



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

June 2014 Newsletter

Can you believe its June already? This year is just flying past... it's really quite scary, anyway let's keep our fingers crossed that we get a decent summer.

As I told you last time we were having two Club nights in May, Friday the 2nd saw us with Martin Cuffe & Off The Kuff Band along with Carson City. Again we had a poor crowd - I did expect, and hoped for, a slightly better turn out... however the ones who were there had a good night.

Carson City from Denny last appeared at NNCMC in 2011 they are an excellent duo and are kept busy in the clubs around the Central belt where they have received Band of the Year Awards. The members really enjoyed them they gave an all-round country programme ensuring the dance floor was kept busy.

It's been some years now since Martin Cuffe has been in the Club, and although I have seen Off The Kuff Band at various events I'm not sure whether or not they have been with us since then. Also with Martin and the boys was Garth Kirwan - introduced as a nephew of Dominic's not sure I'm convinced about that one!!! Martin called him on stage and he performed a 30 minute spot and went down well - he has a good voice for the type of country stuff he performed, mostly old favourites from the likes of Merle Haggard. Martin's programme covered a wide range of numbers - he did some country from his latest album *I'll Waltz You Home* like *Picture In A Frame* along with some Irish including *Old Sligo Home*. However if I'm honest I was kind of disappointed I thought Martin got off lightly - he was happy to let John (from the band) and Garth do a lot of the singing whilst he stood chewing gum, but on saying that we had a good night.

It was certainly a feast or a famine for our last show at the end of May, folk were just crying out for tickets and it was a nightmare. I hate letting people down but I'm afraid I had to this time - there certainly are a lot of Mick Flavin fans out there! Mick appeared in the Legion a couple of years back but I think it's been four years since he played for us at NNCMC. Aside from locals we had lots of visitors: along with Mick came a bus load of his Irish fans who were touring with him, and John Macgregor with his company - John is a great friend of Mick's and helps arrange his tours across here for him. Also joining us was Martin Nicolson, one of our main Festival sponsors, and some of his workforce who help us over the weekend with the bar, security and also with lifting and laying the floor - they certainly looked as if they were enjoying their night out : so you can see now why tickets for non-members were limited.

Opening the show for us was Texas Back a brother and sister duo from Durham - this was their second visit to the Club last time being March 2012 when they went down very well. Gavin & Debbie are a super couple, very friendly with lots of brother / sister rivalry and banter between them on stage. They cover all kinds of country ranging from the up-to-date to the classics, with both sharing vocals. The pair have been singing together since 2006, although they first started singing as kids on Sunday in the Salvation Army. Their love for country music started when they were taken to festivals with their parents and, as they say, their choice of songs take them back to the great times they have spent listening to country music in the past. This time again the crowd enjoyed them and Gavin & Debbie certainly had a good time, saying it was worth the long drive to get here. If you missed them or would like to see them again then they are appearing in the Triple C Club in Wick in July.



Mick, from Co Longford, has been around long enough to know what his fans are after and, as expected, delivered what we knew he would - some Irish favourites but also some great country numbers including *Back Street Affair* and *Choices*. I always say about him that, despite being Irish, he has a voice that can deliver American country music as it should be. Mick released his first album in 1986, recording many more since. He made his UK debut in 1988 at the Peterborough Festival and, the following year, appeared at Wembley and has been visiting regularly ever since. This year he will be back in the Highlands appearing in Eden Court on August 29th.

Needless to say we had an absolutely brilliant night - good crowd, great atmosphere - everyone clearly set out to enjoy themselves and they certainly did. Our Irish visitors were very impressed : they had a ball and were delighted with the way you all made them feel welcome so a big thanks for that, and also for making room and sharing your tables with them. I can't get over how they were all dancers and yes I noticed some tuition going on!



Ally and I spent a very nice enjoyable and relaxing 10 days in Gran Canaria. Our apartments were verging on luxury and the weather was beautiful, so what more could we want? Yes your right...country music, and we found it! The first night we went out a wander and came to the end of a road... we went to the left and found a strip with some nice restaurants and a bar with a guy who sang some country music. However I suspected there must be a busier and livelier spot so went a walk the following morning and this time turned right and found a huge centre with loads of shops, eating places and bars. Fortunately we spied a sign saying Outlaws Country Bar so doesn't take much to work out where we headed that night...and most nights after that. Owner Martin and his Australian wife only moved out eight weeks ago so were still hoping the gamble would pay off. Although being classed as a karaoke bar, both Martin and the Scottish barman, John, were excellent singers, and they didn't stick to the usual karaoke sing a long

country numbers but did stuff by the likes of Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson & George Strait – so right up our street. We met some lovely friendly people, had some good nights, hangover mornings, but all worth it. So if you're on holiday in Puerto Rica on Gran Canaria and are looking for country music then Outlaws Country Bar is the place to go...and you must try the caramel vodka!!

The Saturday after we came back we headed off to Liam and Loraine's Hooley in the Highlands, taking place this year in the Spa Pavilion, Strathpeffer - what a great venue... super hall and lovely gardens outside. Normally at the Hooley we would stay overnight but this time we hired a mini bus and 16 of us travelled down and back. I know we weren't home and in bed until 3.00am, but if we'd stayed we would no doubt have been be up drinking in someone's room until, like last year, the porter chased us to bed, then we would have had to hang around in the morning until we passed the 'breathalyser' and were fit to drive.

Liam got the day off to a great start by getting everyone on the floor in a big circle to *Making Friends* which we did along with meeting lots of old ones. Ironically, after Off The Kuff being in the Club a few weeks earlier, they opened the day and, despite us being sober, John and the guys had us all on the dance floor with their mostly country spot. Next on was Frank & Danny, or Still Water, a duo from Glasgow - I have seen them advertised in the magazines but never heard them live and I must say we were all very impressed... a brilliant country spot with a bit of crack thrown in - they kept things going they certainly would go down well in the Club.

The next guy was the highlight of the day for me - Trevor Loughrey, superbly backed by Off The Kuff. I had seen Trevor in Ireland a few years back and thought then he was a great act, so booked him for the Club. Sadly due to problems with a backing band he was forced to cancel, however he's set to come back to play for us in September so fingers crossed it will all be fine this time. Excellent spot - definitely the full package. He certainly knows how to entertain : great music & crack, and he even danced on the tables... he just didn't stop. I'm sure you will all have seen him on the country programmes on the tele; he is currently involved with Phil Mac doing many of the shows / tours with him. He told me he had heard lots of good things about the Club and is looking forward to coming at long last, so remember to get yourselves along to see Trevor...believe me, you'll love him. Following Trevor we had a couple of hours break had something to eat before going outside to sit in the sun (it was still roasting) and listen to Dougie Sim, who sang all the well-known numbers so we had a right sing along and dance, it was lovely and we all fair enjoyed it.

Once we went back inside it was the turn of another popular duo and regular visitors to the club John and Ivan, or Western Rhythm, not sure if it was the fact that we were all a bit lazy but it took the guys a wee while to get us all up and going and work our tea off, but again they presented a popular range and choice of music.



Finale of the night the popular Irish entertainer John McNicholl and his band. As expected he had the dance floor heaving in no time at all, giving us his full repertoire of hits including his new single *Dig A Little Deeper In The Well*. John has been poorly recently so it was good to see he's recovered and back on top of his game. His stage presence, vocal technique, and good looks certainly impressed. We all thoroughly enjoyed our day out - good fun, great music and crack. Thanks again to the Black Isle Country Music Club. Nearly forgot to mention the visit from Dolly Parton!! 'He' walked from Dingwall to

the hall, complete in high heels, to raise money to support the Cash for Kids charity - I tell you what he did well... I couldn't have done it. The following Saturday Liam and Loraine, along with North Highland Radio, held a 12 hour country music marathon to raise money for Maggie's Cancer Care. Sadly I only managed to catch bits of it, but what I heard was great stuff - they had lots of Thurso visitors popping in and some helping out with the presenting. Well done to everyone for supporting such a great cause I heard they'd raised £2,400 but could well be more than that now.



Speaking of Dolly everyone is getting geared up for her trip over to Britain next week. You would think at the age of 68 she would be taking things easy, but she shows no signs of slowing down. Songs from her newly released CD *Blue Smoke*, her 42nd studio album, are receiving lots of airplay, and I notice that Bear Family Records have released Dolly Parton & Porter Wagner complete recordings 1967-1976. It's a 160-track, 6-box set from the greatest male-female duo in country history, contains loads of good stuff like *Holding On To Nothing*, *Just Someone I Used To Know*, *Making Plans* - I could go on...

Ally got a copy of the 2 CD box set from Philomena Begley & Ray Lynam called Complete Duet Collection - another pair who have recorded some brilliant stuff together... I'm playing it a lot. They start with their old numbers like *We Go Together*, *You're the One I Can't Live Without*, leading on to ten years later with tracks such as *Mr & Mrs Used To Be*, *You And Me Him And Her* and then another ten years down the line *Making Plans & How's The World Treating You*. So many good songs it's a shame they didn't do some more concerts together - it was great to watch them live.

I also quite fancy *Watch Me & War Paint* - a double offering from Lorrie Morgan. I really like her I don't have any of these albums, although they go back to the early 90's when her career took off after the death of her husband Keith Whitley. I love some of the tracks including *Half Enough*, *What Part Of No Don't You Understand & She's Taking Him Back Again*, plus a duet with her current man, Sammy Kershaw, *Good Year For The Roses* - all good country music.

Reading last month's Country Music People it came as no surprise that editor Duncan Warwick gave the CD of the Month, Ray Price's *Beauty Is - The Final Sessions*, rave reviews (by the way we share in the same taste in music - real country). As he says a very poignant recording as Ray knew his days were numbered when he was making the album, and he certainly went out on a high note leaving a beautiful legacy to country music. He has included duets *Beauty Lies In The Eyes Of The Beholder* and *Until Then* with Vince Gill, and *An Affair To Remember* with Martina McBride - a must for all real country fans.

I was delighted to read that Duncan has been awarded with the Wesley Rose Media Achievement Award recognising contribution to the development of country music outside the U.S. Duncan has certainly done that - he is passionate about his country music and works tirelessly on its' behalf.

In this month's CMDS mag Stewart Fenwick has reviewed the new single *Lay Down Beside Me* by our own Keith Macleod (Slange Ava & Dynamos) and Shannon Petrie, who we have seen recently as part of Robbie and The Brothers. Ironically Keith first started his musical career playing with Maggie and Tennessee Express and now 23 years later he has teamed up with Shannon, Maggie's 17 year old daughter. We know they both have good voices, and on this their debut release they make a lovely job of the song, good luck to them.

Joe Moore also has a new release out called *The Scania Man* and Stewart says he's sounding as country as ever - it contains lots of good covers and says the stand out track is *Randy Travis In My Heart* - a tribute to Randy who as we know has been very poorly at the moment. Shame we don't see Joe over here anymore - his voice could make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up... you couldn't get a more country voice, and he made it seem so easy.

Also in the CMDS mag this time is some pictures of Rusty Rierson including one of him in a kilt - Rusty was the young country singer who took this year's Festival by storm. Apart from doing some sightseeing whilst he was over here he got together with songwriter Alex Birnie and they wrote a few songs together, hopefully we won't have to wait very long to hear them, and good news is Rusty's promised to come back in the near future to do some shows I hope so !!! Of his first visit to Scotland Rusty said he thought Scotland beautiful, he had lots of fun and met some great folk and he's looking forward to coming back soon.

Jett Williams, daughter of Hank Williams Snr, (remember we had her over at the Festival a few years ago) is not having an easy time recently. She lost her husband about a year ago and was recently spotted swerving her car. She was taken into custody, released the following day on \$1,500 bail. Apart from being under suspicion of driving under the influence she was done for not wearing a seat belt and for failure to produce insurance documents.

Jerry Kilgore, who we all raved about following his visit to our Festival two years ago, is heading back to Britain again for a few dates - sadly they are all in England. We hoped that we could have him come to play in the Club but it didn't work out. The date we could have booked him he will be playing in France at a huge festival attended by about 30,000 people, but the good news is that he will have a new album ready for release - looking forward to that.

The Indians have released their long awaited new album this week and are in the north of Scotland later this month. They are scheduled to play at the Merkinch Centre in Inverness on the 26th, then two nights in Orkney, before returning to play in the Legion Club in Keith.

Starting this week will be the Heart of Texas Festival in Snyder that we were at two years ago. I was looking at the line up and noticed it includes some of our Festival favourites like Rance Norton, Landon Dodd, Justin Trevino, Bobby Flores and one of this year's popular acts Kelly Spinks... might get back again someday hopefully.

The CMA Festival in Nashville will be in full swing at the moment. Last night's performance by Tim McGraw was apparently the highlight for many, and the icing on the cake was when he called wife Faith Hill on stage to do a few numbers with him - the pair were very love dovey so this will squash rumours that all is not well with their marriage.

I saw that that The Country Music Association has announced that Hank Cochran, Ronnie Milsap and Mac Wiseman will be the inductees into the Country Music Hall Of Fame this year, with the ceremony being in October. Mac and Ronnie will be present to accept their awards, but sadly Hank died in 2010 - he was responsible for writing such songs as *Make The World Go Away*, *I Fall To Pieces* and *Ocean Front Property*.

Well I think that's about it for now. Don't panic if you haven't received your copies of the Festival DVD yet we are still awaiting delivery from production, but hope fully shouldn't be much longer.

Until next time.

Keep It Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCMC