



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

August 2012 Newsletter

As I mentioned in my last newsletter we were getting ready to go away with Jenny & Darryn on another trip to hear some great country music and we certainly did.

This time we flew from Inverness to Luton then went the 85 miles by hire car to a small town called Watton which is near Norwich.

I had never been to that part of the country before and enjoyed the drive through some picturesque villages and beautiful countryside.

The venue for the show was the Queens Hall, and we stayed in apartments on the main street within walking distance.

We were there in time to have a few drinks and do some mingling before the show started, caught up with some of the boys from C'est la Vie and also Nicky James.

The Queens Hall was a fairly old building with tiered seating (probably only held around 300 people at the most) although our seats were at the back we had a good view of the stage, and it was handy for nipping to the bar!!!

Jerry Kilgore opened the night and he was brilliant, I had managed to catch most of his spot when he played our Festival but it was even better to sit back relax and enjoy.

He perfectly delivered some great numbers from his first CD *Loaded and Empty* also some tracks from his recently released album called *Telephone TX* which included the title track and some of my favourites like *Can't Hide A Heartache & Aint On The Menu*.

True to form he took time to pose for photos, meet with everyone (including us) and he asked us to let everyone know how much he enjoyed himself in Halkirk and what a great Festival we had.

The majority of people at the show hadn't seen Jerry or heard his music before but they appeared to enjoy him and bought his CD's, he certainly appears to have made his mark in this country and say's he can't wait to come back. Sad he hasn't received the same response to his music in Nashville - his albums have a pure country flavour which is what they should be producing in Music City.

Next to take the stage from Letterkenny, Ireland's Sweetheart of Country, Lisa McHugh, who in a very short time has become one of the hottest country acts on the scene.

Lisa as we know has appeared with Gene Watson on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry and together they have recorded a duet (which sadly we didn't hear).

During her part of the show Lisa sang her way through a selection of numbers from her recent album *Dreams Come To Life* and her first album *Old Fashioned Girl*. This was a good mix of traditional country and Irish music she also chose to include a few covers belonging to Dolly Parton who is one of her influences in country music. To date Lisa has won 11 awards including our own NNCCM Band Of The Year for 2011 which she will receive at our show on the 28th September.

The audience certainly warmed to Lisa, who is very naturally a people person she found the time to chat to all her 'new' fans, proving why she is set for a long term career in country music.

Last but by no means least the veteran of country music who has been wowing his audiences for nearly 50 years Gene Watson, and without a doubt that ageless voice of his sounded as good as it did all these years ago.

Now you'll remember when he played for us in Halkirk in 2011 he put on a fantastic musical show but fans were disappointed when he appeared as if he just couldn't be bothered, he seemed on edge and just wanted away. We gave him the benefit of the doubt and reminded ourselves that that he had just travelled by car from the south of England was hijacked straight away by the TV and media and ours was the last gig in his tour. Well he couldn't have been more different, you could see on stage he was totally chilled and enjoying himself, he interacted with the crowd telling stories relating to his life and career informing us he had stopped drinking in 1980, stopped smoking in 1900 and was now enjoying doing what he does best. He certainly did that - he took us on a musical journey, captivating the audience with his stunning voice and the depth of emotion in it churning out songs like *Fourteen Carat Mind*, *Farewell Party*, *Paper Rosie*, *Got No Reason* - I could go on and on.

He certainly didn't rush away, again he was relaxed and chatted until the last fan had gone (apart from us we were still in the bar) no wonder they keep coming back!

You have all heard me moaning about poor Duncan Warwick, the editor of Country Music People magazine, who always sings the praises of the English promoters for taking the American acts to Britain -- - well he usually says '...to England' and we don't get a mention--.

Well at one point during an interval I saw Ally blethering to someone only to discover it was Duncan, so as you can imagine I vented my grievances face to face.

He listened and apologised and I guess he's right he can only report on the information given to him. Poor bloke being pounced on when he was out enjoying himself, I think we reached an understanding and had a dram together, he's a really nice guy definitely got good taste in country music - may be Halkirk next year.

The following day after a full English we drove back to Luton, where we got rid of the car, took a taxi to our Hotel which was beautiful - even better as we had been upgraded to suites with four poster beds etc sheer luxury, and all Ally could find to moan about was that the TV was too little.

Spent the day exploring and, at night we ate in Jimmy's World Buffet. This place was amazing - you could eat all you wanted for around £12 and they had freshly cooked food on offer from Mexico, India, China, Thailand & Italy - it was nice just trying little tastes of anything you fancied, (sadly we fancied quite a lot). Next morning we were up early and flew home again think that's the end of the gallivanting for a while now.

I guess by now you will all have heard the sad news that the First Lady Of Country Music, Kitty Wells passed away on the 16th of July.

It was just a few weeks ago that I read an article about her in Country Music people and thought to myself she's hardy still going strong at almost 94.

Kitty shot to fame when she recorded an 'answer' song to Hank Thompson's number 1 record the *Wild Side Of Life* the song of course was *It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels* which defended woman for taking the blame in the break up of a relationship, Kitty herself was married to her husband and stage partner for 74 years.

Tracy Pitcox attended her funeral service and he said it was certainly fit for a Queen, throughout the ceremony there were photos shown on a screen following Kitty's life from when she was a child until recently. Ricky Skaggs was one of the entertainers who sang at the ceremony and many other fellow entertainers were present including Charley Pride, Bill Anderson, Connie Smith & Marty Stuart.

Last Friday another club night, and for our July show the entertainment was provided by Jolene & Barry and The Lorraine MacMillan Band.

Lorraine and her new Country Band have been receiving rave reports in the country magazines recently however it wasn't possible for her to bring her drummer and guitarist, so our own Nigel & Alasdair (Nashville Union) supported Lorraine and her partner, steel guitarist Davy Adam, on stage and they did a fine job.

Lorraine is originally from Paisley but now resides in Durham.

Jolene & Barry from Falkirk need no introduction; they have been on the road together for 36 years and have been regular visitors to the club as well as travelling the length and breadth of Britain.

Although we had two female singers they were totally different and it worked out perfectly - one complimented and contrasted the other. Jolene has a very easy listening style of singing and chooses songs to suit, Lorraine on the other hand has a much more powerful voice and prefers to belt out up tempo numbers.

Sadly it was a very quiet night due to lack of numbers, we knew that there were lots of things on, and that some of our members were joining Jimmy and Marian Gunn at their Golden Wedding party and also peak holiday time.

Thankfully we did have some visitors and it got busier as the night went on but what a shame for the bands as it lacked our usual atmosphere, however they did understand and made an extra effort to get the crowd going and everyone who was there said they had a good time and enjoyed the music.

Nearly forgot that we had our committee night out on Friday 13th, and after stuffing ourselves with a delicious carvery meal we went to the Triple C club night.

We couldn't fail but to have a great night when on stage was Thomas Maguire & Fhiona Ennis. The couple, along with their band, were in fine form and it was great to see a full house in Wick, including many faces from Thurso, Orkney and all over the North enjoying their night. The couple continue to be very busy they have recently been awarded the Vocal Duo of the Year at the Hot Country award show, and their new single *These Boots Are Made For Walking* is doing very well for them. We didn't have them in the club this year but I'm sure they will be able to fit us into their busy schedule next year.

During the weekend of the Invergordon Festival Drew Taylor from Double Trouble married his long term partner Claire, they slipped away to the registrars on Friday morning then spent the rest of the weekend at the Festival.

What a super thing to do they are a lovely couple and we wish them all the best for a long and happy life together.

I had an e-mail recently from Ashville, the band from Holland who appeared at our Festival this year and who had been members of Frank Jansen Band before he came off the road. Just before the Festival their lead singer left them high and dry and Frank agreed to come over with them, well since then they have hired a new female lead singer and were doing great.

So this e-mail came out of the blue saying they were forced to end due to health problems, they are obviously gutted - fingers crossed its nothing too serious - and you never know what might happen in the future, but what a loss to country music.

I know it's on the web site but just a reminder that BBC Alba have announced the dates for our Festival to be shown. It will be part of their Ceol Country series and will start on Tuesday 18th September at 9.00pm repeated the following Tuesday at the same time and this year we have four programmes.

I have been reading snippets about this years Fan Fair, or CMA Music Fest as it is now called, held in June, apparently this year they had a record number of 71,000 fans attending – what a lot of people!

When Charley Pride pulled out of last years Wembley Festival he said he'd be back this year and true to his word he's returning in October/ November doing dates in England, Ireland & Glasgow on the 11th November.

Yes, I will be there! Charley was my introduction to the new style of country music in the early 70's - I was just mad for him bought all his LP'S sadly they are now in the loft.

I am listening to Stewart Fenwick's on line country music programme whilst writing this and he has just played *Josephine* a brilliant track of Joey & Rory's newly released CD called *His and Hers*. I got a copy of it the other day have not really had much time to 'digest' it yet, it might not be everyone's 'cup of tea' but it certainly showcases Rory's song writing talents, Joey's lovely singing voice and their beautiful harmonies.

For you readers interested in reading about our Texas trip a write up is now on the web site along with a selection of our pictures (linked at top of Newsletter page).

Well I think that's about it for now better go and get some chores done.

Until Next Time

Keep it Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCMC