



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

January 2014 Newsletter

Well here we are into the start of February I just can't believe how quickly January has gone flying past however I am pleased to say we started our year with a great show the music was provided by Sean Corrigan & Broken Wing plus the Duke Boys.

For January we had a good crowd who said they all enjoyed themselves and that both bands provided a great nights entertainment.

This month instead of the usual newsletter I thought I would write an introduction to the Festival letting you know what to expect, apart from that I am really pushed I have things going on at home which are taking up my time and because of that I am struggling meeting deadlines for the Festival.

So hope you understand fingers crossed things will be back to normal next time and I will give you all the usual news then.

Introduction to Northern Nashville Country Music Festival **18th, 19th & 20th April 2014**

Our NNCCMF event held on 29th, 30th & 31st March 2013 was given the thumbs up by the many fans that turned up from all over the country Ireland & Europe to help us celebrate our 10th Festival and listen to top quality live country music.

Feedback for the main has been positive with glowing reports from artistes, country music fans, promoters, radio presenters and media personnel saying that once again we had managed to produce the goods and anyone who stayed away missed a great weekend.

We heard quotes like:-

"What a great weekend – warm friendly people and wonderful music, in fact the best country music I've heard since I was last in Texas" that was from Tony Byworth former chairperson of the British Country Music Association

Duncan Warwick, Editor of Country Music People magazine and another first timer, said of his 1,500 mile trip "Don't think I've seen anything like it anywhere in the U.K. the Festival provides the only opportunity anywhere in Britain to enjoy live music from some terrific country acts.

To quote Bobby Flores management "The whole experience couldn't have been more wonderful, we enjoyed so much being part of your fabulous event a big Texas Thank You"

However on the downside this year ticket sales were down slightly, now we are unclear as to why this happened, is it that the Festival has run its course, folks have lost interest, a lot more country events being held around the country, Easter early or the recession – we just don't know— Clearly this resulted in us losing a considerable amount of money and we just didn't budget for the very astronomical increase in band fees and travel costs.

We did ask for feedback and for folk to let us know what was different or went wrong this time, but as we expected received very little response or constructive criticism only moans about the cold.

We were told that some people were saying they weren't buying tickets as they weren't familiar with the line-up whilst I can appreciate this, it's what happens most years and done deliberately. We try and look for something different and I think by now true country fans trust our judgement-- we haven't let them down yet-- To go down the route of running a Festival with acts which are well known tried and tested would be counterproductive.

As you can imagine all this was disappointing and a big worry to us as a committee, our morale was low could we take the risk to go ahead again?

Well we picked ourselves up and started planning for 2014, looking at your feedback and criticisms in the hope of making what has become one of the biggest celebrations of country music recently nominated by the British Country Music Association as Event of the Year for 2013 even better.

This year's line-up will be no different from previous ones we will introduce a varied line up of artistes to include something for everyone.



One of the weekend headliners and possibly the most well-known of our American acts will be Suzy Bogguss the platinum award winning songstress from Illinois.

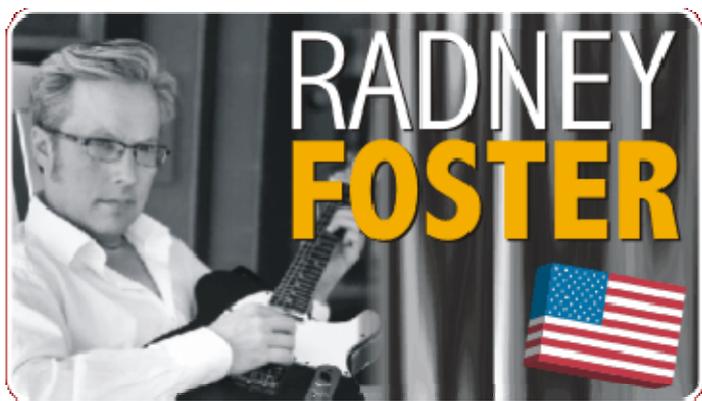
Suzy moved to Nashville in 1985 earned a living by singing demos and performing in a local rib joint. Her break came when she was discovered singing at Dollywood, Dolly Parton's theme park – three weeks later she was signed by Capital Records.

Suzy quickly became one of the key artistes that defined the golden days of 90's Country scoring a string of top 10 singles, a trio of gold albums and a multi award winner.

She has a newly released album entitled Lucky which sees the singer coming full circle returning to her early inspiration Merle Haggard I'm sure Suzy will include some numbers from that along with her other classics.

A young guy from Kansas making his first trip to Scotland will be Rusty Rierison, who like many others got into music as a teenager singing in church. Since then his music has become a passion and he has played all over America, Mexico and Central America opening and sharing the stage with legends such as Sawyer Brown, John Berry & Doug Stone. He has produced 5 albums including his latest offering Souvenirs; the title track went to No 1 recently on the Europe Hot Disc charts and made it into the Music Row charts in the U.S.

Rusty counts Don Williams as his all-time hero so during his show alongside his own numbers Rusty will include some of Don's numbers and he hopes the country fans over here will see his music as a breath of fresh air – I've also heard he tells some good stories.



Many of you may not be familiar with the name Radney Foster but I'm sure you will all have heard of his biggest hits *Just Call Me Lonesome* and *Nobody Wins* recorded 20 years ago on his *Del Rio Texas* album. Due to demand for copies he rereleased it on the anniversary of the original only this time as a haunting acoustic collection called *Revisited: Unplugged and Lonesome*.

Radney was born in Texas in 1959 moving to Nashville in 1985 where he met up with Bill Lloyd and they began song writing and performing as a duo. In 1992 after 3 albums and 9 country chart hits they parted to pursue solo careers and Radney achieved immediate success with his song writing and performing talents; he has remained popular ever since.

Last year Bobby Flores went down a storm over the weekend and I am in no doubt that this time Kelly Spinks will do the same, we saw him perform at the Festival we were at in Snyder and were well impressed.

Kelly is great fiddle player, dynamic vocalist delivering traditional country music remaining true to the old school--- fiddles & steel shuffles & waltzes.

Kelly is a true Texas gentleman who has a real talent, he was delighted that we hadn't forgotten him and jumped at the chance to come to Scotland to share his music with us.



As you know by now no Festival would be complete without our European visitors and this time it's the turn of Highway 40 from Sweden.

This 6 piece band have been playing music since 1998 taking their music to Festivals all over Europe, their close harmonies and perfect English pronunciation ensure that their show comprising of traditional country along with their own mix will score a big hit at our weekend just as all their European counterparts have done.

They went across to Shetland last November and played three gigs and when I spoke to our friend Jim Pearson he said they were one of the best bands he had heard in Shetland and was really looking forward to meeting them again – I trust his judgement so no better recommendation can they have--

Ireland will be well represented this time which will please all you lovers of Irish music but some country fans have decided not to attend this year's event saying we are in danger of becoming like all other Festivals so why travel north when you can hear the same Irish acts anywhere—see what I mean we can't win—

Bringing Friday night to a close will be Irelands Queen of Country Music, Philomena Begley and judging by the interest for tickets she will certainly be one of the most popular acts with the locals.

Philomena I'm delighted to say was one of the stars inducted into the British Country Music Hall of Fame and was she on form that night she received the only standing ovation for her performance.

It's hard to believe she's been in the business for 50years, her wonderful voice, charismatic stage show, warm personality, pleasure in performing and meeting and getting the crack with her fans has ensured she has continued to remain popular during her time in the business.

Philomena hasn't been in Caithness for some time now but I know we will all welcome her back and as she says in the opening track of her latest album she will certainly prove she *Aint Over The Hill*.

Appearing alongside Philomena will be her son Aidan Quinn and his band, Aidan first took to the stage with his mum at the age of 5. Even then Philomena sensed he would follow in her footsteps and she supported him through his career.

After many years fronting his own band he joined up with his mum for her 50th Anniversary tour and the union proved to be a success.

With the band Philomena and Aidan will put on a great stage show they enjoy the crack and banter together, he teases her about getting on in years and she retaliates by giving him a clip on the elbow as he is 6ft 4 ins tall that's the only bit she can reach.



Saturday night and it's the turn of Shaun Loughrey along with his very professional band The Coutrysiders these guys are regular visitors to the north building up a fair size fan base along the way.

Shaun was born in Manchester to Irish parents his father being the well-known country singer Johnny Loughrey who sadly passed away in 2005. That same year Shaun was asked to sing at a family wedding and as they say the rest is history, he moved to Ireland very quickly things escalated with Shaun fronting his own band and his career going from strength to strength.

Shaun and his band are certainly the full entertainment package and like the title of one of his albums *Two Sides of Me* he will certainly do that by playing some of his favourite Irish numbers and showcasing American country songs by his influences—guaranteed to keep the dance floor heaving—

This young man did a brilliant job of bringing our Saturday night show to a close in 2006 and this time he will provide a fantastic finale to our weekend.

From Portaferry County Down, Stephen Smyth the big man with a voice to match and a huge talent is a self-taught musician who made his first appearance at the age of 13, playing lead guitar in a show band.

His break came at 17 when he joined Shogun, Philomena's backing band then playing as part of the Indians also the Declan Nerney Band before going on the road with his own band in 2005.

Stephen has a big talent as a musician and plays fiddle, lead guitar steel and saxophone and has recorded many country and Irish C/D'S including his latest offering *Classic Country* which is exactly what it is some great country covers.

Good to have Stephen back on the stage in Halkirk finishing our weekend for us on a high: I'm sure.



Flying the flag for the females is a young lady who attends the Festival every year to see her heroes but this year she will be performing for us: I am talking about Kathy Kane from Ballymoney in County Antrim.

A young Kathy began her career at the age of 12, appearing in local concerts joining her first band when she was just in her teens; sadly just as her career was progressing things took a turn for the worse when she was diagnosed with Crohn's disease and forced her off the road for 8 years to undergo treatment.

Thankfully she made a full recovery and has achieved a lot since her return building up quite a reputation on the country scene, releasing three great albums of country covers, recording duets with Tony Kerr and John McNicholl lovely songs just made to be sung by a sultry country voice like Kathy's.

The members warmed to Kathy when she played in the club last January aside from being a great singer she is a lovely person so I am sure they will give her the support she deserves at the Festival.

You may remember me telling you that when we were at the Hooley In The Highlands the highlight for me was the set provided by Raintown: Recently engaged Paul and Claire are definitely the hottest new contemporary country music duo around who proved to be worthy winners of the Duo Of The Year title for 2013 at the British Country Music Awards in London.

The couple from Glasgow made history by being the first ever Scottish act to perform at the Global Artist party as part of C.M.A. fest in Nashville in 2011 and being invited back the following year.

There's no doubting Paul & Claire's professional ability and technical performance I can guarantee you will be captivated by their harmonies and the emotion and passion with which they deliver their stunning stage performance it's quite something to watch.



Another bunch of guys making their visit together to play at the Festival will be the popular east coast band New Gambler, they have played for us at the club and some of them have played at past Festivals as part of Broken Wing.

The guys who make up this five piece band from around the Elgin area are all accomplished musicians having played at some time in other popular east coast bands including Gambler, Broken Wing, Mustang or The Brothers.

Last time they played in the club they really impressed with their range of music everything from Johnny Cash to Zac Brown, from classics to something a little bit different and boy do they enjoy what they do.

A very busy man on the country scene is Nicky James he is in demand constantly as an entertainer and also a promoter bringing American acts over to Britain.

Nicky has joined us for a few years at the Festival in his role as a promoter however this time he will be bringing his band with him providing backing for Rusty Rierson and Kathy Kane and also having his own spot on the programme.

It will be good to see Nicky with a band anytime I have heard him has been as a solo act he carries that off without problem singing his way through a varied selection of music managing to keep the dancers on the floor.

This year sadly sees us with a shortage of what we call Local Talent as you know we have lost the Chicken Pickers who played their last gig welcoming in 2014 at our street party, their university commitments were making it difficult for them to fulfil their commitments.

Another local band missing from this year's line-up will be songstress Kate Bain and her Band she has disappointingly decided to give it a miss this year, thankfully they are not coming off the road and if you want to see them they are booked for the club in March.

We have also lost Slange Ava who went out in a blaze of glory after providing us with two superb night's entertainment at our Christmas Shows: another great loss to country music and talent wasted.

However we will be seeing Keith over the weekend as thankfully he will still be playing as part of Manson Grant & the Dynamos the band that was worthy winners of our clubs Local Band of the Year for 2012.

When you look at our line up you will see we have a young man Brandon McPhee another member of the Dynamos taking front of stage. Now while you are all familiar with his absolute brilliant talent and award winning performances on the accordion you will see him showing off another area of his talents when he performs a country spot. Apart from Robert, Manson & Keith, Brandon will be accompanied by one of country music's top steel guitar players, Davie Holland, and the much sought after and brilliant musician from Ireland, Crawford Bell - what a wealth of talent and experience on stage. I'm sure Crawford will treat us to a few songs as well as providing top class harmonies for young Brandon, looking forward to hearing that spot something fresh.

When one door closes another one opens Nashville Union have disbanded, we will certainly miss hearing Colin's voice we were just getting used to him being back on the scene. However we see the reforming of The Duke Boys with Alasdair joining Nigel and George, I am sure hearing them will be just like old times but still calling themselves 'Boys' may be pushing it a bit looking forward to their spot.

George of course will be compere for the Festival this year again and will be doing a wee spot on his own to start the weekend off.

Last year on Good Friday for the second time in succession George and his aunt Jessie Baillie went along to two local care homes to entertain the residents and they have offered to do the same this year again. Jessie is well known entertainer in the Central belt and although she is eighty she puts on a 'good turn' and they thoroughly enjoyed her singing and storytelling.

George has played for us a few times in the club and always manages to get things going which is not always easy for a solo act; he delivers a wide range of material ranging from the very old to the very new.

By the way he will be an old married man when he takes up his compere duties he is getting married in March, a romance which blossomed between himself and Lynne at the Festival a couple of years ago.

Another blow to us this week was an e-mail from MNE T.V. to say that BBC Alba would no longer be covering this year's Festival due to the channel changing their coverage of country music.

We find this hard to believe as Ceol Country is the third most viewed programme on the channel, however they must have their reasons: we are scheduled to meet with them next week to discuss but at the moment we are continuing to plan without them being present.

I have through past newsletters let you know of changes to our weekend in regard to timing we are starting the afternoon shows slightly later and only having a short break in between the shows, when you will be able to stay in the building. This means you can have your seats all day won't have to queue in the cold of course we will still be providing a meal service as usual.

The only major difference will be to our heating system the company have at last recognised what we currently have is unsuitable for the venue and have come up with up with alternatives which hopefully will make a difference.

Tickets are at the same price as last year £85 for the full weekend which I still think is exceptional value and can be purchased through Ticketmaster or Bettine on 01847 892624.

Until next time.

Keep It Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCM