



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

December 2011 Newsletter

Last one this year, can you believe how quickly it has crept up on us, so with that thought can I wish all you country fans a Very Happy Christmas and Good New Year before I go any further.

Now I know its cold but I am not going to moan about the weather because this time last year we had snow, so we should just be thankful and keep our fingers crossed that this winter is not as severe as last one - the snow seemed to go for ever.



I am delighted to report that we had a capacity crowd attending for our award winners show in November, we sold our full compliment of tickets and were at the stage of turning people away if they hadn't booked.

Thomas Maguire and Fhiona Ennis received the award for Band of the Year in 2010 as voted by the members of NNCMC, and Slange Ava were presented with the Sandy Swanson Memorial Award for the most popular local band - both very worthy winners.

Talk about déjà vu, it hardly seemed credible that we were doing the same thing exactly a year ago, yes both bands received the same awards for 2009.

I did panic a bit on Thursday night when the weather turned very windy and stormy with the forecast for worse and the talk of ferries being cancelled. I did wonder would Thomas and Fhiona make it across, so were delighted when they arrived none the worse of their crossing or the drive north. They were due to play in Orkney on Saturday and Sunday and were warned if things hadn't calmed down than the Hamnavoe might not sail on Saturday, that didn't seem to phase them either - we decided if they were stranded in Thurso then we would have action replay and go for it again on Saturday night.

Thomas, Fhiona & their Band have been very busy since they were with us last. They have a few more awards under their belts including the Vocal Duo of the Year at the Hot Country awards recently, and in April received Best Duet of the Year for their single *Solid As A Rock* by the NICMA.

They have also found time for recording, you might have seen the video of their new released single *An Always And Forever Kind Of Love* on Hot Country recently and later this month Thomas will have a new album for sale, it is called *Best of Thomas Maguire* and will celebrate his eleven years in the business contains 6 previously unreleased songs - this would make an ideal Christmas present.

Thomas, Fhiona & their band are super nice people and they gave a great night's entertainment, covering a cross section of music keeping everyone happy and the dance floor heaving. They thanked the members very much for voting for them and were really pleased to have been awarded the title for the second year - I told them no-one had ever managed a hat trick, so it's all to go for!

As I'm sure you all know our local band of the year award is an award given in memory of our committee member and friend Sandy Swanson who sadly passed away in August 09. We were delighted when Sandy's wife Jenny and their daughters Lynn and Audrey agreed to come along and present the award to Slange Ava. Keith, James, Chris & Donnie continue to be very popular with us all in the club and, with the performance they gave, we can see why they are in demand all over the country. Hopefully they will still find time to fit us in to their busy schedule and keep us happy.

As I mentioned earlier a capacity crowd good to see some members present who hadn't been with us for a while, and also nice to see some visitors joining us - everyone had a great night the atmosphere was brilliant.

Shame we couldn't have those numbers every month but hopefully, since everyone had such a good time, they'll come and join us regularly. To put on more big named shows we need to have a better turn out for the less expensive ones.

I was reading in one of the country magazines that Gene Watson's tour bus was in an accident recently apparently it was forced off then road when the driver pulled over to avoid a collision with an oncoming truck. Gene and his band were able to climb out of a window and fortunately no one was seriously injured and they were able to continue to the venue and the opening band allowed them the use of their instruments.

In CMDS this issue is a write up on Nashville Union, our new local band, who are making a name for themselves across Scotland. They recently made their first appearance at the White Horse Festival in Kilwinning and promptly won Band of the Festival, well done boys!!! I noticed that our own chiles Nigel, Colin & Alisdair are now joined by Pete Mylles who played as part of the Duke Boys many moons ago.

Our old friend and festival compere Gerry Ford had written an update on his adventures in Australia and I couldn't believe that he'd been there for 18 months. Seems like Joan and himself have settled very well and are enjoying life Down Under to the full. I knew he couldn't retire completely - he says that he has done a couple of gigs and also hosting a weekly radio programme called Ford's Country Special. Good for him, I'm glad it's worked out well for them both, and of course they are loving being with the family and grandchildren.

I read this month that Jon Derek had died. I am sure some of you will remember him appearing at the Viewfirth back in 1991 when he played along with his band Country Fever, who featured the famous musician Albert Lee. They were the number one country band during the 80's and regular acts to appear at the Wembley festival.

I was listening to Stewart Fenwick on Sunday morning and then our own Robin and Davie on Caithness F.M. at night and heard them both play a newly released Christmas single by Daniel O Donnell and Lisa McHugh. Daniel has just celebrated the big 50 and Lisa will be part of our Festival at Easter. It is called *I'll Be Home With Bells On* written by Dolly Parton and originally sung by Dolly and Kenny - quite a catchy little number.

Speaking about birthdays Johnny Rodriguez who is one of the American acts at our Festival has just celebrated his 60th Birthday last week - so he'll be a youngster just like myself...

I heard that Billy Joe Spears passed away on Wednesday at age of 73. During her career she had five songs in the country top 10 but only one to reach no 1, no prizes for guessing that one of course her most popular *Blanket On The Ground*. It must have been sudden as she was booked to be part of the Ladies Of Country U.K. tour next May.

Barbara Orbison, wife of the late Roy Orbison, also died last week at home in Hendersonville, Tennessee aged only 60, she had been fighting cancer for some time. Barbara and Roy met in London where the Beatles were opening for Roy in 1969, and they were together until Roy sadly passed away on the same day & date 23 years earlier.

Was speaking to Hugh O'Brian from Hot Country and he was telling me that, as from next week, the programme will include a weekly report with latest news and interviews by Juliette Vara from Nashville. So that'll be something different for us to watch on the programme - well done Hugh.

A couple of weeks ago a few of us went through to Wick for the Triple C's Christmas show and had a super night - they had a full house which made for a great atmosphere. The bands for the night were The Chicken Pickers and Arizona Flame, both provided great country music.

We all remarked on just how far The Chicken Pickers had come since the first time, as shy young boys, they pleaded with us to give them a spot in the Festival, and when we heard them we knew they had a promising future. They are now confident very talented young men who have just recorded their first CD which they hope to have released in March.

Poor Mikie had a bad throat and was feeling terrible, however the other guys helped him out and they did fine, they were playing at a dinner dance the next night so hope Mikie was feeling better.

During the show Arizona Flame received the clubs Band Of The Year Award, the trio entertained us with numbers such as *Down Louisiana Way, People Are Crazy & Tell Me That Your Not In Love* - yes my kinda country.

Speaking of Christmas shows we had ours last weekend and thankfully the weather was kinder to us this year and allowed us to go ahead as planned. Our music was provided by Nashville Union, who I mentioned earlier and said they now have a new line up, also the bright bubbly young colleen from Derry City, Sharon Nixon.

Aside from adding glamour to the stage Sharon has a big voice and personality to match, she wowed the audience at the Festival earlier this year, and did the same again over the weekend making many more fans in the north. She has recorded 3 albums which are mostly covers from her favourite artists and influences in country, and during the course of Friday & Saturday nights she treated us to many of the numbers from them.

Sharon's voice is distinctively different it has a slight warble in it making her even more unique. She clearly enjoys herself on stage, changed her clothes for each spot, and finds time to speak to everyone - when you get Sharon you get the full package.

Nashville Union were on stage all night. Aside from their spots they also supported Sharon, so I must thank them for that it's not an easy thing to do. The boys all have a wealth of musical talent and experience, drummer Nigel played as part of the Duke Boys, with Colin as a duo 'Gelco', and most recently with Nickels & Dimes. Alisdair has been part of the north's music scene since the early 60's, playing in many bands. He is very versatile and can play bass, rhythm, piano, harmonica and little banjo. Colin is probably best known as lead singer with Silver who, apart from being top local band, gained a reputation across the country, winning many prestigious awards. New band member Pete Myles is definitely an asset to the line up, he is a respected guitarist/singer/songwriter having played all genres of music during his successful career and was also a Duke Boy.

During the weekend the guys showed their versatility and, given that they've only been together a short time, covered a wide range of music. We heard some country standards, others that took us back to the Silver days, and also some new material. It's great to see Colin back on the music scene - he still has 'that voice' and provides the crowd with something a bit different – a refreshing change. Now Nigel, argue as you will, the jacket still doesn't fit!!!! Proof is in the photos.

Well I think that's about it for now and of course for this year. I have done a small promo write up on the bands who will be with us at the Festival, so if you have time over the holidays in between partying have a look at it on the Festival page of our web site.

A reminder if you haven't already done so best get your weekend tickets before they go up in price at the end of January, Bettine is still selling them like hot cakes.

Until next time Happy Christmas and I hope Santa is good to you.

Keep it Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCMC