



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

February 2014 Newsletter

Back to the usual format this time but I hope you all enjoyed the introduction to the Festival and it encouraged you to get tickets, if not you will lose an event like none other in the U.K. right on our doorstep: which would be a shame.

I briefly mentioned our January show saying we started the year off in good form, February again a corker another ten shows with the same turn out would be brilliant.

For our first show of 2014 the entertainment was provided by Ireland's Sean Corrigan backed by east coasters Broken Wing plus local band The Duke Boys. January is a totally unpredictable show given the weather, sickness, Burns Suppers, but we didn't do too badly and I am pleased to say that feedback from our regulars and visitors was positive everyone enjoyed themselves and said both bands provided a great nights entertainment.

It has taken 29 year-old Sean from Fermanagh a wee while to get the kind of recognition he deserves he has been around for 10 years we saw him a few years back at The Country Fest and really enjoyed him then.

Sean had us all in stitches during the cabaret spot he did some great impressions of some of other Irish acts including Mick Flavin, Stephen Smyth & Declan Nerny brilliant!

Sean grew up listening to country music by the likes of Merle Haggard and George Jones: he is a nice guy with a great country voice his two spots certainly had a more country than Irish flavour to them.

To date Shaun has released 1 DVD and 3, CD's his latest entitled *One Of These Days* is a fine 12, track country offering on it he sings *The Streets Of Bakersfield* dueting with Nathan Carter.

Backing Sean, was Broken Wing the fabulous bunch of lads from the Elgin area although not an easy thing to do they did a great job for Sean and as a bonus we also got to hear a few numbers from them. A little taste of what we can expect from them at the Festival, they will of course make up part of New Gambler, great to see Mike looking so fit and well after a triple bypass op in October.



Another band we will be hearing at our festival will be the Duke Boys so again we got a taste of what we can expect from them. Nigel, George & Alisdair along with Johnny Forde treated us to a great repertoire of country music from old classics to new favourites.

Of course none of them are strangers to us having played many times in the club and festival under different names. George and Nigel formed the original Duke Boys in the 80's releasing their first album 'Back in Love By Monday' in 83; the duo travelled the length and breadth of Britain appearing at all major events including the Wembley Festival.

Following a period when they went their separate ways to concentrate on their careers both here and abroad, they ended up back in the north and decided to reform The Duke Boys, looking at their gig list over the last few months and for this year they are great demand and look like they will be covering lots of miles along the way.



We held our A.G.M. for the club at the beginning of February we had a fairly good turnout but would have appreciated a few more as there were one or two items in particular in regard to finance which needed discussing and would impact on the members.

The downside to the meeting was that Darryn has decided he no longer wishes to remain on the committee: we did try and coax him to stay but he was adamant he wanted to go back to enjoying the social side of the club nights. We thanked him for his input to the club for the past 3 years it's a shame we hoped he might encourage young blood to come on board with him not sure what I'll do now when I need help with the technical side of things. We decided not to appoint anyone in his place Alan has agreed to take on the role of treasurer, and the rest of us agreed to continue for another year, well Johnny and Dennis weren't there to say yes or no they both had a better offer that night.

I know it's a big commitment and no point in being part of a committee if you don't want to put in the time, but as I keep saying if we weren't prepared to make the time then there would be no club for anyone to go to and it is just a hobby; got to remember some of us are getting on a bit won't mention which ones!!!

So looks like another red jacket back in the wardrobe! Any Takers?

Regarding the finances always the down side of our meeting Darryn had circulated a very user friendly breakdown of our accounts along with other stats such as the number of members and non-members who were attending each show. It was clear that our finances have fallen by almost £1,700 which was pretty much down to the prices of bands and attendance being very slightly less. Looking into 2014 the average price of our shows is going to be around £2,000 so we really need to do something about balancing the books for future years. We had lots of discussion and various suggestions and eventually it was agreed to...

- Increase the price of bigger more expensive shows
- Increase the non-members admission to all shows and by a bigger amount
- Up the membership to £10 per year

Hopefully that will help a bit but it was the usual members our back bone of the club who were at the meeting the same ones who attend and support every show I always feel they are penalised by the folk who pick what shows they come to – anyway end of lecture!

February and another capacity crowd turned out for our Band of the Year award show and what a night it turned out to be, easy to see why the members voted Johnny Brady and Manson Grant & The Dynamos their winners for 2012.

Since his last visit to the club Johnny and his five piece band have very quickly become one of the most sought after acts both in Britain and Ireland and as it says in the title of his debut album he truly is *Living All My Dreams*.

Johnny grew up in County Antrim listening and being influenced by the music of Vince Gill, Merle Haggard & Randy Travis along with Irelands greats such as Brian Coll and Philomena Begley.

On Johnny's web site I noticed he was described as lively, entertaining, charming and witty whilst remaining down to earth, judging by his performance all these adjectives are certainly appropriate.

Johnny had the members eating out of his hand with his entertaining show featuring numbers like *Chicken Fried*, *We Danced*, *Here For a Good Time* and his self-penned numbers including *Ireland Is A Place In My Heart*.

The future certainly looks bright for the young man who has put a fresh stamp on the country music scene and thoroughly enjoying it.



The committee were delighted that Manson Grant & The Dynamos were worthy winners of the Sandy Swanson Memorial Award for top local band in the club in 2012. Over the years they have received well over a hundred trophies and awards but I am sure this one was very special to them .

Manson and Robert have been ambassadors for country music for many years and probably my introduction to country music in the 60's and still they go on entertaining people not just locally but all over the world. During that time they have taken many young musicians under their wing providing them with a first class apprenticeship into the music business.

The guys as usual true to form perfectly delivered a wide and varied selection of music featuring tracks from their *Tribute To Buck Owens* album and latest offering entitled *Country*.

Following the breakup of Slange Ava it's good that we can still hear Keith as part of the Dynamos thought he did a brilliant job of the George Jones classic *He Stopped Loving Her Today*.

What can I say about the youngest member of the band Brandon McPhee? He is an absolute genius on the button box accordion, leaving after the show travelling to Stirling to defend his title as Scottish Champion returning to Caithness with the trophy for the third year in succession.

Brandon is now showing another area of his talents as very promising country singer earning himself a spot on the Festival.

It certainly was a brilliant night, great atmosphere everyone thoroughly enjoyed the wide range of music played by two first class bands.



I noticed somewhere that Dolly Parton will be playing Glastonbury this year as part of her tour this summer Kenny Rogers must have started a fashion last year hope the weather is dryer than it normally is can't see Dolly with her wellies under her dolly dress.

I heard that the latest inductee into the Texas Hall Of Fame was Tony Booth; Tony you will remember played our Festival in 2011 along with other members from Heart Of Texas Records.

He proved to be a very popular act and was the guy responsible for such great country songs as *The Keys In The Mailbox*, *Cinderella* and *Happy Hour* so he deserves his place there along with others such as Mickey Gilley and Moe Bandy.

Wonder how many of you have got tickets for Garth Brook's gig's in Dublin in July, it started with two dates now it's five and I am sure they will all sell out.

I know that Ally would love to go Garth is his favourite and I did feel a bit guilty as he took me to Alan Jackson in Norway but when we looked into it we could have had a two week holiday in the sun for the money, he did agree in wasn't really worth that and anyway we had seen him before but I know the night of the show we will be wishing we were there.

To update regarding the Festival we had an e-mail and a subsequent meeting with the BBC and disappointingly they have confirmed that they will not be covering our Festival this year. Apparently the BBC have not given MNE the go ahead to produce the same type of country music programme for the Ceol Country series so it will not be financially viable for them to record the Festival. Instead they suggested they might go to Ireland and yes record YES the same as all the other SKY programmes on the T.V.

When I am having a rant might as well go with my next one! We approached Suzy Bogguss to come to the Festival, made all the arrangements re. flights work permits etc., to find that she has now arranged several other gigs in both England and Scotland and we are now her last one! On a certain programme on Radio 2 they read out her list of dates and we weren't even included - feels like we get taken for mugs constantly... looks like we've just been added on at the end.

Whilst browsing the latest country cuts I see that Roly Daniels has been awarded the title as 'Ireland and Britain's Country Music Ambassador to Tennessee' by the governor, and also received an award from the CMA of Ireland to mark the occasion.

His duties will be to promote Tennessee as a place to visit through country music and to do this he has recorded a song called *Tennessee*. The song, recorded where else but Nashville and Ireland, features Billy Yates, who co-wrote the song, plays tribute to all the places which pull visitors to the state. Roly will also host a tribute concert in Dublin in the autumn which will feature American acts such as Buddy Jewell, Billy Yates, and Moore and Moore alongside top Irish acts.

Thomas Maguire & Fhiona Ennis have had time out of the business to be with their beautiful baby Sherese, but they are now back out playing and have released a new single called *Send Her Red Roses*. Fhiona was saying that the baby is teething - doesn't seem a minute since she was born.

Remember way back I told you that U.K. Country Radio was asking folk to let them know their all-time favourite country songs well I have read the results and must admit there wasn't a lot of surprises in there. No 1 just had to be *He Stopped Loving Her Today* by George Jones, No 2 *Crazy* by Patsy Cline, Gene Watson's *Farewell Party* came in at No 5, *Stand By Your Man* at No 12, with many other favourites

in the list also.

I then looked through Country Music people and to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Billboard Hot country Song Chart - they have published a list of the top 70 Country songs over the past 25 years. Now I must admit that there were a few surprises in their list top place was *Cruise* by Florida Georgia Line... I can hear some of you saying who: well they are the hottest country duo around at the moment. The majority appear to be by newer country acts like Taylor Swift, Toby Keith, Tim McGraw, but I am pleased to say that George Strait is the artiste with the most entries, and I think Alan Jackson must be a close second.

George Strait also comes out tops as the artiste with the most No 1 Country Songs, second Conway Twitty then Merle Haggard followed by Ronnie Milsap, Charley Pride, and Alan Jackson in the top ten and Garth Brooks comes in at No 20.

I was reading some articles in Ireland's Sunday World newspaper which included an article about Lisa McHugh - the poor lassie hasn't had an easy time recently. On the way home from a gig in October Lisa felt unwell with a very bad headache suspecting it was a migraine she thought she would be okay. However thankfully her road manager phoned her mum who took her straight to hospital where they diagnosed viral meningitis, which could have been potentially life threatening if left, she also had a stomach operation and recurring back problems. Thankfully she has now completely recovered and hopes to be back out on the road expanding her career.

In the same paper there was a feature and pictures of Robert Mizzell's December wedding: Robert and Adele tied the knot in a church in Co Tyrone, stopping at a local pub for champagne before arriving at the magnificent Manor House Country Hotel for their reception, which I am sure was a very lavish affair the couple being joined by many of Ireland's top entertainers.

Loretta Lynn recently suffered burns to her finger tips when a candle overturned and ignited a chair, the singer was in the next room watching T.V. when she heard a crackling and she managed to put out the fire with a pillow.

Last night George Malcolm, member of The Duke Boys, solo artiste, and our Festival compere, got married, and we the committee were invited to the evening reception. Everything went well for George and Lynn on their special day and there were lots of folk there to wish them all the best for a long happy life together. We certainly enjoyed the night... health wasn't so good today : I wonder why.

Until next time.

Keep It Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCM