Ramsbottom Festival at the Cricket Club

Reviewed by Helen Nugent September 2011

In a country where there are more music festivals than you can shake a stick at, is it folly to launch a new one? The organisers of the new Ramsbottom Festival didn't think so. And judging by the weekend's entertainment this boutique event deserves a permanent place in the summer festival fixture list.

Before a musician had played a note, the Ramsbottom Festival looked like a promising bet. Who could fail to love a festival which, in addition to a main arena, had a second performance area entitled 'T'Other Stage'? Added to this was a Beer Tent serving locally-brewed delights (including the fragrantly-floral Ramsbottom Festival Ale) and a range of mouth-watering treats in the Food Village. Kids were also well-catered for in this family-friendly town nestled in the shadow of the West Pennines.

With the combined resources of The Met in Bury, Don’t Panic Event Management and Ramsbottom Online behind it, the three-day festival drew a combination of internationally-renowned talent, nationally-recognised bands and local musicians. A calculated decision to ‘theme’ each day paid off. Rock and blues ushered in the festival on Friday night with Mark Radcliffe and the Big Figures followed by The Animals & Friends with Steve Cropper on the main stage. But pure genius was to be found on T’Other Stage in the form of Randolph Matthews, a shoeless one-man machine who did everything using his own voice and a loop pedal.