



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

February 2009 Newsletter

It seems like forever since I last wrote a newsletter. Looking back I suppose it was November - I just didn't have time before Christmas as the shows were close together and I had all the advertising for the festival to get organised.

Christmas, New Year and January has gone flying past, where does the time go? I know it's a bit late but I wish you all happy healthy for '09 with lots of country music thrown in for good measure.

Speaking about country music we ended last year and started this one with fantastic shows. Our Christmas show was Manson Grant & the Dynamos along with Country Features.

Of course Manson needs no introduction, and along with Keith on lead vocals they put on, as ever, a flawless performance, made a real party atmosphere. As usual many of their followers had come along to see them - some even having travelled from the Aberdeen area. We had an added bonus on the Friday night as Daniel Macphee was in the club and joined the band on stage for a few numbers.

Country Features are Florence and Robbie from Northern Ireland and this was their second time in the club - they went down a storm with the members (I must admit to enjoying them much better this time round). They certainly aim to please the crowd and come across as enjoying themselves into the bargain, they are a genuinely nice friendly couple and it's easy to see why the crowd warms to them. They played a cross section of music old and new country, Irish and appropriately some Christmas numbers from Florence's Christmas album.

Friday night our first show of 2009 was a very full show and something a bit different, with two duos plus our own Nickels & Dimes.

Husband and wife Caroline and Pat McGrath from the Birmingham area started the night of for us. Pat and his band, Salt Creek, were in the club when they supported Ruddy Grant on stage last May. Pat told me then that Caroline was normally part of the band but she was at home ready to give birth. Well they certainly didn't waste much time as Caroline told us she was pregnant again - looks like she'll have her hands full for a while!

The couple share vocals and cover a wide range of country through to 60's - all nicely presented they had a great night, although Caroline looked tired before the end.

Nickels & Dimes had a very busy night. Aside from their own very enjoyable spots, they supported our second duo, and headline act of the night, The Calhouns, on stage. Another married couple from a bit further afield - Kansas USA to be exact! Pat brought them over and arranged their tour for them and we at Nashville were delighted that we were part of it.

They put on a fantastic show sharing vocals they covered all styles of country, but mostly good old standards from country greats such as Merle Haggard, Roseanne and Johnny Cash - an absolute pleasure to listen to. They were a very nice couple who thoroughly enjoyed their night, and who were extremely grateful to Nickles & Dimes for doing such a great job of backing them, despite managing to fit in just one hours practice in the afternoon!

For the finale all the artists were on stage together and it was great - mind you I thought that Sandy had them there for the duration again and was never going to let them finish.

I would like add our thanks to Nigel, Pete and the guys for helping us out. I said to Pete it's good practice for the festival, but he thought we were looking for a resident band as they are back in March supporting Brendan Quinn.

I was feeling sorry for myself on Friday night as I was suffering from this dreaded bug. Every time I tried to speak above the music I started to cough, so I really didn't get a chance to have a conversation with the Calhouns or enjoy them much as everyone else did. I'm still feeling poorly but not getting much sympathy apart from being banished to the spare room for coughing all night - a bit inconsiderate since he had it first!!!

Next month sees the return of Thomas McGuire & Fhiona Ennis supported by the ever popular duo Jolene & Barry.

Fhiona is a young lady from County Wexford who, prior to joining Thomas in 2005, shared the stage with many popular Irish acts such as Declan Nerney, Mick Flavin & Jimmy Buckley. She has also toured with American stars including Leona Williams and Moe Bandy.

Thomas, from County Fermanagh, started his professional singing career in London before returning back home to Ireland in 2000. Following the release of his debut album in 2001 his career took off and in 2002 he was Best Male Artist. Aside from being together professionally I'm sure I heard somewhere that the couple have become engaged.

Jolene & Barry are regular visitors to the club and have been a fully professional multi-award winning duo since 1977. More recently they have become part of the Manson Grant fan club weekends both in Aberdeen and Benidorm.

We have at long last received Joe Moore's long awaited new CD entitled *Point of Light* and had some for sale on Friday night. A great album but then it couldn't really fail with a country voice like Joe's. Joe who is a very popular act in NNCCMC will be back with us in May before himself and his family head to Australia in June

On Saturday 10th January the committee were invited to a party in the drill hall in Castletown (I can tell you that took me back a bit) to celebrate Billy Swanson's 60th birthday. Billy is a big country fan since the early days when we travelled to the Wembley Festivals. He never misses a Nashville club night but some nights I wonder does he remember getting home!

Slange Ava were providing the music and I enjoyed hearing them again. They have had a good year despite not having a drummer for a while, but great to see Donnie back behind the drums again.

The festival is now fast approaching and it's getting to the time when I start loosing sleep! The tickets have been selling steadily and I have had lots of calls from people looking to fix up their accommodation. Phone Bettine on 01847 892624 to order your tickets if you haven't already done so, so you won't miss out on a great weekend of country music.

Jim Duncan, editor of Cross Country Magazine produced in Sheffield, is heavily involved in running festivals and country events in his surrounding area said recently that he can't wait to return to Halkirk this year. For those of you that were there last time, Jim was the guy who was on his honeymoon. He went on to say that our festival was the best in the country beating his own one - so we can't get a better recommendation than that!

We have also been fortunate this year to have been chosen by MNE Media who, on behalf of ALBA television, are coming along to film our event as part of their TV series to be screened later in the year in the hope of promoting live country music. We realise that some other festivals will be disappointed they haven't been selected, but we are delighted and quite excited about the whole thing. A bit of a break through for us - maybe the next stroke of luck might be a major sponsor!! Well we can dream!

We are holding our AGM in the Legion on Saturday night, so if you are free please come along and have your say - let us know if we can do anything to improve the running of your club.

Well I think that's about it for now

Until next time

Keep it Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCMC