



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

March 2015 Newsletter

I know February is a short month but it hardly seems a minute since I wrote the last newsletter can't say I paid much attention but I guess March came in like a lion so hopefully it will go out like a lamb and it will be into spring weather for the festival.

Friday night just past our club night with two new bands from Falkirk we had Touchwood and from Co Tyrone Justin McGurk and The Boogiemen.

Touchwood, Catherine and John are relatively new to the country scene they have only been around for 6 months, John has played in bands and Catherine has been more of a classical singer. They enjoy listening and playing all kinds of music however country was an area they felt comfortable in and felt there was a niche for so decided to go on the road together. Up until now they have only played in a couple of country clubs mainly doing bowling clubs in their own area so playing in front of a fairly big crowd was a new experience for them. When I spoke to them before their spot they were excited although a bit apprehensive but eager to please and give the crowd what they wanted.

The couple clearly enjoy a wide range of music they played a real variety but I could see they were fans of Garth Brooks, The Eagles, Dr Hook and Alan Jackson as we heard lots of their numbers along with Dolly Parton and Patsy Clyne and Shania Twain tunes. The couple enjoyed their time with us loved the scenery on the way up and did some of the tourist things since they were in the area.



I met and spoke to Justin McGurk 3 or 4 years ago at one of the Country fest weekends in the Clanree, I heard him sing and enjoyed what he did thought it was a bit different he hasn't got a big voice but a nice country one and I felt he would go down well in the club. Between one thing and another it just didn't happen until now so I was really looking forward to hearing Justin along with his band and I'm delighted to say he didn't disappoint.

Justin has been playing music for 10 years but is only now getting the recognition he deserves he has just released his 9th studio album called LETS GET THIS PARTY STARTED and that's exactly what he did he immediately got them on the floor and there they remained. He covered all genres of music singing songs from Hal Ketchum, Colin Raye, numbers from his albums including THE BOXER, LOOK AT US, dancing

classics like LETS DANCE, THE GUY DOWN THE CHIPS SHOP, some Irish tunes ROAD BACK. Naturally he included some of his self-penned numbers they all loved WHATS THE CRAIG but for most the most powerful and poignant song was IF I COULD TAKE YOUR PLACE, which he wrote a few years back when his wife was being treated for cancer, he said that at the time of writing it was his coping mechanism and when he sings it now it reminds him how lucky he is that things have turned out all right in the end. The Boogie Men a very talented backing band guitarist Mark McNeilly also a good singer I loved his version of the Eagles LOVE WILL KEEP US ALIVE.

Justin certainly put on a good show it was fairly busy but we could have done with another 50 or so it would have made all the difference, however this seems to be pretty much the norm nowadays we have our 120 regulars every month and the rest is a bonus. I did get some phone calls from people calling off because they were ill, I guess that some were away to the Brandon McPhee / Manson Grant & The Dynamos in Eden Court on the Saturday night and maybe some were saving themselves for the Country 2 Country Concerts in Glasgow during the week.

Anyway as I said we all had a good night Justin and the band are nice friendly guys who took the time to chat to everyone like Touchwood they had a good time in Thurso and also managed to get along to John O'Groats. So can I say a big a big thanks to both bands for providing a great nights entertainment for us just what we needed on such a cold stormy night.



I am sure by now you will have heard that we will be bringing our next show in a week to the 20th March this is due to the fact that we will be setting up for the festival the following Friday. We have decided just to go with one band a dance to the Angie King Duo, Angie is the daughter of the legendry John C King who was a regular visitor to Caithness in the good old days and she played alongside her dad and two brothers as part of the John C King Family Band. The other half of the duo is Davy Adams the highly skilled steel player who used to play as part of the Lorraine McMillan Band. I haven't heard Angie for a wee while but she used to have a captivating voice which I'm sure is still the same look forward to hearing her again something a bit different. We thought we would have a fairly low key night, Alan told us we could come dressed for a change (God forbid we come naked) think he meant we shouldn't wear our uniforms. He also plans to do some fun things have a bit of fun so no need to get dressed up come along in you western gear enjoy the night.

Looking back over the month I decided that I didn't do very much apart from working nothing madly exciting has happened. We did go along to the Triple C club night Johnny

Quinn was playing good to catch up with him he was looking very well and sounding as good as ever. Not easy for a solo act to get a dance going but he managed although some folk were quite happy just to sit and listen to him singing all the golden oldies we've come to associate with Johnny.

The following night February 14th we held our own club A.G.M. we had a fairly good turn out and a pretty straight forward meeting with the committee remaining in place. The main discussion was in regard to our finances and how we can encourage some more members to attend regularly however I guess there's no easy answer to that one.

I don't want to tempt fate but all appears on track for the festival, it's a really busy next few weeks for us now, so I guess this will be the last letter until after Easter. We have a meeting later today with the T.V. crew, who will be with us this year on behalf of BBC ALBA. Looks like lots of new faces so they want to have a look at the lay out, it's freezing today and I know when we go in to the riding centre this afternoon and see a big dismal looking barn I'll think to myself 'what have we let ourselves in for' and realise just what we have in front of us. Not too worry I am sure with all hands on deck and lots of hard work we will have it looking like an impressive Texas dance hall for Friday night. The weekend tickets are selling well but now that the running order has been released we could do with selling some more single show ones no doubt last minute as usual remember if you buy 8 you get one free and that's for any of the shows.

Last month the Ameripoliton Awards were held in Austin Texas introduced by Dale Watson (who appeared at our first ever festival) decked out in a silver sparkly suit never seen him in anything else but jeans and denim jacket. These awards go to artistes whose music honours tradition whilst demonstrating exceptional originality, creativity and musicianship, in other words not those who conform to today's style of 'country' but stick to their roots and tradition. The award for the Western Swing Male Artist went to Bobby Flores, who went down a blast at our festival two years ago The Derailers were presented with the Honky Tonk Group award, and Amber Digby took home the Best Honky Tonk Female award, looks like we have come up with an award winning line up for this festival. Musician of the year was Kenny Sears husband of Dawn Sears who passed away recently in Nashville.

The Mavericks are touring across here at the moment minus their bass player Robbie Reynolds (ex-husband of Trisha Yearwood) who they have left behind saying he has a drug abuse problem. They are not writing him off altogether he can re-join the band once he completes a rehab programme. Sad to hear that he was one of my favourites but as the song goes WHAT A CRYIN SHAME. I think you all know that I have been a Maverick fan from day one and would loved to have gone to see them this time again however just couldn't fit it in – mind you if someone had given me the tickets then I would have found the time to go – I think the gigs have been going well by the reports I have heard some saying that they were getting a bit rocky and should have concentrated more on their old classics. I did notice that their Manchester gig was cancelled on Friday night minutes before the guys were due to go on stage due to the level of the water supply falling to an unsafe level. They had sold 2,000 tickets so a lot of disappointed fans they rescheduled for Monday but of course not everyone could manage to attend on that night.

I was reading in CMP, that come April they are opening a new George Jones Museum in downtown Nashville. It will take fans through his childhood his time in the marines lots of footage of performances and interviews, and of course a theatre gift shop and restaurant. It also says that at the same time they will be launching White Lightning

Moonshine – this apparently prompted daughter Georgette to write on Facebook – trying hard to remain silent but I can't I'm sorry but I hope other people can see the truth. Dad is rolling in his grave over this! Anyone who truly knew him would know he would hate this!! Don't think things are any better there then how sad-

I noticed that Dixie Hall wife of Tom T Hall died a few days ago in Nashville after suffering from a brain tumour aged 80. Dixie was born in Manchester but has lived in Nashville for many years together her and Tom wrote mainly bluegrass songs recorded by all the top blue grass singers but in 2014 Miranda Lambert recorded one of their songs on her Platinum Album a number called ALL THAT'S LEFT. Apart from being a songwriter Dixie was a prolific journalist eventually becoming the entertainer editor for Music City News.

Well I think that's about it for this time as I said I have loads to do I must get ready to go and meet this T.V. crew we also have to go to Aberdeen later this week we have a family funeral also a sick relative to visit, so need to get ahead of myself.

Hope to see you all at the festival please come up and give me a shout.

Until next time

Keep It Country

Christine