



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

April 2011 Newsletter

Doesn't seem five minutes ago since I finished the last newsletter, that's what I get for being so late.

Friday and another good night was had by all - we didn't have a full house but we certainly had a good crowd. Two contrasting acts who complimented each other - Mustang a 4 piece band from Elgin, and from Donegal Mary B and Paul Gallagher.

Mustang were with us was last January and the weather was horrific for them driving back down the road. Thankfully they would have got a lot better run down the road on Friday. These guys have all been involved in the music scene for some time and their line up includes the north's top steel player Alan Thompson. Alan was full of the cold last time but had no excuse this time for not giving us a few numbers listening to the band on Friday fully endorsed the fact that you can't beat a band that has a steel player. They were on top form and looked like they were enjoying themselves as much as we were enjoying them they covered all styles of country nice to hear some numbers we hadn't heard for a while.

Mary and Paul are a husband and wife duo who have been regular, and very popular, visitors in the club since way back in the early days. I think I say this every time I see her but Mary never changes, she certainly isn't looking any older, and is still the same bubbly character, wonder what her secret is. Anyway as I said they are very popular and we can see why, they always have time for a blether and chat to everyone never forgetting faces or names. Mary has a lovely voice and during their programme they gave us some old favourites, some new ones - including a song written by Mary's sister called O' Daniel written about the man himself, but saying only nice things of course.

I liked the way that both bands sat and chatted during the breaks and watched each other each on stage, proves they were all friendly nice people with no airs or graces about them.

I think I told you last time that we were planning a committee night out to Lybster hall as they were putting on a fundraising night, with the entertainment being provided by Whiskey River and a Garth Brooks tribute act. Well we went and had a good night. Tommy and Jack who make up Whiskey River are two fine blokes who pleased the crowd by playing mostly modern country, so everyone got on the dance floor including us. We just let our hair down and made the most of the opportunity to chill out and let someone else do the work!

When we were all suitably warmed up and tanked up 'Garth Brooks' came on stage and it was a bit like that TV show that used to be on years ago - I think it was called Stars In Your Eyes. The saying was "Tonight, Matthew Jack from Whiskey River will be ... Garth Brooks". The big debate was he or wasn't he miming - anyway that aside he sang all the songs famous by the man himself and everyone sang along. The committee had worked very hard decorating the hall making it look the part and they made us all feel very welcome.

Declan Nerney was playing in Wick the same night, and the ones that were there all seemed to have had a good night and enjoyed it very much, saying he put on a good show giving value for money.

Some of the troops were at the Triple C's club night in Wick last week to hear The Jacks, reports were the band were on form and they had a full house so that's good. Glad their numbers have picked up as the committee work hard at putting on a good show each month.

We have had some bad news two weeks ago. John Dunnett who is one of our new committee members in the club, and our site director for the Festival had a nasty accident with his bike.

Until Friday he was flat on his back in Raigmore with a broken bone in his neck and one in his back, however he got released on Friday strapped in a brace to restrict movement, so looks like Gina will have the nurses uniform on for a while!

John does a lot of the electrical work for the Festival so that's a real blow. No doubt knowing John he will be feeling terrible about that but it can't be helped, and as long as he gets better we will manage.

I keep telling the committee that there should be two people working together so that we have someone to take over in situations like this. Mind you I doubt there could be another director who could step into John's shoes, or should I say boots, and do the sparky work. I know he won't be able to bend but he might be able to give orders from the sideline or the couch.

Now for part two... His sister in law, Evelyn, who is married to Alan our festival co-ordinator and is another of our new committee members, fell in a pot hole when out walking the dogs and broke her foot. However she managed to hobble in on her crutches on Friday night – no way she was missing out! Poor Evelyn she's another one who works hard for us at the Festival selling raffles and doing whatever she can to help.

March hasn't been kind to country music. During the month it lost some of its great ambassadors - amongst those were Charlie Louvin who was part of the Louvin Brothers along with his brother Ira. Following Ira's death in '65 he continued to record until very recently, his final recording was in November 2010.

Ralph Mooney died in Texas with complications from cancer. Ralph born in 1928 and was one of country music's finest steel guitar player who co-wrote the country standard *Crazy Arms*. He played guitar on early Buck Owens hits such as *Four in the Morning*, also playing steel on Merle Haggard classics including *The Bottle Let Me Down* and *Swinging Doors*, before going on to play steel with Waylon Jennings for over 20 years.

Following a long illness related to heart problems Ferlin Husky also passed away at the age of 85. Ferlin was a pioneering country music entertainer in the 60's and known for hits like *On The Wings Of A Dove* and *Gone*. In 1953 he teamed up with Jean Shepherd on her first hit *Dear John Letter*. He retired in 1977 but made regular appearances in Branson.

Last week grand Ole Opry star Mel McDaniel died after battling lung cancer aged 68. Mel had many hits during the 80's including *Anger and Tears* & *Louisiana Saturday Night*.

2011 Hall of Fame inductees will include Reba McEntire, Jean Shepherd and Bobby Braddock.

Reba continues to very popular and during her career has been awarded Female Vocalist of the Year title on four consecutive years in 84-87.

Jean Shepherd has been an Opry member for 50 years and, as I mentioned previously, had her first chart success with Ferlin Husky, before going on to score many more and influencing other female artistes like Loretta Lynn and Jeannie C Riley.

Songwriter Bobby Braddock also gets his place in the hall apart from being piano player in Marty Robbins band he wrote country classics like *DIVORCE* and *He Stopped Loving Her Today*.

There are one or two good shows coming up later in the year. Brad Paisley is coming over in August playing at the SECC in Glasgow on the 20th and 21st, and Dolly Parton is also back touring Britain in August and September, also be appearing in Glasgow. I am delighted that we have got tickets for Alan Jackson in Norway so thanks Darryn for getting him organised.

I was reading that they have this week opened an exhibition in the Hall of Fame and it's based on the 50 year history of Tootsies', the well known watering hole of the stars located across an alley from the original Opry the Ryman Auditorium. Many of them, including Patsy Cline and Faron Young, could be found propping up the bar waiting to go on stage for their set in the Opry.

The exhibition will be named Thirty Four Steps and Fifty Years after a quote from Willie Nelson - apparently from the Ryman to Tootsies' was 17 steps and he maintains it was 34 back!

I noticed that George Jones has a newly released album his first in five years which contains some new material apart from his greatest hits such as *The Grand Tour*, and *He Stopped Loving Her Today*.

I also noticed that Thomas Maguire and Fhiona Ennis have taken the Hank Thompson hit *The Wild Side of Life* and merged it with the answer song by Kitty Wells, *It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels* and performed the result as a duet. The couple recorded it in Nashville and it is now released as a single.

Speaking of albums Florence Given, one half of Country Features, sent me a copy of her new solo album entitled *Time after Time*. She has recorded two albums and a recent DVD with her singing partner Robbie, but this album is a dream for her as she has been writing songs for years, and the album contains some of her recent self penned numbers. She also sings the Heather Myles number *My Mama's A Star* and some old standards. Florence and Robbie are very popular in Scotland and have gained many friends during their travels. The album is excellent and a bonus to anyone's collection - we wish Florence a lot of luck with it she deserves it, and we have Country Features back with us for our July show.

Well I think that's enough for now I'd better stop as I've got a heap of things to do between now and the Festival. Next time you hear from me it will be over and done with and hopefully we will have recovered - mind you it takes longer each year!

There are still some tickets available, if you don't want to miss out on a great weekend of music and crack give Bettine a phone on 01847 892624 and she will sort you out.

Until next time, Happy Easter and keep it Country.

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCMC