



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

June 2012 Newsletter

Hope you are all enjoying this great weather we've been having, seems almost too good to be true. It's a bit cooler today but it was good that it lasted over the weekend for the kids and also the workers. It was very hot and we are not used to it, so goodness knows how we'll manage in Texas when it will be another 10° higher!

Well last month's newsletter seemed to go on for ever but I can assure you this one will be much shorter - just a quick update as I've too much to do, I am not at all organised for going away at the weekend.

It's been as busy as ever around here over the last few weeks, and in between times somehow I've even managed to catch some country music. Sadly I missed Dominic Kirwan in Wick, however I heard he put on a great show, there's no doubt about it he's a great showman and entertainer who gives the fans exactly what they want.

The weekend after our last show, Ally and I went to Eden Court - we had been given tickets at Christmas for the Solid Silver 60's Show. It featured Peter Noone, Chris Montez, Brian Hyland, Brian Poole and music for the night by Vanity Fare. We thoroughly enjoyed the show it was great reliving the fantastic music from the 60's sung by the original artists. They were all good. I thought Brian Poole struggled a bit and was very breathless, Chris Montez and Brian Hyland were excellent - I forgot how many hits they had had. Peter Noone, who of course fronted Hermans Hermits, used to be one of my teen heart throbs so he was my favourite, and by this time we were all dancing in the aisles. After that we went to the Legion where Mustang were playing so we managed to get our fix of country music. It was good to catch up with Davie, Alan and the boys - not a big turn out but that didn't stop the band putting on a good night.

The following Monday it was back to Inverness & Eden Court, this time 16 woman on a mini bus to see Ladies Of Country, but on getting there we were a little bit disappointed to be told that Jeannie C Riley wasn't appearing as she was ill.

Anyway Sarah Jory opened the show. I hadn't heard her for a long time and last time I had I thought she had moved away from playing pure country and was a bit more rocky. There's no doubt she can still play the steel, but she had a very bad cold so her vocals weren't up to her usual standard.

Sandy Kelly did what she was best at - singing her Patsy Cline numbers. I hadn't heard our Scottish lady of country Anne Williamson live before but she was very good and gave a good all round country spot.

Lynne Anderson really did her best and sang some good stuff but just didn't quite do it for me, and I wish someone had given her advice on what to wear.

During the last part of the show they did a tribute to Billy Jo Spears where they sang her hits and told her life story with pictures on a screen - this was very good. For me personally I thought the whole night lacked something...I know that most folk thoroughly enjoyed it and I am glad they did, and there were lots of Caithness folk there.

On the Friday it was through to Wick to the Assembly Rooms where the Triple C Club had organised a night with Slange Ava and top young Irish entertainer Derek Ryan.

There were two bus loads of us from Thurso, so it was like a mini club night, except we didn't have to do anything but sit back relax and enjoy - maybe that was a bad thing as I certainly drank too much.

Slange Ava opened the night on their usual fine form getting the crowd on the dance floor from the word go and keeping them there for the duration of their two spots.

Derek Ryan is a very talented singer/songwriter from County Carlow, who has not long celebrated his first year on the road with his band, during which he has won many awards and released two albums.

His first called *A Mothers Son*, and more recently *Made Of Gold* - an album of originals and classics which has just won the title of Album Of The Year at the Hot Country Awards. Derek appeared on stage sporting his shiny suit which seems to be the 'thing' for Irish entertainers at the moment and he belted out one song after another I thought he would never stop and speak to us. He got a well deserved reception from the crowd - especially when he sang his hits which of course included his debut single *God's Plan*; previously awarded Song of the Year at the Northern Ireland Country Music Awards. It was an excellent night, everyone there appeared to be enjoying themselves, it was certainly good going with plenty atmosphere.

Last weekend saw us hosting another club night, the entertainment this month provided by the ever popular duo Western Rhythm, and the great Brendan Quinn, who was supported on stage by our own Nashville Union.

The nice weather had brought out a crowd so we had a busy night, and everyone appeared chilled out ready for a good time which it certainly was.

John & Ivan from Galashiels opened the night for us. Apart from being a very talented and versatile duo they are really nice guys, who always receive a warm welcome in the club.

This time again they put on a great show covering a wide range and styles of music from the traditional to the up to date modern country hits - all perfectly delivered.

The boys are certainly one of the best and busiest duos on the scene, they went down well with the members this time again, and will certainly be back to play for us again soon.

Brendan flew into Inverness on Friday, Ally and I went down to pick him up, and we caught up on the news on the way home.

He told us the boys are fine - James is keeping very busy going out as part of a duo playing with his cousin, mostly doing weddings and functions.

Brendan himself is also in great demand and as busy as ever, playing all over Ireland & England and still churning out CD's.

Nashville Union had a different line up - Pete and the steel player were unable to make it so Nigel, Colin & Alisdair were helped out by two local guys, both of whom appeared apprehensive but did a great job.

Brendan did the cabaret on his own as an acoustic spot and did a grand job singing a lot of songs which told stories, & I am pleased to say the crowd gave him the best of order and sat and listened.

Nashville Union joined him for the dancing spots during which time we heard all our old favourites along with some new Brendan numbers off his current CD...and of course no Brendan show would be complete without his Neil Diamond tribute spot.

What can I say - an excellent night - he still hasn't lost the Brendan magic, the crowd just lapped him up the voice is as good and as distinctive as ever.

Our committee member Dennis Macintosh is fast approaching 60, so we had some fun with him, we decorated the hall with banners, balloons and old photos and of course he received the usual poem and silly gifts all very appropriate to him, then everyone got a piece of cake. He had no option but to take it in good humour - the boys were all warned when they did it to me 'what goes around comes around'!

Brendan was playing in the Legion lounge again on Saturday night so of course we had to go along and offer our support.

He pulled a good crowd and it was nice to see the Legion busy on a Saturday night.

Playing on his own from 9.00pm right through until 1.00am is not an easy thing to do, especially without backing tracks, but he carried it off and did very well.



It was a super night I thought he looked very tired and pale by the time he finished - he did say he was suffering with his back and taking strong pain killers, anyway it was great to have back in the area again.

He was flying from Inverness on Sunday so John & Ivan, who had been playing in Kirkwall Legion on Saturday night, offered to pick Brendan up when they came off the ferry and take him to the airport. Can I just say a big THANKS to them for doing that it was really kind - John Dunnet was going to go so that let him off the leash on Sunday morning.

Next weekend, 2nd & 3rd June is the 'Hooley in the Highlands' in Dingwall - we'll miss that but judging by the line up it will be a good two days however I am sure we will hear all about it.

Alan Jackson is set to release his next album very shortly - the first on his new record label - so must get it tell you about it next time. He has just been awarded the Jim Reeves International Award presented for outstanding contributions to Country Music.

I read recently that the bio documentary called *Living For A Song*, about the great songwriter Hank Cochrane, had its world premier in Nashville recently. Among the names appearing as commentators in the film are Willie Nelson, Bobby Bare, Merle Haggard, Brad Paisley, Ronnie Milsap & Mark Chesnutt. It follows Hank's career and features some of his best self penned hits including *I Fall To Pieces*, *She's Got You*, *The Chair* and *Ocean Front Property*.

Don Williams has announced the release of his first album since 2004. Due out mid June it is titled *And So It Goes* - a must for all Don fans I'm sure.

I have just been speaking to Nicky James, singer and music promoter, who was telling me he has booked the young up and coming singer Will Bannister who took Wembley by storm at Easter - I'm sure you've heard me raving about him. He is bringing him to Scotland, putting him on in Invergordon in September.

Speaking of bands coming to Scotland, two very popular young, modern country acts are coming across from America in July - Band Perry is playing the O2 Glasgow on 2nd July, and Lady Antebellum 13th July in the Clyde Auditorium.

I have been browsing the English country music mags and am once again on my high horse as they are full of articles and letters saying how great it is that the English promoters are taking American acts over to England.

Now no offence to the promoters (it's not they who write these things) as we are working well together, but we at NNCCMC had Moore & Moore, Johnny Rodriguez & Jerry Kilgore booked for our Festival, and it made sense for them to do some English gigs whilst they were here anyway. We never get a mention and we have been doing it for ten years anyway that's my rant over, I'll sleep better now!

Well I think that's it for now must go and get the cowboy boots and sun hat packed - I'm running out of time

Until Next Time

Keep it Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCMC