

Midges can't stop the Music as Knockengoroch World Ceilidh Festival 2012 celebrates its 15th year!

Last weekend's four day Knockengoroch World Ceilidh took place under blue skies against the impressive backdrop of the Carsphairn hills. Nearly 3000 people of all ages attended the renowned festival that organizers describe as 'a big festival in a small pot'.

The range of music extended from acts on Friday such as the Skye based traditional fusion act the Peatbog Faeries, to the trail blazing dance act Utah Saints and into Saturday with the world famous Skatalites, featuring musicians from Jamaica, the USA. The band established the genre of ska as we know it today. Local journalist Sarah Ade was lucky enough to get an interview with 76 year old Lester, one of the original members of the band from 1964.

"Scotland is such a great place; and Knockengoroch is a really special location, with such a great audience. We have enjoyed our UK tour, which started in Dorchester, and which we are at the end of now and looking forward to going home for a rest!"

The music continued in the dance tent with UK famed drum n' bass act DJ Hype and MC Daddy Earl who had flown up from London for the event. They had the audience dancing till the wee small hours in the covered Shieling Tent venue.

On Sunday afternoon the premier of the Galloway local stage hosted a selection of hand-picked singer-songwriters from the area's very own hills and glens – the tent was packed for this new event featuring up and coming local stars such as Zoe Bestel from Wigtown and Sally Campbell from Balmacellan.

The Celtic Longhouse venue featured some electric sessions around the fireside lum, including performances from renowned musicians such as Scottish traditional musician of the year Rua Macmillan and all girl group the Shee. Recordings were made of the music created in the venue and an edit of the 'Best of the Longhouse 2012' will be released later this year, with all profits going to the charity Global Music Exchange, which returns music royalties to the Baka pygmy people.

The band Baka Beyond played their fusion of African and Celtic music on Sunday night on the Bo Airigh turf roofed greenstage to an appreciative crowd. They were followed by Balkan Eastern European troubadours the Destroyers, who had travelled from Birmingham.

The festival featured much more than music, eight Tibetan monks from the Tashi Lhunpo monastery in India attended as part of their European tour with their intricately decorated Tibetan tent, and constructed an elaborate sand mandala over the weekend; the Stand Comedy Club came with a selection of six Scottish comedians; award winning international absurdist comedian Dr Brown had the audience in stitches with his award winning children and adults shows and impressive light installations and sculptures adorned the hillside including a giant metal Phoenix, wings outstretched across the Shieling field.

Further activities included children's workshops, the Pyroceltica fire show, a sauna, a cinema, a healing area and a variety of stalls selling different wares. Food and real ale including the bespoke dandelion Knock Ale, brewed by the Fraoch Heather Ales company especially for Knockengoroch, kept festival visitors well fed and watered over the weekend.

Ben Froobs, who had traveled up from Cumbria said 'it was my first time at Knockengoroch this year and I can say hands down it was the best festival I've ever been to! I loved everything about it. The only down side is having to wait a year until the next one!'

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For more information and more images contact katch@knockengoroch.org.uk