



# Northern Nashville Country Music Club

## March 2011 Newsletter

Once again I must start by apologising for me being sadly behind with schedules and timescales. I seriously just couldn't find the time to put pen to paper during these last few weeks. Ally's sister in Aberdeen took ill and later died so for the last four weeks we have been up and down the road to Aberdeen sometimes twice a week, so its been taking me all my time to do the basics.

Anyway I must get my head round things, and crack on, should have had the paperwork all done for the Festival programme (haven't started) so looks like I have a busy few weeks ahead of me or I'll be missing the deadline for the printers - I can feel the stress starting already - housework neglected, oops forgot Ally home no need to worry!!!!

Next task, to rack my brain and remember what happened all those weeks ago.

Club wise the year started on a high - our first show of the year was a cracker with entertainment provided by Manson Grant & The Dynamos plus Carson City. I think after a long boring January everyone was ready for a night out were on top form and things got going right from the start.

Although I hadn't heard Carson City before I had read lots about them from the reports in the Country Music and Dance Scotland mag and noticed that they had received awards including Band of the Year in some clubs in the central belt. After they performance they gave us I can see why they are so popular. The brothers come from Denny near Stirling, and said they had appeared in our club way back in the Viewfirth days with a band called the Peacemakers (probably in 1996). Now think back and see how many of you remember them, they said they looked a lot different then - well didn't we all!!! They were a couple of real nice guys who treated us to an all round country programme cross section of old and new...a refreshing change. They enjoyed themselves and you enjoyed them so that's a sure fire sign they'll be back to see us.

It's been a long overdue return to the club for our top local band Manson Grant & The Dynamos. I had heard them a few times throughout the year but I'm sure for some of their many fans it would have been the first time they'd had the pleasure since our Christmas '09 show (if they weren't at the Festival). Their performance was as polished and flawless as ever, I particularly enjoyed listening to their cabaret spot which had a distinct country feel to it.

Last Friday we had another winning combination - a young band from Wick, The Chicken Pickers, along with very pretty young lady from Co Donegal, Lisa McHugh and her band.

The Chicken Pickers were first introduced to us locally when they performed for us two years ago at the Festival representing the Wick Youth Music Link Media group. The boys went down a treat then and their popularity both locally and further afield continues to grow. Some of them are still in school so apart from learning new songs and practising hard they still need to find time to study for their A levels. The band have been part of our last two Festivals and also played for us in the club. Each time I hear them their repertoire and confidence increases, nice young guys with a big future ahead of them - a little bird tells me they are in the process of recording a CD. They are big fans of The Jacks, singing a few of their numbers, and Mikie even sounded like Geordie. Feedback from the punters endorsed everything I've said and of course the boys will be back with us again at the Festival.

Lisa is a young lady with a big future - it's good to see all these youngsters doing their bit to try and keep country music alive. We can claim Lisa as being Scottish she was born, 22 years ago, in Glasgow to Irish parents, however she has now moved permanently to Letterkenny. She is a relative newcomer to the country music scene appearing on a television talent show in late 2009

and reaching the finals, being mentored by Robert Mizzell. Lisa has already received the award for Best new Female Artist in 2010, with her first single *Old Fashioned Girl* reaching no 8, in the European Country Music Association Chart Top 100, and her second *I'm A Little Bit Lonely* also being a big hit. She says that the most exciting achievement for her is the release of her new 13-track album called *Old Fashioned Girl*, and adds that each song on the album reflects an experience or a time in her life over the past few years.

Lisa parents were with her on Friday night to offer moral support they had a good night and must have been very proud of their daughter, and despite them being in 'bad company' at the bar were not led astray. She has a beautiful voice which lends itself to any style of music, she certainly proved that by covering old and new country, 60's music some Irish and even one or two Scottish numbers. Her band are all experienced on the country music scene: - keyboard player Ray played for many years with Daniel O'Donnell, Frank on guitar and vocals is ex-Mike Denver's band, Barry Kirwan (Dominic's son and double) on drums and vocals, and not forgetting Jimmy Hendry who fronted his own band played and with Dominic and Jimmy Buckley amongst others.

Lisa and the band have a rigorous tour schedule between now and the end of May including opening for Gene Watson on some of his tour dates but sadly Halkirk is not included! A very pleasant and friendly girl, excellent stage presence for someone so young and an added bonus for the boys she's very attractive! The members certainly enjoyed their night and the dance floor was busy all night with a terrific atmosphere.

I'm sure the same will be said for the next show Mary 'B' and Paul Gallagher, supported by Mustang, a positive start to the year for NNCCMC.

It was nice to see some old faces back with us and we had some new members joining the club too, and also we welcomed some visitors, amongst who was Raymond Peters. Raymond presents the country programmes on Radio Keith and promotes country music in his area, and is one of our regular visitors to the Festival, but this was his first visit to the club. He had a good night and said he would be back - the committee said thanks for the drink and we'll see you at Easter. We also had some proud parents and grandparents of the Chicken Pickers with us, and I think half of Orkney - not sure I would like to have been in their shoes on the boat the next morning. We only hope they found their sea legs as they certainly didn't have them the night before!!!!

As most of you will know we also held our AGM meeting between the two shows, which clearly brought changes for our club. Long standing committee members Davie Oag and Kenny Maclean have decided to hang up their red jackets and retire, sadly with them will go their many years of experience and expertise (not only in our club but to country music in general). They will be a sore miss, however I am sure they will be on hand to offer advice and listen to my moaning when needed!

As we have the powers to co opt on to the committee at any time we have had Alan Miller, John Dunnet and Darryn Youngson helping us out in the background. John and Alan were obvious choices as we work together on the Festival committee and they have a good knowledge of country music. Darryn we felt is young enthusiastic and could bring fresh new ideas to the team, thankfully they have all agreed to wear a red jacket (YES Darryn even you!) so we welcome them on board the NNCCMC as fully elected committee members.

Sandy, Dennis and myself are going to plod on and we hope this transition into a new era for the club will be a positive step - we will certainly all try our best to maintain its reputation on the club circuit. The only other change at the meeting was to look at our financial situation, and with ever increasing costs we asked for suggestions on how to improve it. We had a couple of proposals, and the vote agreed we increase the membership to £7.50 per person, which everyone felt was still exceptionally good value. We also still have the member's agreement that we can, when necessary, increase the price of shows.

Of course this gave us an excuse for a night out (think we're due one) to say cheerio to the old committee members - well they must be if they're retiring - and welcome the new ones. We also

have a couple of wedding anniversaries and birthday celebrations in the company. So Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March we are going to Lybster Hall - the playgroup are holding a fundraising country night with a Garth Brooke tribute band and Whisky River playing. We are looking forward to that - a chance to chill out before the Festival work kicks off with a vengeance. That same night Declan Nerney is playing in the Assembly Rooms, he has a big following in the area and it's a while since he's been here, shame they're both on the same night but that's what often happens - all or nothing.

I had to go to Glasgow recently and whilst there we managed to go along to The Grand Ole Opry on the Saturday night. Raisin Cain were playing, and those of you who watched the Kelso Festival after ours on BBC ALBA will remember them - they would maybe be classed as a country rock band. Apparently we picked a good night - it was very busy and because the band were up tempo the place was very lively and bouncing.

I spoke to the guy playing the piano with the band - I couldn't remember what band he'd played in our club with but knew he was familiar, but he couldn't remember either! Thought it was Brian Hughes but he also plays with Red Canyon - he did remember it was a terrible night of snow and they thought they would never get home.

There was a crowd of young lads there from RAF Kinloss and some of them were clearly big into line dancing and boy could they dance. The more they drank the better they got, until they eventually took over the whole floor and gave a display. During the night a while was spent doing the regular fast draw shooting contest, bingo at half time all taken very seriously.

Grand Ole Opry continues to remain an authentic country venue with the traditional flag folding ceremony taking place at the end of the night, and the price of the drink hasn't moved on either - still £1 a nip! Can't be bad and I'll bet there's not many places in the centre of Glasgow you can buy drink at that price - no wonder we drank so much! When we arrived I noticed TV cameras set up and saw Michael and some of the crew who will be up to do our Festival, they were there to film and interview Raisin Cain as part of their section in the next Kelso festival.

Everything going to plan at the moment for the Festival but this is the time I start to panic. Bettine however assures me that the tickets are still flying out the door so that's good news. A lot of interest has been generated through our advert on Hot Country - I have had countless phone calls from all over the country requesting information or tickets.

The Riding Centre has had some refurbishments carried out, which means we will have to lay things out a bit differently. It doesn't really give us much more room in the venue but they have put in a nice new kitchen and toilets.

I noticed that Alan Jackson is coming back to Europe this summer still no British dates unfortunately; I did drop hints but think it fell on deaf ears.

I've also noticed that The Queens of Country are touring Scotland this year again in May including Eden Court on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The featured artistes are Billie Jo Spears, Philomena Begley, Sinead Taggart also Lena Martell.

Well I think that's about all my news for the moment.

*Christine*

Christine Gray  
Chairperson NNCCMC