



# Northern Nashville Country Music Club

## December 2012 Newsletter



Can't believe that another twelve months has gone flying past - we are all too quickly approaching Christmas, and a New Year hardly seems possible, hope you have all done your shopping and, unlike me, are all organised.

Anyway before we move forward I'll rewind a bit back to November and the big thing for me was going to see Charley Pride in Glasgow. I've probably told you before that Charley was my introduction to country music...well that's maybe not entirely right as I grew up in a house with country music being played constantly - my mum being a fan of Jim Reeves and Marty Robbins.

I clearly remember the first time I heard Charley was when I was in the music shop in Thurso and I was listening to the record they were playing and I thought 'I like that...a bit different...a modern country sound'.

I asked who was playing to be told it's a new black Country singer, and I ended up buying the record... and every one he ever recorded since! They were well played but sadly now are in a box in the loft - I keep saying I must put them on to CD's but will probably never get round to it. The first time I went to see Charley live was in 1975 at the Apollo in Glasgow, and I was in raptures. I have seen him several times since then and he still remains on my list of favourite singers. He hadn't released any new material recently, but I bought his album *Choices* which came out last March. It was his first in eight years and it was well worth waiting for - 13 new recordings which can't be called modern but are certainly all superb country songs. There were eight of us (all females) who went to the concert and it was excellent. His band, The Pridemen, opened the show, and then for the next almost two hours it was Charley singing hit after hit the way he always did - very relaxed and effortless, the voice still the same - 100% pure entertainment.

Back to earth in time for our November show. I thought maybe since the previous two had been exceptionally busy, and with the Christmas ones only two weeks away, this one might be quieter, however I am pleased to say that it was reasonably well attended. The music for the night was provided by Mustang from Elgin and our top local band Slange Ava. Both were on good form and, aside from great country music, there was also lots of banter and crack.

When I arrived at the Legion the boys were setting up and I noticed Dado with them. I thought he must have had the dates mixed up and he was a show too early, but no he was just helping Alan, Andy & Davie on stage...when I spoke to him last weekend he said he'd enjoyed it, and it had been a change.

The guys from Mustang are experienced musicians, having all been involved in the music scene for a number of years, and they include one of Scotland's top steel guitar players, Alan Thompson. They covered all forms of country music and, at times, we heard something a little bit different which was a refreshing change - no Irish on the bill tonight just country.

Slange Ava as always played a great spot - it's hard to believe but the band have been together for five years now and are continuing to grow from strength to strength, with requests to play further afield keeping them busy. They played their full repertoire of music treating us to a bit of 60's and Scottish, some great self-penned songs from Keith, and also covers from their influences in country music including Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Collin Raye and Ricky Skaggs.

Both bands had the dance floor busy all night - a great atmosphere with everyone enjoying the music. Slange Ava have been in demand over the festive season - they stepped in at the last minute for The Chicken Pickers at the Triple C's Christmas shows - I wasn't able to make it myself but believe it was a great night. They usually play at the Hogmanay dance in the Royal British Legion but are unable to do it this year; however Keith will be on stage with Manson Grant & the Dynamos at the Legion on Christmas Eve.

So on to the Christmas Shows. As I am sure you all know by now that our very popular local band from Golspie, The Jacks, are retiring, and last weekend they played for the last time at our Christmas shows. Geordie, Dado, Kevin & Trevor have made lots of friends during their time on the road, so it was obvious we were going to be inundated with requests for tickets. They have a lot of young fans, due to the lively performances they have put on at our Festivals, who all wanted to be part of their last show.

Sharing the stage with them were Country Features - Florence & Robbie are a super duo, with Florence hailing from Omagah and Robbie from Country Fermanagh. This is not the first time these two bands have played together. They appeared on the same bill in September 2010 and November 2011, and Country Features also supported Manson Grant & the Dynamos at our Christmas party nights in 2008.

Florence and Robbie are a really nice couple - always professional, very smart in their appearance, taking time to chat to their fans, and they always have a great time on stage - enjoying themselves and making sure everyone else does the same.

Their show covers an all round selection of music including traditional, American country, Irish, tracks from their albums, and also some self-penned numbers from Florence including *Alone Here Without You* & *Why Am I So Lonesome*. Florence has a great ballad voice and Robbie gets everyone on the dance floor with his up tempo numbers on the keyboards. It's easy to see why they were voted the Best Irish Country Duo at this summer's Ulster Country Music Awards, and we had their number one fan from Edinburgh joining us for the weekend.

As for The Jacks, well what can I say about them about them that hasn't already been said? They have had a long and successful career - justly deserved - not only locally but all around the globe. As Colorado they headlined festivals in 25 countries all over Europe, the Middle East & Australia, made appearances at the Grand Ole Opry & the Albert Hall. They were voted the Best British Band by the BCMA for 9 years, and, as Sandy said, have been great ambassadors for country music.

Some may say that to disband is a waste of talent, but hopefully it won't be wasted as I'm sure Trevor & Kevin will pursue their careers elsewhere in the music scene, and Dado will surely be snapped up by some other band (if he wants to!).

Geordie has said he would like to concentrate on his writing and recording, so who knows they might all turn up again sometime, somewhere.

Of course we couldn't let them go without giving them a small memento from NNCCMC, so we presented each with a whisky glass engraved with their name, our logo, and as their signature tune and Geordie's self-penned number says *Making Friends*.

Geordie in return told some stories which, as you all know, he's good at, and we also read out a poem written on their behalf (I will also put it on the web site for you all to read). We had a laugh, but the whole thing was very much tinged with sadness and emotion.

Anyway the guys were on great form both nights played as good as ever, dedicating their first spot to their own original songs - sitting listening I had forgotten just how many there had been.

They are all very talented multi instrumentalists, so the combination of that along with their voices, lively personalities and experience, they entertained us all weekend with their own style of music.

Both bands ensured we had two great nights...a great party atmosphere and lots of crack, very flexible spots with some seasonal numbers thrown in.

Country Features finished their spot by having us all doing the *Locomotion* around the hall with Florence leading us, and we would have been disappointed if the Jacks didn't end our Christmas Shows and their careers (to date) by having us all in a circle to *Making Friends*.

Special thanks to both bands for providing us with a great weekend of country music of the very best.

Anyway, that over, I don't think I have a lot of other news. I was sorry to hear that Jim Marshall, who produced an on line country music newsletter, has decided he will no longer continue. It was always very informative with lots of news snippets, album releases etc. and of course he always gave our Festival a plug...a real shame, I will miss it.

I noticed that Gene Watson has recently celebrated 50 years in the music business, and to mark the occasion they have named a street after him - Gene Watson Boulevard in his home town of Paris, Texas.

I think I might have mentioned that George Jones is to stop touring; he will be doing 60 concerts in America next year as part of his Grand Tour, with the final one being in Nashville in November.

But worse that that George Strait has decided he is doing the same and is also planning much the same - a final tour across the States... think his might be over two years. Of the three stars I wanted to see live - Alan Jackson, George Jones and George Strait - I've seen two, but not sure will get a chance to see George Strait...he's in Vegas early 2013 but won't manage that! What's going to happen when all these great traditional country singers hang up their guitars!!!

Speaking of retiring, top British band C'est La Vie are going their separate ways come the New Year. They are certainly one of the best around at the moment, and we are lucky to have had them support some of our American artists for us as well as do their own spot at our last two Festivals. Thankfully they are all going to continue their work in country music, whether alone or with other projects, but a sad miss for British Country music none the less.

Also heard from Liam & Loraine that they have been forced to cancel their Granite City weekend in March - a real pity when they had put so much time and energy into organising it, but hopefully it will be back on track for 2014.

The big news of course is the forthcoming Country 2 Country concerts in the O2 in London in March. It is going to be a huge event with some 60,000 music fans attending. The line up includes Tim McGraw, Vince Gill, Little Big Town, Carrie Underwood, LeAnn Rimes & Darius Rucker. It will be great for country music and for those who want to pay the prices to see the big names of country music. I am sure it will be a spectacular event, but a bit too rocky and modern for me...the only person I haven't seen live out of the line up but would like to is Tim McGraw. Not getting on my high horse but get so annoyed when, once again, we hear that it's the only place in Britain you can see American acts, first British country festival, etc. ...where have they been!!!

It's been announced that Daniel O'Donnell is the first artist to have had an album in the charts for the last 25 consecutive years, which just goes to show how popular he continues to be - quite an achievement.

Well I think I'd better go now and get myself organised for Christmas. Still loads to do, but will get there. January will be a very busy month for me...can't tell you everything we have on as some is Santa's secret, but all will be revealed!

Anyway hope you all have a great Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year, with lots of country music on tap.

See you in 2013

*Christine*

Christine Gray  
Chairperson NNCCMC