



# Northern Nashville Country Music Club

## December 2010 Newsletter



First things first, here we are with Christmas fast approaching us and the end of another year. I know its hard to believe but when it comes we at Northern Nashville wish everyone all the best for the festive season and a very happy healthy 2011.

We have had two shows since you last heard from me in November - something a bit different - Arizona Flame and the Outlaws. This was an excellent show, the weather was terrible, very snowy and cold, it wasn't too bad when we started but at the end of the night it was snowing really heavy, however the bands thankfully got home safely.

Arizona Flame, from the north of England, had a slight change of line up since I saw them last, George and Neil were joined on stage by Steve James. George is quite a character and provided most of the vocals, excellently delivered by his fine country voice. When Steve fronted his own band he sang modern country numbers by singers like Alan Jackson, Vince Gill, Blake Shelton (the stuff I like) and I had hoped we were going to get - I'm pleased to say we weren't disappointed. The crowd liked them very much as they treated us to great country music all night.

The next band were The Outlaws - a five piece band from Northern Ireland. I'm not sure how to describe them - they're not a show band but come close. They were a very friendly bunch who played a bit of old & new country and some Irish. Their lead singer had a very distinctive voice and you could see he was passionate about his music, they certainly kept the dance floor busy, the crowd just couldn't get enough of them.

Anyway, are you all enjoying this Christmas card weather or like me fed up with it? I've got to admit it's very seasonal but better if it had waited until next weekend when we were all ready for Christmas, and didn't have to work or shop. It just puts everything on hold - you can't make plans, struggle to get the car out never mind drive it - yes I've decided I could happily do without it!

I might be wrong but I think it's the first time in the history of NNCCMC that we haven't been able to go ahead with the planned Christmas Shows (weather again). Tony Kerr and Slange Ava were booked to play Friday and Saturday night, Tony was coming from Ireland and in discussion with him early in the week due to the terrible forecast we agreed it might be best for him not to travel. Tony was disappointed he really wanted to come and didn't want to let us down, we did think maybe people were being extra cautious after being caught out last time and it might never happen, but in hind sight it was the right decision.

The Jacks were booked to play in John O Groats on Saturday night so they very kindly agreed to come on Friday and do the night with Slange Ava, that was one problem less, but by Friday we were wondering whether or not they would make it. The snow certainly came with a vengeance but during a period on Friday morning when the road was open Geordie, Kevin & Trevor made it over the Ord and arrived safely.

James from Slange Ava also struggled a bit getting in from Keiss, so we at Northern Nashville really appreciate the effort the bands went to get here in order to ensure we had a Christmas Show.

Anyway bands here, we worried would the members turn up, phone red hot all day (that was the only thing that was hot!) with people asking if it was on or not. Understandably a lot of folk didn't want to chance coming in from the country but luckily a lot of die-hards made it.

Clearly we didn't have as many members as normal, and it was a shame that many missed out on the Christmas Show, but the ones there all got into the swing of things and we had a party. Both bands were on form, covered all styles and forms of music, and gave the crowd all that they wanted right down to a strip the willow! Brilliant !!!!

Slange Ava really entered into the spirit of Christmas when they came on stage for their second spot – now picture this... Donnie dressed as Rudolph complete with red nose, Chris the rosy cheeked elf Santa's little helper, Santa James dishing out the chocolates, Keith frosty the snowman who was in danger of melting under the heat of the lights. It was a super thing for them to do thanks guys. Photos will be on the web site soon. No one seemed to be worried about getting home at the end of the night - I thought they would never let the band off the stage.

Saturday night Slange Ava did the honours and played all night, we could have done with a few more people but the boys once again put on an excellent show got everyone going.

I would like to thank all those people who braved the elements and came out on such a night - some even making the trip through from Wick. I know myself how easy it would have been to sit with the feet up watching the tele, so thanks to you all for making the effort.

I was flicking through the CMDS magazine when I was having my lunch today and in Stewart's CD round up he reviewed an album from Johnny Reid. Now how's this for a coincidence... I hadn't heard of the guy until Friday night. Kay and Gordon had heard him when they were in Canada they liked him and gave me a copy of the CD and I happened to have him playing in the background while I was reading and thought him brilliant - yes a voice! Johnny apparently was born in Lanarkshire and appears to be making it big in Canada, I agree with Stewart that it's not an out and out country album, but it's got something about it.

I have recently been putting together a promo piece for the festival so I will attach it and you can get an idea of the acts appearing at Easter.

Following a very successful 2010 Festival NNCMC are well ahead in organizing their 2011 event. Feedback and comments from the last one were all positive with country music fans saying 'the best one yet, superb line up, and how can you beat it'. Well, we are going to have a good try, and judging by the line up in place we might have just succeeded.

As usual the Festival boasts a varied line up which introduces the audiences to some well known names, some lesser known and, of course, the ever-popular local contingent.

The acts we had last year from Texas went down a storm, so you're in for a treat if you enjoyed their style of country as there's lots more of it on offer next time. Several of the American acts record on the Heart of Texas record label and will be familiar to those of you who tune into the Tru Country programmes on Sky TV.

The first of these is Justin Trevino a retro honky tonker from Austin Texas, Justin was introduced to country music at an early age as his father was an avid country fan who persuaded Justin to play the local beer joints in his teens.

In his home studio during 1997 Justin began recording artists who were interested in making traditional country music - these included Leona Williams, Johnny Bush and Ferlin Husky.

Justin has recently released a duet album with the popular songstress from our Festival last year, Amber Digby, and its brilliant. Over the years he has won many awards and when you hear his clear clean voice delivering hard core country music you'll understand why.

In the same vein Landon Dodd along with his band the Dance Hall Drifters are the full package. They are a group of talented musicians who go to great lengths to replicate vintage country sound with fiddle, steel guitar and fine harmonies along with the award-winning voice of Landon Dodd.

They are a hard core country act whose stage show will include country shuffles, waltzes, ballads, and timeless classics by country greats like Ray Price, Johnny Bush and Buck Owens.

His album *Call of the Wild* includes duets by Amber Digby, Leona Williams – truly one of the best bands Texas has to offer.

Last years Festival featured Leona the mother, and this time it's the turn of the son, Ron Williams.

Step son of the famous Merle Haggard, Ron has been surrounded by country legends since childhood often sleeping in a guitar case as an infant whilst mum Leona was on stage.

With influences including Glen Campbell, Marty Robbins & Merle Haggard he has consistently proven that he is a genuine country artist worthy of being referred to as the real deal.

Ron performs and travels all over the US and is now looking forward to coming to Scotland, which came highly recommended by his mum.

Although many of you might not be familiar with the name Tony Booth you will certainly know his music.

Tony is the guy responsible for such hits as *The Keys In The Mailbox*, *Lonesome 77203*, *Cinderella & Happy Hour* to name a few.

He was born in Florida but has been resident in the Lone Star State for over 30 years, and in 2006 was commissioned an official Texan by the governor for his contributions to country music in the state.

In the past Tony has worked with Buck Owens, where he was a regular performer on his Ranch Party TV show, and more recently with Ray Price, Merle Haggard, Randy Travis, and Gene Watson.

Born in 1943 this guy may be a veteran in the business but if you ask any number of country stars who their favourite singer is a large number will respond Gene Watson.

Gene is truly one of music's best ballad singers - in the same league as country icons George Jones and Merle Haggard, currently he is singing better than ever with his clear pure tone intact and an unmatched soulful delivery, this is evident in his latest album *A Taste Of The Truth* a classic country album.

Of the album Gene states 'I'm working harder to be better - each song is very personal and has a special meaning to me'

Watching Gene perform live he has the skills to give a powerful vocal performance and drain the emotion from his selected material without effort.

NNCMC have been trying to include Gene as part of our programme for some years, now at last we have succeeded and I know he's going to put on a performance well worth the wait.

Gail Davies was one of the most popular acts at our first Festival and we are delighted that she has agreed to return this year.

She has been described as one of the most important and influential female singer/songwriters, and is also one of the first female record producers in country music. Gail is cited by many divas as their role model - the person who kicked open so many of the closed doors on music row.

Although best known for her pioneering production work Gail is also a gifted vocalist and prolific songwriter, and her compositions are some of today's country radio standards and have been recorded round the world by internationally known artists.

Making a welcome return to our county is the very popular band Highway 101. The band was part of our 2005 event and played in the Club more recently, gaining them an ever increasing fan base in Caithness.

From the moment they formed, Highway 101 presented a new approach to country music, they helped catapult the country genre forward, tapping a whole new audience and paving the way for such mass appeal artists as Garth Brooks and Alan Jackson.

Over the years their sound remains the same and the bands' belief in music is their constant vision to quote 'We still share the sincerity about the music and never pretend to be anything other than what we are –a band who loves to play music'.

Completing the line up from across the pond are 4, young talented musicians from Ontario, Canada who go under the name of South Mountain.

Shortly after the release of their debut album the band created sufficient impact to capture the Canadian Country Music Association coveted 'Visto Rising Star Award' honours as the top new artists of 1991 - this being the first of many bestowed on the band.

When you consider the depth of talent and record of achievement within the individual members of South Mountain, plus the unique sound created by the combination of their strong vocal abilities, success would have been impossible to deny.

They currently hold the title for the best live show, beating the likes of Shania Twain, that must really be something. Maybe a little bit different but certainly entertainment at its best.

Adding glamour to the stage is a wee Irish colleen with a big voice and personality to match, the bubbly Sharon Nixon. Sharon wowed the Northern Nashville club members when she appeared during the summer and I am certain she will do the same again to the festival audience.

She has been singing publicly for 10 years and has released three albums all containing covers from her influences in country music including Loretta Lynn, Joni Harnes & Merle Haggard.

Sharon was the support act for Charley Pride when he toured Ireland and has been part of the UTV Country fest. Her voice is distinctively different - it has a slight warble in it making Sharon even more unique.

Country music legend Dominic Kirwan needs no introduction. He has been on the road for 22 years and his live stage show is still regarded as one of the most vibrant and exciting in today's music scene.

Dominic's latest album recorded in 2009 titled *My Kinda Country* is a selection of country songs that reflect both his love of music and respect for material old and new.

During his career Dominic has toured extensively taking him all over the globe, and giving him the opportunity to work with such great music stars as Charley Pride, Tammy Wynette, Kenny Rogers and Don Williams.

We are fortunate that Dominic has taken time out of his busy schedule to once again entertain his many fans here in the north.

Given that George Malcolm did an excellent job of compering last year's Festival we were delighted when he agreed to make the long journey back from exotic Thailand to do the honours for the second time around.

Of course no Festival would be complete without our own blend of local talent. This year this comes in the form of The Jacks, Manson Grant & the Dynamos, Kate Bain, Northern Nashville's local Band of the Year award winners Slange Ava, The Chicken Pickers, and a debut appearance by newly formed local band calling themselves Nashville Union.

A bonus and regular spot each year is the performance by the school and youth bands this allows these young people to be part of an event where an audience of all ages converge under one roof to share their love of country music.

Joining the fans this year again will be a TV crew from MNE media who are covering the festival on behalf of BBC ALBA in order to produce a series of programmes for screening later in the year.

Until Next Year

Happy Holidays and I hope you get lots of country music from Santa

*Christine*

Christine Gray  
Chairperson NNCCMC

