



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

January 2013 Newsletter

It seems ages since we had our Christmas shows and I wrote the last newsletter, but really can't believe how quickly January has gone flying past, and compared to some places the weather hasn't been that bad for us.

We started our year's entertainment with an all girl show featuring local lassie Kate Bain and her Band along with Kathy Kane and the Breakaways.

January is a funny month - totally unpredictable - can be very quiet or busy so we hadn't a clue what to expect.

I'm pleased to say we didn't do too badly given there was the usual round of Burns Suppers, and sickness at this time of year, but thankfully it wasn't too bad a night weather wise which also helped.

Kate and her band probably need no introduction to any of you, she is a member of the very musical Shearer family and started singing locally and playing the piano with the family band at a very early age. Kate continues to be very popular locally with a voice that allows her to deliver songs from Tammy Wynette and Gretchen Wilson - the past and very present in country music.

Band member Andrew Polson has a very distinctive voice, he sounds uncannily like Garth Brooks while delivering some of his most popular numbers, and also brings us right up to date with hits from the likes of Zac Brown.

Mandolin/guitar player and very talented musician, Gordie Davidson, told me that he was having trouble with his throat and waiting to see a specialist, so wasn't on form. I hope he gets things sorted as we wouldn't want to lose that voice...over the years he has treated us to some great traditional country songs.

The final member of the band is of course Richard, Kate's husband, together they presented a great night of country music, and will be appearing again as part of our Festival at Easter.

I forgot to ask Kate what was happening with her new CD...she hoped it would be ready for release late 2012, must be a hold up somewhere along the way.

This was the first visit to the club for Ireland's 'Authentic Voice Of Country' Kathy Kane, a young lady from Ballymena, Co. Antrim, however Kathy has visited Caithness several times before as she is a firm supporter of our Festival. Kathy, along with some of her friends, will be making the trip over again this year to see one of her favourite singers Connie Smith perform, and she treated us to one of Connie's hits *Once A Day* on Friday night and made a great job of it.

Kathy was in Scotland many years ago when she first started singing; however an illness took her off the road for eight years. Thankfully she has now recovered and has been back in the business since 2010. Despite only being two years ago she has certainly achieved a lot in that short time - building up quite a reputation on the country music scene, releasing three great albums of country covers, as well as recording duets with Tony Kerr and John McNicholl both beautiful tracks.

Hot Country viewers will have seen Kathy perform and heard her sultry country voice - just made to sing numbers from her idols of American country music Joni Harms & Tammy Wynette, and influences in Ireland Philomena Begley & Susan McCann.

A nice touch was when Kathy sang *Dirty Ashtrays* written of course by Keith Macleod's dad David and sang by Keith on his solo album; Kathy has included it on her latest album which should be released soon. She made a lovely job of it David...its one of my favourite songs but of course Ally was in the bar so didn't even get a dance.

During her spots Kathy covered all genres of music and included many tracks from her albums. She has a lovely voice and made it look easy.

The Breakaways did a splendid job of backing Kathy - I can see she might have a problem keeping them in line - only joking...they were full of fun and crack. Playing drums with them was a blast from the past... took me a while when I saw the face but it suddenly struck me...from Footloose, who were regulars in the club during the 80's, good to catch up and I saw him and Gordie having a right crack about the Colorado days.

The crowd warmed to Kathy and the band right away and, aside from being a good singer, she is a lovely person, so I can guarantee for those that missed her she will be back, and of course you can always have a chat to her at the Festival.

January is normally a quiet month but this year we never seem to have stopped. To start off we did something totally different... a new experience, along with Bettine & Edwin, we went to Lakeside to the world darts - Bettine is a fanatic and has been before. Now it's not really my thing although I do watch it when it's on the tele, of course when they asked us if we wanted to go with them Ally jumped at the chance. I wasn't sure but thought they come to country things with me so why not.

We flew from Inverness to Gatwick on Thursday 10th coming back on the following Monday. Our hotel was outside Aldershot, about 15mins from Lakeside, but that was no problem there was a shuttle service provided from the hotel.

Well I am pleased to say I made the right decision! The crack and atmosphere were absolutely brilliant...everyone there for the same reason...to have fun and enjoy themselves and we certainly did. I was even getting right into the darts cheering on who I wanted to win. Along with Scots, Welsh, Irish and English, there were a group of Dutch fans staying in the hotel and they were game for the crack so the bar stayed open at night until we decided it was time for bed - and no we were by no means the last!

No sooner back from that until we were packing our bags again and away last Tuesday to Glasgow to see the Mavericks (Ally got the tickets for Christmas). I have been a fan literally since the first time I heard them which would have been about 1992. I remember being in the car and I heard them on the radio straight away was hooked on Raul's voice.

I bought their album and was delighted when they came to Glasgow - the theatre was half empty as they were virtually unknown then, but I thought them brilliant. Bettine and I did the groupie thing and waited outside the stage door, and when they came out they couldn't have been nicer...inviting us into the tour bus, posing for photos and signing our T-shirts.

We have seen them twice since then of course - in different/bigger venues playing to capacity crowds, but getting better every time. I was clearly disappointed when they broke up over eight years ago following two decades of post modern country hits including *All You Ever Do Is Bring Me Down*, *Here Comes the Rain* and the last and maybe the biggest of their top 40 songs *Dance The Night Away*.

Obviously I was delighted when I heard they had reformed and were releasing a new album. I didn't expect them to tour so soon, but heard they were coming to Glasgow as part of Celtic connections and, after a struggle, Bettine and myself managed to get tickets (and cracking seats they were!).

Now I did wonder if they would have changed but thankfully no they haven't lost their way - they picked up where they left off and before long they had the capacity crowd on their feet dancing in the aisles (well Bettine and I anyway)...the atmosphere brilliant and they got a great reception.

I was disappointed when I heard their new album *In Time* wouldn't be released prior to the show; however they sang a few tracks from it. On hearing the first line of *Back In Your Arms Again* and Raul's unique vocals on *Born To Be Blue* I realised this was a Mavericks album.

Raul still fronts the band and gave us an acoustic spot before welcoming the others back on stage introducing Robbie Reynolds, Paul Deacon on drums of course, Jerry Dale McFadden on keyboards (he still does his funny moves as if he's walking on hot coals) and the new member of the group, ace lead guitar player, Eddie Perez, who has played with the likes of Dwight Yoakam and George Strait.

Anyway I still think they are the most exciting live band and they tackled their latin/soul/country, call it whatever style of music you like, with fresh passion.

The band opening for The Mavericks were called Black Diamond Express, a 9 piece alternative blues band from Edinburgh. Initially I thought 'oh dear this is not for me, may be as well at the bar' however they were excellent. Again not my style of music but they were certainly good at what they did...I found myself listening to their songs, many of them about the gangster days in Chicago.

Delighted to hear the news this week that Thomas and Fhiona are having a baby in August so we hope everything goes okay for them, we have them booked for April so there's no chance of that early an arrival.

I was flicking through the January issue of Country Music People and read the Critic's Choice their pick of the best CD releases in 2012. Found it very interesting that Jerry Kilgore *Telephone Texas* received 4 votes, Red Jenkins *Cheating Heart Motel* 3 votes, Leona Williams *By George This Is* (tribute album to George Jones) 3 votes, Kimberly Murray & Bob Manning *One Night Only* 3 votes, Will Bannister *Turn Back Time* 2 votes, and Joey & Rory *His and Hers* also 2 votes. All these have either played at, or are coming to, our Festival - and really can't believe that Alan Jackson's *Thirty Miles West* received only one vote.

When I looked at the Red Jenkins album he has included a host of guests from Texas, again many of whom have been at/are coming to our Festival...the line up includes Tony Booth, Landon Dodd, Jake Hooker, Amber Digby, Justin Trevino and Bobby Flores plays fiddle throughout. I haven't heard it myself but it's receiving rave reviews so looks like another mail order or maybe get Tracy take a copy over to me.

Speaking of Festival this is the last week for the tickets at the early bird price. As you can see we have a great line up so don't miss out get your tickets from Bettine on 01847 892624.

Our next show, which will be here before we know it, will first time visitors to the club The Irish Knights, along with our own Nashville Union who I hope will be dried out after being over in Shetland for the Up Helly AA celebrations, I'm sure Jim will look after them!!!

Anyway I think that's it for now, until next time.

Keep It Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCMC