



# Northern Nashville Country Music Club

## April 2014 Newsletter

Before I start I must apologise for not getting round to writing a newsletter last month, time just wasn't on my side, between the last minute organisation to get ready for the Festival and then our nephew in Aberdeen passed away so we were away for a few days. Anyway I'm sure you will make allowances for me the only trouble is that now I can hardly remember what has happened since I was last in touch.

We had a Club night at the end of March it was an all local show the acts for the night were the Kate Bain Band along with Neon, we didn't have a full house but a fair crowd who all had a good time.

Kate and the band decided they didn't want to appear at the Festival this year so it was good to have them with us at the club. Kate of course needs no introduction she has been playing locally for many years. Kate has a voice which allows her to deliver songs from all the great ladies of country music covering the good old standards to the very latest.

Band member Andrew does a great job of Garth Brooks numbers and treated us to several of his hits I particularly enjoyed his version of The Dance however he did an equally good job of more up to date numbers from the likes of The Zac Brown Band.

Gordie the very talented ex-Colorado guitar and mandolin player is also part of the band he gave us some blasts from the past, however he was suffering with a very painful leg and back which he was waiting to get treatment for -- hope he's on the mend now --

Final member of the band is Kate's husband Richard on drums and during the night they entertained us to some great country music.



Our other local act was Neon or Colin and Nigel again no introduction necessary, we were all disappointed when last year Colin decided that, due to work commitments, he could no longer manage the time to be on the road full time with Nigel and the rest of the band. So we were delighted when we knew he was still playing as part of Neon as we had just gotten used to him being back on the scene after a fairly lengthy absence.

Colin certainly has a very distinctive voice he can sing anything, and everyone just loves hearing him do those old Silver numbers, but their whole selection of songs for the night was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. We had a good night - but here I go preaching again -- shame more didn't come out and support our local talent.

We managed to catch Neon again on the Thursday night before the Festival as they were playing in the Royal Hotel, it's not often the night before the Festival that we are organised enough or have the energy to do anything. So we made the effort to go along nearly and everyone there were guests booked in for the Festival so it gave us a chance to meet and catch up with them. I did say before I went out that I was only having a couple but I'm afraid I got carried away by the atmosphere and crack and had one or two more -- my excuse was it would help me sleep -- It turned out a really good night Colin & Nigel included lots of songs from the 60's so they soon had everyone up dancing and singing along.



We decided not to have our usual club night on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April thought it would allow everyone to recharge their batteries after the Festival but we have two in May. Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> its Martin Cuffe and Off the Kuffe Band along with Carson City, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> it's the turn of Mick Flavin and Texas Back I already have bookings for this show so make sure you all book your tickets.

I'm sitting here writing this watching the rain thinking thank goodness the Festival was last weekend and what a glorious one we had weather wise it couldn't have been any better everyone was so relaxed wandering about outside -- our prayers were answered -- We had gone to the trouble and expense of getting all these extra heaters in place and didn't need them still better to be safe than sorry. The firm's engineer was also with us from Wednesday onwards, one of the generators did play up on Sunday night and started blowing cold it was quickly sorted but good he witnessed it first-hand and realised what we had been up against over the years. I think he enjoyed the time he spent with us I did check when he arrived that he was a country music fan , he was certainly amazed at how it all came together by Friday night.

So, the venue was warm even at times too hot over the weekend, good to see people stripping off layers instead of putting them on and as we heard dozens of times shame people stayed away because of the cold last time as they missed a cracking weekend.

This time the lead up to the weekend went relatively very smoothly and by Sunday night we were as far on as I have seen us sometimes on the Tuesday. This was due to a great team of committee, friends, and volunteers getting ahead of the game on the Friday night in the venue. Again on Saturday they, along with a squad of workers supplied by Martin Nicolson from our main sponsors Blargoans Limited, got on with the task of laying the floor. When Ally phoned me and said there was 36 men expecting to be fed we had no option but to crack on and make another couple loaves of sandwiches. On that note can I say a huge thanks to all the guys who turned out and helped over that weekend also the ones who arrived every day during the week and got with on with the job -- some even taking annual leave from work -- we are so indebted to you all there would be no Festival without you. Also the ladies who turned up and helped with catering making pans of soup, sausage rolls and lots of home baking, it ensured all the men were well fed, by the state of me trying to get into the jeans I must have had my fair share also-- much appreciated--

By default really the tables and chairs were delivered early but what a bonus that turned out to be whenever us girls were looking for a job we cleaned a pile, mind you that's a job I don't feel we should have to do we pay for the hire so they should arrive fit for use, that way we would still have our nails and fingertips.

Every time during the week when someone said "we're well ahead" I thought don't tempt fate but most things just fell into place with no major hitches. I think this was another reason that we as a committee were much more chilled out than we have been previous years and got a chance to enjoy the weekend instead of running around stressed out. Us girls said at the beginning of the week that we weren't going to 'girn' just smile through things...the men asked for that in writing -- don't think we did too badly but won't bother checking with them just in case!

There's no way I'm going to go through all the acts individually and write a report on them but I can say there wasn't a bad one on stage all weekend, everyone did a fantastic job for us and helped make the weekend the success it was. I know that most of you will say you enjoyed some acts more than others well that's what we would expect and means we achieved what we set out to do and that was to provide

something for everyone's taste in music. We all had our personal favourites but that doesn't take away from the fact that all the artistes from the very inexperienced newcomers to the experienced professionals did their very best to ensure we enjoyed some great country music and had fun over the weekend.

One of the highlights for some was the set provided by Kelly Spinks and his Miles of Texas Band, I knew when we heard him in Texas that he would go down well in Halkirk -- can't get more country than that -- He was delighted when we asked him to come over and play for us. They'd heard from Tracy & the Heart of Texas gang and also Bobby Flores what a great event it was and how welcome they were made to feel.

During his performance he called Alan and myself on to the stage as representatives of the Festival committee and we were presented with a Texas flag and framed plaque -- but this wasn't just any flag -- The flag was flown on the Capital building in Austin on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 signed by the Sergeant-at-Arms from the Texas House of Representatives to 'Honor their Great Friends in Scotland' and to ensure we will always be welcome in Texas. What a great gesture and very thoughtful bet there's not many can say they have had a flag flown in Texas in their honour.

We also made a presentation... ours went to Ireland. We decided that, as our Queen of Country Philomena recently celebrated 50 years in the business, it was something worth recognising. Knowing her as we do we thought she would appreciate one of our 'poems' so 'By Royal Appointment' was duly delivered along with a gold clock inscribed 'The Queens Golden Jubilee To Celebrate 50 years of Country Music'. Philomena was over the moon couldn't thank us enough she enjoyed the poem (which I will put on our website for you to read).

As usual all the acts had a great time they were blown away when they saw how impressive the venue looked, enjoyed the atmosphere at the Festival, thought the crowd were great, couldn't believe how friendly everyone was to them and the warm hospitality they received everywhere they went. It was great for the folk who hadn't been with us before and had time for sightseeing saw our county at its best everything looks so much better with the sun out.

Poor Kelly and his band had a bit of a hassle at the airport, when they landed in Aberdeen at 2.00pm on Thursday they discovered their instruments were still in London, so no option but to hang around until the next plane arrived when they managed to be united with some of their gear but had to wait another two hours for the rest to appear. After the length of journey they'd had that was all they needed to hang around an airport for hours, however they took it all in their stride said these things happen and from what I can gather spent a few hours in the bar sampling our local brew - okay for them but not so good for the poor driver waiting for them!

Sadly Radney Foster also had some problems during his trip he was rather poorly; the poor guy passed a kidney stone and then developed a very painful bout of shingles and was in severe pain. I took him to our local hospital on Friday & Saturday where they looked after him very well - he was still fighting pain and couldn't sleep but they dressed the rash for him and prescribed medication they thought would help with pain and even better he didn't have to pay. Mind you if you didn't know it would be hard to tell there was anything wrong with him when he went on stage and struck up the first cord of *Just Call Me Lonesome* he had them on the floor and gave all his fans, some who had travelled specifically to see him, what they wanted terrific country music. I notice since his return to the States he has cancelled his bookings for this week including a big Festival in California, however he says he is improving slowly so that's good news.

I think that the change of format for the weekend went very well - people seemed happy enough to remain in the venue during the break, and it was nice for the bands who were on around that time that folk didn't leave in droves to go for food but stayed and listened to them. The afternoon ticket holders left to make room for the evening ones and there didn't appear to be any hassles over seats.

Feedback has been very positive it was great that people took the time to seek us out and thank us for a great weekend - all too often people only approach us to criticise, but this year I don't think there was much to moan about.

If I had to be critical about anything it would be that the sound was a bit loud, particularly on the Friday night. If this was a problem for people then unfortunately if they didn't point out to us at the time we couldn't fix it.

Despite all that positives our numbers were still a bit down...probably on a par with last year, I'm not going to try and analyse this but of course again it has an effect on our financial situation. Over the course of the last few months we heard repeatedly that this was our last Festival I don't know where

these rumours start certainly not from us!!!! All weekend we were heard 'please don't let this be the last event, you can't not have a Festival next year' at the moment we have made no final decision over whether or not we are going ahead next year. I also get told the weekend is too dear, single shows too expensive there's just no way that's the case - £35 to hear four top class acts when folk think nothing of paying that to go south to hear one act, then pay petrol, accommodation, meals and drinks on top of that.

People still travelled this year with many more folk travelling the length of Britain to get here but local support was well down even from within our club members. I know things crop up especially over Easter time but for country fans just not to bother turning up to what was nominated the Event of the Year for 2013 on their own doorstep, then no wonder people get fed up trying to bring something into the community.

Anyway rant over and that's of my chest - it's too soon for us to have a full financial overview to decide whether it's viable or not for us to go ahead again but will let you know what we decide.

As this year's Festival was not recorded by BBC ALBA our sound and light engineers have recorded and produced a Festival 14 DVD for a donation of £10 to cover production costs and perhaps help with funds you can have a souvenir of the weekend. It will be a wee while before it is available but you can pre-order if you would like one and I will send it to you. You can let me know by e-mail or by post giving me your details, if you order with a cheque it should be made out to NNCCMF.

Well for someone who wasn't going to ramble on about the Festival I've done not too badly and hogged the whole newsletter, Stewart Fenwick will be doing a write up for CMDS so I'm sure he will let us have a copy for the web site, I will also get some photos on as soon as I can.

Of course the big event of the month was the Country to Country weekend at the O2 in London. By all accounts it was great weekend and certainly the folk who went from here all had a great time and enjoyed the acts. I know for me that some of the artistes would be way too modern and rocky however you can't beat live country music whatever kind and when you are part of something like that the atmosphere gets you and you just enjoy. It was amazing that so many of Nashville's top entertainers were all there together under one roof I am sure it will just continue to grow. I know many folk have booked tickets for next year - I don't know if I would be brave enough to do that without knowing the line up as it's a lot of money to invest if you don't know who's on, still I suppose we did the same years ago with Wembley.

I see that Raintown have a two page spread in this month's Up Country magazine. I know that some of you felt they were a little too modern and loud at our Festival but others thought they were just as good as their counterparts in Nashville. They are certainly making a big impact on the country scene at the moment and their second visit to the C2C event went down a storm ... they received a tremendous reception. The couple are ambitious - they have worked very hard to get to the stage they are at and I know they will continue to do so by writing more of their own songs and striving for perfection. Speaking to Paul and Claire at the weekend, along with their fabulous band, they feel they are fortunate to be where they are things are moving quickly forward for them, and are delighted that their fans are travelling to see them they owe a lot to them. Looks like Raintown have a big future ahead of them they are lovely people and certainly a credit to Scotland.

The American Country Music Awards were held recently at the MGM Grand Hotel Las Vegas - once again no real surprises in there George Strait picked up the Entertainer of the Year award; Jason Aldean was named male Vocalist of the Year, whilst the female vocalist award went to Miranda Lambert.

Speaking of George Strait his final concert in his Cowboy Rides Away tour will be held in Texas on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June on the bill will be Jason Aldean, Kenny Chesney, Vince Gill, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson & Martina McBride and a host of others. It sold out in a day and no wonder with a line up like that, however George did say that he is still going to record and play some events - so there's hope yet—

Martina McBride surprised a group of homeless teenagers from the Covenant Shelter in New Jersey by handing out tickets to her sold out concert with George Strait, what a lovely gesture.

I think you will remember me telling you that the lovely husband and wife singer songwriters, Joey & Rory, who we had with us at our Festival a couple of years back. had given birth to their long awaited baby when their little girl was born in February. The couple have recently announced that baby Indiana has Down's Syndrome - they said at first the news surprised them, but they are saying she is a special gift and they are loving every minute with her... I'm sure she will give them much pleasure.

I read this week that sadly the family of Glen Campbell have had to put him into an Alzheimer Care Facility, he was diagnosed in 2011 but his condition is at the stage they are no longer able to care for him at home.

Better news on Randy Travis - things are slowly improving for him following a stroke last year. He was seen out for the first time at a Neal McCoy concert - he still has a long road in front of him and is not sure if he will ever get back to full health, but is pleased he is getting his voice back a little.

I notice that the 20<sup>th</sup> Wolvestock Festival in Wolverhampton, due to be held in July, has been cancelled due to lack of ticket sales. The organisers say that they were forced to change venue to an indoor location, that advance ticket sales just weren't encouraging and they couldn't afford to take a chance so pulled the plug - seems to happening all over -

Well I think that's about all for now I better go and get on with some post-Festival paperwork which needs to be done.

Ally and me are going to Gran Canaria next Sunday for 10 days - it will be lovely to get a break and do nothing. Don't tell him I told you but he will be 65 so that's why we are going!! I haven't done a thing to get organised... I could struggle finding something to fit after the Festival rolls and home baking!

Until next time.

Keep It Country

*Christine*

Christine Gray  
Chairperson NNCCM