOAD HOUGHTON BUFFS HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING FRIDAY SEP 18 2009

IT WAS A PERFECTLY TIMED email from Neil from Reload that reminded me that they had been waiting over a year for a Riffs review and that Houghton Buffs was a perfect venue to catch the band live.

Having bestowed a big wadge of guilt on me what could I do but book my lensman for the evening and get set for some Rock.....



Lucky Stan from Houghton Buffs was away in Benidorm so it was DJ Dave that was the host for the evening and wasted no time introducing himself and apologising for the lower than usual turnout: 'I can't believe it, the last two to three gigs have been chocka in here - over 150, and yet it's not so full tonight.' As the place is reasonably large (you could have forty people in and not even notice them!) then it did look a little sparse but I have noted on other occasions it's not the amount of people there, it's the vociferousness of them (that *is* a word as I've just looked it up in Val's *Dikshun*, *Dietsyn*, *Diesh*, *List of Possible Words* and it's there).



Nige was very taken with the big screen videos that were playing - it's great having the atmosphere set by some quality rock but to get the visuals as well is a bonus, especially when it was Free live at the Isle of Wight festival and then some rare Bad Co. footage.

Anyway, it was band time and the lads took to the stage and opened with

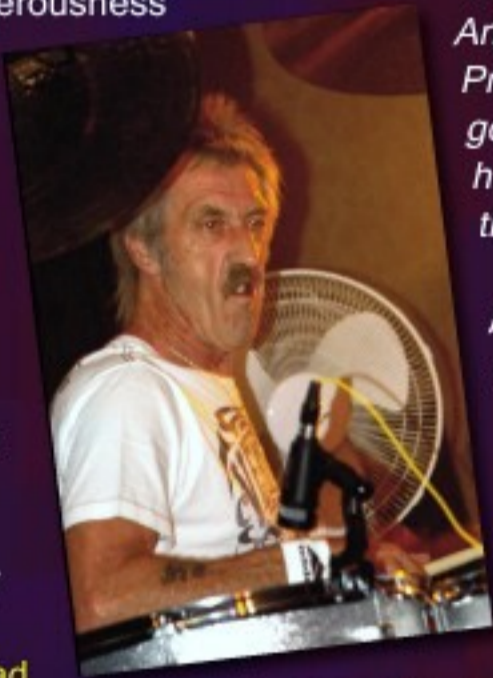


one of my personal favourites - WISHING WELL. The sound was full and complete and it was pleasing to note that a few more people had drifted in.



A bit of Floyd never goes amiss and a superb version of COMFORTABLY NUMB preceded Whitesnake's FOOL FOR YOUR LOVIN. I was

sussing out just where Reload had set their marker and they were Rock - but not as heavy as say, Rock Solid, but not as light as The Dusty Tools. As Dave explained between sets: 'They are perfect for us here. Anything heavier, say Metallica or Priest and the audience just don't go for it. But Reload have got it right on the button.'



And I see exactly what he meant as in minutes the band had got the audience up dancing with HERE I GO AGAIN; and I remember being pleasantly

surprised by a couple of Lizzy numbers, none more so than STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU and a crackin version of ROSALIE (brought back memories of local lads Black Rose).

Phil on keys and vocals seemed a bit out of it on the extreme left of the stage, hidden behind the speaker stack but he made himself known by some very competent playing and guesting on vocals on at least one song. Paul on lead pulled

some excellent notes from his guitar and never put a foot wrong as I could see; Bill on drums kept the pace along with Joe on bass and got a commendation from Nige for their pacing of DOCTOR DOCTOR. Singer Neil is the focal point of the band and visually he IS the band. Never over the top yet always giving the audience something to watch he struts and poses superbly and just now and then that microphone stand is hoisted aloft (much to Nige's pleasure).



Rather chuffed I recognised the opening bars to Gen Ex Billy Idol's WHITE WEDDING. Even the Stones, Bowie and T Rex got an

outing tonight and it all went down very well with the crowd who hardly left the dance floor all night.



Neil explained between set: 'We play only once a week; that keeps us sharp and it still is an excitement to gig - we

actually turn down more gigs than we accept.' I think this is cos they are all mature men with full time jobs and gigging twice in a row can take it out of you. 'It's not just being up there on stage and playing for nearly two hours, it's setting up all the gear and then



stripping it down again. When you're in your twenties it's no hassle...'

Reload play it safe, but this means that they can play

at most venues. They play what you would expect, what some people would call 'cheese' but, as we have found time and time again, that is what the majority of audiences seem to like. And if that's what they want, then Reload will be around to supply.



*Val dol*

<http://www.reloadonline.co.uk>